

Especially informative is the chapter on the secular clergy. Besides the intellectual and religious culture, the material foundations of this class are given full attention. Here also may be found an attempt to study the individual Hungarian dioceses (especially in the waning Middle Ages) statistically—the income of the dioceses, the cathedral chapters, the bishops, and the social origin of the high clergy. The author also deals at length with the “secularization” of the church in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, which seems comparable to Delumeau’s concept of “dechristianization.” Regarding the clergy the author also examines the steadily increasing amount of writing (including that of the so-called laity)—whereby he seeks to fathom the so-called infrastructure of the medieval *orbis christianus*. And to elucidate precisely this infrastructure, also during earlier centuries, is an important desideratum of medieval church history. If traditional sources are lacking, should not one have recourse to other evidence (for example, that of the fine arts)?

The book is an outstanding synthesis of the intellectual, cultural, and spiritual aspects of the last centuries of the Middle Ages, dealing with Hungary in the narrow sense but always bearing in mind the general European situation. No historian who is concerned with the church history of the time can afford to ignore this work by Mályusz, even though the book is at present accessible only to those who know Hungarian.

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A NEMZETI PARASZTPÁRT TÖRTÉNETE, 1944–1948. By *István Tóth*. Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1972. 326 pp. 23 Ft.

In this book István Tóth traces the brief history of the National Peasant Party (NPP) of Hungary during the crucial postwar period, when electoral competition prevailed. The book contains numerous carefully documented facts (from sources that are not available to Western scholars).

The Peasant Party never captured the imagination of the Hungarian electorate. In 1945 they polled 6.87 percent of the ballots (p. 110); and in 1948, even after the Smallholders Party was in complete disarray, the NPP captured only 8.3 percent of the votes (p. 239). The detailed analyses of these elections are the most rewarding parts of the book. Tóth meticulously presents the election results county by county, and occasionally on the district and even the precinct level. The results on the local levels are compared with the showing of the other parties.

The poor election results in both 1945 and 1948 were followed by upheavals within the NPP leadership. Tóth discusses these and other leadership crises and concludes that the divisiveness within the party and the lack of “democratic centralism” were responsible for the NPP’s misfortunes. It becomes obvious that the Communists both from within and from without prevented the NPP from following independent and pro-peasant policies and joining forces with the moderate Smallholders in opposition to the two workers’ parties. However, in spite of its many pro-Communist leaders, the NPP at times managed to assert itself and play a constructive role in Hungarian politics. Credit is due essentially to Imre Kovács, general secretary of the NPP, to his supporters, and to the small group of “third-roaders” (those intellectuals who believed in a future for Hungary with a flourishing agriculture not connected with communism or capitalism) who incessantly

fought the Communist encroachment within their party. Tóth does not diminish the importance of Kovács, but he makes every effort to cast him in a negative light—which, of course, alerts the Western reader to the insurmountable odds Kovács had to face in his honest effort to provide a genuine political representation to the Hungarian peasants.

Even if Kovács and his followers had succeeded in making the NPP independent of any Communist influence, it would have been futile, because by 1947 the limited Hungarian democracy was rapidly coming to an end. The most misleading aspect of Tóth's book is the complete omission of the role of the Soviet Union in the events that shaped Hungary's political future—a future which was decided not by national elections or by parliamentary maneuverings in Hungary but by directives from Moscow.

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ÎNȚELEGEREA BALCANICĂ. By *Eliza Campus*. Academia de științe sociale și politice a Republicii Socialiste România. Institutul de istorie "N. Iorga." Biblioteca Istorică, vol. 36. Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1972. xxv, 394 pp. Lei 27.

Professor Campus, author of many studies, including the recent *Mica Înțelegere* (*The Little Entente*), published in 1968, has produced the most thorough analysis of its Balkan complement—the multilateral arrangements entered into by Rumania, Yugoslavia, Turkey, and Greece in 1934. Previously treated in *The Balkan Conferences and the Balkan Entente, 1930–1935* (1936) by Robert J. Kerner and Harry N. Howard and in *Balkan Federation* (1942) by Leften S. Stavrianos, this topic has now secured a definitive yet controversial treatment by this prolific Marxist historian of twentieth-century international politics. Published at a time when Rumania is reasserting her political and economic independence from the socialist bloc states, this study endeavors to furnish historical justification for an earlier attempt—the 1934 pact—by the Balkan States to wrestle free from the machinations of the greater European powers. The author describes the efforts of Nicolae Titulescu, Rumania's esteemed foreign minister, to alert the League of Nations and the Balkan States to form a common front against the increasing menace of German and Italian fascism. She provides numerous references to the policies of the greater European powers. Most fascinating is the tragic story she tells of the slow rot which spread through the Entente as Europe descended into the abyss of prewar desperation. This solid study contains few references to the role of Soviet Russia, which was minimal in the Balkans during the 1930s. Such an approach by a Rumanian historian today presages an increased independence from the heavy hand of Soviet-dictated interpretations formerly imposed on accounts published in the bloc states. The "bourgeois" intellectuals should welcome the appearance of this first-rate study whose main *raison d'être* apparently is to relate an important historical episode and not to expound a specific historical philosophy.

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