
**Reviewed by Norman M. Naimark, Stanford University**

Even if the concept of Sovietization is a bit tired and worn, the moment is a propitious one to revisit the many dimensions of the imposition of Soviet-style institutions, culture, politics, and “life itself” on the countries of Eastern Europe that fell under Moscow’s sway after World War II. Part of the story is what is called “self-Sovietization,” the process by which East European leaders and bureaucrats for their own reasons and on their own initiative modeled their behavior and policies on those of their Soviet “big brothers.” “To learn from the Soviet Union means to learn how to be victorious,” went the famous East German mantra. E. A. Rees, one of the editors of the volume under review, does a particularly good job in the introduction of breaking down Sovietization into its many component parts. However, the essays in the volume, some better, some not quite so good, generally do not seize the possibilities at hand for engaging in multiple archival research in Eastern Europe and Russia. They therefore tend to tell us much more about the particular time, place, and subject in Eastern Europe—and as such do offer “new perspectives on the postwar period,” be it the Czechoslovak auto industry (Valentina Fava) or the origins of communist Hungarian historiography (Péter Apor)—than about the process of Sovietization itself.

The collection also suffers a bit, as do many edited volumes of this sort, from a catch-as-catch-can approach to what is included. The book begins with a general piece by Tarik Cyril Amar on Sovietization as “civilizing mission” in western Ukraine, although the bulk of the volume focuses on East-Central Europe, where the problems of Sovietization have some similarities to but are essentially quite different from those of territories considered part of the Soviet Union. The book includes sections on Technological Sovietization, Consumerism and Leisure, Sovietized Rituals, Sovietization of Religion, and the Sovietization of Historiography, all interesting and important subjects. But why are these subjects included and not others? Within the sections are very specific, though quite interesting, essays. In the section on religion, for example, we find a chapter about religious denominations in Romania in the late 1940s and early 1950s (Anca Maria Șincan) and another about the Communists and Catholics in Slovenia and Yugoslavia (Matja Režek). There seems to be no principle for selecting the topics.

The remaining essays in the volume, which might appeal to individual readers, are
as follows: Matthias Uhl on Sovietization and “missile-ization” of the Warsaw Pact; Marcello Anselmo on market research in East Germany in the 1960s and 1970s; David Crowley on amateur film and photography in Poland and East Germany; Sibylle Mohrmann on images of Russians in postwar Soviet films in Berlin; Balazs Apor on the cult of Mátyás Rákosi in Hungary; Petr Roubal on the Czechoslovak “Spartiakids”; Árpád von Klimó on the Sovietization of Hungarian historiography in the early 1950s; and Maciej Gorny on postwar Czechoslovak and East German historiography.

A couple of essays deserve special mention. Roman Krakovsky’s fascinating piece on changing itineraries of the May Day ritual in Czechoslovakia tells an intricate story about the symbolic meaning of parade routes and the dilemma of crowd control. A particularly important moment in his discussion is the decision by the authorities in 1974 to move the May Day procession route from the center of Prague to the Letna esplanade to ensure their control over the crowd and the space. This is a fine example of microhistory that illuminates the larger problems of Communist rule. Jan C. Behrends’s excellent essay on the League of Polish-Soviet Friendship during the Stalinist period more directly tackles the problems of Sovietization by using the archives of the friendship society to reconstruct its many problems in attracting Polish adherents. The aborted postwar attempt by Moscow to develop a new Sovietized version of pan-Slavism figures prominently in Behrends’s story, as it does in several other essays in the volume. But none of the authors fully explore the phenomenon’s origins or demise.

Despite the book’s lack of coherence, the individual essays add to our understanding of a variety of aspects of postwar Eastern Europe. Whether they add much to our understanding of Sovietization is less certain.


Reviewed by Andrew Hurrell, Balliol College, University of Oxford

Few historians will need reminding of the role that refugees have played in many of the most important events of the Cold War. But serious studies of the historical development of refugee politics have been notably lacking. In recent years the field of forced migration has been dominated by policy analysis and, in particular, by debates on the linkages between refugees, security, and underdevelopment. Emma Haddad’s impressive study is therefore particularly welcome. Her concern is to situate the phenomenon of the refugee within the historical evolution of the system or society of sovereign states. Adopting a broadly English School approach, her core argument is that “refugees are not the consequence of a breakdown in the system of separate states, rather they are an inevitable if unanticipated part of international society. As long as there are political borders constructing separate states and creating clear definitions of insiders and outsiders, there will be refugees” (p. 7). Refugees are created when the link between state, citizen and territory is broken: “The (modern) refugee is only fully intelligible within the context of a pluralist system of states in which individual political communities fail to guarantee the content of substantive sovereignty” (p. 63).
Haddad writes from an impressively broad perspective. She first highlights the shortcomings of the existing literature across a number of disciplines. She then considers the perennial problems of definition and categorization. She uses a critical constructivist perspective to underscore the mixture of the descriptive and normative in all definitions of refugees and reminds us of the political and historically contingent character of the process by which the category of “refugee” has been constructed; for example, the Eurocentric origins of the modern idea of the refugee. She deploys a similar perspective to explore the nature of the links between refugees and different historical understandings of security. Three chapters cover the historical development of refugee politics: from roughly 1648 to 1914; during the interwar period; and through the Cold War years. Chapter 7 takes European Union refugee policy as an example of the contending forces acting on Western governments: on the one hand, the pluralist imperative to act in accordance with hard state interest and national security; on the other hand, the liberal soldarist concern with human rights and humanitarianism. The final chapter applies her analysis to post-Cold War situation and makes a series of useful suggestions for the way ahead.

Haddad’s argument is coherently organized and generally well-researched (the legal dimensions could perhaps have been treated with greater sophistication). Most importantly, she is successful in arguing that the “problem of the refugee” cannot be understood except in relation to the historically contingent ways in which political life and forms of political community have been imagined and practiced. Haddad criticizes the English School for too often assuming a static and uniform view of international society and correctly notes that concepts such as sovereignty and the state are ambiguous and dynamic. At the same time, her own view is sometimes a little teleological—for example, in her claim that “[t]he French Revolution of 1789 finished what Westphalia had started” (p. 53) or in talking about the modern notions of nationality and citizenship as “the natural extension of what was set in motion in 1648 and 1789” (p. 58). One might want to give greater prominence to state strength and state weakness as crucial variables in the story: to the gradual growth in the ability of states to control their borders and their populations, as well as to the evident importance of state weakness in many of today’s most pressing refugee crises. One might, too, give greater weight to the transformation in the role of the state and in notions of political community that help explain why population movement becomes such a very different political problem in the second half of the twentieth century—compared to, say, the mass movements of peoples and refugees that occurred in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The changing nature of political community raises some doubt about whether and how far the problem of refugees can be associated quite so exclusively with the international society of states as the dominant form of global political order. After all, any strong notion of political community will create some form of distinction between members and non-members, insiders and outsiders. The problem of how to treat those driven out of their own political community who arrive at the borders of a different political community is one that would not automatically go away with the abolition or transformation of international society. Nevertheless, this is an innovative, illuminating, and important book for anyone interested in the historical relationship between refugee politics and international society.