

from the shackles of ideology, a process that occurred during and because of his imprisonment.

Borys Levytsky's book is essentially a reference work. It contains mainly biographies of 234 "rehabilitated" victims of the purges of the late 1930s. The biographies, arranged according to the subjects' occupations, are translations of materials published in the Soviet press between the mid-1950s and the late 1960s. In his introduction, the author briefly summarizes the story of the politics of rehabilitation and attempts to explain the significance of the documents included in the volume. Levytsky asserts that his documents correct two mistaken interpretations of the *Ezhovshchina*: that "Stalin liquidated only those bureaucracies which no longer fitted into his industrialization plans," and that "the events of the 1930s were nothing more than intra-Party squabbles not unlike those known from the 1920s" (pp. 25–26). He argues that the purges of the late thirties stemmed from Stalin's efforts to destroy those among his own followers who had become discontented with the dictator's policies in many areas—particularly with the expansion of the terror, collectivization policies, nationalities policies, and the treatment of the military. Although Levytsky claims that the documents "clearly reveal for the first time Stalin's motive for the bloody purge in 1937" (p. 16), his own analysis does not appear to diverge markedly from widely accepted interpretations.

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RUSSIA AND BLACK AFRICA BEFORE WORLD WAR II. By *Edward T. Wilson*. New York and London: Holmes & Meier, 1974. xvi, 397 pp. \$26.00.

Most Western analysts of Soviet policy toward Africa have stressed the significance of the absence of contacts between Russia and sub-Saharan Africa prior to Khrushchev's forays into that area. They attribute to this dearth of contacts both the initial Soviet successes in Africa and their ultimate failure, because the Kremlin simply did not understand Africans as well as the former colonial countries. Wilson, however, disputes this conventional wisdom. In a detailed and lively pioneering analysis, he examines three centuries of active Russian contacts with Africa prior to 1939, which laid the foundations for the postwar Soviet expansion of influence in that continent.

Wilson's main theme is the continuity between tsarist and Soviet motivations for involvement in Africa. In both cases, "calculations of realpolitik had taken precedence over considerations of friendship or ideological affinity" (p. 71), and in both cases security considerations were predominant. During tsarist times, the need to safeguard maritime communications with the Far East was of prime concern. For the young Soviet state—fearing another attack by the combined forces of the imperialist powers—the main security motive was to weaken the military positions of Britain and France by persuading African troops not to fight for the metropolitan powers. The second aspect of Russian realpolitik was preventative. Both tsarist and Soviet regimes hoped to weaken imperial competitors in Africa (for both regimes, Britain was the main enemy). Wilson also demonstrates that ideology—Slavophilism and Marxism-Leninism—was a mere smokescreen for the pursuit of essentially pragmatic political purposes.

Although his accounts of tsarist contacts with Ethiopia are fascinating, the most important part of Wilson's book deals with Comintern activities. He describes in great detail the "broad spectrum of covert and indirect instrumentalities to conduct activities in Africa" (p. 277) and, as one example, cites the promotion of numerous front organizations to mobilize African nationalist discontent, which was dependent on various changes in the Comintern's political line. Despite the Comintern's failure to harness nascent Pan-Africanism to the black emancipation movement in the United States, Wilson argues that the Comintern had a profound effect as a modernizing agent in influencing the development of the African nationalist movement—"through the activities of the Comintern and its representatives, Moscow helped to transmit to Negro Africans radical political attitudes, a supporting ideology and a knowledge of specific techniques and strategies which were useful in the structural organization and practical conduct of the independence movement" (p. 295).

One can argue, however, that Wilson's analysis of Comintern activities lacks broad perspective. He does not discuss the relative importance of the Comintern, or, indeed, of Africa, in general Soviet foreign policy. By providing a wealth of detail which focuses on a relatively peripheral area of Russian foreign policy, Wilson exaggerates the intrinsic importance of Russo-African contacts under the tsars and in the interwar period. Despite these problems, the book is an important corrective to earlier dismissals of prewar Russo-African relations. With its wealth of hitherto unused Russian, British, French, and African sources, the volume provides valuable insights into understanding the genesis of current Soviet involvement in Africa.

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THE FORGOTTEN FRIENDSHIP: ISRAEL AND THE SOVIET BLOC, 1947-1953. By *Arnold Krammer*. Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1974. x, 224 pp. \$10.00.

In this thoroughly researched and lucid history of Zionist and Israeli relations with the USSR and its East European satellites, the author offers no new or startling conclusions. He states, correctly, that Stalin's policy in the Palestine question was based on power-political rather than ideological considerations; that the Kremlin "was never deeply or sincerely involved in the conflict between Israel and the Arab world"; and that Moscow's overriding purpose was to terminate British influence in Palestine and, possibly, to help aggravate Anglo-American relations in the Middle East (p. 198). The book's main value and strength lies in the detailed account of the desperate, dramatic, and often heroic efforts of the Jewish community in Palestine both to secure from Czechoslovakia the military equipment necessary to repel Arab attempts to prevent the establishment of Israel and to facilitate the flow of East European immigrants to the National Home. The story of the staggering difficulties and the ingenuity with which they were overcome (many details appear in print for the first time) make this balanced and scholarly study fascinating reading both to the student of international relations and the buff of "grand" international intrigue.

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