

tions listed in a monotonous and flat manner. Worse, the author has made no attempt to transcend the oversimplified and schematic approach toward the problems of social democracy which, although impeccably Marxist in its rhetoric, lacks the flexibility and imagination possessed by the best in Marxist historiography.

Social democracy was indeed the "odd man out" in Hungary's political arena during the decades prior to World War I, but the contradictions that engulfed the party were neither Hegelian abstractions, nor merely shifting positions taken by calculating and shrewd leaders. Rather, these contradictions expressed the predicament of people who had to make constant adjustments between a revolutionary ideology and their own natural inclination to become integral parts of the normal political process. The latter was not simply the consequence of opportunism, as it partially derived from Social Democrats' acceptance of certain basic assumptions—including adherence to Hungary's territorial integrity and, to a degree, a belief in Magyar supremacy—which were difficult, if not impossible, to integrate with proletarian internationalism or national self-determination. Because Socialists are not the timeless representatives of an eternal truth, but the products of their own time and environment, a study of Social Democrats cannot be successful if their activities are taken out of context and measured by the rigidly applied anachronistic yardstick of political parochialism.

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GERMAN-HUNGARIAN RELATIONS AND THE SWABIAN PROBLEM:  
FROM KÁROLYI TO GÖMBÖS 1919–1936. By *Thomas Spira*. East European  
Monographs, 25. Boulder, Colo.: *East European Quarterly*, 1977. xii, 382 pp.  
\$18.50. Distributed by Columbia University Press, New York.

Beginning in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the Germans of Eastern Europe played a considerable role in the economic, cultural, and political history of the area. For the most part, their presence was beneficial to the countries in which they settled. It was only between the two world wars that the German minorities, under the influence of Nazi ideology and propaganda, acquired a sinister reputation. They were seen as constituting a fifth column, under Berlin's direction, which was to infiltrate public life, influence political decisions, and serve Germany's expansionist aims. Professor Spira's subject matter, a study of Hungary's relatively large German minority between 1919 and 1936 within the context of German-Hungarian relations, is therefore important. From the work, one hopes to learn about the background of events leading to the outbreak of the Second World War and Hungary's participation in it on the side of Nazi Germany. It is, however, doubtful that the student of interwar diplomacy can profit from this volume. Professor Spira's understanding of the diplomatic history of interwar Europe and his grasp of German-Hungarian relations are inadequate. Moreover, his presentation of the nationality question is at best an uncritical indictment of the Budapest government and an equally uncritical apology for the German minority. In addition to these fundamental problems, the book is crowded with mistakes, erroneous statistics, and contradictory statements. The final result is a confusing, almost unreadable book which should never have been published in its present form.

Ideally, the book should have three distinct parts: the revolutionary period, the postrevolutionary era to 1933, and the Nazi epoch. However, since Professor Spira's basic assumption is that "the Magyars' peculiar psychological, cultural, and demographic position in Central Europe dictated their attitude towards the other ethnic groups in Hungary," no meaningful distinction can be drawn between, for example,

the liberal Károlyi regime and the pro-German right radical government of Gömbös. Indeed, Professor Spira's conclusion, in spite of the title of his chapter on the revolutionary period ("Minorities—Conciliated") is that Mihály Károlyi strove for the "liquidation of the Swabian problem." This is a surprising conclusion in the face of the very far-reaching reorganization of Hungary's administrative units, which provided autonomous minority regions with territorial jurisdiction over many governmental functions, including education and justice, and which established regional governments to be represented in the central parliament.

The treatment of the postrevolutionary era is also problematical. Beginning with a chapter tortuously entitled "'Conciliation' Deteriorates," the reader is confronted with a confusing description of Swabian-Hungarian relations and an inaccurate account of German-Hungarian diplomatic ties. For example, the author sums up Hungary's diplomatic activities in the 1920s with the assertion that "Bethlen prudently avoided armed conflict." Statements such as "Hungary, in tandem with Italy, was slowly forging a cordon sanitaire from the Atlantic to the Baltic and from east of Bavaria to the Black Sea," an activity which allegedly caused Germany acute anxiety in 1929, point to a scanty knowledge of diplomatic realities in the late 1920s.

The author's account of the Nazi period is equally disheartening. In spite of scattered references to German interference in Hungarian-German organizations, Professor Spira asserts that Hitler paid no attention to the German minority. Yet clearly this was not the case, since, already in 1933, the Wilhelmstrasse began cooperation with the National Socialist Party on minority matters.

