

As an analysis of Lenin's nationality policy, however, the work lacks subtlety and is flawed by a basic inconsistency. The author fails to explain, for example, how Lenin's approach to national aspirations, depicted as purely negative, could lead to such positive programs as the development of national cultures and the *korenizatsiia*, which were passed by the Tenth and Twelfth Party Congresses, specifically in response to Lenin's prodding. The Lenin he portrays—cast against the background of Soviet reality in the last chapters as an eloquent defender of national rights—bears little resemblance to the master tactician and propagandist who emerges from the first chapters. But if Lenin's policy was molded by opportunism alone, why accuse his successors of distorting and corrupting it? Or was there a positive core beneath that opportunism, after all?

ISABELLE KREINDLER  
*Haifa University*

THE ROAD TO STALINGRAD: STALIN'S WAR WITH GERMANY, vol. 1.  
By John Erickson. New York: Harper & Row, 1975. x, 594 pp. + 8 pp.  
photographs. \$25.00.

This is the first of a two-volume series by the noted British military historian and writer, Professor John Erickson. In reading the book, two points should be borne in mind from the outset: Erickson is one of the most knowledgeable observers of Soviet military affairs, and he has suffered from the same lack of authoritative Soviet documentation that has plagued all those who have done research in this field.

Professor Erickson's book is probably the best account to date of the first eighteen months of the Russo-German conflict of the Second World War. I am sure, however, that Erickson would be the first to admit that the work suffers from the inadequacies of official Soviet records and the general intransigence of the Kremlin about allowing access to the historical archives of the Ministry of Defense's Institute of Military History. Western historians can take some solace in the fact that most Soviet historians have no better luck in gaining approval to research the files. Recent requests from Soviet officials for copies of American declassification regulations, to be used as a basis for setting up similar procedures back home, do offer some hope for the future.

Meanwhile, Erickson has carefully analyzed and cross-checked available Soviet sources, and has used his numerous contacts to obtain interviews with Soviet war veterans. Captured German records and other sources have been used to balance the account, although there seems to have been something less than full utilization of Nazi documentation. It is often difficult to determine the sources of particular references or statements because the author has not footnoted his work. Erickson has furnished, instead, only general bibliographies for each chapter, making the book somewhat less useful as a serious research vehicle. Even so, he has put together an excellent two-sided account of the events leading to the German invasion of the USSR and the subsequent bitter fighting that ended in the great battle of Stalingrad.

The volume is divided into three general parts. Book One, which dovetails nicely with Erickson's earlier work on *The Soviet High Command: 1918-1941* (London: Macmillan, 1962), is an account of the rebuilding of the Red Army after the Finnish Campaign. The inconsistencies in Stalin's selection of the new leaders of the Red Army following the great purges are clearly shown in the narration of

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,