

ground of the particular areas under consideration. Field, however, makes little effort to establish the historical individuality of the Bezdna and Chigirin peasants for the reader. In discussing the "Chigirin affair," for example, he mentions that the peasants in the Chigirin area were Ukrainians, but does not make clear that the Chigirin District is located in the Right-bank Ukraine, an area traditionally dominated by Polish landowners and officials and Polish social and economic institutions, and that the Russian government had undertaken—and only with partial success—to change all of this during the 1840s and again during the 1860s and 1870s. Can one understand the social myths of a given group of peasants without taking into account the traditional social and economic system of the area in which they live and the precise nature of the interaction of these peasants with the officials (in the Chigirin District, officials were either Poles or imported Great Russians) and with the government under whose authority they happened to find themselves?

I do not want to end this review on a negative note. Field's book is a welcome addition to the list of carefully edited and competently translated source materials now available for use in the classroom. His suggestive commentary on the social myths of the Bezdna and Chigirin peasants hopefully will serve to open the eyes of students to how intellectually stimulating the study of history can be. Teachers of Russian history can be grateful to Professor Field for writing this book and to Houghton Mifflin Company for publishing it.

EDWARD C. THADEN

*University of Illinois at Chicago Circle*

NICHOLAS KARAMZIN AND RUSSIAN SOCIETY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: A STUDY IN RUSSIAN POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL THOUGHT. By *J. L. Black*. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1975. xvi, 264 pp. \$17.50.

The long overdue revival of scholarly interest in Karamzin as an important cultural figure, begun by Iurii Lotman twenty years ago, now seems to be losing steam. The focus, particularly in the Soviet Union, has been on Karamzin's literary career, and by and large it can be said that justice has been done to his verse and prose fiction. The significance of Karamzin's political and historical thought still needs attention, however, although Richard Pipes, as long ago as 1959, pointed the way for further studies with his excellent edition of and commentary on Karamzin's *Memoir*. Karamzin has long been a bone of contention between Russian liberals and conservatives. Indeed, a study of the wrangling that his works aroused in the nineteenth century is most revealing: it served for what had to pass for serious social and political discussion of major national issues in constrained circumstances. Clearly, we cannot look to published Soviet scholarship for a dispassionate assessment of Karamzin's role, that is, anything truly objective is not likely to get published. Happily, Professor Black has stepped forward to redress the previous imbalance in Karamzin scholarship with his well written, thoroughly researched study. One may regret his decision to focus exclusively on "political and social thought," as indicated in his title, rather than attempting to survey Karamzin's total achievement in all fields—after all, we have several recent books that deal with Goethe's multifarious interests. Nevertheless, Black's book is most welcome: it does justice to the literature in English, German, and Russian, and provides us at last with a judicious study of Karamzin's considerable impact on Russian society.

JOHN G. GARRARD

*University of Virginia*