

Czech breakfast. A major asset is the unusually broad-based bibliography ('Further Reading', pp. 94-96).

The 'Language' sub-section (by Elizabeth Brimelow, pp. 27-33) is, however, marred by numerous curious omissions, inconsistencies and errors. Matters are not aided here, as throughout the book, by the haphazard and inconsistent use (and mislocation or omission) of diacritics. Note as one example among hundreds the three different spellings of *Mariánské Lázně* on p. 8. In other respects, too, the work does not inspire confidence, beginning with the two-page 'Preface', where we learn that Kosičce (*sic*) is the capital of western (*sic*) Slovakia (p. 6); here too even the name of one of the persons thanked is misnamed (Pieter [*sic*] Biely), and the work of the editors is described as 'meticulous' — which a glance at almost any part of the book proves is praise unwarranted. Apart from many inconsistent spellings, there are errors in the headers: *Trenčianske Trenčín* for *Trenčianske Teplice*, p. 402; *Liptovský* for *Liptovský Mikuláš*, p. 416; in the maps: there is no *Žebráky* where shown on p. 248; *Hodonín* (*sic*) is transferred from Moravia to Slovakia on p. 360 while it is already correctly located, as *Hudonín*, west of the frontier with the 'Slovak (*sic*) Republic' on p. 304; the map of Slovakia also shows *Hradky* (for *Hriady*), when we know that *r* 'does not exist in Slovak language' (p. 29); in the index, contrary to which there is no reference to *Ludovít Štúr* on p. 383, or to *Karel* or *Josef Čapek* on p. 117, and *Nové Město*, meaning *Nové Město nad Metují*, is on p. 221, not 220; *Břenov* [*sic*] should have been deleted; and in the text: inconsistent references to the 'Little' or 'Lesser Quarter' in Prague; missing words and lines: 'Baroque frescoes by the blend happily. . .' (p. 54); 'This document, representing the first open challenge to the rule of ('the President of Forgetting'), had come about directly as the result of the banning of a rock group called "' (p. 44); odd uses of the English definite article: *the Spiš* (the Slovak county usually known in English as Zips, p. 50), *the Olomouc* (p. 333); fictions and solecisms, such as 'the Czech and Slovak Centre in London' (p. 6; above a 1999 date-line, when there was no such body); the motorway authorization 'disk' (p. 16; it is a square windscreen sticker, 'a juniper-flavoured gin' (p. 25; those who know *borovička* will know what he means, but gin is by definition so flavoured); the church of 'St Nicholas at Kutná Hora' (p. 48; there is no such church, though those of St James, St Barbara, the Holy Virgin, the Holy Trinity, St John Nepomucene and St Anne are all worth a visit), or 'This style of architecture [. . .] was to be current in Czechoslovakia right up to the late 17C' (p. 51; an unforgivable anachronism). This last is symptomatic of the mixed success of converting sections of the text from the earlier book on Czechoslovakia to one on the two daughter republics as separate entities. Thus we learn that 'the Czech Republic is one hour ahead of the UK' (p. 21), which arbitrarily omits Slovakia.

The background 'academic' part of the book has its own peculiarities. For example, under 'Czech novelists of the 19th century' (pp. 77-79), three names are highlighted: *Božena Němcová* (unobjectionable), *Jan Neruda* (a major prose-writer who never wrote a novel), and *Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk* (the philosopher-president, also not known for any novels). And the reference 'On 17 November a gathering of people commemorating a student killed by the Nazis. . .' (p. 45) rather misses the point that the 'people' were themselves students, celebrating

International Students' Day, and that 17 November commemorates the closure of the Czech universities by the Nazis. (The 'student killed by the Nazis' was Jan Opletal, fatally injured at a demonstration on 28 October 1939. His funeral on 15 November triggered major anti-Nazi protests which were the actual cause of the closure of the universities two days later.)

