

## Review of Reviews

*Egyházi társadalom a középkori Magyarországon* [Ecclesiastical Society in Medieval Hungary]. By Elemér Mályusz. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1971. 398 pp.

This study . . . is the result of ten years of a research conducted between 1934 and 1944, and put in its final form only twenty-seven years later. There is no indication that more recent material has been added to the original research . . . [T]he aim of the book is to demonstrate that the structural division of the clergy in medieval Hungary, its life, activities, the rivalries among its various strata, as well as the deep gap which existed between the upper, middle and the lower clergy, reflected the structure and nature of the contemporary feudal society of Hungary. The prominent role, significance and merit of this ecclesiastical community was that it provided, almost exclusively, the framework for the development of an intellectual segment which, at least until the advent of the renaissance period, was missing in the secular community of the feudal society.

The book discusses in great detail, on the basis of original documents, papal tax-records and testaments of individual clergymen, the sharp contrast in the social and economic status between the upper and middle clergy (bishops and canons) and the lower clergy (parish priests). Although the bishops frequently held important state positions, their education corresponding to the highest contemporary standards, and were granted large feudal estates, the so-called "private church" (the parish priests) served the spiritual needs of the village community. The village priest was almost illiterate, his knowledge of Latin extended only to the indispensable parts of the liturgy, and his economic basis was usually a small piece of land donated by the local gentry-landowner. . . .

Thematically the strongest, most coherent part of the book deals with the monastic clergy. In Hungary, like elsewhere, the monastic orders during the feudal era were the centers and carriers of cultural, intellectual and literary activities. Among them the Benedictine order had a significant role in the collection and preservation of manuscripts. One of their oldest monasteries, Pannonhalma, possessed already in the

eleventh century, a collection of eighty codices, among them the famous Pray-codex which contains the earliest extant text in Hungarian vernacular: a funeral oration. Particularly interesting is the discussion of the Pauline order which apparently is the only genuine Hungarian order, founded in the thirteenth century near Pécs and approved by Pope Urban V in 1367. One of its vicars in the sixteenth century was instrumental in introducing the spirit and the teachings of the *Devotio Moderna*, and Thomas Kempis' *De Imitatione Christi*. Among the mendicant orders the Dominicans occupied a prominent place in the religious and cultural life of medieval Hungary. . . . More importantly, the Dominicans maintained several schools of higher education. One of them, the *studium generale* in Buda, early in the sixteenth century, had the privilege to confer the university degree of a *magister*.

In view of the exceedingly large amount of detail, the monograph sometimes is lacking in lucidity and calls for improvements in the organization of the material. Nevertheless it is a veritable treasure-house of information for every scholar who is interested in the study of the life and activities of the medieval church in Hungary.

Andor Urbanszky (University of Bridgeport), in *East Central Europe*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1974).

*A History of the Habsburg Empire. 1526-1918.* By Robert A. Kann. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974. xiv, 646 pp. Maps. \$25.00.

Professor Kann's new work is well-organized and based upon an extensive and, in many cases, exhaustive knowledge of sources in Western languages, particularly German. The author surveys the development of both the Austro-German and the Hungarian parts of the monarchy from the Turkish and religious wars of the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth centuries through the First World War in a style that is clear and succinct.

Geographically, the emphasis throughout the volume is on the Austro-German regions, and more often than not, the problems of the monarchy are seen from Vienna as the center. . . . There are, of course, good reasons why Vienna should be at the heart of things, and the broad view Kann gives us is valuable, but in his preface he has drawn attention to the fact that the development of the monarchy can be fully understood only if the various political units and ethnic groups that com-

posed it receive proper attention. I don't think he has granted them equal time.

The non-German nationalities are generally dealt with in cursory fashion. To take the first half of the nineteenth century as an example, the Czechs probably get the fullest treatment, as in the discussion of the nationality problem in the chapter covering the period 1815–79. On the other hand, there is little depth to the discussion of social and political realities in Hungary in the decades preceding the revolution of 1848. . . .

As for subject matter, emphasis is given to political and administrative history and foreign affairs. There are some very good chapters here, particularly those concerned with the political evolution of the monarchy from 1648 to 1748 (in which Kann argues convincingly that the monarchy's beginnings as a great power should be dated from 1648 rather than 1700–1748), the reforms between 1740 and 1792 (which he treats as a single, unified period), and finally the *Ausgleich* and its ramifications, Austrian political life and administration, 1879–1914, and the history of the First World War—all of which are detailed and balanced accounts. Economic questions are by no means neglected, but they are accorded less importance and space than politics and foreign affairs. Cultural matters are not well integrated into the whole, and, except for the Austro-Germans, they tend to become catalogs of authors and their works. . . .

