

though the most important item, it seems at first glance the most dispensable: this is the fourth edition of *Russe Commonwealth* since 1964. But it is also the most satisfactory in combining an accurate yet readable text with adequate historical commentaries. Fletcher attempted a systematic description and interpretation of how Russia was ruled, and ended by portraying a society wholly subservient to and exploited by a single man, the tsar. The accuracy of this portrayal has been sharply challenged (most comprehensively by S. M. Seredonin, whose *Sochinenie Dzhil'sa Fletchera* remains an indispensable reference), and highly praised (most recently by Richard Pipes in the facsimile edition co-edited with J. V. A. Fine, Jr.). Crummey strikes a judicious balance. He gives full credit to Fletcher's analytical sophistication and impressive accumulation of data. Yet he warns the reader not only against Fletcher's errors of fact but, most important, against his "excessive simplification," his "failure to appreciate those features of the Muscovite administration which ran counter to the prevailing currents of absolutism and centralization" (p. 99).

It is in the nature of things that no commentator ever succeeds in providing definitive answers to all the questions raised by a text. The present editors have been particularly skilled in explicating discussions of diplomatic and commercial affairs, notably in disentangling Horsey's peculiarly muddled narrative. They seem a little less sure-fingered in dealing with Muscovite internal affairs. There remain passages which would benefit from elucidation or verification; a few of the editors' own generalizations might be questioned. But these are minor matters which do not seriously affect the considerable merits of this volume.

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EKONOMICHESKOE RAZVITIE GORODOV BELORUSSII V XVI-PER-  
VOI POLOVINE XVIII V. By Z. Iu. Kopyssky. Minsk: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka  
i tekhnika," 1966. 228 pp. 76 kopeks.

The author of this mine of information asserts that through it he wishes to dispose of the "myth" that Belorussian cities withered during the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century and also of subordinate myths that the use of Magdeburg Law by the cities was closely linked with the power of the great principality of Lithuania, that Lithuanian and Polish nobles enserfed the cities and their citizens, that the Catholic Church, with the help of the king and of Polish nobles, displaced the Orthodox Church in Belorussia, and that all these factors contributed to the alienation of the city from the countryside—the ultimate cause of the alleged decline of Belorussian cities—an alienation in which the decline of the *veche* tradition played a significant role.

Kopyssky shows that Magdeburg Law was not a mere extension of princely power but that the magistracies of cities played an increasingly significant role, borrowing from the law of other cities (Vilna in particular) and from the rules of guilds. He shows the important political and economic role played by guilds, a refutation of the view that nobles enserfed the cities. Moreover, he strengthens the image of a high degree of city self-government by delineating instances of successful opposition by the guilds to the Catholic Church and to the Uniats. In basic agreement with Pokhilevich, he goes further in showing that the country was economically important to the city: not only did peasants need to be able to buy

some manufactures, especially implements, but also the city did not grow enough to feed itself without supplements from the country, and nobles sold large amounts of grain to city merchants engaged in the international grain trade. Thereby Kopyssky has succeeded in modifying previous scholarly opinion, above all by showing Dovnar-Zapolsky and others to have been wrong in their sharp separation of the city from the country and in their attribution of a predominant role to the nobles in the actual export of grain. Furthermore, he has strengthened our image of the importance of Belorussian trade with Poland by showing in clear tabular form comparative statistics on Belorussian imports from Poland and exports in general, both via Brest in the years 1583 and 1605, as well as on Belorussian imports in general and exports and imports to and from Polish cities via Brest in the year 1605 alone. Although Kopyssky accepts Abetsedarsky's view that Belorussian trade with Russia was important, Kopyssky's numismatic data suggest that one should not overemphasize the importance of such trade, for in the sixteenth century it stood at one-sixth of the trade with Poland and in the first half of the seventeenth century at less than one-ninth of that trade. Most of the arguments set forth above are supported by detailed information, much of it gathered in archives in Minsk, Moscow, and Vilnius. Extensive quotations from some of the archival material help to persuade the reader of the accuracy of the author's views.

