

1953 uprising justify Tikhomirov's suggestion to rethink the June 17 events rather as the expression of a nationalistic movement than as an uprising for democracy and rule of law, as they appear in today's official culture of remembrance. "In forming local communities of violence, the insurgents experienced tabooed feelings of national pride and tried to effect healing after the trauma of national and state schism resulting from defeat in World War II by taking vengeance on representatives of SVAG, the Red Army, and the SED regime" (355). The outburst of violence, with the burning of power symbols as high point had a cathartic effect: people were able to discharge their emotions and work out ways in which the regime could be tolerated. Together with the regime's cautious restraint in re-establishing the public power symbols, this led to a new stability of the political system.

The persistence of national feelings in the population can also explain why the SED leadership put the struggle for a speedy end to the schism of the German state and nation and the departure of the occupying forces as the top of reasons to trust Stalin and be proud of belonging to the socialist world (a personal letter written to each adult resident of the GDR in autumn 1951, 157). Obviously, this commitment to German unity also contributed to the relative stability of the regime. The de-sacralization of Stalin after Nikita Khrushchev's unveilings at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSS) in 1956 led to another de-stabilization. As a Stasi report shows, people now worried if there was still a chance to create a single German state and to improve their living standards (289). Thus, Tikhomirov can also explain why the regime concentrated its propaganda efforts on the perspective of quickly surpassing West German well-being.

Ed. Ferenc Hörcher and Kálmán Tóth. *19th-Century Hungarian Political Thought and Culture: Towards Settlement with Austria, 1790–1867.*

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The editors of this exceptionally strong collection of essays have laid out some quite ambitious goals. First and foremost, they describe a gap in our historiography when it comes to the political ideas produced by Hungarian thinkers during the vitally important years between the French Revolution and the Compromise (*Ausgleich*) of 1867 that turned the Austrian empire into what became commonly known as the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary, and by which the Hungarian kingdom achieved a significant degree of autonomy over affairs within its borders. They aim to fill that gap, noting that "an overview of a full range of critical figures from this period has not been published recently in English." (ix).

These were the years where not only ink but also blood was spilled in the struggle to define Hungary's internal political structure and its relationship with the Habsburg dynasty and its broader empire, as well as the extent to which the Magyar language and culture would hold sway within the borders of St. Stephen's kingdom. This book expertly explains the back and forth over the decades on these matters, with an appropriate focus on key periods of change, such as the revolutionary period of 1848–49 and the years leading up to 1867.

Understanding the full range of reform proposals and related political thought put forth by its leaders is thus central to understanding the course of Hungarian history, as well as what the book's editors describe as "the contemporary fault lines in the European political palette" (ix).

The first section, covering about one-quarter of the book, offers a brief but thorough review of historical developments in Hungary, the broader Habsburg lands, and the European continent during the period covered. These chapters—the first one written by the editors and each of the others by contributing scholars—focus on constitutional and political questions, including serfdom and the all-important nationality issue, and comprehensively lay out the broad terms of the ideological debates (as well as the intellectual ideas, trends, and traditions that underlay them) on these matters, along with citing current relevant academic discourse surrounding them.

The nationalities question, in particular the matter of language use, was fundamental for the entire region, in which multiple tongues and cultures existed (if not always harmoniously co-existed) intermixed with one another in Hungary and virtually all the surrounding kingdoms and territories within in the Habsburg patrimony. One chapter in this first section does an excellent job of explaining the range of positions taken by each of Hungary's non-Magyar peoples on their group's relationship with the Hungarian state as well as Magyarization.

The editors make clear in the first chapter their general sympathies with Hungarian revolutionaries, including Lajos Kossuth, the leader of independent Hungary in 1848–49, as well as his martyred colleague, Lajos Batthyány, Hungary's first Prime Minister. They also praised the 1867 *Ausgleich* as a "win-win agreement" that ushered in a "Golden Age" of "spectacular development" and an "unparalleled boom in the Hungarian economy and culture by 1900" (11). Seeing the dualist structure in an almost wholly positive light is not something all historians do, to be sure, with some arguing that it essentially gave the Magyar nobility not only the power to dominate their own kingdom, but also a veto over necessary, comprehensive reforms in either half of Austria-Hungary. But from a Hungarian national perspective, this positive assessment of dualism certainly makes sense.

