

HITLER'S STRATEGY, 1940-1941: THE BALKAN CLUE. By *Martin L. van Creveld*. International Studies. Published for the Centre for International Studies, London School of Economics and Political Science. New York and London: Cambridge University Press, 1973. xi, 248 pp. \$13.95.

The author analyzes the strategy of Hitler toward Greece and Yugoslavia in the months after the defeat of France, on the basis of German and Italian documents, unpublished as well as published. He has made good use of German military records, and the interweaving of military and diplomatic detail is done with a care that adds to our understanding of both. On the German attempt to mediate the Italo-Greek war in December 1940 he has also drawn on newly opened English records.

Van Creveld presents some new conclusions. He demonstrates that Hitler's attitudes toward Yugoslavia and Greece were quite different: he thought of the former as part of the Balkans and of interest to Germany but considered the latter a Mediterranean country in Italy's sphere. The author is successful in explaining that Hitler gave Mussolini the green light to attack Greece and then decided to invade it when the Italians failed. He unravels the complicated problems of harnessing Bulgaria to Germany. He shows that the planned German attack on Russia was affected by the decision to occupy all of Greece, instead of only the northern part, but was *not* postponed because of the decision to occupy Yugoslavia after the March 27 coup. The postponement was caused by entirely unrelated problems in readying German divisions for the great offensive in the East.

On the broader issues of the relation of Hitler's strategy in Southeastern Europe to his Russian policy, the author is so wedded to the misconception that Hitler made his decision to attack Russia in late November 1940 that he contradicts himself. There is some discussion of the impact of Hitler's decision to increase the German army from 120 to 180 divisions two months *after* the defeat of France, but van Creveld evidently thinks the extra sixty divisions were to walk across the Mediterranean rather than to implement a July 1940 decision to attack the Soviet Union. The author assures us that in November 1940 Russia demanded for an alliance an "infinitely higher price than Hitler ever dreamt of paying" (p. 82), after acknowledging elsewhere that Hitler in 1939 instructed von Ribbentrop to offer the European part ("even as far as the Dardanelles." p. 186, n. 8) and in 1940 himself pressed the Asiatic part (p. 70) on the Russians. Some clues are found, but others are missed.

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MINORITIES UNDER COMMUNISM: NATIONALITIES AS A SOURCE OF TENSION AMONG BALKAN COMMUNIST STATES. By *Robert R. King*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973. ix, 326 pp. \$14.00.

The subtitle of this book is more descriptive of its contents than the main title is. Dr. King, senior analyst for Rumania and Bulgaria in Radio Free Europe, is less interested in the political, cultural, and socioeconomic conditions per se of the ethnic minorities in the several Balkan Communist states than he is in ascertaining how the relations between a *Staatsvolk* and the ethnic minorities in any particular

Communist state become a source of international tension between and among several Communist states. On the other hand, the subtitle is in one respect excessively modest, for King interprets the geographical term "Balkan" very broadly, to include Hungary and even Czechoslovakia. Hence his book in effect excepts only Poland and East Germany from his study of interstate tensions accruing from the nationality problem throughout Communist Eastern Europe.

King's thesis is that communism has not solved the nationality problem in Eastern Europe, but the manner in which the problem and its resultant conflicts are handled by the area's political elites has been palpably, albeit not totally, altered by the fact that these elites now share a common overt ideology and political program. Hence the salience and level of conflict are lowered: "Instead of mobilizing troops on the frontier, issuing irredentist proclamations, and encouraging terrorist guerrilla raids, national disagreements are now discussed in private meetings of communist leaders and do not become public knowledge until later, and then only in part. The communist states of Eastern Europe still utilize and have further refined the subtler techniques formerly used by bourgeois East European states in nationality conflicts: manipulating census records, gerrymandering territorial subdivisions, and conducting pseudohistorical debates. A distinctively communist contribution has been added: the technique of creating a new nationality as a means of denying the claims of another state" (pp. 242-43). This last clause refers to the Soviet Union's rationalization of its annexation of Bessarabia by claiming that the territory is inhabited by a Moldavian nation which is quite distinct from the Rumanians, and to Yugoslavia's efforts to blunt Bulgarian irredentism by claiming that the Macedonians are an entirely different nation from the Bulgarians. Though he refrains from an in-depth probe of the historical, anthropological, and linguistic merits of the issues at stake here, King manifestly appears to regard both of these claims to the existence of Moldavian and Macedonian nations as rather spurious.

Other cases of Communist interstate tension, and the techniques for managing it, which are studied in this book in order to illustrate and confirm its main thesis, are the Czechoslovak-Hungarian conflict (over the treatment of the Magyar minority in Slovakia), the Rumanian-Hungarian controversy (regarding the fate of the Magyars of Transylvania), and the Yugoslav-Albanian disagreement (prompted by Belgrade's policies toward its Albanian minority). One frequent technique for simultaneously expressing and screening such conflicts—a technique which King studies in detail and with profit to the reader—is to sublimate (or, rather, sublimate) them into seemingly remote, supposedly safe, and somewhat esoteric historical and scholastic debates. For example, the contemporary resentments between Communist Slovaks and Communist Hungarians over the treatment of each other's ethnic minorities are expressed in disagreements about whether Štúr or Kossuth was "objectively" more or less "progressive" than the other in 1848, and on the correct interpretation of Marx's comments about the events of that revolutionary year.

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