EASTERN TRANSITIONS AND GOVERNANCES OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Frédérick Guillaume Dufour
Department of Sociology, University of Quebec, Montreal

Jan T. Gross, *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz; An Essay in Historical Interpretation*. New York: Random House, 2006, 330 pages, ISBN: 978-0-3755-0924-7, Hardcover, $25.95.

Robert Blobaum (Ed.), *Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005, 368 pages, ISBN: 978-0-8014-4347-3, Cloth, $65.00, Paper, $25.95.

Heide Fehrenbach, *Race after Hitler: Black Occupation Children in Postwar Germany and America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005, 288 pages, ISBN: 978-0-6911-3379-9, Cloth, $39.95, Paper, $24.95.

Cas Mudde (Ed.), *Racist Extremism in Central and Eastern Europe*. London and New York: Routledge, 2005, 336 pages, ISBN: 978-0-41535593-3, Hardcover, $180.00, Paper $47.95.

Is national(ist) history still possible after Auschwitz? In Germany, the answers to this question have a story of their own. Since the end of the Cold War, the debate has migrated to Poland. The four books reviewed here examine historical and contemporary forms of social closure and patterns of violent social exclusion in Germany and Eastern Europe. Providing powerful counterintuitive accounts of official historical narratives, they examine the racialized dimensions of the historical formation of postwar Germany and Eastern Europe, enabling us to contextualize and compare contemporary forms of racism on both sides of the former "Iron Curtain."

Not for nothing does the first verse of Poland's national anthem proclaim, "Poland has not perished yet." Following the annexation of its territory by Prussia, Austria, and Russia in the last years of the eighteenth century, Poland literally

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disappeared from the map. The Second Polish Republic emerged only after the First World War. While all nations are "imagined communities," and all national "traditions" are invented, as the essays in the volume edited by Robert Blobaum illustrate, in the Polish case, these nationalist narratives were cast in an idiom of survival and resistance.

Large numbers of Jewish communities had lived on the territory of what is now Poland since the early days of the Polish-Lithuanian kingdom. However, as in most European countries, both conservative and modernizing social forces during the transition(s) to the modern era viewed the Jewish presence as a "problem" or a "question." *Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland* reveals the extent to which anti-Semitism was firmly rooted in Poland long before the German invasion of 1939 (Blobaum 2005, p. 6). Of course, the most horrendous chapter of the history of the Polish Jewish communities occurred during the Second World War. While there were concentration camps in several areas of Europe during the war, it was in Poland that the Nazis located their murder camps. Therefore, while some nationalist discourses continue to "imagine" Poland as the Christ of nations, for others, Polish territory is more appropriately conceived as a massive Jewish graveyard.

The impact of the war was devastating for Poland. The country lost its minorities and, in total, a fifth of its citizens. The urban population was eviscerated. The Nazis and the Red Army decimated portions of the Polish intelligentsia and the army officer corps. Warsaw was razed, and the Soviet Union absorbed parts of the country's territory (Gross 2006, pp. 1–12). Suffering from such terrible losses, the post-1944 Communist government in Poland did not question the extent to which there had been collaboration with the Nazis. As in Eastern Germany, the victims of the camps were usually designated as fallen comrades or fallen nationals. The fact that the vast majority were Jews was not always mentioned. The social organization of forgetting played its role in the construction of the postwar "nation."

Since the end of the Communist regime, however, an increasing number of historians are posing troubling questions about Polish history. To what extent did segments of the population collaborate with the Nazis? What is the history of anti-Semitism in Poland? Where should the line between persecutors and victims be drawn? Is it ethical to erect a cross on the site of Auschwitz? As Polish governments change, so do the "official" answers to such questions. Lying at the core of the politicized social organization of public commemoration and forgetting of all occupied countries, such thorny and disturbing questions become even more charged in the context of the peculiar history of Poland. And they are arising at just the moment when Poland's absorption into NATO and the EU imposes a significant political reorientation on the country. In addressing these complicated issues, Jan Gross's *Fear* and Blobaum's *Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland* intervene in the healthy and necessary public discussion of the history and legacy of anti-Semitism in Poland. Both books dispute the perception that Modern Poland was free from anti-Semitism, especially during the Second World War and its aftermath.

