

for a stage-by-stage U.S. effort in the Middle East à la Trieste? Even if the answer is negative, the question is worth pursuing at greater length by the editor of this interesting short volume, as well as by its readers.

SIMON SERFATY

Washington Center of Foreign Policy Research

VLAD ȚEPEȘ. By *Nicolae Stoicescu*. Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1976. 238 pp.

Voivode Dracula, ruler of Wallachia from 1456 to 1462 (and for a few months in 1448 and 1476), and remembered in his country's history as Vlad *Țepeș*, that is, the Impaler, horrified contemporary Europe by the terror he unleashed against real and imagined opponents and with which he beat his subjects into total submission. At a time when sovereigns resorted to terror as a legitimate instrument of statecraft, the Wallachian prince was generally regarded as a practitioner of forms of violence of unparalleled viciousness; these excesses earned him a lasting reputation as a blood-thirsty tyrant.

The Impaler has been traditionally approached in Rumanian historiography with caution and ambivalent feelings. Some evaluations have been wholly negative; others, while crediting him with great military valor and victories in battle against the Turks, have been balanced by a sober view of his cruel internal excesses. The five-hundredth anniversary of Vlad's death has prompted a coordinated effort in Rumania to emit a positive reevaluation of the terrible prince, with an attendant educational emphasis upon the constructive effects of autocratic rule. The present biography, which has the merit of being the first Rumanian monographic treatment of Prince Vlad, is one contribution to this effort.

The book proposes to construct a new interpretation of Vlad's place in national and European history, to reassess his record, and to exonerate him from the stigma attached to his name. The author claims that contemporary accounts spread by Vlad's enemies and detractors (the Transylvanian Saxons, the Hungarian Royal Court) deliberately magnified the theme of morbidity in his actions in order to defame him, and contends that the prince employed ruthless methods not to gratify morbid impulses but for the good of the country and in pursuit of well-defined political objectives, thus acting no differently than other European sovereigns of the time. These propositions are, however, open to the counterargument that many sources other than those of German-Saxon or Hungarian provenance or inspiration also emphasize the maniacal streak in Vlad's personality, and that it is precisely by the standards of the time that contemporaries judged his methods of rule and found them unique in their excesses.

The author's assessment of Vlad's record as a ruler is unqualifiedly laudatory. He credits his personage with nobility of purpose and signal accomplishments. Vlad emerges from the book as a heroic national figure, striving to secure the sovereignty and prestige of the state against powerful external adversaries, to establish internal order and discipline, and to promote economic development. The thrust of the argument here is that Vlad's "severe measures" can be properly understood only in relation to such goals, by which the measures were necessitated and, in the perspective of history, validated.

Thus, Vlad's repressive domestic actions, particularly the extermination of boyars, is explained in terms of his objective of reinforcing the central authority of the state, by doing away with debilitating factional strife and consequently ensuring internal cohesion. (Vlad's terror struck all social classes and population groups indiscriminately, but the motivations and implications of this phenomenon are not explored in the book.) Similarly, the murderous persecutions of Saxon merchants are explained as

“proof of the fact that Vlad Țepeș was determined to act firmly in order to contribute to the economic progress of his country” (p. 76). And in the same vein, the extreme excesses inflicted by Vlad upon his Christian Orthodox coreligionists in the course of military expeditions against his Turkish and Transylvanian enemies (while treated with discretion) are explained in terms of his ingenious military and psychological strategies of warfare. All this leads up to the book’s conclusion that “any method is good if its aim is the strengthening of the country and the defense of its liberty, the two ideals of Vlad Țepeș’s policy” (p. 226).

The retrospective ascription to Vlad the Impaler of political objectives interpreted in terms of state interest and historical progress remains somewhat speculative in relation to the sources, relying as it does to a significant degree on hypothesis and contemporary analogies. Moreover, by taking a consistently one-sided approach to such delicately balanced dilemmas—peculiarly inherent in its reinterpretive effort—as the relation between ends and means in the exercise of statesmanship, the place of ethical and religious restraints in the politics of *raison d’état*, or the legitimation of autocratic rule in terms of superior state goals, the book reflects the normative pressures of the cultural and political environment of which it is a product.

VLADIMIR SOCOR
Columbia University

POLITIKA, PARTII, PECHAT NA BŪLGARSKATA BURZHOAZIIA 1909–1912. By *Elena Statelova*. Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1973. 0.65 lv.

This book delivers much less than its title promises. Far from being a comprehensive treatment of politics and political parties at a critical moment in Bulgaria’s history, it deals almost exclusively with Bulgaria’s two major independent newspapers and with the newspapers of six “bourgeois” political parties. Statelova defends this narrow focus by stating that “the history of the Bulgarian bourgeois press represents to a great extent the political history of the Bulgarian bourgeois state,” an assertion with which it is impossible to agree, and which seems intended largely to excuse her failure to make much use of any sources, archival or published, except the newspapers themselves.

When the author does attempt to deal with larger questions, her judgments are frequently wrong or superficial. She argues that Bulgaria’s six “bourgeois” parties—the Agrarian Union, Broad Socialist, and Radical Democratic parties are labeled “petit bourgeois” and ignored—may be defined by their class constituencies. For example, the Progressive Liberal Party represented the rising middle commercial and banking interests, the Democratic Party represented the manufacturers, and so on. But to view these parties as the vehicles of distinct groups within the Bulgarian bourgeoisie is to impose a framework that is simply not applicable. Politics itself was Bulgaria’s largest and most lucrative industry, and the parties existed to gain patronage and access to the state treasury for the “chiefs” and their followers. The parties were, in Dimo Kazasov’s words, “corporations formed for the exploitation of power.” Nor does Statelova succeed in demonstrating any correlations between the parties’ constituencies and their positions on domestic or foreign affairs.

The bulk of the book consists of a survey, and it is no more than that, of editorial opinion on the major diplomatic events from Bulgaria’s declaration of de jure independence from the Ottoman Empire to the outbreak of the First Balkan War. Statelova believes that the period may be divided into two stages: the first, from 1909 to 1911, in which the question of Bulgaria’s acquisition of Macedonia and Thrace was discussed in a relatively calm and abstract way; and the second, marked by the outbreak