

American cousins could not vote when they reached their age of majority, were proud Canadians. Muriel Kitagawa, a Canadian Nisei, recalled clinging to Walter Scott's lines, "This is my own, my native land" when, as an adult, she endured the wartime uprooting. On both sides of the border, schools promoted tolerance and good citizenship. That did not save people of Japanese ancestry from wartime dislocation, but the lessons taught may have contributed to the waning of discrimination after the war.

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Bertrand M. Patenaude — *The Big Show in Bololand: The American Relief Expedition to Soviet Russia in the Famine of 1921*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2002. Pp. xiv, 818.

This spacious and engaging work provides far and away the best account yet written of the American Relief Administration and its work in combatting the Russian famine of 1921–1922. Drawing upon the letters, diaries, and reminiscences of American and Russian participants, as well as the official archives of the ARA, Bertrand M. Patenaude has produced a richly layered portrait of this extraordinary humanitarian effort. Equally praiseworthy is his dispassionate discussion of the clash of cultures and the political disputes that the relief expedition inevitably produced. The book is an unabashed paean to the nearly 300 American field workers who carried the ARA's work into Russia, but it takes full measure of their individual faults as well as the brashness and insensitivity that marked them collectively.

A word has to be said about the unfortunate title. Patenaude strives throughout to communicate the peculiar ethos of the relief effort, a mix of genuine idealism and business enterprise, college high-jinx, and lost-generation angst. The letters and conversations of the relievers (as they were referred to officially) are peppered with contemporary slang and organizational jargon. A "Big Show" was something of real significance (the 1914–1918 war had been a Big Show). "Bolos" was a term widely employed across Eastern Europe in that era to refer to Bolsheviks. "Bololand" was a purely ARA construct denoting, of course, Soviet Russia. "The Big Show in Bololand", then, was the insiders' name for the largest and most important of Herbert Hoover's relief efforts.

In 1921 Hoover's political career and disastrous presidency lay years in the future. He was known as a successful engineer and millionaire businessman and acclaimed as the world's most effective humanitarian. The American Relief Administration was the last of a series of famine relief programmes that Hoover had created, going back to the first years of the war. Prior to August 1921 the ARA's activity had been centred in the post-Versailles nations of Eastern Europe, where a successful formula had been developed in which small cadres of American administrators mobilized committees of local citizens to distribute foodstuffs. Efficiency, sound business practices, and the autonomy of the reliever on the spot were stressed.

This was the template that the ARA sought to employ to combat famine in Russia. In the event, it had to be considerably modified because of the peculiar nature of Soviet society and the suspicions of the Russian government.

The activities of the ARA in Russia were regulated by the Riga Agreement of August 1921 signed by representatives of the ARA and Maxim Litvinov, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of the RSFSR. There was a great deal of anxiety in the Soviet government over the risks entailed in admitting so large an American presence to Russia; balancing these fears was the hope that a successful collaboration with Hoover's organization might pave the way for the resumption of broader economic ties with the West, a goal of Lenin's recently announced New Economic Policy (NEP). In the end, however, the ever-worsening famine and the prospects of mass starvation made the collaboration necessary. The Riga Agreement shows how strong a hand the ARA had in the negotiations. It won virtual immunity from Russian law for its American staff and a free hand on the vital questions of how the food would be distributed and who would receive it. These were bitter pills for the Soviet government to swallow and, while generally honouring the Riga Agreement, it tirelessly sought to exert greater control over the ARA, its operations, and its employees. This impulse to control and the ARA's equally stubborn insistence on autonomy remained a constant counterpoint to the common task of averting a human catastrophe. Turf wars comprise a great part of the official record of the ARA in Russia, and Patenaude deals with them in detail. While he clearly favours the ARA position on most points, his recounting remains evenhanded and generous, a contrast to the rancorous tone of earlier accounts.

