

by Germushka as “The Establishment of the Framework for Cooperation” (41–104). During the years 1953–1956, Hungarian exports were far smaller than its imports; in 1956 exports amounted to only 12.9 million rubles as compared to 44.4 million in imports. Considerable efforts were made to increase specialization of military production between the different member countries. In 1958, Comecon recommended that Hungary should produce a range of military equipment including armored vehicles and different kinds of radio transmitters. A general increase in military production was launched by Khrushchev at this time. By 1962 Hungarian military production was five times what it was in 1958.

In the next period, 1964–69, fundamental changes were made in Comecon military arrangements. In the years 1964–70, the percentage of specialized production as a share of total Hungarian military production and the percentage of specialized production exported substantially increased. A May 1970 report described the standardization of basic weaponry and military equipment, and the establishment of a technical corps as significant achievements. Germushka comments that in the course of a decade and a half military and military-industrial agencies had been established as part of the Warsaw Pact without which military cooperation had stalled repeatedly.

In the fourth period, from 1969–80, a major development of the Hungarian military industry took place, although more information is available on the first half of this period, from 1971–75. At the beginning of this sub-period, military production was expected to increase by 64%, and the role of telecommunications and instruments within this total was expected to increase from 36 to 53%. In practice, the import into Hungary of military equipment was substantially greater than its exports, amounting to 580 million rubles against an export of 351 million. This was primarily because the Soviet Union was still exporting large amounts of military equipment to Hungary, even though Hungary exported military equipment to other Comecon countries, particularly East Germany. Hungarian export of military equipment as a percentage of total military production was expected to increase in subsequent years to a high of 75% by 1986–90. While its exports to the USSR increased, imports from the USSR were still greater. Germushka strongly emphasizes that in general very little data is available on the 1980s, however. After the 1980s, the end of the Soviet Union and of Comecon marked the end of military cooperation with Russia.

The account provided by Germushka is thorough and careful. However, it would have benefitted from placing military expenditure in the context of general Hungarian economic development; he does not discuss how much of a burden the military sector was for the economy as a whole. One would also like a fuller account of the specific military innovations developed in the course of these decades. With these limitations, this is an excellent contribution to our knowledge.

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Property in East Central Europe: Notions, Institutions and Practices of Land-ownership in the Twentieth Century. Ed. Hannes Siegrist and Dietmar Müller. New York: Berghahn Books, 2015. x, 331 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Tables. \$120.00, hard bound.

Is property in east and central Europe distinctive? Real estate markets flourish in most cities with prices not dissimilar to western Europe. Digitized land registers are accessible on-line and foreigners can buy property with little formality. It is possible to buy agricultural land now, albeit subject to more conditions. Private property

enjoys constitutional protection and whilst there remain occasional scandals over certain downtown properties, there have been no significant expropriations since the fall of the last regime.

The rural areas, however, are another country. Travelling through Serbia and Romania reveals a landscape of strip farms alongside huge fields of wheat and sunflowers. In many places there has been no intervention for years, leaving them covered with “unwanted vegetation,” in the words of the European Union. Although around the capitals demand for green field sites is high, in other areas, the land market is practically asleep.

A diminishing number of farmers, aristocratic families, investment funds and churches hold ownership in western Europe. In eastern and central Europe, farmland is owned by the population. Globally, the scale of private ownership is unique: approximately one in six Romanians have a legal interest in farm land and almost half the agricultural holdings in Europe are found in Hungary, Poland and Romania.

With such features, Hannes Siegrist and Dietmar Müller can be confident that property ownership in east central Europe is different and a good subject for research. The authors have assembled scholars from different disciplinary perspectives to outline the commonalities and alternative paths in Poland, Romania and Serbia. By investigating legal practices, governing institutions and cultural dimensions, they show how rural land practices illuminate the processes of nation building, modernization, and struggles between owners and would-be owners.

As the opening chapter shows, land questions flared at every major historical juncture of the last century. After 1918, spectacular redistribution acts were introduced, ending hundreds of years of aristocratic dominance in Transylvania and, for some, stopping Bolshevism in its tracks. Land reforms were integral to territorial settling, incorporating legal traditions and institutions, but also giving colonists opportunities to remake territories. As Henschel shows, agrarian reforms and military colonization were intimately connected in Poland’s eastern provinces, with soldiers receiving between 10 and 20 hectares. Whether they made good farmers or if their initial political enthusiasm lasted are debatable questions, however the point was that land could be taken from one group to reward the loyal services of another. In 1945, the same tactics were used again to punish those who, through no fault of their own, were left on the losing side.

