

Dawn Over Samarkand: The Rebirth of Central Asia by Joshua Kunitz; Changing Asia (Asien Gruendlich Veraendert) by Egon Erwin Kisch; Rita Reil; Moved On! from Kashgar to Kashmir by P. S. Nazaroff; Malcolm Burr; Between the Oxus and the Indus by R. C. F. Schomberg; Ping-Hsin Yu-shi (The Travel Diary of Icy-Heart) by Ping-Hsin; Shanghai: Pei-hsin
Review by: O. L.

Pacific Affairs, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Mar., 1936), pp. 130-134

Published by: [Pacific Affairs, University of British Columbia](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2751036>

Accessed: 17/06/2014 12:31

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Criticism of details in this book should not obscure the fact that it is a unique piece of work, full of interest and crammed with information not available hitherto to an English-reading public. Though one must read it *cum grano*, the seasoning adds zest to the mental feast.

PHILIP C. JESSUP

DAWN OVER SAMARKAND: THE REBIRTH OF CENTRAL ASIA. By Joshua Kunitz. New York: Covici Friede. 1935. pp. 348. \$3.00.

CHANGING ASIA (ASIEN GRUENDLICH VERAENDERT). By Egon Erwin Kisch. (English version by Rita Reil.) New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1935. pp. 267 + viii. \$3.00.

MOVED ON! FROM KASHGAR TO KASHMIR. By P. S. Nazaroff. Translated by Malcolm Burr. London: George Allen & Unwin. 1935. pp. 317. 12s. 6d.

BETWEEN THE OXUS AND THE INDUS. By Colonel R. C. F. Schomberg. London: Martin Hopkinson. 1935. pp. 275. 15s.

PING-HSIN YU-CHI (THE TRAVEL DIARY OF ICY-HEART). By Ping-Hsin (Icy-Heart). (In Chinese.) Shanghai: Pei-hsin Book Co. 1935. pp. 105. \$0.40 (Chinese).

ALL five of these books, which deal with regions far from the Pacific, illustrate the fact that the shores of the Pacific Ocean now reach inland, so to speak, all the way to the Pamirs. Mr. Kunitz' account of the new republics of Central Asia deserves first place; but the pseudo-romantic title is a pity. Phrases like "dawn" and "rebirth" do not prepare the reader for critical acumen. This is unfair, in a way, because what is taking place in Central Asia undoubtedly is a dawn and a rebirth; but authors who are unable to think of more original titles sound as if they had been on carefully conducted tours. Mr. Kunitz and Mr. Kisch, the author of *Changing Asia* (a title which also manages to suggest the inspired and the flat-footed at the same time), were in fact members of a conducted tour of foreign communists or communist sympathizers. Mr. Kisch, though heralded as someone quite out of the ordinary, does not read so well in translation as in the German, which better clothes his jocosity; but even at best his rather blotchy impressions give an effect of turgid ecstasy. Mr. Kunitz is more prosaic, and better. He gives a great many quotations from proclamations, newspapers, letters, books in the new literature of Central Asia, and most vivid of all the new folk-poetry and "songs of wonder" of the Sovietized Central Asian peoples.

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His different sections are also prefaced by selections from the statements of Bolshevik leaders, notably Stalin, and these illuminate in a remarkably effective way the theories that underlie current processes, so that the reader is not merely deluged with marvels, but given a connected line of reasoning to account for them.

He also makes frank allowance for mistakes and what Stalin has called the "dizziness of success," and at the same time is fair to the ability, intrepidity and dramatic appeal of a number of the native anti-Bolshevik leaders. The result is a narrative of actual history in terms of its processes as well as of its events that is exciting, honest and intelligible. The Bolshevik methods of dealing with minority and "backward" peoples, their use of industrialization, their criteria of class differences, their attitude toward languages and cultures, all offer difficulties to the non-communist with no first-hand knowledge of the regions and peoples. Mr. Kunitz' unpretentious parallel exposition of theory and practice is of great value for anyone who is attempting to understand, not merely the Soviet successes in Central Asia, but the whole impact of the Soviet theory of nationalities, with which Stalin has been personally associated from an early period, on Asia in general.

