

explore the war itself as a radicalizing force that was to overtake the schemes of politicians by 1918. Yet the process by which the war fueled the "ethnic nationalisms of the Habsburg peoples" would be a crucial issue in the empire's wartime history.

Literary war hysteria is the theme of R. A. Kann's essay on Austro-German poets in the war's opening months. Eva Balogh traces the evolution of their Magyar colleagues from the initial proud evocations of 1848–49 to the later realization that the Great War had little in common with the relatively short wars of national liberation or unification in the nineteenth century. Stephan Verosta's essay on *Mittleuropa* concludes with an intriguing allusion to the role of this concept in the dissolution of the Monarchy, raising the question of Germany's contribution to this process. While it is clear that some prominent Austro-Germans opposed the *Mittleuropa* scheme, its effect (if any) on the Habsburg peoples' disenchantment with the Monarchy calls for a more systematic analysis. In a timely examination of the historical bias of American writing on the Habsburg Empire, Paula Fichtner reminds us that the empire's history need not be studied primarily from the vantage point of its last years, dominated as they were by the nationalities question. In this connection, her critique of Oscar Jaszi's *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* ably exposes the author's questionable assumptions, while acknowledging his influence on subsequent historical writing.

The general impression one gets from this volume is of many subjects touched on too lightly. Nonetheless, the case studies raise intriguing issues for further research, and the book as a whole serves as a reminder that there is more to Habsburg history during World War I than a collection of peoples eagerly anticipating the military defeat that would signal the triumph of their particular nationalisms.

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A SZOCIALISTA MAGYAR IRODALOM DOKUMENTUMAI AZ AMERIKAI
MAGYAR SAJTÓBAN 1920–1945. By József Kovács. Budapest: Akadémiai
Kiadó, 1977. 439 pp. 100 Ft.

The field of ethnic studies in the United States is comparatively new. Although this does not hold true for immigration studies, the social, economic, cultural, and literary achievements of many of the immigrant nationalities that make up the American nation have received relatively little attention until the past decade or so. There are, of course, exceptions; but the Hungarians, or Magyars, are not one of them. Few serious scholars have ventured into the Hungarian-American past. Thus, the majority of publications in the area of Hungarian-American studies have been either dilettante works produced by untrained authors, or general summaries based on the information found in these works.

Although still far from satisfactory, the situation has changed during the past few years. A number of trained scholars—Hungarian, as well as Hungarian-American—have ventured into the field; and some of them are beginning to produce serious works. In the field of history the most prominent of these scholars is Julia Puskás, whose major work on the development of Hungarian-American organizations should soon appear in print. In the field of literary history Puskás's work is paralleled by that of József Kovács—the author of the work under review.

The title of Kovács's book is an accurate description of its topic and content. It is a documentary work that contains a good selection of the writings of those Hungarian-American authors of the interwar period whose works fit into the category of "socialist literature." While these selections are useful and important, Kovács's eighty-six-page introductory study—which constitutes the first serious summary and assessment of the development and achievements of the socialist-oriented press and

literature during the quarter-century prior to 1945—is perhaps even more significant. Kovács's essay pays some attention to the precursors of the socialist press and literature (for example, *Népjog*—1893, *Amerikai Népszava*—1895, *Népakarat*—1903, *Előre*—1905, *Testvériség*—1911, *Előre*—1912, *Bérmunkás*—1917), but its core is devoted to the study of the Communist paper *Új Előre* (1921–37) and to the discussion of the literary and publicistic activities of its editors and most significant contributors (L. Kövess, J. Lékai, I. Bálint, W. Weinberg, E. Olexo, L. Egri, J. Varga, and so forth). In discussing their works and political or publicistic activities, Kovács also supplies us with a vivid description of the Hungarian-American workers' culture in general, of the nature and limitations of émigré (workers') literature, of the significance of immigrant social and cultural organizations, and of the importance of the image of the lost homeland in the lives and thinking of the newcomers, as well as of the conflict between their naïve and often emotional nationalism, on the one hand, and their economic and class interests, which bound or should have bound them to the socialist movement, on the other.

In his discussion of the development and achievements of the Hungarian-American socialist press and literature, Kovács alludes briefly to the existence of its nonsocialist or antisocialist counterpart, but his allusions are so limited that they may lead to certain misconceptions about the relative influence of these two distinct orientations. His discussion should have been placed in a wider framework, and he should have at least commented upon the relative significance of the socialist and nonsocialist interwar Hungarian-American press. As it stands, his study could easily lead one to the conclusion that the socialist press was almost alone, or at least was dominant in the field. Nothing could be further from the truth. The socialist (and especially the Communist) press and literature constituted only a small part of interwar Hungarian-American journalism and belles-lettres. The dominant trend was toward traditional and mostly patriotic writings, which were always more concerned with the effects of the Treaty of Trianon upon Hungary than with the achievements or failures of international socialism or communism. Moreover—as the author himself has pointed out—Hungarian-American literature, like most immigrant literatures of that period, did not reach high aesthetic levels. But insofar as there was any literature of some aesthetic value, it was more in the “nationalist” than in the “socialist” camp (for example, the writings of G. Kemény, Gy. Rudnyánszky, L. Szabó, L. Pólya, and J. Reményi).

These comments notwithstanding, we can only regard József Kovács's study and documentary collection, which is undoubtedly the first serious scholarly work in the field of Hungarian-American literature, as an impressive undertaking. Because there is a need for more works in this category, the author should be encouraged to continue his research and writings along these lines. A similar volume on the achievements of the nonsocialist Hungarian-American literature and press of the interwar period would certainly fill a void that needs to be filled, and would do so in the best traditions of Hungarian literary scholarship.

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JÓZSEF ATTILA VÁLOGATOTT LEVELEZÉSE. Edited and selected by *Erzsébet Fehér*. Új Magyar Múzeum, no. 11. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976. 530 pp. 72 Ft.

In Hungary poets still command respect. Their words, spoken and written, are the property of the entire nation, not merely of the initiated. Their lives are inextricably intertwined with the life of their country, and as the history of Hungary is tragic in essence, so are (in many cases) the lives of Hungarian poets. Attila József is among