

through its own decrees or indirectly through joint resolutions of the party and the Council of Ministers (pp. 84, 382).

The book takes no comparative approach in discussing the various problems, applies a rather journalistic style, and lacks references to legal and other source material; furthermore, it contains no bibliography and offers only a few footnotes referring to political speeches, party resolutions, and the like. It also has no index. But it does present a comprehensive coverage of the present Bulgarian law of the state, and is thus a valuable contribution and source of information for students of Bulgarian law.

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THE SHADOW OF THE CRESCENT: THE RENAISSANCE IMAGE OF THE TURK (1453–1517). By *Robert Schwoebel*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967. xiv, 257 pp.

"The purpose of this book," the author informs his readers in the preface, "is to examine the western attitudes towards the Ottoman Turks in the critical years 1453–1517." These years were indeed crucial for both Western and Ottoman history. They produced not only a large amount of anti-Ottoman propaganda in the West but also numerous plans—and in some cases even action—on the part of Christendom to stem the Muslim tide. In the Ottoman Empire these are roughly the years of the sultans Mehmed II (1451–81), Beyazid II (1481–1512), and Selim I (1512–20), during which the state expanded considerably, gained inner stability, and shaped its institutions. The Fall of Constantinople in 1453 made even such faraway courts as that of England realize that on the other end of the continent a new major power had risen that presented a serious challenge to the rest of Europe. After Luther's theses of 1517 shattered the unity of Western Christendom its attention turned to its own problems, and the problem of the Ottomans received less attention from the West. Consequently the starting and terminal dates selected for this study were well chosen, marking the limits of a distinct period in late Renaissance history.

Mr. Schwoebel's volume is well organized. The chapter headings clearly indicate the various aspects of the Western reaction to the Ottoman menace which the author has investigated. We learn how the news of the fall of Constantinople reached the West, how these and subsequent reports described the Turks most often in exaggerated and erroneous but occasionally amazingly correct fashion, and how the Western image of the Turks was formed. Different chapters describe the reaction of the popes and the church, the various European rulers, the nobles, poets, and public opinion to the new menace to their realm and faith. We are told what countermeasures were planned, why so many remained only plans, and why those that were undertaken failed.

The author devotes much of the book to the evaluation of his numerous and well-selected sources and to secondary works on the subject. Schwoebel takes great pains to explain his sources and to correct, at least to this reviewer's satisfaction, certain errors that have been repeated by other students of the subject. The work has other merits; for example, it explains convincingly the importance of the Battle of Belgrade (July 3–22, 1456) and the role that John of Capistrano played in the preparation of the city's defense and in the battle itself.

The style and format are pleasing, and both the text and the footnotes are in readable type. It is regrettable that the volume does not have a satisfactory index and that the author failed to check a few minor details, so that, for example, one finds references to Budapest centuries before the city came into existence. But the errors are minor, the value of the study considerable. Students of both Renaissance and Ottoman history will read this volume with pleasure and profit.

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MANNERHEIM: THE YEARS OF PREPARATION. By *J. E. O. Screen*. London: C. Hurst & Company, 1970. x, 158 pp. £2 15s., paper.

K. J. STÄHLBERG—VALTIOMIESELÄMÄKERTA. By *Yrjö Blomstedt*. Helsinki: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Otava, 1969. 549 pp. 35 Finnmarks.

In the summer of 1919 Gustaf Mannerheim was defeated decisively in the first Finnish presidential election by K. J. Ståhlberg. That Mannerheim is much more famous than Ståhlberg suggests that winning is not everything. This hypothesis is certainly supported by later events in Mannerheim's career, when he became covered with glory by leading the Finnish Army to defeat in two successive wars during 1939–44. As a professional soldier, Mannerheim was on the victorious side in only one war—the Finnish Civil War of 1918. After his election in 1919 Ståhlberg made an enormously favorable peace with Russia, in the Treaty of Dorpat (1920). He also united the Finnish nation, still badly divided in 1919, so that at the end of his presidential term (1925) he would probably have been re-elected unanimously if he had chosen to run again, which he did not; and his successes helped to ensure that Finland alone of all the new states of 1919 would remain, six decades later, both independent and democratic.

With track records like these, one would expect that the scholarly literature about Ståhlberg would be much more extensive than that about Mannerheim. Since scholarship seldom follows life, this expectation would be false. Screen's biography of Mannerheim up to the October Revolution is but one of an incredibly large number of books about a born loser; and, even more incredibly, Blomstedt's biography of Ståhlberg is the first book-length scholarly study ever to be published about its subject in any language. Any reviewer's first natural reaction would be to assume that there are already far too many books about Mannerheim, and that *any* book about Ståhlberg should be welcomed with open arms. This reaction, too, would be mistaken. Screen has done brilliantly what no one else, not even the authors of multivolume biographies, has done before him—illuminate Mannerheim's three decades in the Russian Imperial Army. With wide knowledge and deep understanding, this young British scholar has written what is by far the finest book about Mannerheim ever published in any language. No scholar interested in Mannerheim, Finnish history, Russian history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, or military history should miss the pleasure of reading Screen's book. It is the definitive treatment of its subject, and it is written in prose that is always clear and often beautiful. It is a model of fairness, detail, documentation in many languages, and brevity—in short, of scholarship as it should be. Mannerheim, in spite of all his weaknesses, was an authentically great and memorable man, and he has at long last found a biographer worthy of the subject.