NOTES AND REVIEWS

⁂ *Kırım Savaşı'nın 150nci Yılı / 150th Anniversary of the Crimean War,* coord. by BAHATTIN ÖZTUNCAY, Sadberk Hanım Müzesi, Istanbul, 2006, 196 pp. + ills.

This important catalogue, edited for the exhibition with the same name, includes a series of texts by well-known specialists in the Crimean War. The coordinator of the volume, Bahattin Öztuncay, is a prominent historian in the field of Turkish photography, the author of several studies and monographs, one of which dedicated to an outstanding artist of the time, *James Robertson, Pioneer of Photography in the Ottoman Empire* (Eren, Istanbul, 1992), and the author of the monumental work in two volumes *Dersaadetin Fotoğrafçilari. 19. yüzyıl Istanbulunda fotograf: Öncüler, stüdyolar, sanatçılar* (Aygaz, Istanbul, 2003). The bilingual Turkish-English catalogue addresses both researchers and the general public. The Foreword is written by collector Ömer M. Koç, who made available to the organizers a large number of valuable items from his collection. He examines the causes and consequences of the conflict, and presents the modernization efforts made at the time in the sanitary system and in the field of information, also noticing that Turkish researchers have shown a fair lack of interest in the topic so far: "The principal reason behind this war, in which Ottoman forces fought beside Britain, France and Sardinia against Russia, was the intensifying struggle for influence in the Middle East. Following the victory of the Allies and the Treaty of Paris signed on 30 March 1856, the Ottoman state became an officially recognised and inalienable part of the <<Family of the European States>>. (...) The Crimean War was the first <<modern>> war; the first in which official war correspondents kept their newspapers informed of events by telegraph, the new invention of photography was used to record events, and modern nursing played a role. Regrettably this momentous event has not been adequately researched in the light of our own documentary sources, and today has largely fallen into oblivion. *150th Anniversary of the Crimean War* exhibition at the Sadberk Hanım Müzesi brings together original objects, documents and photographs of the period, and will I believe help to fill the gap to some extent and serve as a starting point for new and more extensive research."

A first study, by Norman Stone, makes a short presentation of the Crimean War. The author notes: "(...) the crisis was not really about religion at all: it was about the control of Turkey (...)". The Tsar had believed that the Ottoman troops would be easy prey for his well-trained army. Quite surprisingly, the Russians found themselves opposed by an army no less well prepared, disciplined and equipped, led by Omer Pasha, a marshal of Croatian origin, trained in the Austrian Army. Although called the "Crimean War", the confrontation had extended far beyond the limits of the peninsula: "(...) This war, though known as 'Crimean', had repercussions not just in the Balkans and the Caucasus but also in the Baltic, where there were extensive naval operations, and even in the Far East," (p. 18). Norman Stone identifies the causes of the failure of military operations and of the high mortality behind the frontline: "The war was to reveal incompetence especially on the British side, of a calamitous order. (...) The British had not seen a war for more than a generation and had no idea how to do things. The captains of ships were seventy, and the admirals were eighty. Military establishments often go in for lunatic cheese-paring, in the hope that civilians will mistake it for serious accounting, and various blunders occurred. The worst and most notorious even now concerned the hospitals – a nightmare of rats, lice, drunkenness and stupidity," (pp. 20, 22). The surprise effect which the landing of the allied troops had on the Russians and, most of all, the victory of Alma were not turned to good account. An immediate attack on Sevastopol, while the town was still completely exposed, would have undoubtedly been successful. Furthermore, it would have prevented the long siege during which so many soldiers perished from disease rather than from their wounds.

In *War and Symbolism: Ottoman Medals and Decorations During the Crimean War*, Edhem Eldem of Bağaziçi University makes a presentation of all the medals minted during the conflict, including the Silistra, Sevastopol and Kars medals for the Ottoman soldiers, and the Crimean medal for the allies, engraved in the specific language of every participating country. For most of the medals, the obverse shows the *tughra* of Sultan Abdul Mecid encircled by a laurel wreath, and the reverse a composition of two cannons and an anchor engraved above the fallen Russian flag, and the flags of the four allied powers rising victoriously. After the award of such medals to many western highranking officers, the Sultan was awarded in his turn the Great Cross of the Legion of Honor and the Order of the Garter. It was for the first time in the history of the Ottoman Empire that the Padishah was accepting decorations awarded by the Infidels, with the event taking place not at the Imperial Palace, but at the embassies of the related western countries.

Bahattin Öztuncay, the coordinator of the volume, signs the paper *The First War Documented Through Photography*. Quite commendable is his attribution to Carol Szathmari of all due credits as the first war photographer, unlike many foreign researchers who have been reluctant to accept the evidence in this respect. A French photographer, Ernest Edouard de Caranza was found to have photographed in 1854, almost at the same time with Szathmari, the French troops temporarily encamped at Varna on their way to Crimea. Quite interesting information is provided on an album of photographs by the marine painter Jean-Baptiste-Henri Durand-Brager and his associate Lassimone, offered as a gift to the Sultan in 1857. The author dwells at length on James Robertson, being quite familiar with the life and work of the latter, and less on Roger Fenton, a better known and more often quoted artist. Robertson would exhibit his photographs in London, in January-February 1855, several disparate photographs being sold individually, 10 Francs apiece, in Paris.

The Thorny Road to Modernization: The Ottoman Empire and the Crimean War by Sinan Kuneralp, a distinguished historian and the director of the reputed academic editing house **Isis Press**, addresses the advantages and disadvantages of the conflict. The author examines several key sides of the issue and adds: "Even though the Crimean War has had few lasting political and diplomatic impacts, it largely contributed to put the Ottoman Empire and its capital on the European map, and conversely helped familiarize many segments of Ottoman society with Western mores and usages, to which they would not have been directly exposed," (p. 61). Many western adventurers placed themselves in the service of the Crescent and traveled to Istanbul. The allied soldiers caused amazement among the locals: Moslem women were giggling at the sight of the Scots wearing their kilts, and Moslem men were greatly amused by the fez and shalvars of the *zouaves*. The sultan was no longer a mythical character, rarely to be seen in the street by his subjects, but a real person instead, going to the mosque and visiting the embassies of the allied forces. The protocol of the imperial court also changed to better match western customs. The imperial coat-of-arms was adopted shortly after the war, in agreement with the rules of western heraldry. Here one may see the great, even surprising adaptability of the people: "It is a testimony to the faculty of adaptability of Ottoman society that in the course of a few months it was exposed almost brutally to a way of life that was totally alien to the overwhelming majority of the population it rejected only what was contrary to its innermost belief, adopting the rest by adopting and making use of it to the best of its requirements," (p. 63). The presence of the allies also caused prices to rise in the Ottoman capital. A quite amusing detail is that a famous card game was invented during the conflict. Sinan Kuneralp ends his article with this piece of information: "But the Crimean War's gift to the world seems to be the game of bridge devised by the bored British officers and named after a forerunner of the present Galata Bridge." (p. 65).

