

## Citation style

Gilley, Christopher: review of: Tim Buchen / Frank Grelka (eds.), Akteure der Neuordnung/W poszukiwaniu nowego ładu. Ostmitteleuropa und das Erbe der Imperien, 1917-1924/Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia wobec upadku imperiów, 1917-1924, Berlin: epubli, 2016, in: Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas / jgo.e-reviews, jgo.e-reviews 2018, 2, p. 7-11, <https://www.recensio.net/r/c6a50bcaa33d4f569a7bb383ae406290>

First published: Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas / jgo.e-reviews, jgo.e-reviews 2018, 2

**Jahrbücher für  
Geschichte  
Osteuropas**



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**Akteure der Neuordnung. Ostmitteleuropa und das Erbe der Imperien, 1917–1924 – W poszukiwaniu nowego ładu. Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia wobec upadku imperiów, 1917–1924**

Hrsg. von Tim Buchen und Frank Grelka – Red. Tim Buchen i Frank Grelka. Berlin: epubli, 2016. 300 S. = Interdisciplinary Polish Studies, 4. ISBN: 978-3-7375-0077-7.

Winston Churchill's dismissive description of the violence that erupted in Central and Eastern Europe after 1917 as the "wars of the pygmies" that followed the "war of the giants" exemplifies a particular attitude toward Central and Eastern Europe. It suggests both the aberrance of developments in the region from an imagined norm (i.e., Western European events) and their insignificance. Although they are often expressed less contemptuously today, such prejudices continue to shape West European thinking. Thus, when British journalists express cynical amusement at the vainglorious and naive designation of the First World War as "the war to end all wars", they often assume that September 1939 revealed the hollowness of this phrase; they seem ignorant of or uninterested in the fact that in many parts of the continent 1918 marked intensification in rather than an end to the bloodletting on the battlefield.

Alongside the academic activity surrounding the centenaries of the Great War and the Russian Revolution, scholars of Central and Eastern Europe have produced a flurry of conferences and publications on the wars in the region that forcefully demonstrate the wrongheadedness of such attitudes. The collection of articles under review brings together seven fascinating contributions by young scholars to a 2015 conference on the legacy of the old empires and creation of new states in Central and Eastern Europe at the Viadrina Center B/Orders in Motion in Frankfurt an der Oder. In the Introduction, the editors and organisers of the conference, TIM BUCHEN and FRANK GRELKA, set out the book's goal: to investigate how local actors created new spatial orders, often using violence. The collection is accordingly divided into two parts, the first with four articles examining plans (realised and unrealised) for new state systems, the second concentrating on violent local actors. This is a multi-lingual work: five of the pieces were written in German, two in English; a Polish half follows the German-English one, containing Polish translations of the Introduction and all the articles.

The four articles in the first section reveal the editors' highly judicious choice of contributors: the pieces examine the Soviet, Fascist and Wilsonian responses to demands of the aspiring national movements. For example, STEPHAN RINDLISBACHER describes the attempt to negotiate the Ukrainian Soviet Republic's north-eastern border with its Russian counterpart in the mid-1920s. Representatives of the two republics met in a joint commission. They debated whether ethnicity, on the one hand, or economic function and administrative simplicity, on the other, should determine which republic a particular region

belonged to. The Ukrainians preferred the first as a guiding principle, while the Russians supported the second approach. In the era of *korenizatsiia*, the Ukrainian case was initially more successful. However, the Soviet Union's Central Executive Committee negated the commission's decision to transfer some territories from the Russian to the Ukrainian republic. Local actors also became involved when a commission was set up to draw the exact boundaries in 1926. Local functionaries sent petitions to the commission echoing the ethno-national, economic and administrative arguments. By the time a final decision was reached, the decisive factor had become the goal of promoting economic and cultural development. Rindlisbacher skilfully shows how the representatives of three different levels in the Soviet system – the centre, the republican and the regional – all shaped the way in which the borders between the Russian and Ukrainian Soviet republics were drawn in a negotiated process. This is also a timely piece: the participants in the current war in the Donbas have all made spurious arguments regarding the legitimacy of Ukraine's eastern border (which some Western political scientists have regurgitated) based on simplified or inaccurate versions of this history. Rindlisbacher provides an important corrective to such claims.

In Italy, Mussolini proposed a second alternative to the Wilsonian order. MARCO BRESCIANI offers a new perspective on the emergence of Italian Fascism by examining the movement's growth in the Upper Adriatic borderlands. Here the Italian and post-Habsburg spaces overlapped. Italian fascism developed here with a deep hatred of the Austrian legacy and Slavic nationalism. It generated the feeling of being Italy's gate against the Slavic hoard to the East. Such feelings informed the Fascist desire to create its own Italian space, a revived Mediterranean Empire. Bresciani's article demonstrates powerfully how the separation of Central and East European from West European history hinders our understanding of the continent's past.