This small sample of authorial and editorial shortcomings should suffice to suggest that the book is a curate's egg *par excellence* and should be digested with some caution. What it would have been like without all the profusely acknowledged corrections and suggestions of those who read the manuscript or had responded to the previous mutation can only be conjectured.

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Kontler, László. *Millennium in Central Europe: A History of Hungary*. Atlantisz Publishing House, Budapest, 1999. 537 pp. Maps. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. HFT 3000.00.

This is a magnificent work and, indeed, the best survey of Hungarian history ever published in any language. It is eminently readable: a tribute not only to Stefan Halikowski-Smith who revised the text but also to László Kontler's own grasp of the English language and idiom. Unlike other accounts of Hungarian history, the present work does not concentrate on the modern period at the expense of previous centuries. The Middle Ages is thus accorded 100 pages of solid text; the period 1526 to 1848 receives a further 130 pages. Moreover, Kontler is as equally at home in the fourteenth century as he is in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He is thus as fully alert to debates over the medieval *honores* system as he is to discussion over the emergence of Hungary's middle class or the role of Imre Nagy in the mid-1950s. Nor is Kontler's account just another political history, for it includes lengthy digressions on such diverse topics as Renaissance libraries, sermon literature in the sixteenth century, and popular culture at the *fin-de-siècle*. Notwithstanding the breadth of Kontler's narrative, errors are remarkably few. The plural of *hospes* is *hospites* (pp. 69, 81); the February Patent of 1861 gave the Reichsrat more control of the budget than Kontler allows (p. 270) for it permitted its *Zustimmung* in most financial matters; and Law XII of 1867 surely cannot be regarded as creating two 'sovereign states' (p. 278), since (and as Kontler himself indicates) the *Ausgleich* law rested on the Pragmatic Sanction and thus upon the notion that the Habsburg lands constituted an 'indivisible and inseparable whole'.

Kontler's account is almost entirely free from Hungarian *parti-pris*. He is perhaps rather too dismissive of Romanian claims of autochthony in Transylvania. There is some historic, linguistic and comparative evidence for this which deserves at least acknowledgement. He is also too cursory in his account of magyarization policies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and thus he misses a good opportunity for explaining not only their contemporary rationale but also their firm foundation in liberal theory. Kontler's accounts of 1848 and 1956, the twin 'foundation myths' of modern Hungary, are in

places too heroically conceived. He does not discuss the seamier aspects of these movements, nor the division among Hungarians which they engendered, nor their role less as revolutions than as episodes of civil war. After all, the post-1956 *revanche* was not so much the work of the Soviets as of numerous and willing Hungarian executioners.

Kontler's aim is not, however, to provide a revisionist interpretation of Hungarian history but, instead, to distil the fruits of the latest research. Nevertheless, there is a 'Kontler view' of Hungarian history which owes much to Bibó and Szűcs, and not a little to Wallerstein. In Kontler's opinion, Hungary was different from the West during the Middle Ages. On account of Hungary's late entry to membership of western Christendom, it experienced an 'accelerated, contracted and to some extent imitative development' (p. 68). Notwithstanding Catholicism, chronicle romances and the establishment of a uniform administration, there was a 'Janus-faced development' amounting to an 'incompleteness of structures' (p. 87)—in particular, a lack of urbanization and a failure to reify institutions of vassalage through the fief. This account of medieval Hungarian history, which is pure Szűcs, is supplemented by Wallerstein. The price-revolution of the sixteenth century pushed Hungary into the economic periphery of Europe and exaggerated trends previously evident. Hungary and the region as a whole were thus consolidated in their role as providers of raw materials, serfdom was imposed, and the nobility was confirmed in political, social and economic hegemony.

