

REVIEWS

Domokos, Kosáry The Press during the Hungarian Revolution of 1848/1849

(War and Society in East Central Europe, Volume XXVII. Columbia University Press 1986)

One of Dr. Kosáry's first historical works was a study of the role of General Görgey in the Hungarian War of Independence in 1849 which he wrote in 1936. His interest in this central event in Hungarian history has never diminished. At a later period in his life he became a co-editor with Béla G. Németh of a two-volume History of the Hungarian Press (*A Magyar sajtó története*) published in Budapest in 1985, to the second volume of which he contributed a survey of the press during the War of Independence. The present book is, with minor changes, an English version of the original Hungarian study which Dr. Kosáry was invited to contribute to the "*Atlantic Studies on Society in Change*" which publishes the series "*War and Society in East Central Europe*". It thus becomes accessible to a wider readership unfamiliar with the Hungarian language.

After a short account of the Hungarian press before 1848 by way of introduction, the author's next three chapters describe the events which took place in the last Feudal Diet in Pozsony and in Pest in March 1848, as they affected the press. There follow two chapters on the Press Laws of 1848 and the general political climate in which the press operated. The main part of the book is contained in the next nine chapters which are devoted to the different categories of papers (conservative, liberal, radical, government, literary, professional and provincial), including a chapter on Kossuth's own paper (*Kossuth Hírlapja*) and another on papers in languages other than Hungarian. The book concludes with two chapters on the events of 1849 and a brief epilogue. At the end of each chapter there is a bibliography in which the titles of items in Hungarian are translated into English.

Dr. Kosáry's survey is comprehensive, well-balanced and very readable. He deals fairly with the problems caused to the Hungarian government by the radical papers "*Márctius Tizenötödike*" and "*Munkások Újsága*" (published by Mihály Táncsics), both of which became an embarrassment to the authorities. The latter was banned shortly before Windischgrätz and the Austrian army entered Budapest in January 1849. In fact, the press was very much associated with Budapest and the move of the Hungarian government to Debrecen caused a considerable reduction in the number of titles published in all languages (according to one calculation, from 149 to 74). This reduction was due to a shortage of paper, less printing capacity, problems connected with distribution, especially by post, and a lessening of the number of readers.

In April 1849 the situation improved slightly after the reapture of Pest and the return of the government to the capital. But the government's problems with the press were not to grow less; another version of "*Márctius Tizenötödike*" began publication which was eventually suppressed by the government. Dr. Kosáry argues convincingly in his final chapter (pp. 351/359) that the real reason for its suppression at the beginning of July lay not so much in its attacks on Kossuth and the government, as in its support for Görgey. The government's move to Szeged before the final surrender at Világos on 13th August meant that most of the papers had to cease publication. The group of papers that lasted longest were the military newspapers, of which the paper published in the besieged fortress of Komárom was the last survivor. The final issue of "*Komáromi Lapok*" was published on 1st October 1849 before the garrison surrendered to the Austrians.

The Hungarian government was slow to realize the necessity of publishing its own official newspaper,

the "Közlöny". The author rightly points out that the government also made matters worse by its deliberate policy of not issuing the paper in the other languages used in Hungary. This was a grave handicap in its attempts to make its policies and aims clear to the other nationalities (pp. 201/202).

It is also of interest that the Austrians continued to be fearful of Kossuth's journalistic abilities and paid him the compliment of producing a forged issue of "Kossuth Hírlapja" in December 1848 which was circulated among the Székely inhabitants of Háromszék district in Transylvania. (p. 245)

The defeat of the revolution inevitably meant that the press suffered during the period of new-absolutism before the Compromise of 1867. But towards the end of that period the press had steadily grown in size and in 1867 the number of papers in circulation had reached the total of 119. After 1867, during the era of the Dual Monarchy, Hungary had a modern press, the foundations of which had been laid during the years of the War of Independence.

This English version of Dr. Kosáry's history is well produced, as is usual with the books published in this series. It has a useful map of Hungary, but, unfortunately, lacks an index. It seems a pity that such a basic aid to the enquiring reader seeking information about a particular topic has not been included in a book which, like its Hungarian original, is bound to remain the standard work on the subject for some time to come. If the book is reprinted, it is to be hoped that this omission can be made good in the next edition.

London

I. W. Roberts

John Lukacs Budapest 1900 (A Historical Portrait of a City and Its Culture)

(New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 255 pp.)

According to John Lukacs's soon to be published book *Budapest 1900*, modernity began in Budapest following the Ausgleich in 1867. A few years later the ten districts of Pest, Buda and Óbuda were united to form the new and official capital of Hungary. In 1892 the Emperor-King Franz Joseph issued an imperial and royal decree that proclaimed Budapest to be equal in rank with Vienna (székesfőváros). By 1900 this city had become, through immigration, assimilation, industrialization and nationalism, a Magyar city in culture and atmosphere. The strong traditional German-Habsburg elements of Buda had been replaced by an element that was nationally Hungarian. But, as Budapest took on the characteristic of modernity the remainder of Hungary still resembled a semi-feudal state of the previous centuries. Budapest led the way in attempting to transform Hungary into a twentieth-century state. Unfortunately, time and the sequence of events that led to the First World War were major road blocks in Hungary's development. While Budapest astounded Western visitors with its beauty and splendor, problems and growing conflicts "...between the urban and the populist, between the commercial and the agrarian, between the cosmopolitan and the nationalist, between the non-Jewish Hungarian and the Jewish-Hungarian culture and civilization of Budapest were already there." Modernity brings destructive forces of change along with all its material, cultural and social advantages. Unfortunately, these problems escaped most of the architects of this modern Budapest.

Lukacs writes that the theme of his book "is not the history of a city but its historical portrait at a certain time, a portrait of its atmosphere, of its peoples, of their achievements and trouble." In this regard he has shown Budapest to be a city reaching its apex as a modern European cultural, political and economic center at the dawn of the twentieth century. It is a city that demands recognition and respect, a city that wants to escape from the shadow of Vienna that had loomed so ominous in the past century. A city that wants to spread its wings and join the European community as one of its own. Lukacs draws the reader's