Eventually, "*The Imperial Rescript" Bringing Turkey in to the Family of European Nations* by David Barchard examines the condition of Christians living in the Empire and the rights obtained at the end of the war.

The second part of the volume includes a rich black and white, as well as color illustration: lithographs, book illustration and contemporary caricature. Several previously unpublished images by Amedeo Preziosi and Constantin Guys are also reproduced. The material is arranged by topic: *Istanbul in the 1850's; Visions of the War in Paintings and Books; Photographs and Letters from the*

Front; William "Crimean" Simpson: Scottish Master of War Paintings; Medals, Orders and Memorabilia. The last category includes china pieces with the portraits of Sultan Abdul Mecid, Queen Victoria and Emperor Napoleon III, plates with painted battle scenes, scores of military marches and polkas, and children toys inspired from the campaign. The volume ends with a chronology of the war. All these modest items can establish a link between the past events and the contemporary times. The catalogue of the *Kırım Savaşı'nın 150nci Yılı / 150th Anniversary of the Crimean War* Exhibition is an important contribution to the rich Crimean War bibliography, published in the recent years.

Adrian-Silvan Ionescu

⁂ *Marea Neagră – de la „lacul bizantin" la provocările secolului XXI* (The Black Sea – From a "Byzantine Lake" to the Challenges of the Twentieth Century), coord. by MIHAIL E. IONESCU, Edit. Militară, Bucureşti, 2006, 464 pp. + 42 drawings

Throughout the centuries, the Black Sea has acted as a space of convergence among civilizations. The present book, published by the Institute for Political Studies of Defense and Military History of Bucharest, offers a modern political approach to the topic. As underlined in the Preface by the director of the aforementioned institution, Mihail E. Ionescu, "the increasing interest in the Black Sea region, especially after the fall of the Soviet Union, the new emergence, sometimes after centuries, of previously existing riparian states, and the inclusion of the Pontic space among the areas of strategic importance, especially after the 11 September 2001 attacks, call for more advanced research work on the topic," (p. 8).

The book includes a collection of studies, signed by Alexandru Madgearu, Sergiu Iosipescu (2 studies), Mircea Soreanu, Ruxandra Vidraşcu, Şerban Pavelescu (2 studies), Petre Otu, Gheorghe Vartic, Laurenţiu Cristian Dumitru, and Mihail E. Ionescu (as listed in the summary). The complex topic, with numerous geopolitical, military, social and economic implications, is addressed chronologically, from the time when the Black Sea was operating as a "Byzantine lake" to the present day, in a unitary and highly professional approach.

The investigation opens with the end of the sixth century when, according to the author of the first study, "The Black Sea became … a Byzantine lake, as there were practically no other states with direct access to this sea," (p. 11). The unquestionable Byzantine domination, interrupted only by exceptional events, such as the Barbaric invasions or the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century, would be brought to an end in the mid-fifteenth century by the Euro-Asian political and military rise of the Osmanlı Turks. The key-event generating the new geopolitical situation in the Black Sea area is considered to be not as much the conquest of Constantinople in May 1453 by Mehmed II El Fatîh (the Conqueror), which had an enormous impact at the time, but rather the episode of 1484, namely the capture of Chilia and Cetatea Albă by Bayezid II. "This major victory – as underlined by the author quite rightfully, in my opinion – was a decisive step towards turning the Black Sea into an 'Ottoman lake'" (p. 114). To the complete control exerted by the Turks over the Black Sea would add the occupation of Belgrade in the following century (1521) and the subsequent defeat of Hungary, followed by the turning of most of its territory into a Pashalik (1526).

The triggered consequences were not only military and political, but also of economic nature: the fall into disuse of the major commercial roads linking Western, Central and Eastern Europe to the Middle East and to Central Asia, the introduction of a new economic system by the conquerors, the exploitation of the resources of the Christian states tributary to the Porte, and the necessity for European trade to seek new directions for expansion. Throughout the eighteenth century, political and economic transformations in the Black Sea region would be especially related to Russia's efforts of

expansion towards the south. After a first attempt by Peter I in his campaign of 1711 (a minor episode in the "north war"), which failed due to an underestimation of the adversary and a lack of proper preparation, in the second half of the eighteenth century, especially during the reign of Catherine II, the area would undergo major transformations. Landmarks are provided: the peace of Kuciuk-Kainargi (1774); the annexation of Crimea (1783) and the taking under control of almost the entire north-Pontic littoral; the Peace of Iaşi (1792), giving Russia supremacy in the region; the Peace of Bucharest (May 1812), giving her free access to the Danube Mouths; and in 1833, the unexpected turning of the Porte from an enemy into an obedient partner.

A pragmatic analysis of the nineteenth century will identify two major directions: the attempts by the West to put an end to Russian supremacy in the Pontic area (ingeniously materialized in the Crimean War) and Russia's effort to regain her previous political and military positions. After the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878, the Romanians would regain control of their former possession lying between the Danube and the Black Sea (Dobrogea) and of a large section of the Pontic coast (ca 220 km), through the Treaty of Berlin (July 1878). Several issues related to the Black Sea area in the twentieth century are further on addressed convincingly and competently (pp. 223-364). Quite interesting is the study written by the main coordinator of the book, Mihail E. Ionescu. Security and stability in the Black Sea region after the Cold War are the issues dealt with in this last study. A special focus is laid on the current efforts of the Romanian State, and of the major international organizations Romania has recently joined (NATO, EU, OCEMN), to promote "democracy, cooperation and security" in the Black Sea region (p. 365).

Due to the variety and complexity of the topic, the analysis cannot be exhaustive. However, the present book addresses and gives a thorough insight into numerous issues. The appendages further provided – a table listing the major organizations, programs and projects in the area of the Black Sea, abbreviations, indexes, and a very useful cartographic and iconographic section (by Sergiu Iosipescu) – enhance its documentary impact. The scientific value of the book and its excellent graphics recommend it as an important editorial event.

Marian Stroia

⁂ *Schnittstellen. Gesellschaft, Nation, Konflikt und Erinnerung in Südosteuropa. Festschrift fur Holm Sundhausen zum 65. Geburtstag*, Herausgegeben von ULF BRUNNBAUER, ANDREAS HELMEDACH und STEFAN TROEBST, R. Oldenbourg Verlag, München, 2007, 640 pp. (Südosteuropäische Arbeiten, 133)

The present volume includes a large collection of studies on the history of Southeast Europe at different points in time, under the signature of prominent specialists. It is an anniversary volume dedicated to Holm Sundhausen, a well reputed historian whose historical works have mostly addressed this particular southeastern space. The short foreword by the three editors begins with an excerpt from Sundhausen, in which the later disagrees with the unilateral approach to Southeastern Europe by a large number of western historians who incorporate the Balkan space into the history of the West. "I disagree with the history of the Balkan space being incorporated into the 'general history', more exactly into the 'western history'. To me, the history of the Balkan space is something different; it is far more than a late variant of the *European history*, counterfeited by the *Ottoman heritage*, and subsequently amended in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries." Thus, as noted by the authors of the foreword, Sundhausen believes it necessary to differentiate historically among the various European regions and to understand their particular evolution, especially on the current background of European integration.