[T]he book, as a whole, is a useful addition to the literature in English on the Habsburg monarchy; indeed, it is the most extensive account we have for the period covered. The narrative is supplemented by a long, well-arranged bibliographical essay, stressing works in German, English, and French, and a valuable appendix containing population and nationality statistics and maps.

Keith Hitchins (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) in *Slavic Review*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (March, 1976).

*Comenius and Hungary. Essays.* Éva Földes and István Mészáros (editors). Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1973. 177 pp., 68 plates. \$11.00.

In commemoration of the three hundredth anniversary of the death of Jan Amos Comenius (J. A. Komenský, 1592–1670) many conferences were held throughout Europe in 1970 and a vast literature has been published since 1970 on this distinguished scholar.

*Comenius and Hungary* embodies the material of the conference

under the joint sponsorship of the Pedagogic Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO held at Budapest and Sárospatak, November 23–26, 1970. Sixteen scholars participated, twelve of whom represented Hungary; three, Czechoslovakia, and one, West Germany. The conference dealt primarily with Comenius' stay at Sárospatak, that little-explored period of 1650–1654. With the use of primary sources, Comenius's personality and works were fitted into the context of political and intellectual history of seventeenth-century Europe in general and Hungary in particular. All sixteen lectures shed in some way new light on the activities of this great educator. . . . Among the highlights is Sándor Maller's (Secretary General of the Hungarian UNESCO Commission) lifelike portrayal of the scholarly development and maturation of Comenius from his early youth to his death. . . .

Some of the contributions are not of a sufficiently scholarly level, but without exception they all offer a worthwhile addition to Comenius studies. The volume is indispensable to scholars concerned with the educator's variegated activities in Hungary. There is but one aspect the conference did not even touch upon; it is Comenius' influence on Hungarian pedagogy, which, since the Sárospatak period, has catafalped. . . .

Sixty-eight contemporary illustrations, one map, a well-compiled dictionary describing at length personages and institutions of Comenius' Hungary, a list of his works published in Hungary, and useful bibliographical notes enhance the scholarly value of *Comenius and Hungary*.

Francis S. Wagner (Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.) in *East Central Europe*, Vol. II, No. 2 (1975).

*Szabad királyi városok gazdálkodása Mária Terézia korában* [The Housekeeping of Royal Free Towns in the Age of Maria Theresa]. By István Kállay. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1972. 200 pp.

This book is about the administrative and financial housekeeping of the royal free towns of Hungary during the reign of Maria Theresa. After Kállay describes the governing institutions of the towns, he becomes an accountant reporting the incomes and expenses of the towns in question. As can be expected, therefore, the book is important, but as unreadable as a corporate report.

The municipal governments delegated the authority to supervise economic affairs to a committee of the town council, to the town judge, to the major, or to combinations of the above with the notary also called in at times. Yet the burghers exercised considerable voice in town affairs through their elected representative, the *tribunus plebis*, whose authority increased during the period under consideration. He was present at the allocation of the war taxes, took part in the review of the town's accounts, and, significantly, could report directly to the Royal Chamber in Pozsony in matters of dispute. The everyday duties in economic affairs were handled by the Stadtkammerer, who unlike the *tribunus*, was a paid official, but who could be either elected by the burghers or appointed by the council. Under his supervision there were as many as twenty-five inspectors and officials of varying importance, from the Militarcasse Inspector to the Marktrichter and the Waldmeister.

Kállay relates the duties of each of these officials, then discusses the incomes and expenditures of the towns in detail. He divides the incomes into five categories: 1) authorized by royal patents, i.e., wineries, breweries, mills, brick manufacturies, butchers, tariffs on goods entering the town, etc.; 2) accrued from interests on loaned capital or rents on leased real estate properties owned by the towns; 3) income from manors, villages, forests, commons, hunting, and fishing rights; 4) derived from official functions such as fines; 5) house taxes, printing, pharmacies, mines. The greatest share of the income of the towns was from the sale of wine, beer, and from house taxes. . . .

Kállay also asserts that the royal free towns accumulated substantial liquid assets which were not invested into industry or commerce, but were used for "usury" (p. 124). Since borrowed capital can be invested as well by the borrowers, the role of the towns as credit-generating institutions may have had substantial effect on investments, hence on the economic growth of Hungary. This possibility was not adequately explored by Kállay.

