

important innovation during the entire period between 1706—when the Austrians first arrived in Lombardy—and the end of Maria Theresa's reign in 1780. Daniel Klang has filled this gap with his brief but incisive study based on all the key published primary sources and the most important studies of the topic by twentieth-century historians.

As the author makes clear, the *censimento* was not the work of a single man or committee. As early as 1706, Count Prass had advocated the substitution of a new survey of land values for the one completed by the Spaniards in 1568. In 1712 a special commission recommended a revision of the direct tax system, and in 1718 a royal commission, headed by Vincenzo Miro, was appointed for this purpose. This commission, which was in existence between 1719 and 1733, devised a truly innovative new principle of taxation: engineers were to make a careful survey of the productivity of every plot of ground in Lombardy, and a particular landowner's tax was to amount to a certain fraction of the capital value of his holding. The survey was not resumed until 1749, when a second commission, headed by the distinguished Tuscan reformer, Pompeo Neri, was appointed. In a period of nine years, the new commission not only completed the *censimento* but also associated with the local-level Austrian administration "a medium rank civil nobility which could transform moribund or dishonest local governments into agencies responsive to the interests of the crown and large proprietors" (p. 28). By assessing land on the productive quality of the soil and not on the market value of crops raised, the tax stimulated agriculture and made it possible to initiate important economic, political, and social reforms. Mr. Klang's excellent monograph deals with one of the most important innovations of enlightened absolutism not only in Lombardy but also in all of Europe.

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II. RÁKÓCZI FERENC, SZÜLETÉSÉNEK 300. ÉVFORDULÓJÁRA. By Béla Köpeczi and Agnes R. Várkonyi. 2nd rev. ed. Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 1976. 534 pp. Plates. 104 Ft.

Köpeczi's numerous books and articles have dwelt primarily on international relations, particularly between Hungary and France, and include works on the Thököly insurrection and the Rákóczi war of independence and two major volumes devoted to Louis XIV. Várkonyi's no less impressive list of publications has turned on military affairs, serfdom, and the ideologies of the Hungarians' struggles with the Habsburg dynasty. This same division of interests is reflected in the present work. The second edition improves considerably on the first (now two decades old) by substantially augmenting its sources and sharpening its general lineaments. The result is a comprehensive book compiled from a wealth of material, which offers a fine and sensitive synthesis of Rákóczi the man and statesman.

The authors have perused archives in Hungary, Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, both Germanies, France, Rumania, and the Soviet Union. They have objectively resolved the toughest problem they faced—separation of the man from the myth—and they have clarified contradictory interpretations. Their assessment that Rákóczi has been a wellspring of "socialist patriotism" may be a little puzzling, but in other respects their portrayal of him is sound.

Born of the Rákóczis and the Zrinyis, two of the most prominent Hungarian families, Ferenc II Rákóczi emerges as a man who lived and died in a feudal society, his sympathy for which did not deter him from leading a peasant uprising which he turned into a war of independence. He is shown to have been a proponent of absolute monarchy, who firmly created a prototype of an enlightened absolute Hungarian state. This is at variance with the claim of many Austrian historians that the

Rákóczi war was retrograde because it was opposed to contemporary ideas and practices of absolute monarchy and fostered feudalism. The fact is that, had Hungary under Rákóczi been left alone, it would have been in harmony with developments in Western Europe at that time, but to the benefit of its own population rather than that of the Habsburg dynasty.

The authors achieve a remarkably well-drawn portrait of Rákóczi the incorruptible statesman, devoted to the common weal and to the fulfillment of his political commitments. The fine illustrations that are included vividly document the man and his era. Published to mark the tercentenary of Rákóczi's birth (March 27, 1676), this new edition by Köpeczi and Várkonyi definitively supersedes Sándor Márki's scholarly two-volume biography published in Budapest between 1907 and 1913.

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THE RADICAL LEFT IN THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION OF 1848. By *Laszlo Deme*. East European Monographs, 19. Boulder, Colo.: *East European Quarterly*, 1976. x, 162 pp. \$12.00. Distributed by Columbia University Press, New York.

Few events in Hungarian history have excited as much attention as the Revolution of 1848–49. Works written about the events and personalities connected with the Revolution could fill a small library, and new publications are constantly forthcoming. In the course of the past two years, at least two separate volumes have appeared in the United States alone; and another volume on Kossuth's role in the Revolution is scheduled to appear soon. One of these volumes is E. W. Stroup's *Hungary in Early 1848* (1977), which is basically a reassessment of the early phase of the Revolution, resulting in a much more charitable portrait of the Hungarian nobility than is customary today. The other volume is the work under review, which treats the role of the so-called "Radical Left" in the Revolution.

Not counting some of the outright pro-Habsburg aristocrats, the political spectrum in the Hungary of 1848 was divided into three groups: the Conservatives represented by such personalities as Count E. Desseffy and Count Gy. Apponyi; the Liberals, whose spokesmen included such great minds as L. Kossuth, F. Deák, J. Eötvös, and even the more traditional Count I. Széchenyi; and the Radicals, whose membership was made up of a number of young poets, writers, and journalists (such as S. Petőfi, M. Jókai, P. Vasvári, J. Irinyi, and so forth), as well as several members of the landowning lower nobility (for example, P. Nyáry, M. Perczel, and the Madarász brothers, László and József). Of these three groups, the Liberals were undoubtedly the most important, and the Revolution of 1848–49 was basically their doing. The role of the Radical Left—their involvement in the March Revolution in Pest notwithstanding—was, on the whole, peripheral. And while more recent attempts have been made (especially by Gy. Spira in Hungary) to reexamine and perhaps to enlarge their role, their relative secondary role as compared to that of the Liberals cannot be altered.

Professor Deme's book—which is based on his more extensive Ph.D dissertation of a decade ago—is the first comprehensive English-language study of this question. He has made an honest and respectable attempt to portray the significance of the Radicals. But perhaps precisely because of his visible sympathies for his subjects, he may have exaggerated their role. This is evident both in his claim for an alleged duality of real political power in March 1848 (the Diet at Pozsony versus the Committee of Public Safety at Pest), as well as in his apparent belief in the possibility of a "second revolution" by the Radical Left in September of that year. Neither of these claims is sufficiently convincing.