

Svetlana Frunchak. *Studying the Land, Contesting the Land: A Select Historiographic Guide to Modern Bukovina.* Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies, 2108. Volume 1: Essay (61 pp.) and Volume 2: Notes (64 pp.). Pittsburgh: Center for Russian and East European Studies, 2011. Paper.

Svetlana Frunchak sells herself short by insisting that she has compiled a historiographic guide to “modern Bukovina,” whatever this may be. This concise study comprises far more than that: a detailed overview of largely everything written about the area during the different epochs of the region’s relatively short, but turbulent history.

Bukovina first appeared on the map when the Habsburgs gave this name to the area they had more or less cheated out of Ottoman hands in 1774-75. Initially it had been administratively joined to the neighbouring crownland of Galicia, but it acquired autonomous status in 1861 and thus became Austria’s smallest, easternmost crownland. After World War I and the subsequent demise of the Habsburg Empire, Bukovina became part of Greater Romania in 1919, only to be divided into a Soviet northern part and a Romanian southern part after World War II. Once the respective communist regimes had been ousted, Northern Bukovina became part of independent Ukraine, while Southern Bukovina remained Romanian.

Bukovina with its multitude of religions and languages has often been a synonym for tolerance and multiculturalism, but was—and still is—subject to various historical interpretations. Frunchak manages to provide a remarkably clear and detailed overview of all this in a sixty-one-page essay. Her work is divided into the chapters “Bibliographic Aids and Historiographic Studies,” “General Historical Studies,” “Studies of the Austrian Period,” “Studies of the First World War,” “Studies of the Interwar Romanian Period,” “Studies of the Second World War,” and “The Soviet Period.” The author states in her abstract that the study is not only intended as an introductory guide to the historical literature on Bukovina, but is also meant to demonstrate how historiography became a tool for political and cultural controversy in a borderland region.

In the chapter “General Historical Studies,” Frunchak places the spotlight on the general interpretations given to Bukovinian history by authors with Austrian/German, Romanian, Slavic/Ukrainian, Jewish, and Soviet agendas, an indispensable, but challenging task, which she masters admirably well. Of special value is her observation that the different camps have embraced the merits of the cultural diversity of Habsburg Bukovina in their present-day views, but underneath still cherish their traditional,

nationalist positions. This is something that fresh researchers of the region should keep in mind.

The chapter “Studies of the Austrian Period, 1774–1914” presents an excellent overview of the source material published after that period, but could have been somewhat more elaborate regarding primary sources from the era itself. A report by governor Gabriel Splény from 1778 is briefly discussed, but similar reports by landowner Basilius Balsch (1780) and civil servant Ion Budai-Deleanu (1813) are only mentioned in the notes. Since these documents are cornerstones of conflicting nationalist interpretations of Bukovinian history and, therefore, resonate until today, they deserve more attention. More notably absent—even in the notes—is Karl-Emil Franzos, who was a reporter and a novelist rather than a historian and whose *Aus Halb-Asien. Kulturbilder aus Galizien, der Bukowina, Südrussland und Rumänien* [Semi-Asia: Cultural Images from Galicia, Bukovina, Southern Russia and Romania, 1876] admittedly does not cover Bukovina exclusively. Still, Franzos’s observations were such a commercial success at the time and shaped Bukovina’s internal as well as its external image to such extent that they should have a prominent place in any historiographic compendium to the region.

Of particular value in this work is the author’s decision to include separate chapters on both World Wars: the First leading to the end of Austrian Bukovina as such, and the Second with its deportations leading to a dramatic demographic change. Puzzling, however, is the way Frunchak handles Bukovinian historiography regarding the timeframe between 1945 and 1991. As the title of the respective section indicates, the focus here lies exclusively on the Soviet period and thus refers solely to Northern Bukovina. Southern Bukovina may initially have been ignored by historians in communist Romania because of territorial sensitivities on the side of the brotherly Soviet neighbour, but in Nicolae Ceaușescu’s era of communist nationalism, the region with its renowned painted monasteries obtained a prominent place in the politico-historical discourse, which deserves to be addressed.

A matter of practical nature is the absence of a list of contents, an alphabetical index and/or a bibliography. Although the notes in Volume 2 of the guide have been meticulously edited, the reader needs a PDF version of the work to browse for specific titles or authors.

These minor issues, however, should not distract the reader from the great value of Frunchak’s research and analysis. This guide offers students of Bukovina not only a remarkable compass to navigate their way through the mind-boggling heaps of literature on offer, but also provides the necessary caveats for possible political/nationalist agendas among them. Whereas especially German, Romanian, and Ukrainian bibliographies of

Bukovina have so far not been intercommunicating vessels, Frunchak's knowledge of all three languages enables her to bring all these sources together. With scholars such as David Rechter, Markus Winkler, and Kurt Scharr, Frunchak represents a new school of Bukovina research that goes beyond groupist thinking and nationalist justifications.

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