

## Book Reviews

Náray, Antal. *Náray Antal visszaemlékezése, 1945* [The Recollections of Antal Náray, 1945]. Edited and introduced by Sándor Szakáy. Budapest: Zrínyi Katonai Kiadó, 1988. 152 pages.

This little book deserves more attention than it has received to date outside of Hungary. It contains the recently surfaced wartime recollections of one of Hungary's influential soldiers and as such constitutes a useful addition to the sources available for the study of that country's military and political evolution during Second World War.

Náray's recollections fall between the category of diaries (i.e. original sources) and memoirs that historians often classify as secondary works. They were written in the spring and early summer of 1945, when its author's recollection of events was fresh and had not been clouded by the polemics that began to surround many historical events soon after the war's end. Furthermore, the bulk of Náray's discussion concentrates on events that he had intimate knowledge of. Thus, his writing is a first-hand commentary on historical developments and not a compilation of rumours that circulated widely in Hungarian governing circles during the war.

Náray was important figure in wartime Hungary. He was one of the few soldiers who came to fill important posts in the country's administration, posts not necessarily reserved for military officers. He was born in 1893 and served as a junior officer in World War I. After the war, he taught at various military schools, while he also continued his education at the university level. His training and interests extended from military subjects to technology, as well as the arts, particularly music and literature. He was fluent in German, French, Italian, and Croatian. By the mid-1930s he had become a general staff officer, filling positions of important administrative responsibilities in the expanding Hungarian armed forces. In one of his 1940 assignments he and his work came to the attention of the country's

civilian authorities, in particular Prime Minister Pál Teleki, to whom Náray developed a deep-seeded devotion. Late in that year Náray was appointed Secretary of Hungary's Supreme Defence Council. In this capacity he attended the most important meetings of Hungary's leaders during the fateful year of 1941 which brought the country's involvement in the war. Two years later Náray was transferred to a still more important position when he was put at the head of the country's radio and information services (as President of the Hungarian Radio and the Hungarian Telegraphic Bureau). In this position he used his authority to counter the spread of right-radical and Nazi influence in Hungary. After the German occupation of Hungary in March of 1944, as a result of German pressure, Náray was retired to the military archives in Budapest, and after the Arrow-Cross takeover of October, he was imprisoned by the Nazis. He was taken to Germany at the end of the war where he was liberated from captivity by the Americans. His reminiscences were written during the weeks following his release.

Perhaps the most important part of Náray's book is his comments on Hungary's entry into the war against Yugoslavia in April of 1941. On the 1st of that month the Supreme Defence Council met, and Náray had the task of keeping proceedings of the meeting. Thirteen men were present. Regent Horthy, Chief-of-the-General-Staff Henrik Werth, Náray (as secretary), Prime Minister Pál Teleki and nine members of his cabinet. According to Náray, six of those present spoke against accepting Hitler's suggestion of unconditional and unlimited Hungarian participation in the planned war against Yugoslavia, while four argued in favour of it. The most strident pro-German position was taken by Werth, while historian Bálint Hóman, the Minister of Cults and Education, saw Hungary's future in terms of taking the side either of Germany or Russia, a situation in which, according to Hóman, siding with Hitler was the lesser of two evils.

The Council decided, but before Náray had a chance to prepare the meeting's minutes, decisive events took place. News came of Teleki's death and of the agreement between the Hungarian and German regimes to ignore some of the conditions that the Defence Council wished to impose on any collaboration in the invasion of Yugoslavia. In fact, the Council would not be summoned again while Náray remained its secretary. For the rest of 1941, important decisions would be taken usually after discussions by the cabinet and a smaller group composed of the Regent, the Chief-of-Staff, the Prime Minister, and his Minister of Defence. Parliament was ignored, and the constitutional process gradually abandoned.

Náray's testimony does not warrant a wholesale revamping the story of Hungary's involvement in the German campaign against Yugoslavia, but it prompts us to revise it in certain respects. It suggests that the positions of the pro- and anti-German (or, pro- and anti-war) factions of the Hungarian leadership were not as far apart as has been suggested by many

commentators. Neither advocated a complete denial of the German request: transportation of German troops across Hungary and help in the occupation of Yugoslavia. What the more moderate elements insisted on was placing limitations on the nature, size, and timing Hungarian participation. Teleki, for example, insisted that Hungarian troops not enter Yugoslavia before that country disintegrated, and that they should not, under any circumstances, cross the pre-1918 southern border of Hungary. Náray's version of events, however, reinforces the impression created by historians of wartime Hungary that the meeting did reach a consensus to proceed with caution. Subsequently, however, this stance was abandoned in discussions between the German and Hungarian leadership, the latter being represented by the General staff and Minister of Defence Bartha. For this change, Náray, like so many commentator before him, blames Horthy. Náray also adds that, after the Council's meeting, Bárdossy revised the minutes in a way as to make his speech appear more pro-German than it had been according to Náray's notes taken during the proceedings. Obviously, he was anxious to be on the side of the winners.

Late in 1941 Náray was relieved of his secretaryship. His next appointment was as head of Hungary's information services. His account of his experiences in this post offers glimpses of Miklós Horthy as a statesman (with whom Náray had a few interviews), and of István Horthy as a close acquaintance. He also relates how the Germans extended their control over the Hungarian broadcasting industry after their occupation of Hungary in March of 1944.

The appearance of Náray's memoirs is an important event for historians dealing with the story of wartime Hungary. Even more significant is the fact that, ever since the late-1980s, such works can be published in Hungary. It is also fortunate that Hungary has the people with expertise to evaluate and to edit such works properly. This volume in particular has been succinctly introduced and meticulously annotated by Szakály.

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Milan S. Durica, *Jozef Tiso, slovensky knaz a státnik, 1887–1939* [Jozef Tiso: Slovak Priest and Statesman, 1887–1939] Abano Terme: Piovan Editore, 1989. 318 pages.

This is a new work of the author on his favorite subject: Slovak politics and the struggle of the Slovaks for autonomy in the first Czechoslovak republic (1918–1938). This monograph is a study of Tiso by a fervent supporter of the idea of an independent Slovak state. We should keep this