

tion. Gilberg recognizes this dilemma but propounds the optimistic solution that the forces of modernization will eventually overcome those of retardation. He may be correct in his judgments and predictions but the evidence, as of 1975, cannot rule out less optimistic assessments and prognoses.

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ROMANIA'S SOCIALIST ECONOMY: AN INTRODUCTION TO A CONTEMPORARY EXPERIENCE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. By *Costin Murgescu*. Translated from the Rumanian by *Leon Jaeger*. Bucharest: Meridiane Publishing House, 1974. 178 pp. Paper.

This is a book which should not be taken very seriously by scholars interested in East European economies, central planning, or comparative systems. It would not even serve as a decent supplementary text for students in a course. Aside from the fact that the syntax is turgid and the style dull, the translation is so poor in some spots that it is impossible to determine the meaning of a particular sentence.

The book's major virtue is that it makes a good deal of recent data available to the English-speaking world. Contemporary economic performance is compared with pre-1945 achievements and this is useful, but there is no effort to evaluate the structural change which has taken place. Indeed, the book suffers from a liberal sprinkling of political rhetoric—in particular, quotes from Ceausescu's speeches.

Regrettably, there is a virtual absence of thoughtful economic analysis in this volume. We are asked to accept such meaningless assertions as the national plan "ensures the accomplishment of the Programme of the Romanian Communist Party, in accord with the objective laws of historical development and with the specific realities of each phase" (p. 71).

The greatest disappointment, however, is that a book written so recently does not at all deal with economic reform. While the book concentrates on macro structural issues and accomplishments, an uninformed reader might well be left with the impression that nothing has happened in Rumania since the Soviet Union taught the Rumanians central planning.

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TURKEY, THE STRAITS AND U.S. POLICY. By *Harry N. Howard*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974. xiv, 337 pp. \$14.50.

The hero of this book is a treaty. The Montreux Convention, concluded in 1936, allowed Turkey to exercise sovereignty over the Straits (and thus to fortify them) and laid down detailed rules of passage for merchantmen and warships in time of peace and in time of war. Today, after a world war, three decades of continuing crisis in the eastern Mediterranean, and several revolutions in military technology, it remains in force. The Turks control the Straits and the Russians are playing the game according to the rules. Their past attempts to change the rules provide a main theme of this book.

A few years after Litvinov had welcomed conclusion of the treaty as meeting his country's interests, Stalin was pressing the Turks for revisions that would put the Straits under effective Soviet control, and he pursued that end through the war, first with Hitler and then with Churchill and Roosevelt. The latter were prepared to consider revision of Montreux, but Stalin overplayed his hand, pressing not for new rules of maritime traffic but for Soviet bases on the Straits and the reduction of Turkey to satellite status. The Turks resisted, were backed by the United States, and the policy of containment began, two years before the so-called Truman Doctrine.

Although Harry Howard begins his narrative early in the nineteenth century and deliberately follows the thread of United States policy, which until World War II was concerned only with freedom of navigation, his account of the crucial events of 1945–46 is the heart of the book. He is the ideal American historian to tell it, because, during this period, he was a State Department officer whose job it was to prepare memoranda on the Straits question for the high policy-making officials. Furthermore, he has been writing extensively on the Straits question and on Turkey's role in world politics ever since producing his fundamental *Partition of Turkey* in 1931, and he is meticulously careful in his research. Although nothing strikingly new is presented, this book does a good job of elaborating and documenting Soviet policy from newly available American and Turkish documents. While the message of the book is the consistency of United States policy over the years, it also shows the basic consistency in Soviet aims through alternating phases of active and passive diplomacy.

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VENICE: THE HINGE OF EUROPE, 1081–1797. By *William H. McNeill*.
Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1974. xvii, 334 pp. \$10.75.

The scope of this book extends far beyond Venice: it is a study of the rise and fall of empire in southeastern Europe. It discusses the tensions between orthodoxy and heresy in Islam as well as in Greek and Latin Christianity; it shows how the Greek Orthodox church was able to gain a privileged position under the Ottoman Empire; and it traces the development of Orthodoxy in Russia. Extended discussion of these topics occupies about a third of the book, although they do not figure in the title or in the table of contents.

The major turning points in the course of empire are traced to technological revolutions. The first era, based on an "alliance between Frankish knighthood and Italian shipping," came to a dead end at the Sicilian Vespers (1282), where the crossbow overcame the spear, and "gave the towns of Italy a chance to slough off the medieval carapace of knighthood, and assert their power, in all its manifold forms, independently. Doing so, they inaugurated a new era—the era of the renaissance" (p. 39).

The political conditions for the rise and decline of the Italian city-states also receive attention. Their rise was made possible by the decline in power of the Byzantine Empire, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Papacy. The decline of the city-states was made inevitable by the rise of France and of the Spanish and Ottoman Empires, and it was the monopoly of powerful siege guns by these rising