

rank in the ephemeral last Austrian government of the Monarchy, played a role in mediating the emperor's retirement, and in the new republic quickly became the intellectual and soon the titular leader of his party. Chancellor from 1922 to 1924, and again from 1926 to 1929, he presided over some of the most important events in the history of the republic, including the League of Nations reconstruction operation of 1922; and even during his years of retirement, up to his premature death in 1932, he was always a very great, although not always undisputed, power behind the scenes.

His stature as a statesman was acknowledged by his bitterest enemies. Whether the presence of so commanding a figure in the ranks of one party in a small country was boon or curse to it is a question less easily answered. Mr. von Klemperer divides the previous literature on Seipel into hagiography and demonology, and the *mot* is not altogether unfair. His own work, unquestionably the best in its field to appear, steers a commendably sane course between the two extremes. It is particularly valuable for its clear delineation and explanation of the strange evolution of Seipel's ideas from the detached academic outlook of his early writings through the "accommodative" attitude which made possible his party's participation in a coalition with the Social Democrats in 1919–20 to the uncompromising hardness of later years, when he played what seems to have been a decisive part in steering Austria, via the Heimwehr, into the arms of fascism. Seipel emerges from this scholarly analysis neither angel nor demon, perhaps smaller than either—a man of great ability but also great limitations. It is a thoroughly convincing picture, for which those not committed to either extreme position will be grateful.

While the analysis of Seipel's spiritual pilgrimage constitutes the most valuable part of the work, and probably reflects the author's own chief interest, he has, of course, to show the background against which this took place. He does this accurately enough, but lightly, and students of the history of the period will still need to consult the standard "straight" histories for fuller details.

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A TALE OF THREE CITIES [VIENNA, BUDAPEST, PRAGUE]. By *Ernst Roth*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971. xi, 178 pp. \$6.95.

The further removed we are from the "golden age" of Central Europe under the Habsburgs, the more nostalgic we may become. Compared with the blessings of peace and surface tranquillity, the difficulties of the Habsburg Monarchy seem trifling indeed. The nostalgia for that era is both capitalized upon and reinforced by those who grew up then and in whose remembrance a yearning for their lost youth and for the lost "Eden" fuse imperceptibly. Ernst Roth was born and raised in Prague, lived in Vienna, and visited Budapest; he offers a glittering account of these three cities, interlaced with wit, sympathy, and a mellow-sweet charm, which is known to be the trademark of the very world he describes. Thus his book is most enjoyable to read, but it is not a reliable historical guide to dispel ignorance as he suggests in his introduction. The portrait he paints is that of the middle-class "paradise," where, as in Vienna, "nothing was extravagant, neither wealth nor poverty" (p. 30)—the world of bourgeois complacency and comfort, the military

band music on Sunday mornings, the "Café mit Schlag," and the golden epaulettes on the ushers' uniforms in the Vienna Opera House. The image of this world reflects reality, but only in a limited sense—limited by the somewhat smug penchant of the middle class to see its own world in universal terms, a misunderstanding pardonable to some measure, because both the upper and lower classes did share in the preponderant middle-class ethos of the times. Yet, to the extent that the working-class slums in Vienna were immune to *gemülichkeit*, they were still part and parcel of Vienna; and in Budapest, too, the coffee-house culture waned in direct proportion to the distance from the center of the city.

There is nothing wrong with nostalgia; it is a legitimate human response, and it does bring us closer to the often precious values of the past. However, to make its message more meaningful, it ought to break out at times from the confines of its own stifling sentimentality and subconscious awareness of class. Long after I grew up, I began to notice and even enjoy with some embarrassment how my grandfather's stories about his years in the Austro-Hungarian cavalry were only slightly personalized versions of scenes from a Kálmán or Lehár operetta. Reading Ernst Roth's book, I was captivated by the same sense of ambivalence.

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DIE UNGARISCHE REVOLUTION VON 1848/49 UND DIE DEMOKRATISCHE BEWEGUNG IN DEUTSCHLAND. By *Karl Obermann*. Kommission der Historiker der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik und der Volksrepublik Ungarn, vol. 1. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1971. 70 pp. \$2.40.

This first volume of what had seemed to be a promising new series undertaken by a joint historical commission of the DDR and Hungary is a disappointment. If the author's intention is to demonstrate the impact of the German democratic movement on the Hungarian revolution, or vice versa, the book falls far short of his goal. At best, Obermann is able to show that there was a great amount of sympathy in some quarters for the Magyar people "fighting bravely for their freedom and independence." But were the sympathies as widespread and as deeply ingrained among the Germans as Obermann purports? He does not bring any exceptions to the reader's attention, which makes one suspicious that the homogeneity of evidence is due to the careful screening of the available data.

There is another problem. Among the Germans, who were those who looked to Hungary as the "last bastion of the fight against the counterrevolution"? For Obermann they are the "democrats and workers" of Germany, "who felt strong solidarity with all the people fighting for their freedom and independence" (p. 11). (He repeats this phrase often enough!) Are freedom and independence really synonymous? Did the people know, or did they think they knew, what freedom was? What form of independence did the democrats and workers want? Obermann does not answer these and many other questions. Furthermore, those segments of society who are excluded by Obermann from being designated as part of the people are labeled counterrevolutionary. Yet there were great numbers of German-speaking men and women who did not feel as passionately about Hungary as Obermann's democrats and workers, but who did not belong to the counterrevolution in any sense. It was these apathetical multitudes who constituted, and usually constitute,