

miklós, etc.) makes it impossible for the non-Hungarian reader to trace the narrative on modern maps published outside Hungary. Similarly, the use of a correct but unfamiliar German geographical nomenclature instead of place names familiar from English historical writing (for example, Höchstädt for Blenheim) fails to prompt instantaneous reaction in the lay reader's mind.

Methodologically the text, which otherwise reads well, lapses into weaknesses characteristic of dogmatic historiography. Hypothesis is presented as historical fact, as on p. 15: "The ordinary Magyar [of the early 10th century] had the choice of two alternatives: to join the armed bands or . . . to till the soil," etc. Historical fact incongruous with the justification of a synthesis is omitted, as on p. 243: "Ferenc Nagy, who was in Switzerland at the time . . . was summoned by the government to return home. . . Nagy refused and sent a letter of resignation instead." The non-captive reading public has the omitted facts available in Ferenc Nagy's *Struggle Behind the Iron Curtain*, Macmillan: New York, 1948, pp. 405-426 and in the open diplomatic archives of the West. The book ends with a presentation of the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Hungary (p. 247) as a curtainraiser to the end of the dialectical process in that country and so perforce of Hungarian history.

The 1975 publication of this little book in Budapest roughly coincided with the signing in Helsinki of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The fact that it is being freely distributed in America by Imported Publications, Inc. of Chicago should be partial proof of U.S. compliance with those "third-basket" desiderata of the Final Act which call for reciprocity in the free movement of ideas and in access to printed information. We hope that the Hungarian counterpart of the American Imported Publications, Inc. will soon be, if it isn't already, as free of government control in importing and distributing information originating anywhere in the world as is the Chicago firm which has placed Zoltán Halász's book in our hands.

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*The Crises of France's East Central European Diplomacy, 1933-1938.*  
By Anthony T. Komjathy. Boulder: East European Quarterly, 1977.  
Distributed by Columbia University Press. 277 pp.

As a general rule scholars would agree that highly critical reviews should be kept as brief as possible, if indeed they should be written at all.

Now and then, however, this rule deserves to be discarded in the interests of professional standards — standards which must apply to scholars and publishers alike.

Dr. Komjathy calls his book, *The Crises of France's East Central European Diplomacy, 1933-1938*. One need not quarrel with a title, but one has every right to measure its appropriateness against the book's contents. It is true that one can live with the "East Central" designation, although the Introduction makes it clear that "Central" would have been quite adequate (2). So too we can accept with grace the idea of successive "crises", even though the crises identified by the author generally failed to be regarded as such by French statesmen of the day. And we can even suppress our curiosity as to why the book ends without explanation in 1938, shelving for the moment our doubts that Munich was "the last diplomatic defeat of Britain and France before the outbreak of World War II" (210). But we can only swallow so much.

The title suggests that this is to be a book about French foreign policy with special reference to Central Europe. In fact, the emphasis is reversed in the work itself. Much attention is paid here to the Central European states, "Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Rumania and Yugoslavia", and relatively little to France. For instance, the Munich affair is rather brusquely dismissed with the remarkable pronouncement that "the Munich crisis became the crisis of Britain and not of France" (208). In the long run we may be grateful for such facility, for a good deal more research would have been necessary in order to make the exercise worthwhile. Is it really possible to say anything about France in the 1930's without having read the eleven volume post-war commission of inquiry entitled *Les événements survenus en France de 1933 à 1945*? Can one really afford to venture remarks on French military preparations before having consulted Weygand's memoirs, or Bankwitz, or Tournoux, or Challenger, or at least some of the vast periodical literature on the subject? Searching in vain for references to such works in this book, the reader might properly balk at some of the author's suggestions: for instance, that which blames the French for squandering the Polish alliance by not planning for the "speedy occupation of Denmark" (31). And if one is really going to explore French policy in Central Europe, can one afford to ignore the ambassadorial memoirs of Laroche, Noel, Coulondre, Puaux and Chambrun, the published papers of Lukasiewicz, the collection of papers in *Studia Balcanica* (1973) or even the monographs of Budurowycz, Wathen, Gehl and Bruegel? In a word, the rare instances of unpublished source materials, combined with League of Nations publications and the pub-

lished diplomatic documents from Germany, Britain, France, America and Hungary, do not compensate for what constitutes some quite extraordinary omissions.

