

Book Reviews

A History of Middle Europe: From the Earliest Times to the Age of the World Wars by Leslie Charles Tihany (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1976, pp. 280, \$16.50).

Ktéma es—what Thucydides said about his history is also applicable to this book. It is a possession for all time. Especially for Hungarians, with St. László on the cover and a Hungaro-centered comparative history of the peoples inhabiting the Baltic-Adriatic-Black Sea triangle between the covers. There has never been such a book; the closest to it was Halecki's *Borderlands* (1952), which was lexico-graphic, Polish-centered, and used Henrik Marczali's book of the 1890's as the most recent German-language source for Hungarian history. Tihany's new book is based on the latest available research in twelve languages. It is the work of a great historian, Hungarian-born and *non-engagé*, trained in the best American universities, and employed for nearly 30 years by the diplomatic service of the United States. Tihany knows history not only from studying it but also from participating in its making. He writes that beautiful, clear, and enthralling English which—as G.B. Shaw said in *Pygmalion*—only Hungarians are capable of using as an idiom.

Tihany's thesis asserts that history ran different courses for the descendants of the Cro-Magnon man in the coastal and landlocked areas of Europe because (1) the peoples of the latter were prey to an unceasing succession of expansionist empires (Roman, Byzantine, Carolingian, Holy Roman, Ottoman, Habsburg, Hohenzollern, and Romanov); and (2) the states they formed were barred from participation in world trade for lack of maritime outlets, except for the 14th-century period of the "Monarchy of the Three Seas" constructed by the political genius of the Hungarian Anjous.

The book is full of unforgettable vignettes. The Hungarians riding as conquerors through the ghost town of Aquincum; and as conquered, a millennium later, losing most of their country to their neighbors. We see Koppány's quartered body nailed to four city gates; diver Kund sinking the German fleet at Pozsony; Andrew II

driving the scheming Teutonic Knights from the Barcaság; Vladislav I leading his lethal cavalry charge at Varna into the Sultan's palisaded enclosure; Matthias, with imperial Luxembourg blood flowing in his veins, vainly pursuing the dream of the Holy Roman sceptre; vanguards of fugitive Gypsies (scouts, spies or refugees?) arriving in Brasso before Mohammed the Conqueror orders his ships dragged across the isthmus of the Golden Horn to capture Byzantium; Louis II sinking on his wounded mount into the Danube swamps; the Turks unwittingly safeguarding the vitality of Protestantism; the utter devastation of the land by liberators and fleeing occupiers after the recapture of Buda; Louis XIV keeping Rákóczi's insurgents under arms as a diversion to his Spanish war; Kossuth challenging the gates of hell to prevail over a Hungary embattled for freedom; the rise and fall of the compromise-based Dual Monarchy with its unfolding capitalism, socialism, zionism, and a multitude of centrifugal nationalisms pressing against its seams; carnage and party strife continuing parallel through the holocaust of the first World War.

Around this action-rich center of the stage swirls the turbulent history of Bulgarians, Serbs, Croatians, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Rumanians, Czechs, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Ukrainians, Poles, Lithuanians, Letts; Bogomils and Hussites, rebellious serfs, *haiduks*, *kuruc*, cossacks, *uskoks*, *janissaries*, and *ichoglans*. Tihany's best chapters are: as social history, the transformation of heathens into heretics along basic fissures in the structure of society; as intellectual history, the evolution of utopian and agrarian socialism into trade unionism and Marxism (a delayed process owing to the pan-German and Pan-Slav idiosyncracies of the 19th-century German and Russian socialist founding fathers); as political history, the irresistible disintegration of the Polish state during the 18th century through inability to do away with unanimity-rule aristo-democracy; and as diplomatic history, the treatment of the Eastern Question in its relationship to the whole complex of Middle European problems. Here we are shown convincingly that the coastal Great Powers never treated as *grosse Politik* any internal issue of the middle zone except where their own interests in safeguarding the sealanes and the maintenance of the balance of power were at stake.

What emerges from this scholarly yet highly readable and fascinating book is the continuity, through the ebb and flow of historical impermanence, of the millennial state-forming genius of the Magyars,

a nation situated in the continental heartland for the performance of memorable deeds, past and future.

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Esterhazy and Early Hungarian Immigration to Canada. Canadian Plains Studies No. 2. By Martin Louis Kovacs. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 1974. Pp. x + 170.

The study presents the most recent research of Professor Kovacs concerning the early history of Hungarians in Western Canada. Specifically, the author reconstructs the role of Paul Oscar Esterhazy, surveys the history of the Esterhaz colony to 1903 and assesses Esterhazy as immigrant leader in the late nineteenth century. In addition, he publishes the full text of an historically significant pamphlet on the colony, compiled in 1902, and provides critical commentary on its value as historical documentation.

An important contribution of the study is the clarification of the early history of the Esterhaz colony. First settled in 1886 by Hungarian and other East European settlers arriving from the United States, Esterhaz refers to a compact area of settlement in the eastern Qu'Appelle Valley of Saskatchewan. The author documents the decisive role of Esterhazy in selecting the site for settlement and relates his personal efforts leading to the establishment of the village of Esterhazy in 1902 as a railway junction and agricultural market serving the entire colony. As a result, the village of Esterhazy became subsequent to 1902 the major centre for Hungarian settlement in Western Canada. Professor Kovacs explains the origins of this significant process on the basis of original source materials, including the Paul Oscar Esterhazy Papers, documents from the Public Archives of Canada and the Saskatchewan Provincial Archives.

Also noteworthy is the author's assessment of Paul Oscar Esterhazy as founder of Hungarian settlements in Canada, as an advocate of Canadian immigration for East European peasants and as a particular type of ethnic leader to immigrants from Eastern Europe. Professor Kovacs sees Esterhazy as an effective and influential advocate of Hungarian settlers in Saskatchewan. He also suggests an explanation for Esterhazy's interest in Canadian immigration. Deeply affected by the exploitation of East European immigrants in United