

as far as it symbolized "resistances to Southern empires – ancient Rome, and its successor, the Catholic Church" (p. 45). The alternative view, widely accepted by scholars after World War II, holds that post-Herderian localisms and Germanisms were potentially (and increasingly) malignant as carriers of national-racial glorifications. Perhaps the truth lies somewhere in the middle, and late- or mid-eighteenth-century mythological localizing carried, intermeshed in its center, possibilities (and intentions) for both human opening and refusal. This last example well illustrates the manner in which Marilyn Butler's propositions, even when puzzling or controversial, are informed by an immediacy and lack of inhibition that make them attractive, fresh, and stimulating. She remains the leading British scholar in Romanticism.

Taken as a whole, the collection of Porter and Teich is a strong and original contribution to our knowledge of the Romantic age. Despite its title, it is a worthwhile comparatist enterprise. Moreover, it is a step forward towards the treatment of Romanticism as a coherent historical process, in the spirit of cultural morphology.

Catholic University of America  
Washington, D.C.

*Virgil Nemoianu*

Jörg K. Hoensch  
**A History of Modern Hungary, 1867–1986**  
(Longman, London, 1988. 320 pp.)

No one can blame the author of this history of modern Hungary for failing to foresee the momentous events that were about to occur in Eastern Europe as his book was published. Jörg Hoensch, the author of previous studies in Slovak and Hungarian history of the interwar period, is Professor of East European History at the University of the Saarland. This book is an expanded and updated English edition of a work first published in German in 1983. It appeared in 1988 at a time when Hungary was, of course, on the threshold of major political and economic reforms. Yet virtually all political observers would at that time have shared Hoensch's view that it was "wishful thinking" to suggest that "a parliamentary system along Western democratic lines will eventually establish itself in Hungary." (p. 283) Though many of Hoensch's observations in the final pages of the book will thus seem to readers in the 1990's as completely outdated and irrelevant, the book as a whole will be a valuable source of information for a general public whose curiosity about the countries of Eastern Europe will have been piqued by the historic events occurring there.

The great merit of Hoensch's book is the clear and organized way in which he presents the basic facts of Hungarian history since the *Ausgleich* of 1867. The book contains remarkably few factual or typographical errors. Hoensch's emphasis is almost entirely on political and economic affairs. He is particularly skillful in presenting the intricacies of shifting party politics in the Dualist era and in the immediate post-World War I period. True to his statement of purpose in the book's preface, Hoensch's explication of political events is quite "free of ideological or apologetic tendencies". His judgments on controversial issues are judicious and for the most part reflect a consensus of recent historical work. Thus, in discussing Hungary's historical development from 1867 to 1918, he cites certain economic problems Hungary encountered because of the close relationship with Austria, but concludes that overall the *Ausgleich* was a benefit to Hungary and that "Hungary was by no means an economically exploited country held in a condition of dependence on Austria (p. 43). He is particularly effective and persuasive in describing the nature of the anti-Communist and anti-Russian attitudes in Hungary in the decade leading to uprising of 1956. For the most part, however, Hoensch eschews analysis and prefers to offer a straightforward narrative of historical events. Seldom does he step back from his recitation of facts to offer a personal opinion or analytical speculation.

Preferring to focus on political parties and movements, Hoensch for the most part offers only thumbnail sketches of the key political figures in modern Hungarian history. Even so his coverage is uneven. Relatively

little attention is paid to such fascinating figures as Béla Kun and Miklós Horthy, and the reader is left unaware of some of the historical controversies surrounding their activities. Hoensch offers a more extensive discussion of the career of István Tisza, citing his political acumen but concluding that "he lacked the stature of a great statesman". (p. 52) Hoensch's portrait of Tisza, however, would have been more convincing, and his analysis of liberalism in Dualist Hungary more probing, had he made better use of Gábor Vermes's work on Tisza that is cited in the bibliography. In a similar way Hoensch's discussion of the place of István Bethlen in modern Hungarian history would have been enhanced by a recognition of the interpretations and conclusions of Ignác Romsics in his important study of the Bethlen era.

If the author is reasonably even-handed in his treatment of the major statesmen in modern Hungarian history, he does perhaps allow a certain bias to enter his depiction of János Kádár, who receives extensive coverage. Kádár is described as the "affable pioneer of liberalization" (p. 221) whose realistic, purposeful, and pragmatic policies won him "the respect, indeed the adulation, of his fellow countrymen". (256) The pluralism that Kádár allowed to develop is described by Hoensch as offering the Magyars the "maximum possible benefits at the least possible risk". (p. 284) Many observers of East European politics will share this view of Kádár, but given the rapid decline of Kádár's political fortunes in 1989 and the severe criticism of his policies that suddenly surfaced, one may question whether Hoensch presents too rosy a picture of the Hungarian political and social scene in the 1980's. Perhaps he should have paid greater heed to the warning signs of malaise (high suicide rate, drunkenness, etc.) that István Völgyes has focussed on in his various studies of contemporary Hungary.

Even if one might question some of Hoensch's emphasis or wish that he had offered more than fleeting references to some of the important current historical debates among historians of Hungary, his book nonetheless deserves recognition as a valuable reference work and the most up-to-date and authoritative study of modern Hungary. Still, specialists in Hungarian history will probably be disappointed on two counts. Firstly, while Hoensch's writing style (both in the original German and in the excellent English translation) is clear and well-organized, it is also quite colorless and pedestrian. His detailed, and quite valuable, discussions of economic problems are presented with monotonous precision. The effect in such cases is that of an encyclopedia rather than of well-crafted history. Perhaps it is unfair to make comparisons with John Lukacs, whose recent book, *Budapest, 1900*, is written with great flair and in compellingly evocative language. Yet Hoensch could have enlivened his work considerably with at least a few of the kind of telling anecdotes or provocative details that Lukacs employs so skillfully. He could, for example, have described Béla Kun's hasty (some would say ignominious) departure for Vienna upon the collapse of the Soviet Republic; Miklós Horthy's poignant letter to Stalin in 1944 pleading for an armistice; or János Kádár's fateful visit to Rajk's jail cell in 1949. Lacking a colorful and gripping writing style, Hoensch's book will not easily hold the attention of the general reader.

For the Hungarian specialist a second problem may be more serious. As Hoensch admits in his preface, "owing to lack of space" he had to neglect most of Hungary's cultural history. The results are dismaying. Endre Ady is here dismissed in half a sentence as a poet who (along with Zsigmond Móricz) set "new standards in literature". The treatment of Béla Bartók, Attila József, and György Konrád is equally brief and superficial. The uninitiated reader of Hoensch's book will have no inkling of the profound influence that these artists and others had on Hungarian society. Hoensch's book thus should not be seen as a comprehensive history of modern Hungary. Perhaps it should be read in conjunction with Pál Ignóty's *Hungary*, published in 1971, which deals with roughly the same time period. Ignóty deemphasizes political history and has almost nothing to say about economic development. But his discussions of cultural affairs are rich and provocative, and his writing style is idiosyncratic and entertaining. The works of Ignóty and Hoensch are in many ways complementary and deserve a place along-side each other on the library shelf of the Hungarian.

University of Cincinnati  
USA

Thomas Sakmyster