The second section, which moves roughly in chronological order, consists of ten chapters, most of which are devoted to a careful study of an individual Hungarian figure (the first two examine more than one within a particular era). This section "reconstructs the voices of the most outstanding Hungarian political thinkers of the period and traces their impact" (xi). The editors each take one chapter, with the other eight written by contributing scholars. These chapters uniformly do an outstanding job achieving their defined goals. They successfully synthesize the ideas of the figures under examination (as well as provide brief but illuminating biographical sketches for those who are explored in depth), place them in the context of political, social, and cultural developments, and constructively bring in related historiography.

My own research dwelled at some length on one of these figures, Baron József Eötvös, and focused on his reform plans for the Habsburg Monarchy. The chapter in this book that examines his life and ideas were thus of special interest to me, and I can say that it was exceptionally well done.

The book, somewhat surprisingly, does not contain a formal conclusion, which could have proven helpful. The final paragraphs of the last chapter, on Ferenc Deák, do serve as somewhat of a conclusion, as they offer brief thoughts on the post-1867 era. Nevertheless, the lack of a conclusion is a small flaw, not a serious problem.

Overall, this collection is a highly valuable contribution to the scholarship on Hungarian intellectual and political history during the period 1790–1867. It strikes an excellent balance between diving into detail and tracing developments in broader strokes. The book will be of great interest above all to scholars and students of Hungarian history, as well as those studying the Habsburg Monarchy, central and eastern Europe, and nineteenth century European political thought. It is written in lively, accessible prose, with little in the way of jargon, and

so can be profitably read by both undergraduate and graduate students, as well as those in the general public with a desire to learn more about the important topics covered within.

Esther Levinger. *Constructivism in Central Europe: Painting, Typography, Photomontage.*

Leiden Brill, 2022. 370 pp. Notes. Index. Bibliography. Illustrations. Appendixes. Hard bound, \$187.22.

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A deep examination of central European art's constructivist avant-garde, Esther Levinger's book features some unusual methodology and aspects: selected protagonists for each chapter, that is, each of the central European countries' constructivist art, is discussed in the book through a few of its leading representatives. These selections serve as guidelines but do not limit the richness of the material of the book.

Levinger's topic is the art of the progressive, left-leaning minority in the central Europe of the 1920s and 30s, when "artists in the region shared a firm belief in progress (social, scientific, and technological) and the merits of objectivity" (2). Although this belief was shared by the wider international community of artists, Levinger outlines that "the organizational model" of artworks in central Europe was architecture, and the constructivists aspired to the cleanness and systematic order of architecture. "Picture-architecture," a term used by the Hungarians Lajos Kassák, Sándor Bortnyik, László Moholy-Nagy, and Béla Uitz, as well as the Polish Władysław Strzemiński, but originating from the unmentioned Russian painter Ljubov Popova, was a case in point. Levinger underlines the courage of the leftwing artists to reject the Soviet-type socialist realism for freedom of expression.

After an introductory description and interpretation of constructivism in its birthplace, Russia, and its "Migration and Reception in Central Europe," this avant-garde's presence in Vienna, Warsaw, and Prague is discussed, where Vienna is the outpost of Budapest, as Hungarian constructivists lived in exile there. One of the central dilemmas of the time, the conflict between individualism and collectivism of the future culture, is clearly highlighted in the early 1920s concepts of Kassák and the critic Ernő Kállai. While they all struggled with utopian ideas, which soon proved to be unrealizable, the Moscow debate about "composition" as opposed to "construction" trickled down, somewhat altered, as art forms of "antithetical social and political regimes: composition in capitalism and construction in communism" (32). As they had to place suprematism on this palette, it was found "passive" as opposed to the vigorous activity of constructivism.

The selected hero of the Hungarians in Vienna exile is Uitz, who was the most receptive to the concept of a collective artwork and is presented, in a very nuanced account, as more revolutionary than fellow Hungarian artists Bortnyik and János Mácza. The Warsaw scene's protagonists are Mieczysław Szczuka and Teresa Żarower, who saw social problems as inseparable from issues of art and championed the "beauty of utilitarianism" (66.) Typography is abundantly illustrated in this context projecting clarity and democracy. The Czech scene features, among others, Karel Teige, a central figure of the international avant-garde with ties to most European movements.