BOOK REVIEWS

Literature and Fine Arts

Givens, John. *The Image of Christ in Russian Literature: Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Bulgakov, Pasternak*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2018. 329 pp. $60.00. ISBN 978-0-87580-779-9.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about John Givens's new study of the image of Christ in Russian literature is that it is the first of its kind. Students of Russian literature cannot but be familiar with the attention paid to Christianity and Christ by the canonical novelists of the book's sub-title, both from the novels themselves and from the enormous critical literature on them. Yet the representation of Christ in Russian novelistic prose has not previously been brought diachronically and comparatively into consideration under an overarching thesis, as Givens does in his book. This in itself makes it a significant and valuable contribution to scholarship.

At the center of Givens's thesis is the theological concept of apophasis, which denotes the approach to God by way of negation (whereby the unknowable God is deemed knowable only by what he is not). It has become a favored critical tool for Russianists with an interest in religion since the émigré Russian theologian Vladimir Lossky placed it at the center of Orthodox theology in 1944 (in his *Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*). Givens's central argument is that Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Bulgakov, and Pasternak adopt an apophatic approach, not to the Godhead as such, but to Christ (even though, theologically speaking, it is precisely in Christ that the Godhead makes himself known). "Literary apophaticism" is defined as "the use of a discursive approach that deflects, contradicts, complicates, and renders mysterious what we know about Christ in order to reveal Christ anew to a society for whom he had become invisible" (pp. 8–9). The writers' strategy is motivated partly by their own vacillation between faith and scepticism, but in much greater part by the inherent difficulty, and—from a faith perspective—danger, of representing Christ directly and positively in an age that is ideologically indifferent, or hostile, to him. In a sense the representation of religious ("authoritative") discourse is a problem inherent to the principally undeferential novelistic genre, as Mikhail Bakhtin (with whom Givens might potentially have engaged) long ago pointed out. In the Russian and Soviet context, Givens draws a neat and effective contrast between the nineteenth "century of unbelief," in which Dostoevsky and Tolstoy were up against, among other things, the challenge posed to faith by local ideologies of atheistic socialism, and the twentieth "century of belief," in which Bulgakov and Pasternak faced those same ideologies in their new guise as an official faith that brooked no dissent. No doubt this sharply heightened degree of menace is why the representations of Christ in *The Master and Margarita* and *Doctor Zhivago* focus, as Givens points out, on the Passion narrative.

The book is structured accordingly: contextual chapters on the centuries of belief and unbelief respectively, in which Givens sketches relevant ideological developments and surveys salient literary representations of Christ by novelists (and occasionally poets) other than his four "Evangelists," are followed in turn by chapters devoted to the canonical novels. It concludes with an overview of developments since the death of Stalin. The weight of the book is in the nineteenth century, with two chapters each being devoted to Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, and one to Bulgakov and Pasternak. All are rich, productive, and engaging, if some analyses are more conventional (for example, "Christ outside the Truth"), and some more original and exciting (for example, "A Narrow Escape into Faith") than others. I was personally least persuaded of the applicability of an "apophatic Christology" to Tolstoy, who in contrast to the others by Givens's own admission is more concerned with concealing the *person* of Christ than revealing him: but Tolstoy of course needed to be there. Givens's focus is not on intertextuality or the dialogue that is so clearly going on between the novels he analyzes, but

his work opens the way to these things, and it will deservedly become standard reading on courses of classical Russian literature across the globe.

Ruth Coates, University of Bristol, UK

Helfant, Ian M. *That Savage Gaze: Wolves in the Nineteenth-Century Russian Imagination*. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2018. 177 pp. $99.00. ISBN 978-1-6181-1843-1.

Although Ian Helfant teaches Russian literature and language at Colgate University, *That Savage Gaze* presents the reader with a historical narrative: a shift in depictions of wolves in Russian literature during the Golden and Silver Ages, and especially in those isolated moments when human characters look directly into the eyes of wild animals. Helfant finds a point of inflection in 1885, the year when Louis Pasteur first publicized a cure for rabies. Prior to that date, Helfant argues, Russian writers depicted wolves in an extremely negative light, as either the embodiment of amoral natural forces, or as symbols of the social chaos that would ensue if the aristocracy lost its ruling position. After Pasteur's discovery decreased the threat posed by wolves, literary interactions with wolves changed in character, becoming more empathetic.

