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Oscar Jaszi. *Homage to Danubia.* Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1995. xxviii + 213 pp. $44.50 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8476-7971-3.

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In 1985, Stephen Borsody announced at the Oscar Jaszi Memorial Conference at Oberlin College that a new collection of Jaszi's American works, edited by Gyorgy Litvan, would soon be published. Unfortunately, the Oberlin participants would wait until 1995 before this work was finally available.

At that conference two words were used repeatedly to describe Jaszi: moralist and patriot. Jaszi's writings can only be understood on these terms. *Homage to Danubia* is a new testimonial to Jaszi's quest for a world based on moral principles and providing national, linguistic, social, and cultural justice for its inhabitants. It also documents Jaszi's acute understanding of the important philosophical, intellectual, and economic issues that threatened to engulf Europe and America from the end of the Great War through the beginning years of the Cold War. This book reflects the central conviction of Jaszi's life, taught him by his father, that any policy not backed by moral principles is a form of exploitation.

Gyorgy Litvan has performed a great service by making obscure, unpublished, and partially forgotten – yet poignant – works of Jaszi available to students and scholars. For Litvan, Jaszi's writings are significant because Jaszi still has something pertinent to say about the future of East Central European society. Yet his words, idealistic as they may be, continue to be ignored by those he attempted to reach.

Litvan, who was assisted in this venture by Borsody, has selected twenty-three of Jaszi's articles and organized them into three separate parts: "Freedom in Our Time," "World Peace and Federalism," and "Matters Public and Private." He has surrounded Jaszi's work with his own biographical introduction and an epilogue that includes two earlier tributes to Jaszi written by Professors John D. Lewis and Borsody. This organization is effective but at times also confusing because of the difficulty of classifying Jaszi's work. Jaszi's articles address a variety of issues and topics at different time periods, but one can discern the central themes, such as freedom, peace, and federalism, on which Litvan wants us to concentrate.

Litvan's introduction, written in 1985 and amended in the spring of 1994, is most useful for those who have little knowledge of Jaszi and are unfamiliar with his work beyond his books on the dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy and the revolution and counter-revolution of 1919. It is well organized, enlightening, and effective in laying the basis for an understanding of the period and of Jaszi's role. This is important because a great deal of Jaszi's work is unpublished or still not translated.

The introduction does, however, sometimes paint an idealized portrait of Jaszi and his influence. For example, Litvan writes that Jaszi "was devoted to promoting ethical values in politics and to the ideas of equality and federalism among nations."(p. x) Yet Jaszi was at first opposed to federalism because he believed it would bring the return of "feudal disunity" to Hungary.(note 1) After the Great War, federalism was one of the ways Jaszi could preserve "the entity of historic Hungary."(p. xiv) Also, criticism of Jaszi, particularly among his contemporaries, is not mentioned. It was when he came to America that Jaszi's life and work showed fully the "perspicacity and astuteness" which Litvan attributes to him in his introduction.(p. xi)

When it comes to the actual texts, Litvan's selections are excellent. Many came from the voluminous Jaszi collection located in the Butler Library at Columbia University. In the first part, Litvan presents ten of Jaszi's lectures and articles, some never before published, which discuss the threat freedom faces from totalitarianism of both the left and the right. In "The Present Crisis of European Marxism," Jaszi states that Marxist doctrine is more of a religious system than an economic or political theory. He begins "Tolstoy or Lenin" by stating that the crisis of European humanity "is in its deepest roots a moral crisis." Since Bolshevism rejects all legal and moral scruples and advocates violence, dealing with it is part of the "more general problem of right and justice."(pp. 13-14) Revolutionary groups in Russia "eliminate and annihilate

political and even theoretical opponents." The nonviolent approach, such as Gandhi employed in India, is not a valid response to these groups because "a small group of armed bandits could thrust into slavery or even annihilate the highest type of human society."(pp. 21-22)