The next two articles examine Wilsonian approaches from the perspective of local actors. As JAKOB MISCHKE shows, the Ukrainian legal scholar Stanislav Dnistrians'kyi based his demand for a Ukrainian East Galician state on the Wilsonian principle of national self-determination. Dnistrians'kyi believed the subjective identification with a nation to be more important than attributes such as language, religion and territory; for him, nations only began to appear in the Early Modern period. This superficially postmodern approach emerged from Dnistrians'kyi's desire to promote Ukraine's national claims: it allowed him to claim Polish-speaking, Roman Catholic "Ukrainians" for Ukraine and present Ukraine (whose appearance as a nation he dated back to the 1648 Khmelnyts'kyi rising) as equally old as other, more established nations. At the same time, Dnistrians'kyi believed parliaments alone could not express the will of the people; therefore in addition to the parliament, a future Ukrainian state would use popular assemblies and councils. He also foresaw powers for the executive that would allow it to ignore or reinterpret legislation that it believed to be out of date. He granted non-Ukrainians personal national rights, including the right to communicate with the

authorities in one's own language and change one's official national belonging. Each national group would receive a percentage of the seats in parliament; however, Ukrainians would have a majority of seats, guaranteeing their leading role in the state.

Mischke describes this concept as "more moderate" than the thought of the integral nationalist Dmytro Dontsov and the neo-monarchist Viacheslav Lypyn'skyi. Further research placing Dnistrians'kyi's beliefs into the context of the history of Ukrainian political thought will be fascinating and fruitful. While he did not abandon parliamentary forms entirely, Dnistrians'kyi's scepticism at the value of parliaments echoes many of the characteristics of the "turn to the right" (exemplified by Dontsov) in the interwar Ukrainian emigration; indeed, as Mischke mentions, Dnistrians'kyi praised Mussolini. We can also see connections to Lypyn'skyi, who foresaw individuals from non-Ukrainian ethnic backgrounds becoming members of the Ukrainian nation.

Sebastian Paul's study of the incorporation of Subcarpathian Rus into Czechoslovakia describes how various self-proclaimed national councils claiming to represent Rusyns (some in the North American Diaspora, some in the area itself) proposed incorporating the region as an autonomous territory into Czechoslovakia, Ukraine or Hungary. As the political and military situation changed, so did their demands; some actors pursued different solutions at the same time. The occupation of the area by Czechoslovakian and Rumanian forces marked the triumph of the Czechoslovakian option. Certainly, the Rusyns' fate depended on the decisions of the larger regional powers. However, the petitions and demands of the elites were useful to the governments of countries like Czechoslovakia, who could refer to them to legitimate their actions, even if the councils' claims to represent the broader Rusyn population were baseless. In this way, Paul's article expertly reveals how the activities of local, seemingly impotent, actors interacted with the decisions made by the leadership of more powerful countries.

As in the first half of the collection, the articles in the second half complement each other by viewing the activity of violent actors from a variety of perspectives. DIMITRI TOLKATSCH examines the political views and activity of the Ukrainian peasantry during the Russian Civil War. He argues that their actions reveal a nebulous but important commitment to social equality through land redistribution, popular democratic decision making, and the legitimation of power combined with ethnic homogenisation from anti-Jewish pogroms. Accordingly, Ukrainian peasants were attracted by the programmes of both the Ukrainian People's Republic and the Bolsheviks. However, the peasants' first loyalty always remained to the village; support for the warring parties trying to create new governments in Ukraine was always short-lived. At the same time, they often came into conflict with peasants from neighbouring villages and with leaders of insurgent peasant bands (*otamany*). Nevertheless, peasants were also interested in developments beyond their village. They had a national identity, connected to a suspicion of Russians, but this was tied to the land question and did not mean support for a Ukrainian state. To view the resulting situation in Ukraine as "chaos", Tolkatsch argues convincingly, is to take on the

perspective of representatives of the aspiring states. Seen from another angle, the village assemblies were establishing their own form of order, fulfilling many of the functions of the state according to peasant concepts of justice. Thus, Tolkatsch skilfully manages to refute attempts by nationalist historians to co-opt the peasantry for the Ukrainian national movement, while also rejecting ideas of “dark”, unpolitical villagers. Lecturers in German-speaking universities will find it sufficiently succinct and comprehensive to give to students looking for an overview of the Ukrainian peasantry in this period.

