

STUDIES IN RUSSIAN-AMERICAN COMMERCE, 1820–1860. By *Walther Kirchner*. Studien zur Geschichte Osteuropas, vol. 19. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975. xii, 265 pp. Tables. Illus. Appendixes. 68 Dglds.

In aggregate, Russian-American commerce in the forty years before the American Civil War was declining and relatively unimportant, although each nation bought from or supplied to the other significant amounts of cotton, sugar, tobacco, hemp and flax and their products, and to a lesser extent, iron and tallow. The main aspects of this trading relationship, claimed to be *sui generis*, are covered in Kirchner's book. About half of the volume is a valuable discussion of trade and shipping statistics. The remainder concerns port conditions, the chief entrepreneurs engaged in trade, and the treaty of 1832 (which Kirchner argues was of little influence).

Apparently because of different methods of valuation (c.i.f., f.o.b.) both countries simultaneously show years of bilateral trade surpluses or deficits. In addition, the unknown size of indirect trade (for example, U.S. cotton via England), smuggling, and large unrecorded items, generally on government account, all make the official record defective. Some tentative suggestions about the magnitudes of these omissions in particular cases are put forward, but they do not alter substantially the impression of the relative unimportance of the trade. (The statement, on page 3, that Russia gained more because her American trade accounted for a larger share of her total trade than vice versa, is nonsense.)

In a work depending, as this does, on the presentation of data, it is annoying to have three different ways of writing numbers over ten thousand, and two for decimal numbers (see table 9 for both).

Apart from general economic changes, the chief explanations of the course of trade are to be found in particular influences on particular products. An obvious example is the rise of American cotton exports; less clear-cut are the improvement in the quality of American iron and the decline in that of Russian hemp. Prices are dismissed as unimportant, in a rather off-hand way, and tariffs are given a very minor role. We are left to speculate whether the patterns of tariff duties exhibited a "country bias," that is, whether tariffs were particularly harsh on the products of especial interest to the other. Certainly much was heard in the ante-bellum tariff debates of the lowly paid serf and the need to protect American hemp products.

In a number of instances, Kirchner remarks on the lack of enterprise on both sides, of opportunities lost and of ventures never made. The trade did not grow as it should, or could, have. His discussion of the leading figures, perforce, concentrates on those successful in a risky business. The comments critical of the reliance on middlemen of other nations are, therefore, cautiously made. It is surprising, however, in view of the emphasis on individuals and their motivations, to be told that "the United States had to make the greatest efforts to supply services in order to make up for the drain on bullion reserves" (p. 88).

The book is well presented and bound, and in a readable style despite a topic not "spectacular or romantic."

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RUSSISCHES TAGESBUCH, 1916–1918. By *Nora Gräfin Kinsky*. Introduction by *Fürstin Gina von Liechtenstein*. Edited by *Hans Graf Huyn*. Stuttgart: Seewald Verlag, 1976. 280 pp. Illus. DM 28.

During the First World War, Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Russia allowed Red Cross missions to inspect their respective prisoner of war camps. Countess Nora Kinsky, as an Austro-Hungarian Red Cross representative, was sent to Russia for