

ment and the final disillusionment with the prospects for democratic change in central Europe. Kossuth encountered large and enthusiastic crowds in some localities, but he also received sharp criticism from scholars who were concerned about his attitude toward the nationalities in his proposed Hungarian state. Abolitionists attacked his reluctance to speak out against slavery, while Southerners viewed his appeals with growing suspicion. The government was wary and politicians were generally cool; it was, after all, an election year. The visit, as Komlos shows so well, was marked by misunderstandings between Kossuth and the Fillmore administration, resentment against the Hungarian's efforts to alter the direction of American foreign policy by a grass-roots appeal, and shock at his attempt to lecture the American public on the meaning of Washington's Farewell Address. Kossuth failed, and Komlos attributes the failure largely to Kossuth's own shortcomings—his ineffective leadership, poor judgment, indiscreet statements, and his misconceptions about the nature of American politics and diplomacy.

The author has examined a wide array of sources, both Hungarian and American, but relies most heavily on the valuable documentary collection, *A Kossuth-Emigráció Angliában és Amerikában, 1851–1852* (Budapest, 1940–48). Even so, his study (originally a master's thesis) lacks the depth that a full and proper assessment of Kossuth's mission demands, especially in its treatment of America's very complicated mid-century politics. C. A. Macartney points out in his foreword that Komlos has filled "a real gap" by providing the only serious study of Kossuth's visit in English; until a more definitive account appears, utilizing both European and American perspectives, this brief survey will retain its value and usefulness.

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BETHLEN ISTVÁN TITKOS IRATAI. Edited with an introduction and notes by *Miklós Színai* and *László Szűcs*. Magyar Országos Levéltár. Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1972. 493 pp. 66 Ft.

Count István Bethlen was the man to whom Hungary turned for leadership, in the early 1920s, in the struggle to rebuild a polity disrupted by defeat, revolution, and counterrevolution. Hungary, at that time, had been reduced to one-third its former territory by the secession of its one-time national minorities (taking with them substantial Magyar populations, who now became minorities in their turn in the new successor states). Bethlen, as minister-president, shepherded the disparate political groupings which had emerged from the chaos of 1918–19 into a new United Party, dominated by the same agrarian-industrial-officeholder oligarchy which had ruled Hungary before 1914. A Transylvanian aristocrat, Bethlen set Hungarian foreign policy firmly on its interwar course with demands for a revision of the frontiers set down by the Treaty of Trianon—the treaty which had dismembered the historic Kingdom of Hungary. Revisionist policy brought Bethlen into conflict with the Western powers, but, nevertheless, adroit diplomatic footwork, and his successful restoration of order and some semblance of civility at home, enabled the minister-president to attract loans for reconstruction from the West (at the same time tying Hungary more closely to Anglo-

American capital). No one would deny the role of the regent, Admiral Horthy, in all this, but it was Bethlen who exercised the day-by-day political legerdemain which restored as much of the old order as could be restored, and introduced a measure of stability. Bethlen was, in fact, the last of the great Hungarian political managers, a worthy successor to such men as the two Tiszas.

Miklós Szinai and László Szűcs, who some time ago edited a collection of the confidential papers of Admiral Horthy, have now issued a similar volume of documents from Bethlen's private files. Documents are included from June 1921 through August 1931, and thus cover virtually the whole of Bethlen's term of office. The material is grouped under a number of subject areas, including Bethlen's planning of the 1922 and 1926 elections; his relations with early national-socialist groups (Hungarian and German); his role in the affair of the corrupt Smallholder minister, Lajos Esküdt, and in the counterfeit-franc scandal (see Andor Klay, "Hungarian Counterfeit Francs: A Case of Post-World War I Political Sabotage," *Slavic Review*, March 1974); and his futile efforts to negotiate a new Western loan in 1931. The editors have contributed an excellent forty-five-page introduction, and there is an appendix listing the members of Bethlen's successive governments, a listing and description of his private papers preserved in the Hungarian National Archives, and a proper-name index. Following current Hungarian practice, all documents in the collection not originally written in Hungarian are translated into that language. Thus, Western historians who wish to study Bethlen's rather extensive correspondence with Anglo-American financial experts and others, originally in English, French, and German, will be unable to read it here if they do not know Magyar. Otherwise, in format and organization, the book is exemplary—a model document collection. Furthermore, Szinai and Szűcs's introduction is a fine brief survey of Bethlen's career in office.

