

what impelled him to ignore many excellent and pioneering works by East European and Western scholars.

The author's apparent unawareness of new data and interpretations of this period has led him to perpetuate a number of errors which have been handed down by generation after generation of Hungarian historians. Thus he states (citing as his source Acsády's book on Hungarian serfdom, published in 1910) that Hungary's population in 1711 had dropped to an incredibly low two and a half million. Although the bibliography cites a recent work edited by József Kovacsics, *Magyarország történeti demográfiája* (1963), which exploded the myth that exaggerated the devastation caused by the Turkish conquest of Hungary, the text ignores this revision altogether. Király ignores recent debates about the meaning of Josephinism in the Habsburg lands, and neglects the problems of the complex motivations of Leopold II, Joseph's enigmatic and ambivalent successor, and the Hungarian Jacobin movement whose failure marked the end of enlightened despotism in the Habsburg monarchy. The author's attempts to justify these lacunae are unconvincing, and his cut-off date of 1790 is unacceptable.

Király's account of the rich literary revival of the period is based on secondary sources, rather than on his own analysis of the literature of the Hungarian Enlightenment—a lively, stimulating, and seminal period of Hungarian history. At the same time he is to be commended for his excellent account of social classes and relations in this still underdeveloped country, and on his elucidation of the complex political and constitutional relations in a Hungary possessed of an anachronistic political and constitutional structure upon which the Habsburgs attempted to impose a more Western or, if you like, "enlightened despotism."

Perhaps the book's greatest fault is its lack of new interpretations and its failure to throw light on the significance and impact of the French and German Enlightenment on an underdeveloped society.

It is an unhappy duty to point out these weaknesses in a highly welcome and useful work. Yet if American scholarship is to compete with the vast erudition and incisive analytical insights of European scholars working in the same area, such as Professors Silagi, Benda, et al., we may have to do some soul-searching regarding the quality of training and the values of our academic system. These methods encourage and even force scholars to publish semifinished books, when additional research, editing, and polishing would result in a genuine contribution to scholarship.

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VÁROSAINK MÚLTJA ÉS JELENE. By *Kálmán Eperjessy*. Budapest: Műszaki Könyvkiadó, 1971. 308 pp. 44 Ft.

By the end of World War II the writing of local history in East Central Europe was in many instances colored by local patriotism. The overwhelming majority of local historians were not professionally trained scholars, nor were they able to apply up-to-date methodology. Professor Kálmán Eperjessy (b. 1893) is one of the few historians who have not succumbed to such rather political motivations. Since the closing years of the twenties he has devoted his unstinted energy to local historiography, conducting research in Vienna and Budapest as well as in many

local archives and libraries. Eperjessy's prolific research has produced many outstanding monographs and innumerable articles. More recently he has published two standard works, including the history of the Hungarian village (*A magyar falu története*, 1966).

In his present volume the history of the cities of East Central Europe is excellently surveyed, with heavy emphasis on greater Hungary. The volume consists of eight chapters, each chronologically subdivided. The chapters deal with the origins and development of cities, economic life, society and nationality, legal structure, forms of settlement, place names, city culture, and descriptions of post-1945 Hungary's seventy-five cities with county and district rights. The book is the first historical survey of the cities in the Middle Danube area. Its value to scholars is enhanced by 164 maps, diagrams, and graphs, a well-compiled bibliography, and a place and personal-name index. This monumental work is absolutely free of nationalistic prejudice, a bias very few authors in Central and Eastern Europe have been able to rid themselves of up to now. Eperjessy, basing his stand on archival sources, has refuted the old school's dogmatic views and has proved that not only Germans and Hungarians but Slavs and several other ethnic elements had a hand in establishing and developing cities in the Middle Danube Valley. He has also convincingly proved, in the light of primary sources, that Germany's or any other nation's exclusive priority in land settlement cannot be accepted concerning the area as a whole. According to Eperjessy this problem should be treated individually to bring out significant regional differences. In order to justify his findings he has also made use of the best available multilingual literature.

There is only one significant statement made by the author with which I cannot agree: "In the period after the liberation, chiefly from 1949, the increase in population in our [Hungarian] cities can be explained partly by the natural growth, partly by industrialization" (p. 83). It is true that the process of excessive industrialization did initiate large-scale internal mobility whereby a goodly portion of, for example, the peasant youth invaded the industrial centers, especially in Budapest, Miskolc, Pécs, and Debrecen. But the part of the author's thesis which refers to natural growth is not evident from the official statistics. On the contrary, these figures show that since the enactment in June 1956 of Hungary's extremely liberal law, its birth rate has fallen so sharply that in respect to natural increase of population the country has occupied last place in world statistics.

Eperjessy's pioneering work has opened new vistas in local history research, and its well-proven results and methodology will be used also by scholars whose main geographical interests lie outside East Central Europe. The work is well worth translating, because it also sheds new light on city history from a socio-economic angle, which up to now has been a conspicuously ignored aspect of the topic.

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TWENTIETH CENTURY HUNGARIAN PAINTING. By *Zsuzsa D. Fehér* and *Gábor Ó. Pogány*. 4th rev. edition. Budapest: Corvina Press, 1971. 19 pp. and 48 color plates.

This book is commendable mainly for its forty-eight color reproductions, which are large and generally of good quality. The paintings represent the work of