nineteenth century. For example, Davis argues that the political debates of 1820 indicated that the innovations of the previous decades had left southern Italy caught uneasily between an older agrarian order that had been seriously destabilized and newer forms of bureaucratic power that were in large part still to be created. Davis’s fine study invites the counter-intuitive suggestion that the model of internal contradiction may be pushed too far, and that there is a widespread tendency both to think in appropriate terms of a Neapolitan Sonderweg and to underrate the extent to which both Mediterranean and, more generally, European societies and states of the period could cope with difficulties to a greater extent than might be implied. David Ringrose’s book on the Spanish economy offers an instructive contrast.

JEREMY BLACK

Russian Studies

*Slavophile Thought and the Politics of Cultural Nationalism*. By Susanna Rabow-Edling. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006. Pp. viii + 183. $55.00.

The debate between so-called Slavophiles and Westernizers dominated Russian intellectual life at a crucial juncture, in the 1840s. Preoccupation with the fundamental question that this debate addressed – the relationship between Russia, on the one hand, and ‘the West’, conceived as a cultural construct rather than a clearly defined space, on the other – has coloured Russian intellectual life ever since. The Slavophiles perceived disturbing rifts in their native land – between the educated minority and the people; between the life of the spirit and the life of the mind – and they expressed a deep anxiety about the imitative quality of their modern culture.

There is already a large corps of scholarship on Slavophilism. However, Susanna Rabow-Edling manages to treat the doctrine, if we may call it that, in a fresh way by reconsidering it in the light of the scholarly discussion of recent decades on the subject of nationalism. In particular she makes use of the distinction that has been drawn between a political variety of nationalism, based on the concept of the sovereign people, and a cultural variety, based on the concept of the unique people with a shared cultural heritage. Taking issue with the assumption that cultural nationalism is necessarily apolitical, she treats Slavophilism not as a dreamy, utopian conservative critique of
modern society (as previous students of it such as Andrzej Walicki would have it) but as ‘a critical assessment of contemporary Russian society and a project for social change’ (p. 2). She does not accept that the Slavophiles wished to counter the Westernizers’ espousal of things Western by promotion of Russian customs, institutions and values (p. 5). In fact she challenges the view that Europe is the other in relation to which the Slavophiles defined their idea of Russia (p. 6).

Readers may find this latter contention – that the notion of an opposition between Russia and the West in Slavophile thought has been overemphasized, or indeed that it does not exist – one of the least convincing elements in Rabow-Edling’s work. It is perhaps also debatable whether previous scholars have been so resistant as readers of this monograph might assume to some of the other claims that its author makes. It is uncontroversial, for instance, to assert that Romanticism and Idealism forced Russian intellectuals to develop a culture of their own or that the notion of national distinctiveness to which the Slavophiles subscribed was itself a borrowing from the West. (It is good, though, that Rabow-Edling has devoted more space than is commonly given to the ideas put forward in the late eighteenth century by Herder, whose impact on cultural nationalism was great.) One may also question whether the author’s treatment of the Russian historical and cultural background to Slavophilism is quite broad and firm enough to support her claim to have focused more sharply than previous scholars on the contexts in which the doctrine was formulated (pp. 1, 11). After all, Pushkin, Lermontov and the ‘superfluous man’ (the literary incarnation of the identity crisis in the Russian educated class to which Rabow-Edling rightly says the Slavophiles were responding) are nowhere mentioned. Indeed even the examination of Slavophilism itself, while fundamentally sound on such matters as the Slavophiles’ view of the Orthodox faith, the Russian people, community and law, seems somewhat limited. For it is only the writings of Khomiakov and Ivan Kireevskii that Rabow-Edling has used. Konstantin Aksakov and Samarin are mentioned but twice each and Petr Kireevskii not at all.

While there may be doubt, then, as to whether her work represents quite such a ‘new way of looking at the Slavophiles’ as she claims (p. 11) and whether its thesis is as firmly grounded as it might be, Rabow-Edling has undoubtedly offered a lucid new discussion of this subject. She engages seriously with the classic scholarship about Slavophilism and with more recent scholarship about nationalism, of which she shows an extensive knowledge. Her monograph will be seen as a useful contribution to historiography on these subjects,
especially, perhaps, by scholars in the field of political science, from which Rabow-Edling herself has approached her material.

Derek Offord

_The Bakhtin Circle. In the Master’s Absence._ Edited by Craig Brandist, David Shepherd and Galin Tihanov, with an introduction by David Shepherd. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004. Pp. x + 286.

This volume is devoted to the lives and works of members of the Bakhtin Circle. It contains seven articles by Bakhtin specialists, three selected articles by members of the Bakhtin Circle in translation, materials from V. N. Voloshinov’s archives in translation, and a timeline of the Bakhtin Circle. The articles result from a conference held at Sheffield University in 1999 under the title ‘In the Master’s Absence: The Unknown Bakhtin Circle’. After the detailed synoptic introduction to the Circle and its major representatives by David Shepherd, founder and director of the Bakhtin Centre at the University of Sheffield, Bakhtin specialists from Britain, St Petersburg and Bulgaria shed light on a range of biographical, historical, philosophical and scholarly aspects of what has become known as the ‘Bakhtin Circle’. The results are sometimes very detailed overviews, but of uneven quality and interest for the non-specialist reader. Iurii Medvedev and Dar’ia Medvedova have written about the scholarly legacy of Pavel Medvedev in the light of his dialogue with Bakhtin (Shepherd’s translation of their Russian article, published earlier in the journal _Dialog. Karnaval. Khronotop_, 2 (2001: 73–94)), which offers a condensed and admiring description of Pavel Medvedev’s life and works. Galin Tihanov writes about the choice for Soviet aesthetics between Eurasianism, Marxism and Formalism. In fact, his article concentrates on the extremely complex (not to say unclear) reception of Medvedev’s critique of Formalism on the Paris émigré scene, the polemic about Eurasianism, and the role of art in Soviet society; and this particularly through the eyes of Emilia Emmanuilovna Litauer, an obscure polemic émigré critic of whom, as Tihanov stresses, very little is known to this day. Vladimir Alpatov addresses the Bakhtin Circle’s attitudes towards linguistics. His concise article is devoted to positioning Voloshinov’s _Marxism and the Philosophy of Language_ in the context of contemporary linguistic debate. Alpatov concludes with the claim that Voloshinov’s book was marginalized at the time, but is even more contemporary now...