
REVIEWS

A SOURCE BOOK FOR RUSSIAN HISTORY FROM EARLY TIMES TO 1917. Vol. 1: EARLY TIMES TO THE LATE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. Vol. 2: PETER THE GREAT TO NICHOLAS I. Vol. 3: ALEXANDER II TO THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION. Edited and compiled by *George Vernadsky, Ralph T. Fisher Jr., Alan D. Ferguson, Andrew Lossky, and Sergei Pushkarev*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972. xlv, 306 pp. xliii, 307–584. xliii, 585–884. \$35.00 for 3 vols. \$12.50 each.

VOLUME 1: By far the most comprehensive collection of translated primary sources for use in Russian history courses, this anthology is a fitting monument to its senior editor, the late Professor George Vernadsky, who contributed so much to the growth of Russian studies in the United States. One might assess the results of sixteen years' collective labor on the project in two broad areas: the scope and limitations of the selection, and the quality of the editorial apparatus and translations.

The editors' aim was "to include representative samples of the sources that are important enough to be alluded to in the standard textbooks" (p. vii), with emphasis on "political and social history in the broad sense" (p. viii). The selection that has been made, after consultation with many other members of the profession, is perhaps a bit too traditionally legal in approach (this may be unavoidable for the early period) and unfortunately slights culture. Nevertheless, few, if any, of the important sources have been missed; of particular use are sections on Novgorod, the Lithuanian-Russian State, and the Muscovite Time of Troubles, for which we have a representative collection of translated sources for the first time now. Perhaps the least successful selection covers the Mongol and early Muscovite period, where the influence of traditional historiography is all too evident. The importance of the Asian trade might have been stressed much more, instead of emphasizing primarily negative aspects of Mongol rule and reaction to it. It seems rather strange that Giovanni de Piano Carpini, William of Rubruck, and Marco Polo have been used only for what they say specifically about the lands of Rus'; one regrets the absence of appropriate selections from, say, Ibn Batuta, Pegalotti, or Afanasii Nikitin. The correspondence of the Muscovite grand princes with the Tatar remnants of Ulus Jöchi could have taken the student much farther than something like the account of the events of 1480.

In most cases, extracts had to be taken from long sources. Although one generally wishes for longer pieces, the selections for the most part have been wisely chosen. One omission that strikes me as rather unfortunate is the very important article 15 of Iaroslav's *Pravda*, which is all too relevant for an examination of the "social and economic changes in the Kievan state" (p. 36).

On the whole, the editorial work is of high quality. Translations seem to be quite accurate and readable. Where some of the material already exists in English translation, the editors have revised and often translated anew—a case in point is the Cross translation of the Primary Chronicle. Most unfortunate, however, was the decision to translate the word *Rus'* and its derivatives as "Russia" and "Russian," which, despite disclaimers (p. 19), is hardly neutral and can only confuse important issues in the pre-Kievan and Kievan period.

The introductions to the selections and editorial explanations have been kept to a minimum and the reader referred to Professor Pushkarev's excellent *Dictionary of Russian Historical Terms* for further explanation. However, a few criticisms are in order. Some commentary is probably not necessary (such as the locations of certain manuscripts), and some is not entirely to the point (for example, the raids by Novgorod *ushkuiniki* were not merely a "favorite pastime," p. 73; the "mix" of the "50 mixed Slavic and Scandinavian names" in Igor's treaty with Byzantium is of considerable importance). The criteria for the inclusion of bibliographical references are ill-defined (in one case, on p. 9, reference to a "useful collection" of sources is to a work dealing with Africa, not Russia), and references that might well go at the beginning of a section fall at the end.

Unfortunately the IBM Roman type of the volume apparently cannot handle Polish orthography, and one fears that the type may be too small for the anthology to be reduced in size photographically for a cheap paperback edition. Such an edition should be produced to make this valuable collection more readily available for classroom use.

