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Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience

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lated to the text itself and the long story of its reception and political (ab)use across two centuries.

Ploky constructs his narrative as a sort of detective story in order to target a readership broader than just specialists in Ukrainian and Russian history. For some tasks this strategy works extremely well. Ploky tells amazing stories of the various interpretations of the *History* in conjunction with often dramatic individual stories of those literati and scholars who tried to interpret and analyze the mysterious text in tsarist Russia, interwar Polish Lwów, Nazi-occupied Kiev, and Soviet and post-Soviet Ukraine. Equally fascinating is the reconstruction of family ties and relations within the Cossack milieu of the Hetmanate, where the *History* was created, as well as familial connections in the imperial capital and bureaucratic structures. Ploky skillfully relates the personages and localities mentioned in the *History* to his analysis of the Cossack nobility of the early nineteenth century, a gesture that allows him to build a convincing argument about the town of Starodub where the text was produced. Ploky identifies a circle of people around the retired general Stepan Shyrai who could have been involved in writing the text, and he estimates that the text was produced sometime around the second decade of the nineteenth century. He comes to the conclusion that the *History* was originally produced by a group of people and then by an individual author. Ploky also identifies the sources of inspiration for the *History*, which included not only Cossack chronicles and oral stories, but also the Russian translation of Jean-Benoît Scherer's *Annales de la Petite-Russie*. These parts of the book contain some inaccuracies such as dating the Polish uprising 1861 instead of 1863, the assertion that Ukrainian publications were forbidden altogether in 1863, or failure to mention the role of the tsar's family in buying Shevchenko out of serfdom (pp. 47, 76). In general, however, the book is a truly fascinating read.

Ploky's narrative strategy, however, does not come without a price. The conclusions derived from the analysis of the text come only in bits in various chapters and some important issues are lost in between or not addressed properly. Apparently, Ploky has not studied all the existing copies of the *History* and therefore has not been able to undertake a detailed textual analysis. At least, we are not fully informed about this part of his research in the book. Ploky himself mentions that already in the middle of the nineteenth century Nikolai Pogodin was asking questions about the quality of the editorial work done by Osip Bodiansky, who had published the *History* in 1846 (p. 318). This question remains unanswered, although we know that Bodiansky had his own agenda from his discussion about the quality of information concerning the names of towns in Little Russia. Bodiansky so zealously "ukrainized" those names that he provoked criticism from such a patriot of Little Russia as Mikhailo Maksymovych.

Another important problem is the interpretation of the concept of "nation" used in the *History*. Throughout the book, Ploky identifies the modern understanding

of this term with the way in which the author(s) of the *History* used it (pp. 166, 177, 334, 350). Only in the conclusion does he provide the extremely important caveat that the authors' "transition from an estate-based to an ethnically based concept of nation was far from complete" (p. 354). Indeed, the understanding of the nation as a corporation of the nobility was dominant during the whole eighteenth century. That is how the term was used in Poland (*naród szlachecki*) and Russia by many authors, including Denis Fonvizin in his "Elaboration of State Laws," which he wrote in the 1780s. There are many reasons to believe that that was exactly the meaning used by the Cossack author(s) of the *History*, who regretted the limitations of their power over the serfs, looked with contempt at local peasants in general, and were predominantly occupied with their uncertain status as part of the imperial nobility. How and to what extent the above-mentioned transition from an estate-based to an ethnically based concept of nation was taking place on the pages of the *History* could be an extremely interesting and important subject to research. Ploky does not elaborate on this issue. However, these critical remarks in no way undermine my general evaluation of this book as an extremely erudite and engaging text.

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ALEXANDER ETKIND. *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience*. Cambridge: Polity Press. 2011. Pp. ix, 289. \$24.95.

Much of Russian history, suggests Alexander Etkind in this pioneering work, was shaped by the "imperial experience," which included the simultaneous process of the "internal colonization" of both people and space—of Russian peasants and the interior provinces of the empire. "The characteristic phenomena of colonialism," he concludes, "such as missionary work, exotic journeys, and ethnographic scholarship, were directed inwards toward the Russian villages as well as outwards and overseas" (p. 251).

The author imaginatively treats familiar moments, people, and institutions in Russian history from this perspective. The fur trade (an early modern example of the more recent natural resource curse) served to stimulate colonization and the acquisition of new land; the "reforms" of Peter the Great extracted resources not from distant colonies but from Russian subjects; the new capital of St. Petersburg "reproduced the script of internal colonization"; and famous Russian writers provided descriptive material about Russian peasants that shaped the emancipation and subsequent forms of rural administration (pp. 88, 98, 101, 160). Landed servitors were similar to colonial administrators, and the function of the commune was to manage settlers (p. 126, 142). Romantic writers such as Alexander Griboedov, who wrote exotic tales about the Caucasus, produced similar material based on their experiences in Russian provinces (p. 109). Nikolai Gogol "belongs to the list of

great colonial authors” (p. 14). Well-known historians such as Vasilii Kliuchevsky, of course, but also Sergei Soloviev, Afanasii Shchapov, and Pavel Miliukov all contributed to the “self-colonization idea” (p. 65). Russian orientalists such as Vasilii Grigoriev were also important officials who applied their knowledge to Jews, Ukrainians, and other peoples of the empire. “What, indeed, was not the east in Grigoriev’s Russia?” (p. 126).

