

viet institutions help the Polish women survive? Did it harden them for the future? Or are Jolluck's observations sometimes too general and the testimony given by the Poles who moved from the Soviet Union to Iran in 1942 not representative enough, emotional, and simply biased? Maybe the authors of the testimonies should be divided into smaller groups established according to education, social class, prewar dwelling place, and experiences in the Soviet Union?

*Exile and Identity* discusses many aspects of the Polish women's exile experiences and shows that the most traumatic of them (usually related to issues of sexuality) did not find room in the traditional heroic and righteous image of Polish patriotic martyrdom. On the other hand, however, Polish women did take solace in this image, embraced the notion of *Matka Polka* (Polish Mother) and showed themselves to be patriotic Poles by defining themselves against "the other"—Soviet women and female members of Polish and Central Asian national minorities. These exiles affirmed their Polish identity and maintained their Polish nationalism in the most difficult circumstances.

Jolluck's new approach toward World War II history of Poland makes *Exile and Identity* interesting and important, and it should be obligatory reading for anyone interested in contemporary east European history. If a revised edition is a possibility, I would hope it would be better illustrated, include more maps, and be free of several minor mistakes. Polish names are frequently misspelled, and the reader is not always certain whether Jolluck is writing about Poles in general or just Polish women. In fact, Jolluck conflates men and women as well as testimonies, memoirs, and several other kinds of primary sources. Nothing is perfect, however, and this innovative and provocative book is definitely worth reading.

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*A History of Hungary: Millennium in Central Europe.* By László Kontler. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002. 527 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Maps. \$26.95, hard bound. \$15.99, paper.

First published in 1999 in Budapest under the title *Millennium in Central Europe: A History of Hungary*, and then republished three years later in Great Britain with the title and subtitle reversed, this book by László Kontler is one of several one-volume syntheses of Hungarian history prepared for the English-speaking world by both Hungarian and western scholars during the last six decades. All of these syntheses were geared to the general reading public. But in light of the dearth of knowledge about Hungary's history even among historians of Europe, most of these works were also consulted by professional historians when dealing with the history of east central Europe. Some of the best known include Denis Sinor, *History of Hungary* (1959); Carlyle A. Macartney, *Hungary, a Short History* (1962); Kálmán Benda and Péter Hanák, *One Thousand Years: A Concise History of Hungary* (1988), and Peter F. Sugar, gen. ed., *A History of Hungary* (1990).

The book under review is the product of Kontler's decade-long experience teaching courses on Hungarian and central European history "to North American and Western European students in Budapest [Central European University] and in the United States [Rutgers University]" (12). Similar to its predecessors, this work is intended "not for a professional audience" but "for the general educated reader" (11). Kontler may be in for a surprise, however. With the exception of a "captive audience" in classes on Hungarian history, his book will be consulted more by historians of Europe than by the general reading public. Today's "educated readers" simply do not read books of this intellectual level about a relatively obscure nation in the midst of several other obscure nations.

Although the claim printed on the back of the book that Kontler's book is "the best survey of Hungarian history ever published in any language" may be overstated, this is unquestionably a well-written volume. Comprehensive in its coverage, it is challenging in its interpretation and organized in a manner that makes it relatively easy for the uninitiated to find their way within the labyrinth of Hungarian historical developments. Each major

chapter begins with a miniesay, a kind of chapter preface that forewarns the readers of things to come and attempts to tie Hungarian developments into contemporary European developments.

The periodization scheme is fairly standard. After an introduction on "symbolic geography," the book is divided into eight lengthy chapters, each with several subsections. These chapters embrace the following topics: the origins of the Magyars and their conquest of the Carpathian Basin to 895; the age of the Árpád dynasty, 895–1301; Medieval Hungary's climax and decline, 1301–1526; the period of Ottoman domination and the expulsion of the Turks, 1526–1711; the period of national reconstruction and reassertion, 1711–1849; the development of the dualist partnership with Austria, 1849–1918; Hungary's post-World War I dismemberment and independence as a small central European state, 1919–1945; and the period of Soviet domination, 1945–1989. This is followed by a brief epilogue on postcommunist developments.

In looking at Kontler's interpretation of Hungarian history, it is amply clear that he is basically a partisan of the western liberal view of history. He rejects backward looking conservatism, extreme manifestations of Magyar nationalism, as well as totalitarian communism. For this reason he is critical, both of interwar Hungary's "neo-Baroque society," and of the one-party communist dictatorship that followed. In his treatment of postcommunist developments, his sympathies are less with József Antall's first postcommunist regime (MDF), with its emphasis on traditionalism, and more with the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) who represent Hungary's urban intellectuals with a strong western orientation, democratic leanings, and a high degree of cosmopolitanism.

Although Kontler's synthesis is detailed for all periods of Hungarian history, he feels more comfortable in covering the modern and recent periods. And, as exemplified by his refusal to consider new theories concerning Hungary's "dual conquest" and the new location of Great Moravia proposed by such scholars as Gyula László of Hungary, Péter Püspöki-Nagy of Slovakia, Imre Boba and Charles Bowlus of the United States, and Martin Eggers of Germany (whose works are not listed in the bibliography), he is also more prone to explore new avenues in historical interpretation in modern history.

Reading Kontler's synthesis of Hungarian history is an intellectual challenge. With some minor modifications, it will probably stand the test of history for a long time to come.

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*The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents.* Ed. Csaba Békés, Malcolm Byrne, and János M. Rainer. National Security Archive Cold War Readers. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2002. xliii, 598 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Chronology. Glossary. Index. Photographs. Maps. \$67.95, hard bound.

This extraordinary collection of 120 unique documents from newly opened Hungarian, Soviet, and American archives, as well as seven other national archives, is divided into three chronological sections, each with an introduction by the editors. Together with the foreword (by Charles Gati) and an introductory essay (by Timothy Garton Ash), they present a historical analysis of the events. Reading the documents, one becomes an eyewitness to the political drama, to history in the making. The Soviet Politburo meetings in Moscow and the National Security Council debates in Washington offer rare insights into the anatomy of a political crisis, the mishandling of which led to an armed revolution and war by a small nation against a superpower.

The Hungarian and Soviet political leaderships realized the crisis, but they did too little too late. As Lavrentii Beria asked at a meeting of the Soviet Politburo and the delegation of the Hungarian communist leadership in Moscow in June 1953, "Could it be acceptable that in Hungary—a country with 9,500,000 inhabitants—prosecutions were initiated against 1,500,000 people . . . within two-and-half years?" (16). At another meeting in May 1954, Nikita Khrushchev suggested that "mistakes are to be corrected discreetly so