The kindest thing that one is able to suggest is that such omissions are responsible for some equally extraordinary judgments. Weygand's memoirs alone should have pre-empted references to the "undisguised admiration of French military experts for the Soviet armed forces" (61), just as they would have qualified the notion of the "militarily useless Soviet mutual assistance" (139) by pointing up the principal French desire to avoid any renaissance of the Rapallo agreements between Germany and Russia. Similarly, many of the neglected sources would surely have encouraged, if not demanded, qualifications for such contentions, that French "military leaders . . . proved to be incapable of understanding the influence of changed technology on strategy" (213), that the French felt "absolutely secure . . . behind the Maginot line" (139), that Popular Front foreign policy "did not accept the validity of natural alliances" but allowed "ideology and not realistic interests" to determine "allies and enemies" (78). Finally, one would have hoped that more careful research might have reduced the chances of presenting the French as quite unimaginably stupid. If a point is incorrect in the first place, no amount of repetition is going to change the fact; and thus the reviewer is moved to deny the claim that Laval was "naive" enough to believe that "the Little Entente would unconditionally follow the desires of France" (107) and to deny that Blum was "naive" enough to believe that "Britain had the same feelings vis à vis Germany as France did" (171). Throughout this work it is repeatedly suggested that the French were simply oblivious to the special and competing needs of their individual allies and clients.

One is less confident that problems of documentation are responsible for the many internal inconsistencies. For instance, what are we to believe after having been told that Titulescu's rapprochement with Russia was "pursued over the objections of his government" (149) and that "the government agreed with Titulescu's rapprochement attempts with the Soviet Union" (161)? Should we conclude that Blum entertained "the hope of reconciliation" with Italy, which he considered "absolutely necessary" (165), or rather should we accept that Blum did not care about offending Mussolini (176), that he refused to believe in the Duce's sincerity, and that he "excluded the possibility of any cooperation with Italy" (178)? Are we to believe that French trading policy with Central Europe was "disastrous" (26) because it wilfully neglected the economic interests of France's client states, or should we

temper such an indictment by recognizing that France "was not in a position to effectively help the Polish economy" (41), that she "did not need" Yugoslavian goods, and that she "was not in a position economically to help Hungary" (115)?

To these complaints one is obliged to add two others. First, a conceptual problem lies at the heart of this book. There is no doubt at all that we are in need of a work that investigates more closely the nature of France's relations with Central Europe; and this work does contribute to that cause. However, in order to appreciate such a topic fully, surely we have to be told more about France's relations with the western powers, especially with Great Britain. Unless and until we are given that sort of broad coverage, we are likely to be further plagued by such judgments as those which refer to the "questionable value" of a British alliance "as far as true French interests were concerned" (202).

Second, this work prompts us to wonder where all the editors have gone. The reviewer has compiled a list of 42 printing and spelling errors, excluding those in the footnotes and bibliography and excluding 11 cases of *fait à compli* (sic). One would think, too, that flaws of greater magnitude required even less detection.

... but in 1934, Germany also entered this group, while France moved into the neutral block, which consisted of Poland, Switzerland, and England in 1933, and was joined by France in 1934. (68)

Thus, while in 1933 Austria's foreign trade was fairly distributed among the friendly . . . , hostile . . . , and neutral . . . blocks, in 1934. (68)

Finally, the translations are frequently awkward and unclear. We encounter for example: 'A throughout pacifist state of mind preferred to believe. . . .' (135); 'It will be easier . . . if Austria will have. . . .' (178); the German minority was also "aggrevated (sic) by the arrogant and 'politically not too psychological' attitude of the Czech bureaucracy. . . ." (186). And did Fichte really say that for any nation 'peace exists till her own frontiers are not invaded' (215)? If so, what in heaven's name could he have meant by it?

This is not an impressive piece of work, except perhaps in its deficiencies. One would hope that for his next book the author will resist the understandable urge to rush to publication, and that he will find himself a more meticulous and thorough publisher.

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