

“the Czech question”—the subject of profound works for nearly two centuries—asks matters that sound universal. That might be attainment of what the first Czech premier, the free-marketeering Václav Klaus sought in the 1990s: that the new Czech Republic be a “normal country.” Normal is: rampant corruption, non-democratic and possibly counterproductive expert governments, and uncertainty about political values. Those problems are now rather generic. That is a dispiriting but necessary analysis. We can be glad all the more that Přibáň continues to keep his sharp, astute watch on matters Czech, and universal.

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Youth Movements and Elections in Eastern Europe. By Olena Nikolayenko. Cambridge Series in Contentious Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. xii, 260 pp. Appendix. Notes. Index. Tables. £75.00, hard bound. doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.334

In the public imagination, youth and protest go together: when we think of social movements, from Nanterre to Tiananmen to Tahrir, we tend to think of young people. After socialism, however, the connection has been far from self-evident. Low birth rates and high emigration have made it difficult for younger protesters to find strength in numbers. Social protest has often been driven by those whose ongoing working lives were disrupted by market-oriented reforms or stripped of social protections they had taken for granted. Political opposition movements, likewise, have often been dominated by veteran activists who cut their teeth battling (or defending) the old regime. More recently, political protest has once again displayed a youthful face in countries as diverse as Macedonia, Slovakia, Romania, or Russia, but the emergence of political youth movements has been anything but straightforward.

Olena Nikolayenko’s book studies one subset of such movements: organized opposition groups pursuing regime change through elections in the name of democratization. Beyond the general points she is making, the author is clearly rooting for democratic change and interested in distilling practical lessons. With this in mind, Nikolayenko’s focus is on the strategy and tactics of movement organizers regarding recruitment, mobilization, and political transformation, as well as on their interaction with political allies and opponents. Perhaps most significantly, she is interested in the cross-national diffusion of ideas and tactical know-how. Following introductory chapters that set out the political context in the countries under consideration and provide quantitative data on youth mobilization in protest and elections, she presents five national case studies, each focusing on one or two youth movements (or several small ones, in the case of Azerbaijan). The seminal case she discusses is that of the Otpor movement in Serbia, which was crucial to the ouster of President Slobodan Milošević. The remaining country chapters discuss movements active in four post-Soviet republics in the 2000s: Belarus (Zubr), Georgia (Kmara), Ukraine (“black” Pora and “yellow” Pora), and Azerbaijan (Dalga, Maqam, Yeni Fikir, and Yokh). Nikolayenko covers formative local and national conflicts, predecessor organizations, and the movements’ own successful or failed campaigns. She draws on semi-structured interviews with key movement figures that are impressive in overall numbers, though unevenly distributed among countries (eight for Azerbaijan, twenty for Ukraine). She also systematizes online and offline media sources and the gray literature produced by the movements themselves as well as local and foreign think tanks and international organizations. This is a useful effort. It can be surprisingly

difficult to find detailed and reliable information even on Otpor's relatively well-known campaigns, let alone the much more obscure and abortive activities of Yokh, be it in western or local languages. Thus, Nikolayenko's meticulous synthesis makes the book a valuable first-stop reference even for those who do not share her interests in movement tactics and cross-border contacts.

Those interests are what propels the author's narrative, which draws heavily on her interviews. Strictly speaking, the book's central sources are retrospective assessments of movements by prominent members of those movements. While Nikolayenko is at pains to explain that government officials are much harder to approach for interviews, I do not see that as a serious shortcoming of the book. Much as it would be fascinating to be privy to internal discussions on how to deal with challenger organizations, such information is hard to glean even from interviews, and the author does a good job of reconstructing it based on decrees, public pronouncements, and observable actions, in addition to first-hand material, such as an interview with an activist for the loyalist Ireli movement in Azerbaijan. What I missed much more was the perspective of the silent majority of movement participants, those further removed from key organizing positions, as well as that of sympathetic or indifferent bystanders. This might have helped gain a richer view of internal conflict, assess the extent to which leaders' pronouncements are *ex post* rationalizations, and also weigh the importance of cultural conventions and dimensions of mobilization beyond the strategic. Coverage of such topics varies between chapters: conflicts inside movements are covered in greater detail for Ukraine; socio-cultural factors are discussed more explicitly for Azerbaijan. Nikolayenko argues that strategic and tactical decisions can matter regardless of cultural context. This is plausible to a degree, but it is precisely to make that kind of argument that one needs historical depth rather than abstraction. The structural constraints she does mention are intriguing and open up further questions: why, for example, are university rectors in Azerbaijan expected to do ideological work, unlike their colleagues in Leonid Kuchma's Ukraine? What factors, other than wages, account for police loyalty to incumbent regimes? Why did the Georgian state abolish subsidized student housing (ruling out eviction as a retaliatory measure)? What shapes expectations of gender roles within protest movements, and how does involvement in protest alter such expectations? Such questions are difficult to address using the thin descriptions favored by political science, but exploring them would make the comparison even richer, and advance our understanding of the relationship between political movements and long-term social change, not just short-term political outcomes. But that is a task for another book.

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Social Imaginaries of the State and Central Authority in Polish Highland Villages, 1999–2005. By Anna Malewska-Szałygin. Trans. Aniela Korzeniowska and Stefan Sikora. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017. x, 299 pp. Appendix. Bibliography. £61.99, hard bound.
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Students of Polish politics and society have become increasingly disturbed by the prevalence of sentiments and opinions incompatible with modern liberal democracy. Since the Polish economy has performed consistently well in the last two decades, the rise of populism, exemplified by the Law and Justice Party (PiS), the ruling party since 2015, cannot readily be attributed to declining material conditions. Anna