

talent enables Wass to depict the sufferings of his people in a manner palatable even to non-Hungarians.

Wass's new book, *Sword and Sickle*, is an historical novel. Part I is a chronicle, not only of a family, but also of the Hungarian nation through nine hundred years. The author's breadth of knowledge is revealed by his description of a people's evolution, spirit and traditions. The second part is a description of the modern age, the era of the Second World War. It is not a dull report on the politics and diplomacy of the day, but a lively, touching story of a people, the Hungarians of Transylvania. It carries the reader with the story and makes him share the joys, grief and cares of the novel's heroes. The author's message is clear. It is wrong to place the burden of guilt for the Hungarians' misfortunes on scapegoats such as the "aristocracy" or the "clergy". Hungarians were collectively responsible for the tragedy that overtook them, and they all must individually bear the burden of that responsibility.

The sword and the sickle are symbols. The former is indispensable in the conquest of the homeland and its defence against external foes. But one can retain the homeland only with the sickle, the plow: through the cultivation of the soil, through backbreaking and honest toil.

Wass has received many literary honours, but he has not stopped writing. He has now presented us with a unique book which combines joy and sadness, encouragement and warning. This is a work of eternal validity, for today's man, who has conquered space but keeps stumbling on earth, needs moral guidance. After reading this book the despondent will raise his head, the sad will smile, and those who had lost hope will discover light in the seemingly dark future. What more can a writer offer to his readers?

Holland

Erzsébet Kisjókai

Quest for a New Central Europe: A Symposium. Edited by Julius Varsányi. Adelaide – Sydney: Australian Carpathian Federation, 1976. 295 pp. ISBN 0 9597246 0 3.

In his introduction to the work, Dr. Varsányi describes its purpose in the following terms:

This is not an attempt to pass moral judgements on a particular political reality, but rather, a scrutiny of its underlying facts and superimposed features, in an attempt to determine the degree of validity of this reality, and the viability of an alternative form of regional arrangement.

The alternative proposed is regional integration in East Central Europe, defined as "all the countries . . . situated between the two German states and the Soviet Union: Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Rumania, and Yugoslavia." This integration is to be accomplished through the guaranteed neutralization of the area and its voluntary participation in the proposed regional structure.

As several of the contributors point out, the idea of some regional arrangement in the Danubian area is not a new one. The individual articles are designed to show that no insuperable obstacles of a geographic, historical, economic, or legal nature exist to prevent some form of integration. The ethnic diversity problem is recognized and dealt with at some length. Various practical and legal solutions are proposed to deal with this internal problem.

It is in the area of external political relations that problems arise. The only article specifically labeled "political" deals with Austrian neutrality. Dr. Felix Ermacora, Austrian legal specialist and member of the Austrian Parliament, describes in some detail the practices and policies of his country's internationally recognized neutrality. In concluding his article, Ermacora indicates that permanent neutrality is only effective "if it is in the framework of the big powers of the region" and "if its activities are generally recognized at least by the states of the respective region." He also points out that the hegemonial power in the area would have to acquiesce in the neutralization process.

It is this practical political consideration which creates difficulty. The Soviet Union is not likely to acquiesce in any arrangement which would leave a divided Germany on the far side of a belt of neutralized states. Until some permanent resolution to the German problem is implemented (if then), the Soviet Union is unlikely to permit any Central European regroupment which would diminish its power position in the area.

Neither the Brezhnev Doctrine nor the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine offers much hope to believers in a neutralized Central European federation. Each doctrine envisions continued Russian involvement in the region. The recent elaboration of West European "Eurocommunism" by the Spanish, Italian, and French Communist parties adds a new complication. The doctrine appears to present a challenge to U.S. and Soviet political interests throughout Europe. If the two major powers attempt to limit the political impact of the Eurocommunists, the result may well be a strengthening of the status quo in each half of Europe.

The circumstances surrounding the book's publication are intriguing. The book, dealing with Central Europe, is published by the Australian

Carpathian Federation, and printed by the Dai Nippon Printing Company in Hong Kong. A more truly international venture could hardly be imagined. A careful reading of some of the articles leads to the suspicion that Australian Carpathians are really Australo-Hungarians (pardon the pun) in disguise. The term "Carpathian Basin", rather than Hungary, is used regularly in the text, often with the basic assumption that the basin would serve as the focal point of the integration movement.

From an over-all perspective, the articles are uneven in quality and interest. The translation of the Ermacora article is undoubtedly correct, but a bit stilted. Typographical errors are an occasional minor annoyance.

While the book is intended to promote a political goal of sorts, most of the articles selected are neither political nor polemical in content. They have been drawn from a wide variety of academic disciplines. Graphs and charts provide statistical information on population factors, natural resources and trade. One need not be an academic specialist in order to profit from reading the work, although its primary appeal will be to the Central and East European devotee.

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Edward E. Platt

A Short History of Hungary. By Zoltán Halász. Translated by Csaba Szabó. Budapest: Corvina Press, 1975. Distributed by Imported Publications Inc. of Chicago. 275 pp. Illustrations. \$10.00 cloth.

Tastefully turned out by Corvina, this historical primer presents and updates for English-language readers the interpretation of Hungary's past familiar to us from the work of the late, outstanding Marxist historian Erik Molnár. The translation is nearly flawless and idiomatic, though we hope that the rendering of the 1918 Károlyi *öszirózsás forradalom* as the "Michaelmas Daisy Revolution" will prove to be less risibility-inducing in Britain than in America.

Structurally the book is disproportionate. The first fourteen centuries of Hungarian prehistory and history ending in 1900 receive 174 pages; the ensuing seventy years, 87. More space is devoted to the 10th Hungarian Party Congress than to the Reformation, about the same as the author gives to the Rákóczi and Kossuth Wars of Independence each. The illustrations are excellent but there are no maps. The translator's practice of using Hungarian place names in discussing events taking place in territories detached from Hungary in 1918-1920 (Pozsony, Érsekújvár, Gyulafehérvár, Balázsfalva, Világos, Liptószent-