

revolution (the critic Mikhail Osorgin refused to classify the novel 'either as typically émigré or as typically Soviet' in *Poslednie novosti*, 1 March 1934) was not something that the highly polarised Russian society had been ready for until fairly recently. Second, the book's sophisticated structure, as an autobiographical *roman à clef*, makes its full appreciation difficult without a detailed annotation. This is undoubtedly one of the reasons why Dr Nikolai Andreev once said that Annenkov's oeuvre 'was still awaiting an appraisal that would be commensurate with the author's talent' (*Grani*, no.33, 1957).

At long last, almost half a century after this observation was made, Dr Aleksandr Danilevskii, Lecturer in the Department of Russian Literature at the University of Tartu (Estonia), is helpfully providing the reader with all the necessary information, both in the form of an exegesis of *Povest' o pustiakakh*, published as a separate volume, and of a popularised apparatus to the Ivan Limbakh edition (pp.315-574). As a result of Danilevskii's meticulous research, it is now possible to establish the prototypes behind Annenkov's fictional characters. Thus, the critic Kornei Chukovskii is referred to in the novel as Apushin; the publisher Zinovii Grzhebin is given the identity of Dr Frenkel; the combined features of two composers, Arthur Lourie and Dmitri Tiomkin, are recognisable in one Davie Shapkin; and the Socialist-Revolutionary and Formalist Viktor Shklovskii sports no less than three different disguises: those of Tolia Zhitomirskii, Tolia Vilenskii and the designer Guk. The reader also learns a great deal about Annenkov's literary sources: Aleksandr Amfiteatrov's journalism, Georgii Ivanov's memoirs, Mandel'shtam's poetry, the picaresque novels *Dvenadstat' stul'ev* and *Zolotoi telenok* by Il'f and Petrov, and *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, to name just a few. We discover too which genuine documents cited in the novel (the 1914 speeches of the tsar, Rodzianko and Kerensky, as well as two 1917 articles by Lenin, and Nestor Makhno's letter describing the battles that his troops were waging against the Red Army in February-August 1921) have been edited by the author, and why (often, it transpires, simply to poke fun at various representatives of Russia's entire political spectrum).

The son of a member of the People's Will, Annenkov himself was a moderate left-winger in his youth, and, after the Bolshevik coup, even took prominent part in designing such propaganda mass spectacles as *The Field of Mars May Day Celebration* (1918), *The Hymn to Liberated Labour* and *The Storming of the Winter Palace* (both 1920). However, already in his illustrations to the above-mentioned poem by Blok, the degenerate types representing the 'old' Russia appear next to the sketches of revolutionary brutes, which was presumably intended to imply that the revolution might well have been justified but brought with it nothing but desolation and violence. It looks as if Annenkov's attitude to the Russian Revolution stems from his profound contempt for many things Russian. For example, Russian politicians and public figures of all times seem equally uninspiring to him, and this is precisely why Kerensky and Count Fedor Rostopchin (1763-1826; not 1769-1826, as Danilevskii mistakenly states on p.390 of *Povest' o pustiakakh*) make an almost simultaneous appearance as pretentious speechmakers, while General Ermolov (1777-1861), General Bennigsen (1745-1826) and General Kuropatkin (1848-1925) are portrayed as bogged down in a futile military reshuffle during the Russo-Japanese war, in what is otherwise largely a historically accurate

account. It is possible that by referring to one of the greatest cataclysms of the twentieth century as *pustiaki* ('trifles'), Annenkov is trying to distance himself emotionally from the abundance of unpleasant memories and experiences, and to assert his right to be above and beyond them all. It is curious, however, that his attempts at being cavalierly non-judgemental sometimes appear to be nothing short of immorality (cf. two mutually exclusive depictions of Lenin, whom the artist knew personally, in Annenkov's memoirs that appeared in his *Dnevnik moikh vstrech*, vol.II, New York, 1966, pp.253-83; and in the Moscow *Nedel'naia* newspaper of 10-16 April 1966, designed for émigré and Soviet consumption respectively).

Danilevskii's companion volume and commentary to Annenkov's novel are not entirely error-free. Thus, M.L. Spivak is a woman (contrary to the male pattern of declension chosen for her surname in *Povest' o pustiakakh*, p.562), and Annenkov had never received an Oscar (*Poetika 'Povesti o pustiakakh'*, p.9), although he was nominated for one in the costume design (black and white) category for his work, together with Rosine Delamare, on the set of Ophüls's *Madame de...* (1953). The commentator could have also benefited from a wider knowledge of Western scholarship (R.F. Christian's 1999 monograph, *Alexis Aladin: The Tragedy of Exile*, is not mentioned where it perhaps should have been; see *Povest' o pustiakakh*, p.374). Still, these minor slips do not in any way diminish the role Danilevskii has played in helping to get Annenkov's message across to a broader public. In no small measure thanks to Danilevskii's efforts, the acquaintance with *Povest' o pustiakakh*, which seems to have artistically distilled the Russian Revolution and Civil War down to their very essence, can usefully supplement, and in some instances even replace, many a historical research on the subject.

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Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis, 1914-1921*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002. Pp.ix + 359; notes; index; map. £29.95 (hardback). ISBN 0 674 00907 X

'We in our green youth have to settle the eternal questions first of all.' So said Ivan Karamazov to Aliosha, and it is my impression that Peter Holquist would agree with the sentiment. In an extraordinarily ambitious first book, which is intended to reshape the ways that we understand the Russian Revolution, Holquist addresses those eternal questions that have stimulated and plagued scholars ever since 1917. What was the relationship between the Great War and the Russian Revolution? How revolutionary was the revolution? How should the revolution be understood within the broader contexts of Russian and European history?

