

former communists with no informer pasts may stand to gain politically from the revelation of the secrets of incriminated co-members of the former ruling party (the same process may be true for the opposition). The use of unitary actors goes hand in hand with other questionable assumptions like extreme party discipline and the belief that the surfacing of incriminating evidence against one member means the equal loss of face in a political sense for all the other members of the party. Moreover, Nalepa assumes that former communists are hurt in the same way by informers in their ranks as the opposition, and that actors are risk neutral, which is hard to imagine in times as turbulent as transitions.

A few methodological problems² and factual inaccuracies³ are also present in the book, but generally they are not of such importance so as to endanger the validity of the main argument. There is one crucial issue which I believe that Nalepa overlooked, namely the credibility of the autocrats at the roundtable negotiations. If they know the informers in the ranks of the dissidents, they can reveal this information any time to discredit the opposition even without a legal framework for lustration. In Nalepa's model, the autocrats have perfect information about the secret pasts of the dissidents, thus they should be able to exert considerable influence not only in the adoption of lustration legislation, but in all the other political moves of the opposition. Therefore, the communists would also need to make a credible promise that the secret information in their possession would not be released.

Despite these shortcomings, this book is definitely an important work with a theory of high promise in the field of transitional justice. Certainly, it should be read by all those interested in the empirical analysis of the institutions of transitional justice or in the history of Eastern Europe in general.

Roland Erne, *European Unions: Labor's Quest for a Transnational Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008)

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Roland Erne's *European Unions* examines the potential role of trade unions in democratizing the European Union (EU). Those interested in the evolution of a pan-European labor movement can gain much from this elegantly designed study that

2 For example, in the analysis of elite interviews, even though only one fifth of the respondents gave answers to a certain question, Nalepa makes use of this data without any reference to the possible bias involved.

3 For instance, the information about the governing party in Hungary in 2001 is incorrect (Table 1.1) and about the voting share of FiDeSz in 1990 (Appendix D).

draws on interviews with eighty-seven European labor activists, widespread travels across Europe and access to a multiplicity of union archives in a number of countries. Building on an existing literature that points to organized labor's historical role in democratizing the nation-state (Thompson 1980; Hobsbawm 1984; Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992; Florek 1994; Thompson 1994), Erne asks: "In what way and under what conditions do or can European trade unions contribute to a democratization of the EU?"

While noting the importance of uniting labor at the European level, Erne is also attentive to the substantial obstacles standing in the way of such a goal. These obstacles include: (1) "the neoliberal dynamic of the EU integration process," which effectively shields key policy areas from public pressure and reinforces the structural weakness of labor; and (2) the persistence of divergent national union traditions and regulatory environments when it comes to wage setting and welfare regimes. In fact, 'Euro-democratization' is only one of the many potential strategies available to labor in responding to the challenges of globalization, market integration and neoliberal restructuring.

Erne identifies three alternative strategies that are also available to organized labor in the EU, including: Euro-technocratization (favored by union elites with direct access to EU regulatory bodies); technocratic renationalization (embodied by competitive-corporatism); and, democratic renationalization (reaffirming the autonomy of the nation-state in an attempt to salvage the remnants of the social democratic pacts of the past). The bulk of Erne's book aims to analyze the comparative effectiveness of these strategies in influencing wage bargaining (Part II) and EU competition policy (Part III).

Erne's analysis of wage bargaining begins with the downward pressure on wages caused by the introduction of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the subsequent rise of competitive corporatism in the 1990s (including the increasing acceptance of wage concessions by workers). By the late-1990s, the tendency of this model to stimulate a race to the bottom triggered a rethinking of labor strategy. One response was to establish minimal benchmarks for wage negotiations across Europe, including benchmarks set by the Doorn group in September 1998, the European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF) in December 1998 and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) in December 2000.

Unfortunately, Erne shows how such complex benchmarking criteria simply tended to reproduce the technocratic logics of EU governance, marginalizing rank-and-file activists in the process and yielding low compliance rates as a result. More promising for EU-wide wage bargaining, according to Erne, has been the cross-border mobilization of unionists in support of a coordinated minimum wage and

innovative organizing by the European Federation of Building and Wood Workers' (EFBWW) to set standards in the increasingly transnationalized construction sector.

