

The latter may indeed be the most valuable aspect of the study, since the facts of the Provisional Government period from March to November are well known and hardly altered by this account, although it does bring new perspective. In the period following November, on the other hand, the Kadets generally fade from sight in most accounts, even those which have dealt substantially with the anti-Bolshevik forces. It is therefore much to the author's credit that he devotes about a third of the book to the Kadet effort to remain alive as a party and to influence political developments in areas such as the Ukraine, the Crimea, the Cossack region and Siberia.

Finally, a feature of this work which deserves attention is the general frame of reference or critical stance of the author. Rosenberg, as have many who have written on the Russian Revolution and civil war, appears to base his critique in the earlier chapters on the notion that the Kadets were failures because they were incapable of becoming socialists. However, in view of the socialists' failures, this thesis never did have much to recommend it, and in his important account of the Kadet role in the civil war Rosenberg develops a much deeper appreciation of the real dilemmas of a liberal party which at its best would not simply respond to popular whim or take the path of opportunism for the sake of holding power.

Rosenberg is not uncritical of the Kadets' handling of the problems they faced, but he does try to deal with his protagonists on their merits, recognizing even a fatal clinging to principle as a virtue of sorts and not just a sign of hard-headed obstinacy. Liberalism was probably a hopelessly inappropriate political philosophy in Russia in 1917–21, but perhaps that says more about Russia than about liberalism. The great fault of the Kadets, just as of the socialists, was undeniably their disunity and internal conflict, but as Rosenberg concludes: "(W)hether the revolution and civil war could ultimately have been altered by a disciplined liberal party is only speculation. The wisdom of hindsight is always easy, and one must recognize that the revolution and civil war presented staggering tasks to all Russian political groups, even the most progressive" (pp. 472–73). One could add simply that hindsight may be easy, but it is well-informed only when studies like this one are available (although at twenty-five dollars one might have to redefine "available").

GEORGE BRINKLEY
University of Notre Dame

1939: THE MAKING OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR. By *Sidney Aster*.
New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973. 456 pp. Illus. \$9.95.

"We separated with a feeling almost of relief with the knowledge that a definitive decision had been taken, even though we realized that we were burning our boats and that we might be committed to war over a principle that we have all come to think transcends even the vital material interests of our country." The writer was the Marquess of Zetland, secretary of state for India and Burma, and the definitive decision was the British pledge, announced on March 31, 1939, to defend Poland against a German attack, and it did have all the dreadful significance that he attributed to it. With the Polish pledge, the British government inaugurated a desperate last minute attempt to deter Hitler from new aggressions and, as a result, gave up a great measure of their own freedom of action. If Hitler chose not to be deterred, they had no honorable alternative to resistance.

The hope in London was that Hitler would realize that aggression would now mean a two-front war and that he would draw back. But how credible was that possibility? No knowledgeable person in England believed that the Western powers could provide tangible military aid to the Poles, which meant that the Eastern front would be a very temporary one, and this calculation remained unchanged even after the British reluctantly pledged their support to Rumania. The British chiefs of staff never for a moment believed that the deterrent would work unless the Russians were brought in. The real question after March 1939 was whether this could be done considering the patent dislike which Mr. Chamberlain had for the Soviet government, the fears of the Poles and the Rumanians, and the ambivalent nature of Soviet policy. The answer in the end was negative.

The story of why this was so has often been told before, but never perhaps in the detail that Sidney Aster tells it. The author has profited from the fact that the British state papers bearing on the events of the spring of 1939 have now been declassified and opened to the public. He has worked through an extraordinary number of private archives and he has interviewed key figures in the diplomacy of his period, including Sir William Seeds, the British ambassador to Moscow from January 1939 to 1940, and the late Dr. Viorel Virgil Tilea, who, as Rumanian minister in London, was principally responsible for overcoming British hesitation about granting a guarantee to his country.

In addition to the account of the Tilea affair, Mr. Aster provides new information about the evolution of Soviet policy and the beginning of the negotiations that resulted in the Nazi-Soviet pact, and also about the ill-starred Anglo-French military mission to Moscow in August 1939, demonstrating in the latter case that much of the criticism that has been made of the mission's composition and procedures has been naïve. Most interesting are his revelations concerning the late manifestations of the appeasement spirit in British political circles—in the group of Dominion High Commissioners (“a hotbed of appeasement”); in the grasping at straws of R. A. Butler, parliamentary undersecretary for foreign affairs; and in the personal diplomacy of people like the Duke of Buccleuch, Lord Kemsley, C. R. Buxton, Ernest Tennant, and Robert Hudson. As Mr. Aster writes, the attempts at appeasement added “to the growing German impression that the British were faltering, having second thoughts, and weakening in their support of the guaranteed states.”

Considering what lay ahead, these hesitations are understandable, and it is not strange that Mr. Chamberlain found it agonizing—even when German troops were already rolling into Poland—to have to admit that his efforts to preserve peace had failed. In the end, Mr. Aster points out, it took a kind of sit-in strike at No. 10 Downing Street by more determined ministers to get the prime minister to the sticking point and to make good the pledge of March 31, 1939.

GORDON A. CRAIG
Stanford University

THE SOVIET AIR FORCE IN WORLD WAR II: THE OFFICIAL HISTORY, ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OF THE USSR. Edited by *Ray Wagner*. Translated by *Leland Fetzer*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1973. xiii, 440 pp. \$12.95.

Histories and memoirs of the war on the Russian front published so far have paid relatively little attention to the German-Soviet struggle in the air. The pres-