Fehrenbach's *Race after Hitler* explores the racial dynamics between Black American soldiers, their German lovers, their children (raised by single White German women in Germany), and segments of the German and U.S. public spheres. The book is a devastating critique of the U.S. self-congratulatory representation of itself as a liberal and antiracist nation during the Second World War. The Gross and Fehrenbach volumes examine the different ways in which this war transformed U.S., German, and Polish race relations. Together with the Blobaum collection, these books shed light on the history of racialized social relations in Western and Eastern Europe. On the other hand, the various chapters in Cas Mudde's *Racist Extremism in*

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Central and Eastern Europe (2005) force us out of the lofty comfort of historical distance to provide a topography of racism in the region today.

Eric J. Hobsbawm begins his seminal work *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (1990) by arguing that unlike the nationalist, whose practice involves getting at least part of his history wrong, the work of the historian is to wash the nationalist politics of memory in the acid bath of critical examination. Since the historical and comparative sociology of race and nations critiques all nationalist mythologies of a heroic national past, the volumes reviewed here have the potential to disturb their respective public spheres. Gross's historical work, for example, has sparked important debates in Poland. Wanting his "readers turning pages to experience from time to time a sense of discomfort" (Gross 2006, p. xiii), Gross certainly achieves his objective. Five years after the publication of *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (2001)—an account of the pogrom of 1600 Jews by their neighbors in the village of Jedwabne in occupied Poland on July 10, 1941—in *Fear*, Gross takes his readers back to postwar Poland. With *Neighbors*, the professor from Princeton University had already sparked an important public debate on Polish identity, its narrative of victimhood, and the country's Catholic and Communist pasts (see Polonsky and Michlic, 2004). *Neighbors* was only the first layer of Gross's archeology of Polish-Jewish relations during the Second World War and its aftermath. *Fear* is more ambitious. This densely documented book is an act of accusation without appeal. It argues that the pogrom of Jedwabne was part of a much bigger and darker picture, which includes the postwar fateful evolution of Polish-Jewish relations. The book documents similar pogroms that took place in half a dozen villages during the same period, especially in the Podlasie region and in Kraków (Gross 2006, p. 40). Building on his previous work, *Revolution from Abroad* (2002), the author reconstructs the different steps through which anti-Semitism and nationalism were channeled by the Communist regime to become pillars of its hegemony. Gross shows that the important transformation of the property regime in postwar Poland did not inhibit the popular recourse to anti-Semitism as a mode of exclusion and appropriation.

In *Neighbors* and *Fear*, Gross sheds light on the banality of popular violence in postwar Poland. Commenting on a moment during the Kielce pogrom when a crowd was stoning a Jew, a student bystander, Mr. Suszko says: "'They were throwing stones in a somehow detached, leisurely manner—a stone would fly, people saw whether the man fell, then somebody else would throw a stone,' and in the meantime they were busily carrying on conversations" (Gross 2006, p. 103). In sum, Gross concludes, "What stands out on this gruesome occasion is the widely shared sense in Polish society that getting rid of the Jews, by killing them if necessary, was permissible" (Gross 2006, p. 108).

But, the author goes beyond the strict social fabric of the pogroms. He proceeds by analyzing the discrimination faced by the Jews in the labor market, at school, and with local administrators. He reconstructs in detail the dynamics of the political economy of exclusion that led villagers to slaughter their Jewish neighbors and appropriate their property. *Fear* is also a powerful study of social conformism. Like *Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland*, it examines the stigmatization of those Poles who tried to help the Jews. Both books contribute to the understanding of the ideological development and instrumentalization of anti-Semitism rooted in traditional Christian anti-Judaism in Europe. They clarify the shifting role of the Communist state from the "prevention" to the mobilization of anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist practices (see Dariusz Stola in Blobaum 2005, pp. 284–300). Finally, these texts also reveal how opponents of Communism mobilized the myth of "Judeo-Communism" to their own ends. As is often ironically the case, anti-

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Semitism was a deeply rooted technology of governance used by a wide range of competing social forces, from the Communist regime to its opponents (see Janine P. Holc in Blobaum, pp. 301–326; Mudde 2005).

Many Polish Jews fled to neighboring countries during the Nazi occupation (approximately 200,000 survived the war in the Soviet Union). *Fear* analyzes what happened to them upon their return in Poland. It stresses that anti-Semitism and the Jewish question became central issues during the years of Stalinist consolidation in Poland. During this period, between 500 and 1500 Jews were killed (Gross 2006, pp. 28, 35). The security of returning Jewish survivors became an issue as early as August 1944 (Gross 2006, p. 31). The book reconstructs the pogroms of Rzeszów (June 12, 1945), Kraków (August 11, 1945), and Kielce (July 4, 1946). As Gross sums up, "Polish society was uniquely affected by the Holocaust in that the mass killings of Polish Jews created a social vacuum that was promptly filled by the native Polish petty bourgeoisie" (Gross 2006, p. 39). The pervasiveness of everyday-life anti-Semitism in postwar Poland was such that in the two decades following the end of the war, almost all the remaining Jews had left Poland.

