

The American Non-Policy Towards Eastern Europe 1943-1947. By Geir Lundestad. Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1978. Pp. 654. Distributed in the United States and Canada by Columbia University Press. \$18.00 paper.

This large book was inspired by the author's desire to probe theories on the origin of the cold war in the context of American policy toward Eastern Europe. The structure of the volume is complicated. After an introductory chapter, Part One discusses American universalism toward Eastern Europe. Part Two examines American policy toward Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Finland, and the Baltic States. A chapter compares policies toward the various East European countries. Another examines the peace treaties with the Danubian Axis satellites, and another scrutinizes the American attitude toward plans for federation in Eastern Europe. Part Three raises the question: what could and what did the United States do against Soviet domination in Eastern Europe? Three possible levers are considered — the atomic bomb, the American conventional military strength, and the power of the immense American economy. An appendix summarizes Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe. The notes, about 150 pages of them, show a Sisyphean research in American archives, manuscript collections and libraries. The result is a very useful book for students of East European affairs.

Throughout the narrative Lundestad emphasized that there was no consistent United States policy toward Eastern Europe. But consistency is not always a virtue or even possible in foreign policy. Eastern Europe — a low priority area on the scale of American interests — had to yield to more important interests, as the author explains on several occasions.

In the opinion of this reviewer the main reason for a contradictory and confused American policy toward Eastern Europe was the lack of a high-level policy-making organ in Washington. A first step was made in this direction only in 1944 with establishment of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee. But President Roosevelt remained his own secretary of state throughout the war and made the important foreign policy decisions, sometimes even without informing the Department of State, which played a subdued role during his administration. Special emissaries and representatives of wartime agencies appeared in foreign countries and few people knew who was doing what, when, where, how and why in foreign affairs. The tons of planning and briefing papers available now in official publications, archives, and memoirs are to a large extent expressions of individual or group suggestions and opinions

in government agencies, but few of those papers reached the President's desk or were considered by him. The task he assumed was beyond the capability of any man.

There were other factors at work, ensuring confusion. Policy-makers believed, or their attitude created the impression, that the affairs of Eastern Europe would be settled primarily by Britain and the Soviet Union. The Joint Chiefs of Staff ruled, in the autumn of 1943, that the United States should take no responsibilities "in the area of the Balkans, including Austria."

Gradually the Soviet military occupation of Eastern Europe became the decisive factor in policy. This situation would not have changed without use of force, which was never considered by the English-speaking powers. Keeping Soviet influence out of Greece, Turkey, Iran, and Japan remained a more important and more feasible task. In Eastern Europe the armistice agreements and peace treaties simply confirmed the military status quo established at the close of hostilities.

For the East European nations this turn of events brought traumatic experiences. In view of America's tremendous power in the closing stage of the war, the peoples of Eastern Europe believed that their fate would be settled at the peace table according to the Four Freedoms, the Atlantic Charter, and the Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe. Alas, these universalist declarations had at best only a tenuous connection with politics, and a foreign tyranny could impose totalitarian systems of government without much ado. The timetable was not the same in each East European country, but eventually the leaders of democratic parties were put in prison, exiled, executed, or otherwise eliminated. Such stark facts, fatal to more than a hundred million people, cannot easily emerge with clarity in a scholarly discussion of the theories of the cold war and the options of American policy.

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Ferenc G. Harcsár
1910-1979

Founder of the Hungarian Readers' Service and co-founder of the *Canadian-American Review of Hungarian Studies*, F. G. Harcsár was born in Szatmárnémeti, Hungary (now Satu Mare, Romania). He completed his university education in Budapest. After obtaining a doctorate in chemistry, he embarked on a career in scientific research. The war drove him into exile. Following several years' stay in Venezuela, he immigrated to Canada where he resumed his career as a research scientist. He retired in 1977 as a respected member of Canada's defense research establishment.

F. G. Harcsár was a deeply religious man with an equally strong passion for his Hungarian nation as well as his ancestral Transylvania. Throughout his adult life he had been involved in religious and patriotic organizational efforts. He had been instrumental in the founding and the maintenance of Hungarian Calvinist congregations wherever he stayed for more than a brief period. During the last decade of his life he devoted most of his spare time to the establishment and the directing of the Hungarian Readers' Service, our journal's institutional sponsor. A dedicated and punctual worker, he put in long hours every week, often every day, to attend to the administrative and financial affairs of his organization. Although the apathy and malice he encountered often caused him to despair, he refused to be discouraged and to abandon his plans.

After nearly four years of preparatory work, in 1974 he launched the Readers' Service and published, with the help of N. F. Dreisziger, the first issue of his *Review*. Following his retirement from government service three years later, he devoted even more of his time to the increasing administrative work demanded by the journal. Even during the last months of his life, he expended his rapidly diminishing energy in making arrangements for the periodical's future.

He is survived by his wife, two daughters and two granddaughters. His death is a great loss to his family, his many friends, the Hungarian-Canadian Calvinist community, and to the cause of Hungarian studies in North America and elsewhere.

N.F.D.