The foreword is followed by Carl Bethke's paper on the *Social Responsibility of the Historian: Southeast Europe during the Nineties, in the Writings of Holm Sundhausen*, an exhaustive bibliography of Sundhausen's works, and forty studies arranged in three parts: 1. *Social and Political Transformation*; 2. *Studies on the Making of Nations*; 3. *Representations and Cultures of Memory.* The most varied themes of the modern history of the Balkan space – social structures, the making of nations, and the international relations of the Balkan peoples – are thus approached. The volume is undoubtedly a useful tool for historians with a special interest in Southeastern Europe.

Şerban Papacostea

⁂ *Spectacolul public între tradiţie şi modernitate* (The Public Show Between Tradition and Modernity), coord. by CONSTANŢA VINTILĂ-GHIŢULESCU, MARIA PAKUCS WILLCOCKS, Institutul Cultural Român, Bucureşti, 2007, 304 pp.

The coming out of press of every new history book at Institutul Cultural Român is a commendable event. Furthermore, it is evidence to the fact that historians are toiling for a better understanding of the Romanian past. The present volume gathers the papers of nine young researchers belonging to the same generation, who embarked upon their research work after the 1989 revolution and were able to acquire advanced specialization abroad. Hence, two particular traits of this book: the papers are equal in value, which is usually difficult to attain in any collective enterprise, and they are largely based on French, English, German and Italian documents, which ensures the integration of Romanian topics into the European context.

The general topic is a borrowed one – the public show. Festivities at the Prince's Court or celebrations in the streets, crime punishment in public, and preparation of the good Christian for eternal life. The character of novelty is given by the host of new information gathered from the Romanian archives or from local collections of published documents and chronicles, in all the aforementioned directions, ranging from the fourteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century.

A very original and extremely useful contribution of Sorin Iftimi is the employment of ceremony regulations and treasury registers as sources of information for ceremonies held at the Prince's Court. Gheorghe Lazăr examines only one source, an extremely rich one, though, namely the will of a merchant of Craiova dating approximately to 1830 (Băluţă Ioanu, Ioan, from the Greek genitive, being here the father's name).

A determinant element in organizing festive events was undoubtedly the solidarity created between the population and the power, with the former assuming the role of spectators (and participants). Several meaningful examples in this respect are given by Maria Pakucs Willcocks, who examines civic rituals in nineteen-century Sibiu, and by Radu G. Păun, who has become in the recent years a specialist in the propaganda strategies of the Moldavian and Wallachian princes. Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu is analyzing the ceremonies held in Galaţi and in Iaşi in 1834, on the occasion of Prince Mihail Sturdza's enthronement.

The event lying at the core of Ovidiu Cristea's research, the execution of 1693 of the boyars who denounced Constantin Brâncoveanu to the Porte, is the starting point for an ample review of similar other cases of the time, in which repression was staged as a pseudo-triumph, aiming to discredit the perpetrators. Having used Dan Horia Mazilu's edition of Wallachian chronicles, Ovidiu Cristea overlooks the fact that in the Foreword to M. Gregorian's edition, Eugen Stănescu was the first to point out to the stage character of executions for political crimes. The public impact of the punishment of crimes under the common law, often staged as a public show, is examined at length by Constanţa Vintilă-Ghiţulescu, an experienced researcher in the field of the history of morals, who

illustrates various episodes from the law court archives and from the memoirs of foreign travelers who visited Wallachia and Moldavia.

The investigation of the spiritual life, in the cases studied by Liviu Pilat, concerning the pilgrimage, and by Andreea Iancu, in her interpretation of the testamentary discourse, is very productive. The significance of the *Pastoris aeterni* bull, by which the bishopric church of Baia was being authorized to grant indulgences in 1476, is explained by Monsignor Tăutu. The catholic churches of Baia and Siret, where the miracles of the Holy Blood had been recorded, became places of pilgrimage. The wills and testaments discovered by Andreea Iancu provided the editor and the witnesses with the memory of a biography.

Despite a few errors here and there – a repeated phrase on p. 289, a misinterpreted quotation from Carra on p. 82, n. 10, in which the biting irony so characteristic of this author goes unnoticed, etc. – the book is very well written. It is a great satisfaction to see that the research efforts of these young historians are now bearing fruit.

Andrei Pippidi

EVGHENII ANISIMOV, *Elizaveta Petrovna*, Molodaia Gvardiia, Moskva, 2005, 426 pp.

The reign of Tsarina Elisabeth Petrovna (1741-1761) was a time of internal and external progress and consolidation. It followed after the beneficial period of 1730-1740, when the throne of Russia was held by Tsarina Anna Ivanovna. It also paved the way for the remarkable successes of Russia during the reign of the well-known tsarina of German origin, Catherine II (1762-1796). One should note that Tsarina Elisabeth Petrovna belongs to the dynasty of the Romanovs, being the daughter of Peter the Great (1689-1725), the Tsar of the reforms. For this reason, this recently published monograph by Evghenii Anisimov deserves full attention.

Tsarina Elisabeth Petrovna acceded to the throne of Russia on 25 November / 6 December 1741, by a coup undertaken with the assistance of the regiments of guard of Saint Petersburg. By doing this, she dethroned Ivan VI (1740-1741), the infant tsar, and his mother, regent Anna Leopoldovna (the niece of Tsarina Anna Ivanovna). After a few days, the three higher officials of German origin on whom Tsarina Anna Ivanovna had always relied – Vice-Chancellor A. I. Ostermann, Field marshal B. H. Münnich, and E. I. Biron (Anna Ivanovna's favorite) – were arrested and deported to Siberia. Tsarina Elisabeth Petrovna chose to rely instead on the Russian aristocrats and officers who had assisted her during the coup. However, a number of foreigners (Westerners) continued to hold relatively important offices in the army, administration, education, science and industry.

In 1741-1761, the manufacturing industry continued to develop in Russia. Fairly large quantities of goods were produced for the army and administration, aristocracy, town dwellers, and the Imperial Court. The modernizing of roads continued as well. Several public buildings were erected. The Russian army and fleet became better organized and equipped. The law system and the political and administrative framework were improved. In 1754, the internal custom duties were lifted. In 1754 again, the first important Russian bank was created; in 1755, the University of Moscow; in 1756, the first public theater, in Sankt Petersburg; and in 1757, the Academy of Fine Arts of Sankt Petersburg. Tsarina Elisabeth and the higher officials in her entourage encouraged the development of architecture, painting and sculpture. The beginnings of Russian orchestral music can be traced to the same time.

