

TO THE EDITOR:

In many years of book reviewing, I have not come across so graceless—to put it mildly—a book review as that written by Eva S. Balogh of Thomas Spira's *German-Hungarian Relations and the Swabian Problem: From Károlyi to Gömbös 1919–1936* in your issue of December 1978 (vol. 37, no. 4, pp. 700–702). Where experts in the field have praised this study by a truly able and conscientious scholar, your reviewer unaccountably descends to picayune carping, half-truths, and distortions. She mistakes clear-cut objectivity for pro-Germanism and sets a dangerous intellectual precedent by intimating that nothing less than total agreement with her own views is acceptable in her narrow field—on debatable issues.

Fair-minded historians will not be impressed by this clumsy kind of claim for omniscience from a small hill near Mount Olympus. One expects more mature judgments in the respected pages of the *Slavic Review*.

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TO THE EDITOR:

No author likes to receive a negative review of his work, but reviewers are entitled to their opinions, and I have made it a point to try to look at their criticisms objectively. I also have written a number of reviews and have tried to be objective and honest in my reporting. Unfortunately, Dr. Spector's review of my book *Clash Over Romania: British and American Policies Toward Romania, 1938–1947* (*Slavic Review*, September 1979) is just the opposite of what I would call objective, intelligent reviewing. In fact, I wonder how much beyond the introduction and the conclusion this reviewer actually read.

The overall purpose of the book was simply to show the political policies and diplomacy of England and the United States toward Rumania during the years 1938 to 1947, touching upon the economic and military events of the period only as they related to their political policies. On the other hand, Dr. Spector claimed that I made a "herculean effort" to write a full "diplomatic, military, economic, and social history of the period" and then proceeded to criticize me for failing to accomplish this! More disturbing was his remark that Albert Resis, in his essay "The Churchill-Stalin Secret Percentages Agreement on the Balkans," "refers to more sources on that event alone than on all the sources" I used "put together." This is simply absurd. Based on my calculations, Resis lists the use of approximately forty different sources comprising seventy footnotes. In my work I list two hundred and seventy-two sources as well as over eight hundred separate footnotes. There is no excuse for this kind of sloppy reviewing!

In one way, Dr. Spector was correct in saying that my book was "selective." My bibliography was somewhat limited, limited largely to those sources I quoted from in the text. I must have looked at at least four times that many sources, but was it essential that I list all or most of them? It is always necessary to pack one's bibliography with a lot of "window dressing" in order to impress those who think a colossal bibliography is a mark of true scholarship? Moreover, what important works on Rumania during the period did I fail to include? In addition, in dealing with overall Allied policies toward Eastern Europe and the Balkans during the Second World War, I felt I had to be somewhat selective in the amount of explanation I could give, especially in those areas that already have been extensively covered by other historians.

Yet Dr. Spector's remark (he quoted from the conclusion) that I failed to analyze American and British efforts at Teheran and Yalta to stop the Russians from taking over the Balkans is erroneous and hardly justified in light of the overall material presented. Actually, at both conferences Rumania was hardly mentioned. Important decisions on the Balkans as a whole emerging from those conferences which indirectly concerned Rumania were explained. Perhaps I should have provided more details on overall Allied Balkan policies, even though much of this can be found in most general diplomatic studies of the war. Nevertheless, chapters 4 through 6 extensively analyzed Anglo-American policies toward Rumania, including Western efforts to stop the Russians, which after all was what I was trying to do.

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TO THE EDITOR:

I wish to correct the factual errors which appeared in George M. Young's review of my *Five Russian Poems* (*Slavic Review*, 38, no. 3 [September 1979]: 530–31). I refrain from commenting on Mr. Young's evaluative statements, except to say that it would take more than his one-page review to reconcile "absurd conclusions" (p. 530) with "brilliant moments" (p. 531).

The first error of fact concerns Young's statement that "Laferriere tries to prove that Mme. Kern (*genii chistoi krasoty*) represents a 'phallic mother,' and that the hidden purpose of the poem's form is to shield Pushkin from latent homosexual and Oedipal feelings" (p. 531). What I said, in fact, is the following: "There is not the slightest hint of an Oedipal triangle in the poem itself" (*Five Russian Poems*, p. 60), and "the poem not only provides the addressee with the defensive shield of poetic form . . . , but it also manages to distill away all the homosexual and Oedipal associations that contaminate the letters, and thereby makes the female persona a partner in a much more private or intimate kind of relationship than Puškin had ever had with Anna Petrovna" (p. 75). If there is a "hidden purpose" to the poem's linguistic structure, it is to shield Pushkin (and his reader) from specifically *pre*-Oedipal feelings about a phallic mother. By placing *genii chistoi krasoty* in parentheses after "Mme. Kern," Mr. Young shows that he has disregarded my statement that ". . . it is not possible to say that they [Anna Petrovna and the woman in the poem] are one and the same person at all levels" (p. 75).

The second factual error appears in the statement that Laferriere's theory "turns the reading of any poem into an exercise of how to get from a given starting point to uterine regression" (p. 531). It is true that uterine regression operates in three of the five poems I analyze. But one will search in vain for any mention of a uterus or womb in my analyses of Pushkin's "Ia pomniu chudnoe mgnoven'e" or Mandelstam's "Tristia." Psychoanalysts are careful to distinguish between Oedipal, homosexual, *pre*-Oedipal, and uterine regressive fantasies. They are not all the same atavistic thing, and any Slavist who presumes to say something about their relevance to poetry should be just as careful about distinguishing them as about distinguishing, say, an anapestic poem from a dactylic poem, or a poem in Russian from its Ukrainian translation.

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