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N.N. PETRUKHINTSEV, *Vnutrennaia politika Anny Ioannovny (1730-1740)* [Anna Ioannovna's domestic policy (1730-1740)], Moscow : Rosspen, 2014, 1063 p.

- 1 In recent years Russian historians have filled in many of the gaping holes in Russian historiography. One of the chronological gaps is the years in the eighteenth century between the death of Peter the Great and the beginning of the reign of Catherine the Great. The decade and a half after Peter's death is particularly critical because it saw the consolidation of his work and the failure of almost all attempts to revise it. Nikolai Petrukhintsev's remarkable study of the 1730's, encyclopedic in its scope, goes a long way toward filling this gap. It is a fundamental work, and will require much thought and discussion to be assimilated into our conceptions of eighteenth century Russia.
- 2 The reign of Anna Ioannovna, Peter's niece, has been studied primarily for the failed attempt of the aristocrats in the Supreme Privy Council to establish an oligarchy in the place of autocracy in 1730. That attempt was a classic subject for pre-revolutionary liberal historians and their opponents, producing a rather anachronistic history that tried to fit the conflict into later ideas of constitutional government. This approach lasted in the West through the twentieth century. In recent years Petrukhintsev and I.V. Kurukin, among others, have brought new light to the 1730 events as well as the entire decade. Kurukin has contributed a fresh and much more convincing account of those events, while Petrukhintsev has devoted his efforts to the ensuing decade,

primarily the history of the army and navy.¹ Building on his earlier work, he has now produced a definite story of the main features of the “domestic policy” of Empress Anna and her government. What he means by that, as he explains, is not a modern, written, and thought out program but a series of measures that were strongly interconnected though the ruling elite probably did not understand them as a system (96).

- 3 Petrukhintsev shows that Anna and her ministers inherited a discussion about what to do about Peter’s legislation that began immediately after his death. The problem was that many of the new institutions were expensive, especially local administration and the navy, and the new rulers, whether Menshikov or the future oligarchs of 1730, thought that the resulting tax burden was too great. The vicissitudes of court politics in 1725-30, however, meant that the attention of the ruling elite was focused more on intrigues and maneuvers at court. After Anna’s restoration of autocracy in February, 1730, the government could turn to implementing basic measures. The “autocracy” of Anna, to be sure, was scarcely personal rule, as the Cabinet and Senate did most of the work. These were small bodies : the Cabinet consisted only of Andrei Ostermann, prince A.M. Cherkasskii, count G.I. Golokin (to 1735), and later P.I. Iaguzhinskii and A.P. Volynskii. The Senate had about twelve members for most of the reign. Petrukhintsev is not writing a history of court politics, however, and in his new book we see the Cabinet and Senate setting policy and administrative practice throughout the empire. He describes the roles of the various individuals (and favorites such as Ernst Johann von Biron), but as ministers of state, not as plotters of intrigues around the empress.
- 4 The activities of Anna’s government were many, and Petrukhintsev has covered an enormous range of topics, some of them in great depth. He begins by surveying the first two years as the government tried to implement the proposals to lighten the burden that were formed soon after Peter’s death. He covers the status of the gentry, monetary policy, administrative staff reductions, and commerce, as well as the response to famine in 1733-1735 (17-206). He then moves on to policies on the frontiers of Russia, the Ukrainian hetmanate and the southern Russian provinces, followed by an extensive account of Bashkiria and a brief survey of the Baltic provinces (where very little happened that was new). The last third of the book describes the effects of the Russo-Turkish war of 1735-1740 on the country and the related problems of the development of the iron and steel industry.
- 5 It is difficult to do justice to a book of this breadth and richness. Petrukhintsev’s description of the government’s policies on the southern frontier stresses that the framework was not just the Ukrainian Hetmanate, but the whole of the frontier (222-381). It was not a matter of nationality, as the policies were similar across the whole area and designed to strengthen defenses while holding down the costs. They also sought to make the burden not equal, but equitable, among the various communities. These policies did affect the Hetmanate, the Sloboda Ukraine, and southern Russian areas according to their specific status. In particular the Hetmanate and Sloboda were not subject to the “soul tax” of the central provinces until 1783, and Petrukhintsev provides a detailed account of the evolution of the central government’s fiscal policies in those areas. For the Russian inhabitants of the southern provinces, the expansion of the *Landmilitsiia* laid an extra burden of military service. The hope here was to reduce the military budget by shifting expenses onto the southern *odnodvortsy*.

