long period, Shepelev's detailed investigation has many implications for students of both Russian economic development and the bureaucracy.

While probing the infrequent general policy statements of successive finance ministers, Shepelev effectively unifies his work by concentrating on the ministry's recurring problems and daily concerns. These included taxation and budget deficits, government regulation of business, monetary matters and the gold standard, tariff protection, foreign capital, the labor question, and schemes to improve the coordination of economic policy. All these matters are carefully examined, and many specialists will find fresh and useful information. I was particularly struck by Shepelev's demonstration of the powerful, generally overriding influence of budgetary deficits on the formulation of policy until the late 1880s. Equally striking was the related conviction of all finance ministers, from M. K. Reutern through Sergei Witte, that the Ministry of Finance desperately needed to attract foreign capital and then defend it against domestic foes. The ministry's long and well-known conflict with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, especially on labor questions, is also effectively analyzed.

One appealing aspect of this work is Shepelev's keen interest in the personalities of the ministers and their coworkers. No less refreshing is the attention to corridor politics and bureaucratic power plays. The actors come alive and they matter. Most valuable of all for this reviewer is the wealth of archival material quoted and summarized. Here Shepelev carries forward the tradition of the Leningrad branch of the Institute of History, which has developed a flair for mining the rich ore at their disposal. Western scholars who have taken a turn in those mines cannot help but be appreciative.

Two of Shepelev's general interpretations are especially noteworthy. First, stressing the continuity of the Ministry of Finance's basic positions, Shepelev concludes that the ministry's numerous and powerful agrarian and conservative opponents were nonetheless incapable of reversing or derailing the main thrust of commercial and industrial policy. Second, buttressing his Marxian argument with unusual attention to Friedrich Engels's famous letters to N. F. Danielson, Shepelev stresses the underlying similarity of Western and Russian capitalist development, thereby diverging markedly from American scholarship's delight in emphasizing differences. Shepelev's conclusion might be more convincing if he (and other Soviet scholars) paid closer attention to private entrepreneurs and their critical role in capitalist economic development.

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NEAR EAST

BERNARD LEWIS. *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*. New York: W. W. Norton. 1982. Pp. 350. $19.95.

The theme of this book as announced in its second sentence is the tracing of a Muslim discovery of Western Europe "parallel" to the discovery of the rest of the world by Western Europeans from the fifteenth century onward. Yet the substance of the work actually constitutes a demonstration that no such parallel discovery occurred prior to the nineteenth century, a period that is specifically treated only in the last five pages. Muslim curiosity about Western Europe during the preceding millennium is persuasively shown to have been virtually nil and mainly utilitarian.

In the course of the exposition the reader is amused and informed by a wealth of anecdote and direct quotation drawn from Lewis's long and painstaking experience with Arabic, Persian, and particularly Ottoman Turkish sources. Seldom degenerating to catalogue-style citation of sources, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* is both impressive and useful as a contribution to knowledge in a hitherto little explored area. Read in tandem with Norman Daniel's *Islam and the West*, though not Edward Said's *Orientalism*, which treats a later period, it will provide a comprehensive overview of the picture each society held of the other.

Unfortunately, the tenor of Lewis's exposition is derisive and condescending toward Muslims to such an extent that the book's analytical value is seriously undermined. One may start with the title. Why suggest a comparison between an explosion of knowledge and curiosity in Europe and a tepid lack of interest in the lands of Islam if not to show the latter to be deficient? A comparison of language skills and firsthand experience between Western Europe and the Islamic world at the present day would show an enormous imbalance in the opposite direction. The author maintains that the world distribution of power is a sufficient explanation of the fact that now more Arabs know English than Englishmen know Arabic; but different levels of economic, political, military, and cultural achievement in times past, while mentioned as partial explanations of the slight regard earlier Muslims had for Western Europe, in no way damp the repeated intimation that the Muslims *should* have been more interested in things Western and would have been had it not been for their stultifying religion and social customs (pp. 299–303).

