

relationship between man and environment; but if one is to include a long chapter on geologic history, one should expect to find some serious attention given to the manner in which Russian or Soviet society has used or misused the natural fundamen- (and there is substantial evidence suggesting that a "socialist" society does not necessarily preclude environmental deterioration).

At any rate, in stressing the geographical factors of isolation in Russian history, Gregory raises the question of why the Soviet Union developed "a personality and way of life so distinct from those of North America—particularly those of the United States, a nation of comparable size, almost completely isolated by the oceans that surround it" (p. 17). He cites several examples of human life and history that contribute to these differences, but finds that there are two major factors of physical geography that could account for them: North America, though "isolated," has two long coastlines that play an important part in the life and economy of the people, and most of the Soviet Union is essentially a northern land. Despite some elaboration by the author, it is not at all clear how from these locational and situational factors there should have developed in Russia "a mystique based on the concept of the strength of the nation as a whole, under God and the Tsar, with a destiny of conquest of the whole plain," nor why "throughout Russian religion and literature" one should find "evidence of the desire for great universal truths and theories . . ." (p. 18).

With respect to his second objective, Gregory really provides no evidence—except for a tribute to a Russian friend and frequent quotations from some Soviet literary sources—that he is presenting a geographical account of the USSR as it appears to the intelligent Soviet citizen today.

Gregory also draws a comparison between the "new united society of Soviet people with common aims and aspirations" and the British Commonwealth, an idea that strongly colors his interpretation of Soviet gains over the past half century or more. Although he has visited the Soviet Union several times, the author does not seem to have grasped the reality of Soviet life and experience and the nature of the dissent that, in literary form or otherwise, has raised its head despite official efforts to suppress it. Does he really believe that the role British traditions and ideas play within the member nations of the Commonwealth is similar to that of "Russian ideology and technology" say in the Georgian SSR or in any of the Baltic republics?

Still, these matters of interpretation do not detract entirely from the value of the book. It may be too large to be adopted as a text, but it will serve as an important source of data for students. Had Gregory not attempted so vast a canvas, he would have produced quite likely a more effective study and one that would have looked more critically at what has taken place within the USSR. And there are problems in Soviet development—apart from politics—which are "earth-spatial" and which are completely overlooked.

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AN ATLAS OF RUSSIAN AND EAST EUROPEAN HISTORY. By *Arthur E. Adams, Ian M. Mailey, and William O. McCagg*. New York and Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967. xi, 204 pp. \$6.00.

The only safe generalization about Eastern Europe may be that regional differences there are many and deep, and similarities are exceptional. Yet this slim volume

tries to present some fifteen hundred years of history of this picturesque region and Russia in just one hundred outline maps and thirty-eight pages of text.

Against a skillfully constructed mosaic of physical and human geography, the authors survey the political, cultural, and economic development of the region, focusing especially on four themes: the impact of the acceptance of Christianity, the thirteenth-century calamities and their consequences, the continuous absorption of influences from both the East and the West, and the development of a distinct type of sociopolitical culture in recent decades. Spatial patterns and the dynamics of specific historical events and processes are depicted on simple and in most cases quite legible maps.

Because the text is brief and the maps are minute in scale, there is of necessity a concentration on macropatterns and generalization to a degree that leaves little room for the nuances that often reveal the character of this diversified region. Even valid generalizations may become too broad, and valid patterns on a map may turn out to be only indicative rather than precise when the map is reduced considerably in size.

The small and selective bibliography will disappoint a studious reader. Though the book is of little value to a specialist in this area, the judicious selection of the main focuses and the competent presentation of the crucial historical trends make it a lucid, informative, and generally recommendable introduction to the history and historical geography of Eastern Europe. Considering the length of the volume, the authors could hardly strive for more.

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THE COMEDY OF ARTAXERXES. By *Johann Gottfried Gregorii*. Translated by *Yvette Louria*. *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, vol. 72, no. 3 (March 1968). 72 pp. 50 cents, paper.

With this translation *Artakserksovo deistvo*, the first play to be commissioned for the Russian secular theater, becomes available to the English-speaking student of Russian drama. The play was originally written in German, then translated into Old Russian. A comparison of the extant German and Russian copies shows considerable differences, some intentional, some caused by misunderstanding. The complete Russian text published by Kudriavtsev (*Artakserksovo deistvo: Pervoi p'esa russkogo teatra XVII v.*, Moscow and Leningrad, 1957) was collated from the two extant Russian copies, both of which contain gaps; but we do not have the actual copy of the original performance. Yvette Louria has translated Kudriavtsev's edition first into modern Russian and then into English. Thus the original has been modified by at least three translations. The Old Russian translation was done by several people, with a consequent variation in the style of the different acts; however, this variation in style is not found in the English version. Considering all this and the mistakes of the present translator, the literary value of the English translation is dubious to say the least.

Louria explains in a preface that, without imitating the verse of the play, she tried to preserve "the psychological, philosophical, and aesthetic nuances contained in the idiom of the Church Slavonic" (p. 142). From her lengthy explanation of Church Slavonic (p. 140, n. 4), one can see that she is not well acquainted with the differences between Church Slavonic and Old Russian, and even less between