

war memories that must trouble East Germany's relations with Russia and most East Europeans (known to erupt during Warsaw Pact exercises)? Or how can we measure the importance of such variables as a proclivity to action or inaction; open resistance or passive Schweikism; rebellion or dissent?

Mixing our hard and soft variables, how will the political forecaster determine how to assess the importance of rates of change and critical thresholds? In the Czech-Soviet case, for example, all the hard indicators (and many of the soft) looked positive until 1968, when a Stalinist regime was replaced by a more liberal one, itself to be put down by Soviet armies—thereby reversing most popular sentiments about Russia.

We might, finally, criticize the premise that views Eastern Europe in terms of a zero-sum relationship between the superpowers. "If the area is dominated by the USSR, or by communist regimes, it is lost to the West. To the extent that we can pry it away, we will gain." These are among the tacit assumptions the authors make. Thus, they hypothesize that increased trade, intergovernmental and cultural relations should make for a greater "deviation from Soviet policy." In fact, they note, Rumania's autonomous policies have taken place despite her relatively few transactions with the West, while Bulgaria appears faithful to Moscow while trading twice as much of her net national material product with the West as Bucharest. (The extreme cases of Albania and Yugoslavia, however, do support the original hypothesis.)

One may doubt if Western security or the well-being of the East Europeans will ever be put on a solid foundation so long as nations continue to view these problems in zero-sum terms. It may be that a Pan-European power grid or a common struggle to clean up the environment will be needed to transcend the outlooks that have led us to what Pierre Hassner has termed a "hot peace" superseding a "cold war."

## From the Jaws of Victory by Charles Fair

(Simon and Schuster; 445 pp.; \$8.95)

Nicolas Turner

Charles Fair has made a study of examples of military stupidity through the ages. Whether or not intended, no clear central thesis emerges. It may have been the author's desire that the reader should get the impression that wars are won and lost by stupidity alone. It might have been better if he had admitted that in some campaigns and battles stupidity was about equal on both sides. One does get the feeling, save in odd examples such as Charles XII of Sweden, that such influences as luck and failures of communication between commanders and subordinates have been undervalued here.

Yet the book undoubtedly succeeds in what should be its main purpose, to show just how often events have been greatly influenced by the foolishness of commanders. It is on the whole rare for an historian to spotlight the loser and his faults rather than the victor and his virtues. In the author's numerous examples, stupidity has its antecedents in a variety of causes such as plain ignorance, inadequate preparation, the irrational desire to promote senseless attacks against well-fortified positions, and of failing to strike quickly when the time is ripe.

It would be unsound for the reader to draw too many general conclusions from the book. In the first place, the author could have done no more in one volume than select cases from a very rich field. The majority of wars have gone unmentioned, as have both the great men and the general run of quietly competent commanders.

Mr. Fair begins his study with Crassus, whom he sees as the forerunner of a "type of general who hopes by sheer technical and numerical superiority to bludgeon his way to victory." Moving on, he sees the Middle Ages as a time when

valor and seemingly hopeless attacks carried out according to the rules of chivalry counted for more than clever generalship, an overstatement but quite interesting. Meanwhile, he contrasts the chivalry of the medieval nobility to their opposite numbers in the enemy army with the often brutal and merciless treatment meted out to lesser folk, whether combatant or not. Yet when dealing with an age when most leaders viewed the masses with either contempt or disinterest, it is hard to find examples where this factor was actually decisive in a campaign.

His analysis of the Hundred Years War suffers from a failure to delve deeper into the political and military realities. A great deal of space is devoted to a study of the failings of Philip VI of France and his son John, with extensive quotations from C. W. Oman, J. F. C. Fuller, and Guizot, not an adequate set of sources for a true grasp of medieval military history. Having shown the cause of the initial French defeats to lie almost exclusively with the stupidity and rashness of her kings and the antiquity of her feudal army, he portrays Edward III's later failures as due to the aimlessness of his policy. The latter's financial difficulties and the improved French strategy get no proper mention. The English policy under Henry V and Henry VI for the systematic conquest of France gets no mention at all, though there was plenty of foolishness on both sides; in the final analysis, however, the English offensive ran out of steam.

