

the role of the incompetent G. I. Kulik, and help explain the Finnish fiasco that followed. The account of the rebuilding is exceptionally well done.

Book Two covers the period from the fateful day of the German attack through mid-November 1942. Of particular importance is Erickson's discussion of the fact that "not all Soviet soldiers invited their own destruction." Numerous Russian commanders sent warnings to Moscow, warnings replete with indicators of imminent attack. Stalin's will prevailed, however, and all attempts to increase the readiness of the Red Army were blocked by directives issued by the General Staff. Some commanders, though certainly not many, risked Stalin's fury by ignoring orders and taking steps to deploy their forces. As Erickson points out, only the confusion following the German attack saved these officers from the megalomaniacal wrath of the Soviet dictator.

The remainder of Book Two offers a good account of the operations—especially in the Battle of the Frontiers and the German onslaught through the Ukraine and White Russia—which followed. Stalin's gathering of all authority into his own hands for the prosecution of the war is clearly shown. Those interested in organizational details will find some new material on units, deployments, and personalities. I suspect a great deal of this information came primarily from interviews and the frequently ghost-written memoirs of senior Soviet officers. For example, Meretskov's memoir, published in 1968 and cited on page 477, was actually written by a historian and a novelist! Caution is therefore advised in the use of any Soviet data, since a great deal of it comes from the recollections of those well indoctrinated in "Socialist truth-making." In places, Erickson's account is difficult to follow because he rather abruptly swings from high-level operational planning to low-level combat operations, and then back again, without sufficient warning to the reader. This is a minor point, but a distraction nonetheless.

Book Two ends with the Soviet encirclement of Paulus's forces and the bittersweet realization by the leaders of the Red Army that their success against the Germans was largely a matter of having "caught a tiger by the tail." The almost 300,000 besieged Nazi troops constituted a threat that even Zhukov had miscalculated. Thus, Erickson sets the stage for the opening of his forthcoming volume, entitled *The Road to Berlin*.

The narrative portion of this work ends on page 472. The remainder of the volume—almost one hundred pages—contains the third part, "Sources and References," which presents a great deal of data and constitutes a most valuable resource. Erickson's annotations are especially useful, and the numerous organization charts provide much additional material, although the same caution advised above—about the veracity of Soviet figures—should be applied here also.

All in all, Professor Erickson has provided a most worthwhile book, both for the historian and for the interested reader. His second volume will be eagerly awaited.

JOHN E. JESSUP, JR.
Washington, D.C.

MEETING AT POTSDAM. By *Charles L. Mee, Jr.* New York: M. Evans & Company, 1975. xiv, 370 pp. + 16 pp. photographs. \$10.95.

In terms of popularizing an important historical event, Mee has written an intriguing story. Many of his interpretations and anecdotes help the reader to develop a better understanding of the personalities of the major participants at Potsdam,

the dynamics of the conference sessions, and even the issues themselves. Too often, however, the author's portrayal of the mood, attitudes, and personal motives of the "Big Three" reflect more his personal embellishment than what is warranted from the available data. Value-laden adjectives and conclusions abound in this work, extending even to the photograph captions—for example, a posed photograph of the three leaders at Potsdam is described by Mee as showing "Truman erect, natty, and resolute; Stalin jocose, perhaps having just made some bantering joke, and Churchill slouched, scowling at Stalin."

To the more serious student of this period, the book offers little that is new either in terms of sources or interpretation. Mee, like several other writers on this period, has attempted to build a case for Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb on Japan based on the president's desire to impress or scare the Russians, even though he knew it was not needed to bring about the defeat of the Japanese. The evidence cited here is found in earlier treatments, and does not support the firm conclusions he draws from it.

The book is also less than satisfactory for the reader who is not a scholar of these years and yet wants something more than a good story. Virtually no context for the conference or its principal issues is developed by the author. It would be difficult for a reader, only marginally acquainted with the background of these events, to gain from this volume an adequate understanding of the complexity of the issues, and the way in which they developed over the course of the war.

Attention to the broader concept of summit diplomacy itself, and its many implications, would have been helpful. Mee's focus on the role and influence of the personalities and their views could easily lend itself to an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of personal negotiation at the highest level. But he lets this opportunity go by untouched.

Because Soviet perceptions and motivations behind the Cold War are of considerable interest, it is also disappointing that the Soviet perspective is so poorly handled. Admittedly, the sources for the Soviet view are less than satisfactory, and Western bias is difficult to overcome (even the revisionist historians who fault the United States for the Cold War suffer from the same shallow assessments of Soviet policies). Nevertheless, it is unfortunate that so little effort was made to avoid this obvious pitfall. The literature on the Cold War still needs more perceptive analyses of the view from Moscow.

There are no footnotes provided in the text. Instead, in scores of places, the author uses quotes and direct references to opinions and arguments of individuals without any citations. The technique of listing the consulted sources for each chapter at the back of the book—a developing tendency of documentation that I find contrary to good scholarship—is unhelpful at best and, at worst, misleading. This is especially true when the author uses the "three-dot" method of quote abridgement. Thus, the only way a reader can ascertain whether or not the condensing is accurate to the sense and context of the original is by hunting laboriously through the sources listed in the back.

All in all, while this book is interesting and at times illuminating, it does not provide the necessary analysis of the period, and it fails to compare favorably with the more impressive efforts of Diane Shaver Clemens's study of the Yalta Conference, *Yalta* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

G. WILLIAM BENZ
Whitworth College