The era of the Reformation was a rebellious age. During the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century, widespread dissatisfaction with ecclesiastical, political, and economic conditions coalesced in numerous challenges to established authority. Luther and those reformers who came after him rebelled against the authority of the Church. The nobility regularly opposed the authority of the Holy Roman Emperor or of the emerging dynastic national monarchs. Cities sought to defend their ancient privileges while peasants often resorted to armed insurrection in desperate attempts to obtain immediate relief from the debilitating obligations of their estate and circumstance.

At the same time, the Reformation was an age of growing absolutism. The doctrinal innovations of the first half of the sixteenth century gave way during the later Reformation to increasingly rigid orthodoxies. Economic power remained in the hands of a privileged few, while the consolidation and centralization of political power and influence emerged as the ideal of absolutist princes and kings.

In attempting to describe and analyze the momentous transformation which occurred in Europe between 1500 and 1648, scholars have wrestled with questions concerning the relationship between politics and religion, rebellion and Protestantism, absolutism and Catholicism. The theses which they have advanced are as varied as their confessional allegiances, as diverse as their political attitudes and their definitions of the terms "revolution" or "absolutism," and as disparate as the regions and personalities studied.

While it is impossible here to provide even a sketchy review of the debate concerning the relationship of religion and politics in the later Reformation, it should be noted that historians of the era have directed their attention primarily toward the investigation of developments in Western Europe. Save for the Turkish invasions or the Thirty Years' War, events in Eastern Europe have

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1. Continuing the debate of Karl Holl and Ernst Troeltsch, recent scholarship has exhibited two foci: the actual results of sixteenth-century developments and the political thought of the reformers. Those investigating the former issue seek to establish whether or not specific political and/or socioeconomic changes during the Reformation era can be classified as revolutionary; those considering the latter attempt to determine whether or not the reformers advocated or enunciated "theories of resistance."
generally been ignored or brushed aside. This is symptomatic of the chasm
which has too often separated scholars interested in Eastern Europe from
those investigating the Reformation and early modern eras.

Although the lands of Eastern Europe were the "lands between" and the
"borderlands" of Europe, they were not the hinterlands or backwaters of Eu-
rope. During the early modern era they participated in and had a significant
impact upon the major intellectual, political, and economic developments of
the day. One example of this impact was described by Stephen Fischer-Galati,
when he wrote: "The consolidation, expansion, and legitimizing of Lutheranism
in Germany by 1555 should be attributed to Ottoman imperialism more
than to any other single factor." And certainly no one would contest the sig-
nificance of the Defenestration of Prague and the Bohemian Revolt for
seventeenth-century Europe. Another event in Eastern Europe which can help
to illuminate and explain the broader patterns and developments of West Eu-
ropean history is the Fifteen Years' War between the Hungarians and the
Turks. The war was a result of Ottoman imperialism and a precursor of the
Bohemian struggle.

While it must be admitted that the Fifteen Years' War was, on the whole,
of less significance for Western Europe than the other conflicts mentioned, an
examination of the genesis and resolution of the war can help to clarify the
relationship between religion and politics, Protestantism and revolution, Ca-
tholicism and absolutism, at the dawn of the seventeenth century. In addition,
it can illumine the attitudes of the Austrian Habsburgs on the eve of the Thirty
Years' War. Finally, it can help to answer the question to what extent the
Protestant political leaders in Hungary utilized the theories of resistance
which had been advanced by theologians in Germany and Switzerland during
the sixteenth century.

The Fifteen Years' War, the "long war," or the "Hungarian War," was
a continuation of the struggle between the Hungarians and the Turks which

2. Stephen A. Fischer-Galati, Ottoman Imperialism and German Protestantism 1521-
3. An excellent survey of the Fifteen Years' War is contained in Carl Max Kortepeper,
Ottoman Imperialism During the Reformation: Europe and the Caucasus (New York:
Pamment, ed., A History of Hungary (London: Collet's, 1975); C. A. Macartney, Hungary,
a Short History (Chicago: Alkine Publishing, 1962); Denis Sinor, History of Hungary (Lon-
don: George Allen & Unwin, 1959); Dominic Kosary, A History of Hungary (New York:
Benjamin Franklin Bibliophile Society, 1941); Robert A. Kann, A History of the Habs-
burg Empire, 1526-1918 (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974); and Peter F. Sugar,
Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804 (Seattle: Univ. of Washington
Press, 1977). See also works concerning the rebellion of Bocskay, note 10 below.
4. Sinor, p. 175; Macartney, p. 79.
5. Sugar, p. 158.