Mr. Kunitz and Mr. Kisch, having travelled together, use a lot of the same material. One gathers that Mr. Kisch is an old communist who always knew it was all going to be wonderful and is too much gratified to do much but exult. He is the famous Austrian reporter being shown around. Mr. Kunitz does not try to show off. He is, to take one instance, notably less lurid and sentimental and more revealing in his version of the enthralling story of emancipation and struggle told to both men by an Usbeg woman communist.

Both writers have a curious, oversimplified, almost infantile attitude toward international questions, as distinguished from what they observe within the Soviet Union. "British intrigue" in particular is made dramatic and personal. Any British agent, like Colonel Etherton or Colonel Bailey, is turned into a personally malevolent villain who commands all the wicked resources of the diabolic British Empire. Yet the truth is that in the period of intervention when such men were active they were merely attempting to apply a very orthodox, very British "stiffening" to what they inevitably regarded as the "stable" forces in Russian Central Asia. It was all quite hopeless, because no one who at that time approached Central Asia from India, of all places, could possibly have understood what the Revolution was all about. Nor did some of the early Russian leaders themselves, as Mr. Kunitz makes plain. Such interventionists

are more important as part of a process than as individuals; but communist writers, who can on the average distinguish in an admirably hard-headed way between the individual and the historical process when applying their theories to the concrete problems with which they are dealing, seem very often to go off at half-cock when they start to expound the sinister inwardness of what is supposed to be going on in Afghanistan, Chinese Turkistan and so on. It is for example silly to say, as Mr. Kunitz does, that the British in 1918 were anxious to deprive Soviet Russia's textile industry of Central Asian cotton. Soviet industrialization can at that time have been little more than a figure of speech. The British were trying to prevent the Soviet authorities, then laboring in the shackles of the Brest-Litovsk treaty, from turning cotton over to the Germans for use in making munitions. Colonel Etherton, whom he quotes, has written some inept things about Central Asia; but it would have been more effective to make clear the largely blind and haphazard process of which he and other British agents were a part than to exaggerate his personal importance.

To open Mr. Nazaroff's book is to move into a world geographically contiguous but intellectually remote. Mr. Nazaroff is a "White" who helped the British against the Revolution, after which he escaped into Chinese Turkistan. He has written an exciting book called *Hunted Through Central Asia*. His new book, much less exciting, gives a rather sketchy account of the Kashgar region and narrates his journey over the Karakoram trade route into Kashmir. It would be ungenerous to demand of a refugee precisely the qualities which distinguish the Bolsheviks; it would be like insisting that the sole survivor of an earthquake should draw up a seismologically accurate report of what happened. Yet I cannot help feeling that this book suggests what a profound book might have been written by a man with Mr. Nazaroff's qualifications. He spent most of his active life in Russian Central Asia, and four years in Kashgar, and had the important advantage of knowing the most current language of both regions, but his personal experiences lack depth; one can see that he was deeply marked by the events that he lived through, but he is a man of action, not of contemplation, and his observations, many of which are interesting, do not seem to go below the surface or indicate the significant relations between the peoples, cultures, economies and geographical regions which he observed.

Colonel Schomberg's travels in the Gilgit Agency describe little known and often turbulent tribes in the land of huge mountains lying between Kashmir and the Afghan part of the Pamirs, where a tongue of Afghan

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territory runs out to meet a tongue of Chinese territory, the two thus providing a narrow strip of insulation between the British Empire in India and the Soviet Republics of Central Asia. Iranian, Turanian and other peoples are here mixed; they are few in numbers but prolific in tribal and religious divisions, and most of them are strongly established in natural fastnesses. Limited resources and the ambitions of savage rulers, some of them claiming fantastic descent from Alexander of Macedon, have contributed to a history of centuries of assassination, treachery, forays and trading in slaves. The Afghans on one side, and the British, working through Kashmir, on the other, now hold these mountaineers to a more or less uneasy peace. Of all the tribes concerned, Colonel Schomberg has not much use for any except the men of Hunza, who used to carry out raids of prodigious difficulty on the Karakoram trade route. He denies that they are savage by nature; on the contrary, they are the most capable and industrious people of the whole region. It was their starveling country which forced them to supplement their lack of resources by raiding. The pictures of his two Hunza followers are remarkable; bold and hard men, without a trace of servility. Most of Colonel Schomberg's comments are comments of disapproval. This would be tedious were it not that they are salted by reference to the remarks made by these Hunza men, so that to a certain extent one sees the region through the eyes of men who are natives of a part of it.

As for the general contrast between a retired British colonel on one side of the frontier and communist members of a "writers' brigade" on the other, it cannot be bridged in a review. It may be mentioned, however, that this country is part of the frontier on which the British at the end of the last century feared the "grey menace" of Tsarist Russia, described so picturesquely in fiction by Kipling. The dread at that time was that the Russians would find a new, easy line of passes, practicable for artillery, through mountains not yet completely mapped. It is now known that there are no such passes; but on the other hand the grey menace has become a Red menace, which is not looking for artillery routes but for a chance to convert such tribes as those described by Colonel Schomberg. It seems that the Soviet peoples of Central Asia are being made conscious not only of being a bulwark against British imperialism, but of being the advanced vedettes on the way to Hindostan.

The last of this group of books brings us to the Chinese side of the immensely long Central Asian frontier, in a region accessible by rail from Peiping. "Icy-Heart" is the pen name of an admired Chinese poet. With her husband and a professorial party from Yenching University

(near Peiping) she travelled up the Peiping-Suiyuan railway, along the border of Inner Mongolia. They stopped off at a number of places, and from Kueihua went about 100 miles by car into Inner Mongolia, to Bato Khalagha (better known under its Chinese name of Pailingmiao), the temporary "capital" of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Political Council, where they met Prince Te, the secretary of the council and its organizer and most important figure. The book is slight, but written with a charm, especially in the descriptions of scenery, which makes it easy to understand "Icy-Heart's" reputation as a delicate poet. It would be well worth translating for the sake of foreign travellers along the railway. The description of labor conditions in a coal mine which the party visited is, one might say, unconsciously gruesome. There is also a certain irony in the fact that it was the Japanese invasion of Manchuria which turned the attention of the party to the importance of Mongolia. Although Mongolia has overshadowed so many centuries of Chinese history, they found Mongol life completely strange and novel. This is understandable; it is because, for a century, relations with the West have been more important than with the tribal hinterland of China. The result has been, however, that the sudden increase of frontier difficulties following the Japanese invasion of Manchuria found the Chinese and their Government unprepared to deal with Mongolia. And Mongolia reaches back to Chinese Turkistan, which touches the Soviet Republics of Central Asia.

O. L.

EXTRÊME-ORIENT ET PACIFIQUE. *By Roger Lévy. Paris: Armand Colin. 1935. pp. 220. Frs. 10.50.*

THIS small book admirably fulfills the motto of the series to which it belongs: "popularization without cheapening." The author, secretary general of the Comité d'Étude des Problèmes du Pacifique, has in a masterly way summarized a vast amount of information, omitting all unnecessary statistics but giving the main numerical facts in the form of percentage proportions which are impressive and easy to remember; omitting many names of places and persons, yet giving a graphic picture of situations and events. The assignment of space to different topics is well balanced and the interpretations are realistic and thought-provoking. If some of the factual statements seem a little shaky, the fault lies in the inadequacy of the accessible source material. Nor can the author be