The economic growth of the royal free towns is another consideration ignored, even though the data indicate a substantial increase in economic activity. . . .

It is clear, in sum, that Kállay is uncomfortable as an economic historian, but is at his best when describing the administrative institutions of the towns. The book is more useful, however, for the data it contains on the economic activity of nineteen royal free towns. . . .

John Komlós (University of Chicago), in *East Central Europe*, Vol. II, No. 2 (1975).

*Österreich-Ungarn und der Französisch-Preussische Krieg, 1870-1871.*  
By István Diószegi. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1974. viii, 311 pp.  
\$15.00.

Students of nineteenth-century foreign policy have every reason to welcome this translation of István Diószegi's book, published in Hungarian in 1965. Based upon extensive research . . . it is the first thorough study of the Dual Monarchy's preparations to intervene in the Franco-Prussian War, its attempts to work in the French interest when such intervention became inadvisable, its efforts to block South German adhesion to a new German imperial structure, its unsuccessful diplomacy during the crisis caused by Russia's abrogation of the Black Sea Clauses of the treaty of 1856, and the cumulative effect of these events upon the direction of Austro-Hungarian policy after the spring of 1871.

The key figure in this story is Franz Ferdinand Graf Beust, who was a minister in Saxony from 1849 to 1866, and Emperor Franz Joseph's foreign minister from 1867 until his retirement from politics in 1871. Metternich once called Beust a political tightrope walker, and Mr. Diószegi confirms the aptness of this description by recounting the way Beust pursued his hazardous course above the heads of the contentious political factions of his country. Although the factions had sharply divergent views on foreign affairs, Beust assured himself of their joint support at the beginning of his Austrian service by following a firmly anti-Prussian policy, which appealed to the resentment of the Court party over the defeat at Königgrätz, the anti-Bismarck prejudice of the Austrian liberals, and the fears of Prussian expansion that were rife among the Hungarian followers of Deák and Andrassy. But support for this line was not always reliable (the Deák party was more afraid of Russia than of Prussia, and the liberals were susceptible to the appeals of German nationalism), and external circumstances made it, in the long run, unsupportable. Prussia's defeat of France altered the European balance so completely that the Austro-Hungarian government felt compelled, by May 1871, to seek an accommodation with Prussia and, subsequently, with Russia. The government also began to think in terms of finding compensation, at Turkey's expense, in southeastern Europe. . . .

Gordon A. Craig (Stanford University) in *Slavic Review*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (September 1976).

*Magyarország az első világháborúban, 1914–1918* [Hungary in the First World War, 1914–1918]. By József Galántai. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1974. 453 pp.

Professor Galántai's work on Hungary's participation in World War I fills a significant need for a comprehensive study on this subject. Its main value lies in its methodical and well-documented coverage of all the important aspects of the war pertaining to Hungary, but placed within the broader framework of international relations and internal conditions within the Monarchy. One should not look for controversies, new approaches, or profound personal characterization of the leading statesmen in the book, but its steady evenness and scholarly reliability are adequate compensations.

Nevertheless, there is one part in Professor Galántai's work where he strikes out boldly to offer a radically new interpretation of why Count István Tisza, prime minister of Hungary, abandoned his initial opposition to the war. According to the author, Tisza was primarily concerned about a potential invasion of Transylvania by Romania, and he gave his consent to the war only when Romania's neutrality seemed to be assured and Germany appeared willing to adopt a bulgarophile policy. Such a willingness was a crucial turning point in maintaining Bulgaria as a counterweight to Romania, and, thereby, an effective deterrent to a possible aggression by Romania.

Although Professor Galántai's logic is beyond challenge, the conclusion he draws is at least partially incorrect. Tisza was undoubtedly worried about the exposed position of Transylvania, and he did constantly urge a foreign policy line which assigned an increasingly important role to Bulgaria as the pivot of Austro-Hungarian influence in the Balkans. However, Tisza's concept was a long-range one because he was well-aware that Bulgaria was still suffering from the debilitating consequences of its defeat in the recent Second Balkan War. . . .

