the book: “Let us therefore return to questions of definition.” As important as it is to clarify concepts like “postcolonial,” the constant reframing weakens the argument. Nevertheless, Adam Kola has produced a valuable archaeology of cultural and political orientations in Communist Poland. Eastern Europeanists interested in the global turn will benefit from acquainting themselves with this work.

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Falk Flade’s book adds to a growing literature that merges Russian, Eurasian, and east European studies with the history of technology and, in particular, energy history. Recent years have seen a steady stream of historical publications spanning a wide range of energy sources and geographical contexts, from nuclear energy and electricity systems in the Soviet Union and its east European satellite states to national and transnational studies of oil and gas pipeline construction east of and across the Iron Curtain. Flade is interested in all of these topics, revisiting them using new empirical sources while developing new perspectives. He is especially interested in transnational energy developments as they appeared from Poland’s horizon.

The book consists of four main parts. First, Flade sketches the history of pre-war Poland’s energy infrastructures (Chapter 2). This is the shortest chapter, but it is valuable in setting the stage for subsequent developments. The territory of what became the independent Polish Republic after World War I rested on substantial oil and gas reserves and there were far-reaching plans already at this time to materially unify the country by constructing nation-wide gas and electricity systems. The economic downturn from around 1930, however, appears to have thwarted these ambitions.

Second, the author traces the new, transnationally-oriented attempts to develop Poland’s and the eastern bloc’s energy infrastructures in the post-war decades (Chapters 3–5). Flade shows that the severe energy deficits of Hungary, in particular, became a starting point for thinking transnationally about energy supply in the communist world. This eventually resulted in the construction of an intricate electricity network in the eastern bloc, dubbed the “Mir” system, which spanned most Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) member states. The Danube, with its immense hydropower potential, and the construction of a transnational high-voltage transmission hub in Mukachevo in western Ukraine became focal points for cooperation in electricity. That cooperation subsequently spilled over into the oil and gas industries, where the famous “Druzhba” oil pipeline system and the less well-known “Soyuz” gas pipeline became the main showcases in highlighting socialist international cooperation. Flade shows that cooperation was in no way friction-free, however. On the contrary, virtually every cooperative project was plagued by radical controversies over system fundamentals, project designs, the division of labor between the involved countries and organizations, and, in particular, the economic dimension of the projects. There were endless struggles over pricing mechanisms, exchange rates, and other key issues. An important point here is that CMEA-internal energy cooperation became closely coupled with developments in the western world,
in several ways. For example, the pricing formulas for trading energy among the communist countries were based on world market prices (that is, western capitalist price trends). Also, serious delays and failures to live up to contracts in the socialist international supply chains paved the way for imports of many components and equipment from the west.

Third, Flade looks into the oil crises of the 1970s and their impact on energy infrastructures in the eastern bloc (Chapter 6). This is perhaps the most interesting part of the book. Flade takes a holistic approach, viewing the energy sector in its entirety and pointing to the complex interaction between coal, oil, gas, nuclear energy, and electricity grids. He shows how the supposedly “Western” crises in oil supply, as they were initially thought of in the east, caused havoc both to east European oil imports from the Soviet Union and, more generally, to the CMEA’s vulnerable cooperative structures that had now gained some momentum. The main response strategy that emerged was to extend existing cooperation into the nuclear field, while also radically scaling up the “Mir” transnational electricity grid. A very large number of nuclear power plants were planned and built across the region—in close cooperation between CMEA member states. Nuclear cooperation took the form of not only international supply chains involving institutes and factories in different countries, but also thousands of Polish construction workers being sent to nuclear power sites in the Soviet Union, where they helped to construct not only power stations, but entire nuclear towns.

Fourth and last, Flade reflects on the development in the post-communist era, in which, needless to say, cross-border energy issues have remained high on the political agenda (Chapter 7).

The broad scope of this book should make it a useful reference for anyone interested in Cold War and east European energy history. Although the title indicates that the book is about Poland, it covers much more than that, taking into account the entire CMEA region from a transnational point of view.

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Building on his previous research on the Lutheran Church in East Germany, Robert Goeckel seeks to answer several research questions relating to church-state relations in communist systems by focusing on the former Soviet republics of Estonia and Latvia, the two western republics that had national Lutheran churches. Notably, this means that Goeckel omits a focus on Lithuania, a country similar to Poland in that the Catholic Church has played a vital social and cultural role in the nation’s history. Latvia, however, does have a historic Catholic presence in the southeast region of Latgāle, so the Catholic dimension of the story is covered to some degree. This allows for a comparison of the Lutheran and Catholic churches under Soviet rule that is often revealing. While the book offers several new insights that add to our understanding of church-state relations in the Soviet Union, the most impressive strength of the book is the depth of research conducted by Goeckel in official state archives in the Baltic region and Russia. The author has consulted hundreds of documents in the archives and these primary sources make up the majority of notes provided for each chapter.