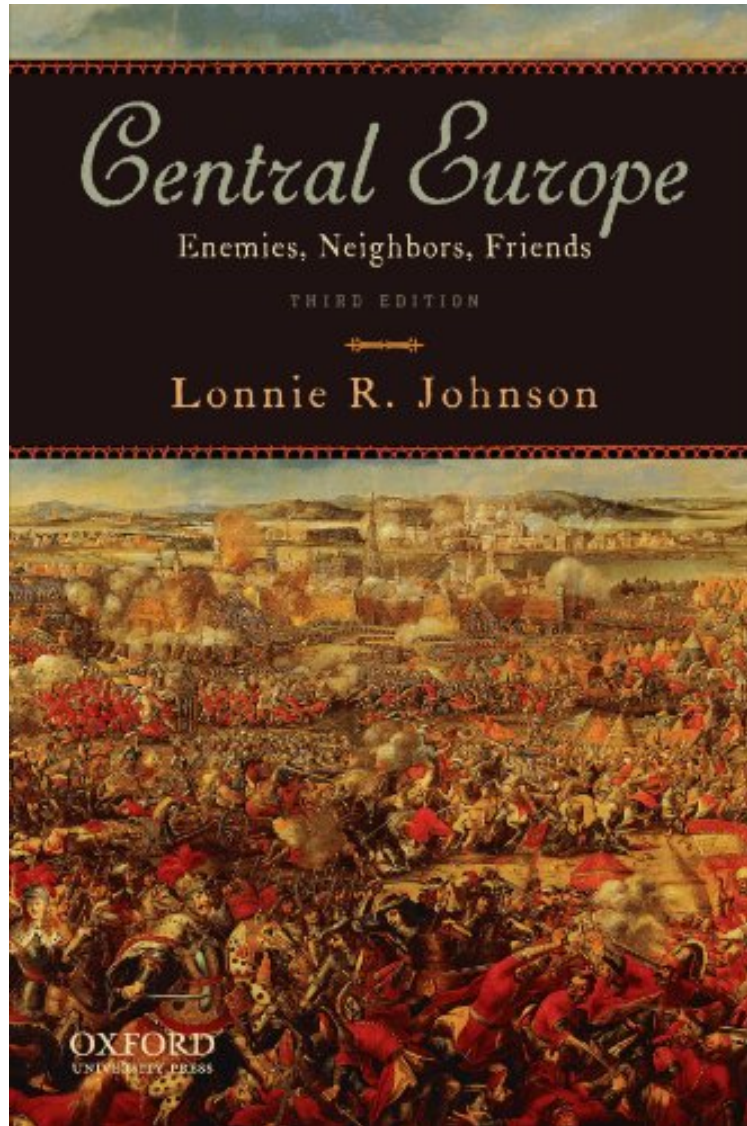


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Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends

Lonnie Johnson

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Lonnie Johnson : Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Hard to get through, not cohesive By John Chapman This book reads like a textbook from college that you didn't like to read. It's at a fairly high level, but the history is not cohesive. It jumps around and occasionally refers to topics that it doesn't explain. I picked this up to learn about the region before a trip there, but it's hard to get through and not very interesting (despite a very interesting topic). Separately, it tells the story almost purely from a Habsburg and/or German perspective, whereas I was hoping to learn more about Hungary,

