

During the late fourteenth century, royal decrees gradually assumed the role of nationwide laws, overriding all others except "ius." A close study of the *decreta* published in this volume will also reveal the changing relationships between royal authority and baronial power. By the end of the period covered in this volume, baronial ascendancy seemed assured. The following volumes will undoubtedly reflect the recovery of royal power during the reign of King Matthias Corvinus Hunyadi and its later demise under his successors.

Few documentary collections will be as important for researchers of medieval Hungarian history as this volume. The introduction provides an excellent background for the project and the thinking of its editors. The published decrees are meticulously edited. Summaries are provided in German, enabling Western scholars to work with the *decreta* without first having to go through the Latin texts. Döry, Bónis, and Bácskai have made a significant contribution to the scholarly community by publishing this volume and should be complimented for a job well done.

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A MAGYAR ÁLLÁSPONTOK HELYE A SZERBIÁVAL SZEMBENI HADICÉLOK RENDSZERÉBEN (1915–1918). By *Dániel Szabó*. *Értekezések a történeti tudományok köréből*. Uj sorozat, 79. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976. 181 pp. 27 Ft., paper.

SZOCIÁLDEMOKRÁCIA NEMZETI ÉS NEMZETISÉGI KÉRDÉS MAGYARORSZÁGON (1900–1914). By *György I. Kalmár*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976. 248 pp. 62 Ft.

Belligerent powers frequently display tangible evidence of their future intentions even before diplomats gather around the table of a peace conference. Not only do conquests during the course of a war bring about makeshift military occupations open to the dictates of expedience, but they also encourage long-range planning about the territories in question. The resulting plans tend to reveal the various crosscurrents underlying the formulation of war aims, which generally fluctuate in response to conflicting external and internal pressures. Wartime policy toward occupied territories therefore provides the historian with insights into the disparate elements of a country's wartime mentality and constitutes a dress rehearsal for the performance to take place in the wake of anticipated final victory.

Dániel Szabó has chosen occupied Serbia, Austria-Hungary's primary foe, to demonstrate various Hungarian parties' positions vis-à-vis the defeated country. He depicts the conflict not so much between the Magyar parties as between the Hungarian and Austrian points of view, and between these two and the German position. The most revealing part of Mr. Szabó's book is the very fact that all the Magyar parties in Hungary, even the somewhat reluctant Socialists, shared a belief in Magyar supremacy. They endorsed Magyar overlordship in the Balkans, some blatantly, others in a democratic guise, depending on their respective places in the political spectrum. The author described this fundamental unity in this excellent monograph, which is based on a thorough knowledge of the sources and is written in a lucid and interesting style. The only objection concerns the conclusion, which, instead of emphasizing and explaining this most revealing unity, simply summarizes what has been said before.

If cataloging events and facts is merely a minor flaw in the last part of Szabó's otherwise first-rate book, it is unfortunately the most conspicuous feature of György I. Kalmár's monograph on social democracy and the nationality question between 1900 and 1914. Although the book reflects exhaustive research and the author's commendable mastery of the material, the narrative is hardly more than a string of quota-

tions listed in a monotonous and flat manner. Worse, the author has made no attempt to transcend the oversimplified and schematic approach toward the problems of social democracy which, although impeccably Marxist in its rhetoric, lacks the flexibility and imagination possessed by the best in Marxist historiography.

Social democracy was indeed the "odd man out" in Hungary's political arena during the decades prior to World War I, but the contradictions that engulfed the party were neither Hegelian abstractions, nor merely shifting positions taken by calculating and shrewd leaders. Rather, these contradictions expressed the predicament of people who had to make constant adjustments between a revolutionary ideology and their own natural inclination to become integral parts of the normal political process. The latter was not simply the consequence of opportunism, as it partially derived from Social Democrats' acceptance of certain basic assumptions—including adherence to Hungary's territorial integrity and, to a degree, a belief in Magyar supremacy—which were difficult, if not impossible, to integrate with proletarian internationalism or national self-determination. Because Socialists are not the timeless representatives of an eternal truth, but the products of their own time and environment, a study of Social Democrats cannot be successful if their activities are taken out of context and measured by the rigidly applied anachronistic yardstick of political parochialism.

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GERMAN-HUNGARIAN RELATIONS AND THE SWABIAN PROBLEM:
FROM KÁROLYI TO GÖMBÖS 1919–1936. By *Thomas Spira*. East European
Monographs, 25. Boulder, Colo.: *East European Quarterly*, 1977. xii, 382 pp.
\$18.50. Distributed by Columbia University Press, New York.

Beginning in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the Germans of Eastern Europe played a considerable role in the economic, cultural, and political history of the area. For the most part, their presence was beneficial to the countries in which they settled. It was only between the two world wars that the German minorities, under the influence of Nazi ideology and propaganda, acquired a sinister reputation. They were seen as constituting a fifth column, under Berlin's direction, which was to infiltrate public life, influence political decisions, and serve Germany's expansionist aims. Professor Spira's subject matter, a study of Hungary's relatively large German minority between 1919 and 1936 within the context of German-Hungarian relations, is therefore important. From the work, one hopes to learn about the background of events leading to the outbreak of the Second World War and Hungary's participation in it on the side of Nazi Germany. It is, however, doubtful that the student of interwar diplomacy can profit from this volume. Professor Spira's understanding of the diplomatic history of interwar Europe and his grasp of German-Hungarian relations are inadequate. Moreover, his presentation of the nationality question is at best an uncritical indictment of the Budapest government and an equally uncritical apology for the German minority. In addition to these fundamental problems, the book is crowded with mistakes, erroneous statistics, and contradictory statements. The final result is a confusing, almost unreadable book which should never have been published in its present form.

Ideally, the book should have three distinct parts: the revolutionary period, the postrevolutionary era to 1933, and the Nazi epoch. However, since Professor Spira's basic assumption is that "the Magyars' peculiar psychological, cultural, and demographic position in Central Europe dictated their attitude towards the other ethnic groups in Hungary," no meaningful distinction can be drawn between, for example,