

for decades. Cristian Vasile has shown how the Church's links to fascism allowed the Romanian Communist Party to compromise and subordinate it during the immediate postwar years, and research by Oliver Gillet and Lucian Leuștean has demonstrated how willing the Church was to collaborate with the communist regime. Nevertheless, Popa's history is groundbreaking in several respects. By placing the Holocaust at the center of his narrative, Popa explains how earlier misdemeanors motivated Church leaders to lie about the past, to restrict access to archives, and to seek the closest possible ties with the state. Details about clerical perpetrators emerged only when it was politically expedient for the Church, such as when the Romanian Church used accusations about Valerian Trifa's involvement in the Holocaust to discredit him as the leader of Romanian Orthodox Christians in the United States and to replace him with their own appointee. Denying the Church's guilt resulted in a contradictory stance, in which "the Church presented itself as a victim of Communism, and portrayed itself in a glorious light in relation to its involvement in the Holocaust" (197). Antisemitic nationalism characterized Romanian Orthodox discourse under state socialism and has continued to do so since the 1989 revolution, when right-wing bishops and theologians, some but not all of whom were active anti-Semites, have been promoted as Orthodox heroes in religious publications.

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of Popa's story is the response of the Jewish community. Although Jewish leaders were and are well aware of the Church's complicity in the Holocaust, they have refrained from calling it to account and instead have focused on building bridges between the two religious communities. In return for its silence, the Church and state worked to create an image of "religious harmony" (116), stifling extreme expressions of antisemitism, allowing Jews to emigrate, and giving them some degree of independence in managing religious affairs. Similarly, although the state of Israel publicly reproached the Romanian President for denying the Holocaust in 2003, it continues to maintain a positive relationship with the Romanian Orthodox Church. The Church plays an important symbolic role in Romanian-Israeli diplomacy, Israel encourages Romanian Orthodox pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and no one talks about the war.

Although at times it slips into broad, unjustified generalizations, such as the claim that "in the countryside . . . the sermons and advice of village priests were followed without hesitation" (42), or the characterization of Romanian state socialism as a "totalitarian regime" (129), most of Popa's analysis is careful and precise. His deconstruction of the handful of articles in which Church writers have rewritten history is particularly valuable. The story that Popa has to tell of a powerful religious institution using its social and political influence to misrepresent the past for political gain is an important one that is crucial for understanding the relationship between religion, politics, and history in contemporary eastern Europe.

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***The Eugenic Fortress: The Transylvanian Saxon Experiment in Interwar Romania.*** By Tudor Georgescu. CEU Press Studies in the History of Medicine, Vol. VII. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2016. x, 279 pp. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Figures. \$55.00, hard bound.  
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The Transylvanian Saxon minority has become the subject of diverse studies with respect to issues related to culture, ethnic identity, the relationship to Germany, and

especially the Nazi regime. In this book, Tudor Georgescu raises a novel question as to how far the elites of this minority created eugenic discourses and agendas, and then he answers this question. With the term “Transylvanian Saxon experiment,” Georgescu describes a generic example of eugenics practiced by the Transylvanian Saxon elites who in the interwar period increasingly correlated eugenic concepts with an autochthonous fascist movement. In doing so, they created the image of a “eugenic fortress’ that was intended to distinguish the Saxons from ethnic ‘others’” (11). This study considers a broad stretch from 1885 to 1944, but focuses primarily on the period from 1918 up to 1940.

In the analytical approach that Georgescu chooses to pursue, he presents the protagonists of the Transylvanian Saxon eugenic discourse and fascist movement and emphasizes their biographies, agency, and interrelations. Following this plan, the book is structured into six chapters: the first addresses the key protagonists in Saxon eugenics (such as Heinrich Siegmund, Alfred Csallner, Fritz Fabritius, and Wilhelm Schunn), their engagement in the Saxon community, and their networks with German racial anthropologists. The second and third chapters are dedicated to Alfred Csallner, his eugenic proposals and activities in founding and leading several welfare services within the Transylvanian Saxon community. A large part of the book focuses on Fabritius and his leading role in the “Self-Help” organization whose eugenic agenda and operation as a fascist movement in the 1930s is addressed especially in the fifth chapter. Similar to Csallner’s welfare projects, eugenic proposals within the Self-Help organization only included positive measures, such as premiums for families with qualitative progeny whose quality should be attested by medical and other examinations. Georgescu argues that minority elites tried to transfer their eugenics concepts into community policies using fascist or National Socialist organizational structures as their vehicles, and he remarks that the sources he consulted do not provide clear evidence as to the extent to which these plans were put into practice. In the last chapter the author briefly refers to the developments after 1940 that were marked by the removal of the interwar protagonists from their leadership positions within the Saxon community, although their eugenic/racial-hygiene ideas did not change in any essential way.