Prince A.I. Shakhovskoi was the most important of the Russian officials in the area until his death in 1736, and Petrukhintsev sees him as cautious, trying to keep the southern frontier defenses in good shape but careful of local autonomies. Unfortunately all of the southern border regions were especially hard hit by the Russo-Turkish war, as they were a staging area for the army and its ill-fated (and in Petrukhintsev's view) ill-conceived campaign of General-Field Marshall Count B. C. von Münnich against Crimea. Requisitioning horses and oxen needed to transport supplies for the army was disastrous to the Ukrainian peasant economy. Ironically Count Peter von Lacy's capture of Azov was the only success of the war, bought at much less cost. Curiously, Petrukhintsev says little about the Don Cossacks.

- 6 In contrast, Russian policy in Bashkiria was more of a nationality issue, though the by-product of more far-reaching plans (382-634). Here the villain was I.K. Kirillov, *ober-sekretar'* of the Senate, who constructed a project shaped by Russia's new westernized culture. Kirillov had already been involved in the planning of Vitus Bering's Second Kamchatka Expedition, where one of the side-shows was a ruthless attempt at new forms of exploitation of the native peoples of northeast Siberia. In 1734 he presented a proposal to the government to expand Russian trade with Central Asia by establishing a commercial center to be called Orenburg in the southern Urals, the area traditionally occupied by the Bashkirs. Empress Anna accepted the proposal and ordered it to be carried out.² In it Kirillov cited the example of the Iberian empires in the New World, great producers of silver and other riches for their royal masters. He thought that the gold of Badakhshan (in modern Tajikistan and northern Afghanistan) would bring similar treasure to Russia. He wanted to eventually cross the steppe into Central Asia, capture Badakhshan, and also make of it a waystation on the road to the final goal, India. The first step in this fantastic plan was the construction of the new city. His Orenburg was to duplicate the success of Batavia in the Dutch East Indies, cited as the example to be followed, no matter that Orenburg was not on the sea but at the northern fringe of the Kazakh steppe. Kirillov was dreaming of Indian riches, and the Bashkirs seemed a minor obstacle to which he gave little thought. The problem was that his new city would close off the Bashkir nomads to the southeast and also place Russian administrators closer to the population, inevitably restricting the power of the local elites. The result was a revolt. Kirillov responded by realizing the Bashkirs' worst fears, trying to give some Bashkir lands to the Tatars, to replace the nomadic clan structure with elected elders, and to restrict the numbers of the Muslim ulema. His accompanying brutality and arrogance fueled what became the largest and bloodiest of the Bashkir revolts. Kirillov and his lieutenants, such as the Tatar murza A.I. Tevkelev, distinguished themselves by ineffective cruelty. Fortunately Kirillov died in 1737, and it was left to V.N. Tatishchev and the Russian army to finish off the revolt and reset the government's course in a way more favorable to the Bashkirs. The resultant portrait of Kirillov is quite far from the optimistic account of the self-taught statistician and geographer in the older Russian and Western literature and more like a character from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.³ The result is also a new picture of the Bashkir revolt, one in which the cause was not general "oppression" but a very specific attempt to restrict local autonomy. In Petrukhintsev's view this was the normal reason for revolts on the periphery (436).
- 7 One of the main objects of concern to Anna's government was the mines and factories in the Urals that produced iron and copper. Russia had produced both in the seventeenth century, mostly from rural craft industries but also in and around Tula, in

factories run by Russian merchants as well as the Marselis family. Peter's army, however, needed much more and higher quality metal for artillery, muskets, the navy, and other uses, so he sponsored the expansion of the mines and factories by the state, all them eventually falling under his Berg-kollegiia. Petrukhintsev chronicles their fate from that moment on to 1740, in the process giving a fresh account of an old subject (802-940).⁴ The stimulation of production by the state was not an end in itself. Peter already began to "privatize" some of the factories, and this process went on into the 1730's. For the Russian government the deciding factor was the contracts it made with English merchants to export large quantities of iron, essentially a fiscal measure to swell the treasury with profits from iron exports. To fulfill the contract the Berg-kollegiia sent Tatishchev to the Urals to improve and expand the state factories, which he did with great success, in five years setting up more factories than ever before. Tatishchev was not, however, a principled supporter of government enterprise over private. He favored a combination of government stimulation but also believed that the dominant merchant clans, most prominently the Demidovs and Stroganovs, should continue to own, finance, and run the factories. While Tatishchev had great success in the Urals, events elsewhere gave him doubts. In 1738-40 a Saxon mine administrator in Russian service, Curt Alexander von Schönberg, tried to get control of alleged silver and copper sources in Lappland. The mines turned out to be worthless, but the Schönberg affair demonstrated the vast possibilities of corruption in deals between the state and merchant mine owners. Petrukhintsev sees Tatishchev as an excessive "rationalist" in his approach because of his penchant for excessively neat formal administrative structures, but he emerges from this account as a talented and learned administrator. Perhaps he was not the titan of the older literature, but successful enough to fully merit his place in the history of the Urals and its industries.

