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Eastern European Government and Politics

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PROFESSIONAL READING**BOOKS**

Benes, Vaclav, et al. *Eastern European Government and Politics*. New York: Harper & Row, 1966. 247p.

Eastern European Government and Politics contains a broad survey of six Communist states representing ideological variations of the Communist political structure. They are Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Rumania. A significant feature of the book is that each of the co-authors is a native of the region, a specialist in its political development, and a practicing professor and scholar. The six countries are described as having been caught in two gigantic power struggles: the Communist Chinese-Soviet dispute and the United States-Soviet cold war. Because of their fear of being trapped, as so often in the past, by their hopeless buffer location between struggling giants, they enthusiastically endorse the "peaceful coexistence" theory espoused by the Soviet Union, and they vastly prefer it to Mao's assumption that almost all forms of war are desirable and inevitable. After the Hitler and Stalin years, there is a deep-seated desire to be left alone. The governmental and political structure and the meanderings of the leadership through such traumatic experiences as the denunciation of the "cult of the individual" and the East German, Polish, and Hungarian revolts are chronologically depicted through 1965. Professor Gyorgy sees a growing spirit of defiance and independence among the area's future elite, based on attitudes of ideological indifference, combined with trends of economic unreliability and political instability as far as the U.S.S.R. is concerned. He believes that the current search for autonomy will continue unabated, and that the Eastern European peoples will be able to bolster their national positions vis-a-vis a Soviet Union of declining power and hegemony. Unfortunately, the gains in liberalization and humanization are seen as short-term, for the goals of the U.S.S.R. have an aspect of permanence and constancy for the ex-satellites, and there are set and tangible boundaries beyond which existing and future leaderships of Eastern European states will be incapable of progressing.

This book is a boon to the student of comparative government and should be particularly valuable to those who have studied the political and governmental

structures of Western states, and principally those of Western Europe. It is read with ease, the structure is orderly, and the contents are concise and scholarly. An excellent and variegated bibliography is offered at the end of each country's treatment. The short period required to peruse *Eastern European Government and Politics* makes it extremely profitable reading for those unable to devote time to a more detailed study of the states depicted.

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Brinkley, George A. *The Volunteer Army and Allied Intervention in South Russia, 1917-1921*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966. 446p.

In the turbulent years which immediately followed the Russian Revolution, the Bolsheviks' tenuous grasp on the reins of national authority was challenged from all sides by internal and external forces. Within Russia, such diverse entities as the Ukrainians, Cossacks, Czarists, and Mensheviks, all vied with one another to seize political opportunities created by the revolution. Externally, Imperial Russia's former World War I allies, often working at cross purposes, backed first one, then the other, of these counter-revolutionary groups in a vain attempt to patch together a winning combination. In the midst of this international maelstrom stood the Volunteer Army of General Denikin, a self-styled national army, dedicated to the overthrow of Lenin's regime. The author has chosen to trace the short life-span of the Volunteer Army from its sanguine inception in the south of Russia to its ignominious evacuation and flight into exile in 1920. Although the army represents the thread that lends continuity to the tale, it is treated as a political rather than a military instrument. The book has all of the virtues and vices of a paper written in fulfillment of an advanced degree requirement. The torrents of detail and explanatory footnotes which course through the text indicate a research effort of significant depth. The 36-page bibliography and index should also prove to be an excellent point of departure for any student interested in scouting the subject. Unfortunately, Mr. Brinkley seems reluctant to discard any of his carefully acquired research items. As a result, the reader is forced to climb ridge after ridge of unsynthesized