The particular merit of this book is that it sharpens the eye for examining eugenic aspirations and the use of a eugenic/racial hygienic language among the Transylvanian Saxon elites. Tudor Georgescu’s intention is more than the reconstruction of the eugenic narrative, however. As announced in the book’s introduction, this case study aims at contributing to closing a gap in the research on eugenics by addressing a neglected matter: the eugenics agendas of a minority and their attempts at implementation without nation-state structures. But, contrary to what Georgescu suggests, neither has European eugenics been for the most part investigated with respect to “projects proposed and empowered by nation-states” (9); nor is research missing about eugenics concepts that have been elaborated by minorities. In the last several decades, scholarship has dealt with feminist, socialist, anarchist, or Catholic eugenics and provided a wide range of case studies that make clear that eugenics does not necessarily need the state’s empowerment. Yet, numerous studies on Jewish eugenics provide a fruitful frame of reference for a comparison of eugenics concepts offered by minority elites.

This study is poorly contextualized in the scholarly research with regard not only to eugenics but also minorities, given that conceptual and theoretical instruments of available minority studies are missing. Finally, the minority issue can only be examined in correlation with both the society in which a minority resides and the external homeland (if there is one, as is the case with Transylvanian Saxons). In order to buttress the argument of a “eugenic fortress,” one expects the book to make readers

familiar with Saxon forms of organization, their relationship to the dominant society, and to other minorities. Ethnic “others” and their relation to Saxons, however, are only marginally considered in this study (for example, the few references to mixed marriage), while the limited consideration of the Jews is disproportional to the fundamental position of antisemitism in the self-definition of the Saxon elites.

Nevertheless, the extensive archival research carried out by Tudor Georgescu, especially regarding the welfare institutions founded or directed by Csellner, is helpful for examining bio-political agendas, keeping in mind, however, that not every form of bio-politics and biological determinism is identical with eugenics.

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***Performative Contradiction and the Romanian Revolution.*** By Jolan Bogdan. Critical Perspectives on Theory, Culture, and Politics. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. ix, 218 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. £85.00, hard bound, £27.99, e-book. doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.235

The Romanian Revolution of 1989 remains a fascinating research topic because of its unexpected inception, violent unfolding, and ambiguous outcome. If violence is the fundamental characteristic of a revolution, then the 1989 regime changes in east central Europe (ECE) were not “authentic” revolutions, inasmuch as violence was almost non-existent, with the conspicuous exception of Romania. Timothy Garton Ash, for instance, wrote at the time: “Nobody hesitated to call what happened in Romania a revolution. After all, it really looked like one: angry crowds on the streets, tanks, government buildings in flames, the dictator put up against a wall and shot” (Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague*, 1993, 20). Yet, what happens after a certain event can change one’s perspective on that event, and this is what happened with regard to the Romanian revolution. In his concluding remarks to an international conference celebrating ten years since the 1989 revolutions, the same Garton Ash stated bluntly: “Curiously enough the moment when people in the West finally thought there was a revolution was when they saw television pictures of Romania: crowds, tanks, shooting, blood in the streets. They said: ‘That—we know *that* is a revolution,’ and of course the joke is that it was the only one that wasn’t” (Garton Ash, in Sorin Antohi and Vladimir Tismăneanu, eds., *Between Past and Future: The Revolutions of 1989 and Their Aftermath*, 2000, 395).

Given the contradictory truths that surround the Romanian Revolution of 1989, which the statements cited above perfectly illustrate, Jolan Bogdan’s book should be welcome as a major contribution to the understanding of the authenticity issue in relation to this particular event. The author convincingly argues that performative contradiction is a useful analytic tool for examining complex, contradictory, and bloody events such as the 1989 regime change in Romania. Most prominently, Bogdan employs performative contradiction to address the discrepancy between performance and proposition with regard to accusations of inauthenticity against the Romanian Revolution of 1989 (8). The author engages with relevant, primarily philosophical texts that criticize or even dismiss the revolutionary nature of the 1989 events in Romania (8–9). At the same time, she makes clear that such an analysis is not meant to defend the Romanian revolution but to examine such accusations, which in many cases “arise from the presence of an internal inconsistency, which is deemed intolerable, or worse, intentionally committed and in bad faith” (18).