

and it not only prevented serious negotiations but led to the outbreak of war. Thus, Newman contends that in essence World War II was started by Lord Halifax and others in the Foreign Office who recognized the risk and accepted the inevitability of war. They chose deliberately to challenge Hitler through the Polish guarantee and they were aware of the consequences of this action.

Newman's argument is based primarily on statements by Halifax which are limited in number and open to interpretation. They are insufficient to support fully his contention that the guarantee was a deliberate challenge and that the British leaders fully grasped the consequences of their action. Newman ignores statements by Halifax and Chamberlain that the guarantee was intended as a deterrent, a means of bringing Hitler up short, compelling him to return to the negotiating table. Nor does Newman present sufficient evidence to show a cold-blooded decision to use the guarantee as a pretext for war. If anything, Newman proves conclusively how completely the Chamberlain government misread the situation and failed to understand the consequences of the guarantee.

Although Newman's conclusions are debatable, his book offers a thorough examination of this question. It is an important contribution to the study of the outbreak of World War II. All serious students of the history of this conflict must read Newman's book even though they may argue with him over his interpretation of the evidence.

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NEO-SLAVISM AND THE CZECHS 1898-1914. By *Paul Vyšný*. Soviet and East European Studies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977. xiv, 287 pp. \$21.95.

Paul Vyšný's interesting, well-written volume offers a valuable treatment of Neo-Slavism, a short-lived but significant movement that sought to promote Slavic cooperation, particularly between Czechs and Russians. The movement was an ideological amalgam of Austro-Slavism, Czech Russophilism, Russian Pan-Slavism, and the special perspectives of Poles and South Slavs. Its creator and main driving force was the Czech politician, Karel Kramář; at its zenith in 1908-10, the leaders and adherents included the Czechs V. Klofač and J. Preiss; the Russians V. A. Bobrinskii, V. A. Maklakov, and A. I. Guchkov; the Pole R. Dmowski; and the Slovene I. Hribar. Among the many objectives of the Neo-Slav movement were united political action by Slavs in Austria, better treatment of Poles in Russia, the creation of an international Slav bank, and the organization of a Slav industrial and trade exhibition in Moscow. The movement also became involved with the principal diplomatic problem of the period—the tinderbox of the Balkans. Despite its brief existence and ultimate failure, the movement engaged many prominent politicians and addressed the major issues of concern to Slavs. Nevertheless, apart from an unpublished Austrian dissertation (O. Heinz, "Der Neoslawismus," University of Vienna, 1963) and a few scattered articles, Neo-Slavism has not been the subject of serious study; even the standard Czech histories of the period give it scant attention.

Vyšný's book goes far toward filling this gap. Drawing mainly upon printed sources (memoirs, congress protocols, the Kramář trial proceedings, newspapers) and a few archival materials (in Vienna and London), he has written a lucid political history of Neo-Slavism and provides a reliable account of its origins, program, activities, internal conflicts, and diplomatic complications. Separate chapters are devoted to the Neo-Slav congresses in Prague (1908) and Sofia (1910), giving a detailed account of their participants, achievements, and impact. Insofar as his sources allow,

the author has produced a thorough and careful analysis of the movement's dynamics—why it emerged and why it so quickly disintegrated.

To explain the rekindling of ideas about Slavic unity at this time, Vyšný stresses the interplay of many different factors. Most important in his view were: the commercial interests of Czech industrialists and businessmen in Russian markets; the personal ambition of Kramář to find a new political base (after his loss at the polls in 1907); the hope engendered by the 1905 revolution in Russia for a more liberal government that would treat its Polish subjects more fairly; the desire of Austrian Slavs for rapprochement between Austria-Hungary and Russia (to counter the threat of German domination); a revival of Russian interest in Europe and particularly in the Slavs after Russia's defeat in the Far East in 1904–5. Vyšný discusses how such different concerns coalesced to form a Neo-Slav movement and shows that the prospects for success were meager indeed.

The author's analysis of the movement's demise—and by 1910 it was virtually dead—is equally exacting and incisive. Of the multiple reasons for its failure, Vyšný gives particular emphasis to the turn of events in Russia, where the political reforms of 1905–6 ended in the Third-of-June regime and reaction under P. A. Stolypin, quashing hopes for a liberal ally in Russia and for concessions to the Poles. At the same time, the Russian contingent of the Neo-Slav movement veered to the right; its liberal members dropped out, and conservative nationalists (with no sympathy for Poles) took charge. A mortal blow to the Neo-Slav cause was dealt by the Bosnia-Herzegovina crisis of 1908; manipulated by Aehrenthal, afraid of offending Vienna, the Czech Neo-Slavs decided to support the Austrian annexation—a decision that alienated Russians and South Slavs and thwarted further development of Neo-Slavism. More broadly, however, Vyšný argues that the Neo-Slav movement suffered from a fundamental internal contradiction: it was ostensibly nonpolitical (with overtly economic and cultural objectives that would not provoke the wrath of existing governments), yet was dominated by politicians whose ultimate goals required political action. Without a clearly defined political program they could not hope to win broad support much less to achieve their aims.

Despite its considerable value, the book has several deficiencies. Most serious is an inadequate source base: the author was unable to use archival materials in Czechoslovakia (such as the Kramář papers in Archiv Národního Musea, Prague) and the Soviet Union (such as the police reports and party archives in Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii in Moscow). As a result, he cannot fully disentangle the backroom politics of the story or analyze the membership of Neo-Slav organizations to determine the movement's social base and reveal the dynamics of its rise and fall. Furthermore, although the exposition of Czech politics is informed and perceptive (and indeed the primary focus of the book), the author's treatment of Russian politics is somewhat less satisfactory. The role of the domestic political crises is not fully taken into account; the political identities of Russian Neo-Slavs could be more clearly defined; and the use of party labels for Duma factions is sometimes inexact and misleading. Finally, most readers will find distracting and ill-advised the author's use of "racial" rather than "nationality" (as in "racial conflict between Czechs and Germans").

Still, this is a very important book—an impressive piece of research and a thoughtful analysis that illuminates a crucial area of politics and diplomacy in prewar eastern Europe.

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