Two chapters analyze the social dynamic of, and the reactions to, the pogrom in Kielce, where a quarter of the adult population was involved in the slaughter (Gross 2006, p. 94). The strength of these chapters is the reconstruction of the "normative order of sorts regulating access to plundered Jewish property" (Gross 2006, p. 44). This normative order is interwoven with the political economy of such pogroms. "Local people," argues Gross, "came to perceive Jews as a resource that could be harvested when an opportune moment arrived. . . . Evidently, a town's Jews were for the town's people to plunder" (Gross 2006, p. 42). "The governing principle was simple," remarks the author, "those who were more intimately involved with dispossessing the Jews had a better claim on the goods than anyone else" (Gross 2006, p. 44).

What is particularly striking about the pogroms described by Gross, Keely Stauter-Halsted, and William W. Hagen (Blobaum 2005, pp. 39–59 and pp. 124–147) is their almost medieval setting. The dynamics here are far from those of the top-down, hypermodern, and bureaucratically engineered context depicted in theories of totalitarianism. In some cases, figures of authority did try to stop what was going on:

> Upper echelons of the administration tried repeatedly to remedy the situation. The Ministry of Public Administration urged the Lublin voivodeship office in March 1945 to impress on subordinates that the provisional government had restored Jewish citizens to full equality before the law and was determined to combat anti-Semitism (Gross 2006, p. 62).

Yet, these directions did not reach a receptive audience. Simply put:

> Socialization into anti-Semitic ideology by the most numerous prewar political parties and the Catholic Church, in addition to the demoralization of wartime, combined with the existence of a broad stratum of beneficiaries in Poland who for economic reasons resented and actively opposed the return of the Jews to their towns and villages after the war (Gross 2006, p. 46).

Moreover, what sparked Kielce's pogrom was the old ritual accusation of child kidnapping. Along the lines of the arguments of several contributors to *Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland*, Gross's work indicates the limitations of studies of

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the exclusively modern character of the enterprise of destruction of the European Jewry during the Second World War and its aftermath. He shows that several elements, the actors, the social dynamics, and the rhetoric, stem from a deeper habitus.

The collection of essays in Blobaum's *Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland* is an important complement to Gross's *Fear*. The volume brings together an important range of historical genres which dissect the complexity of the social and symbolic relationships throughout a century of transformations. Introduced by Robert Blobaum, and bringing together fifteen essays by Polish and international contributors, this volume has a broader historical scope. Focusing on the social and symbolic dimensions of Jewish-Polish life in Poland from the nineteenth century to today, and covering the geographical area from Austrian Galicia to the Russian Kingdom of Poland, the essays in the Blobaum collection grapple with anti-Semitic practices through a wide range of historiographical strategies. The first chapter, written by Theodore R. Weeks, provides a theoretically sophisticated attempt to capture the specificity of the process of modernization and national formation in Poland from 1855 to 1905. Weeks introduces his readers to the changing specificities of "Polish" nationalist practices. From 1795 to 1918, these practices evolved largely along the axes of the Polish language and Catholic religion. During this period, there was no Polish state. The territory was divided between Prussia, Austria, and Russia. Local elites melded nationalist aspirations with modern and enlightened elements in a relational context where minorities were perceived as a potential fifth column, an enemy from within.

Transitions to the modern era in Europe have been profoundly uneven and combined processes. The clash between conservative, liberal, and socialist social forces led to different outcomes in each region. However, almost everywhere in Europe, these clashes were socially mediated by anti-Semitism and other practices of social exclusion: nationalism, racism, and eugenics. In this social maelstrom, Jewish communities were often split between opposed strategies of social reproduction—from assimilationist liberals (the Haskalah) to traditionalists—and caught between contradictory social expectations from their neighbors, from "integrationist" to isolationist trends (Weeks in Blobaum 2005, p. 27). In Poland, however, important specificities reinforced the dangerous triad between declining imperial neighbors, Polish nationalists, and Jewish minorities. Polish cultural resistance was already embedded in Catholic religiosity, and thus in specific anti-Judaic preconceptions. Moreover, the Jews were forced to learn Russian if they wanted to make a living in the sectors associated with modernity (from politics to commerce) (Weeks in Blobaum 2005, p. 29). This pattern reinforced the perception that Jews could be an "internal" threat, a "fifth column" to Poles. Weeks forcefully recasts this historical process by presenting the process of the 1862 legal emancipation of the Jews within the broader context of adaptation of the region to the speedy transition to capitalism of some states of Western Europe.