In a letter to *The Nation* and *Athenaeum*, entitled "What did Mr. Keynes See in Russia?," Jaszi agrees with Keynes on the "essentially religious nature" of Bolshevism, but he disagrees with him because the "progress which the Soviet state has achieved has nothing to do with any special feature of Communism, but rather with the continuous and systematic withdrawal, dilution, and betrayal of communistic doctrine." Russia's recovery is a result of "the clandestine reintroduction of capitalistic economy."(pp. 35-36) In his analysis of Bolshevism and fascism in "The Crisis of European Democracy," Jaszi explains that despite the diversity concerning the final aims of these movements, "there is profound harmony between them in their political and moral attitudes."(p. 45) The Bolsheviks betrayed true communism for their own ends. The proletariat only received "the empty shell of formal democracy without those economic and social achievements which were the real aims of Marxist socialism."(p. 7) For Jaszi, "socialism is freedom, liberty, and equality not only in politics but also in morals and economics."(p. 12)

Jaszi's brand of socialism, "liberal socialism," was to be the key to opening the door to democracy. He did not want to see the elimination of private ownership and free competition that Marxist socialists thought necessary for their democratization program. Liberal socialism, led by an organized proletariat, would destroy the evils of capitalism, surplus labor and unearned income. Afterward, the unification of Europe would be the "most important historical task of the proletariat."(p. 11)

Jaszi's article "Tyranny in Our Time" attacks totalitarianism because "dictatorship and violence…remain an essential element in their system." The dictatorship of the proletariat is "the rule of the dominant elements of a bureaucracy directed by a supreme dictator."(pp. 64-65) Bolshevism has a more human aspect than Nazism, for if the Russians have killed more people, Russian cruelty rests on "ruthless expediency, and not "sophisticated sadism."(p. 69) This difference is partly due, according to Jaszi, to Bolshevism's "nature as an international religion and its belief in a mission to save the world." Jaszi believes if Bolshevism discovers its true nature, its liberal-historical tradition, it can still be changed to allow Russia to play a positive role in East Central Europe, and, possibly, in a United States of Europe.

According to Jaszi, nationality problems and minority abuse were still the major problems that plagued Europe's future. In "War Germs in the Danube Basin," Jaszi restates his theme (from his book on the dissolution of the monarchy) that the breakup of Austria-Hungary was a result of its inability to solve the nationality issue. The post-war conditions, however, succeeded in only creating a new group of minorities, primarily Hungarians, which were being persecuted in the successor states.

For Jaszi, mere frontier revisions are not an issue, because they cannot satisfy the three basic needs of the Danubian basin: education, alleviation of the agrarian crisis, and defense of minority rights. He astutely warns that Hungarian revisionism, along with German and Italian imperialism, is the most active force leading to a new European war.(p. 83)

Jaszi's work during and immediately following the Second World War deals primarily with his dream of a United States of Europe as a just and moral solution for postwar Europe. His plans now reflect the changing balance of power: a federal, decentralized political system for Europe's future which would reconcile Russia with the West. In "Central Europe and Russia," he calls for a moral and spiritual rapprochement between the two blocs. Jaszi knew that the future of East Central Europe would depend on Russia and not the United States or Britain.

His growing disappointment with events in Central Europe can be seen in Jaszi's article "Soviet Policy at the Danube." Beginning with Churchill's speech in Fulton, Missouri, Jaszi states that the Russian leaders and satellite followers are men without conscience, and, as always, returns to the moral theme of his life by stating, quite correctly, that "no political order can last without some amount of moral support."(p. 138) Only a common organization of democratic nations, like what the United Nations should be, could end the stalemate of the Cold War. Once again, the world has lost an opportunity to create a better and more just world for its inhabitants.

This book is an excellent addition to Litvan's other works on Jaszi. It is important to show that Jaszi continued to be active in support of his ideals long after he left Europe. Since most works on Jaszi discuss his life up to his exile in Vienna, Litvan presents an area of Jaszi's life which has scarcely been covered. More importantly, he has allowed Jaszi to speak for himself. It is a refreshing view of a Jaszi who did not lose his faith in humanity following the cataclysm of World War I and his failed reforms in 1919. Litvan has faith in Jaszi's dreams of a democratic and federal Europe. This is something Litvan

is "not willing to abandon."(p. xxvii) As long as people possess faith in justice and are optimistic about our future, Jaszi's work will always have something to say to us. Jaszi's greatest legacy is the fact that his works and ideas are still discussed today as a possible road to the future.

NOTE

1. Jozsef Galantai, "Oszkar Jaszi's Conceptions on Federalism During the First World War," *Studia Historica* 119 (1970), 8.

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