Erne also found that a Euro-democratization strategy was more effective than a Euro-technocratization strategy in politicizing EU competition policy. The broad mobilization of workers in the *ABB Alstom* merger and its politicization served to partially offset job losses in 2000-2001 and saved the company from bankruptcy in 2003. Conversely, the Euro-technocratization strategy adopted by the same unions in challenging the merger of Canada's *Alcan*, France's *Pechiney* and Switzerland's *Algroup* in the aluminum sector met only with short-term success and ultimately failed to curb ambitious restructuring plans.

Regardless of their preferred strategies, trade unions are increasingly being driven towards the Europeanization of organizing by the supranational reorganization of firms and the contradictions inherent in EU integration according to Erne. The existence of statutory EU-wide institutions, like the European Works' Councils (EWC), acts as a further catalyst to transnational action. The related mobility of labor activists in the EU also encourages greater cross-border mobilization and the forging of wider networks needed for sustained collective action.

Erne thus effectively problematizes accounts that take 'national differences' as an insurmountable obstacle to working class mobilization. 'National' frameworks are only important, he claims, in so far as there is "a congruence between nationality and [a worker's] economic and social interest" (p.196). As the congruence between the national and the economic unravels, activist networks, migrant workers, EWCs, European trade-union federations and cross-border mobilizations all serve to breakdown the appeal of narrow national frames. The prospects for a Euro-democratization strategy are thus "rather encouraging," though it requires that "EU-level politics be seen not just as a threat [by labor activists] but, rather, as a decisive battlefield in the fight for social justice and egalitarian democracy" (p.202).

While the book provides many crucial insights into the broad challenges confronting the emergence of a pan-European labor movement, it also leaves ample room for further study. Though Erne's argument is persuasive, it is possible that his study suffers from a case-selection bias that tends to favor the beneficial effects of democratic over technocratic and European over national labor strategies. Similarly, *European Unions* was published prior to the global financial crisis and the resulting recrudescence of right-wing populism and xenophobic rhetoric within the EU. Finally, the book tends to reproduce the frequent bracketing-out of the global by scholars of the EU, thus undercutting more internationalist, cosmopolitan, feminist and postcolonial alternative frames for imagining transnational labor solidarities. Nevertheless, Erne's contribution

highlights many of the on-going challenges confronting those wishing to close the EU's democratic deficit.

Josette Baer (ed.), *From Post-Communism toward the Third Millennium* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2011)

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From Post Communism toward the Third Millennium is a collection of contributions whose origins are different in style and content. The main aim of the book can be found concisely within the last part of the title 'toward the third millennium'. It offers a consumptive panorama after a period where most of the political transitions in the area were either resolved or had reached a conclusion defined by the membership in NATO or the EU, or had simply come to a standstill.

The book offers to this purpose a sort of requalification of the term Eastern Europe (p.7) in order to differentiate it from Central Europe, the fate of which is signed in fact by the integration in the above mentioned supra-national organizations. As the editor puts it, the whole post-communist Europe must be divided in three regions consisting of the Visegrad Region, the South Eastern region or the Balkans and the 'hegemonic or imperial region' of the post soviet countries (p.21). The back bone of the book are the contributions made by the editor, Josette Baer, who has signed the introduction and a chapter on transition in Belorussia, while other authors origins are mainly from the countries considered in the volume. The book offers a panorama of case studies concentrated mostly on three general lines: political transition or missing transition; ethnic identity and political developments; and economic transition and development. Apart from the theoretical prospective, the books is enriched by the case studies the authors have included. From this perspective, the book offers a valuable tool for understanding the political contexts and evolution in some of the countries of the chosen area. The book consists of a foreword and an introduction that give the reader a brief panorama and a theoretical prospective from which the text can be read. The long introduction by Baer defines the theoretical boundaries in which the cases are considered while trying to introduce the reader to the specificities of the region, especially in relation to the wave of colored revolution which affected the post soviet area in the mid 2000's (p. 13).

The book is so sub-divided across three broad lines with two or three chapters each. The first contains two chapters on Ukraine, authored by Walzenbach and Kuzyk, which offer, respectively, a comparison of the European governance system and transformations within the country, while the second one points mainly to the quest