

## Book Reviews

**American Research on Russia.** Harold H. Fisher, Ed. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1959. xiv + 240 pp. \$5.

How often one hears Americans complain, "Oh, but we know so little about Russia!" *American Research on Russia* tells how much we really *do* know about Russia, if people would only take the trouble to read even a small fraction of the studies referred to in this new survey. The book should be of interest to laymen as well as to experts.

*American Research on Russia* is a collection of 12 essays resulting from surveys conducted under the auspices of the Joint Committee on Slavic Studies of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council; these surveys were widely discussed at the 10th anniversary conference of the Russian Research Center of Harvard University in January 1958. Far from being an anthology, the book is a most thorough guide to scholarly works on Russia which have been published in English during the last few decades, particularly since World War II. In addition to providing a general survey of the growth of Russian studies in the United States, the essays discuss the research in such diverse fields as history, economics, political science, philosophy and religion, social relations, science, geography, literature, linguistics, music, architecture, and the minor arts. Without attempting to prejudge the quality of individual research efforts, referred to individually or discussed in group topics, the essays attempt to assess the position of the community of American scholars in regard to an "integrated outlook in a study of Russian society." The verdict: a great deal has been done; much more needs to be done.

The survey shows that our research effort is represented by a community of some 550 scholars, approximately 450

major book and study titles, and an uncounted number of articles, monographs, reports, and so forth. Activities of the United States Government, as well as all "popular writing" on the U.S.S.R., are omitted from consideration in the essays.

Research, particularly during the last 15 years, has had a tendency to focus more and more attention on the examination of contemporary problems. The volume of research, and especially its quality, attests to the ability of the American academic community to withstand the pressures of America's shifting attitude toward communism and the U.S.S.R. The book makes a plea for more continued effort by appealing for wider public acceptance of, and acquaintance with, research on Russia carried out for the sake of scholarship and knowledge rather than for immediate utilitarian ends of a political or strategic nature. The broader understanding of "detached scholarship" is viewed as essential for bridging the gap that, unfortunately, continues to exist between "popular knowledge" of the Soviet Union and the wealth of scholarly research on Russia and world communism. This defense of the ivory tower is made with an eye toward the increasing role the government is expected to play in this area of research and in the hope of expanding the "pipeline" of private financial support.

Despite the tribute to "area-oriented interdisciplinary research," the very structure of the book, as well as most of the studies reviewed therein, mirrors quite accurately the true state of American studies on the Soviet Union, showing traditional discipline-oriented research to be the dominant activity. The departmental pattern of employment in colleges and universities and the discipline-oriented education of most Russian area specialists is responsible, in large measure, for this pattern. The majority of researchers teach their respective traditional disciplines, and only a

few enjoy the luxury of research and teaching in Russian and Soviet areas exclusively.

Judging by the volume of research output, we find that historical research (with some 170 major titles) is the oldest and best established discipline. Postwar research advanced Soviet studies, particularly in political science (with some 70 major titles), social relations (about 70), and economics (about 50). As may be expected in these disciplines, there are many major studies, and some of them overlap onto closely related topics. By comparison, the score card for other fields is distressingly unfavorable, with far fewer titles of major scholarly works (for all other fields covered by the survey there are less than 100 titles). After the big four mentioned above come philosophy and religion, literature and music. There are very few studies in geography, the fine arts, or even linguistics. Titles are listed for only five major books on science in Russia. Most of these, and a supplement of two dozen or so articles, deal largely with ideological and political interference with Soviet scientific research. There is only one major study dealing with the institutional aspects of scientific research in the U.S.S.R. There are no major studies on the history of science. There are no major studies on engineering and technology. American science and Russian area studies will benefit mutually if more physical scientists and engineers can be attracted to study the Russian language, culture, and society, and to apply their scientific knowledge to area research. Soviet science and technology have remained terra incognita much too long.

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**The Coconut Palm.** K. P. V. Menon and K. M. Pandalai. Indian Central Coconut Committee, Ernakulam, South India, 1957. xvi + 384 pp. Illus. \$11.95.

This monograph on the coconut palm is a well-documented and well-illustrated publication concerned with all aspects of the plant. Essentially it is a compilation from the literature published since the 1938 monograph, *The Coconut* (by J. S. Patel). The authors of this new

monograph are K. P. V. Menon, director of the Central Coconut Research Station, Kayangulam, and K. M. Pandalai, joint director of the Central Coconut Research Station, Kasaragod. In addition to the discussions of morphology, floral biology, and genetics and variation, there are descriptions of field culture, plantation management, pests and diseases, and the utilization of coconut products. The orientation is practical throughout, and, presumably, this was responsible for the curiously mixed and often outdated presentation in the strictly botanical chapters. The authors have merely repeated previously published works without due regard for their publication date or for the possibility of changing concepts in biology. Thus one finds anatomy discussed in terms of dermatogen, periblem, and plerome, while pollen formation is the result of "heterotypic" and "homoeotypic" divisions of chromosomes derived from a "spireme."

