

In part one of his study, covering the period from the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in February 1956 to the Fourth Congress of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers in June 1967, the author traces the uneven course of de-Stalinization in Czechoslovakia: the quest for freedom of expression which characterized the memorable Second Congress of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers and the student *Majales* festivities during the brief thaw of 1956; the regime's repressive countermeasures in 1957–58; the resurgence of the ferment among writers and journalists and their tug of war with Novotný's hard liners over the issue of censorship in the early 1960s; the cessation of the jamming of Western broadcasts (other than Radio Free Europe); and the "gradual transformation of the press into a medium of information" (p. 84).

In part two the author discusses the developments that triggered the 1968 reform movement and did so much to maintain its momentum, such as the rebellious Congress of Czechoslovak Writers in June 1967, the influx of Western periodicals, the abolition of censorship which "unleashed a powerful stream of grievances accompanied by demands for their rectification" (p. 133), the impact of the *Two Thousand Words Manifesto*, and other evidence of the support of the Czechoslovak press and other communications media for the cause of the reform. Finally, in the epilogue, the author briefly reviews the political activism of the media during and after the Soviet invasion of August 1968 and its eventual repression by the Husák regime during the "normalization" era of 1969–72. Appended to the volume are several tables of statistical data about Czechoslovak newspapers and other periodicals from 1948 to 1970 and a select bibliography of books and articles.

Professor Kaplan's basic thesis—that freedom of expression stood at the very center of the democratization process and that "the press eventually became a prominent channel of dissent and, in the case of the cultural press, one of several oppositional forces which developed during the liberalization process" (p. 134)—is well taken; as is his view that "the very condition which was at the heart of the democratization process—an independent and vigorously active press—also represented a major factor in its demise" (p. 133), for it greatly influenced the Soviet decision to employ military force to suppress it. On the other hand, I wonder whether Professor Kaplan is correct when he answers in the affirmative his own question about whether "an uncensored press and a more pluralistic system" was possible "without precariously endangering the KSC's leading role in society" (p. 143). While that may well have been so initially, I rather think that eventually the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia would have been faced with the alternative of either accepting defeat in a free election or reasserting its monopoly of power and thus abandoning the pluralistic system it appeared to have sponsored during the "Czechoslovak Spring."

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TAX REFORM IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY LOMBARDY. By *Daniel M. Klang*. *East European Monographs*, 27. Boulder, Colo.: *East European Quarterly*, 1977. vi, 110 pp. \$10.00. Distributed by Columbia University Press, New York.

The tax reform, or *censimento*, completed by the Austrian government in 1760, was highly praised by a number of eighteenth-century political economists, including Adam Smith. In the next century, even such pronounced anti-Austrian Italian nationalist leaders as Carlo Cattaneo spoke highly of it. Today, historians still regard the *censimento* as the most important single achievement of Austrian rule in Italy. Yet, although many scholars have written in general terms about this notable reform, up to now no writer has focused his attention on the background and evolution of that

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