In arguing thus, Lewis is helped by the fact that he is only examining one aspect of a many-sided phenomenon. He speaks, for example, in a chapter on the Muslim view of the world, of the division of

the world in Islamic law into a House of Islam and a House of War. "Most Muslim jurists held that it was impossible for a Muslim to live under a non-Muslim government" (p. 66). This more than the hostility of Europeans toward Muslims living in their midst is adduced to explain why so few Muslims voluntarily sojourned in Europe. Yet a broader perspective would have revealed that large Muslim communities existed for centuries under non-Muslim rule in China, Africa, and Indonesia. Indeed, in many areas such communities ultimately achieved the conversion of the indigenous population, contrary to Lewis's implication that the Islamic religion propagates primarily by warfare (p. 301). Such a perspective would also have provided a desirable comparison between Muslim interest in Western Europe and in other foreign lands.

The contrast between European bigotry and religiously dictated Islamic tolerance of Christians and Jews is well brought out, but the significant consequence cited is not that Muslims had good reason to avoid Europe but that they had indigenous minorities upon whom they could rely, when necessary, for knowledge of European languages. For Lewis, a Muslim who evidences knowledge of a Western language is not really to be counted as a Muslim if he is himself a convert to Islam or even the son or grandson of a convert. "By the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the number of [Muslims] able to read a European language was still remarkably small, and many of them were converts or sons or grandsons of converts from Christianity or Judaism to Islam" (p. 303). The implication is that Christian and Jewish mental vigor can persist genetically for some time against Muslim torpor.

Language knowledge, and particularly knowledge of foreign literatures, looms here as the highest pinnacle of altruistic intellectual attainment. "It was not until Renaissance and post-Renaissance Europe that human society for the first time developed the sophistication, the detachment and, above all, the curiosity to study and appreciate the cultures of alien and even hostile societies" (p. 75). This orientalist ideal, which Lewis himself personifies, is one he finds sorely lacking in Muslims. The fact that "educated Turks knew Arabic, Persian, and Turkish" (p. 72) counts for little in his estimation compared with their lack of interest in "foreign"—specifically Western European—languages. There is no mention that Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, belonging to three entirely different language families, pose greater intellectual challenges in their acquisition than are encountered in learning *all* Western European languages. The Muslims are simply written off as uninterested and unskilled in foreign language.

With respect to literature, the structure of the book gives rise to a curious argument. Separate chapters are devoted to the scant data indicating Muslim knowledge of Western religion, economics, government and justice, science and technology, cultural life, and social and personal behavior. In treating cutural life, Lewis duly notes a marked Muslim interest in European art from the sixteenth century onward as well as occasional signs of appreciation of European music, which finally made a definite impact early in the nineteenth century. Only later does European literature come into the Muslim ken. In explanation Lewis avers that "for the visual and musical arts, all that was needed was to see and to hear and to achieve the measure of understanding necessary to follow the one or the other. Difficult as this might be, it was less so than the problem of mastering a foreign language or even of acquiring the desire to do so" (p. 275). Any professional artist or musician would surely dispute this proposition, but in context it poses a more profound problem. Since Muslim art and especially music have, to this day, received far less attention from Western scholars than has Muslim literature, what has caused this apparent Western deficiency in simple seeing and hearing, not to mention in curiosity? The structure of Lewis's argument would suggest that it must be Christian religious doctrine.

It seems difficult for Lewis to find something to praise in the activities of Muslims, and given that he has chosen to write about things that the Muslims virtually ignored, it is seldom necessary. But by attributing all Muslim inadequacies to their religion and entirely ignoring the realms of social and comparative history in seeking explanations, he renders the past century of true Muslim discovery of Europe difficult to understand. Today one can travel from end to end of Saudi Arabia, a rich and rigidly Muslim country that has never been ruled by a Western power, and speak nothing but English. Is our understanding of this sort of phenomenon really advanced by statements like "dealing with infidel foreigners was a dirty and dangerous business and best left to other infidels" (p. 105)?

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FRED MCGRAW DONNER. *The Early Islamic Conquests.* (Princeton Studies on the Near East.) Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1981. Pp. xviii, 489. $35.00.

This book deals with two questions relating to the expansion of the Arabs in the seventh century A.D., that is, the origin and nature of the conquests (why and how did the Arabs attempt them?) and the course of these conquests in Syria and Iraq. It does not discuss the conquests of Egypt, upper Mesopotamia, Iran, North Africa, or Spain, and it has