prescription for the clergy's decline. The decline is all the more ironic in view of the state's original aim to "modernize" the church at all levels, to strengthen it while simultaneously integrating it into the framework of the new, secular state.

No brief review can do justice to the subtlety and comprehensiveness of Professor Freeze's efforts. His book is based on a phenomenal amount of research, much of it archival, and his lucid writing is a model of historical and sociological analysis. He has succeeded in making the maximum use of his research material without burdening the reader with excessive or irrelevant examples. More extensive reflection on what it means to "modernize" a clergy would have been desirable, but to insist would be to cavil. Professor Freeze's portrait of the clerical *soslovie* ranks with the best histories we have of other social groups of this period, whether nobility, townsmen, or the peasantry. It is a major contribution to our understanding of Russia's social and cultural history.

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THE RUSSIAN ECCLESIASTICAL MISSION IN PEKING DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. By *Eric Widmer*. Foreword by *John K. Fairbank*. Harvard East Asian Monographs, 69. Cambridge, Mass.: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1976. xii, 262 pp. Map. $15.00. Distributed by Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

A religious missionary enterprise ordinarily is sent across international boundaries as part of an outreach by religious zealots who sense some obligation to convert foreigners who are perceived to stand in need of spiritual enlightenment and salvation. The missionaries' arrival in the foreign society is seldom welcomed. The "Russian ecclesiastical mission in Peking" exhibited an ironic reversal of the usual roles in such an endeavor. The initiatives for the mission came from Peking and the Chinese emperor himself provided the resources to sustain the mission station for over a century. The "missionaries" made few converts, but manifested little concern about their poor showing. They even experienced what Widmer calls a "substantial fear of converting Chinese" (p. 150).

The truth is that the Russian ecclesiastical mission was no mission at all, but an ad hoc surrogate for regular diplomatic relations which, under the circumstances, were impossible even though they were imperative. What was called an "ecclesiastical mission" was in fact an impromptu creation which allowed China and Russia to resolve the problems surrounding the first contacts of the two expanding empires in a way which permitted both to maintain satisfactorily, for the time, their mutually incompatible views of relations between sovereignties. China, holding to its hierarchical view of such relations, accepted and even nurtured the Russian mission as a symbol of its "'tributary" suzerainty over the peoples of the interior of the Asian continent; Russia, representing the Western view of the essential equality of sovereigns in international relations, considered the religious institution to be the equivalent of a diplomatic mission. Russia could thereby claim to have outdone the other Western powers in the attempt to establish orderly relations with the giant of the East. Widmer's argument is quite plausible, although considerable speculation is necessary to compensate for the lack of definitive documentation, from either Russian or Chinese sources, demonstrating precisely how the two governments viewed the arrangement.

In a narrative which is occasionally unchronological and confusing, Widmer painstakingly recounts the story of the mission from its remote beginnings in the capture of Russian adventurers in 1683 to the end of the eighteenth century. Widmer's major contribution lies in his discussion of events prior to 1728. There he ably documents the thesis that China treated Russia as an Inner Asian tributary rather than a

https://doi.org/10.2307/2494913 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Western barbarian intruder. Manifesting a capacity for wry perspective, Widmer inserts some dry wit into a generally tedious topic. To be sure, the peccadilloes of Russian churchmen in China—drunkenness, thievery, homosexuality—invite ridicule. What the reader is not prepared to hear is the summary announcement that these Russians were "heroic" (p. 147).

The Russian ecclesiastical mission is fascinating for its peculiarity. But its historical significance is elusive. Widmer's study accordingly entertains the reader with its details but, in the end, leaves him as ignorant as the missionaries themselves of "the meaning of their existence" (p. 180).

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A PARTING OF WAYS: GOVERNMENT AND THE EDUCATED PUBLIC IN RUSSIA, 1801–1855. By *Nicholas V. Riasanovsky*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976. x, 323 pp. $25.25.

Professor Riasanovsky's new work combines the encyclopedic scope of his well-known textbook of Russian history with the intuitive grasp of his two previous studies of intellectual life under Nicholas I. It provides a comprehensive survey of political, social, and cultural developments, as well as of changing fashions in thought, from Catherine II's accession (notwithstanding the date in the subtitle) to the Crimean War. The main theme is the breakdown of that tacit understanding which, the author convincingly shows, existed between the government and educated society during the eighteenth century. The first phase in this "parting of ways" began around 1815 and reached its tragic climax on the Senate Square ten years later: it was a limited disagreement among men who still shared the basic assumptions of the Enlightenment. The second phase originated in the late 1830s and culminated in the less dramatic but no less disastrous events of 1848, which inaugurated the bleak last years of Nicholas I's reign. This experience created an unbridgeable gulf between any self-respecting *intelligent* and partisans of the autocratic regime.

Explaining the reasons for the breach, Riasanovsky rejects as too simple the common view that the government was to blame for its repressive policies, or that the educated class became significantly democratized by an influx of *raznochintsy*. The key lies rather in "the evolving structure of intellectual life": in the growth of the universities and of journalistic enterprise, which encouraged a mature professional spirit to develop among Russian writers. No longer satisfied with shallow escapist literature, or the superficial moralizing of official propagandists, they sought to provide independent answers to the fundamental questions of modern civilization; and in their quest they turned naturally to the philosophical, aesthetic, and political ideas of Europe's Romantic age. Foreign concepts were no longer accepted uncritically, as in the eighteenth century, but were creatively reworked to fit the Russian environment; later they could be transmitted back into the mainstream of European thought, a sign that the country's cultural lag had been overcome.

This thesis, buttressed by wide erudition and a profound sympathy for the intellectual's delicate predicament, is attractive and plausible. It does, however, obscure the fact that both the "official nationalists" and their critics were permeated by Romantic ideology. For Uvarov, and perhaps for Pogodin, the ideal organic Russia lay in the present; for Aksakov it was situated in the past, for Herzen in the future. All these men were devotees of the same fashionable myth, which we today might describe as "cultural nationalism"; their differences were of degree rather than of substance. If Riasanovsky tends to exaggerate them, this is partly because much of his argument is drawn (with due acknowledgment) from his two earlier monographs instead of being derived from a wholly fresh analysis.

https://doi.org/10.2307/2494913 Published online by Cambridge University Press