In 1741-1761, Russia was extremely active on the international stage, acting concurrently on the political-diplomatic and military levels. Russia had been at peace with the Ottoman Empire for almost thirty years (1739-1768). But this was only the stillness announcing the storm. While the Porte

genuinely hoped to maintain the peace, Russia intended to keep it only until favorable conditions for a new anti-Ottoman war arose, and until she was able to prepare thoroughly in order to win such a war (and gain access to the Black Sea, at last). In 1751, Russia began the massive colonization and militarization of the north-Pontic strip delimited by the Lower Boug, the Dnepr, and the northeastern region of the Azov Sea (captured from the Porte in 1739). This enabled Russia to come out victorious from the Russian-Ottoman war of 1768-1774, at the end of which the Russian State gained access to the Black Sea.

Hoping to regain possession of the territories lost to Peter the Great in 1721, Sweden launched the Russian-Swedish war of 1741-1743. The war was won by Russia, who also managed to wrest from Sweden the southeastern corner of nowadays Finland. Until 1788, Sweden refrained from any further attack on Russia.

In 1741-1761, Russia's external policy mainly focused on preventing the rise of Prussia and keeping Poland under Russian influence. In order to achieve these goals, Russia took part in the two major European wars of the mid-eighteenth century – the war for succession to the throne of Austria (1740-1748) and the Seven Years War (1756-1763). Her war effort earned her no additional territories. However, she was able to achieve the goals related to Prussia and Poland, and her prestige increased. Furthermore, in the clashes with the well reputed Prussian army, repeatedly won by the Russians, the Russian army was able to gain experience. This experience would be further employed in the wars against the Porte and against Sweden, in the last decades of the eighteenth century.

Tsarina Elisabeth Petrovna died on 25 December 1761 / 5 January 1762, aged 52. The country she left behind was well consolidated internally and internationally. No doubt, the Russian State was apt for internal progress and territorial expansion to the detriment of the Ottoman Empire, Poland and Sweden.

Inevitably, this complex and difficult book has its drawbacks, deriving mainly from the fact that the author has chosen not to employ Turkish scientific works or any Ottoman historical sources. Also, several aspects of the Russian external policy of 1741-1761 are insufficiently developed.

However, the book is an ample and solid monograph. It makes a coherent and convincing rendition of the life and reign of Tsarina Elisabeth Petrovna, and of the evolution of Russia during her time. The book is well-documented and brings into focus a host of new information. The exposition is clear and fluent, and the conclusions are pertinent for the most.

Anisimov's book is an important contribution and it can prove a useful tool for researchers studying the history of Russia and of the neighboring European states, including the Romanian Principalities, in the eighteenth century and in the centuries to follow.

Adrian Tertecel

MIREL BĂNICĂ, *Biserica Ortodoxă Română, stat şi societate în anii '30* (The Romanian Orthodox Church. State and Society in the Thirties), Edit. Polirom, Iaşi, 2007, 268 pp.

The approach offered by Mirel Bănică in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română, stat şi societate în anii '30* is extremely important and necessary in Romanian historiography. The position of the Church in society and its relations with the political power are topics still under debate, with interlocutors very often assuming dogmatic standpoints. Things are all the more difficult as the public perception of the thirties continues to elude all negative aspects, imperative for any well-balanced historical presentation, as noted by Bănică.

The present book is a concise version of a doctorate dissertation prepared by the author in the West. As the inter-war period has been little addressed by Romanian historians, the richness of the

topics makes the book quite dense. The 22 chapters, discrepant in length and consistency, can be read as 22 independent studies. The writing style is captivating and makes the reader want to access the full variant of the dissertation.

Quite interesting and inciting is the short presentation of the documentary effort. To the suspected bias in the analysis of past events added the difficulty in accessing various archives or archive funds, a recurrent and most unfortunate obstacle to historical research nowadays. Poor access to archive documents prompted Bănică to employ other sources as well, including the church and political press. Articles, standpoints, and polemics around one issue or another, which are extremely useful to researchers in their approach to the inter-war period, enabled Bănică to identify several interesting issues in the relations between the Church and the political power, against the backdrop of the political and scientific ideas put into circulation at the time. Bănică gives a general outline of such topics – the inter-war church press, priesthood as a profession in the inter-war period, official and latent anti-Semitism among the clergy – and points out that Romanian historiography and sociology are called to address them more thoroughly.

A most important and commendable feature of the present book is the comparative dimension of the scientific approach. Therefore, Bănică makes a comparison between the position of the Orthodox Church in Romanian society and within the Romanian State and other contemporary situations in Fascist Italy, national-socialist Germany, and the Soviet Union. He also examines the relations between the Church and the political power, identifies the tendency of the Romanian democratic or totalitarian State to employ Orthodoxy as a means of endorsement for its actions, and shows that the access to power of the Legionary movement brought along no real change in these relations, but rather made official the specific religious character of the Romanian Extreme Right.

As declared by the author, the purpose of the book is not to solve issues, but rather to stimulate the debate on the general role of religion – more specifically, of Orthodoxy – in the political, cultural and power framework of the thirties, and on topics still delicate, like for instance the relation with the Greek-Catholic Church.

Further research, stimulated by Bănică's book, can undoubtedly bring to attention new elements linked to the history of the inter-war period.

Bogdan Popa

ANTONY BEEVOR, *Berlin. Căderea – 1945* (Berlin. The Downfall – 1945), Edit. Rao, Bucureşti, 2005, 604 pp.

Antony Beevor is part of the same family as Cornelius Ryan, famous for his two books: *The Longest Day* and *A Bridge Too Far*. A student of the well-known John Keegan, Antony Beevor, the author of *Berlin. The Downfall*, a journalist and a writer at the same time, in love with history, author of several books, some of which received different prizes[1], used a vast, extremely serious bibliography in order to substantiate what he asserted. What is impressive is that he personally investigated some military and civilian archives from Russia and Germany, with the help of some renowned researchers, whom he thanks in the preface.

The book deals with the last days of the Nazi Germany, from January to May 1945. It very well captures the despair of the defeated, humiliated, disoriented German people who had believed

[1] The Runciman Prize for *Crete: The Battle and the Resistance*, John Murray, London, 1991; the Samuel Johnson Prize, the Wolfson Prize for History, the Hawthorden Prize for Literature for *Stalingrad*, first edition, Viking, London, 1998 (translated in Romanian and published in Bucharest in 2005), the Longman-History Today Trustees' Award for *Berlin: The Downfall 1945*, Penguin, London, 2002 (translated in Romanian *Berlin. Căderea – 1945*, Bucureşti, 2005).

