

BOOK REVIEWS

Roads Not Taken: An Intellectual Biography of William C. Bullitt. By Alexander Etkind. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017. xiv, 290 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. \$24.95, paper.

doi: 10.1017/slr.2019.24

At first I was very skeptical about reviewing this book. I knew that it was written by an author who was trained as a Soviet psychologist and who had already covered some aspects of the biography of William Bullitt, related to Soviet Russia, in his two previous studies, published in Russian in 1993 and 2001 in the Russian Federation. Both of these works were more about psychological and literary history in Russia, involving Bullitt's personality, than about a traditional "intellectual" biography of the famous American diplomat, well-known to experts of US diplomatic history.

After reading this new book, however, I forgot about my previous skepticism and became fascinated with this new and expanded version (now in very good English!) of the real intellectual and psychological biography of William C. Bullitt (1891–1967), an extraordinary man who at his best, represented both political and cultural diplomacy of the United States in the twentieth century. At the same time, Alexander Etkind created a brilliant psychological portrait of Bullitt's personal diplomacy, which contributed to the creation of the unique network of "personal relationships with some of the twentieth century's most important people, including Vladimir Lenin, Franklin Roosevelt, Chiang Kai-shek, Charles de Gaulle, Sigmund Freud, and Mikhail Bulgakov" (xii). In contrast to numerous published biographies of Bullitt, which concentrated mainly on his political career and ignored his intellectual accomplishments, including his novels, plays, and essays, Etkind focuses on Bullitt's life, portraying him "as an intellectual rather than as an official." As the author noted, "taking seriously Bullitt's words, foresights and laments, this book addresses Bullitt as an original thinker and elucidates his role as a political actor" (xii).

In sixteen short chapters of his book, Etkind traces Bullitt's intellectual biography from his early career. He was born into a wealthy Philadelphia family. He first worked as a foreign correspondent in Europe, where he fell in love with and married Louise Bryant, the widow of American communist John Reed. Etkind then relates the rise of Bullitt's career as a US diplomat, working for Presidents Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt, and serving as US Ambassador to the USSR (1933–36) and to France (1936–40). Bullitt saved Sigmund Freud from Nazi-controlled Vienna, co-authored with Freud the first psychological-historical biography of Woodrow Wilson, and organized the Spring festival at the US embassy in Moscow in 1935, which was described by Soviet writer Mikhail Bulgakov in his novel *The Master and Margarita*. Finally, he describes Bullitt's evolution from a liberal friend of Soviet Russia to a political hawk of the Cold War, sharing its paranoia about homosexuals, influencing George Kennan's concept of containment of the USSR, and contributing to the idea of united Europe after WWII.

The most important idea of Etkind's book is a forgotten historical legacy of Bullitt, who was a "great adviser" to so many people in politics and culture in the US, Europe, and the Soviet Union. Despite the very fact that politicians, starting with Woodrow Wilson, rejected many of Bullitt's recommendations (therefore, the title of this book is "Roads not Taken"), Bullitt's legacy survived and his advice accomplished important results. In conclusion, Etkind gives a concise description of those accomplishments: "The ailing Sigmund Freud formulated some of his most bizarre ideas, and had more years of life, because of his friendship with Bullitt. The brilliant George Kennan followed Bullitt when he studied the basics of international diplomacy and the mysteries of

Soviet politics. Supported by Bullitt, the unexpected chain of Soviet defectors revealed the sad truth about the Soviet Union and the distrustful world. Materialized by his disciples during the Cold War, Bullitt's futuristic ideas and failed projects gave rise to the Marshall Plan and the subtle art of containing the Soviets. His intrepid French friend Jean Monnet followed Bullitt when he brought the European Union into existence. And his doomed Russian friend Mikhail Bulgakov commemorated Bullitt, merging him with Kant, Christ, and Satan in another bid to end history" (240).

The psychological insights, cultural generalizations, and symbolism of Etkind's book will be an unusual and precious contribution to the traditional prevailing narrative of the political biography of an outstanding US diplomat who tried to use his personal diplomacy, charm, and erudition to build human understanding and respect in US-Russian and US-European diplomatic relations. During the rise of tensions in present Russian-American relations, Etkind's psychological biography of Bullitt is a convincing reminder to contemporary politicians about the importance of personal diplomacy in improving those relations.

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Soviet Americana: The Cultural History of Russian and Ukrainian Americanists.

By Sergei I. Zhuk. The Library of Modern Russia Series. London: I. B. Tauris, 2018. xxv, 323 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Figures. \$110.00, hard bound.

doi: 10.1017/slr.2019.25

Most readers of this journal are familiar with the works of their Russian/Soviet counterparts and their accomplishments, both bad and good. Sergei Zhuk, who teaches at Ball State University and is best known for his *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dnepropetrovsk, 1960–1985* (2010), provides a detailed examination of the origins and growth of Russian and Ukrainian specialists in American history, society, and culture. This book was preceded by Zhuk's closely-related study concentrating on one of the leading Russian scholars, Nikolai Bolkhovitinov, his mentor, and of many others in the field: *Nikolai Bolkhovitinov and American Studies in the USSR: People's Diplomacy in the Cold War* (2017), which is surprisingly not cited in the current book. For my review essay of that book with my personal memories of Bolkhovitinov, see online, *Journal of Russian American Studies*, vol. 1, no 2 (November 2017), 110–14. In fact, Zhuk repeats a substantial portion of the Bolkhovitinov book in the one now under review.

A problem in the case of both books is evaluating Zhuk's sources. He relies heavily on citations of personal e-mails, private interviews, personal telephone conversations, and unpublished letters and memoirs, such as those of Bolkhovitinov. How do we know that these are interpreted correctly, since none are publicly available and many of the original sources are no longer living? The claim that Grigory Sevostianov, the longtime director of the Center of North American Studies of the Institute of World History of the Academy of Sciences, was a KGB agent can be believed because of the involvement of that agency in the development of experts on America, but is not clearly substantiated. Readers may also accept that the two sons of Alexander Fursenko, the doyenne of St. Petersburg Americanists, were close friends of Vladimir Putin while students at the University of St. Petersburg, but was this consequential?

More interesting, but perhaps tangential, is a large section (165–94), on the Russian and Ukrainian craze for Native American culture (playing Indian in the