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Review

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Throughout the drama of 1989, Gorbachev steadfastly refused to intervene with cash, advice or a show of force, even refusing to take the telephone calls of the desperate East European party bosses. Soviet forces were confined to barracks and the East Europeans were told to sort out their affairs themselves. Gorbachev was fighting to reform and hold together the Soviet Union and had little time or sympathy for his socialist brothers. In the West it all seemed too good to be true, though George Bush feared a Soviet backlash, and Margaret Thatcher and François Mitterrand were initially opposed to German reunification. So we had the paradox of Moscow abandoning their brightest jewel (the Hungarians used to say 'those bloody East Germans, they almost make Communism work') while London and Paris backed the status quo. Fortunately Helmut Kohl seized the moment and the borders opened. The escape of tens of thousands of East Germans in their Trabants through Hungary to Austria and the fall of the Berlin Wall is well known but is retold almost as a thriller. A strength of this book is the vast amount of original research and the personal interviews conducted by the author. The result is that we see 1989 through eastern as well as western eyes, a feature often lacking in other works. Throughout the Cold War the West made great efforts to keep alive the lines of communication between a divided Europe, from the broadcasts of the BBC and Radio Free Europe to support for dissidents and Church leaders. Were the revolutions homegrown or did they owe something to the West? Pope John Paul's role in Poland is discussed but I would have welcomed the author's wider assessment.

The European twentieth century can be said to have started in 1914 and to have ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The economic and moral bankruptcy of the East European empire played a major role in the Soviet demise. In 1990 I asked a Soviet ambassador, whom I had known for many years, why the great Marxist–Leninist experiment was in tatters. He replied quite simply 'because it was against human nature'. Victor Sebestyen has written a masterful account of how human nature finally triumphed over oppression. It is a mercy that it was achieved with so little bloodshed.

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Russian energy power and foreign relations: implications for conflict and cooperation. Edited by Jeronim Perovic, Robert W. Ortung and Andreas Wenger. Abingdon: Routledge. 2009. 251pp. Index. £75.00. ISBN 978 0 41548 438 1.

The topic of Russian energy has received much attention in the last few years in both scholarly literature and the media. Russia's wielding of the so-called energy weapon has become almost a cliché: therefore, this volume is to be welcomed as a corrective to much of the misinformed hyperbole that has been written about Russia's energy. This is an edited work containing eleven substantive chapters by various experts on Russian energy and economic issues; it is divided into three parts covering the domestic dimension; Russia and global energy markets; and the policies of some major external actors toward Russia.

A key point, made in the chapter by Philip Hanson, is that Russia's recovery from a long fall in output is very hard to gauge. Nevertheless, Hanson, and some of the other authors point to the huge doubts regarding Russia's long-term capacity to supply oil and gas. The overreliance on resources for export, but also as a means of paying off key elite groups, means that diversification cannot take place. Robert Ortung emphasizes the instability of the Russian political system and its lack of inclusiveness; high energy prices help to determine this system. Similarly, Heiko Pleines's chapter stresses that politics will continue to determine the role of the state. Pleines points out though that despite the outcry over the creeping etatism in the Russian oil and gas industries, state companies are not necessarily always less efficient than private ones, citing Norway as an example. However, if there are neither stable property markets nor a well-functioning market system overall, then companies will remain inefficient. In addition, the restrictive laws on investment in strategic areas of the economy are further discouragement to foreign investment, which brings with it key technologies and know-how.

An admirable chapter by Stacy Closson seeks to disprove the fallacy that Europe is dependent on Russia for energy, and instead points to the difference in views of energy security in Brussels and Moscow. In fact, the two actors are interdependent, but Moscow has managed to create the illusion

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that Europe is dependent on continued Russian energy supplies. As Closson points out, by 2030 Europe will source most of its energy from OPEC (the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) countries, rather than from Russia. A nuanced chapter by Pami Aalto also suggests that the picture is one of interdependence and a strong economic logic that drives Europe–Russia relations. The strength of Aalto’s chapter is that it places recent concerns over energy supplies in a historical context and differentiates clearly between the very different energy needs of EU member states.

The chapter by Julia Nanay on Central Asian oil and gas offers a detailed analysis of the various pipeline projects and speculates as to the future orientation of states such as Kazakhstan, which must navigate carefully between China and Russia.

Nina Poussenkova’s chapter emphasizes the Kremlin’s failure to craft a strategy for developing the energy resources of the Russian Far East and Siberia. She points out that despite Gazprom’s muscling in on various production-sharing agreements, Russia has neglected this area in terms of resource development. Poussenkova warns that if the energy resources of the Russian Far East remain undeveloped, then the country will face fiercer competition for Central Asian oil from China and others. Indra Øverland and Kyrre Elvenes Braekhus’s analysis of Chinese policies also stresses that Russian inaction will only mean greater Chinese efforts to obtain oil and gas from the Caspian and Central Asia.

Andreas Wenger’s chapter concludes that the view of Russia as ‘an aggressive energy superpower’ is overstated, although some Russians would no doubt relish the description. He calls for a less reactive policy from both the US (Peter Rutland is very critical of US policy in his chapter) and Europe, arguing that Europe holds the key to delineating the future trajectory of energy relations with Russia, and that the US should acknowledge this.

Overall this is a thoughtful, well-researched and informative volume, although one should bear in mind that the subject matter can by its nature become easily outdated. It would also have been of interest if something had been included on the so-called BRIC—that is the economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China—not least because they have been hailed in Moscow as a basis for future energy and security partnerships. As this is a volume which is focused on the interplay between energy and security, some discussion of the BRIC and also more extensive analysis of the role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in terms of energy relations could have been attempted. Nevertheless, this book will be of great interest and use to practitioners, scholars and students alike.

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Expanding Eurasia: Russia’s European ambitions. By Janusz Bugajski. Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies. 2008. 216pp. Pb.: £32.99. ISBN 978 0 89206 545 5.

Janusz Bugajski is one of the most fluent Russia commentators on the circuit. He is also one of the strongest critics of Russia. That doesn’t make him wrong, but it gives you an idea of where he is coming from in his follow-up to *Cold peace: Russia’s new imperialism* (Greenwood Press, 2004). However, that context is barely needed, as the book’s claim is staked out nakedly on front and back covers: while the front has an image of Vladimir Putin dressed in red, a list of Soviet and Russian invasions from Poland 1919 through to Georgia 2008 and the words ‘you are the next!!!’, the back cover is more problematic still, talking of ‘transforming Europe into an appendage of the Russian sphere of influence’. Setting out your stall is one thing, but this book’s biggest problem is the same on the inside as it is on the outside: it does not know when to quit while it is ahead.

In his first two chapters, Bugajski identifies four Russian foreign policy targets: the post-Soviet States, Eastern Europe, Western Europe and the United States. An impressively damning list of Russian misdemeanours is rushed through. But the approach of endlessly lambasting Russia is draining for even the most critical of Russia analysts (perhaps not Edward Lucas though, as this book invites comparison with Lucas’s *The new Cold War: how the Kremlin menaces both Russia and the West* (Bloomsbury, 2008) more than any other).

In spite of the front cover and dotted mentions, *Expanding Eurasia* does not discuss the events of August 2008 in any depth. It was mostly written beforehand—no fault of the author. The Russia–

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