

In Remembrance

C. A. Macartney

With the death of Carlile Aylmer Macartney the last representative of a generation of British scholars who were both witnesses and historical commentators of the end of the Austro-Hungarian empire has disappeared.

Born in 1895 in Kent, England, the son of a Scotch father, with intellectual ties to the Gladstonian-Liberal school of thought, Macartney was educated in Winchester and at Cambridge. He served in World War I and was wounded in action. In 1919 he was posted to Vienna as acting vice-consul of His Britannic Majesty. His interest in Austrian and Danubian history crystallized then and there. It was in Vienna that he met and married his wife, Mlle. Mamarchev, a Bulgarian. He was then thinking of writing a history of the Dual Monarchy. Heinrich Srbik is said to have discouraged this particular ambition. "You must know fifty languages to do that," Srbik was supposed to have said. "But I am learning Hungarian," Macartney was reputed to have answered. In 1925 he returned to England. He devoted the rest of his life—fifty-three long years—to scholarship. He was made a research fellow of All Souls College, Oxford; he taught in the University of Edinburgh; he acquired a M. A. and a D. Litt. from Oxford and was elected fellow of the British Academy. His main published works concerned Hungary, even though at the end of his life he returned to his first ambition and wrote a volume on the Habsburg monarchy.

The repercussions of Macartney's choice were great, particularly in Hungary. After a gap of nearly twenty-five years, he was the first reputable Western scholar who wrote about Hungary and her prewar nationalities in a sympathetic and understanding manner. After the publication of his *Hungary and Her Successors* (1937) he was idolized by many Hungarians, sometimes to sentimental extremes. Macartney's visits to Hungary caused him to be increasingly interested in contemporary Hungarian politics, with the eventual result of his massive two-volume work, *October Fifteenth* (1957), the most detailed compendium in any language of the developments and intrigues in Hungarian politics between 1920 and 1944. This concentration on contemporary Hungarian politics did not exhaust his scholarly interests. His works in medieval Hungarian history as well as in Habsburg history reflected the high standards and the style of historical reconstruction characteristic of his generation. Prominent among them are *The Magyars in the Ninth Century* (1930); *Studies in the Earliest Magyar Historical Sources* (1938); *The Medieval Hungarian Histori-*

ans (1953); *Hungary: A Short History* (1962); together with A. W. Palmer, *Independent Eastern Europe* (1962); and *The Habsburg Empire, 1790-1918* (1969). His political preferences were conservative, in the broad sense of that term, marked as they were by the sympathy he had acquired for the defeated Central and Eastern European states after World War I. Existentially as well as historically, his years in Vienna after World War I were the formative years of his career.

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