What is not so clear is whether this volume of private papers really tells us very much about Bethlen's activities which could not have been learned from other sources. Szinai and Szűcs demonstrate convincingly in their introduction, for example, that Bethlen got Hungary deeply in hock to Western bankers (more deeply, indeed, than any of her neighbors), and that much of the proceeds went only to service existing indebtedness and for other unproductive purposes. Yet all this is easily enough demonstrated from the existing record, and probably most appropriately presented in article or monograph form. The documents published here do not really add that much to the story. Bethlen's contacts with early national-socialist groups, and his involvement in the counterfeit-franc affair, are hardly surprises; where was the conservative politician, in the Europe of the 1920s, who did not coquet with fascist or proto-fascist groups? And who believes any longer that agents of government engage in political dirty tricks without the knowledge and approval of their superiors? As for Bethlen's interference in the electoral process, it simply perpetuated the practice of the dualist era.

There are, of course, more serious matters to be considered. Bethlen strove to restore, on a diminished territory, the Hungary of 40,000 landowning families—with their commercial, industrial, and "gentry" auxiliaries—and to regain the areas lost at Trianon. But to restore the Hungary of 200,000 gentlemen was to perpetuate the Hungary of three million beggars, and to strive for the restoration of historic Hungary was to keep Danubian Europe constantly in greater or lesser turmoil. These are the real charges to be brought against Bethlen, if one wishes to indict him, and the main evidence for the prosecutor's brief will be

found in these areas, not in such bagatelles as the printing of bogus currency. Indeed, the publication of confidential papers, which turn out upon inspection to be not so startling after all, can even backfire.

All this is not to detract from the merits of the collection. Yet, one wonders if perhaps a more useful, more comprehensive, more representative, and even a more damning sampling of documents from the Bethlen era would have resulted, if the rubric "confidential" had been dropped and the materials had been drawn from a wider variety of sources.

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OPERATION HAZALAH. By *Gilles Lambert*. Translated by *Robert Bullen* and *Rosette Letellier*. Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1974. xi, 235 pp. \$6.95.

Most of the literature on the Holocaust has focused on the ideology and techniques of the Nazi extermination program, with Jews portrayed as its passive object. *Operation Hazalah*—the Hebrew word means "rescue"—provides a corrective to the typical portrayal. It relates the story of the courageous and desperate Jewish resistance movement, organized in Budapest, Hungary in 1944 by young Zionists, which helped save tens of thousands of Jewish lives in the face of the awesome and efficient death machine commanded by Adolf Eichmann and his associates.

The strategy of the extraordinary resistance movement, which was almost totally isolated from the West, was oriented to disrupting the meticulously arranged "order" of the Nazi occupiers. Hundreds of false identification papers and legal documents of all types were run off on clandestine printing presses. The young rescuers, with stolen uniforms, masqueraded as neutral embassy officials, Nazi police, and even SS officers. With forged documents, they released condemned Jews from prison or from trains heading for death camps, and guided escapees over borders.

What is, however, not adequately stressed in the work are the special circumstances which prevailed in Hungary that made the rescue effort possible. Though a Nazi ally and administered by native anti-Semites, Hungary was not occupied by the German army until spring 1944. Indeed, it remained until then a haven for Jews fleeing Nazi rule, who brought with them stories about concentration camps and gas chambers. Thus alerted about their fate, activist Jews could make preparations. Second, the highly concentrated ghettos, which simplified the isolation and roundup of Jews as a prelude to extermination elsewhere in Nazi-occupied Europe, were absent in Hungary. Finally, with the Red Army rapidly approaching the Hungarian borders and an Allied victory in sight, the Horthy regime, in an effort to placate the West, offered various forms of resistance to the Nazi drive until the coup in October brought the Arrow Cross to power.

In failing to take account of these factors, the author reaches the misguided judgment that "wherever the Jews were submissive, wherever they obeyed the laws and decrees, they were exterminated; while wherever the spirit of resistance prevailed, the Nazis had to abandon part of their spoils." Some form of Jewish resistance, in fact, was to be found almost everywhere, as Lucy Dawidowicz has