Once past these unpalatable botanical items, the book presents detailed descriptions of the practical aspects of coconut growing, including much tabular material, derived from the very extensive bibliography. Unfortunately there is a separate bibliography for each of the 18 chapters, but separate author and subject indexes are provided. The book should prove useful to those interested in economic aspects of botany and will be a very useful introduction to the literature on the coconut palm.

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#### **America in the Antarctic to 1840.**

Philip I. Mitterling. University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1959. 201 pp. Illus. \$5.

Current research programs of the United States and other nations have revived interest in the history of antarctic exploration. A failing of several recently published histories is that they recount only exploration which has occurred since the late 1800's. The distant past and, sometimes, the very recent ventures are excluded. This book partially corrects the deficiency by dealing with a little known period of United States antarctic exploration (1776-1840).

America's first expeditions to the southern oceans were for commercial

enterprise. Reports of fur seals in these waters circulated widely after Captain James Cook's voyage of 1775 and led to a number of reconnaissance voyages by different nations. *The States*, first known American sealing ship to sail the antarctic seas, shipped out of Boston to the Falkland Islands and took 13,000 pelts for later sale in China. The spectacular profit gave rise to a large industry, centered in Boston, Nantucket, and Stonington, which enjoyed financial success until 1793 when the market declined. After a lull, fur sealing was resumed and continued throughout the early 1800's.

Intense competition resulted in voyages of discovery among the subantarctic islands of the Scotia Arc, among offshore islands along the Antarctic Peninsula (also called Palmer Peninsula or Graham Land), and on the peninsula itself even though few new seal grounds were found.

Mitterling has summarized these voyages concisely, giving careful attention to conflicting claims of discovery made by Nathaniel Palmer, Christopher Burdick, George Powell, John Davis, Benjamin Morrell, and Edward Bransfield. Each of these men led a voyage from the United States or from Great Britain; claims by either country for discovery of Antarctica often cite their work. Palmer's meeting with the Russian, Bellingshausen, in January 1821 is also treated with care and insight. I believe Mitterling shows the difficulty of basing a claim of continental discovery on a single voyage made during this period. He says "Attempts to substantiate this imperfect evidence . . . have obscured [the sealers'] real accomplishments . . ."

By 1820 exploration financed by the sealing industry had become costly. Several suggested a nationally sponsored United States expedition, but, curiously enough, it was a theory expressed by John Symmes and his associate Jeremiah N. Reynolds which led to a national expedition. Symmes declared "the earth is hollow, habitable within; containing a number of concentric spheres, one within the other, and that it is hollow at the pole." Impassioned public pleas along with solicitations in Congress and the Navy Department eventually caused the government to send an expedition to Antarctica in 1838. Under the command of Charles Wilkes, the ships made a few discoveries in the area of the Antarctic Peninsula, then, in a second season, sighted the land now bear-

ing Wilkes' name. Wilkes' discoveries left no doubt that there was a large southern continent, a fact substantiated a year later by Sir James Ross. Mitterling writes "When the United States Exploring Expedition put to sea, a precedent for the use of Federal funds to explore throughout the world was established . . . thus, American beginnings in Antarctica were conspicuous ones."

Philip Mitterling has chosen a fascinating and little known period of United States antarctic activity and has described it in a highly readable yet scholarly manner. Because of these qualities the book will be of great value for some time.

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**Tukani.** Helmut Sick. Translated by R. H. Stevens. Eriksson-Taplinger, New York, 1960. 240 pp. Plates. \$5.

This is the first detailed account of the famous Brazilian Roncador-Xingu Expedition, which devoted several years to blazing an 1800-mile route diagonally across Brazil from Rio de Janeiro to Manaus on the Amazon River. The author, a 50-year-old German-born naturalist, joined the expedition in 1946, and he ably describes the unknown lands through which the expedition passed.

Helmut Sick's sensitivity to the world of nature and to the problems of adjustment between civilized and primitive man makes this a valuable contribution to the historical and scientific record of one of the largest undeveloped regions in the world.

The title is taken from the name of a pet toucan that figures prominently in the book, but all living things captivate the author's alert mind. Sick discusses 10-inch stick insects, Indian women who feed water hogs at the breast and allow mice to build nests in their hair, exotic birds 1/15 the weight of a sparrow, stinging ants an inch long, lantern bugs glowing with luminous bacteria, and piping guans that play instrumental music with their wings when they mate.

One may doubt some statements, such as "[the natives] can pinpoint their position . . . [by] instinctive attributes with which many animals such as migratory birds and bees are endowed