Yet, at the same time, Kontler is torn between what he defines in his introduction ('Reflections on Symbolic Geography', pp. 12–20) as the maximalist and minimalist interpretations of Hungarian history. Was Hungary essentially different from western Europe? Or was it the perception of this, rather than its reality, which guided Hungarian development over the centuries? Kontler is too shrewd to come down on one side or the other. In his view, it is the interrelationship of perception and reality, and the hybrid forms which their combination have engendered, which have tended to characterize Hungarian history. Béla IV, Maria and Joseph thus equally apprehended Hungary's backwardness vis-à-vis the West, but in attempting to close the gap they imposed new institutional patterns which served only to entrench Hungary's distinctiveness. In Kontler's view, Central Europe exists less as a reality than as a programme of reform and place of experiment: 'the expression, at the immediate eastern periphery of the west, of the consciousness [...] to be "western" in terms of values and structures' (p. 17). As Kontler concludes, explaining the interplay of the reality and apprehension of backwardness, 'Belatedness has been, for historical and geographical reasons, a permanent, nearly natural endowment for Hungary, which has occasionally pushed her into lethargy and exasperation, but also quite often stimulated flexibility, adaptability and a peculiar ability to respond to challenges. (p. 20). In summary, Hungary and Central Europe constitute 'part of the modern self-reflection of the peoples concerned' (p. 17).

It may be objected that Kontler's conception of the West is an ideal one and a short-hand for London, Paris and Amsterdam. It has, however, been a similar misperception which has spurred Hungarians on for much of their history and which has prompted the sense of belatedness that Kontler makes

one of the mainsprings of Hungarian development. Nevertheless, as Márton Szepesi Csombor discovered almost four centuries ago, there is also a Europe made up of such a sort of 'wretched little town' that the landlord overcharges you fourfold for beer and pimps his daughter. That place is actually Rochester, which is today a commuter suburb of London not far from the railway to Paris.

This is a book which serves not only the general reader but also the specialist with an interest in just one part of Hungary's history. It is comprehensive, inspiring and provoking. This reviewer must, however, register two regrets. First, the bibliography (pp. 497–502) is too thin and hardly does justice to the burgeoning western-language literature on Hungarian history. Secondly, there is no western co-publisher, which is bound to limit the circulation, availability and sales of this splendid and important book.

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Eötvös, József. *The Dominant Ideas of the Nineteenth Century and Their Impact on the State*, vol. 2. Translated, edited and annotated by D. Mervyn Jones. Atlantic Studies on Society in Change, no. 88. Social Science Monographs, Boulder. Columbia University Press, New York, 1998. xiv + 612 pp. Notes. Index. \$56.00.

*The Dominant Ideas of the Nineteenth Century and Their Impact on the State*, by the Hungarian Baron József Eötvös (1813–71), is a two-volume political treatise written in German while the author was living in Munich following the 1848 revolution in Hungary. (Eötvös, already an important writer of prose fiction, had become minister of education in the revolutionary government of 1848 but had resigned following disagreement with Kossuth.) The first volume of the treatise appeared in 1851 and the second in 1854. Eötvös falsely claimed to have written the work first in Hungarian and then to have translated it into German himself, whereas in fact it was the two German volumes that were translated, each by a different translator, into Hungarian. The first volume of D. Mervyn Jones's translation into English, with an introductory essay by the translator, was published as volume 87 in the series Atlantic Studies on Society in Change in 1996. The second volume, which is being discussed here, is a translation from the original German version. It contains Eötvös's long text, followed by quite extensive notes on the text (pp. 509–72) by Eötvös himself, a useful note by Jones on the German and Hungarian versions of the second volume (pp. 573–76), an index with brief notes on the subjects to which reference is made (pp. 577–98), and a list of *corrigenda* to the translation of the first volume. The translation reads well: one does not sense an original in another language behind it and the translator deploys a vocabulary and register appropriate to the subject and period.

*The Dominant Ideas* is a treatise written against the background of the French Revolution and subsequent Napoleonic Wars, the rise of national consciousness among ethnic groups living within the autocratic empires, the birth of socialism, the revolutionary upheavals of 1848, and — after the first volume