

nificantly, as Professor MacKenzie confirms, Cherniaev was someone who could easily be admired or despised, but who could hardly be ignored even by Russia's monarchs.

On the basis of long and extensive research in the USSR and Europe (the book's bibliography can only be described as thorough and complete so far as available sources are concerned), MacKenzie carries the reader through Cherniaev's long life, from his family background and education to the major and minor episodes of his military (and, might one say, his amateurish political and diplomatic) career. Some of Cherniaev's exploits are well known, such as his audacious and freewheeling command of Russian troops in Central Asia (which earned him the sobriquet "Lion of Tashkent") and his involvement as a "retired" Russian officer in the Serbian struggle for independence. These familiar episodes aside, the reader is treated to a portrait of a "latter day Don Quixote" (p. 243), a "crusader, adventurer, opportunist" (p. 125) who time and again, owing to the desire for personal gain and glory, or more tragically, to an irrational (even psychotic?) perception of reality, engaged in personal and professional activities that had a significant effect on Russia's military posture, her diplomatic position in relation to several of her neighbors, and aspects of her domestic politics.

This is not a flattering biography, nor should it have been. Cherniaev was consumed by self-pity, delusions of grandeur, a sense of persecution, ambition, and congenital restlessness, all of which could easily condemn him in the eyes of many. Yet time and again he was able to overcome the consequences through an incredible capacity to deceive and captivate. That his career lasted as long as it did, and that he continued throughout much of it to retain the support (politically and financially) of important governmental and private figures (including at least three tsars), is perhaps the greatest tragedy of all, and it is a sad commentary on nineteenth-century Russia's military and political establishment.

Professor MacKenzie is to be commended for this volume which not only probes the career and character of Cherniaev but also links both to the contemporary scene in an absorbing and informative manner.

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BISMARCK AT THE CROSSROADS: THE REORIENTATION OF GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY AFTER THE CONGRESS OF BERLIN, 1878-1880. By *Bruce Waller*. University of London Historical Studies, 35. London: The Athlone Press, University of London, 1974. viii, 273 pp. \$18.00. Distributed in USA by Humanities Press, New Jersey.

The period covered by this book parallels closely that of W. N. Medlicott's *Bismarck, Gladstone and the Concert of Europe* (London: The Athlone Press, 1956). Whereas the Medlicott study mainly concerns British policy, the present work emphasizes German diplomacy, particularly in relation to Russia. The aim is to examine the background of the Dual Alliance of October 1879 and the Russo-German rapprochement leading to the negotiations for the Three Emperors' Alliance of 1881. Waller considers these years crucial not only for German foreign policy, but also because "the period 1878-79 can be considered one of the important points in nineteenth-century European history, marking the end of *laissez-faire* liberalism and the beginning of the new conservative trend" (p. 1).

Based on a careful analysis of German diplomatic documents, the narrative concentrates on the Russo-German tension following the Congress of Berlin, the personal animosity and rivalry between Bismarck and the Russian foreign minister, A. M. Gorchakov, and relations between Berlin and Vienna. A great deal of attention is also given to the controversy over German investments in the Rumanian railroads and to their relevance for German foreign policy. In general, Waller gives an able account of the events of the period. However, it must be strongly emphasized that this book is designed for specialists in diplomatic history with a good knowledge of the issues at stake. Waller does not discuss the general policy of the countries involved, or their aims and methods. Adequate background information on the specific issues with which the study deals is also missing. For example, the reader is not given an explanation of the background of the complicated and controversial Rumanian railroad problem, the settlement of the Silistrian boundary, and the terms of the Treaty of Berlin. In addition, some objections could perhaps be made to the treatment of Gorchakov. Considerable attention is paid to the "two chancellors' war" without any indication that there is a great deal of evidence that the Russian chancellor was by this time sick, feeble, and even senile—in no way a match for his vigorous and aggressive opponent.

With these reservations in mind, this book should definitely be read by anyone interested in diplomatic relations in the years 1878–80. It is based on thorough research in London, Paris, and Vienna, as well as on German documentation.

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DEUTSCHE RUSSLANDPOLITIK: DAS SCHEITERN DER DEUTSCHEN WELTPOLITIK UNTER BÜLOW 1900–1906. By *Barbara Vogel*. Studien zur modernen Geschichte, vol. 11. Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag, 1973. 335 pp. DM 38, paper.

Barbara Vogel, a student of Fritz Fischer, has presented us with an exhaustive, closely reasoned examination of the role vouchsafed to Russia in Bülow's *Weltpolitik*. But it would be unfair to the author to think of her work as nothing more than a study, however excellently done, of Russo-German relations in the Bülow era. Her larger aim is to relate German domestic and foreign policies to each other and to perceive these policies, in turn, as part of a consistent design to gain Russian support for the ultimate destruction of English hegemony, and it has been, for the most part, brilliantly achieved. In her eagerness to break with the old *Primat der Aussenpolitik*, however, she has perhaps swung too heavily in the direction of an *Interessenpolitik* carried out "on the order of and for the benefit of the ruling elements of the state." If only it were all so easy. Then one would merely have to fathom the interests of these elements and, presto, the policy would become obvious. In actuality, her own scholarship and sophistication have led her far beyond such limited premises.

Vogel demonstrates convincingly that Björkö, far from being "an escapade of personal imperial policy," as it has been described so often, was a logical outcome of Bülow's earlier policies toward Russia. Fully conscious of the ironies of history, she notes almost with relish how one of Bülow's greatest domestic triumphs, the fusion of agrarian and industrial interests in support of the Russian