

danger. How to keep hold of a character who is not in the narrative spotlight, and how strong is the need, the ethical need, to remember especially the traumas, moments of pain, or entire lives of loneliness and degradation. Such a magnificent curlicue of life with its loves lost, deferred, and foreclosed would pose a challenge to the best, most major, readers. And the Anglophone reader has been given a novel in Zucker's translation that matches the original with special verve. English cannot match the potential for pyrotechnic paronomasia in Czech nor its flavorful palaver, but Zucker makes decisions that please the English ear (and eye) in a manner that allows the English to yield respectfully to the Czech, even to Zmeškal's *sui generis* Czech. Zucker, in the translator's note reserved for the end of the novel in English, reads itself, aptly, like a love letter, "It was a genuine pleasure to find my way through the maze of Zmeškal's *Love Letter* . . ." (315). This reader hopes, along with Zucker, that he "will be able to translate another one of [Zmeškal's] books before long" (315), and eagerly awaits the ability to share the contemporary, and perhaps more important, precursive importance of Zmeškal's work.

MALYNNE STERNSTEIN
University of Chicago

The Value of Labor: The Science of Commodification in Hungary, 1920–1956. By Martha Lampland. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016. xviii, 330 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Illustrations. \$40.00, paper. doi: 10.1017/slr.2017.252

Following the demise of Communist regimes in 1989, the countries of eastern Europe embarked on a course of rapid political and economic change. Western advisers proffered plans that promised a quick transition to capitalist economies. Conventional wisdom held that since socialist economic systems had been artificially imposed, they could be easily dismantled, allowing free market capitalism to flourish. The wrenching economic and social dislocations that followed belied western economists' glib predictions. These experts had failed to grasp the degree to which socialist economies were intertwined with existing institutions, practices, and social structures. In her new book, Martha Lampland examines the previous transition—the one from capitalism to socialism in Hungary after World War II—to illustrate the complexities of labor valuation under the socialist economic order. Her findings shed light not only on the character of Hungary's socialist economy, but on the reasons it was not so easily disassembled.

Lampland wisely begins her study in the interwar period, where she finds important antecedents to the communist regime's approach to labor and wages. Already in the 1930s, the state role in the Hungarian economy was substantial. And contrary to many existing accounts, which depict the Hungarian Communist Party as importing wholesale the Soviet economic model, Party bureaucrats based attempts at agricultural modernization and scientific wage calculation on ideas from the pre-communist period. The means they used to calculate wages on collective farms derived not from the Soviet model but instead from the ideas of Hungarian economists and work scientists of the 1920s and 1930s. Inspired by German agricultural work science, these Hungarian specialists designed ways to measure all components of the labor process independently of market forces. While they did so as committed capitalists, their ideas ultimately shaped the communist government's system of wages on Hungarian collective farms.

Lampland goes on to show how these non-Party specialists played such an important role in formulating wage policy under the communist regime. As Party

bureaucrats took control of the economy, they faced a daunting array of managerial tasks. In need of economic and accounting expertise, they turned to work scientists and other non-Party experts. These specialists embraced the challenge of creating efficient and productive work places, even in a non-capitalist system. They crafted policy instruments, including a scientifically-calibrated wage system for collective farms.

Lampland's broader contribution to economic history is to present the commodification of labor as a historical process. She argues that the role of markets in commodifying labor has been exaggerated, and demonstrates the importance of specialists, institutions, and practices that permit a reasonable approximation of labor's value. In particular, she illustrates the contribution of Hungarian work scientists and economists in assigning a value to specific tasks and creating the infrastructure to make labor markets function. The Hungarian specialists she studies intended their system of labor valuation to work within a market framework. Instead, their ideas became central to the communist regime's matrix of labor value called the work unit, which in turn shaped Hungarians' attitudes about work, time, and money.

Lampland's book provides much for scholars to contemplate. She contributes to a growing body of literature that sees the Soviet bloc as far from monolithic, and that instead examines the particularities of communist rule in each country. She underscores national and regional differences in the process of collectivization and the functioning of collective farms. Her work also suggests that developments in eastern Europe can be fruitfully compared with those in other parts of the world—she notes, for example, that scientific management practices in Hungary were part of an international movement in the twentieth century. Finally, her study calls into question simplistic understandings of the role of markets in labor valuation, and highlights the importance of other mechanisms for defining and assessing the value of labor, including scientific wage calculation. Lampland's book will therefore be of interest to a wide range of historians, sociologists, political scientists, and economists.

DAVID L. HOFFMANN
Ohio State University

Post-Communist Mafia State: The Case of Hungary. By Bálint Magyar. Budapest: CEU Press, 2016. xxiv, 311 pp. Appendix. Notes. Figures. Tables. €40.00, paper. doi: 10.1017/slr.2017.253

What is the nature of Hungary's authoritarian turn? Bálint Magyar argues that it is a post-communist mafia state, and details how Viktor Orbán and the ruling Fidesz party have transformed Hungarian society, economy, and polity since their return to power in 2010.

The state is *post-communist* for obvious reasons of chronology and history: it is post-communist because it is built on the institutional site of the communist regime. The elites are also recruited from the communist party and its broader networks. It is also built on the monopoly of state ownership, as opposed to building such a monopoly.

It is a *mafia* state by the nature of the its organization, built on the network of contacts grounded in family, or sealed by businesses in common (70). Specific aspects make the mafia state a subtype of the autocratic regime; its concentration of power, where decisions affect both power and wealth accumulation at once; the key players, which consist of a *poligarch* who gains illegitimate wealth through