The essays of Keely Stauter-Halsted and William W. Hagen are important contributions to the social history of collective violence. While Stauter-Halsted reconstructs the dynamics of the pogroms in Austrian Galicia in 1898, Hagen studies the "moral economy" of the pogrom in Lwów in 1918. Stauter-Halsted grounds the social dynamic of the pogroms in "the profound contradiction that lower-class Poles were experiencing between their aspirations for social mobility, on the one hand, and the very real barriers to economic advancement on the other." This "found reflection in increasingly self-conscious ethnic attachments" (Blobaum 2005, pp. 40–41). This probing analysis of the social contradictions inherent in the development of rural

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capitalism in the region provides a social history of the dialectic between two fundamental elements of the context leading to the pogroms—emerging social aspirations and barriers to mobility. In a section where the grounding of anti-Semitic symbols in social practices is especially brilliant, the author analyzes how the taverns—a "symbol of Jewish dominance over the peasantry" (Blobaum 2005, p. 47)—became the target of peasant attacks.

The essays of Szymon Rudnicki and Konrad Sadkowski document the interwar period, proving essential material to compare the Polish and the German contexts. The essays of Sadkowski and Brian Porter emphasize the crucial role of Catholicism in narrowing the perspectives of Polish nationalism and in constructing "Jewishness" as an element incompatible with it. The stronger the search for a Catholic identity, stresses Porter, the more the Jewish community became a symbol of otherness. He argues forcefully that the opposition between a modern "racial" anti-Semitism and a traditional Christian anti-Judaism does not hold in the Polish context. The book's last chapter provides an excellent transition to the case studies edited by Mudde and discussed below. Locating the memorial sites of the Auschwitz death camp in the social, political, and symbolic contexts of 1990s Poland, Janine C. Holc presents a nuanced analysis of the Jewish and Catholic views of Auschwitz.

This edited volume is a significant contribution to our understanding of racism. Several of the essays are social history at its best. Together, they provide interpretations of a broad range of sociohistorical contexts of action where antagonistic social relations are reconstructed through a careful account of the symbolic contexts mediating these relations.

In *Race after Hitler*, Heide Fehrenbach takes the reader to another dimension of racial questions of the Second World War and its aftermath. The author seeks to present "an extended historical moment after 1945 when Afro-Germans attained a highly charged visibility in West German society, only to be rendered invisible once their value for the democratizing nation had dissipated" (Fehrenbach 2005, p. 185). However, the book does much more than this.

Fehrenbach's study of the grammar of racist practices in postwar Germany provides an illuminating comparative history of racist practices in the United States and Germany. Its originality lies in the analysis of the dissemination of these practices through transnational processes. In 1949, there were 94,000 occupation children in Germany, of whom 5000 were "biracial." It is the social, cultural, gendered, and symbolic trajectory of these children that is addressed in detail in *Race after Hitler*. The author juxtaposes this rich narrative of U.S. liberal-laden foreign policy with the narrative of the ongoing segregationist practices and the policing of interracial relations and intercourse in Germany and in the U.S. South. In turn, she dissects the policies of the "color-blind" (German) postwar boom from the 1950s to the 1980s. The U.S. policy of denazification had an important impact back in the United States, where African American soldiers and groups struggled for the same kind of antidiscriminatory policies that the United States implemented in Germany. The author's methodological transnational juxtaposition is effected through the perspectives of a series of actors who mediated the parallel trajectories through various channels. The book demonstrates that "the reformulation of race after 1945 was not merely a national enterprise, but an international one" (Fehrenbach 2005, p. 13).

