

strange statements: the Cossacks are descended from the horsemen of the Mongol steppes (p. 110); by the end of the wars in Europe (1815) "it had become clear that the one luxury the Russian nobility could not afford was the stagnant institution of serfdom" (p. 99). (Clear to whom besides the handful of Decembrists?) The famous cadet corpus is called the "Shlyakhterly" (p. 113). Napoleon at Erfurt "confirmed his willingness to see . . . the Danubian Principalities incorporated into Russia" (p. 146). (True, but only on the unacceptable condition that the French empire annex Silesia as compensation.) Kutuzov is portrayed as the pupil of Suvorov (p. 118) in military tactics. (But can one imagine Suvorov letting Napoleon escape the trap at Berezina?)

The text is drawn largely upon British memoirs—Ter Porter, the Wilmots, General Sir John Wilson, Lyall and J. A. Carr. It is clear from the exposition, however, that the author has read a great deal besides the quoted memoirs and items of his select bibliography. The background chapters show a skill in concise and vivid statement which will be appreciated by lecturers who must try to cover a millennium in the first semester.

ALLEN McCONNELL  
*Queens College, CUNY*

THE LION OF TASHKENT: THE CAREER OF GENERAL M. G. CHERNIAEV. By *David MacKenzie*. Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1974. xx, 267 pp. \$11.00.

In recent years a growing number of Western scholars have become engaged in the study of nineteenth-century Russian conservatism. Some have focused their attention upon the careers and impact of major conservative figures and have produced important biographies—of the statesman K. P. Pobedonostsev, the publicists M. N. Katkov and K. N. Leontev, the biologists/philosophers N. I. Danilevskii and N. N. Strakhov, as well as a number of Slavophiles including A. S. Khomiakov, I. S. Aksakov, and I. Kireevskii. Others have been busy translating and editing the writings of these and similar exponents of conservative thought, while still others (such as Robert Byrnes, Edward Thaden, Hans Rogger, and Richard Pipes) have sought to come to grips with the broader dimensions and problems of Russian conservatism. To this welcome development in Western historiography of nineteenth-century Russia can now be added David MacKenzie's newly published biography of General M. G. Cherniaev, one of the premier military figures of the last century, whose career coincided with the reigns of Nicholas I, Alexander II, and Alexander III.

About Cherniaev's conservatism there can be no doubt. Here was a man who more than anyone else was responsible for extending Russian imperialism in Central Asia during the 1860s; who was the hero of the Pan-Slavic movement by virtue of his active support of Serbian liberation from the Ottoman Empire and his vociferous demand for South Slav unification with Russia; and who spoke out repeatedly against the reforms of Alexander II and his liberal advisors. His actions and views made him the darling of Russian conservatives and the *bête noire* of the liberals. To the former "he was a patriot and hero unfairly vilified and persecuted by the military establishment, bureaucrats, foreigners, and radicals." To the latter "he was a reactionary intriguing against overdue reforms, a soldier-adventurer threatening to involve Russia in needless conflicts" (p. xviii). Perhaps more sig-

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.

EDWARD J. LAZZERINI  
*University of New Orleans*

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).