

A HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN-AMERICAN COMPANY. By *P. A. Tikhmenev*.
Translated and edited by *Richard A. Pierce* and *Alton S. Donnelly*. Seattle and
London: University of Washington Press, 1978. xiv, 522 pp. Illus. \$35.00.

In 1857, a young Russian naval lieutenant named P. A. Tikhmenev was hired by the Russian-American Company to write its history. The company's monopoly in Alaska was under attack and the directors hoped, in vain, that a sympathetic account would help them win a renewal of the company's charter in 1863. Tikhmenev labored diligently in the company's archives, and, in 1861–63, he published two large volumes, which combined a detailed history and a compilation of documents long acknowledged as a major source for the study of Russian activities in Alaska. Tikhmenev's narrative, in this excellent new translation, will be of particular interest to specialists in both Russian and American history, as will be his documentary appendixes, which will be published separately by Limestone Press of Kingston, Ontario.

Although Tikhmenev had a pedant's love of endless detail, certain recurring themes hold his book together. Originating in the 1780s, the Russian-American Company was modeled after the great state-sponsored trading companies of the early modern period. It sought to profit from its monopoly over the Alaskan fur trade while also promoting general Russian interests. The company's pursuit of profit required exploration, the establishment of fortified settlements, and trade with the natives. The company and its trappers gradually pacified and then Christianized the Indians, a theme dear to Tikhmenev's heart. Yet the number of Russians involved was always small—less than eight hundred Russians in Alaska in 1860 plus a population of seventeen hundred Creoles. The small number of settlers was related to the tremendous difficulties the company had in providing its people with food and supplies, which generally came from Siberia or St. Petersburg at enormous risk and expense. Finally, the author proudly examines the company's substantial role in Russian settlement along the Amur River and on Sakhalin Island.

The great virtue of Tikhmenev's book is its mass of data, much of which was subsequently destroyed. This attribute is skillfully enhanced by the editors, who have provided meticulous annotation and citation of relevant works published since the original Russian edition. They also note Tikhmenev's faults: his pedestrian style, his rambling organization, and failure to stir up procompany feeling. A related flaw is the casual use of statistics, which makes this a frustrating work from the point of view of business history. More systematic attention to financial questions might well have helped Tikhmenev's case. The company's profits clearly declined with time, while the costs of spreading "civilization" in the form of religion and education apparently rose substantially.

JOHN P. MCKAY

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

OBALENIE CARATU. By *Ludwik Bazyłow*. Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo
Naukowe, 1976. 484 pp. Illus. 80 zł.

This is a book on the background of the February Revolution by a Polish historian, professor at the University of Warsaw and author of six other monographs on the history of Russia in the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. The study covers the events from the beginning of 1915 to March 3, 1917 (O.S.). It is based on a great deal of primary and secondary documentation, provided not only by Soviet but also by French archives, and on a vast bibliography of Soviet, Russian émigré, West European, American, and Polish books and articles. This amazingly rich material has been analyzed by Bazyłow as objectively as possible, within the