

in regard to the author's concept of authoritarianism in Latvia. The book is flawed by a number of editorial, translation, and minor factual mistakes. In general, however, von Rauch's is the most objective and valuable book on Baltic independence yet by a Western scholar.

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POLISH POLITICS IN TRANSITION: THE CAMP OF NATIONAL UNITY AND THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER, 1935-1939. By *Edward D. Wynot, Jr.* Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1974. xvii, 294 pp. \$12.50.

The death of Marshal Piłsudski in May 1935 created a major crisis for the semi-authoritarian regime he had established after the coup of May 1926. Although ill and unable to take any real part in government in the last years of his life, Piłsudski had still personified an ultimate authority who could preserve the unity of the heterogeneous groups which supported him. Consequently his death forced into the open the deep divisions within the Polish administration. The main attempt to overcome these rifts was the creation in early 1937 of a new government party, the Camp of National Unity, and the most interesting part of Mr. Wynot's book is a detailed description of the emergence and development of this Camp. Though difficult to read (still much too heavily based upon a Ph.D. thesis), the volume contains a good deal of new material from Polish and British archives as well as some intriguing documentation from the Italian archives on Polish-Italian links.

The picture of the period that Mr. Wynot paints is convincing and also depressing. He stresses the fascist elements in the Camp's program and shows how its leaders were prepared to resort to anti-Semitic demagoguery in order to win over nationalist support. His account of the crisis of November 1937, when the Camp's leadership toyed with the idea of a fascist coup (but in the end failed to carry it through), is particularly absorbing. He also points out that even though the Camp failed to unite public opinion, it refused to share power with the opposition before the outbreak of the war—a fact that was to have considerable significance after the rapid Nazi conquest of Poland.

The introductory section on Polish social and political background is much weaker and contains many elementary errors of fact and analysis. It is highly misleading, for instance, to quote without major qualification the 1931 census figure of one million Belorussians, for their total was certainly at least 50 percent more than this (p. 14). "Three-quarters" of Polish Jews did not live "in cities": 46.5 percent lived in towns with a population of more than 20,000, 29.9 percent lived in towns with less than 20,000 inhabitants (hardly cities), and 25.6 percent lived in villages and in the country. Forty percent of the Jewish population were not artisans (p. 15); rather, Jews comprised nearly 40 percent of all artisans. The Brześć trial was directed against the Center-Left alliance and did not involve Ukrainians (p. 23). The anti-Semitic bill introduced in the Sejm in 1939 was the work of Benedykt Kieniec (not Kieniec) and he was not a Nationalist, but a member of the Camp of National Unity, Mr. Wynot's subject of study (p. 18).

Mr. Wynot sees his work as "a case study of how a developing nation in the late 1930s moved increasingly toward the model of a Fascist state" (p. xi). Yet

for someone who places such stress on comparative methods, his knowledge of the rest of Eastern Europe is disturbingly slight. The "rate of economic development" of Poland in the interwar period was not "relatively high for the region" (p. ix). It actually lagged significantly behind that of Hungary and Rumania (see I. Sventnilson, *Growth and Stagnation in the European Economy*, Geneva, 1954, pp. 304-5), and this relative stagnation had much to do with the political malaise of the thirties. Moreover, the freedom which the Polish government conceded to opposition parties can hardly be claimed to have given "Polish politics a unique position in Eastern Europe" (p. 28). Similar freedom existed in Hungary, Yugoslavia, the Baltic States, and, at least until 1938, in Rumania. In spite of these defects, Mr. Wynot's study is a useful contribution to the history of Poland between the wars.

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REVERED BY ALL: THE LIFE AND WORKS OF RABBI ISRAEL MEIR KAGAN—HAFETS HAYYIM (1838-1933). By *Lester Samuel Eckman*. New York: Shengold Publishers, 1974. ix, 214 pp. \$10.00.

Dr. Eckman's biography of the Hafets Hayyim, one of the major figures of East European Jewish Orthodoxy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is seemingly an excellent idea. But for whom is the book intended? It is pure hagiography, and as such it will not interest the serious outsider who would like to gain an insight into the life and times of the celebrated rabbi. On the other hand, those familiar with the Orthodox Jewish tradition within which the Hafets Hayyim lived will hardly find anything of substance in this confused and shoddily written book. The author discusses the rabbi's views on a variety of issues but fails to analyze in any depth the historically vital dilemma of a great traditionalist living in a time of enormous upheaval in Jewish life. The rabbi's attitudes toward Zionism and toward the anti-Zionist party Agudas Yisroel, to cite just two examples, are not seriously analyzed. The historical background is based on the books of Dubnov and Baron, and Dr. Eckman is apparently unaware of the considerable amount of new work appearing on East European Jewish history. There are bewildering digressions into Israeli religious disputes and personal theology. It is possible to sympathize with the author's piety and reverence for the Hafets Hayyim, but this book succeeds neither as scholarship nor as popularization.

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KAPITOLY Z DĚJIN ČESKÉHO UČITELSTVA (1890-1938). By *O. Kodedová* and *Z. Uherek*. Prague: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1972. 159 pp. Kčs. 21.

This slim volume describes the efforts of Czech elementary school teachers to obtain better salaries, social position, and freedom to participate in the political affairs in the prewar Austrian Empire. It also traces the later organizational efforts of the teachers, first in the newly established Czechoslovak Republic, and later during the periods of economic crisis and political uncertainty which culminated in the destruction of the republic in 1938.