Hitler's words. In those times, the Germans felt deceived because the Nazis had promised them a total victory. Instead, everything had turned into an indisputable defeat.

More than ever, in those moments, the Nazi "gauleiters"' incapacity of command and leadership came out and the example of Himmler convinces the reader of this. Adolf Hitler continued to lead the Nazi system unconsciously and physically decrepit after the attempt at the "Wolf's Lair". Antony Beevor emphasizes the manner in which that leader reached, in those days, such an abnormal state that he preferred to sacrifice his country and people instead of abandoning power. He left his leading position too late, by committing suicide. It was the worst and most destructive solution. It raises a question for the reader: did Hitler have the real qualities of a leader? Personally, I think it is normal for anyone to doubt a political person who does not know how to lose.

A special merit of the author is the skill in rendering the atmosphere in which the Red Army moved to Berlin. The way was paved with plunders, murders, rapes, inhumane acts. The Soviet soldiers' appearance was not something the German people had expected. They were dirty, unshaved, with shabby, patched uniforms, but with their eyes full of hatred, eager to do evil. In antithesis, A. Beevor also drew the image of those who attacked Berlin in the west: the Anglo-American armies. In aspect, they were much more civilized. This way of presentation is something that the author can be reproached with. He may be accused of a certain lack of objectivity. Documents show that the Anglo-American troops treated the German population just as brutally. Therefore, from this point of view, of the behavior, that is, a distinction between them and the Soviet armies cannot be made.

The Germans' opposition in front of the Red Army was illustrated and demonstrated, when possible, with valid, real cases, as that of the Junker Jesco Freiherr von Puttkamer, the father of a contemporary distinguished German politician. This is another deficiency of the book, namely of not showing that the Germans did not passively took all the blows of the invading army. They reacted individually, efficiently in many cases.

The sufferance caused to the German people and, to some extent, to Europe by the greatest battle of Berlin is suggested by the title of the penultimate chapter, "Vae Victis!". I believe the author could not find a more eloquent ending than that described in the last chapter, "The Man on the White Horse". It illustrates, in few words, the lack of gratitude of the politicians to the soldiers who had brought victory. The life of Marshal Jukov that Beevor refers to is a convincing example.

Any scholar can tell that the book about the downfall of Berlin brings new written information, well-grounded by 16 maps and 49 photos, expands the horizon and incites to meditation.

Radu Ştefan Vergatti

ANTONY BEEVOR, *Stalingrad*, trans. by DELIA RĂZDOLESCU, Edit. Rao, Bucureşti, 2005, 544 pp.

A winner of the Samuel Johnson Prize for non-fiction, the Wolfson prize for History and the Hawthornden prize for Literature, Antony Beevor managed to create an outstanding piece of work. The reason he wrote it was to describe the experience that both the Russian and the German armies went through, having as starting point new documents from the Russian archives, mostly.

Stalingrad, as he called his book, is structured in five parts. Although it mainly deals with the Battle of Stalingrad, with a tragic end for the German troops, Antony Beevor begins his account with the events of June 1941: the outbreak of the war and the Barbarossa plan. The failure of the German troops in the battle of Moscow led them towards the south. Then it was clear that the Barbarossa plan was a two-edged knife for the Germans. The German's expedition to the south was a way to make Hitler's idyllic plan, of conquering the oil-bearing areas of the Caspian Sea, come true. The Sixth German Army led by Paulus, supported by the panzer divisions commanded by Generals Hott and von Bock, obtained an important victory at Harkov in May 1942. This success made Hitler so

enthusiastic that he moved the OKW headquarters in Ukraine. He ordered the army to immediately set out to Stalingrad. To conquer the city was not absolutely necessary, from a military point of view, for Germany. Hitler made a mistake because granted too much importance to the political factor. The army led by Paulus moved too slowly. To the Germans' surprise, the Red Army commanded by General Ciuikov resisted exceptionally at Stalingrad. It constantly received both material and human support, the most important of all being that of the forces led by General Jukov. The end of the battle had been anticipated. The Soviets won a total victory on February 2nd, 1943. It was the first time that an entire German army surrendered. The significance of this battle is clearly emphasized by Antony Beevor. After the defeat, the Germans lost initiative on the front for good. Their capitulation was merely a matter of days. The events of war are sagaciously covered up to 1945 when Germany capitulated.

Could the author of a book about the Battle of Stalingrad stop here? Naturally, the answer is no. Antony Beevor describes the fate of the prisoners captured at Stalingard up to 1945 when most of them were set free.

The book is based on an exhaustive documentation, including war journals, letters, personal accounts, reports of the priests on the front. The author also used the NKVD's interrogations of the German prisoners and the reports of the interrogations that the survivors went through. This serious documentation presents itself to the reader in the form of an impressive bibliography: new and old sources, memoirs of the veterans, fiction, newspapers, photographs, etc.

I feel compelled to add that the text is supported by 31 pictures, many of them being very little known. The entire movement of the troops is visually illustrated by six maps which prove Antony Beevor's training as a former officer.

The author managed, possibly due to his talent as a journalist and a writer, to fully use these sources. He put them in a pleasant shape, attractive for the audience, and created such a piece of work as I would much like all of them to be to make people love history.

Cristina-Mihaela Predoiu

NICOLAE BETHLEN, *Descrierea vieţii sale de către el însuşi* (His Life, in His Own Rendition), trans. by FRANCISC PAP, preface by CAMIL MUREŞAN, Edit. Casa Cărţii de Ştiinţă, Cluj-Napoca, 2004, 330 pp. + ills.

The book is an autobiography of Nicolae Bethlen (1642-1716), a prominent Transylvanian politician and historian, written by himself while in detention in Vienna (1708-1710).

The Bethlens, a most prominent and powerful family, exerted great influence on the political and cultural life of Transylvania. Both the author's grandfather and father held important offices in the Transylvanian principality in the seventeenth century. Bethlen began his education in Alba Iulia and Cluj, and continued it abroad, in Viena, Nuremberg, Heidelberg, Utrecht, Leiden, London and Paris, in 1661-1664. He began his political career in 1667, during the reign of Prince Michael Apafi, as Supreme Captain of the region of Odorhei and member of the Diet. After the death of Michael Teleki (1690), he became chancellor of the government of Transylvania and count of the Habsburg Empire.

Bethlen's autobiography gives a most complex picture of the life of the higher aristocracy in seventeenth-century Transylvania. Alliances contracted through arranged marriages and disputes over estates and offices are part of this genuine fresco of the time. Mentalities and customs of the ruling class in Transylvania are also rendered in vivid colors. A host of information is provided on the Bethlens and, especially, on the author himself: physical description, temperament, diet, health, illness, education, travels, etc.

