
anny: "The argument that today's National Guardsmen, members of a select militia, would constitute the *only* persons entitled to keep and bear arms has no historical foundation." How modern Americans should act on this conclusion she declines to say: "We are not forced into lockstep with our forefathers. But we owe them our considered attention before we disregard a right they felt it imperative to bestow upon us."

BUDAPEST AND NEW YORK: Studies in Metropolitan Transformation, 1870–1930. Ed. by Thomas Bender and Carl E. Schorske. Russell Sage Foundation. 416 pp. \$39.95

In 1870, Budapest and New York were rising stars of urban modernization. During the following 30 years both acquired world-famous bridges and subways, substantial new populations, and all the trappings of modernity. Moreover, their economies outpaced those of their closest urban rivals. Yet while the next 30 years made New York wealthy and cosmopolitan, an avatar not just of America's but of the world's future, Budapest settled into economic stasis and a reactionary torpor. What happened?

It's tempting to blame Budapest's political system, a nearly ossified centralized government with limited suffrage (under five percent of the population voted). But according to Bender, Schorske, and the 14 other historians who contributed to this volume, politics was not the only reason, or even a major reason, for Budapest's stagnation. In fact, a brief phase of relatively progressive politics, from 1900 to the failed Revolution of 1919, had minimal effect. Rather, the historians argue that New York's success depended on its ability to produce and retain diversity, while Budapest floundered because of its virulent xenophobia, which produced widespread resistance to cultural innovation.

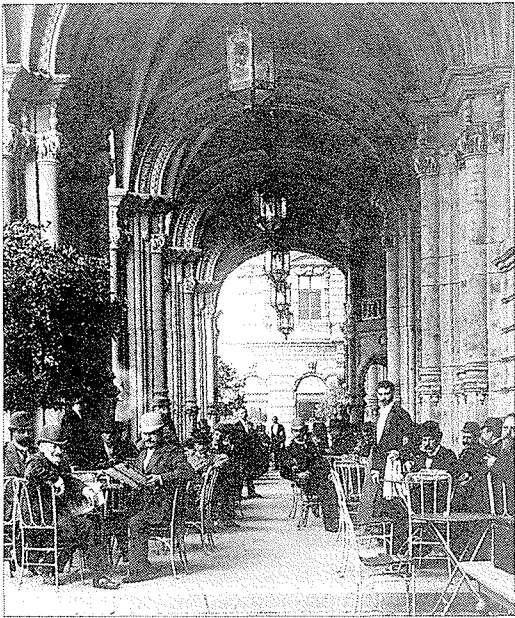
Ethnic difference forced on New York's institutions, from its local government to its construction industry, the sort of resourcefulness and flexibility that remained essential to the city's ever-evolving infrastructure. For example, Central Park evolved out of a contest of various civic interests: Frederick Law Olmsted's patrician vision of a zone of rural tranquility became, under public (i.e. ethnic) pressure, the home of brass

bands, working-class crowds, and a zoo. The heterogeneity and chaos of mass-market newspapers and avant-garde art were vital in founding a new urban order precisely on "moral and intellectual disorder." In the new newspapers—read by Bowery workers and uptown aristocrats alike—limerick contests that drew more than a million responses ran side by side with Will Durant-style philosophizing and pious exhortations about poverty.

Meanwhile, Budapest was being "Magyarized." An influx of rural Hungarians at the turn of the century had the effect of driving German-speakers and Jews out of the city and stifling modernization in the commercial and public spheres. City parks and other sites of social mingling never flourished in Budapest. From 1900 on, Budapest's literary and cultural scene (aside from a tiny, virtually ignored avant-garde) was ruled by various antimodernists who denounced the sinful excesses of urbanity or mocked its notions of progress. In one fictional account, the "woeful people of Pest" spend their lives selling each other antifreckle cream and preparations for perspiring feet. There was even a spirited campaign against something as innocent as the telling of jokes, which came to signify to the provinces how un-Hungarian the capital had become.

Why did petty provincialism and xenophobia exercise such a stranglehold on Budapest? In part because, as Hungary's capital, it was expected to remain somehow exemplary of the nation as a whole. Budapest was home to one of eight Hungarians and yet could never seem Magyar enough to satisfy most newly arrived Hungarian peasants. New York, by contrast, was never home to more than one-twentieth of the nation's population, and was capital only of a commercial and financial network that exerted an admittedly strong but still comparatively indirect control over America. Furthermore, being progressive, innovative, or forward-looking—traits that came to characterize New Yorkers—commanded respectful attention, even envy, from the rest of the country.

Curiously, for all of the talk of bigotry's effects, the historians who contribute to this volume bring up New York racism toward African-Americans only in passing. If the retention and toleration of diversity is indeed the essential



prerequisite of successful urbanization, then why did racism persist, even deepen, as New York modernized? In the end, the self-congratulatory optimism of the New York accounts, and the air of melancholy and self-reproach in the chapters on Budapest, may lie less in the past than in the present. The book gives off the faintest whiff of post-Cold War triumphalism. Nevertheless, it usefully explores the deep connections among such aspects of a city's life as a heterogeneous political debate, technological and commercial innovation, a thriving avant-garde, and the toleration of ethnic differences. By 1930, Budapest could boast of none of these virtues, while New York was the nurturing alma mater of them all.

Contemporary Affairs

A RAGE TO PUNISH: The Unintended Consequences of Mandatory Sentencing. By Lois G. Forer. Norton. 204 pp. \$23

The thesis of *A Rage to Punish* sounds so unobjectionable that one may wonder why the author had to write the book at all: Public safety should be our top priority in sentencing criminals; a judge should be the one to determine a

convict's sentence; once sentenced, prisoners should serve out their time.

But Forer's appeal for criminal-justice reform comes at a time when we are passing laws that run directly counter to her desired goals. Our ever-harsher sentencing laws mandate minimum sentences for certain crimes, especially nonviolent drug crimes, leaving judges with little discretion to sentence as they see fit. As a result, prisons are overflowing, dangerous criminals are being let out years early, and preventable violent crimes are further jeopardizing public safety.

Forer, a state trial judge in Philadelphia for 16 years, left the bench in 1987 to protest a prison sentence she considered unfair but would have been forced to impose under state mandatory-sentencing laws. She thinks we need to get over our retributive and moralistic approach to crime. Judges should lock up only those criminals they deem dangerous. The others should be fined, forced to make reparations to their victims, and placed on probation with requirements such as finding a job or learning to read.

America has already seen one attempted reformation of criminal law along the lines Forer proposes. It was spearheaded by the U.S. Supreme Court after Earl Warren's appointment as chief justice in 1953. Victim-compensation laws and alternative sentencing became commonplace, and for the first time the Supreme Court guaranteed the right to free counsel to all defendants, in the landmark *Gideon v. Wainwright* decision in 1963. But a period of what Forer dubs counter-reformation set in when the Supreme Court in 1976 restored the death penalty, which had been abolished only four years earlier. Rehabilitation was declared a liberal pipe dream, and mandatory-sentencing laws spread. With the 1980s war on drugs, Forer argues, jails became packed with drug-runners and other two-bit criminals. She wistfully recalls the days before guidelines, when a crotchety old judge could bark at a prosecutor who had brought in a petty thief, "There are wolves out there and you bring me squirrels and chipmunks. Case dismissed."

Part of the current impetus behind mandatory time was the fear that sentencing had grown arbitrary, that judges of different ideological stripes were imposing vastly different sentences