

SCORCHED EARTH: THE RUSSIAN-GERMAN WAR, 1943–1944. By *Paul Carell*. Translated from the German by *Ewald Oser*s. Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown, 1970. 556 pp. \$12.50.

It is unusual to find a volume of military history so well written. This book, a sequel to the author's *Hitler Moves East*, continues his fascinating story of the Soviet-German campaigns of World War II. In addition to a wide range of published materials, including many Soviet military memoirs, the author has combed through the official archives and has collected diaries and accounts of many German participants. Some of these are documentary materials from the time of the war; others are later recollections. Carell does not provide source references. He focuses first on considerations at High Command and senior field command levels and then shifts to the perspective of action on the battlefield as experienced by individual participants. In short, we are given a vivid, coherent narrative that conveys the personal feelings of the armies at war at different levels, and alternately as seen on opposite sides of the line.

The book is written principally from a German point of view. Nonetheless, the author has attempted—on the whole, rather successfully—to be objective. He has that rare romantic regard for the individual courage and achievement of those on both sides whom he finds responsible for successes in the enterprise of combat. Hitler emerges as increasingly responsible for German failures. Stalin, by contrast, is seen as less inclined to ignore and override the advice (which was often, but not always, good) of his trusted senior military men. Khrushchev is shown to be basically a sound and sensible representative in the field.

The author (in line with the main current of Soviet military historiography) attributes decisive significance to the Battle of Kursk in the summer of 1943. That battle, rather than Stalingrad, is held to have marked the real turning point and end of German prospects for victory. This conclusion, in the judgment of the reviewer, is correct. Among the other campaigns covered, the siege of Leningrad and its successful lifting are particularly dramatic.

In a brief review it is, of course, not possible to do more than indicate the general approach of the author and the scope of his work. This book is a well-researched, good “evocative” history. One hopes for a third volume to complete the story of the Soviet-German campaigns of World War II.

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YALTA. By *Diane Shaver Clemens*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970. x, 356 pp. \$8.50.

In the aftermath of World War II, Roosevelt and his advisers were bitterly attacked for selling out to or being duped by the Russians at the Crimean conference in February 1945. Lately we are told that instead of being traitors or fools, the American leaders cunningly deprived the Soviet Union of the fruits of victory. Mrs. Clemens, claiming to be the first person to undertake in English a study of the conference per se, is extraordinarily receptive to the second interpretation. Her book began as a study in decision-making, complete with a complicated model showing the pattern of decisions at Yalta. This part of the volume is ably done, incorporating

material from the official Allied papers, available Russian collections, and Allied memoirs and secondary sources. As far as new facts are concerned, the account goes little beyond the studies written when the Yalta documents appeared in 1955. Later a new beginning and conclusion were added, but they lack the precision of the central chapters.

Too often the author has omitted valuable studies from her consideration. She cites my book, *The Supreme Command*, but fails to use Maurice Matloff's *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-44*. She ignores *U.S. Foreign Relations, 1944* (vol. 1), which would have saved her from errors concerning the European Advisory Commission. She would have benefited from William Franklin's article on zonal boundaries (1963) and Earl Ziemke's *Stalingrad to Berlin: The German Defeat in the East* (1968), which draws heavily on German sources and the Russian items cited in her book. Although there are many errors in Anthony Kubek's *How the Far East Was Lost*, which has a wholly misleading statement about General Marshall's role at Yalta, it should have been cited by the author in preference to Felix Wittmer's *Yalta Betrayal*.

The disturbing element in Mrs. Clemens's book is the tendency to accept most Russian statements at face value (a notable exception is her concession that the Russians may have been responsible for the Katyn Forest deaths) and to regard Allied statements as hypocritical and deceptive. Thus the Russians constantly gave way on reparations, Poland, and German dismemberment in order to reach an agreement, while the Allies drove for hard bargains. One finds here little evidence that Allied suspicions were based on the Russians' 1939 pact with the Germans, the invasion of Poland, the invasion of Finland, the occupation of the Baltic states, and the obvious Russian intent to control Poland, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria.

One may deplore, as many Americans did, Churchill's policy in Greece and Central Europe, or accept as justifiable the Russians' efforts to protect their western frontiers, without fully accepting the thesis that the Soviet Union followed a policy of accommodation in 1945 and that the Western Powers were intent only on digging bear traps. One may also question Mrs. Clemens's easy assumption that Truman's willingness to abide by the Yalta agreements was merely "a delaying tactic to postpone a confrontation until the United States was in a stronger position—or, as one historian has claimed, until the atomic bomb gave the United States the power to enforce its will on the Soviet Union." (The remarkable thing about this statement is that the author elsewhere in the book indicates disagreement with the Gar Alperovitz thesis.)

Revisionism is essential to the understanding of history. As one who grew up in the twenties and thirties, I sympathize with younger historians who want to re-examine the evidence. However, history consists of something more than polemics. Mrs. Clemens outlines an interesting case for the Soviet Union at Yalta and the months that followed. But on the basis of the records, it is difficult to agree with her sweeping statement: "Within a few months . . . , the United States attempted to undo those agreements at Yalta which reflected Soviet interests. America presented the Soviet Union with a choice between relinquishing her gains at Yalta or suffering ostracism and economic boycott in the postwar world" (p. 268).

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