Much of the fear of a possible Romanian attack on Transylvania was based on the constant factor of the hostility of the Romanian public towards Hungary, and on the recent Russian-Romanian rapprochement, which increased rather than diminished the risks involved in any armed conflict. Yet, Tisza drowned his fears and eventually joined the war party, because a barrage of German messages made it appear that to let the opportunity of settling the account with Serbia slip would have incurred German displeasure, and perhaps even the eventual break-up of the German-Austro-Hungarian alliance. Tisza, to whom German power was the principal guarantor of Austria-Hungary's assumed great-

power status, could accept such a risk less than the risk entailed in a war. This explanation is, of course, the "conventional" one, but it still stands in the reviewer's opinion. Therefore, Professor Galántai's interpretation cannot be accepted in terms of its single-minded exclusiveness. Nevertheless, he correctly emphasizes Tisza's frantic search for a foothold in the Balkans, demonstrating that his foreign policy, although forcefully pursued, was severely limited by the scarcity of his available options, given the implacable hostility between Hungary and its Southern Slav and Romanian neighbors.

Gábor Vermes (Rutgers University, Newark) in *East Central Europe*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1975).

*Az ellenforradalom nemzetiségi politikájának kialakulása* [The Formation of the Nationality Policy of the Hungarian Counterrevolution]. By Béla Bellér. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1975. 290 pp.

With the Treaty of Trianon, Hungary was transformed from a multinational state, where barely fifty per cent of the population was Hungarian-speaking, to a rump country, one-third of its former size, where almost ninety per cent of the people were Magyar and only three per cent could not speak Hungarian. Thus, a long book on Trianon Hungary's nationality policy would seem, at first glance, to be painfully beside the point. A closer look, however, reveals that, despite the somewhat misleading title, Béla Bellér's study deals with an important aspect of Hungarian domestic and foreign policy in the 1920s, namely, the revisionist aims of the Horthy regime.

Only a small part of Bellér's book is devoted to Hungary's nationality policy per se. . . . It could not be otherwise, for with the Treaty of Trianon "the nationality question" ceased to be a real issue. In 1918, when the Károlyi government established the Ministry of Nationalities, the problem of accommodating dissident nationality groups was pressing. With the signing of the Treaty, territorial autonomy was no longer in question, and even cultural autonomy lost much of its political and practical significance.

Bellér's study of Trianon Hungary's nationality policy suffers from ideological clichés—for instance, that the post-revolutionary regime was fascist and that "the nationality policy of the Hungarian Soviet Republic was based on the teachings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin and on the historical experiences of the Great October Socialist Revolution."

At times, he is unduly harsh on the Budapest government, as when he criticizes the regime for not accepting the provisions of the Treaty of Trianon months before the Hungarian peace delegation arrived in Paris. His valuational conclusions are often undocumented and in seeming conflict with the facts. For example, after stating that 65.2 per cent of those participating in the Sopron plebiscite of 1921 voted for Hungary and that, even considering irregularities, Hungary was the clear winner, he announces (without further explanation) that "the victory was not glorious." . . .

The greater and more valuable portion of the book is devoted to the undercover propagandistic activities of the Ministry of Nationalities. Although the avowed goal of the Ministry was the protection of the rights of Hungary's minorities, the very budget of the Ministry is telling: the Ruthenian department, nominally in charge of 1,500 Ruthenians in Hungary, received exactly the same portion of the budget as did the German department, responsible for 551,211 Hungarian subjects of German origin. The Ministry was not so much a clearing house for minority affairs within the country as it was a vehicle for Hungary's revisionist aims.

The attention of the Ministry was first directed to the Slovak question. Its zeal was understandable. In November 1919 František Jehlička, a close associate to Andrej Hlinka, leader of the Slovak People's Party, arrived in Budapest, claiming to speak for his imprisoned party chief. He revealed that the Slovaks would vote for reunion with Hungary if Hungary, in turn, would grant them territorial autonomy. In January 1920 the officials of the Ministry, in long bargaining sessions with Jehlička, hammered out the provisions of the proposed autonomy. At the same time, with the assistance of the Ministry, a network of pro-Hungarian Slovak émigré groups was planted both in Hungary and in Poland. In addition, Magyarone Slovaks living in Slovakia received subsidies for their pro-Magyar propaganda campaigns inside the Czechoslovak Republic. Soon, similar networks were established to work for Ruthenian autonomy.

Bellér provides some fascinating details about Hungary's endeavours to promote Slovak and Ruthenian reunion with Hungary. Unfortunately, he does not deal with the diplomatic repercussions of these ill-conceived and often badly executed ventures. In themselves, they were simply desperate, foolish schemes. But they led to exaggerated fears of Hungary's designs on her victorious neighbours and, in this way, contributed significantly to the early isolation of Hungary and to the formation of an anti-Hungarian combination, the Little Entente. When,

in 1922, the Ministry's doors were closed forever, the Hungarian government acknowledged that its propagandistic schemes had failed and that any revision of the Treaty of Trianon would have to be postponed.