In his piece, Tolkatsch describes the pogroms as a form of ethnic cleansing. ANDREI ZAMOISKI also discusses this question, this time from the perspective of the victims. He examines Jewish self-defence units created by Jewish communities in Belarus amid the wave of pogroms that hit the former Russian Empire. By comparison to those formed in neighbouring Ukraine they were much weaker: poorly armed, small in number and often lacking military training. Consequently, they could only protect the community from assaults by small groups of bandits; they were ineffective against larger groups of organised troops. They also received little support from the Soviet authorities, who viewed them as politically questionable. The authorities might tolerate them or seek to co-opt them, but they were very reluctant to supply them with weapons. Zamoiski’s piece reveals the great value of studying the Jewish self-defence units further, above all in a comparative perspective.

MATHIAS VOIGTMANN examines the activity of various paramilitary organisation in Latvia: the German *Freikorps*, the local German *Landeswehr* and the Latvian *Aizsargi*. Voigtmann draws heavily on the conceptual approach of Jörg Baberowski and Felix Schnell, historians who have used theories of space and violence in the former Russian Empire. However, he does not do so slavishly, acknowledging more than they do the role of ideology in violence. Thus, he finds a variety of motivations for joining the paramilitary groups: the *Freikorps* followed purported promises of land in the Baltic, imperial ambitions and the fight against Bolshevism. At the same time, violence was a means of community building with its own dynamics that was of great emotional importance to the perpetrators. Many *Freikorps* members maintained their contacts with these communities after the war; they brought back the violence from the Latvian space of violence to Germany, destabilising the new Weimar state. The Latvian *Aizsargi* had a distinctly political goal – mobilisation of nation in favour of independence. After the war, many members maintained links with the paramilitary structures. However, these transformed to adapt to civil life, founding sports clubs, choirs, orchestras etc., as well as women’s and youth organisations. Nevertheless, they played an important role in Latvia’s 1934 coup. Thus, both the German and Latvian, paramilitaries were involved in the failure of democracy in their respective countries. In this way, Voigtmann shows how one can embed models of violent space into the broader context of political developments.

The quality of the individual pieces is testimony to the lively state of research on this topic. The articles profoundly assert the need to incorporate a Central and East European

perspective into our understanding of the continent's history in this period. The contributors to the volume are young scholars working on doctoral and post-doctoral projects. One can therefore expect several interesting monographs examining the period based on solid empirical and theoretical foundations to appear in the next few years. In the meantime, this collection will serve as a very useful summary of some fascinating research.

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### **Kunstgeschichte in den besetzten Gebieten 1939–1945**

Hrsg. von Magdalena Bushart, Agnieszka Gašior und Alena Janatková. Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau, 2016. 327 S., 34 Abb. = Brüche und Kontinuitäten: Forschungen zu Kunst und Kunstgeschichte im Nationalsozialismus, 2. ISBN: 978-3-412-50168-6.

Seit Ende der siebziger Jahre gewann die Beschäftigung mit der Kunstgeschichte des „Dritten Reiches“ immer mehr an Bedeutung. Mit Recht nimmt sie heute einen festen Platz in der Erforschung des jeweiligen Fachgebietes ein. Was aber das Thema Kunst und Kunstgeschichte in den besetzten Gebieten 1939–1945 betrifft, galt bislang das wissenschaftliche Interesse jedoch primär „den Handlungen und Diskursen der Vertreter der deutschen Besatzungsmacht“, wobei „die Situation in den betroffenen Ländern“ bedauerlicherweise deutlich weniger Beachtung fand (S. 10). Basierend auf einer von MAGDALENA BUSHART (Technische Universität Berlin), AGNIESZKA GAŠIOR (Universität Leipzig) und ALENA JANATKOVÁ (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin) vom 27. bis 29. April 2012 in Berlin durchgeführten Tagung für das Projekt *Post-Panslavismus: Slavizität, Slavische Idee und Antislavismus im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert* vereint der hier zu besprechende Sammelband 14 aus einer transnationalen Perspektive geschriebene und gut fundierte Beiträge zur „Konfrontation zwischen Besatzern und Besetzten und ihren Folgen in den kunsthistorischen Praxisfeldern Lehre, Museen, Denkmalpflege und Publizistik“ (S. 10).

Gleich eingangs skizziert CHRISTIAN FUHRMEISTER das Problem der Wechselwirkung von deutscher Kunstgeschichte, Kulturpolitik und Kulturpropaganda in Italien vor und nach 1943 (S. 15–26). Dabei stehen zahlreiche „Transferprozesse und Resonanzen und ihre Veränderungen im Laufe der Besatzungsherrschaft“ im Mittelpunkt seiner Forschung (S. 16). Er konstatiert eine umfassende „Einbindung der beiden deutschen kunsthistorischen Institute in Florenz und Rom in die Kultur- und Wissenschaftspolitik des Dritten Reiches“ (S. 19). Eine neue Dimension kunsthistorischer Arbeit wurde erst