The symbol of Soviet interference was Aleksandr Eiduk, a fearsome former secret policeman, who was installed next to ARA headquarters in Moscow with the title of Representative Plenipotentiary. He was constantly embroiled in disputes with William N. Haskell, ARA director for Russia, and he tried to establish a network of local plenipotentiaries in the various district headquarters across the country. This harassment finally forced Haskell to employ the ARA's trump card, a credible threat to end the food shipments. Eidok was reprimanded by the Soviet government and shortly afterward was replaced. In Patenaude's view, by far the greater part of government obstructionism was generated on the district level by meddling or incompetent local officials.

One of Patenaude's stated aims is to take his account beyond the narrative record and to give a human dimension to the ARA's experience in Russia. A great part of the book is taken up with a recounting of the impressions and experiences of the relievers and their reception by Russian society. Two full chapters are devoted to relations with Russian women, which range from marriages destined to last a lifetime to the employment of prostitutes at drunken parties and even to accusations of bartering food for sexual services. The struggle with obtuse officialdom is a frequent theme, but we also learn of armed confrontations with bandits and panicked flight from wolves. Patenaude's scholarship has in many instances unearthed more than one variant of these events, and the reader gets the bonus of several good yarns spun about each adventure.

Typhus raged throughout the famine regions during the mission's stay, but there

was only one fatality among the relievers. The greatest health threats to the Americans were alcoholism and nervous breakdown. Many of the ARA men were known as drinkers before they came to Russia, and the stress of the work combined with the easy availability of alcohol (prohibition was in force in the United States, but the Riga Agreement guaranteed the unlimited importation of “commissary supplies”) led to heavy habitual drinking and the occasional epic bender. Two senior members of the Moscow staff were sent home for drinking. Stress, as well, was a contributing factor to “famine shock”, nervous collapse as a result of confronting one too many scenes of hunger and death. Enough of these images are included among the photographs in this book to suggest what effect must have been produced in the minds of those who lived in the midst of famine for up to two years. The businesslike and emotionally distant approach the relievers affected towards their work, an attitude that frequently shocked their Russian employees, was as much an attempt to insulate themselves from the surrounding horrors as it was an affirmation of the Hooverite principles of efficiency and practicality.

By the summer of 1922, it was evident that the harvest of that year would be abundant. As well, the agrarian programme of the NEP was already having an effect in stimulating greater grain production. Hoover, therefore, resolved to shut down the relief expedition, and within a year the last ARA man was out of Russia. Successive Soviet governments ignored or played down the contributions of the ARA, and Haskell, on a trip to Russia a decade later, noted that the effort which “fed nearly eleven million Russians in the days of the darkest famine of 1921 and 1922, seems almost forgotten” (p. 725). Its memory was kept alive in America chiefly through the efforts of the ex-relievers. In 1925 the ARA Association was founded, and its periodic meetings lasted into the 1960s. The *A.R.A. Association Review*, established in the same year, published 39 issues over 40 years. A host of letters, reminiscences, and photographs were collected and catalogued, creating the archival base that Patenaude has so skilfully employed in bringing to life this extraordinary episode in American-Russian relations.

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Guy Saupin — *Les villes en France à l'époque moderne, (XVI<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Paris, Éditions Belin, 2002, 270 p.

La synthèse de Guy Saupin est la cinquième à porter sur l'ensemble de l'histoire des villes françaises à l'époque moderne, après celles d'Albert Babeau (1880; L'Harmattan, 1997), d'Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, directeur du tome 3 de l'*Histoire de la France urbaine* (Seuil, 1981), de Jean Meyer (SEDES, 1983–1984) et de Benoît Garnot (Ophrys, 1989). L'ouvrage s'inscrit dans l'excellente collection « Belin Sup Histoire » qui compte plus de quinze titres pour la seule période 1500–1800.

Ce manuel universitaire aux paramètres d'édition parfaitement pédagogiques, avec un fort appareil de cartes, tableaux, graphiques, photographies, documents,