

LETTERS

From the Editor:

Slavic Review publishes letters to the editor with educational or research merit. Where the letter concerns a publication in *Slavic Review*, the author of the publication will be offered an opportunity to respond. Space limitations dictate that comment regarding a book review should be limited to one paragraph; comment on an article should not exceed 750 to 1,000 words. The editor encourages writers to refrain from ad hominem discourse.

D.P.K.

To the Editor:

To my disappointment *Slavic Review*, the signature journal in the field, did not select a Russianist to review my *Russian Society and the Greek Revolution* (*Slavic Review* 55, no. 2). Comments by reviewer Gerasimos Augustinos are misleading or misconstrued and merit response. Greek and Russian interests converged not in 1821 when the Greek revolt erupted but in the previous decades when a Greek awakening benefited from tsarist gains in the landmark Kutchuk-Kainardji Treaty (1774). Archival materials examined in St. Petersburg and Odessa document the most significant and widespread manifestation of Russian philhellenism's Orthodox dimension, relief drives to raise humanitarian aid for Greek Christians. Just because classical motifs, images, and allusions predominated in Russia's philhellenic verse is no reason to disparage this poetry as "little more than an extension and a mirror of Western romantic philhellenism." Decembrist poetry, inspired by the cult of antiquity, romanticism, and liberalism, voiced the zeal of the wide philhellenic movement and embodied Russia's literary tradition of addressing political questions in creative writing, a tradition in which poetry often became a moral compass with the message of reform and liberty. Because the actual content of Russia's philhellenic literature suggests little of the shared Byzantine Orthodox heritage, it is not possible to analyze the interaction between "classical and religious strands." The poems offer abundant evidence that Russia's philhellenic muse painted a mythical image of the struggle, an idealized portrait rich in classical inspiration and romantic enthusiasm but short on detail about the factionalism which plagued Greek rebel forces.

THEOPHILUS C. PROUSIS
University of North Florida

Professor Augustinos replies:

I am responding to the letter that Professor Theophilus Prousis sent to you regarding my review of his book *Russian Society and the Greek Revolution*. I believe that it is the author who has misconstrued certain points in the review. With regard to the author's statement that "Russian and Greek interests converged" (3 and 5), it is not the matter of when they did so, as he notes in his letter, but *whose* interests are meant by "Russian and Greek" (i.e., a state, intellectuals, merchants, or society in general). That was what needed to be made clear and precise. As to the nature of Russian philhellenic poetry, there was no intent to "disparage" the classical motifs of Decembrist poetry as derivative, since Prousis himself emphasizes their western provenance (102, 109). Rather, the implied question was: was there a uniquely Russian literary response to the Greek revolt? Finally, the author protests that it is impossible to analyze the interaction between the classical and religious strands in Russian philhellenic literature. Yet, the author begins his lengthy discussion of this literature by stressing that Russian writers perceived the Greeks as "fellow Orthodox Christians and descendants of the Helleans" (83), a point to which he returns in the concluding chapter (162). It is these statements that led the reviewer to expect an analysis of this connection in the literature.

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