

It is in his description of the Crimean battles and especially of the “decisive” Alma (to which he devotes four chapters) that the author excels. In an amazing account he tells how the British regiments in their dress uniforms had to perfect their alignment, with rifles at just the right angle, before they could march into Russian artillery fire. Fortunately for them, their line tactics permitted devastating rifle fire, which drove the Russians from the field. The Russian account of the battle, however, gives more credit to the French, who managed to turn the Russian left flank and enfilade their lines with artillery fire, although the British certainly bore the brunt of the battle.

Barker gives an excellent comparison of the British and French armies, in which the former proved inferior in leadership, provisioning and housing the men, and care of the wounded. Hence the great blizzard in November hit the British far worse than it did the French. From then on their strength was much inferior to that of their allies. Because the British soldiers never advanced their trenches as well as the French did, they were mowed down in the two big assaults, while the French penetrated the Russian lines and finally retained the Malakov, the key position. On the other hand, by the end of the campaign the British had rebuilt their army and, with the help of a Sardinian contingent and a foreign legion, had made it stronger than ever. The French deteriorated at the end and wanted no more fighting.

The book also gives brief accounts of the secondary campaigns—in Asia Minor, the Baltic, the White Sea, and the Pacific. Since these campaigns did not affect the outcome of the war, they illustrate the British difficulty in striking effective blows at Russia. In fact, though sea power had made it possible to attack the Crimea, its limitations quickly became apparent, for the French army had to win the victory, and that not a decisive one. The British profited by this lesson, for after the Crimean War their army underwent reforms that eliminated its worst failings. This probably was their sole gain from the war.

The book is provided with a number of excellent maps.

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KATIA: WIFE BEFORE GOD. By *Alexandre Tarsaidzé*. New York and Toronto: Macmillan, 1970. 349 pp. \$8.95.

“On the very night of Friday the thirteenth [*sic*], 1866 . . . , the ‘trembling’ Katia ‘at last’ succumbed to the charms of the aging Czar, himself ‘trembling’ even more than Katia. ‘Today, alas!’ cried Alexander, ‘I am not free; but at the first possibility I will marry Thou, for I consider Thou from now on and for always as my wife before God, à demain . . . ’” (p. 98). Such (in Mr. Tarsaidzé’s inimitable translation) are the celebrated words later claimed by the tsar’s new mistress to have been spoken immediately after the event, and which form the subtitle of this work—a retelling of the story (familiar from the book by Maurice Paléologue) of the liaison between Alexander II and Catherine Dolgorukov, who in 1880 became hismorganatic wife.

The main novelty of the book is the appearance for the first time of numerous love letters the tsar addressed (mainly in French) over a period of fourteen years to his “Adorable Imp,” and a few she addressed to him in return. Neither party emerges with credit from the exposure. Katia reveals “her poor upbringing, the short-comings of her education, her lack of culture and imagination” (p. 106).

The tsar's wearisome notes—endlessly repetitive—show him devoid of wit, imagination, and perhaps even true feeling. The basis of the relationship emerges clearly enough. Alexander was what is usually described as a “sensualist.” “Oh dear friend,” Katia writes (of course in translation) to her beloved, “I wish it were already tomorrow evening, to be able to throw myself into your arms and forget the whole world. I want to do bingerle [an expression hitherto unknown to your reviewer] with you, it is so sweet and cosy to stretch out next to my angel and to torment him” (p. 122). Alexander writes, “I see that the lack of our bingerles is already beginning to have its usual effect on you, and that those insupportable discharges of yours, which had nearly disappeared last winter, have started again and I am very distressed about it” (p. 136). The historical value of all this is, of course, negligible. References to political events are rare, though it is nice to come across the odd reference to “that swine of a Beakensfield [*sic*] who decides everything according to what he has in his noddle” (p. 185). The psychological interest of the affair is reduced to near zero by the triviality of the protagonists. As to the taste of the entire publication . . .

George (Gogo), the only male offspring of the liaison, eventually enlisted in the Imperial Russian Navy. After he had failed an important examination, the Naval Staff issued instructions to the commanding admiral “to examine him until he passes” (p. 283). In 1893 his squadron visited the United States in connection with celebrations of the fourth centenary of the discovery of America. In Tarsaidzé's words, “At the same time, the world's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, celebrating with a year's delay Columbus's discovery of America, welcomed warships of other nations, culminating in a brilliant international naval review of the Hudson” (p. 281). And with this review it seems best to draw a veil over the whole sorry affair.

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“VPERED!” 1873–1877: MATERIALY IZ ARKHIVA VALERIANA NIKO-LAEVICHIA SMIRNOVA. 2 vols. Edited by *Boris Sapir*. Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1970. Vol. 1: “Ocherk istorii ‘Vpered,’” pp. 1–212. “On the History of ‘Vpered,’” translated by Brian Pearce, pp. 213–395. 403 pp. Vol. 2: “Dokumenty.” 556 pp. 215 Dfl.

In these two volumes the specialist in the history of the Russian revolutionary movement will find material that vividly portrays the difficulties of émigré revolutionary journalism in the 1870s. The clashes and splits illuminated by the documents and Boris Sapir's brief history of the journal *Vpered!* were mainly over revolutionary strategy. The first volume contains Sapir's history in both Russian and English. It is a good piece of scholarship, based mainly on the excellent materials in the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam, and taking into account recent Soviet scholarship dealing with the origins of *Vpered!* Given the author's evident mastery of the sources, the following observations have to do with their interpretation rather than the thoroughness of the scholarship.

Sapir's account of Lavrov's position between 1870 and 1872 is an oversimplification. There is much evidence in Lavrov's correspondence that he might have chosen something other than a revolutionary career if it had not been for several overwhelming historical and personal events. Thus the nature of Lavrov's commitment to the revolutionary movement might have been more carefully examined for the period 1870–72.