

but also the most significant, he argues, for the origins and development of the merchant class. In discussing Moscow's social-occupational make-up Knackstedt stresses the fluctuations in definition, role, and fiscal or administrative organization. In so doing he divides the "medieval" history of Moscow into an early period, from the mid-thirteenth century (before that time the city was quite insignificant) to the end of the fifteenth century; a middle period lasting until the end of the sixteenth century; and a third period, from the Time of Troubles to the reign of Peter the Great. The latter is left out of Knackstedt's account as being less organically tied to the earlier ones (it is to be hoped that Paul Bushkovitch's book will appear soon to complete the story).

Throughout the book, and especially in the latter parts, Knackstedt addresses the much discussed and controverted problem of the existence in Muscovy of guilds, corporations, and institutions of urban self-government. His conclusion is that juridical concepts and norms and institutional organizations of genuine corporate character cannot be documented for Moscow (or for most other Russian medieval towns in the post-Kievan period, except for Novgorod, of course). That there were groupings of craftsmen and parish and neighborhood associations is more than likely. But neither these associations (for example, *sotni*, *slobody*), nor urban officials (*tysiatskii*) had any autonomous administrative, fiscal, or judiciary authority; they all acted as agents of the ruler. The intermeshing of free and dependent individuals, the instability of their status, the primacy of the fiscal status of the land on which the urban population lived, and the presence of the prince, all precluded the development of those juridical and institutional features which had enabled Western medieval towns to play their well-known historical role.

To the well-nigh complete bibliography, this reviewer would add anent the important discussion of the dynamics of Moscow's population (pp. 169 ff) Arcadius Kahan, "Natural Calamities and Their Effect on Food Supply in Russia (An Introduction to a Catalogue)" (*Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, n.s., 16 [September 1968]: 353-77) and as a useful reference aid, V. N. Shumilov, comp. and S. V. Bakhrushin, ed., *Obzor dokumental'nykh materialov tsentral'nogo gosudarstvennogo arkhiva drevnikh aktov SSSR po istorii g. Moskvy s drevneishikh vremen do XIX v.* (Moscow, 1949 [Glavnoe arkhivnoe upravlenie MVD SSSR, Gosudarstvennyi arkhivnyi fond Soiuza SSR, Nauchno-spravochnye posobiia]).

MARC RAEFF  
Columbia University

AN ACCOUNT OF THE PLAGUE WHICH RAGED AT MOSCOW, 1771 (LONDON, 1799). By *Charles de Mertens*. With an introduction and annotated bibliography by *John Alexander*. Newtonville, Mass.: Oriental Research Partners, 1977. ii, 50 pp. + x, 122 pp.

Before the late nineteenth century, ignorance of the causes and proper treatment of disease was such that doctors and government officials could have little influence on the course of an epidemic. To the extent that they encouraged medical intervention they often simply aggravated the condition of the afflicted and raised the death toll. The best doctors and public health officers were those who knew when to institute a quarantine and who had enough common sense to place patients in a clean and well-ventilated environment and to avoid heroic methods of treatment. Charles de Mertens was one of these level-headed physicians. During the Moscow plague of 1771 he was one of the first to recognize the scourge and to demand speedy government action, despite the objections of some of his less learned colleagues. He continued to give the government wise counsel throughout the crisis. But alas, even the best minds had no understanding of the plague's etiology and hence no chance of controlling it.

Mertens nevertheless provided a concise and accurate report on the progress of the Moscow plague. His account, now reproduced in a facsimile edition, illuminates clearly three important facets of the struggle against the plague: the devoted service of medical personnel faced with a terrifying crisis and working among a panic-stricken and frequently hostile populace, the utter helplessness of physicians armed with a medical knowledge little advanced since Galen's time, and the acrimonious disputes of doctors over the causes and treatment of the disease.

An introductory essay by John T. Alexander places the Moscow epidemic in historical context and contrasts the social and political repercussions of this outbreak with those of the London plague of 1665. He also analyzes official British responses to the news of the 1770–71 plague in eastern Europe and tells how protective measures often had to be developed on the basis of alarmingly misleading and inaccurate information about the course of the epidemic. The edition would have been strengthened by some background on Mertens's disputes with other government medical counselors, issues that frequently turn up in the text and original notes but are nowhere fully explained. Presumably Alexander will elaborate on these interesting policy confrontations in his forthcoming monograph on the Moscow plague.

DAVID L. RANSEL

*University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

DIE EUROPÄISCHE ALLIANZPOLITIK ALEXANDERS I. UND DER GRIECHISCHE UNABHÄNGIGKEITSKAMPF, 1820–1830. By *Eberhard Schütz*. Veröffentlichungen des Osteuropa-Instituts München, vol. 43. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz in Kommission, 1975. viii, 153 pp. DM 28, paper.

This is a competent short study, based entirely upon printed materials, of the difficulties created for Alexander I by the outbreak of the Greek war of independence and of his unsuccessful efforts to resolve them. Dr. Schütz's central theme is not new. On the one hand the tsar wished to press home claims on Turkey with regard to the Danubian Principalities, the Caucasus, and the right of free passage for Russian merchantmen through the Straits. On the other he was deeply unwilling to do anything which seemed to aid the cause of revolt against the legitimate ruler or to encourage the forces of disorder which, he believed, threatened peace throughout Europe. Until the last weeks of his life Alexander remained faithful to the ideals of international cooperation which he had so strongly expressed in 1815 and the following years. In spite of pressure from Capodistrias for an active Russian policy in the Near East and even for a war with the Turks, the tsar continued to hope for concerted action by the powers to give Russia satisfaction for her grievances and the Greeks some security within the framework of the Ottoman Empire. The opposition of Britain, the ambiguities of Metternich's attitude, and the unreality of Alexander's own ideals doomed his efforts to failure. Dr. Schütz tells the story well and with sympathy, but says little that is new. The terminal date in the title is misleading, since the book ends with the death of Alexander in 1825.

M. S. ANDERSON

*London School of Economics*