

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.

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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

may well be the case, needs to be demonstrated with case-level data, which would be difficult to get and she does not provide. Data are a main obstacle to much of what she argues, but she is quite open about its problems. She situates her argument in the international relations literature, arguing that it has ignored non-governmental organizations. Given its focus on interstate relations and states as often unitary actors, this is unsurprising, although this ignores important recent work on transnational movements that do address NGOs. Why McMahon did not situate her argument in the literature on peacebuilding is not clear because there her arguments about international missions and the consequences of funding NGOs, largely international NGOs with scraps for local NGOs, and their imposed projects and outcomes—that they ignore local NGOs and have negative consequences in general—are extremely rich and make the same arguments at length. There is nothing new in this. It's particularly sad to miss reference to the work by Michael Foley, for example, or Paul Stubbs on Bosnia, and her apparent misunderstanding of why Haitians label their country, devastatingly, as The Republic of NGOs. McMahon makes a strong statement about the new economic power of NGOs, without empirical support and which my data dispute, and while she recognizes differences among types of NGOs and their goals, the analysis and data do not distinguish sufficiently. The difference between humanitarian NGOs and those related to democratization are important, but not sufficiently discussed.

The two case studies demonstrate the true difficulties for SR readers of limited field research. McMahon's evidence is largely from interviews, building in the biases of her interviewees and nothing systematic; in Bosnia, moreover, she only gathers information in the Federation, nothing in the Serb Republic, and the timing matters—she begins in Bosnia more than five years after the peace accord and in Kosovo less than two years after the NATO intervention. Nonetheless, the two cases provide superb comparative insights that I invite. The two had very different conflicts, pre-war civil societies, and international missions; the comparison would be fascinating. I encourage it. More detail on local NGOs in both cases, both before and during their conflicts, and their differences, would be very important for readers to know, as would her intriguing assertion that the “bust” era led local NGOs to create, innovate, and revive.

The many typographical errors are a disappointment (Christopher Hall instead of Hill and community instead of communist period) and factual mistakes (on the role of the US in these interventions, 40, 46; the leading role of the World Bank in needs assessments and its overall approach, 45–46, 52, 56; the origins of responsible sovereignty, 78; that Bosnia was largely Muslim, 94; her total neglect of the role of UNPROFOR, 95; the origins of the federation in Bosnia, 96; that the Helsinki Committee was one of the oldest NGOs in Bosnia, 106) in such a serious work. It is a very important topic.

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The Defence of Constitutionalism: The Czech Question in Post-national Europe.

By Jiří Příbáň. Trans. Stuart Hoskins. Vaclav Havel Series. Prague: Karolinum Press, 2017. xvi, 312 pp. \$20.00, paper.

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Shall we not judge a book by its cover—or shape? The book's near-square format suggests the atypical, and intriguing. Those familiar with some of Jiří Příbáň's other works can expect sophisticated insights, such as from his legal-scholarly works *Legal*