Eva S. Balogh (Yale University), in *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Fall, 1975).

*A magyar polgári történetírás rövid története* [The Short History of Hungarian Bourgeois Historiography]. By Emma Lederer. Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1969. 197 pp.

*Hungarian Historiography and the Geistesgeschichte School*. By Steven Béla Várdy. Cleveland, Ohio: An Árpád Academy Publication, 1974. 96 pp. \$4.00.

Gyula Szekfű (1883–1955) occupies a pivotal importance not only in the development of Hungarian historiography but also in the political history of twentieth-century Hungary. The contradictory course of his life mirrored his country's changing fortunes, or rather misfortunes, and the controversy surrounding his major works, *Három nemzedék* (Three Generations) and *Magyar történet* (Hungarian History; with Bálint Hóman), was, and is, political as well as scholarly. Both of the books under review attest, however reluctantly, to the intellectual and political significance of his remarkable career.

Emma Lederer's short history of what she is pleased to call "bourgeois" historiography exemplifies the high quality of post-1956 Hungarian Marxist research. Based on her series of university lectures, the book is an admirable introduction to the generally unphilosophical practice of Hungarian historians, Szekfű notwithstanding, from the Revolution of 1848–49 to the end of the Second World War. Lederer maintains that this period witnessed significant progress in research techniques, accompanied by increasingly retrograde theoretical constructions. The brief prefatory chapters on Western European historians and philosophies of history focus on Germany because "in the theory and practice of history, German historical science exerted the primary, if not the only influence on the entire development of Hungary's bourgeois historiography." (p. 25). In the principal chapters Lederer analyzes the Hungarian Positivist School — for want of a

better name — of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries before turning her attention to Szekfű and the *Geistesgeschichte* School of the inter-war years.

While personally sympathetic with Szekfű, . . . Lederer indicts him on two counts. According to the first count, the *Verstehen* method employed by Szekfű is irrational and the importance he attached to spiritual-intellectual history is *ipso facto* reactionary. The second count states that Szekfű's anti-Semitism and Magyar chauvinism perverted his historical judgment and served not to increase understanding, much less to promote progress, but rather to buttress the nefarious policies of the Horthy government.

It is difficult to see how any fair-minded jury could find Szekfű guilty on the first count. The method proposed by Wilhelm Dilthey is not irrational in the sense Lederer suggests; it is a discipline designed to study phenomena judged to be beyond the range of scientific reason. Further, her contention that the basic assumption of the *Geistesgeschichte* School — that *Geist* (“Spirit” or “Mind”) is the stuff of history — is “reactionary” rests on her commitment to Marxism. Non-Marxists may therefore be forgiven for dismissing this charge.

The second count is more serious. In *Három nemzedék* Szekfű elevated anti-Semitism to a principle of interpretation; in attempting to account for the “catastrophic” Hungarian revolutions of 1918–19 he suggested that Jewish radicals had carried the logic of pre-war liberalism to its ultimate conclusion. Now even if, as I believe, Szekfű's well-known preference for Széchenyi and “conservative reform” can be defended, his analysis of the “three generations” from the Reform Era to the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy cannot. . . .

Steven Béla Várdy's book comprises the Hungarian text, with English summary, of an address delivered to the Árpád Academy in Cleveland. The author's aim is a modest one; he wishes to refute those who, like Lederer, argue that Szekfű and the *Geistesgeschichte* School were without serious challengers in the period between the wars. While acknowledging the ascendancy of *Geistesgeschichte*, he insists that other schools of history were very much alive. Of the various anti-*Geistesgeschichte* schools discussed, Várdy thinks most highly of the Ethnohistory (Népiségtörténeti) School and its principal representative, Elemér Mályusz.

The argument is persuasive, even though the need to present it is a measure of the length of the shadow cast by Gyula Szekfű. Be that as it may, this fine monograph, which includes an excellent bibliography,

serves notice that the appearance of Várdy's English-language work in progress on the history of Hungarian historiography will be a publishing event of importance.

Lee Congdon (Madison College) in *East Central Europe*, Vol. II, No. 2 (1975).

*Environmental Deterioration in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*. Edited by Ivan Völgyes. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974. xvi, 168 pp. \$14.00.

While the momentum of the environmental movement in the West seems to have slowed a bit, it appears to be accelerating in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. This is to be applauded because the challenge there is as great or greater than that which exists in the West. Unfortunately, most Westerners are still uninformed about just how serious the problem is in Communist countries.

