

to starving POWs reveal a brilliant if chilling understanding of the psychology of the perpetrator. Consistently refraining from a preoccupation with the graphic details of death, the author concentrates on the humdrum pursuits of 'normal life' instead, i.e. popular piety, entertainment, education, etc. Originally a doctoral dissertation, *Harvest of Despair* has grown into a rich tapestry of life that is essential reading for scholars of Holocaust Studies and Eastern European history and for anyone desirous of gaining a sense of death and life as they were experienced in all their tragic dimensions in Nazi Ukraine.

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James Cracraft, *The Revolution of Peter the Great*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003.

James Cracraft's *The Revolution of Peter the Great* is a fine, short (190-page) synthesis of scholarship on the extraordinary era of Peter the Great. It sets out to meet the needs of students and general readers. Cracraft has succeeded admirably. Student readers are better rewarded, for instance, by Cracraft's brief themes than the excessive details of diplomacy in Mathew Anderson's *Peter the Great* (1978, 1995) or Paul Bushkovitch's *Peter the Great: The Struggle for Power, 1761–1725* (2001) or of state policy in Evgenii Anisimov's *Reforms of Peter the Great* (1989, 1993). General readers might still prefer, however, their Peter fleshed out in biographies, such as those by Robert Massie (1980) or Nikolai Pavlenko (1994).

*The Revolution of Peter the Great* joins a field alive with exciting scholarship. Cracraft's core purpose is to show the scale and intent of the 'cultural revolution' (p. vii) that Peter set in train. Cracraft's new contribution differs from some other important recent works in Petrine studies. He develops only six case studies: Peter's social life and values; military and naval affairs; cameralist reforms towards a bureaucratised state; a transformed culture — visual, architectural and verbal; resistance to all these changes, and, the wonder of St. Petersburg.

Cracraft's decision to emphasise a few key themes comes at a cost, however. Peter's life is made to seem more consistent and coherent than it probably seemed to his contemporaries. Thus, to the relief, no doubt, of hassled students, Cracraft emphasises only the effects of final victory in a war or of the final expression of a policy reform. This emphasis on firm outcomes Peter eventually achieved over day-to-day events, neglected processes and *faux pas* of Peter's works to entrench Cracraft's sense of a common, cohering thing that characterises Peter's era: 'a cultural revolution'. The contingencies of the past as it was lived and loathed tend to slip by. Would Peter have still been 'the Great', for instance, if Baltacı Mehmed Pasha on the Prut in 1711 had not let him off the hook? Readers of narrative biographies, such as Kliuchevskii's (1910), obtain a more *ad hoc* Peter, on-the-run, crueller and more inconsistent.

Nonetheless, Cracraft's view is still persuasive. His Peter is the Peter of the 'Great Embassies' to Europe, 1697–8, 1716–17. Cracraft's Peter adapts Kliuchevskii's emphasis on the appeal of the culture of the 'German suburb (*Немецкая слобода*)'. Both see an underlying Westernising consistency in everything Peter did, however cruel and inconsistent. Cracraft's Peter comes alive as a *nouveau* European, a would-be Emperor (1721), a *faux*-Dutch sailor stuck in landlocked Muscovy, always looking for good company (as in drinking, fighting and making things), a person as indifferent to Russian rules and customs as he is eager to be feared and celebrated as a Russian. Cracraft finds an underlying coherence in Peter's life, and he persuades in this sense: Peter's seemingly *ad hoc* policies and predicaments probably seemed to make more sense to him than to most of his contemporaries. Cracraft's diverting analysis of the records of Peter's dreams — such records exist! — offers unusual evidence (p. 25).

Cracraft's account is compelling. It also has the virtue of brevity. Lindsey Hughes' corresponding study, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great* (1998) seems to have been inspired by the fine example of Isabelle de Madariaga's *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great* (1981). Both are great books. Like Hughes and de Madariaga, Cracraft eschews the standard birth-to-death biographical approach, but instead of their comprehensive policy studies of every possible view of their monarchs and their ages, Cracraft chooses to elucidate only six key themes, all related in one way or another to his thesis that Peter's era was an era

of 'cultural revolution'. Something is lost here, but, from a student's view not a great deal. Cracraft's fifth chapter can only offer a vivid general sense of the opposition to Peter, reprising a fine essay he published in 1988. Bushkovitch's long and detailed narrative, by contrast, concludes with a compelling re-telling of the folly, ordeal, trial and death of Aleksei Petrovich.

Cracraft's first chapter of *The Revolution of Peter the Great* describes Peter's *société* and *sociabilité*, how his new ideas of friends empowered and 'in company' eroded traditional Muscovite politics of gender, ceremony and precedence. His second and third chapters summarise the outcomes of the mighty revolutions Peter wrought in navy, army and state administration, normal preoccupations of studies of the era, but handled skilfully all the same. Like Kliuchevskii, Cracraft emphasises, moreover, important underlying cultural dimensions of the state and military transformations of the era: for instance, the effects on old Muscovite values of Peter's new codes of professionalism and service in his Table of Ranks (1722), regiments and fleet, and the ways Peter adapted Dutch and British values of trade, toleration and pragmatism, French style, and German and Swedish cameralism to undermine the old Muscovite values. Cracraft's fourth chapter vividly summarises changes wrought in the Peter era in Russian culture: his 'cultural revolution' in ways educated Russians came to think about themselves and their place in the world. Cracraft here traverses his important new research on portraiture and landscape, on architecture, on gender relations and on the oral and written culture. In his fifth chapter following, in which Cracraft discusses the resistance to Peter's cultural revolution, Cracraft is as able to draw on his research. His *Church Reform of Peter the Great* (1971), for instance, vividly evoked the ordeals of Stefan Iavorskii and the enthusiasm of Peter's man in cloth, Feofan Prokopovich.

James Cracraft's brief survey is an artful crystallization of a lifetime's fine work on the Petrine era and its history. Although his Peter is certainly an absolute, though not necessarily an enlightened, monarch (p. 65), citing Anna Akhmatova's *Poem without a Hero* (1919), Cracraft would have us consider Peter's impact as longer lasting and more revolutionary than the Communists' (pp. viii, 156). I, for one, am ready to agree.