The basis for all of these misunderstandings is inadequate research. How, for example, could the treatment of the Károlyi period be accurate when the author repeatedly asserts that Károlyi was a Social Democrat and that his government was also a purely Social Democratic one? No wonder Professor Spira's conclusions are so off the mark when it comes to the discussion of the 1918–19 period when he is convinced that the county administrations at that time were still entirely autonomous and that, therefore, the central government was unable to enforce its own laws. Or how could he give an even approximately accurate portrayal of Hungarian foreign policy when he believes that Hungary "was forbidden by the Victors to pursue an independent economic or diplomatic course"? As for German-Hungarian relations in the 1920s and 1930s, one is bound to be suspicious when the author insists on calling Weimar Germany the Reich, or when he asserts that Hitler handled Hungary cautiously in 1933 because of the country's strategic importance to his future attack on the Soviet Union.

The bibliographical omissions in this study are telling. Although many sources are cited only in footnotes and not in the bibliography, there are still grievous oversights. These range from the U.S. State Department documents on the Paris Peace Conference and classic works on European diplomatic history to contemporary Hungarian tracts on the German minority and more recent German treatments of the Swabians.

Professor Spira's statistical information is often highly suspect. For example, the 1910 census shows that only 2 percent of the population was of Serbian origin, yet, according to Professor Spira, one out of every four Hungarian citizens was a Serb. According to the same census there were fewer than two million Germans living in prewar Hungary; it is therefore unlikely that over two million Germans found themselves in the Successor States, as the author claims. It is also hard to believe that only 46 Swabian gymnasium students, out of a Swabian student body totaling 1,191, managed to matriculate when the author himself emphasizes that the educational attainment of Hungarian Germans was higher than that of the Magyars.

The inaccuracies of this volume also encompass geographical descriptions. Western Hungary is not the same as Transdanubia, and there is no such county as

Vasvár. The Gólyavár is neither a city nor a village, as Professor Spira leads us to believe, but a building in the courtyard of the University of Budapest. As for the accuracy of references, the lengthy quotation about the Hungarian Soviet Republic's constitution, attributed to Frank Eckelt, was actually written by this reviewer.

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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BALKAN NATIONAL STATES, 1804–1920. By *Charles Jelavich* and *Barbara Jelavich*. A History of East Central Europe, vol. 8. Edited by *Peter F. Sugar* and *Donald W. Treadgold*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1977. xvi, 358 pp. Maps. \$18.95.

This is a welcome addition to the multivolume *History of East Central Europe* published by the University of Washington. The admirable Jelavich couple, to whom we are already indebted for numerous excellent works in the East European and Russian field, have put us still further in their debt. To compress the complexities of Balkan history, through the whole nineteenth century and the first fifth of the twentieth, into slightly over three hundred pages, is no mean achievement. Students and history teachers will find this book invaluable. The style is clear, the right words are used with economy, and there is no padding or gobbledegook. Possibly those readers who are accustomed to not more than one fact in a page, or more than one idea in five, will not like it; if so, that is their loss. There are some verbal infelicities, very few misprints, some mistakes of detail or curious omissions: for example, Vranje was acquired by Serbia in 1912, not by Yugoslavia in 1919 (there is apparent confusion with Bosiljgrad on page 302); and even a brief survey of Rumanian literature in the years before 1914 (pp. 278–79) should not leave out Octavian Goga, one of the great poets of that language. But these are minor blemishes. This reviewer feels that the account of the positions of Pašić and the Yugoslav Committee is a little out of focus; but it is, of course, an occupational disease of academic reviewers to over-emphasize the points about which they have specialized knowledge.

Every historian of this region and period is at once confronted with the question, "What are the Balkans?" The purist doctrine of Nicolae Iorga (Yugoslavia is a Dinaric state, Rumania a Carpathian, Albania an Adriatic, Greece a Mediterranean, and only Bulgaria is a Balkan state) is not acceptable in practice. The authors have fixed their eyes firmly on the emergent states in preference to the nations. Thus, from the beginning, "the Balkans" extends to the northeast as far as Jassy, but in the northwest it does not go beyond the Sava until the eve of the Great War. At this point we are given an extremely competent, but excessively brief, account of the affairs of the South Slavs of the Habsburg Monarchy and a much less satisfactory summary of the Habsburg Rumanians, which omits Bukovina altogether. There is nothing about conditions in Bessarabia before 1919. This is not a carping criticism. The authors' approach is perfectly defensible. There is no infallible way of handling such complexity, and brevity in a book is a great virtue; nevertheless, these gaps must be pointed out.

In contrast to Professor Sugar's bibliographical essay in volume 5 of this series, the Jelaviches have confined theirs to works in English. For student readers, this is probably the best procedure; and reading through the essay, it is pleasant to be reminded how many excellent books there are in English, mostly published in the United States. The argument which one sometimes hears in British academic circles, that Balkan history cannot be taught to undergraduates because there is no literature, is here revealed as the nonsense that it is. The Jelaviches' work is, of course, also based on much wider research in many languages.