Given the vast amount of scholarship on these events, much of it of high quality, such ambition can be dangerous. If a first-time author blazes his own trail, he risks ignoring the important and laborious efforts of his predecessors, offending them and discrediting himself at the same time. If, on the other hand, he succumbs to the magnetic power of established and contentious



legitimacy, and comes to be taken for granted as a normal and expected part of organizational life' (C.A. Heimer, 'Law: New Institutionalism', in *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Amsterdam and New York: JAI-Elsevier, 2001, p.8,534). This is a nearly perfect description of the approach adopted by Holquist here. Indeed, the best concise description of the book is that it is a provocative and extensive 'new institutionalist' analysis of the new institutions of Russia's revolution.

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Semion Lyandres and Dietmar Wulff (eds.), *A Chronicle of the Civil War in Siberia and Exile in China: The Diaries of Petr Vasil'evich Vologodskii, 1918-1925*, 2 Vols. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2002. Pp.455 + 471; illustrations; map; biographical glossary; bibliography; indexes. \$60.00 (paperback). ISBN 0 8179 2972 X

Biographies give historians a useful insight into how historical events and processes leave their marks on everyday life. They also show the society's ability to develop a culture of consent and dissent. Life stories can reveal political and socio-economic ruptures. The twentieth century meant for Russia an epoch of cataclysms that began with the October Revolution and the civil war. Borderlands and peripheries played an important role in shaping a culture of violence. In the vastness of the hinterland, where institutions of the state had traditionally weak roots, it was difficult in a time of civil war and foreign intervention to domesticate violence in the social and international context. This is the essence of the diaries of Petr V. Vologodskii, now published for the first time.

The edition by Semion Lyandres and Dietmar Wulff, based on the rich material of the Hoover Institution at Stanford, makes a laudable contribution to our understanding of the Russian Civil War. Previous studies on the anti-Bolshevik movement in Siberia gave a one-sided perspective from the military leadership – that is, that of Admiral Kolchak. Petr V. Vologodskii was a prominent Siberian lawyer who served in the Kolchak government. His diaries contain important information on Kolchak's domestic policy, but also on the personal ties between political and military leaders. From his heritage Vologodskii was a typical liberal thinker of Siberian society, as he was engaged from the 1880s in the Siberian autonomous movement that had its centre at the University of Tomsk. Vologodskii's career as an *oblastnik* explains his strong anti-Bolshevik attitude after the October Revolution.

After the decline of the tsarist autocracy Siberian regionalists, among them Vologodskii, articulated their demand of a Siberian autonomy within a future Russian federation. But the First Siberian Regional Congress (convened in October 1917 at Tomsk) took place under the conditions of civil war. The absence of nearly two-thirds of the delegates curtailed the quorum. The main outcome of the congress was an agreement 'to drive out the Bolsheviks and to restore order' (p.29). But there was no clear conception what this order should look like. The anti-Bolshevik uprising of the Czechoslovak Legion along the

Trans-Siberian Railway gave a new impetus to regionalist and autonomist tendencies and here Vologodskii's diaries begin. Vologodskii's purpose was to compile a historical document destined for posterity (p.33).

On 29 June 1918, the Provisional Siberian Government was established at Omsk. As the editors correctly point out, this government from the very beginning was marked by a bad omen: the city of Omsk presented an atmosphere of political intrigues so typical for Russia's 'Wild East'. In vain, Vologodskii, as chairman of the council of ministers, tried to anchor rules of law in the political culture. It is very surprising that Vologodskii accepted Kolchak's *coup d'état* in November 1918, but he saw in the Bolsheviks the greater challenge. The shock about the Red terror was deep-seated (Vol.1, p.76). Vologodskii not only had a profound knowledge of Russian domestic politics, his diaries reveal that he also had a good insight into the diplomacy of the foreign powers, notably the United States and Japan, which intervened in the civil war in Siberia. At the beginning of 1920, the Kolchak régime collapsed under the attacks of the Red Army and here a new chapter in Vologodskii's life begins. In January 1920 he emigrated to China. Vologodskii's diaries deliver a good insight into the Russian émigré life in Manchuria. In China Vologodskii became an eyewitness to the Chinese Civil War and, not surprisingly, he drew comparisons between the events in China and Russia. Like many Russian emigrants, Vologodskii feared that the Chinese government could hand them over to the Bolsheviks (Vol.2, p.109). With this excellent edition of Vologodskii's diaries, we have an important historical document that shows how deeply moving autobiographies written in a time of political and social upheavals can be.

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Abraham Ascher, *Russia: A Short History*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2002. Pp.xiii + 265; notes; bibliography; index. £10.99 (paperback). ISBN 1 8516 8242 2

As Abraham Ascher points out in his Preface, in writing this book he has a tall order to fulfil: a complete history of Russia, from its beginnings in the ninth century to the most recent events under Vladimir Putin, and all in about 90,000 words. The intention is to provide an introduction to Russian history that will be 'useful and enlightening for students, scholars and travellers alike'. It is a difficult assignment indeed, especially since success depends upon providing not just a survey of Russian history, but one that will be absorbing enough to encourage its readers to take the subject further.

Despite the amount of ground that is covered, the book is not a breathless recital of facts. The author has been selective in what is treated, focusing mainly on the modern period, and is able to give a fairly extended and cogent treatment of most of the chosen topics. The section covering the period from the reign of Peter the Great to the Russian Revolution is quite admirable for the concise but informative and stimulating way that Ascher approached his subject. As one would expect from an historian of the 1905 Revolution, this particular section is treated in a masterly fashion. But even in the first section of the book, where the coverage is less detailed, the author still succeeds in