

Rákóczi war was retrograde because it was opposed to contemporary ideas and practices of absolute monarchy and fostered feudalism. The fact is that, had Hungary under Rákóczi been left alone, it would have been in harmony with developments in Western Europe at that time, but to the benefit of its own population rather than that of the Habsburg dynasty.

The authors achieve a remarkably well-drawn portrait of Rákóczi the incorruptible statesman, devoted to the common weal and to the fulfillment of his political commitments. The fine illustrations that are included vividly document the man and his era. Published to mark the tercentenary of Rákóczi's birth (March 27, 1676), this new edition by Köpeczi and Várkonyi definitively supersedes Sándor Márki's scholarly two-volume biography published in Budapest between 1907 and 1913.

BÉLA K. KIRÁLY

Brooklyn College and Graduate School, CUNY

THE RADICAL LEFT IN THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION OF 1848. By Laszlo Deme. East European Monographs, 19. Boulder, Colo.: *East European Quarterly*, 1976. x, 162 pp. \$12.00. Distributed by Columbia University Press, New York.

Few events in Hungarian history have excited as much attention as the Revolution of 1848–49. Works written about the events and personalities connected with the Revolution could fill a small library, and new publications are constantly forthcoming. In the course of the past two years, at least two separate volumes have appeared in the United States alone; and another volume on Kossuth's role in the Revolution is scheduled to appear soon. One of these volumes is E. W. Stroup's *Hungary in Early 1848* (1977), which is basically a reassessment of the early phase of the Revolution, resulting in a much more charitable portrait of the Hungarian nobility than is customary today. The other volume is the work under review, which treats the role of the so-called "Radical Left" in the Revolution.

Not counting some of the outright pro-Habsburg aristocrats, the political spectrum in the Hungary of 1848 was divided into three groups: the Conservatives represented by such personalities as Count E. Dessewffy and Count Gy. Apponyi; the Liberals, whose spokesmen included such great minds as L. Kossuth, F. Deák, J. Eötvös, and even the more traditional Count I. Széchenyi; and the Radicals, whose membership was made up of a number of young poets, writers, and journalists (such as S. Petőfi, M. Jókai, P. Vasvári, J. Irinyi, and so forth), as well as several members of the landowning lower nobility (for example, P. Nyáry, M. Perczel, and the Madarász brothers, László and József). Of these three groups, the Liberals were undoubtedly the most important, and the Revolution of 1848–49 was basically their doing. The role of the Radical Left—their involvement in the March Revolution in Pest notwithstanding—was, on the whole, peripheral. And while more recent attempts have been made (especially by Gy. Spira in Hungary) to reexamine and perhaps to enlarge their role, their relative secondary role as compared to that of the Liberals cannot be altered.

Professor Deme's book—which is based on his more extensive Ph.D dissertation of a decade ago—is the first comprehensive English-language study of this question. He has made an honest and respectable attempt to portray the significance of the Radicals. But perhaps precisely because of his visible sympathies for his subjects, he may have exaggerated their role. This is evident both in his claim for an alleged duality of real political power in March 1848 (the Diet at Pozsony versus the Committee of Public Safety at Pest), as well as in his apparent belief in the possibility of a "second revolution" by the Radical Left in September of that year. Neither of these claims is sufficiently convincing.

Although failing to go beyond published sources, Professor Deme's work is a well-researched scholarly study. It summarizes well all that is known about the role of the Radicals. Insofar as his topic and his limited space permitted, he has done an excellent job. But I fail to see how he managed to produce a book about 1848 in Hungary—even if its topic is the Radical Left—that does not even mention the name of the great liberal statesman and political philosopher, Joseph Eötvös.

Deme's work is supplemented by brief biographical sketches of the most significant personalities, by a chronology of the Revolution, by a list of his primary and secondary sources, as well as by a brief index.

S. B. VARDY

Duquesne University

A FÜGGETLEN KISGAZDAPÁRT POLITIKÁJA (1944–1947). By *István Vida*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976. 368 pp. 85 Ft.

Treatises on postwar political developments in Eastern Europe have rarely been based on both primary sources and an impartial attitude on the part of the author. István Vida's approach seems to be an exception. In this substantial work, the history of the Independent Smallholders' Party is related to and analyzed within the context of Hungary's domestic and foreign relations. He stresses that while the Soviet Union played an active role in shaping the country's policies, Western powers remained quite passive. In this constellation—which is well illustrated by the author—the Smallholders' Party waged its struggle for power without any foreign support while the Communist Party was backed by the Kremlin, a situation that inevitably led to the Communist takeover. The Smallholders' Party did manage two decisive victories, however: the first on October 7, 1945 at the Budapest municipal elections where they garnered 50.54 percent of the vote, and, the second at the November 4, 1945 general elections where they won 57.03 percent of the vote.

In describing the power struggle between the Smallholders' Party and the Communists, Mr. Vida masterfully reviews the hesitant behavior of the other members of the coalition, namely, the tactics of the Social Democrats and of the National Peasant Party. But he supplies only superficial data on the party's internal struggles and relies mostly on oral information given by the late Gyula Ortutay and György Gulácsy, neither of whom was privy to firsthand knowledge of the party's internal fights between Secretary General Béla Kovács and the factions led by Zoltán Tildy. Mr. Vida's value judgment of the Smallholders' Party's role is worth quoting in its entirety: "Its survival perhaps would have moderated the mistakes which were committed during the collectivization of agriculture and which were corrected only after the defeat of the 1956 counterrevolution" (p. 352).

There are a few factual errors in the book; for example, the author states that "the Peasant Alliance (*Parasztszövetség*) was founded in the autumn of 1941 with the aid of Prime Minister Teleki" (p. 16); this is not so, because Prime Minister Teleki was not alive at that time, he had committed suicide on April 3, 1941. In several cases, important names are misspelled: Bárányos (as Bársonyos, p. 284), Minister of Justice István Riesz (as I. Reisz, pp. 335 and 336), and József Gróh (misspelled as J. Gróth, pp. 216 and 222).

Primarily based on original documentation and contemporary analyses, the monograph includes a well-compiled bibliography and a personal name index. In post-1945 Eastern Europe it represents an objective experiment in writing party history.

FRANCIS S. WAGNER
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