

Professor Brown and the other distinguished contributors to this volume have significantly advanced our understanding of the role that ideas and open debate played in the rapid progression of political change in the USSR and the Russian Federation in the 1980s and 1990s. Concise and well written, this volume will serve as a very useful addition to reading lists in courses dealing with this period of Russian political history.

Robert H. Donaldson, University of Tulsa

Gros, Daniel and Alfred Steinherr. *Economic Transition in Central and Eastern Europe: Planting the Seeds*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. xii + 362 pp. \$100.00. ISBN 0-521-82638-1.

If this book were available in paperback, I would seriously consider adopting it for my undergraduate senior seminar on transition economies. If only available in hardback, given the relatively dated sources—only three from 2002, most others before 2000—and the disproportionate share of the analysis focusing on international trade and finance issues, the book is overpriced for the undergraduate student market. It is, however, quite handy to have as a source of information to supplement lectures on transition economies. For example, chapter 9 examines the costs and benefits of transition economies joining the European Union. Chapter 6 provides a detailed discussion of German unification. Throughout the book, “boxes” provide appropriate analyses of select topics: constructing a gravity index, estimating a gravity model, the loss of tariff revenues from free trade, the neoclassical growth model, the optimum size of a club, Russia’s loans-for-shares program, monetary overhang, and multiple equilibria in corruption are a few of the ones I found most helpful. Appendices at the end of chapters are also quite useful in highlighting particular technical points (information and methodologies) that complement material presented in the text.

The book has many strengths. It is clearly and concisely written, and much of it could be easily understood without any formal training of economics. This is quite remarkable, considering the nature of some of the topics covered in the text. Few important topics receive short shrift. The graphics (figures) are excellent and both the graphics (figures) and tables are quite effective in illustrating points made in the text. The Introduction does an excellent job of motivating and summarizing the subsequent chapters. I would certainly recommend the book to anyone who would like to learn about the transition process in Central and Eastern Europe. When I look back through the book, I find much in the way of highlighted text and notes in the margins, two signs that, for me, the text has included interesting points and potential for animated discussion.

My guess is that the book will not be satisfying to specialists on the Soviet or Russian economy. It is here where the sources and topics covered are most inadequate. However, since the book is intended to be a more general analysis of transition, this is not considered a serious drawback—just a notice to potential readers.

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Papava, Vladimer. *Necroeconomics: The Political Economy of Post-Communist Capitalism: Lessons from Georgia*. New York: iUniverse, Inc., 2005. ix + 201 pp. \$18.95. ISBN 0-595-34915-3.

This book is wide ranging, dealing with manifold issues of transition in post-Communist societies, from taxation and political reform to the role of international financial organizations and privatization policies. Papava is one of the best-informed Georgian economists and himself a former minister of economics in the Georgian government. This gives him the ability to discuss the practical