- 8 The book devotes nearly two hundred pages to the effects of the Russo-Turkish war on a variety of policies beyond the southern border (635-801). The reader learns of the attempts to recruit surplus clergy for the army, the effect of the mobilization of horses and men, taxation and commercial policy, all distorted to a greater or lesser extent by the war. This is a pioneering move, for the many wars of eighteenth century Russia are a well-known part of its history, but how they were financed and supplied, and what were the effects on society and the state has not been the subject of much attention. Indeed the Turkish war dominates the whole book, for it came into nearly every area of Russian policy directly or indirectly.
- 9 Petrukhintsev concludes with a brief narrative of the intrigues at court in the government at the end of the reign. It is one of his contentions that these intrigues, famous from historical novels and biographies, were not so important in setting policy until the very end. His prosopography of the main officials (140-166) is useful, but for Biron and the chief decision makers the reader should turn to Petrukhintsev's earlier work cited above.
- 10 In a book of this magnitude there is much to discuss. Petrukhintsev sees the local variation of forms of rule on the periphery of the Russian empire as incomplete integration. That is, he believes the ultimate goal was integration, though at the same time he is aware that the center was (still, in his view) trying to preserve local institutions, as in the Baltic provinces, Bashkiria, or the southern frontier. Many historians of Russia, especially in the West, have recently emphasized that local autonomies remained, often to 1917, and that the various efforts at centralization and

uniformity were aimed only at certain areas like the former Polish provinces and they were incomplete even there. Empires, in this conception, are intrinsically based on local autonomies and local elites.

- 11 Another issue to consider is the character of politics at the court and its relationship to the central government. Petrukhintsev is very solid on policy formation at the level of central and local administration, providing a fascinating picture of how projects like Kirillov's came into being. He does not, however, systematically investigate the extent to which court politics influenced these decisions, though he does provide some vivid examples, such as Biron's support for Schönberg's scheme. Kirillov's main patron seems to have been Ostermann, but Petrukhintsev does not go into detail about how his patronage worked. At one point (744) he asserts that higher politics were a contest between the Cabinet, which looked out for state interests, and the Senate, with its more pragmatic but also more pro-gentry position. This is a theme for another large book.
- 12 The story of Anna's reign provided here also throws some light on the much debated question of the effects of Peter's measures and the "Westernization" of Russian culture. Historians and publicists have often lamented the alleged superficiality of the acceptance of European culture, but Petrukhintsev, in his accounts of Tatishchev and Kirillov, has given some very concrete examples. Tatishchev used what he learned mostly to good effect, building up the mining and metal industries. Kirillov took from Western culture the notion that the search for treasure justified risky schemes and the subjection and mishandling of communities that stood in the way. His methods were not just reprehensible to the modern reader, they also were ineffective, creating more opposition than the older Russian practice of cooptation and cooperation with local elites. Two different sides of Russia's adoption of European culture come out vividly.
- 13 It is a mark of the quality of Petrukhintsev's work that it provokes these and other questions. Perhaps it is also inevitable in a work of this size that there are some Western and even recent Russian and Ukrainian publications not mentioned that would have enriched the argument. Nevertheless, the achievement is enormous. He has provided many new ideas and a portrait of the aims of the Russian state and their fulfillment in a crucial decade of the eighteenth century that has no equal in depth or breadth.

NOTES

1. N.N. Petrukhintsev, *Tsarstvovanie Anny Ioannovny : Formirovanie vnutrennogo kursa i sud'by armii i flota 1730-1735 g.* (SPb., 2001); I.V. Kurukin, *Epokha 'dvortsovykh bur': Ocherki politicheskoi istorii poslepetrovskoi Rossii* (Riazan', 2003); I.V. Kurukin, A.B. Plotnikov, *19 ianvaria-25 fevralia 1730 goda : sobytiia, liudi, dokumenty* (M., 2010).
2. *Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii, Pervaia seriia*, vol. 9, No. 6571, 309- 317.
3. M.G. Novlianskaia, Ivan Kirillovich Kirillov – geograf XVIII v. (M.-L., 1964); Glynn Baratt, *Russia in Pacific Waters 1715-1825 : A Survey of the Origins of Russia's Naval Presence in the North and South Pacific* (Vancouver, BC, 1981), 25-29. Kirillov left a manuscript with a statistical

and geographic survey of Russia in 1727 : I.K. Kirilov, Tsvetushchee sostoianie Vserossiiskogo gosudarstva, ed. L.A. Gol'denberg, S.A. Troitskii (M., 1977).

4. For the older view see N.I. Pavlenko, Razvitie metallurgicheskoi promyshlennosti Rossii v pervoi polovine XVIII veka : promyshlennaia politika i upravlenie (M., 1953) ; and idem, Istoriia metallurgiii v Rossii XVIII veka : Zavody i zavodovladel'tsy (M., 1962).

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