Information is also given on the political and social life of the Transylvanian principality during the office of chancellor Michael Teleki, on Bethlen's conflict with Teleki, his subsequent imprisonment in the fortress of Făgăraş, his rehabilitation and participation in negotiations with the House of Habsburg.

Bethlen was a resolute Calvinist and a defender of the old status of the Transylvanian Principality. His naturally ensuing antagonism with the Habsburg authorities would eventually trigger his disgrace and imprisonment in Vienna. Bethlen also opposed the introduction of the Jesuit Order in the province and the Union with Rome of part of the Romanians. Moreover, he showed little sympathy for the Catholic Armenians or their bishop.

The included appendices enable a better understanding of the text.

Bethlen's autobiography, now in Romanian version, gives a thorough insight into the mentalities and everyday life of Transylvanian élites in the second half of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Alexandru Ciocîltan

FRANCESCO GUIDA, *Romania*, Edizioni Unicopli, Milano, 2005, 350 pp. (Storia d'Europa nel XX Secolo)

The book written by Francesco Guida, a reputable specialist in the history of East Europe and a professor at the University of "Roma Tre" Studies, is a history of Romania from 1900 till present. In agreement with the profile of the collection "Storia d'Europa nel XX Secolo", the book is addressed to the general public, has no notes, but includes a rich bibliography in its final section. It is in fact an excellent introduction to the contemporary history of Romania. The author makes a chronological presentation of the history of Romania in the twentieth century, employing the classical chronological landmarks, focuses on the major moments and processes in this history, and gives a personal viewpoint. The pages devoted to the reforms and political crises of the first years after the end of World War One, Marshal Averescu Government, the 1989 revolution, and post-communist Romania are a few examples in this respect.

Professor Guida's sympathy for our country transpires throughout the book, from the very first lines, in which he invokes Gheorghe Brătianu, and until the last pages, in which he writes optimistically about Romania's future within the European Union.

Viorel Achim

LARRY McMURTRY, *The Colonel and Little Missie. Buffalo Bill, Annie Oakley, and the Beginning of Superstardom in America*, Simon & Schuster Inc., New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, 2006, 246 pp. + ills.

This recent book by Larry McMurtry is a valuable addition to the rich bibliography on Buffalo Bill, the great Army scout and a prominent figure of the beginnings of *showbiz*. The author is a well-known novelist who has published 27 titles until now. His novel *Lonesome Dove* earned him a Pulizer Prize and was turned into a very successful TV series starring Robert Duvall and Anjelica Huston. In addition to essays, memoirs and over 30 film scripts, McMurtry is now trying his hand with a history novel. More exactly, with a history essay, in which he shows sympathy and understanding for the characters, as well as objectivity in analysis and conclusions. The present book, structured as a novel, has a Foreword entitled *Superstardom*, a Book One – *The Tropes* and a Book

Two –*The Troupes*, followed by a chapter entitled *Annie* (after the name of the famous female sharpshooter performing in Cody's troupe) and a last chapter, *Grandmother England*. The chapters include short subchapters of rarely more than 1-3 pages, marked with letters. To the historical data and contemporary anecdotes, the author adds his early personal knowledge of Buffalo Bill. The book begins with one such confession: "When I was eight years old, I was sitting in a hot pickup near Silverston, Texas, bored stiff, waiting for my father and two of my uncles, Charlie and Roy McMurtry, to conclude a cattle deal. I was reading a book called *Last of the Great Scouts*, by Helen Cody Wetmore, Buffalo Bill Cody's sister. At the time I was more interested in the Lone Ranger than in Buffalo Bill Cody, but when my father and my uncles finally returned to the pickup, my Uncle Roy noticed that book and reminded Uncle Charlie that they had once seen Cody. This had occurred in Oklahoma, near the end of Cody's life, when he had briefly merged his Wild West with the Miller Brothers' 101 Ranch show. Both agreed that Cody, an old man at this time, hadn't actually done much; mainly he just rode around the arena on his white horse, Isham, waving to the crowd. Sixty years have passed since that hot afternoon in Silverton. I mainly remember that heat in the pickup – but it was true that two of my uncles, not men to veer much from the strict path of commerce, did perk up a bit when they remembered that they had actually seen Buffalo Bill Cody ride his white horse around the arena in Oklahoma. And like millions of others, they had made a trip precisely for that purpose, such was Cody's fame," (pp. 3-4).

One may see here the very substance of the first chapter, in which McMurtry traces the landmarks of William Frederick Cody's celebrity and of his several million dollars business. The remark that follows is quite surprising, but no less realistic, as it is based on observations made by contemporaries and by posterity: "Buffalo Bill was probably the most famous American of his day; he was easily more famous than any president, more famous even than Theodore Roosevelt," (p. 5). To this adds the fascination that a show featuring the Old West – not a *rodeo*, though – continues to exert on people's minds even now, in the 21st century. The author of the present review strongly agrees with the remark, having traveled widely in the United States without ever happening on any such show, but quite surprisingly, being able to see it near Paris, at Euro Disney, where a Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show is performed morning and evening, in front of a packed audience (mostly made of Americans!!).

Upon embarking on his adventure on the stage, Cody had little knowledge about the show business. However, by a stroke of luck, he found two people who would assist him throughout his career: the impresario Nate Salsbury, a vaudeville actor himself and the director of a well-known troupe, and Major John M. Burke, who became his press agent. Salsbury was the true manager of the troupe, the iron arm bringing to order Cody himself, when the latter would start drinking excessively or get involved in an affair detrimental both to him and to the troupe. It was Salsbury again who discovered the *star* Annie Oakley, second in importance to Cody. He had seen her practicing and had hired her immediately, offering a salary rated fabulous at the time. From the moment they met, Cody called his young employee Missie or Little Missie, and she called him Colonel; this courteous form of address would never change during the 15 years they worked together, even if relations among the members of the troupe were thoroughly informal.

The two characters are placed in antithesis: Annie Oakley was withdrawn and discreet, whereas Cody craved for attention from the general public and the press, and basked in the adulation of his audiences; Annie was gloomy and pessimistic, but very ambitious, whereas her employer was optimistic and good natured, albeit showing a fair disinterest in serious matters; Annie was economical, even stingy with money, whereas Cody was generous and rather a squanderer; Annie was excessively prude, and could only be found in the company of her husband and agent Frank Butler (a skilled sharpshooter himself, who had nonetheless stopped performing in order to better train his wife and offer support), whereas the Colonel could be seen in the company of glamorous beauties in restaurants, at the opera and at dinner parties, even though he had a wife and several daughters in North Platte, Nebraska; Missie was frugal, perfectly happy with her meager meals and drank nothing but water or lemonade, whereas Cody was a gourmet and quite a drinker, sometimes even going on

stage when he was on his cups. In fact, his drinking problem had become so acute at one point that Salsbury insisted on introducing in the new contract a clause along which Cody would only be allowed a glass a day; the size of the glass not being mentioned though, Buffalo Bill safely kept to a … tankard of whiskey daily (p. 130).