Fehrenbach dissects an important chapter of the story of so-called Mischlinge (mixed bloods) in the Federal German Republic. Her account of the processes of social categorization of races and differences stresses the pervasive, structuring, and contradictory role of racial stereotypes in the mediation of everyday life in both

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postwar Germany and the United States. Aside from the politics of class, very few aspects of the social construction of race, gender, and sexualized subjectivities are left unscrutinized in *Race after Hitler*. The author explores, in turn, the politics of the opposition between the "homeland" and the "foreign," the known and the unknown, politics and war, reproduction and sexuality, civilian and military life, and "Whiteness" and "darkness." In doing so, Fehrenbach forcefully denaturalizes the shifting and precarious topographies of the racial and sexual orders in postwar German society. The historical analysis moves far beyond the opaque dichotomy of the ritualized celebration of the victorious U.S. army over the racist Nazi state. Rather, it proposes an efficient, incisive, and destabilizing complementary narrative of the internalization and metamorphosis of racist practices and hierarchies in the United States and Germany. The book explores the paradoxical social and cultural consequences of the impact of the occupation of postwar Germany by an army committed both "to democracy and to Jim Crow practices." It stresses that some African Americans in uniform encountered less racism from the society that they were required to denazify than they encountered from their White compatriots in uniform.

The third chapter offers an insightful account of the politics of the postwar racial taxonomic order. At the time, the children born of U.S. soldiers were alternatively constructed as "Germans or Americans, 'occupation children' or 'illegitimate children,' 'mixed-bloods' or 'half-Negro'" (Fehrenbach 2005, p. 11). The fourth chapter explores the instable and malleable symbolic representations of Blackness and Whiteness. The result is an important contribution to the understanding of the politics of the social ascription and self-ascription of race. The fifth chapter takes the reader to the Kafkaesque world of the politics of adoption and belonging, and

> reconstructs the emerging discourses and policies informing intercountry adoptions of black German children in order to sketch a social history of this postwar phenomenon, explore the racial and national ideologies underpinning adoption practices, and consider the range and destinies pursued for the children (Fehrenbach 2005, p. 136).

Between 1945 and 1968, Black Americans adopted 7000 Black German children. Fehrenbach argues that prejudices of the Nazi era concerning adoption policies had not entirely disappeared during the 1950s. She notes that "racial restrictions in forming German families attracted little U.S. attention because the assumption underlying such policies were not viewed as necessarily Nazi or even undemocratic" (Fehrenbach 2005, p. 139).

A later chapter describes the obstacles faced by Black teenagers in the 1960s when the time came to integrate the labor market. The author denotes a general trend of "retreat from a focus on race" during the early 1960s (Fehrenbach 2005, p. 173) when a labor shortage facilitated the relative integration of the Black labor force. Yet this was predominantly concentrated in manual jobs. It was assumed that this labor force was well suited for manual labor. Despite this integration, the association of citizenship with Whiteness remained the norm until the 1990s. Even today there is little consciousness of the historical presence of Black Germans in the country.

This perceptual racial narrowing of "nation" left little space—social or psychological—for German citizens of color who daily felt, to borrow from W. E. B. Du Bois, the "doubleness" of their lives as Blacks and Germans in a hostile or, at best, indifferent society that was their own. The silence that overtook issues of race

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in West Germany muted discussions of the relationship between Blackness and Germanness for two decades, until its reemergence in the 1980s in the form of identity politics and discussions of German multiculturalism (Fehrenbach 2005, pp. 174–175).

"The challenge for contemporary white Germans—and for contemporary historians of white Germany," Fehrenbach concludes, "is to find a way to reconceptualize the nation and its narratives to recognize the existence and experiences of its minorities, not on the basis of 'differences' but as Germans and equals" (Fehrenbach 2005, pp. 185–186). If the German public sphere has usually confronted the challenge of dealing with its Nazi past, *Race after Hitler* stresses that a reflexive history of the contributions of minorities to the construction of modern Germany has not entirely penetrated the public sphere. Some would be tempted to argue that this nationalist bias is not specific to Germany, however.

Fehrenbach warns the reader against misinterpretations that equate all forms of violence against ethnic minorities either to "xenophobia" or to violence against "foreigners." For the implicit concession in these interpretations is that it is foreigners, not ethnic minorities, who are victims of violence. Indeed, in the cases documented in all of these books, racist practices are usually directed at minorities born in the country where they are victims of violence, and who sometimes have a presence in that country going back several generations:

The interpretative act of attributing the violence to "xenophobia" and identifying its victims as "foreigners" casts the problem as a short-term one: an uncomfortable period of adjustment issuing from the end of the Cold War; the demise of socialism and the East German state; and the ensuing civil, social, and economic crises that these circumstances have unleashed (Fehrenbach 2005, p. 185).