Nevertheless, there are flaws. The principal flaw lies in the fact that Kopyssky does not prove his contention that Belorussian trade expanded in the seventeenth century, a vital aspect of his aforementioned thesis that the cities did not wither. The detailed statistics about foreign trade via Brest show a distinct rise in 1605 as compared to 1583, but they show nothing about later years. Comparable statistics about trade via other cities are lacking. Little of the trade data cited relates to the second quarter of the seventeenth century. It is difficult to see how some of the information helps to prove continued good trade or expanded trade; for example, is the demonstration that import taxes rose (p. 162) relevant? Moreover, the author does not consider such problems, currently under careful examination, as the economic crisis of the first half of the seventeenth century and the demographic crisis in Belorussia around the middle of the seventeenth century. In fairness to the author, I must stress that he concedes that the data is "fragmentary and not comparable" (p. 161).

Because the author has some difficulty with such basic concepts as feudalism and wages, contradictions appear in his book. Thus he asserts that the cities functioned within a feudal structure which may have retarded the development of a crisis in the cities, but subsequently he "mentions" that one (presumably not he) may argue that a feudal structure may not have existed. In conformity with the first view, he asserts that there was no early capitalistic exploitation within the guild, for pay was fixed by the bylaws (*ustavy*) of the guilds and there was no concept of the hired worker. Later he mentions that some persons called *cheliadniki* sometimes received wages and that the bylaws were really contracts (I may interpolate the modern term "wage contracts") between guild masters and submasters. This ambiguity about wages is strange, especially since much Soviet scholarly work asserts a pattern of hiring labor during the period under consideration, above all in the North. Yet it is not strange, for Soviet scholarship has not resolved the problem of how its image of feudalism is thereby affected: does the appearance of wages mean a moving away from feudalism, or does it challenge the credibility of the assertion that feudalism existed? However Soviet scholarship chooses to resolve this problem, I am persuaded that there is substantial evidence of wage payments in

seventeenth-century Russia. We may, therefore, regard Russia as a land in which serfdom was increasing and a wage-earning proletariat was also growing. To be sure, such a picture does not conform to Marxist or other theories about the nature of historical development.

There are lesser flaws. Kopyssky does not disprove the view that the decline of the *veche* tradition was a partial cause of the decline of the cities, despite his announced intention to do so. Indeed he scarcely bestirs himself to deal with the view. Moreover, he is sometimes not disposed to give an author the benefit of a doubt. For example, he asserts that Dovnar-Zapolsky cites no proofs about trade routes in a general article on economic structures, when in earlier works he had cited much supportive data. Despite such flaws, I am persuaded that this is a significant book by an honest author. I have not been able to check his archival references, yet a spot check of other references attests to his accuracy. Above all, he is careful in avoiding overemphasis on many points.

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THE MONGOLS. By *E. D. Phillips*. New York and Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969. 208 pp. 39 photographs. 29 line drawings. 3 maps. \$7.50.

The history of the Mongols has many aspects and extends over numerous countries. Thus the scholars who during recent decades concerned themselves with this people and its historical development always were able to portray only one or possibly a very few aspects of it. Under these circumstances a general treatment that would assemble the findings of the newest works in this field and at the same time recapitulate the current state of research was lacking. Mr. Phillips, a professor of classical studies at Belfast, has undertaken to fill this gap. He naturally had to rely extensively on secondary works. In his treatment one may observe that the Mongol and East Asian side is plainly more familiar to him than the West Asian or European sides. While the transcription of names pertaining to the former is scientifically correct, those from the Islamic sphere are often reproduced in vulgar form; perhaps a remark to this effect in the "author's note" (p. 12) would have been in order. The author has accordingly placed his chief emphasis on the time of Genghis Khan and events in Mongolia and China. In this connection the description of Qara Qorum (pp. 94-103) on the basis of new Soviet excavations (since about 1950) is very valuable, and it will be useful to have it available in a Western language. For the rest, the author's description is above all political and military. The facts of cultural history are fully dealt with only for the time of Genghis Khan, while the cultural and religious symbiosis of the Mongols with their subjects originally of a different faith under the Yuan dynasty, the Il-khans, in Central Asia and in the Golden Horde are only fragmentarily described. The attitude of Islam or Russian Orthodoxy receives no greater attention, since the chapters on the Il-khans and the Golden Horde are only summaries, though accurate ones, of the events in these regions.

In general the book is characterized by great precision. Only very few errors are found (the book of Bar Hebraeus on page 17 is called "Maḳtēbānūt Zabnē"; the last important Il-khan, Abu Sa'id, died in 1335 and not 1365, on page 164). Thus the reader has here a reliable guide, if a rather narrow and thematically restricted one, to the many-faceted history of the Mongols, supported by the most recent research, which the author knows and cites in his substantial documentation.