

by explaining how the growing challenge of commercial sport hastened the decline of both *fizkultura* and the interest of Soviet artists therein (p. 190).

The book is well illustrated; indeed, O'Mahony must be praised for acquainting readers with the manner in which Aleksandr Samokhvalov's paintings, such as *Girl with a Shot Put* (1933) or *At the Stadium* (1935), depicted women's sport. Even so, the position of women in *fizkultura* is glossed over in the text itself, so that readers requiring more on this aspect will need to consult the writings of, say, Alison Rowley, whose doctoral dissertation inspired her recent article, entitled 'Sport in the Service of the State: Images of Physical Culture and Soviet Women, 1917–1941', in the *International Journal of the History of Sport* (Dec. 2006).

Sport in the USSR is part of the well-established 'Picturing History' series designed to examine the historical significance of images. Despite occasional weaknesses concerning the coverage of women and the failure to draw upon the recent research of Barbara Keys, among others, O'Mahony's book represents a strong contribution to the series. Illuminating the symbiotic relationship between visual culture and sport, his study reminds historians of leisure and sport about the merits of studying the visual arts alongside sport.

Kingston University

PETER J. BECK

***The Cossacks.* By Shane O'Rourke.** Manchester University Press. 2007. 316pp. £15.99.

This is an effective volume that draws on the substantial amount of new research that has appeared in recent decades. O'Rourke, lecturer in history at York, is well aware of the developing literature on the relationship between the steppe and the settled areas, as well as the specific literature on the Cossacks including his own work on the Don Cossacks. The book contributes to the literature on pre-Soviet and Soviet Russia, but also adopts a wider perspective in noting that Chinese, Byzantine, Persian and, later, the Russian empires had to find some means of reconciling nomadic autonomy with their own world-views. Each insisted that nomadic peoples approach them through a cultural framework in which they acknowledged their subjection to imperial power, even if this was far removed from the reality of the relationship. O'Rourke points out Cossack military proficiency. For example, even the most difficult and draining of all military operations provided opportunities for the Cossacks to demonstrate their prowess in either defence or attack. O'Rourke argues that neither the Cossacks nor the Cossack homelands can be recreated in any meaningful sense. He suggests that Stalin largely succeeded in eradicating the Cossacks as a separate people and in destroying the traditions and memory of the Cossack communities. Collectivization and dekulakization are presented as destroying any possibility of collective survival for the Cossacks. The deportations of the anti-kulak campaigns of 1930–3 demonstrated a powerlessness that destroyed identity. This clearly argued book deserves a wide readership.

University of Exeter

JEREMY BLACK

***Bulgaria.* By R. J. Crampton.** Oxford University Press. 2007. xxii + 507pp. £35.00.

This book fully lives up to its two distinguished provenances: it is part of the 'Oxford History of Modern Europe' series (which has previously served up such

instant classics as Raymond Carr's contribution on Spain and Gordon Craig's on Germany) and its author, a professor of east European history at Oxford, is perhaps the leading English-language authority on modern Bulgarian history, having previously published three titles on the subject (including the Bulgarian volumes in both the Cambridge 'concise' and the Cambridge 'short' national histories). Any criticisms included in this review are minor quibbles: this is a solidly researched, well-written (if somewhat detached) and clearly organized book, and, although anyone not interested in Bulgaria or at least not open-minded on the subject (including Winston Churchill, whom Crampton quotes on p. 3 as declaring he 'could not give a damn about Bulgaria') would clearly be deranged to seek to read this 500-page volume, most others will find perusing it both rewarding and, often, quite pleasurable. The book's focus on the political (especially), social and economic history of post-1800 Bulgaria provides plenty of material for writing and food for thought (on p. viii Crampton says that as a 'non-expert' he has not attempted to include substantial material on Bulgarian cultural history since to do so would be to 'short-change' the reader). Although he never seeks to compare Bulgaria with other European or non-European countries, a great deal of the historical material will easily lend itself to such comparison: for example, the growth of Bulgarian national consciousness in the nineteenth century clearly parallels that of many other countries, including Hungary, Norway and Serbia, and the rise (or imposition), decline and fall of communism after the Second World War provides obvious grist for comparison with developments elsewhere in eastern Europe. Although the book takes account of Bulgaria's 2007 European Union accession, it badly needs to include readily available post-communist economic and social statistical data, as the textual treatment is vague on this critical subject (especially in contrast to the balanced treatment of communist Bulgaria, where the police-state nature of the regime is highlighted, but so are the very substantial improvements in standards of living, including, for example, a twenty-year increase in life expectancy and a 90 per cent decrease in infant mortality). The book is – quite appropriately given the scope of its coverage – only lightly footnoted, but Crampton includes an excellent 25-page bibliographical essay, including Bulgarian (mostly), English, French and German sources. Oddly, only a couple of Russian sources are included, however, and one cannot help but wonder if it might have been worthwhile for Crampton to have received linguistic help in order to include some Greek and Turkish materials, since Bulgaria's modern history has so often involved struggling against Greek cultural and Turkish and Russian political domination. The book has an extensive index, but it has some odd omissions, for example lacking entries under 'elections', 'suffrage' or 'voting'.

The University of Michigan at Ann Arbor ROBERT JUSTIN GOLDSTEIN