Post war reforms were of mixed success. Bogdan Murgescu doubts that the inter war period in Romania was the golden age that some contemporary politicians claim. Small peasant farm yields fared poorly compared to their predecessors and to collective farms. As the late Jacek Kochanowicz shows, Polish rural overpopulation meant average land holdings shrank rather than grew. The practice of equal division of land amongst siblings seemed to thwart the modernizers. Such was their disappointment that they questioned whether the legislators ever intended to modernize. As Cornel Micu suggests, “their strategies were only intended to calm the discontented peasant masses and gain their political support” (223).

These shortcomings are well known; the original contribution here is to show how mistrust of the peasantry was expressed as property restrictions that were far from a liberal notion of unfettered use and free disposition. Recipients were told what to grow, they could not divide their land, nor could they sell it. It was not even possible to use land as collateral, and failure to abide by the many rules could lead to forfeiture.

In practice, restrictions were bypassed and households continued to divide their lands. Land registers were seldom complete or kept up to date, something that remains a problem to this day. Kurt Scharr, in his intriguing account of the Habsburg registration system in Bukovina, showed how a universal register was a form of

“political communication” that took decades to install, thrown by nervous elites and peasants alike. Did inheriting the Habsburg system offer its beneficiaries a distinct contemporary “gift” compared to areas relying on the modified Ottoman system? Müller questions this—“a functioning land register is dependent on reliable cadastral work, which never materialized” (131). For him, the culprits were clear, “Romania’s political class, consistent with its general neglect, even contempt, of rural areas and their inhabitants, simply ignored the legal insecurity that was rampant in the countryside” (131–32).

In this light, it is unsurprising that landownership created and existential insecurity, or as Pavel Klint puts it, “a certain sense of temporariness concerning one’s property” (212). The absence of a universal pension system or opportunities for urban work compounded the centrality of land as security. Even today, despite the huge changes in society and the economy, land still remains an asset that many believe should not be sold outside the family. Politicians may claim that “no matter what Brussels says,” foreigners will never be able to buy land. Yet, in practice, pocket contracts, sleeping partners, and other devices mean that thousands of hectares are already owned by foreigners. There are telling vignettes of domestic dramas concerning land. In Poland, the state offered additional pension payments in exchange for unwanted land. As Klint points out, for would-be heirs, land is a problem which they do not know how to solve; renunciation in favor of the state is “not possible,” yet they have no intention to work it themselves. For Jacek Nowak, the case of the Lemkos in Ukraine demonstrates how both struggles around dispossession and repossession can deprive land of its meaning and lead to a “people [that] might also forget its land” (194).

The volume effectively marries comparative legal analysis, economic history and ground level ethnography. Backed up with impressive scholarship and a huge bibliography, it should be a source of inspiration and reference for a long time to come.

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The Rise and Fall of Belarusian Nationalism, 1906–1931. By Per Anders Rudling. Pitt Series in Russian and East European Studies. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015. xii, 436 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Tables. Maps. \$29.95, paper.

In his influential 1993 book *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, Ronald G. Suny argues that Soviet efforts to domesticate nationalism after 1917 eventually led to the consolidation of more than a dozen nations and the collapse of the USSR. This elegant thesis has been tested and refined in the past quarter century by an array of studies focusing on the former Soviet republics: Terry Martin’s *Affirmative Action Empire* (2001); Shoshanna Keller’s *Toward Moscow, Not Mecca* (2001); Timothy Snyder’s *The Reconstruction of Nations* (2003); Adrienne Edgar’s *Tribal Nation* (2004); Douglas Northrop’s *Veiled Empire* (2005); Serhy Yekelchuk’s *Stalin’s Empire of Memory* (2004); Kate Brown’s, *A Biography of No Place* (2004), Adeeb Khalid’s *Making Uzbekistan* (2015), and others. Here, Per Anders Rudling contributes further to this growing literature with his insightful book *The Rise and Fall of Belarusian Nationalism, 1906–1931*.

Rudling traces the origins of what he calls Belarusian nationalism to the late nineteenth century and then follows its activists forward through their interaction with major regional players—state authorities from the Russian and German empires;