

PROFESSOR MONAS REPLIES:

By means of a simple typographical device and a footnote, Professor McNally could have included the paragraph I missed while at the same time retaining his own view of its authenticity. M. B. Zeldin, in *her* translation (University of Tennessee Press, 1969) does just this, and I think it is fine.

In spite of Professor McNally's editorial authority, there are some decisions readers like to make for themselves.

TO THE EDITOR:

I was appalled upon reading the June 1970 issue of the *Slavic Review*. The feeling did not stem from any dissatisfaction with editorial direction or quality. It did, however, stem from amazement at the contents. Unfortunately, this has been a recurring phenomena. I have asked myself why.

The answer lies in the incredible preponderance of articles and reviews dealing with either the Russian Revolutionary movement in its myriad aspects, Soviet affairs, or the like. Presumably, this is a fair reflection of the interests which dominate our field, but the inference must then be one of paucity. Are not American scholars interested in anything else that through the centuries had bearing on the various Slavic cultures? Are we not, pure and simply, capable of coming to grips with problems that take us beyond our century? Why this peculiar fascination with contemporary affairs? Is it easier? less demanding? more likely to appear in print?

All this is, of course, not in any way to disparage studies of the Soviet Union and parallel studies. It is to ask, however, if there is no room for the other one thousand years or so of Slavic affairs. I am well aware that we do have a few practitioners who dare go beyond the general competence and purview. Their number is still relatively small and, undoubtedly, is one of the factors most responsible for the disjunctions in Slavic studies.

Unfortunately, this has specifically negative effects in academia. In recent interviews for a teaching position I came across some curious examples. At one institution Russian history (which is my field) is handled in the following fashion: first semester—a survey of Russia, concentrating on “revolutionary movements”; second semester—the Soviet period. A second school offers four courses in “Russian” history: (1) survey of Russia to 1917, (2) Soviet period, (3) Soviet diplomacy, and (4) theory and practice of communism. No doubt we can all cite other examples. But doesn't this bother anyone? Is no one concerned for even a semblance of balance? I am glad, in any case, that some historians find categorization and simplification so easy. I do not.

I presume that the point raised above has been voiced before. It must, indeed, be voiced constantly if the existing situation is to change. For as it stands now, it is disquieting to a young man who must soon enter the profession.

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