That atrocities on the civil population are often counterproductive is a recurrent theme in the book, the repressive policy pursued in the Netherlands by Philip II of Spain and the Duke of Alba being given in elaborate detail. Yet the cases where

harsh policies have succeeded in subduing the population have not received the author's attention. The Vietnam war is largely a study of atrocities of U.S. and ARVN troops, with numerous quotations from J. Schell's *A Reporter at Large*. Readers may find it a surprise to see only one small footnote referring to the ungentlemanly activities of the Viet Cong. If the book was meant to be just an attempt to analyze the Vietnam war by reference to world history over two millennia, then it proves little or nothing. Simply by taking Westmoreland as an example, Mr. Fair cannot prove that all products of West Point are bound to fail. The Second World War was not unknown for its West Point successes.

However, readers looking for inspiration on the last World War are likely to feel very deprived, since little space has been accorded to it, and Japan is not even mentioned. What there is is mainly devoted to German savagery inflicted on the civilian populations.

The book's title is taken from its lengthy assessment of General Ambrose Burnside, who, in Lincoln's words, wrested defeat from the "jaws of victory" when he failed to press home an attack on Antietam. Later on, at Fredericksburg, with an almost total disregard for human life, Burnside sent wave after wave of Union infantry to their slaughter by the Confederate artillery. Similar tragedies were enacted by the British and French in the First World War.

At this point perhaps Mr. Fair should have done more than just raise the moral issue as to how hard a general should think before he commits infantry to any frontal assault in which a very large proportion are bound to die. The price of victory in war has often been too high, but some generals pay the price and fail. The great victories of history have often been won by brain power and with remarkably little cost. *From the Jaws of Victory* is a well-written book, often quite absorbing, but unlikely to prove the standard work on military stupidity, if only because Mr. Fair has attempted too much with too little.

## Women Under Socialism by August Bebel

(Schocken Books; 379 pp.; \$3.95)

## Sexuality and Class Struggle by Reimut Reiche

(Praeger; 175 pp.; \$6.95)

### Nancy Schwartz

For the women's liberation movement, "the personal is the political." Politics is no longer seen as an occasional act of participation "out there," in an election or a seizure of state power, but the constant activity of becoming free and equal "back here," among personal friends and enemies. The recognition of unfair male power in small groups, in the family, in couples, and even in our own heads, has taught us the lesson that politics begins at home.

But wherever politics begins, it encounters power relations which are rooted in larger structures of society and history. For women, as for all those who suffer from oppression, it is less important to locate a first cause, a single primary contradiction, than it is to identify the continuing relations that uphold the system of domination as a whole.

That sense of totality has been too rare. Marxism might seem to offer feminism a broader perspective, but for the most part Marxists have been hostile to women's movements. Many have considered interest in "the woman question" as only idealistic rambling in the realm of superstructure or as dabbling in petty bourgeois politics. Recently, radical feminists have returned the compliment by ridiculing male Marxist leaders for their failure to create a mass base, pointing by contrast to the vitality of a movement based on small groups which lead, in turn, to broader forms of interaction.

Such disputes are important, for they have grown out of real, though different, historical situations and political choices. But it now appears

possible to hope for a synthesis, or at least a complementarity, between Marxism and feminism.

August Bebel hoped for such a synthesis in 1883 when his *Women Under Socialism* was first published. Focusing on the place of women in capitalist production, Bebel observed that relative to men, in the sphere of private production (the household), and relative to society, in public production (industry), women were exploited labor-power, working harder and longer than was socially necessary to earn enough to reproduce themselves. To be sure, in public production this also occurred to male wage-laborers, but the condition of women was worse. Then, as now, women worked for lower wages and served as a reserve army of the unemployed, pulled out of the household when the exigencies of capitalist production require it.

Bebel's argument depends, of course, on the labor theory of value, a crucial but problematic assumption which he does not examine because his book is a political tract aimed at the masses. It had many foreign language editions and was also required reading for new members of the American Socialist Party. I find it difficult to understand its political success, for it is very long and filled with details concerning the brain sizes of males and females, the many uses for manure and new inventions such as the carpet cleaner displayed at the Chicago Exhibition of 1893. Some women readers were apparently inspired by his vision of society that included them as equals, but today we are dissatisfied at a dis-