

the Russian thrust into the Mediterranean, and to the history of the diplomacy of the Napoleonic era.

BEN-CION PINCHUK
University of Tel-Aviv

RUSSIA FROM 1812 TO 1945: A HISTORY. By *Graham Stephenson*. New York and Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1970. 467 pp. \$10.95.

The curious choice of terminal dates for this book was apparently dictated by the author's major interest, which is evidently the relative standing of Russia among the Great Powers. However, as an English schoolmaster, writing primarily for his fellow Englishmen (and Scotsmen), he felt it necessary to stress also the peasantry and the intelligentsia, for "the English-speaking reader needs to have his imagination jogged." Nowhere is there any indication that Stephenson has used primary source materials; he has been content to read widely in an assortment of secondary works, good, bad, and indifferent, and to patch their contents together in somewhat random fashion. The result is an uneven account, prefaced by "The Legacy of Peter the Great" (with no interest shown in his inheritance).

Some parts of the book are excellent, such as the one on the Emancipation, apparently written with Robinson's *Rural Russia Under the Old Régime* at the author's elbow. At the other extreme is the treatment of Nicholas I, about whom Stephenson has been at pains to amass old-fashioned gossip. His treatment of the first two Alexanders is far more gentle, and he has made an obvious effort to rehabilitate the reputations of the last two emperors. He neglects the economic factors making for the industrialization of Russia, treating the whole process as though it were merely a hobby of Witte's. His discussion of the intelligentsia, whom he identifies with "Unofficial Russia," is weak and punctuated with odd judgments—for example, that Dostoevsky was "the profoundest thinker of the period." Strangely enough, considering the author's chief interest, his treatment of international relations is feeble.

Worst of all is the chapter on "The Bolshevik Revolution: 1917–21," an amazing travesty of the history of that complex period, with an extraordinary number of factual errors and (as in most other chapters) omission of really significant developments. In the sequel, Stephenson evinces admiration for Stalin. He does recognize that "in human terms, the policy [of forced collectivization] was no doubt very unpleasant." He notes also that "Draconian measures were taken" to impose labor discipline in industry. Yet he is sure that "without the Stalinist Revolution the Soviet Union would have become a German colony and its people enslaved by an even harsher tyrant." As it was, despite the "monstrous degree of suffering" inflicted by the war, "Russia could have continued the war even had the Allies made a separate peace with Germany."

The book has been very carelessly proofread, but this can hardly explain successive sentences stating that "from 1762 . . . the provincial nobility . . . were uneducated" and that "during the nineteenth century the rural nobility were to give birth to the revolutionary intelligentsia," or the affirmation that "war communism" "was not unlike the system which had enabled Britain and Germany to sustain a long war," or many another such imaginative judgment.

JESSE D. CLARKSON
Brooklyn College