

KELET-EURÓPA TÖRTÉNETE A 19. SZÁZAD ELSŐ FELÉBEN. By  
*Endre Arató*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1971. 598 pp. 110 Ft.

It is good news that Hungarian historiography since the Second World War has developed a broader sense of regional orientation transcending the egocentric nationalist bias of the prewar era. But the quality of work this regionally oriented historiography is producing is not always as good as the regional orientation itself. This book is a case in point. Arató, Hungarian by birth, is a professor of East European history at the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, Hungary's most prestigious university. His residence in interwar Czechoslovakia introduced him to Slavic civilization. His Slavic ties, reinforced by membership in the Communist Party, assured preferential treatment for him in postwar Budapest. But politics apart, he is a scholar of encyclopedic knowledge and superior linguistic versatility.

The scope of collected material in Arató's work is impressive. He offers a comprehensive comparative history of no less than twenty-seven so-called East European peoples in the first half of the nineteenth century. His philosophy of interpretation, however, reduces much of the value of his voluminous work to the level of propaganda. He forces nineteenth-century history into a Marxist and Soviet strait jacket, and he manipulates his subject matter in such a manner that Communist rule and Soviet-Russian influence over Europe's eastern half appear (already in the first half of the nineteenth century) as a preordained sequence of history.

The manipulation starts with geography. Curiously coinciding with everything the Russians have ever regarded as a legitimate part of their empire or sphere of influence in Europe, Arató's Eastern Europe comprises the huge area bordering on the Elbe and the Alps in the west, the Baltic Sea, the Gulf of Bothnia, and the Arctic Ocean in the north, the Ural Mountains in the east, and the Adriatic, Mediterranean, Aegean, Black, and Caspian seas in the south. Thus, in the author's meticulous Marxist survey, the inhabitants of the Ural and Caucasian Mountains find themselves in the company of various peoples from the Baltic to the Balkans. They are treated in a manner parallel with the Finns, Prussians and other Germans, and the Rumanians, Magyars, and Albanians, as well as the many members of the Slavic family in Eastern, Northern, Central, and Southern Europe.

The "common characteristics" which supposedly tie this large area from the Elbe to the Urals historically together are socioeconomic backwardness and the national liberation struggle. There is no denying that some such "common characteristics" do exist in the history of these regions. In fact, by the same token, much of nineteenth-century Italy would qualify for membership in this historic area. On the other hand, there are so many exceptions to the supposedly common rules in Arató's Eastern Europe (and he himself calls attention to them incessantly) that the geographic limits he forces on the reader are often more confusing than clarifying.

Geographic manipulation is not the worst aspect of Arató's scholarship. A more serious offense is his Manichaeic view of history. Feudalism, bourgeois democracy, capitalism, and other Marxist targets come under indiscriminate attack. Rational criticism slips into emotional dogmatism. The author's basic philosophy of interpretation runs as follows: Emerging from feudalism, the bourgeois-capitalist development of Eastern Europe only sharpened both social and national conflicts. Bourgeois-capitalist contradictions could be resolved only by an agrarian-socialist

revolution. The Russian Bolsheviks came to lead Eastern Europe on the path of historic transformation to socialism.

Still, behind all this political bias there is a knowledgeable historian. And, apart from ideological prejudices, the wealth of information Professor Arató has compiled makes the reading of his book both interesting and profitable.

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OTTOMAN IMPERIALISM DURING THE REFORMATION: EUROPE AND THE CAUCASUS. By *Carl Max Kortepeter*. New York University Studies in Near Eastern Civilization, no. 5. New York: New York University Press. London: University of London Press Ltd., 1972. xix, 278 pp. \$14.50.

Professor Kortepeter has written an informative but not very important book on Ottoman history. The purpose of the study is to analyze the political problems which faced the Ottoman Turks in their relations with diverse clients, subjects, and enemies in Europe and in the Caucasus per se and in terms of the impact which continuous territorial expansion had on the empire's stability.

The author accomplishes these goals with uneven success. He provides a succinct account of the Porte's relations with political leaders and entities in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus and detailed data on the Crimean Tatars and their relations with the Turks and the Steppe powers. The chapters concerned with Eastern Europe, primarily during the long war of 1593-1606, are valuable mainly because of the use of Turkish sources. The basic information, other than that derived from those sources, is routinely extracted from standard documents and monographic studies. The chapters concerned with the Crimean Tatars, by contrast, are novel and based on much original research conducted during the preparation of Kortepeter's doctoral dissertation, "The Relations Between the Crimean Tatars and the Ottoman Empire." There is little integration of the several chapters which comprise the monograph, and the concluding materials and interpretations do very little to coordinate the arguments or prove the validity of the author's thesis. In sum, we are told that the continuing warfare and insubordination of those political leaders whom the Ottoman Turks had defeated or subdued created conditions unfavorable to the maintenance of political stability in the Ottoman Empire. We are not told, however, why, how, and to what degree the instability was a function of warfare, imperialism, and other related causes.

The strengths and weaknesses of the study are characteristic of the work of scholars who are primarily linguists. Kortepeter's principal contribution lies in his use of Turkish sources. Yet these sources, at least with respect to Ottoman imperialism in Eastern Europe, provide only footnotes to our historical knowledge. This is true also, albeit to a lesser extent, with respect to Tatar-Ottoman relations. Kortepeter also makes extensive use of primary sources in Latin, Rumanian, Russian, and other languages; but again, more often than not, the data revealed by these sources is only marginally novel. The shortcomings of the book, however, are not in the area of research but in historical methodology. The individual chapters appear to have been put together directly from index cards. As such they are packed with detail but with almost no interpretative judgments. An interpretative synthesis of the voluminous research materials incorporated in the book would