Several familiar trends in Russia’s history form the background to this process of “internal colonization” and its consequences. Russia’s engagement with Europe’s Enlightenment intersected with the gulf between educated society (*obshchestvo*) and people (*narod*) as well as with the territorial expansion of the empire. In both cases the encounter inspired similar programs of cultural uplift and forms of representation, applicable to both “savages” on the frontier and “backward” peasants at home. These dimensions of the Russian imperial experience even influenced major European writers whom scholars do not generally associate with the Russian empire. Immanuel Kant and Johann Gottfried von Herder, Etkind argues, drew important lessons about matters dear to them from their time in Königsberg and its experience under Russian rule. Joseph Conrad’s father was Apollo Korzeniowski, a poet and playwright who dreamed of emancipating Poland from Russian colonial oppression while also serving as a land manager supervising Ukrainian peasants. “The multilayered experience of Russian colonialism, in which the roles of the colonizer and the colonized repeatedly flipped, provided Conrad with [his] stereoscopic ability” (p. 218).

The extraordinary breadth of this study will frustrate some historians, who might prefer to see Etkind’s many ideas and considerable gifts as a cultural critic applied to a thorough archival study of a particular institution, such as the Academy of Sciences or the Imperial Russian Geographical Society. These major scholarly institutions simultaneously promoted the study of Russian cultural identity and the study of imperial expansion, and many contemporary scholars concluded the two matters were related. Most readers, however, will be delighted and inspired by Etkind’s innovative return to major episodes and figures in history and culture and will be informed by his perspective on the importance of empire in Russia’s past.

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ANTON A. FEDYASHIN. *Liberals under Autocracy: Modernization and Civil Society in Russia, 1866–1904*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. 2012. Pp. x, 282. Paper \$26.95, e-book \$16.95.

Anton A. Fedyashin’s book, based on extensive research, serves as a useful reminder that the political debates in the Russian Empire in the latter part of the nineteenth century did not involve only unyielding reactionaries on the right and uncompromising liberals and revolutionaries on the left. Fedyashin focuses on a

small but vocal, intelligent, and interesting group of intellectuals who published a journal, *Vestnik Evropy* (Herald of Europe) that espoused a third path for the country: moderate but steady reform that would lead to modernization. The story that Fedyashin tells is remarkable in demonstrating how four gifted persons—Konstantin Konstantinovich Arsen’ev, Aleksandr Nikolaevich Pypin, Mikhail Matveevich Stasiulevich, and Leonid Slonimskii—were able to defy governmental censorship and publish what within two years of its appearance in 1866 became “Russia’s leading popular historical journal” (p. 78). By the 1880s, about 7,000 people subscribed to the monthly, a very respectable number. Interesting biographical sketches of the four men yield insights into their abilities as writers and as advocates of a political course for Russia that has not received much attention from historians. Journalism, Fedyashin points out, “was the primary form of progressive self-expression and a central institution in the formation of a civil society in Russia” (p. 67).

Only one other recently published work on this general topic comes to mind: Joseph Bradley’s *Voluntary Associations in Tsarist Russia: Science, Patriotism, and Civil Society* (2009), which demonstrated forcefully and convincingly that in the period from 1765 to the 1890s numerous organizations dedicated to the improvement of the country’s economy and the advancement of science functioned effectively despite the restrictive policies of the autocratic system of government.

But the *Herald* was a “thick journal” that was unique because it published articles on a wide range of political subjects as well as novels and poetry; it differed from other journals in that it focused on politics in the broadest sense. As Fedyashin shows in commendable detail, the primary goal of the four editors was to bring about fundamental changes in the Russian Empire that would transform it into a state comparable to those in Western Europe. The editors called for reform in a wide range of public areas: local self-government and especially the *zemstvos* (institutions of limited local self-government), the rights of labor, rural taxes, land ownership, education, and foreign policy. In all these areas the *Herald* favored liberal policies that would improve conditions for those layers of society that were powerless and impetuous. The proposals of socialists of every stripe seemed to them unworkable, likely to worsen conditions rather than improve them. Pypin, for example, referred to socialists as “idealistic fanatics made up of excited youths who had found no place for themselves in the complex and tense relations of the contemporary world” (p. 111). The editors rejected every form of terror and denounced the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881 as “a tragic historical event that has shocked the minds of the people” (p. 111). Pypin referred to the anarchist Mikhael Bakunin as a “windbag” and denounced Petr Lavrov, a theorist of socialism who gained fame as the author of the “Historical Letters” that were influential in attracting readers to the revolutionary cause.

At the same time, the editors of the *Herald* voiced