Romania, Bulgaria and others in that part of Central Europe. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. thoughtful, comprehensive, readable By Peter G. Stillman Lonnie Johnson has written an excellent history of a complex region that is, to many Americans, a relatively unknown part of the world (or a part of the world known as Eastern Europe, the satellite nations of the USSR). The region is extraordinarily complex: about 1500 years of history, with many different peoples moving around, political units coming into and out of existence, and forms of political order (e.g., states, empires) changing and morphing. Just trying to make sense of the Hapsburg line is a difficult task. But Johnson finds common themes (or contrasts) in each time period he chooses to structure his chapters, and so transforms the multidimensional area into a readable text. Different readers will come away with different senses of what is important. But for me, knowledgeable in western European history and politics, Johnson gave me a sense of the greatness and the ironies of these countries (at least as seen by themselves). Most of them have one point in their past when they ruled vast territories, most have had a significant history of being ruled, including oppressive domination, by outsiders, most see themselves as having protected the west from the dangers of Eastern Orthodox Christianity, the Ottomans, the Bolsheviks, and other assorted 'barbarians'. Equally, most, having been ravaged by the Nazis and the Stalinists in the 20th century, are also responsible for large-scale forced emigrations (after World War II), flirted or succumbed to tyranny in the inter-war (1919-39) years, and are now facing or accepting exclusionary nationalism now. And also the long sweep of history allows one to see many aspects now forgotten: the value, and the ultimate failure, of the Austro-Hungary Empire; the past centuries where different ethnic groups lived together in relative peace and stable, usually limited, inequalities; and the exceptionalism of the 20th century, with its exclusionary nationalism, destruction of the Jews, creation of a unified Germany, and destruction of the vast empires around Austria, Hungary, or both. All in all, a very readable, expert, thoughtful book. (I read the 1996 paperback. The pagination of the 2010 paperback is identical except that the last chapter, on post-1989, has grown from about 23 pages to about 33 pages.) 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Superb By Sylvia McGrouther Lonnie Johnson's writes with scholarly depth the history of Central Europe from the Middle Ages through the fall of Communism and to the present, including the role geography, the great Northern European Plain played in the development of Central Europe. Especially fascinating, Central Europe shows the feudal medieval kingdoms of Bohemia (Czech Republic), Poland, Hungary as loose confederations with a king having limited power over the lands of nobles proud of their ancient rights, traditional rights of the nation and the limitation of royal power. Unlike Western Europe, England or France, these kingdoms did not develop into strong absolute monarchies or constitutional monarchies. Foreign empires, Austrian Hapsburgs, Russian, German intervened brutally in the sixteenth and seventeenth century impeding political and cultural development, leading to secondary serfdom and greater divide between Western and Central Europe. Central Europe is scholarly, interesting, enlightening showing the historical and religious influences that shaped the countries of Central Europe. Stanford Travel/Study used this book on its 2010 Elbe River trip.

This historical survey of Central Europe covers a region that encompasses contemporary Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, and Croatia. Author Lonnie R. Johnson illuminates the competing religious, cultural, economic, national, and ideological interests that have driven the history of Central Europe in the past millennium. Each chapter is thematically organized around issues or events that are key to developing an appreciation for the historical and political dynamics of the region, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This third edition also contains a new concluding chapter and epilogue and several redesigned and updated maps.

It is a strength of Johnson's always compelling narrative that he manages to separate clearly the horrific aberrations of the twentieth century from the real history that was misused by ideologues to produce them ... Insightful and superbly written book. * Nicholas T. Parsons, The Vienna * From the Back Cover Central Europe provides a broad overview and comparative analysis of key events in a historical region that encompasses contemporary Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, and Croatia. Starting with the initial conversion of the "pagan" peoples of the region of Christianity around 1000 A.D. and concluding with the revolutions of 1989 and the problems of post-Communist states today, it illuminates the distinctive nature and peculiarities of the historical development of this region as a cohesive whole. Lonnie R. Johnson introduces readers to Central Europe's heritage of diversity, the interplay of its cultures, and the origins of its malicious ethnic and national conflicts. History in Central Europe, he shows, has been epic and tragic. Throughout the ages, small nations struggled valiantly against a series of imperial powers - Ottoman Turkey, Habsburg Austria, imperial Germany, czarist Russia, Nazi Germany, and the Soviet Union - and they lost regularly. Johnson's account is present-minded in the best sense: in describing actual historical events, he illustrates the ways they have been remembered, and how they contribute to the national assumptions that still drive European politics today. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, the unanticipated problems of transforming post-Communist states into democracies with market economies, the wars in the former Yugoslavia, and the challenges of European integration have all made Central Europe the most dynamic and troubled region in Europe.

In Central Europe, Johnson combines a vivid and panoramic narrative of events, a nuanced analysis of social, economic, and political developments, and a thoughtful portrait of those myths and memories that have lives of their own - and consequences for all of Europe. About the Author LJ: Executive Director of the Fulbright Commission in Vienna, Austria; specializes in Central and Eastern Europe, particularly in the 20th Century. Books include: *Introducing Austria* (Ariadne Press, 1989) and *Vienna* (Ariadne Press, 1995).