

tribution to the undermining of state socialism in the late 1980s. Vladislav Zubok's contribution lies somewhere in the middle. He addresses both the mechanics of Gorbachev's dawning realization that liberalization in the "western borderlands" was necessary for the success of his own domestic reform program and to avoid a more destructive explosion "ten years later," and the role that Gorbachev played as a "beacon for historical change" for reformers and protesters in eastern Europe. At the other end of the spectrum are those who seek to provide a corrective to Stephen Kotkin's emphasis (outlined in his *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment* [2009]) on the centrality of elites in the processes of political transformation around 1989. Pithily summarizing new work on the German Democratic Republic's collapse, Konrad H. Jarausch argues for the reassertion—though not the romanticization—of the role of the crowd as actors in the processes around the fall of state socialism. Vladimir Tismaneanu argues for restating the importance of dissidents whose ideas "chipped away at the foundation of the party-state monolith" (20).

A succession of chapter on lustration, justice, and memory make for a strong closing section to the volume. Marci Shore provides a nuanced overview that employs a well-judged selection of debates and personal responses from a variety of national settings to show how intellectual responses to the exposure of collaborators have evolved since 1989. Lavinia Stan provides a very effective overview of the literature on the varying approaches to postcommunist justice in the region. A. James McAdams explores the political impact of the politicization of transitional justice.

There are some problems with this collection, however. In places, it lacks cohesion, and includes work—such as Cătălin Avramescu's interesting comparative chapter on the experience of light electrification in the USSR and Romania, and Bradley Abrams's contribution on late socialist consumption in Czechoslovakia—that might have found a better home in a different volume. It is also, on occasion, based on work published elsewhere. Sometimes it is better at framing new directions of methodological travel than providing new research which engages with these proposed agendas. Nevertheless, there is much to recommend: it engages in important debates, provides some provocative interventions, suggests interesting approaches to the study of 1989, and includes some effective overviews of the latest in the literature.

JAMES MARK

University of Exeter, United Kingdom

Intermarium: The Land between the Black and Baltic Seas. By Marek Jan Chodakiewicz. New Jersey, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2012. 568 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Maps. \$59.95, hard bound.

In the last decade several studies have reexamined the history of the eastern European borderlands—a bone of contention between the Great Powers and a crucial segment of the post-World War II Iron Curtain. Marek Jan Chodakiewicz traces the evolution of *Intermarium*—the vast region between the Baltic and Black Seas, dominated from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century by the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. The book thus seems to be rather derivative of Timothy Snyder's *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569–1999* (2003) or Kate Brown's *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (2005).

Outside *Intermarium*'s wide geographic scope, however, the similarities end, as it reads like a Cold War project designed to forewarn readers of the danger emanating from Russia. Chodakiewicz asserts that Europe was traditionally split into three main geopolitical zones: democracy in the west, oppression in the "east," and, in the mid-

dle, Poland-led Intermarium, a “staunch defender of Western civilization” (5), immaculate in its centuries-long fight for freedom. Accordingly, to prevent Russia’s renewed expansionist drive into eastern Europe he calls upon the United States to use Intermarium as the “springboard to handling the rest of the successor states, including the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Russian Federation itself” (2). The book, therefore, is construed to “help the United States influence the target populations” (3).

Utilizing a huge array of primary and secondary sources, Chodakiewicz proceeds to assert that the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth was the “freest” nation in Europe (48), “a multiethnic state assembled on voluntary basis,” that “Poland and the Poles were the conduits of Western culture” (52), and that Intermarium (that is, Poland writ large) has always stood in the way of Russian (and later Soviet) aggression.

Those familiar with the history of the region will find these and similar assertions puzzling, at least. While no one can deny that the “Polish factor” played a significant role in the history of eastern Europe, and that in the 1980s the Solidarity movement provided a model to emulate for other popular movements in the region, Chodakiewicz’s depiction of Intermarium as a bastion of freedom is more than problematic. Indeed, the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth was a royal union between Poland and Lithuania, whereas its multiethnic populations had no say in joining it on “voluntary basis.” Similarly, the “indigenous” Polish political freedoms were but the prerogative of a small political and economic elite—the *szlachta*—which denied the same freedoms to the peasant population and ultimately contributed to Poland’s decline and collapse. In addition, at the peak of its might the Commonwealth was no less expansionist than its neighbors, cherishing aggressive, expansionist designs “from sea to sea.” Just as overstretched seems the assertion that during the Russian civil wars the Whites and Poles protected the Jews “to an extent” (71).

More convincing is the book’s section on the postcommunist period. Here Chodakiewicz shows that while wielding substantial economic power the former communists managed to reappear in the guise of leftist and nationalist parties, and that the Kremlin has skillfully used its gas and oil resources and also harnessed the popular resentments of disgruntled Russian minorities to maintain political influence in the region. Again, to upset Russia’s dominance Chodakiewicz inevitably promotes the “Polish solution,” in the form a new, America-backed and Poland-led, Intermarium (391).

To this effect, Chodakiewicz is highly critical of those who have “misguided” popular opinions. This reviewer finds it particularly disturbing that such individuals are branded by their supposed political affiliations or even their ethnicity. Thus the leftists and liberals with no pronounced anticommunist sentiments are labeled “post-modernists” (245) or the “pinks” (253–54), while a prominent historian is brushed off as “a leftist with pronounced pro-Soviet sympathies, who retains a soft spot for the Jewish minority” (103n5).

In general, the book fails to match the standards set by Snyder or Piotr S. Wandycz’s *The Price of Freedom: A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present* (1992), but it will certainly find propitious ground among those who favor a new cordon sanitaire in Europe. (Superlatives on the dust jacket certainly give such an impression.) Alternatively, *Intermarium* may be used in graduate seminars on the history of eastern Europe, nationalism, and the Cold War, in conjunction with more nuanced and less ideologically predisposed studies.

ALEXANDER PRUSIN

New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology