

that of the boyars, the state peasants against that of the local officials. The workers of the Ural factories were mostly uprooted peasants who were revolting against their employers and wished again to live and work in the countryside. As for the minorities, their aims were very specific and sometimes not in harmony with those of their fellow insurgents: the Bashkirs, who were the most active, blamed all Russians for the harm done to their national and religious rights and their traditional ways (nomadic life, freedom from recruitment, and so forth). Seeking to take advantage of all these discontents, Pugachev appears to the author, plausibly enough, as an opportunist attracted by adventure more than a utopian doctrinaire or a conscious revolutionary: he was a charismatic figure, using his own gifts of persuasion and the credulity of a people ready to submit blindly to the "true tsar."

Are things clearer or more rational on the side of the officials and the land-owners? Indeed, everything shows that, with very rare exceptions (such as Sievers, governor of Novgorod), they did not understand or seek to understand the deep causes of the movement. After having underestimated the real importance of the rebellion, Catherine II and her advisers soon came to count on nothing—except for a few homilies unintelligible to the people—but brutal and widespread repression to restore calm. Instead of improving the condition of the people, they had in mind only strengthening the administration and making serfdom more rigorous. Even more, the nobility as an order (*soslovie*) behaved in a lamentable fashion; despite their eloquent pretensions to be the "shield of the throne and fatherland," they scarcely thought to do anything but take cover. Once order was restored by the army, the nobles usually forgot the last duty which they recognized toward their peasant laborers—that of patriarchal management.

Such are the conclusions of this solid and careful study. They rest on a vast and well-assimilated documentation, witnessed by abundant notes and a copious bibliography. They are reinforced by appendixes which, if they sometimes appear marginal to the subject, are always interesting in themselves. The most useful one shows that certain diplomats and foreign travelers in Russia were better informed about the events concerned than the great majority of the population, and understood better than the nobility the socioeconomic factors present in the revolt.

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THE PETRAŠEVSKIJ CIRCLE, 1845–1849. By *John L. Evans*. Slavistic Printings and Reprintings, 299. The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1974. 114 pp. 32 Dglds.

In his book Evans, through a conscientious use of the available sources, gives us a description of Petrashevsky's Fourierism, as well as Petrashevsky's views on his society and how to change it. He describes also the circle that met at Petrashevsky's residence and the social and political ideas of the circle members. He concludes with an account of the arrest, investigation, and punishment of the Petrashevtsy.

It is one of Evans's assumptions that Russia in the 1840s was, using Popper's category, a closed society which debased "the finer human qualities and led to the ruination of many of the outstanding Russian intellectuals of the period." This assumption, it seems, leads him to assert that the Petrashevtsy were entirely devoted to social justice and humanitarian ideals. He does not, to any significant degree, look for elements of self-interest in the social and political beliefs of the Petrashevtsy. He

does not inquire into the function for them of the ideas they held, or investigate what they thought their roles would be in the new society they would create out of the existing order. Conversely, Nicholas I is regarded as having prosecuted arbitrarily and perversely members of his army and bureaucracy who devoted a good part of their energies to talk of reforming the state in a radical or revolutionary manner.

In that unquestioned view of Nicholas, however, the author is as fashionable as in his use of the all-embracing ubiquitous American word "background." He contends that the members of the circle were bound together by their "gentry background." Was this some common experience in their past upon which they drew? What of their function in the social order? Did they share that? Did their function affect their view of a future state and society? Do the rigors of Evans's discipline discourage such questions? His discipline permits him, however, to conclude with another assumption, that of inevitability. In speaking of the circle he says, "Their failure was inevitable." Is that the objective verdict of history, or is it the judgment of an historian from the viewpoint of the success and failure of events as opposed to a search for their meaning?

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ST. PETERSBURG AND MOSCOW: TSARIST AND SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY, 1814–1974. By *Barbara Jelavich*. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1974. xvi, 480 pp. \$12.50, cloth. \$4.95, paper.

Although this reviewer must confess to having himself written survey history on more than one occasion, he must also admit that in his opinion history of this nature, and particularly diplomatic history, can sometimes be a questionable exercise. So intricate is the actual web of international events—so fluid, so complex, and so intimately related to the shifting situations of the day and the week rather than the year or the decade are the true motives of diplomatic decision-taking—that to try to summarize briefly the interactions of governments over long periods of time means to inflict upon the subject matter a measure of oversimplification and generalization so great that it places in question the very usefulness of the exercise. What historian, confronted with the results of such an effort in a field which he himself has studied in detail, has not been impelled to this conclusion?

Particularly is this true when the focus of the exercise approaches, chronologically, the present age. Whether this is because we are more sensitive to oversimplification when it applies to recent developments about which our understanding is more sophisticated, or because recent events are indeed more complex and more swiftly moving and thus less susceptible to sweeping summary, is a question that need not be answered here. Suffice it to note that the task of grasping and holding in mind the entirety of the significant international events of even a single recent decade probably surpasses the capacity of even the best human memory. When, therefore, the recital of these episodes, along with those of many other decades as well, is spread out for the reader on a large number of printed pages, the mind boggles at the demands thus raised for memory and analysis, and sometimes finds it difficult to follow the narrative as a whole.

This does not mean that survey history has no value. It is useful for reference purposes. Administered in small doses, it can be useful for teaching. Usually, of course, the history of the external relations of a country is included in general