

borrowing” to Kazakh and Kyrgyz entrepreneurs (262). And Manja Stephan-Emmrich analyzes how studying Islam abroad helps Tajik students reshape their identities once back home. These three chapters advance the shared finding that views from the outside concomitantly influence and are influenced by local understandings of Islam.

What these final chapters and the volume more broadly demonstrates is that Central Asia’s Islamic revival shares much in common with religious revivals elsewhere. Central Asian polities, like those in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, are navigating the challenges of what Jones explains in conclusion is the “postcolonial experience.” While there can be no denying the Soviet legacy of secular autocracy, the region’s autocrats cannot steer the course of Islamic revivalism. Postcolonial Central Asia is part of the “Islamic core.” The region’s religious future will shape and be shaped by Central Asia’s embeddedness in the global Islamic community.

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Red Hangover: Legacies of Twentieth-Century Communism. By Kristen Ghodsee. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017. xxi, 227 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Photographs. \$89.95 hard bound. \$24.95, paper. doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.331

For a third of my teaching career, students entering my course on eastern Europe already knew a few things about the area and its history; by the mid-1990s, they knew almost nothing, and even less in 2005 when I stopped teaching undergraduates. Now, one has to be truly imaginative to explain to someone why eastern Europe is interesting and important. Kristen Ghodsee launches this arresting book into that void, hoping to educate readers about an area to which she has devoted herself for many years. Using examples primarily from research in Bulgaria (where she has done extended field work) and Germany (both halves), she approaches the task through a mix of narration, memoir, fiction, and essays. She states at the outset that this is not a scholarly work but one for “nonexperts curious about how the legacies of the Cold War impact European politics today” (xx). She provides minimal background on some of her topics, just enough to render them intelligible for her broader purpose, which is to make sense of “the limits of our contemporary political imagination and the various threats posed to the democratic ideal” (xx).

Ghodsee easily attracts readers’ attention with her first chapter, “Fires,” concerning six self-immolations that occurred in Bulgaria over forty-five days in 2013. Focusing popular misery concerning the precarious standard of living and relentless price increases, these acts were carried out by people who said they “wanted to make a difference” in a time of rising desperation, a time when one study reported that forty-three percent of Bulgarians were “severely materially deprived” (5). She follows this with “Cucumbers,” about her discovery of a set of discarded files that turned out to concern an agronomist whose contribution to meeting socialist Bulgaria’s production targets for cucumbers was importing cucumber seeds from Holland. The next two chapters are fictions, one concerning the international trade in body parts and the second an argument between a mother and son about how his father’s grave is to be marked: with a cross or a red star. Each of these skillfully employs small details of daily life to reveal larger predicaments that east Europeans have faced since the end of communist rule. As with the two fictions in the book’s fourth part, the examples here are well chosen and beautifully written, and they provide a deeply humanizing view of the people facing these predicaments.

Subsequent chapters report on conflicts between east and west Germans over the terms of reunification; a commemoration by the German left of the deaths of leftist martyrs; the bankruptcy of a typewriter factory (which becomes a meditation on the consequences of privatization); a study concerning whether East or West Germans had better sex (my favorite); socialist realism; and debates about rewriting history, in which people argue over which was worse, communism or fascism. In each of these chapters she selects a particular happening or argument and expands upon its context in a creative way so as to reveal unexpected meanings. In Part Four, she again uses fictions to discuss the difficulties of political transformation, and in a final chapter she interrogates the relationship between liberal democracy and the free-market capitalism that it empowers.

For decades, socialism has been demonized in both western and formerly-communist contexts. Ghodsee sees this ongoing demonization as having toxic political effects, by limiting our vision of possibilities for the future. In her view, our current global predicament demands expanding our vision instead. “To prevent the ascendance of a resurgent right,” she argues, “we need to get past our red hangover and recognize the pros and cons of both liberal democracy and state socialism in an effort to promote a system that gives us the best of both” (200).

Kristen Ghodsee has taken a risk with this book, but she has already established her scholarly bona fides and can afford to do so. It is a brave book, one that brims with urgency concerning the current state of the world and the possibilities for improving it—possibilities that are enhanced, she believes, by taking the communist experience seriously. In short, she makes the study of eastern Europe, both under socialism and after it, crucial in effort to envisage a more viable future. I agree with her and wish I myself had had the nerve to write something like it.

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The NGO Game: Post-Conflict Peacebuilding in the Balkans and the Beyond. By

Patrice C. McMahon. Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2017, xiv, 178 pp. Notes.

Bibliography. Index. \$89.95 hard bound. \$24.95, paper.

doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.332

Although the new interventionism of United Nations peace making, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding begins in 1990–91, such as in El Salvador, Cambodia, and the 1992 *Agenda for Peace* that Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali submitted to the Security Council, the dominant practices of these interventions were developed in Bosnia-Herzegovina and then Kosovo. Patrice McMahon focuses in *The NGO Game* on the role of these international missions in promoting civil society through support to non-governmental organizations, both local and international, but the empirical meat of the book occurs in her two case studies of Bosnia and Kosovo. It should, therefore, be of particular interest to readers of the *Slavic Review*.

The motivation for McMahon’s concept of an NGO game is the sharp rise of funding for non-governmental organizations and their presence in post-conflict peacebuilding missions after 1990, then the sharp drop off in each case after a period of time. The “game” is the attraction for people in these conflict-affected cases of this rush of money, although that attraction is never demonstrated, only assumed, and while she argues that this explosion of funds is due to a change in the international system after 1990, her data show that the rise in NGOs funding begins at the end of WWII and drops off dramatically around 1990. Her claim of a boom and bust, which