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VOLUME 2: If this volume had appeared ten years ago, it would have achieved acclaim. Now, however, it invites the query: why still another set of primary readings? Its compilers assume that a need exists and imply that their product surpasses its rivals. They address their work to the "teacher and especially the purposeful student." Yet since 1956, when they launched their project, several unforeseeable developments have transformed the teaching of Russian history on the college level. These include the publication of numerous textbooks and source books, particularly those by Thomas Riha and Basil Dmytryshyn; the translation of much primary material and the reissue of many firsthand accounts in English; the "paperback explosion" that enables instructors to supplement, or dispense with, the traditional textbook; the professional expansion that has largely displaced teaching by nonspecialists; and the recent inflation of book prices. The price of this volume alone would seem to preclude mass purchases.

The main value of this work derives from the broad variety of materials presented (some three-quarters of which appear in English for the first time), its high standard of accuracy, and its arrangement to coincide with the organization of most textbooks. It nevertheless has several drawbacks. The plethora of legal materials may disenchant beginning students. Furthermore, the emphasis on variety has yielded short excerpts, the pedagogical value of which is doubtful. As an illustration, this volume prints twenty-three articles of Catherine II's *Nakaz*, whereas Riha included thirty-three and Dmytryshyn a whopping 250. True, the *Source Book* gives brief excerpts from many heretofore untranslated *nakazy*, but the selection seems unbalanced. Neither the Moscow city cahier nor the St. Petersburg one is included, nor any from government institutions or from the state peasantry of regions except the far north. The documents treating the Pugachev Revolt also strike me as deficient. Thus "Count Chernyshev" is not further identified; in addition, Major Salmanov was atypical of Pugachev's "officers," the Tsentrarkhiv collection comprises three volumes, and one misses testimony from Pugachev himself (whose dates are incorrect).

The coverage of periods is likewise uneven: both the 1725–62 era and Paul's reign get short shrift; neither Lomonosov nor Bulavin is represented. Problems of transliteration and editorial commentary arise as well. Why translate Fedor and Feofan, yet retain Petr? Did Catherine secretly marry Potemkin? Did she prompt Korobin's critique of serfdom? Finally, the author of *The Life of Catherine II* is J. H. de Castéra.

These criticisms are not meant to disparage the work as a whole. Dare one hope it will appear in a less expensive edition?

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VOLUME 3: When this source book was planned in the 1950s only one book of readings in Russian history was available, and few important sources for the study of Russian history had been translated. A real service was to be performed. Now, some fifteen years later, the book is still helpful and significant, but publication of five or six other collections of readings and translated sources has reduced the need for this work. Nevertheless, volume 3, which includes 141 selections, many translated for the first time, covering the period from 1861 to 1917, does provide the most extensive and richest selection of primary sources from that period so far available in English. The editors rule out belles-lettres, and foreign policy is only marginally treated (and often, regrettably, as full texts of treaties). Like the other compendiums available, the emphasis of the volume is quite traditional. There is almost no attention to popular culture and social history, and industrialization and social change are shortchanged compared with the stress on political, intellectual, and institutional developments.

Two sections of this volume are particularly outstanding. The one on the emancipation of the serfs provides not only insight into the process but a good balance of positions for and against the measures being undertaken. The materials on the final crisis of the tsarist system in 1916–17 are exciting and compelling, and include many significant but hitherto little-used sources.

Although some users of this volume may wish that the editors had provided more documents in full, the selection is generally sensible—though it seems unnecessary to have three separate but not very different eyewitness accounts of the opening of the First Duma in April 1906.

The editors were unable to solve the dilemma of introductory notes for the documents. They wished to keep them to a minimum in order to encourage students to interpret the sources on their own. But some introductions (for example, to the zemstvo statute of 1890) “give away” the meaning of the selection, while for others the background supplied is too skimpy to permit the student to analyze the document intelligently.

The care and thoughtfulness lavished on this volume are impressive. It is a most important aid to students of Russian history. But in its present hard-cover and expensive format it is not likely to be widely used. One can only hope that an inexpensive paperback edition may soon become available.

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