

This pioneering work in Hungarian local history ought to inspire some scholars to investigate thoroughly the history of the Baranya dispute. Archival and other primary as well as secondary sources, untapped by Dr. Tihany, will facilitate the quest.

PETER PASTOR
Montclair State College

THE HUNGARIAN LABOR SERVICE SYSTEM, 1939–1945. By *Randolph L. Braham*. East European Monographs, 31. Boulder, Colo.: *East European Quarterly*, 1977. x, 159 pp. Illus. \$11.00. Distributed by Columbia University Press, New York.

This brief, well-documented, and thorough study by a professor of political science at City College, CUNY is the first detailed history of the auxiliary labor service Hungarian Jews were compelled to undertake during the Second World War. Hungary's treatment of Jews throughout the war was as contradictory as the entire participation of Hungary in World War II. The introduction, administration, and operation of the Jewish labor service bore these very marks of contradiction.

Hungary was the first country to emulate Hitler's Germany with the institution of anti-Jewish laws. The original purpose of legislation introduced between 1938 and 1941 was to remove the "unreliable" Jewish elements from fighting while compelling them to undertake incredibly hard physical labor—building trenches, digging in copper mines or building roads without equipment, in their own clothes, dying like flies from the cold, the lack of food, typhus, and dysentery. Without shelter, they were ridiculed, beaten, tortured, and killed by sadistic guards and front-line soldiers in both Hungarian and German uniforms. The author devotes most of his attention to the fate of the two most significant operations in which Jewish labor service was involved—in the Ukraine and those in Bor, Yugoslavia. In the first operation, out of fifty thousand labor servicemen only six to seven thousand survived. In the second, in the copper mines south of Belgrade, approximately six thousand men suffered perhaps one of the greatest ordeals of history. Even as the war was drawing to a close, the exhausted men were driven like animals towards the German borders where they were massacred along the road and forced to dig their own graves. Hungary's finest lyric poet, Miklos Radnoti, described sensitively his own and his fellow sufferers' impending death in handwritten lines of beautiful poetry found on his body in the mass graves that contained the bodies of these victims of the horror.

There are a few heroes in the book: they are the small number of Hungarians who protested, the decent and honest members of the Ministry of Defense, which in 1944 curiously and ironically became the protector of the safety of some Jews. Among officials of the Ministry of Defense, the author singles out the ministry's spokesman, General Vilmos Nagy, who resigned rather than allow the slaughter of the Jews. But then again, there were few heroes in those days in Hungary as far as the Jews were concerned, and this book, written by someone who experienced the suffering, is so understated and objective that the reader is allowed to draw his own conclusions.

The appendixes, including statements made by former labor service members, documents relating to administration, glossaries and abbreviations, add immeasurably to the fine and tragic account of man's inhumanity to man. The volume is worthy of being included in the East European Monographs series—ably edited by Stephen Fischer-Galati—and will be of value not only to the specialist of the period, but to the general reader interested in Eastern Europe as well.

IVAN VOLGYES
University of Nebraska