

THE RUSSIAN DAGGER: COLD WAR IN THE DAYS OF THE CZARS.

By *Virginia Cowles*. New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1969. 351 pp. \$7.95.

The story of Russian intrigue and violence in the Balkans, 1840–1914, is a familiar one. Virginia Cowles has expanded this account with a novel thesis concerning the close connection that existed between expansionary Balkan policies and domestic revolution in imperial Russia. The author maintains that “the two movements, subversion at home and subversion abroad, not only stimulated but fed one another” in a revolutionary sense.

The Balkan or Russian specialist will find little new information in this volume other than a delightful collection of vignettes on Romanov family life, Balkan intrigues, and selected revolutionary terrorists. Students will be attracted by fascinating descriptions of an awe-inspiring Nicholas I, senseless butchery at Plevna, unbearable pressures on Nicholas II in the critical hours before World War I, and almost unbelievable domestic treachery and foreign intervention in Bulgaria and Serbia.

The author's thesis is deceptive. The book is slanted heavily toward Balkan matters. Memoir accounts, standard monographs, and some new material from British Foreign Office archives adequately document foreign affairs. The Russian revolutionary movement receives only superficial analysis. Cowles demonstrates little basic understanding of the aims, programs, and composition of the various revolutionary groups.

Obviously, Cowles intended her book for the general reader. Here she is at her literary best. The volume reads like a novel in places and deals intimately with the human side of historical characters. Yet popular history should be accurate history. I fear the general reader will come away with a somewhat distorted picture of nineteenth-century Russia and its policies. Oversimplifications, such as the “love of conspiracy” in the Russian character and the “Slav race . . . [being] inefficient in daily administration,” typify the author's disdain and condescension toward things Russian. The enemies of Russia—Prince Alexander Battenberg of Bulgaria, Stambulov, and Prince Alexander Obrenovich of Serbia—usually receive very sympathetic treatment. A book which must tell its readers that Serbia is now part of Yugoslavia should contain maps. Cowles includes none, but she does incorporate an interesting collection of prints and photographs. The plethora of detail makes it difficult to sustain the general reader's attention throughout the volume.

In summary, this work has limited value for the specialist. It gives the general reader an adequate though occasionally distorted and unbalanced view of Russian relations with southeastern Europe during the sixty years prior to World War I.

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“THE OKHRANA”: THE RUSSIAN DEPARTMENT OF POLICE. By *Edward Ellis Smith* and *Rudolf Lednicky*. Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1967. 280 pp. \$10.00.

This volume is essentially a bibliography (containing 843 entries) of published materials and manuscripts in the Hoover Institution library relating to the activities of the Okhrana, the secret political police of the Russian Empire. On reading the annotations that describe the contents and indicate the conclusions of each listed