

commonly accepted views of this period, she has brought to light a number of letters that will be of use to the European historian.

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THE RUSSIAN ANNEXATION OF THE CRIMEA, 1772-1783. By *Alan W. Fisher*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970. xvi, 180 pp. \$9.50.

This is a good narrative of the struggle of two powers to dominate the Crimea. Fisher has uncovered a wealth of information from Turkish archives and from published Turkish and Russian sources. He describes the problems of the Crimean peoples, who wished merely to follow their own interests, the Ottoman Empire which endeavored to maintain its hegemony, and the Russian Empire which sought to supplant it. With the ascendancy of Russia's power, the loyalty of the Crimean peoples to Turkish sovereignty was strained, and this threatened the northern defense perimeter of the ever-weakening Ottoman Empire. With her victory in the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-74, Catherine achieved a settlement which permitted the Crimea a semblance of independence but allowed Russia a greater influence there than ever before. Independence did not produce any greater unity among the Crimean peoples, and any attempt by a khan to assert autocratic authority met with forceful opposition. Khan Şahin Giray, hand-picked by Catherine, did not always follow her every wish. During his reign from 1777 to 1782-83, because he was an ineffectual leader and administrator, his attempted reforms to Westernize or Russianize the Crimea failed miserably. The Crimea suffered greatly from indigenous revolts, Ottoman military thrusts, and full-scale Russian invasions. Annexation remained the only alternative for Catherine to secure firmly this volatile territory and people.

Fisher is at his best when dealing with Ottoman and Crimean subjects. As for Russia, he makes only cursory mention of divisions of opinion on policy without exploring fully the decision-making process at the Russian court. Nor is there more than incidental recognition of the commercial worth of both the Crimea and the Black Sea to Russia, especially at a time when Catherine was initiating a broad policy of commercial expansion. A further elaboration of Catherine's policy toward the Crimea in the context of Russian foreign policy at that time would have been desirable.

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TSAR ALEXANDER I: PATERNALISTIC REFORMER. By *Allen McConnell*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1970. viii, 232 pp. \$2.25, paper.

In this brief biography, designed primarily for use in undergraduate history courses, McConnell has synthesized the vast bibliography of older works on Alexander I's reign as well as a number of recent works on some of the less well known aspects of the Alexandrine age. Although the book contains little that will startle scholars working on this period, it will certainly help destroy various stereotypes long cherished by nonspecialists (the hackneyed division of Alexander's reign into clear-cut "liberal" and "reactionary" phases, the exaggerated emphasis upon Arakcheev, the idea that Alexander's inconsistencies resulted from weakness and an inability to control his advisers, etc.). McConnell has convincingly pointed up

the emperor's general strength of will and his despotic proclivities, while noting his genuine liberalism and idealism. In seeking to explain the discrepancy between Alexander's libertarian ideals and his autocratic practices, the author perceptively suggests that what really requires explanation is "not the failure to fulfill his grand adolescent dreams in his backward empire, but the fact that he held to these ideals" despite the discouraging events of his reign.

Inasmuch as McConnell has so carefully demolished various myths about Alexander I, it is disappointing to note that he has, probably inadvertently, supported the extravagant and certainly unprovable view that if Alexander had only been able to carry through his projected reforms, Russian society unquestionably would have evolved in the direction of democracy. One can easily agree that there were numerous "lost opportunities" in Alexander's reign and that the course of Russian history might have been very different if certain proposals had been enacted; but it is surely hyperbolic to assert that the implementation of Speransky's proposals "would have averted the despair which in December, 1825, turned hundreds of the flower of the empire's youth ('Decembrists') into hopeless rebellion against autocracy and serfdom; it might also have averted 1881, 1905, and 1917 and achieved the emancipation of 1861 much earlier" (p. 75).

There is an inordinate amount of detail on military and diplomatic events for a work presumably focused upon Alexander's performance as "paternalistic reformer." On the whole, however, this volume will serve as an excellent supplementary text for courses in Russian (and general European) history.

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THE THIRD HEART: SOME INTELLECTUAL-IDEOLOGICAL CURRENTS AND CROSS CURRENTS IN RUSSIA, 1800-1830. By *Peter K. Christoff*. Slavistic Printings and Reprintings, 77. The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1970. 130 pp. 34 Dutch guilders.

Over the past decades Mr. Christoff has been working on a monumental, multi-volume history of Slavophilism. One must infer from what he says in the preface to this slender volume that he became not a little tired by the slowness of his progress on a study of Ivan Kireevsky (or discouraged by the publication of Eberhard Müller's important monograph, *Russischer Intellekt in europäischer Krise: Ivan V. Kireevskij (1806-1856)*, Cologne and Graz, 1966) and decided to publish the introductory background material separately. It was an unfortunate decision. The book has no clear focus as Christoff ranges superficially over a variety of topics (folklorism, medievalism, mysticism, free masonry, idealism, etc.), none of which he treats accurately or adequately. In a vain effort at originality he constructs a pretentious and outright silly conceptual framework ("hub concept of flow of influences"). He makes an annoying number of factual mistakes or inaccurate generalizations and offers neither new evidence nor information. As a matter of fact he makes an incredible admission: "Since this is a field in which much work is being done, I have not found it possible to utilize publications that have appeared since about the end of 1963" (p. 8). Christoff's main thesis is that the intellectual and experiential development of the intelligentsia of the 1830s has a strong, permanent Russian component (the "third heart" of his puzzling title). This is perfectly true (although by no means a novel discovery in the historiography