Moreover, such a characterization "locates the origins of the problem as external to the German nation and German history, rather than treating the problem as connected to a longer and deeper German history of racism and racist violence" (Fehrenbach 2005, p. 185). Once again, the conclusions reached by Fehrenbach with regards to German historiography could certainly be extended to national(ist) historiography in general.

Like Gross's book and the collection of essays edited by Blobaum, *Race after Hitler* raises important questions regarding the relations between social transformation, political institutions, citizenship policies, and racist practices. Whereas the Blobaum collection explores the mutations, transformations, and resurgence of anti-Semitic stereotypes and practices in different periods of Polish history from the feudal to the post-Communist eras, Fehrenbach explores the metamorphosis of anti-Semitic practices into racist stereotypes directed at the biracial German population. Gross's *Fear* underlines how anti-Semitic stereotypes were used as a strategy of governance by the emerging Communist regimes after the Second World War. The narratives reconstructed by each of these volumes demonstrate the modularity and malleability of racist practices and habitus. They provide cautionary antidotes to the argument that such practices can be erased by drastic social changes.

Cas Mudde's *Racist Extremism in Central and Eastern European Europe* is a very different book. It shifts from the past to the actuality and future of racist extremism in Central and Eastern Europe. Funded by George Soros's Open Society Institute (OSI), the book seeks to provide a tool for scholars, journalists, and human rights activists dealing with issues of human rights violations by racist organizations and with issues of violence and politics in Eastern and Central Europe. The OSI was "interested not just in analysis, but in action" (Mudde 2005, p. x).

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Sensing a lack of academic and journalistic sources on the issue, in 2001 the contributors to this book started a country-by-country comparison to address the lack of information.

Each chapter uses the same criteria to present a rough portrait of current racist extremisms in the different countries of the region. Documenting the principal racist organizations, political parties, and social movements of each country, *Racist Extremism in Central and Eastern European Europe* first assesses the state's domestic and international framework for dealing with racist extremist organizations. Then, it moves on to present data on the number and types of racist incidents; it concludes by detailing government and civic responses to racist extremism.

The book was intended as a map and compass for grassroots organizations trying to counter the growth of racist organizations in post-Communist Europe. The work "is not rooted in the comparative study of extremism, but in a human rights and anti-racism perspective. In this perspective, a core guidepost is the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)" (Mudde 2005, p. xi). Accordingly:

> the term "racial discrimination" shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect or nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life (Mudde 2005, p. xi).

The term *racist extremism* is here defined as any "organized discrimination or violence against persons belonging to another national/ethnic, religious or linguistic group in society and/or speech that incites or condones such behaviour" (Mudde 2005, p. xi).

The result is a well-defined topography of racist organizations ranging from political formations to the rock music scene, including monarchist clubs, national fronts, political leagues, skinhead subculture, and right-wing social movements. The authors of the comparative study have gathered a list of racist organizations that testifies to the vigor of the activities and networks of local and international racist organizations in the region.

The collaborators of this volume seek to provide a tool and a detailed picture of a rapidly shifting political landscape, comparing the endeavor to "shooting at a moving target, but also shooting with clouded vision" (Michael Minkenberg cited in Mudde 2005, p. 267). The individual chapters are useful, instructive, and well informed. The concluding chapter, which sums up the comparative analysis, is short yet very descriptive. The analysis of the impact of the party systems on the success of right-wing parties is overly brief. There are no sociocultural analyses of comparative national transformations and no political and economic examinations of the social transformations that these societies have been going through since the end of the Cold War. Nor is there analysis of the penetration of capitalist social-property relations in the region. There are interesting, but few, comparisons with the situation in Western Europe and in Russia. The book is largely descriptive rather than analytical.

Since 2001, the rapid transition to capitalism in the Eastern bloc and Russia has been accompanied by a drastic increase in skinhead violence. In Russia, populist and antiminority discourses are part of a technology of governance that spread in some countries of the former Eastern bloc. Social experiences of dispossession and humiliation are channeled via a normalization of racist practices. Though Fehrenbach's

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book reminds one that these practices are far from unique to Eastern Europe, the books reviewed here contribute to reconstructing forgotten chapters of the history of these practices in this region of the world.

Corresponding author: Professor Frédérick Guillaume Dufour, Department of Sociology, University of Quebec, Montreal, Pavillon Thérèse-Casgrain, Bureau W-5012, 455 René-Lévesque Boulevard East, Montréal, Québec, Canada H2L 4Y2. E-mail: Dufour.frederick_guillaume@uqam.ca

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