

TRADITION VERSUS REVOLUTION: RUSSIA AND THE BALKANS IN 1917. By *Robert H. Johnston*. East European Monographs, 28. Boulder, Colo.: *East European Quarterly*, 1977. viii, 240 pp. \$14.00. Distributed by Columbia University Press, New York.

Despite its title, this extremely useful monograph moves well beyond the relatively limited parameters of Russia's relations with the Balkan states in 1917. Indeed, it is a rather concise and comprehensive account of all aspects of the foreign policy of the Russian Provisional Government in 1917, both in terms of the role which foreign policy played in bringing on the transition from the February Revolution to the October Revolution, and in terms of the Provisional Government's relations with Russia's allies in 1914–17. Moreover, even though the author's Russian sources have long been available and have been much used by other historians, he has been able to shed considerable new light on their contents through the judicious use of unpublished British, American, German, and Italian World War I documents. The result is a book which should be especially rewarding to those with a special interest either in World War I diplomacy and war aims or in the eight-month transition period between Nicholas II and Lenin in Russia.

As might be expected, the author's main themes are: (1) the vain effort by P. N. Miliukov, the first foreign minister of the Provisional Government between March and May 1917, to keep Russian foreign policy on the same course supposedly set by the tsarist regime since August 1914; and (2) the fumbling attempts by his successor, M. I. Tereshchenko, to satisfy Socialist Revolutionaries' and Mensheviks' demagogic demands for a "revision" of Allied war aims, as a condition of their repudiation of Bolshevik demands for peace at any price. The author demonstrates that both Miliukov and Tereshchenko certainly confronted impossible tasks. In 1917, Russia's major European allies (France, Great Britain, and Italy), her lesser European allies (Serbia, Montenegro, Rumania, Greece, and Belgium), as well as Germany and her lesser allies (Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria) were all interested in the February Revolution only for its possible and probable impact on the Russian contribution to the course of the war. Moreover, though the United States was itself raising the question of the revision of Allied war aims after its formal intervention of April 6, 1917, the Wilson administration had no interest in a joint endeavor in this direction with the foundering regime in Petrograd, whose chances of survival seemed slim as early as July 1917. The Turks and the Bulgarians were fleetingly interested in a possible reconciliation with the new Russia, but like Austria-Hungary, by 1917 they were too dependent on Germany to strike out on such a course without Berlin's approval. Meanwhile, the Italians occupied Albania and sought a share in the prospective partition of Turkey; the French effected a change of regime in Greece; and the Serbian and Rumanian governments, driven from their capitals by the Central Powers, turned completely away from Russia to the West with hopes of ultimate salvation and aggrandizement. All of this took place with, at the most, only perfunctory consideration of any interest the new Russia might have in such developments. Finally, the Left in both the major Allied capitals and in Berlin showed little, if any, real interest in responding to S.R.-Menshevik "revisionist" rhetoric.

The author of this book has undoubtedly proven that, for all his serious failings in other respects, Kerensky was essentially right in 1917 in supposing that revolutionary Russia's only hope of gaining a hearing in Allied councils lay in her ability to win the military victories which had eluded the tsar. Consequently, until she had won those military victories, it made little difference whether she reaffirmed the tsar's alleged war aims or drastically revised them. It seems only fair to add, however, that recent research on the first two and one-half years of World War I diplomacy raises serious questions as to whether the results of the initial battles of 1914 had

not long since rendered Russian diplomacy impotent, well before Miliukov tried to direct it. Specifically, it would seem that the willingness of the British and French to offer Russia control of the Black Sea Straits was less the result of Russian demands than of fears in London and Paris that a Russia whose armies were unable to move forward in East Central and Southeastern Europe would leave her allies in the lurch, as Lenin eventually did during the winter of 1917–18.

What made all the difference in 1917, therefore, was the fact that the United States, though wanting a revision of war aims, was ready and willing by 1918 to more than make up for the defection of Russia, by reinforcing the Allies on the western front. Moreover, if the United States had been available as early as 1914 to help block the German bid for the mastery of Europe, there would almost certainly never have been an Anglo-French offer of the Black Sea Straits to Russia. In any case, as things turned out, and with a considerable assist from the folly of the German generals, the Anglo-Franco-American combination brought down Germany and all her dependents in 1918 without Russian help. The war aims "issue," invented by Lenin in 1914, had served the Bolshevik cause well enough within Russia, by making it difficult for the S.R.'s and Mensheviks to cooperate with the Kadets in 1917. It was significant in the realm of international politics, however, only in the sense that the Germans, after losing World War I, effectively used it to make it difficult for the United States to cooperate with the democratic nations of Western Europe.

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CULTURAL REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA, 1928–1931. Edited by *Sheila Fitzpatrick*. Studies of the Russian Institute, Columbia University. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1978. x, 309 pp. \$17.50.

Sheila Fitzpatrick and her fellow authors should be congratulated. This is a symposium containing a great deal of original, challenging, and intelligently presented material. Very few readers, even specialists, will be unable to find new facts, insights, and interpretations.

The book is devoted to a decisive and, in many ways, contradictory period. NEP in all its aspects was being overthrown. The overambitious five-year plan was adopted, and then amended ever upward. Collectivization was launched, with all its brutalities. Stalin was establishing his personal despotism. Amid all this turmoil, the ultraleft gained control of Soviet culture for a few years; zealots were given their heads. This was the "cultural revolution" of the book's title, not the quite different and gradual cultural revolution—transforming the backward masses by education which Lenin had advocated. In 1928–31, the semieducated (or lumpen intelligentsia) and Komsomols viciously attacked both the remnants of the "bourgeois" educated strata and many of the established leaders of Marxist thought; possible parallels with China spring to mind.

Why did it happen? What was it for? How much of it was Stalin's doing? Several authors dismiss explanations in terms of objective necessities of modernization, and are quite correct in this. If one wants to industrialize and is desperately short of trained engineers, arrest and dismissal of thousands of *spetsy* are hardly "functional" responses.

In excellent essays, the authors survey the antics of fanatics, who seemed to have the highest support on various cultural "fronts," such as law, literature, town planning, psychology, and education. Then, in 1931 or 1932, these zealots were themselves thrust aside, and most of them eventually perished in the purges.