(David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb*, 1994; Paul Josephson, *Red Atom*, 2005; Sonja Schmid, *Producing Power*, 2015).

Overall, with the exception of the final section (part VI), this volume does not add much to the vast existing scholarship on Chernobyl; in fact, by overlooking so much of it, Plokhy's narrative presents a skewed view of the disaster's origins, powerful impacts, and lasting implications for the future of the world's nuclear industry, and for the Ukrainian state. The accessible style in which Plokhy presents his narrative will appeal to readers who engage with the disaster for the first time, and unfortunately, it offers them a partial, technically inaccurate, and at times outdated perspective. Readers with familiarity in the matter will likely dismiss this volume as expendable.

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Ukraine and the Empire of Capital: From Marketization to Armed Conflict. By Yuliya Yurchenko. London: Pluto Press, 2018. xvi, 284 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Figures. Tables. Maps. $27.00, paper.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2019.132

Yuliya Yurchenko's is a Marxist account of recent Ukrainian history, arguing that Ukrainian labor has been exposed to the brutality of domestic and foreign capital in a process supported by international financial institutions and various governments. Unabashedly polemical, the book reads like a manifesto dedicated (as it is) "to the victims of capital." The goal is to make sense of the recent armed conflict in Ukraine, and the verdict is stark: "Russia, the EU, and the USA, together with Ukraine's oligarchs are responsible for the fresh blood that has been shed in the name of markets and power" (22). Rooting her inquiry in Antonio Gramsci's notion of control, the author suggests that "the expansion of the empire of transnationalizing capital" (3) in Ukraine was secured through elite-manufactured "myths" that reference the elusive transition to market democracy, create artificial cleavages in Ukrainian society, and brand Russia as "the Other." Empirically, the book mostly relies on an array of Ukrainian media sources, government reports, and select western scholarship.

Unorthodox from the perspective of positivist social science, the book succeeds in several respects. By rattling conventional interpretations of the Ukrainian crisis, it is thought-provoking and draws attention to class analysis and the power of myths as potentially fruitful lenses for examining post-communist Ukraine. The book's trenchant criticism of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement as it has been applied by the EU in Ukraine merits attention. The investigation of the organizational history of the main foreign business lobby groups in Ukraine will be of interest to scholars of state-business relations in the region. The author's discussion of Ukrainian national identity—its evolution and its manipulation—is simply fascinating.

The book could have been more compelling on several fronts, too. The author's rhetorical edge is sharp but not always backed up by evidence. Proceeding from its ideological foundation, the account goes to great lengths to establish a moral equivalence between Russia and the west: "Russia's manipulation toolbox is not dissimilar to that of Ukraine's Western partners as both groups pursue their economic imperialist interests; yet the latter's selection contains a few pressure devices

more sophisticated than those of the Russian, for example, delays in the IMF loan tranches . . . indeed, no military intervention is needed if the road to capital is open" (45). The book hardly furnishes sufficient evidence for such statements to be taken seriously. At the same time, the narrative too often triggers Karl Popper's (1963) critique of the twentieth-century extensions of Marxism as being essentially non-falsifiable.

A brief consideration of cases outside of Ukraine would have been illuminating. Ukraine's neighbors Belarus and Moldova, for example, have approached the "transition" quite differently from Kyiv. Are there any lessons to draw here for evaluating Ukraine's "neoliberal kleptocracy" (208) as the putative product of transnationalizing capital?

Methodology aside, there is a want of dialogue with scholars outside of the Marxist tradition (strictly speaking) in comparative political economy, which is regrettable as such accounts often resonate with the book's key themes, offering potential for deeper insights. Henry Hale's work on patronal politics (2014), for example, provides theoretical tools to understand the simulation of democracy by domestic elites in Ukraine. Juliet Johnson's (2016) volume points to the transnational central banking community as a route for the neoliberalization of the post-Soviet space. My own work on agent predation and stakeholder alliances in Ukraine and Russia (2015) offers a conceptual framework for understanding kleptocracies and the defensive mechanisms available to labor and small businesses. It may prove fruitful for these and other dialogues with fellow comparativists to occur in the future.

Overall, Yuliya Yurchenko has written an impressive book that readers interested in historical materialism and Ukraine will find indispensable.

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The Near Abroad Toronto: Socialist Eastern Europe and Soviet Patriotism in Ukraine, 1956–1985. By Zbigniew Wojnowski. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017. xiii, 317 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Maps. Illustrations. $70.00, hard bound.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2019.133

During the Cold War, the depiction of Ukraine as a disenfranchised, occupied periphery of a "Muscovite" empire was a common rhetorical figure in Ukrainian émigré politics. Over the past decade this imagery has become part of official Ukrainian memory politics: in January 2018, the Director of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory—a government agency tasked with the instrumentalization of history—declared that the Soviet period in Ukrainian history constituted an occupation.

The contrast to Zbigniew Wojnowski's approach could hardly be greater. Using Anthony D. Smith's theory, Wojnowski identifies Ukrainians as part of a Soviet "ethnic core." "To be Soviet meant to be Ukrainian and to be Ukrainian meant to be Soviet," (18) he argues. If some Ukrainian public intellectuals have sought to cast Ukrainians in the role of "colonial," "aboriginal" "Fridays"—and the relations between the two most important Soviet republics as a center-periphery relation, Wojnowski instead identifies Ukrainians as part of the center, arguing that "Ukrainian ethnic identities . . . were a key source of legitimacy for the post-Stalinist Soviet state" (11). This identity, in turn, was articulated in opposition to the satellite states of the "near abroad": "Contrasting the core ethnic groups of the USSR with foreigners in the near abroad, citizens defined Sovietness as a composite East Slavic identity" (17).