BOOK REVIEWS


Dr. Horecky is well known as the editor of important bibliographies in the Slavistic field (Basic Russian Publications, 1962; Southeastern Europe Basic Publications, 1969), and the announcement of a new book raised very high expectations for a significant new bibliographical tool. These hopes have not been disappointed. With the cooperation of 79 well-selected experts, Dr. Horecky has given to Slavic studies and to libraries a valuable compendium.

The book is organized in six chapters: Overview of the East Central European Area; Czechoslovakia; East Germany; Hungary; Poland; Sorbians (Lusatians) and Polabians. It lists slightly over 5,000 titles of books and articles grouped under 3,380 bibliographical entries; it closes with an invaluable index of 144 pages in small print. Obviously, the term “basic publications” does not lend itself to an ironclad definition and cannot be translated into rigid criteria which would have the authority of the Ten Commandments. The following comments should, therefore, not be construed as the “slings and barbs of the critic” but as the expression of the sincere admiration which motivated me to read the book carefully from cover to cover three times and to spend many hours in checking catalogs and bibliographies and in discussing the selections with various experts.

Although we all will basically agree with the emphasis the bibliography gives to selected languages, additional attention could have been given to Italian scholarly literature (especially valuable for linguistics) and to Spanish and Portuguese titles. J. Pe-


To Chapter 6, one might add: Giesebrecht, Wendische Geschichten (Berlin: 1841–43), 3vols.; Boguslawskii, Historija serbskeho naroda (Bautzen: 1884).

The index, which has been compiled with utmost care, has only one insignificant typing error. Wytrwal is listed under 2586 but indexed under 2585. Another small misprint on page 674 of the text is 2729 instead of 2739.

Many titles listed above probably had been known to the compilers of the bibliography but had been rejected for various reasons. Complete unani mity about the usefulness and quality of over 5,000 titles cannot be reached. Therefore, I have nothing but praise for the work done by Dr. Ho recky and his colleagues. They have provided us with an extremely useful tool.—Felix Reichmann, Cornell University.


Having been disenchanted by library associations' preoccupation with housekeeping techniques and organizational self-scrutiny, it is reenchanting to note the California Library Association's sponsorship of this substantial reference work. This new edition has been enlarged to include 17,000 items in some 230 libraries, as compared with 5,000 items in 98 libraries. The additions consist of items published in 1949–61, earlier publications previously omitted, and holdings of libraries contributing for the first time. Some representative out-of-state libraries are now included.

The format has been improved. The work is set in easily readable typefaces, rather than from typewritten copy. The arrangement is by counties, subdivided by towns; regional and statewide works; special collections; bibliographical references; index and map of the state's 58 counties. The endpapers reproduce the contributing libraries' symbols. It represents an enormous achievement by volunteer professional labor, and will be greatly useful to workers in California.

Yet a serious review seeks to render a balanced judgement of a work. Strong as this bibliography is, it has some weaknesses and limitations which must be noted.

Although Mrs. Rocq earned her place on the title page by what must have been Amazonian labors of arranging, checking, deciding, and so forth, the work is essentially an uncritical omnium gatherum. This is the result of the method followed in compiling the work. Its "author" is the Northern Division of the Regional Resources Coordinating Committee of the California Library Association, under which functioned the California Local History Sub-Committee, chaired by Editor Rocq.

This latter group was headquartered at the California Historical Society in San Francisco, and there held regular Saturday afternoon work sessions over a period of five years. Because the labor was voluntary, in the words of Jane Wilson, chairwoman of the Regional Resources group, "It did not seem feasible to redo much of the work that had already been done." That is to say, the new edition is not, as its title page declares, revised, at least not substantially.

Mrs. Rocq states, "Although we examined a majority of the bibliography's titles in the Library of the California Historical Society and other San Francisco Bay Area libraries, time and distance did not allow personal checking of all the items listed."

This volunteer, regional method seems to me to indicate the nature of librarians' work in general. Their main efforts are given to collecting, arranging, and servicing materials. Except for a few scholarly bibliographers often unorthodox in their education, they are not, nor are they required to be, familiar with the contents of books. Thus, theirs might be said to be a service and not a scholarly profession.

Lacking in the preparation of this other-