*Environmental Deterioration in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*, while repeating and even republishing much of the material that has become available about the Soviet Union, does offer some new material in English about Eastern Europe. The chapter by György Enyedi is a forthright statement about conditions in Hungary. David Kromm reports on a public opinion survey which he supervised and which, among other things, revealed a striking awareness by low income residents of the pollution problem of Ljubjana, Yugoslavia.

Leslie Dienes provides details for Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia, and shows just how serious environmental disruption is in these three countries. For example, Budapest, as of 1972, dumped as much as two-thirds of its sewage into the Danube without even primary treatment. Furthermore, because most of the homes in Eastern Europe are heated with poor quality soft coal, the level of sulfur concentration in the air during the winter is far above the levels in most other parts of Europe and the parts of the USSR where central heating is used. . . .

Except for the section by Ihor Stebelsky on soil erosion and dust storms, and the section by Philip Micklin on the Caspian Sea, much of the material on the USSR either has already appeared in print (and sometimes in the same articles by the same authors) or is not especially insightful. . . .

Marshall I. Goldman (Wellesley College), *Slavic Review*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (March 1976).

*Ungarn. Geschichte und Gegenwart. Eine Landesbiographie.* By Denis Silagi. Second Edition. Hannover: Verlag für Literatur und Zeitgeschehen, 1972. 168 pp.

Silagi's study was designed to be a national character sketch — “a living picture” as the author puts it — rather than history in the orthodox sense. Silagi believes that recent events offer better insights and clearer perspectives than the history of more distant happenings. Consequently, most of the text covers developments after World War II. Only thirty pages are devoted to events antedating the eighteenth century, and the period terminating with World War II is disposed of in only twenty-five pages. . . .

To what extent does a survey such as this serve a useful function? Superficial readers might be content with matters as they stand. Two brief paragraphs on Széchenyi, and only one on Kossuth, might suffice for the literary browser. Serious scholars would certainly expect a more circumspect coverage, as well as adequate documentation and a bibliography comprising at least major works written in the most prevalent Western languages. All these ingredients are missing, unfortunately, to the detriment of this otherwise interesting account. . . .

On the whole, Silagi's survey follows a moderate course between the two extremes of traditional and Marxist historical exegesis. Although the author betrays an occasional pro-Magyar and anti-Communist bias, his is a sensible and fair account of the history of a nation which has always been plagued by partisan and extremist interpretations. This study should be of some interest to the educated German public, whereas the scholar will find it of lesser significance, because of its relative superficiality and lack of documentation. Several useful maps and a guide to Magyar pronunciation for German speakers round out this modest contribution to the history of Hungary.

Thomas Spira (University of Prince Edward Island) in *East Central Europe*, Vol. 2, no. 2 (1975).

*Soziologie und Gesellschaft in Ungarn.* Edited by Bálint Balla. Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke Verlag, 1974. 4 vols. 160, 128, 186 and 154 pp.

Professor Balla has translated and edited these four separate volumes on society and sociology in Hungary. Hungarian-born and educated,

Balla now teaches sociology at the Institute of Social Science, Technical University in West Berlin.

Next to the Poles, the most interesting sociologists in eastern Europe are undoubtedly the Hungarians. Since 1960 one can speak of the revival of Hungarian sociology whose characteristic feature is empirical research. These volumes describe social reforms, social problems, political bureaucracy, and the mechanism of economic laws. Through them we have a clearer view of the phenomena of "interest-plurality" and "interest-conflicts" within Hungarian society. This thorough analysis is based not on abstract theories but on case-studies and concrete data.

These volumes contain original contributions by well-known Hungarian scholars on socialist society in Hungary. Balla introduces the volumes with a detailed essay on the nature of Hungarian sociology. He believes there is something unique about Hungarian society which distinguishes it from others in East Europe. We would not dispute that each society has its own peculiarities, but, on one point Balla is mistaken. The monolithic political and economic system prevailing in East European countries has created problems which are common to them all. . . .

It is most appropriate . . . to mention some of the themes discussed in these volumes: the history and state of Hungarian sociology, the Marxist approach to the problem of social structure, development of Marxist sociology in socialist countries, the role of sociology in political leadership, the sociological problems of division of labour in the family, social structure and school system, sociological problems of new housing settlement, and how organized irresponsibility endangers the system of decision-making.

Peter Raina (Osteuropa-Institut, Free University of Berlin) in *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (June 1976).

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