

Migrating Merchants stands out among other studies regarding Sephardim as merchants because Poettering applies a multi-perspective approach that does not reduce them to just the religious or ethnic aspect of their existence. Additionally, she avoids the pitfall of treating Sephardim as passive victims of stigmatization, persecution, and segregation. These phenomena do feature in her analysis; however, Poettering always reconsiders established narratives and corrects them when necessary or discards them altogether.

She examines her case studies carefully and meticulously, always paying attention to how intricately interwoven the social, religious, and demographic spheres of mercantile life are. Albeit being detailed, the analyses are never overwhelming, and Poettering ensures that her readers – seasoned scholars and students new to the field alike – understand her approach and use of the sources. The English translation will make her valuable research accessible to a wider audience and give her the attention she so well deserves.

Note:

- 1 German original: Handel, Nation und Religion. Kaufleute zwischen Hamburg und Portugal im 17. Jahrhundert, Göttingen 2013.

John Connelly: From People into Nations: A History of Eastern Europe, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020, 956 pp.

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John Connelly's *From People into Nations: A History of Eastern Europe* is a welcomed addition to broad narratives concerning Eastern Europe (or East Central Europe – a term that Connelly uses interchangeably with Eastern Europe). Geographically Connelly is looking at the band of countries between imperial Russia and Turkey in the east and Prussian and Austrian Germany in the west from the late eighteenth century to the present. The book joins earlier works on modern and Eastern Europe, such as Mark Mazower's *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* and the more recent Timothy Snyder's *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*, as well as the more specific works on the Habsburg monarchy by Pieter Judson and Steven Beller.[1] These earlier histories emphasize ideology, territory, politics, and even national indifference, whereas Connelly returns in his narrative to nations, nationalism, and nationality conflicts as the driving forces of historical developments – arguments that were more common in the writings of historians such as Robert Kann.

The 800-page book is divided into 5 parts and 27 chapters, following the “emergency of national movements” in the first part to “from communism to illiberalism” in

the last part. Two of the five parts include maps, one from 1800 and the other from 2000, which “tell the basic story: a shift from simplicity to complexity, from one small and three large multinational powers to more than twenty national states” (p. 3). Connelly puts a great deal of emphasis on language as a criterion for nationness. He examines Joseph II’s decree in 1784 to make German the administrative language in his realm; Ján Kollár’s arrival at a German university in 1817 and his interest in the ideas of Johann Herder; the liberal and national revolutions of 1848–1849; the Congress of Berlin in 1878 and the beginning of national self-determination; the Linz Program of 1882, which gave birth to a variety of nationalisms, including fascism; the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914 by the nationalist Gavrilo Princip; the nationalist-inspired fascist movements; the Nazi and Soviet empires; the Holocaust; the Cold War; and the year 1989 and its aftermath.

From People into Nations is a beautifully written history that integrates the stories of various national groups from the region into one narrative. I highly recommend it as a source for readers interested in specific events or individuals. Connelly skilfully explains the history of the region, the main historical actors, and the driving ideologies during the last two centuries. It is a great reference source as well as a general narrative concerning the history of Eastern Europe and nationalism.

In this book, Connelly tries to redirect discussions about nationalism and nations in Eastern Europe since 1800. He takes issue with the standard works on nationalism by scholars such as Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, Ernest Gellner, and others,

whom he refers to as promoting “a global definition of the term [nationalism]” (p. 797). Connelly believes that these theorists of nationalism do not place enough emphasis on language and that capitalism did not produce nationalism in Eastern Europe because, as Connelly argues, capitalism only helped reshape and spread national ideas and identities that already existed. For Connelly, what generated the ideas of nationalism and national identities was “the consuming fear of oblivion” (p. 798), which is a theme throughout the book.

Even though Connelly never directly engages with additional works on the “spatial turn”, his book joins the conversation by focusing specifically on the geographical space of Eastern Europe and its own peculiarities. He argues that “nationalism was not contingent, but rather situational: its strength depending above all on the level of perceived threat to a particular ethnicity” (p. 790). For Connelly, the region of Eastern Europe was defined by nations and nationalism. They are what made the region unique. The global theorists (Anderson, Hobsbawm, Gellner, etc.), as already pointed out, fail to explain nationalism in Eastern Europe because nationalism in this region was situational. Here one is reminded of Snyder’s arguments for looking at the “space” of what he calls the bloodlands.

Connelly takes a clear position against the more recent historical trend towards explanations of national indifference, even though he recognizes how that work has enhanced our knowledge of Eastern Europe. Connelly’s interest in language as a dominant player in national identities and national movements runs counter to arguments by Judson, Tara Zahra, and others, who point out that everyday people,

especially in border regions, were often multilingual and indifferent to the goals of nationalist groups. Connelly's book demonstrates that that is perhaps not correct: language and nationalist arguments clearly played various roles in forming identities and policies.

This book should be read by scholars and students of the region. Its size may deter some readers, but Connelly's prose is elegant. Connelly's breadth of knowledge is obvious, and the reader needs to pay attention to his arguments. In the current climate that has steered the conversation away from nations and nation-states and instead emphasizes non-national stories, it is good to be reminded of how nations, nationalism, nationality conflicts, and national self-determination dominated discussions, policies, and identities in Eastern Europe during the modern era.

Note:

- 1 M. Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*, New York 1999; T. Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*, New York 2010.

Adom Getachew: Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019, 274 S.

Reviewed by
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tion in a (supposedly) post-imperial world means. Surely, many new books will take up the concept in the coming years. But rather than a narrow focus on (post-)Soviet history alone, authors would be wise to consider what self-determination meant in different, non-European contexts during the twentieth century. A book that could inspire commentators, political scientists, and historians would be Adom Getachew's *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* – an analysis of the concept of self-determination in an unequal world.

In this ambitious book, the political theorist and assistant professor of political science at the University of Chicago analyses the political thought of black anti-colonial nationalists during the height of decolonization in the twentieth century. Published in 2019 by Princeton University Press, the work is designed as a study of political theory with an explicit claim to engage with historical scholarship. This hybrid form characterizes the book and is one of its great strengths. As Getachew discusses concepts such as post-colonial cosmopolitanism, transnational networks of anti-colonial thought, and post-colonial development, the work can (and should) be used as a bridge between political theory and (primarily intellectual and global) history. Getachew elegantly shows how political theory can be historically aware and cautious of generalizations while still challenging assumptions about the nature of multifaceted historical developments such as decolonization, globalization, and nationalism in the twentieth century.

In *Worldmaking after Empire*, Getachew studies “the global projects of decolonization black Anglophone anticolonial critics

The current war in Ukraine has brought up discussions about what self-determina-