Although she played on stage the role of the "Girl of the West", the West itself was completely unknown to Annie. Se had been born in Ohio, into a poor family, and in order to help to provide for the common needs, she had learnt how to hunt at the age of 8. As the girl was an excellent shooter, the quantity of partridge, quail and hare soon exceeded the needs of the family, and a contract was signed with some grocers. Careful not to damage the body of the animals and thus make them improper for being served at elegant dinners, Annie would always aim at the head (p. 146). Hence, the extraordinary precision with which she would hit targets. Her reputation as an excellent shooter spread around, and she was eventually employed by various circuses and, later on, in the Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. She could never allow others to do better than her. And nobody did, in fact. When another excellent sharpshooter, Lillian Smith, much younger than her, was hired by Cody, Annie was seriously affected and changed her date of birth from 1860 into 1866! (p. 146)

McMurtry insists on personal details which are more often than not overlooked or even hidden by other authors, such as done by Helen Cody Wetmore, Cody's sister (whom the author was reading and quoting at the beginning of the book), who mainly focuses on the heroic character of Cody's life and leaves aside his drinking and his conjugal infidelities. Even though an experienced Army scout with many victims, Cody does not appear to have been a great Indian killer. The author notes: "(...) he not only helped but probably saved far more Indians than he was supposed to have killed. It is likely that real Indian killers, such as George Armstrong Custer, never took Cody seriously as a fighter; some of the Indians he is supposed to have fought probably felt the same way," (p. 23). Additional points are added in this respect: "Cody was never an Indian hater, as so many of his contemporaries were. He was not moved to kill Indians, but merely to void being killed by them. (...) He rarely bragged about his Indian killing, and if he did talk about it, it was usually to repeat once again the particulars of the <<duel>> with Yellow Hair. (...) There is evidence that Bill Cody liked Indians," (pp. 44-45).

Even if everybody called him "Colonel", he had never been brevetted this rank in the regular Army. This title was conferred to him in a purely honorific way by the Governor of Nebraska before the 1887 tour in Great Britain, knowing that the English were particularly sensitive to titles (p. 158). It is no less true that in 1890, when the Indians of the Northern Plains had become restless owing to the Ghost Dance Religion and were threatening with an upraising, Cody had been appointed Brigadier General and had been called back from his tour in order to intercede with Sitting Bull, his old friend and employee of 1885. He had a uniform made for him on the occasion and had a picture taken, clad in it. However, his mediation was intentionally avoided, and Sitting Bull was killed in December 1890. After the campaign of 1876, he had been awarded the highest American distinction, the Congressional Medal of Honor. However, in 1916, the medal was taken away from him on the ground that when he had been awarded it he was a civil employee of the Army and not a military proper. This event saddened him during the last year of his life.

In his essay writing style, McMurtry explains the myth created around Buffalo Bill through the success of his show on the East Coast and especially in Europe, rather than in the West, a myth that can be traced in literature to this day: "All serious commentators on Cody's career agree on one thing: his show succeeded because of the immense, worldwide appetite for anything pretending to portray life in the old West. In our time a Frenchman named George Fronval has published at least six hundred Western novelettes, and even in distant Norway there's a writer, named Kjell Halbing, who has produced more than sixty. (...) The Karl May cult in Germany has not even begun to slow down, although May died in 1912 and was himself never west of Buffalo," (pp. 119-120). People who knew the West well also enjoyed the show. So did Elizabeth Custer, the wife of the General who had died in 1876 at Little Big Horn, and the humorist Mark Twain, who wrote *A Horse's Tale* in the first person, as if imagined by Cody's horse (pp.137, 140). The show had enormous success: an audience

of 200,000 people in just one week, at Staten Island. This was due to people perceiving the show as real and well documented. McMurtry notes: "It was, in his [Cody's] mind, and in the minds of most of the spectators, history, not fiction – easy to understand fiction that allowed the audience to participate vicariously in the great and glorious adventure that had been the settling of the West, an enterprise not yet wholly concluded even in 1886," (p. 139).

Being an extremely generous person, Cody would give charity shows for the poor children and for the orphans. And if he happened on a destitute person, lacking all means and with no place to go, he would immediately hire him and find him something to do. However, after 1900, financial problems arose, and Cody had to go into partnership with other circus owners and borrow money. His health was also failing, he could only mount a horse with difficulty, and his hair had fallen out, which forced him to wear a wig for almost 20 years, so that his audience may not notice his dramatic change in appearance. Quite often he would take out his hat together with the wig, which greatly annoyed him (p. 220). His relations with his wife were very tense. Lulu Cody had taken the precaution to place all the property under her name. Nonetheless, she was finding the infidelities of her husband, who was always away from home, particularly irritating. To win back his affection, on the Christmas night of 1900, she surreptitiously gave him a love potion called "Dragon's Blood", which she had purchased from a gypsy woman. When nonetheless demanding the divorce in 1905, Cody accused his wife of attempted poisoning (p. 203). The divorce was not granted, and the two spouses eventually reconciled. Upon the death of Buffalo Bill on 10 January 1917, his wife, finding the offer by a creditor quite tempting, maintained that Cody had expressed the wish to be buried in Colorado, on Lookout Mountain near Denver. But where in fact Cody should have liked to be buried still remains a controversial issue. As the earth was frozen, the ceremony was postponed until the month of June. The troupe decided to make a last tour, without the performer who had given a name to the show.

During the same year, after the American troops had entered the Great War, Annie Oakley, who was no longer a member of the troupe, overcame her cupidity and, having melted the medals won in shooting contests, gave financial assistance to a hospital. Subsequently, to help keep up the morale of the troops, she visited various military camps and performed there. Unlike Cody, Missie did not think much about her posterity. Information about her life is scarce and disparate. Discreet and withdrawn, she preferred to live in mystery. Excessively prude, she made the necessary arrangements for her corpse to be attended and embalmed by a female and not by a male (p. 11). She died on 3 November 1926, nine years after Cody's death. Her husband Frank Butler was unable to cope with the loss and, starving himself to death, perished 18 days later.

In 1917, E. E. Cummings, quite famous for his non-rhyming verse, wrote a poem never to be surpassed by any of his subsequent writings (p. 223).

The present volume also includes a list, *Western Heroes, Heroines, and Villains. How Long They Lasted*, which does not quite seem to belong there, a short bibliography and an index of names.

