

**SOVIET INTERVENTION  
IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA,  
1968: Anatomy of a Decision**  
by Jiri Valenta  
Johns Hopkins, 1979  
208 pp. \$12

When communist Czechoslovakia embarked upon democratic reforms for several turbulent months during the "Prague Spring" of 1968, most Soviet leaders, to a greater or lesser degree, clearly saw their country's own security in jeopardy. After examining the Soviet press and interviewing former Czech officials, Valenta, a Czech political scientist now teaching in America, has sought to reconstruct the lengthy Kremlin debate that ended in a decision to invade Czechoslovakia in August 1968. On the domestic front, bureaucrats, such as P. E. Shelest, first secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, worried that "deviate" ideas in Eastern Europe would encourage nationalist movements in the USSR's non-Russian republics; the KGB feared that the Czech example would galvanize Soviet dissidents. Within the military, at least one Soviet general pointed to the Czech Army's low morale as a threat to discipline among Warsaw Pact forces. On the other side, Soviet foreign-affairs specialists argued that an invasion would jeopardize accommodation between Communists and Socialists in Western Europe. And China, they warned, would be driven closer to America. The result, reports Valenta: a "bureaucratic tug-of-war ending in shaky compromises and trade-offs between various elements in the Politburo." Valenta's story is as complex as it is intriguing; it should not be missed by those who seek a better understanding of Soviet purposes in world affairs.

—Franklyn J. C. Griffiths ('79)

**HERBERT HOOVER: The  
Great War and Its After-  
math, 1914–23**  
edited by Lawrence E.  
Gelfand  
Univ. of Iowa, 1979  
242 pp. \$17.95

Many Americans still remember Herbert Hoover only as the "Great Depression President" of 1929–33. Yet, earlier, before he acquired his reputation as a bumbling reactionary, his contemporaries considered Hoover one of the ablest and most progressive public men of the century—as this collection of eight essays reminds us. The former mining engineer's accomplishments as head of the Commission for the Relief of Belgium (1914–