

suggestive metaphor is not used to full capacity. The King is powerful and able to move into any direction, but, just like the Pawn, only one step at a time. Focusing on the Pawn's powerlessness, in turn, might foreclose the search for conditions or instances in which the Pawn assumes the position of a Queen, potentially defeating the King, or for explanations as to why these conditions were never fulfilled. The Pawn kills at an angle, but not forward, and must not go backwards. Does the motive of "once you're in, you're in" really hold true in a situation of occupation violence that triggered other violence as well? The many members of the police who defected to the partisans in 1943 prove otherwise. Nonetheless, considering the neither horizontal, nor vertical direction the Pawns' action may take might reveal an important aspect to further probe in assessing relevant agency and power relations under occupation.

Finally, the chess board houses many pieces and multiple parties, but none of them are the players. An understanding of why some local residents sided with occupation authorities must be open to considering that decisions under duress often have short-term goals in mind, rather than following a fully planned strategy. Just as the German occupiers regularly adjusted their use of "collaborators," the latter made choices that may require us to devise a new vocabulary to understand and represent local responses to the occupation regime.

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Andrea Graziosi and Frank E. Sysyn (eds.), *Communism and Hunger: The Ukrainian, Kazakh, and Soviet Famines in Comparative Perspective*. Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2016. 158 pp.

Famine is never a wholly natural disaster; it always has a man-made dimension. Andrea Graziosi and Frank E. Sysyn, the editors of the multi-dimensional and thought-provoking *Communism and Hunger: The Ukrainian, Kazakh, and Soviet Famines in Comparative*

Perspective, try to convince readers that famines are not only terrifying weapons of war but also powerful engines of economic transformation. Throughout six carefully crafted chapters, specialists in Ukrainian, Kazakh, all-Soviet, and Chinese famines gradually reveal when and why the great twentieth-century famines caused by state policies unfolded. The volume is important for two reasons. It takes as its subject famines in the context of communist development programs, namely Stalin's Great Turning Point and Mao's Great Leap Forward. Moreover, the book is a first attempt to compare not only Soviet and Chinese famines but also Soviet famines with one another. It is a valuable invitation to further research into this overlooked—not to say neglected—topic in academic research.

For many, great historical famines were an immanent part of the development of the capitalist system of the imperial era. In India, China, Egypt, and Ireland (to mention just a few “lands of famine”), many people died while being forcefully incorporated into the economic and political structures of the modern world. The phrase *Communism and Hunger*, as the editors rightly point out in their introduction, would “seem to be a contradiction in terms.” Yet, as the studies in the volume suggest, famines were also parts of the socialist experiments—not only in the USSR (1931–33 and 1946–47) and China (1958–62) but also in Ethiopia (1983–85) and North Korea (1994–98). Different chapters in the volume deal with the similarities and differences in the process of unraveling the realities behind famines both within the Soviet Union and China as well as in comparative perspective, exploring their economic and political dimensions. As pointed out by Sarah Cameron in her contribution on the Kazakh Famine (1930–33), “[a] famine is a complex human crisis, the study of which requires a range of methodologies, including social, political, economic, and environmental history” (p. 32). As demonstrated by the contributors, famines also powerfully illuminate not only states' political economies and food regimes but also patterns of organized mass violence and very often much more tangible forms of the cultural responses to disaster connected to the politics of historiography and memory.

Perhaps the most valuable contribution of the volume lies in its comparative design. The book is divided into two parts—the first

focusing on study of the Ukrainian Holodomor, Kazakh famine, and the Chinese Great Leap Forward, and the second on the similarities and differences among them (especially in the analysis by Lucien Bianco and Andrea Graziosi). Also, Niccolò Pianciola's analysis stands out as a call for the further examination of the under-studied geographic and environmental dimensions of transnational pastoralism in Inner Asia. Nonetheless, the comparative spirit seems to penetrate each chapter. For example, in his chapter "Food Shortages, Hunger, and Famines in the USSR, 1928–33," Nicholas Werth places the Ukrainian Holodomor within the broader aspect of other "islands of famine" within the USSR—more importantly in the steppe parts of Kazakhstan, the Lower and Middle Volga, and the Central Chernozem regions. In the discussion of the Great Famine in China, Zhou Xun points to the regional distribution, spatial unevenness, and complicated politics of memory—especially in comparison to the Ukrainian Holodomor. Bianco and Graziosi in their respective chapters carefully point out the various similarities and differences between Soviet and Chinese famine catastrophes, exploring more the demographic and economic factors in one case (Bianco's chapter) and more political, ideological, and historiographic dimensions in the other (Graziosi's analysis). The richness and complexities of these chapters showcase the need for further comparative research into the transnational context of socialist famines and the potential influence they may have exerted on one another.

The volume, however, uncovers yet other interesting dimensions of socialist famines, namely both their neglect in Western scholarship and the complicated politics of memory within the analyzed societies. The Ukrainian Holodomor for a very long time was understood as a mere "food shortage" (to use Walter Duranty's phrase); the Kazakh famine was a "miscalculation on the part of Stalin"; and, finally, the Chinese famine is still being called simply the "Three Difficult Years" by many in China. The researchers of socialist famines need to deal not only with scarce resources and the internal politics of the archives but also with the various misrepresentations of the topic—not to say denial—in the West and "blank memory spots" in national historiographies. In this regard, Cameron's and

Xun's chapters stand out in particular as important mirrors that clearly reflect the complicated politics of documents, archives, national memories, and Western scholarship.

Communism and Hunger: The Ukrainian, Kazakh, and Soviet Famines in Comparative Perspective is a new and refreshing analysis of famines in the context of socialist experiments. It points to the importance of studying political famines not only in the context of socialist food regimes and political economy broadly speaking, but also as case studies of mass state violence against governments' own citizens. It could be argued that the volume only whets the appetite, and that 158 pages are not enough to provide complete answers for an unfulfilled curiosity about this too often ignored subject. It would also not have been unfruitful for the editors to have incorporated the Ethiopian (1983–85) and North Korean (1994–98) cases into the analysis. Nonetheless, this valuable collection will certainly spur further analysis of political famines in their transnational contexts.

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Mikhail Minakov, *Development and Dystopia: Studies in Post-Soviet Ukraine and Eastern Europe*. Stuttgart: *ibidem*-Verlag, 2018. 280 pp.

With the pro-EU Revolution of Dignity in 2013, Russia's annexation of Crimea and its subsequent hybrid aggression in Eastern Ukraine and beyond, "Ukraine is likely to remain at the center of attention for all major geopolitical centers for the foreseeable future" (p. 243). Moreover, dealing with the opened Pandora's box of discontent and demodernization in CEE states and the Eastern Neighborhood, and safeguarding the future of the EU requires a reflection over the past twenty-five years of modernization efforts, revolutionary cycles, new hopes, and new traumas in post-Soviet space. In his new monograph, Ukrainian political philosopher and social analyst Mikhail Minakov seeks to consider (de)modernization dynamics in Ukrainian politics (also within the wider context of transition studies and