

MOSCOW AND THE WEST. By *S. F. Platonov*. Translated and edited by *Joseph L. Wiczyński*. Introduction by *Serge A. Zenkovsky*. Russian Series, vol. 9. Hattiesburg, Miss.: Academic International, 1972. xx, 171 pp.

Platonov's *Moskva i zapad* (Leningrad, 1925) is a minor classic, with equal emphasis on both words. It is limited in aim, being an essay rather than a monograph, a summary rather than an exploration. At the same time it is the definitive statement of the traditional "Westernizer" view of the relationship between Old Russia and Europe. Muscovy had to borrow from the West in order to compete with it. Therefore the initial objectives were highly pragmatic: in the sixteenth century commerce, in the seventeenth century military skills. But with increased contact came the attraction of Western ideas and customs, which in the long run were equally necessary if Muscovy was to overcome its "stagnation" and "darkness." Despite strong resistance to change, by the latter part of the seventeenth century "progressive Russians" welcomed the new culture. Thus the groundwork was laid for the "final triumph" of Western influence under the leadership of Peter the Great.

Platonov's approach leaves out a good deal of the complexity and cost of Westernization. It focuses on a few outstanding individuals and presents their problem in simple terms: to borrow what was good for Russia without losing their identity as Russians. Ordin-Nashchokin succeeded; Kotoshikhin failed. Platonov does not wholly ignore the role of the state, yet he gives insufficient indication either of the dimensions of its response to the Western challenge or of the impact of this response on Russian society as a whole. It can, after all, be argued that both serfdom and the Old Belief were, each in its own way, the products of Muscovy's collision with the West.

Granted the difficulties of Platonov's text, the translation is often unidiomatic and sometimes incorrect, particularly in the many quotations from contemporary sources. Zenkovsky's introduction sketches pre-sixteenth-century relations with the West and summarizes Platonov's career. The editor's contributions include a map, notes to the text supplementing the author's own, a glossary, and an index.

BENJAMIN UROFF

University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana

EXPLORATIONS OF KAMCHATKA: NORTH PACIFIC SCIMITAR. By *Stepan Petrovich Krasheninnikov*. Translated with introduction and notes by *E. A. P. Crownhart-Vaughan*. Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1972. xxxiii, 375 pp. \$13.75.

Geographical remoteness, climatic severity, and (most recently) politically contrived inaccessibility have fostered an undeserved neglect of the Pacific littoral stretching from northern Japan to the Bering Strait. Consequently the first definitive translation of S. P. Krasheninnikov's almost forgotten classic, *Opisanie zemli Kamchatki* (1755), comes as a welcome contribution to the limited literature in English on this area. Krasheninnikov (1711–55) filled his short but eventful life with an insatiable quest for knowledge under appallingly adverse circumstances. A cadet member of Vitus Bering's ambitious second expedition (1733–41) that ranged over Eastern Siberia and the North Pacific, Krasheninnikov was entrusted with the awesome task of exploring and studying Kamchatka, a forbidding peninsula equal in size to England and in length to California. Undeterred by a per-

versely inhospitable natural and human environment, the young scholar never ceased to observe and record during three years of solitary peregrinations. His labor has yielded an encyclopedic compilation of notes on Kamchatka's mountains and rivers, fauna and flora, climate, aboriginal inhabitants, and a history of the Russian conquest, depredations, and subsequent revolts. In addition, there are descriptions of the Kurile Islands, the Okhotsk seaboard, and the Aleutian chain.

Very little escaped Krasheninnikov's inquiring eyes. His curiosity embraced the life cycles of salmon, the hallucinogenic properties of mushrooms, the sexual mores of Kamchadal widows, and the demonology of volcanoes. But he transcended the mere amassment of data by exercising an astute, even poetic, appreciation of the tragicomic human condition. Few readers can forget his eloquently laconic account of how Aleuts would paddle fragile *baidarki* through rough seas in order to warn Russians in their relatively large ships about the dangers of capsizing (one of these ships did subsequently capsize). Only rarely do Krasheninnikov's sympathies lapse, as when he betrays an aversion to Chinese women ("among the lowest class of people") or when he evokes the less savory details of Kamchadal cuisine (potage of decayed fish). His narrative of the Kamchatka Rebellion of 1731 (a fierce but abortive native challenge to Russian rule) constitutes an invaluable chronicle replete with instructive glimpses into the almost casual brutalities of frontier politics.

Mrs. Crownhart-Vaughan's translation is superb—faithful to the original without sacrificing readability. She has enriched the text with copious maps, illustrations, explanatory notes, and a concise introductory essay. The index is general but serviceable.

Long known only to specialists or antiquarians, Krasheninnikov has at last found an eminently worthy introduction to a wider audience. The Oregon Historical Society is to be commended for setting such high standards in the first volume of what promises to be a distinguished series on the greater Pacific Northwest.

JOHN J. STEPHAN
University of Hawaii

KAPITALISMENS GENESIS: ET PERIODISERINGSPROBLEM I SOVJETISK HISTORIESKRIVNING. By *Niels Erik Rosenfeldt*. Københavns Universitet, Institut for Økonomisk Historie, publication no. 3. Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gads Forlag, 1971. 176 pp. 34.50 DKr., paper.

The rewriting of Russian history goes on in both East and West, but in the Soviet Union the party—the self-proclaimed incarnation of proletarian class-consciousness and class will—provides guidelines that can be ignored only at one's peril. This lucid study by a Danish scholar, Niels Rosenfeldt, provides an excellent summary of problems in Soviet historical scholarship since the Revolution and an in-depth study of the question of "periodization," particularly the debate over the origins of capitalism in Russia. The running debate between 1947 and 1951 was essentially spawned by Stalin himself, who made it clear that Soviet historians should take on the mantle of militant Bolshevik propagandists. Creeping "bourgeois objectivism" and "cosmopolitanism" were more dangerous than even Pokrovsky's "vulgar Marxism." It was time also to pay greater attention to the active role of the "superstructure" as well