

## BOOK REVIEWS

***Napoleon and the World War of 1813 Lessons in Coalition Warfighting.*** By J. P. Riley. (London and Portland, Ore.: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000. Pp. 480. \$54.50.)

An officer in the British army who commanded a battalion during the 1995 Balkan War, the author of this book has had firsthand experience in waging war as part of a multinational coalition. In *Napoleon and the World War of 1813*, he argues that the wars in Europe and North America during 1813 provide the best example for studying coalition warfare as a "historical phenomenon" (4). J. P. Riley undertakes the ambitious task of examining the diplomatic and military history of 1813 in order to answer perplexing questions that he believes will continue to trouble Western policymakers. Based on his thesis that many Western states have reached the conclusion that future wars will be conducted by coalitions, he attempts to identify the factors that solidify and dissolve coalitions. Riley also uncovers the military and diplomatic peculiarities that distinguish coalition warfare from the wars of nations or established alliances (4).

For this task, Riley compares the events in central Europe, Iberia, and North America as they related to the great struggle against French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte in 1813. The text is arranged in four parts (each divided into chapters and subchapters) and a conclusion. Part one offers the reader a survey of the historical events that produced the coalitions of 1813. Readers will be impressed by the author's descriptions of the various forms of coalition warfare that existed simultaneously, in each of the main theaters of war, as well as the interesting analogy between Napoleon's power as a coalition commander and that of the Soviet Union in the Warsaw Pact. Riley describes how European geopolitical maneuvering produced the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, and how, despite being at war with Great Britain, the United States and its grain fed the British army, its allies in Iberia and Canada, and the populations of Spain and Portugal. Parts two, three, and four detail the military operations in central Europe, Spain and the Mediterranean, and America respectively. Unfortunately, the "lessons" of coalition warfare are often obscured by discursive accounts of campaigns and battles. The work would have been more effective had the author concentrated on analyzing coalition warfare as a historical phenomenon and spent less time on the actual military operations.

The book is based predominantly on printed primary sources and secondary literature. A notable omission from the source material is Paul Schroeder's authoritative work, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763-1848* (1994), which may, in part, explain Riley's confused analysis regarding the Congress of Prague and the general diplomacy that ensued during the armistice of Pleiswitz (June-August 1813). The author overstates the influence of British diplomacy in the Sixth Coalition, while affording only cursory treatment to the roles of Russia and Austria. Another surprising omission is a discussion of the great trepidation in Allied Headquarters at Teplitz following the disastrous Battle of Dresden. Moreover, minor inaccuracies concerning Prussia plague the narrative. Riley confuses the 1807 Treaty of Tilsit with the 1808 ^Treaty of Paris, which actually reduced the Prussian army to forty-two thousand men (50). Baron Heinrich vom Stein's role in the opening months of 1813 is exaggerated and somewhat inaccurate, particularly the assertion that Stein sought a united Germany under Prussian leadership (12, 55). Prussian

diplomacy between the signing of the Convention of Tauroggen and the Treaty of Kalisch is oversimplified (55). Moreover, 3-4 February 1813 is incorrectly cited as the date for the mobilization "of the Prussian Landwehr (56). Finally, although General Gebhard Leberecht von Blucher has been revered for two hundred years as Marschall Vorwärts, it was General Friedrich Wilhelm von Bülow's corps that reinforced the Russian army to fifty thousand men in early 1813, and it was Bülow again who later defeated Marshal Nicolas Oudinot's corps at Luckau (64, 109).

Despite these minor problems, Riley makes several excellent points in his work. He provides a thought-provoking explanation of Napoleon's role as a coalition general, the effects of the hated "blood tax," and the impact of coalition warfare on the Napoleonic system itself. *Napoleon and the World War of 1813* has several attributes that will interest scholars and students alike. Its scope will provide an engaging read for European and U.S. historians. The work is replete with numerous maps, illustrations, and a useful chronology of 1813; orders of battle are included as well, although the structure of the North and Silesian Armies in September 1813 is incorrect (122-23). One particular strength is the analysis provided in part one and the conclusion. Riley brilliantly illustrates the importance of using the historical model of 1813 as a guide for understanding the dynamics of future coalitions. He offers a convincing explanation of why Napoleon could not accept peace in 1813, and why the Allies, after five previous attempts at coalition wars, finally succeeded in defeating Napoleon. His thesis is stimulating, and the conclusion is worthwhile.

*Louisiana State University in Shreveport*

*Michael V. Leggiere*