Written as an essay, extremely well documented and easy to read, Larry McMurtry's book reveals a host of details about the lives and exploits of the two heroes, so different and yet so deeply attached to the show of the Old West. Without being a monograph, *The Colonel and Little Missie* is a valuable addition to ampler books on the same topic, signed by well-known writers, such as the classical writings *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill* by Don Russell (University of Nebraska Press, Norman and London, 1960) and *Buffalo Bill. His Family, Friends, Fame, Failures, and Fortunes* by Nellie Snyder Yost (The Swallow Press, Chicago, 1979).

Adrian-Silvan Ionescu

ROY MEDVEDEV, ZHORES MEDVEDEV, *The Unknown Stalin. His Life, Death, and Legacy*, Overlook Press, Woodstock NY, 2004, 336 pp.

The conventional wisdom depicts Stalin as a wily, adept, but illiterate tyrant. Though indeed the Soviet dictator was a wily and adept tyrant, it turns out that he was an avid, retentive speed reader, had a personal collection of some 20,000 books most of which he had read and annotated, and had both a library and a librarian at his Moscow area dacha. In fact, one visitor described the dacha as "stiff and formal" except for the library "which had a cosy feel".

This is just one of the nuggets of information to be found in the Medvedev brothers' entertaining, scholarly new book. It comes from a fascinating chapter dealing with the whereabouts of Stalin's personal papers and belongings (including a large collection of phonograph records), most of which seem to have disappeared without a trace following his unlamented death in 1953. It appears that many of Stalin's henchmen were less than thrilled with the idea that the contents of Stalin's archives might be made public, sooner or later. Beria, Khrushchev, and Malenkov were officially charged with "putting the documents and papers of Comrade Stalin … in proper order," which they liberally interpreted to mean burning all of them without looking through or even opening any of the packets and files. This process was continued over the next four decades as Stalin's henchmen passed on to their eternal rewards (the exception was Khrushchev, who, though he could read, could barely write and left no handwritten documents behind). Most impressive was Anastas Mikoyan, whose papers filled three trucks when they were scooped up the day after his death in 1978.

The book does not try to present the story of Stalin's life (the authors note that there are now more than 100 biographies of Stalin), but focuses on episodes or issues – such as the fate of Stalin's archives – that the authors think are interesting and/or which have been clarified by the availability of new archives and publications since 1991's timely end of the Soviet Union.

In the chapter concerning "Riddles Surrounding Stalin's Death," readers will likely be disappointed to find that Stalin's demise was not the result of foul play or a plot, but more or less a consequence of his suspicion of doctors (which led him to avoid the kind of regular medical checkups that a man of his age ought to have; incidentally, the authors confirm that Stalin was born a year earlier than officially reported), overwork (he was busy with two elaborate repression schemes that would have wiped out most of the USSR's Jews and all of his closest Party colleagues), and a sudden decision to stop a smoking habit of 50 years (which changed his metabolism and led to a rise in blood pressure). It was curious that when Stalin had his massive stroke on March 1, 1953, he was not attended to by doctors for nearly 24 hours, who, in turn were handicapped by the complete absence of Stalin's medical records (he had had them destroyed earlier) and who were surprised to find that there was no medication of any sort in the dacha, and that the household staff did not include a nurse. The Medvedevs conclude, however, that "even today a stroke of this kind is nearly always fatal …" Their answer to the question "illness or plot?" is that the delay in getting Stalin medical attention as well as whatever "plotting" that occurred were merely "a spontaneous response to circumstances at the time of his fatal illness. Once he lost consciousness … Stalin lost power and was no longer part of the 'game.'"

"Stalin's Secret Heir" on the Medvedevs' account turns out to be Mikhail Suslov, who the Medvedevs believe to have functioned as the Cardinal of the Kremlin and "Keeper of the Cult" until his death in 1982. In the end, Suslov was the man responsible for the perpetuation of the Soviet Stalinist system until the eve of Perestroika and Glasnost.

Roy Medvedev's account of "The Twentieth Party Congress: Before and After," is a readable summary of the beginnings of DeStalinization. He concludes by noting that this event began the unleashing of great Russian writers who had been victims of the camps, such as Solzhenitsyn, Shalamov, and Ginsburg, another small step towards the decisive events of the 1980s.

The chapters on Stalin and nuclear weapons – "Stalin and the Atomic Bomb," "Stalin and the Hydrogen Bomb," and "Stalin and the Atomic Gulag" – also provide admirable précis of their

respective topics, showing how the Soviets were able to close the weapons gap with the United States, partly through espionage and partly through the use of the Gulag as a resource. This included tragic sacrifices made by thousands prisoners who died while mining radioactive metals, building reactors and entire nuclear research cities, and through nuclear accidents, as well as a callous disregard for the human and environmental consequences of this whole project.

This is followed by three chapters on Stalin and Science, dealing, respectively, with geopolitics, Lysenko, and linguistics. The Lysenko case is by now a familiar one, but the Medvedevs have some interesting things to say about it. The "Stalin and Linguistics" chapter presents a contrast to Stalin's (and Khruschchev's) well-known support of Lysenko's quack theories. They conclude that Stalin's intervention in this case actually had a beneficial effect in cutting short a looming purge of traditional linguistic scholars, though they recognize that Stalin's personal impact as a linguistic "thinker" cast a pall over the entire discipline.

The fourth part of the book deals with World War II: one chapter on the German attack on the USSR and another which tries to establish the significance of General Joseph Apanasenko. Two important conclusions are advanced in the first case. The first is that Hitler's principal blunder was not pursuing a winter campaign in Russia, but consisted in thinking that a blitzkrieg campaign could succeed in the Soviet Union at all. It could not, and therefore the Soviet campaign was compromised from the start. Secondly, they argue that the traditional account of Stalin's supposed mental breakdown in June 1941 is a myth. Aside from the psychological unlikelihood of Molotov (Stalin's toady) taking any independent action, they show that Stalin's recently discovered visitors' book was full of appointments between 22 June and 1 July, except for periods when he was at Stavka or holding meetings at his dacha.

The final section of the book contains three more interesting chapters, one on Stalin as Russian nationalist (in contrast to Lenin), one on the murder of Bukharin (a tale of some pathos well told), and one of Stalin's mother. These are written in the same engaging and irenic style.

All in all, this book presents a good deal of new information skillfully contrasted with older or lesser known information. Though Roy Medvedev is a historian and was the author of the first major Russian biography of Stalin, *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism*, back in the 1972, it should be noted that his approach was as a Leninist critic of Stalinism, and he continued to live and work in the USSR through the end of the Soviet regime. His biochemist brother, Zhores, on the other hand, was exiled from the Soviet Union in 1973 for being a wise-guy who asked too many questions about the censorship of mail (hilariously detailed in his *The Medvedev Papers*, 1971) among other things. The short and pithy chapters included in this volume are, on the whole, remarkably free from evident bias, entertainingly written without compromising scholarly obligations, and well worth the attention of anyone interested in Stalin, the USSR, or the history of the 20th century.

Paul E. Michelson