

but that was not necessarily an offensive measure. Likewise, the second Persian war in 540 was started by Chosroes who wanted to get access to the Black Sea and used the Byzantine campaign against Mundhir as a pretext to start the hostilities. Mundhir, to be sure, was a client of Persia, but he had first raided the Empire's lands. All this does not mean that Justinian is entirely free of blame for the eventual Slavic occupation of the Balkan area. The Ostrogothic war was the unrealistic and wasteful realization of a dream which may have prevented him from paying more attention to the Danube frontier. But still, Justinian was willing to make a negotiated peace in 540 with the Ostrogoths, dividing Italy in two; it was Belisarius who frustrated his intentions.

One chronological slip found frequently in chapter 3 is the reference to Louis the Pious as the reigning ruler of Germany in the 860's; the author probably meant Louis the German, since the former had died in 840. But these slips do not detract from the outstanding merits of the work which is an exhaustive treatment of the intricate Byzantine diplomacy with its neighbours in Eastern Europe and in the Caucasus region.

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A Budai Vár és a debreceni csata [The Budai Vár* and the Battle of Debrecen]. By Ignáz Ölvedi. (Budapest: Zrínyi Katonai Kiadó, 1970. Pp. 225. Illus.)

The literature of Hungarian military history has again been enriched. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the ending of the Second World War the Zrínyi Military Publishing Co. released *A Budai Vár és a Debreceni Csata* by I. Ölvedi. This book deals with the events of the fall of 1944 in Hungary and is based on material gathered from German, Hungarian and Russian archives.

The book is written against the following background: at the end of August, 1944 Regent Horthy of Hungary dismissed the government led by Sztójay, which was completely under Hitler's influence, and asked Géza Lakatos, the loyal, former general of the First Hungarian Army, to form a new government. General Lakatos took over the direction of the country at a most difficult time. Hungary was under occupation by the German *Wehrmacht*, and on the other side of the Carpathian mountains her army lay bleeding. The Red Army which,

*The Budai Vár was the seat of the Hungarian government in 1944.

after Roumania's declaration of neutrality, was pushing toward Transylvania through the southern Carpathians, had arrived at the country's borders. Inside the walls of the Budai Vár the decision was reached: the war must be ended. But how? Ölvedi devotes the first part of his book to pondering this serious question. With this book on Horthy's and Lakatos' military strategy, the Hungarians have their first glimpse of the enormous difficulties which beset the government during that critical time. It was almost impossible for the government, during September 1944, to see through the complexities of the internal and external military and political situation, and to select the least hazardous path along which Horthy's delegates could head for Moscow in order to negotiate with Stalin regarding the possibility of a Hungarian-Russian ceasefire. Ölvedi discusses the Regent's myriads of problems, and writes of the 1944 August-September secret talks in Bern. As a result of these consultations, the British advised Hungary to approach Moscow. The author discusses the many facts of domestic politics; documents the intentions and moves of the German and Hungarian military and, finally, he devotes space to describing the feelings of the population. There is no doubt that the Hungarian people, as a whole, dreaded the arrival of the Red Army. Ölvedi accurately reports the fact that not only the supporters of the government and the civil service, but also the military, the intellectuals, the moneyed middle class and the "petit bourgeoisie" all supported Horthy's moves towards an agreement or alliance with Britain. Thus, it was against this socio-economic backdrop that the Lakatos government had to make its decisions.

The second part of the book deals predominantly with the military operations taking place on the other side of the Tisza river; detailed knowledge of these events was until now limited.

Of note is the fact that Ölvedi devotes equal space to a discussion of the Russian, German and Hungarian military hopes and strategies. By doing so he manages to bring in a degree of objectivity and avoid the traditional one-sidedness prevailing in Hungarian communist military chronicles, a one-sidedness which in the past has often bordered on servility toward the Russians.

Ölvedi devotes a full chapter to the events of October 15, 1944 and their military and political consequences.

Schweizerische-Osteuropa-Bibliothek.
Bern.

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