Helfant discusses a wide range of authors, including contributors to hunting journals, but Anton Chekhov figures as the exemplar of the literary transition from antipathy toward wolves to empathy. Just as Pasteur was publicizing his breakthrough, Chekhov was composing a story with the title "Hydrophobia," in which Chekhov (who was, as is well-known, first trained as a medical doctor) recounts the horror that the mysterious and incurable disease was capable of invoking to the exposed. Because a revised version of "Hydrophobia" was published twenty years later as "The Wolf," Helfant is able to discern very closely the small changes in word choice that signal the attitudinal shift he seeks to document. In "Hydrophobia," the character Pegasov (like Chekhov, a physician) describes rabies in this way: "There's no disease more tortuous and terrible, gentlemen, than hydrophobia. ... Of a hundred who get sick, exactly a hundred will die" (p. 81). However, in the later iteration, published after Pasteur publicized his cure for rabies, Chekhov's tone is changed; the wolf is no longer identified as "Satan," but rather as an "evil spirit"; the word "paws" is changed to "feet," and the doctor assures his audience that those bitten by a rabid animal "have a much better chance of not falling ill, than falling ill." Perhaps most importantly for Helfant's interpretation, when a character named Nilov is attacked by a wolf in the later draft, and he looks into the eyes of the beast, "nothing resembling evil could be seen there," for they "cried and resembled those of a human."

Helfant's narrative arc is most convincing when comparing literary encounters between humans and wild wolves, especially in the case noted above. The reader must accept the implicit argument that all (or most) other literary mentions of wolves in the period discussed track similarly; Helfant discusses many other authors in addition to Chekhov, but one cannot help but wonder if the shift described in the book is as pervasive as suggested here. In addition, the author's claim that wolves represented "a symbolic locus for the expression of underlying tensions in Imperial society as Russians grappled with the pressures of modernity" is less developed than it might have been. Nevertheless, Helfant provides scholars with an illuminating instance when literature, medicine, and environmental ethics converged, leading to surprising outcomes.

Stephen Brain, Mississippi State University

Bergelson, David. *Judgment: A Novel*. Translated by Harriet Murav and Sasha Senderovich. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2017. xxxvii + 222 pp. $18.95 (paper). ISBN 978-0-8101-3591-8.

The question who of the Yiddish writers is most popular nowadays remains hanging in the air. Judging by my teaching experience, the majority of the American undergraduate students who enroll

for courses dealing with Yiddish literature have never heard before even of such classic authors as Sholem Aleichem, Sholem Asch, and Isaac Bashevis Singer. Still, there is another dimension of popularity, namely, the attention paid to the writers in the world of scholarship, whose denizens constitute the main pool of "professional readers" of Yiddish poetry and prose, both in original and translation. Here we observe a noteworthy phenomenon: David Bergelson (1884–1952) is one of the most popular authors. Bergelson's eventful life and consummate prose clearly appeal to scholars and translators, especially as the former and latter are sometimes the same people.

Bergelson was brought up in a wealthy and pious Jewish family, residing in a deep province of what is contemporary Ukraine. Being orphaned by both parents, he moved to live with his much older brother in Kiev, one of the most significant cultural centers in the Russian Empire. Although notorious in Jewish history for the 1913 blood libel trial of Mendel Beilis, the city had a vibrant Jewish cultural milieu and boasted the country's highest number of Jewish university students. Systematic schooling, however, did not attract Bergelson. Rather, he lived as a rentier from his share of the inheritance left by his father and made unsuccessful literary attempts, first in Russian and Hebrew. Ultimately, he gained some critical success after publishing his Yiddish novella *At the Depot*, which came out in Warsaw in 1909 as a vanity thing. Written in an impressionist style, under the influence of such literary lions of the time as Anton Chekhov and Knut Hamsun, the novella found grateful readers, notably among those who dreamt about a high-cultural foundation for the (as it turned out) utopian project of building a modern Yiddish-speaking nation. More prominence came to him following the publication of his first novel, *Nokh alemen* (1913), known in English as *When All is Said and Done* or *The End of Everything*.

Bergelson emerged as the toast of the circle of Yiddish *literati*, dubbed in Yiddish literary history as the Kiev Group, whose importance is associated with the Culture League (Kultur-Lige), formed after a brainstorm at Bergelson's Kiev apartment. Significantly, the "Kievans" were close to, or even part of, the intellectual milieu of Vilna, the trend-setting center of modern Yiddish culture. In its July 15, 1921, issue, the New York Yiddish daily *Forverts* wrote: "Every person who is more or less interested in Jewish life in Ukraine, Belorussia, Poland, Lithuania and Latvia, certainly has heard about the Jewish Kultur-Lige. ... The Kultur-Lige was established in April 1918 and, in a rather short period of time, spread its activity over the whole territory of Ukraine. The Kultur-Lige had concentrated around itself a whole range of strong groups of Jewish radical intelligentsia, who sought to organize the Jewish masses and develop Yiddish culture." At that time, we find Bergelson already in Berlin, where he had wound up following disappointing stays in Moscow and Kaunas.

Known until 1926 as a critic of communism and contributor to the increasingly anti-Soviet *Forverts*, Bergelson raised many brows after publishing an article that placed him squarely in the pro-Moscow camp. In his quest for mass readers of his sophisticated prose Bergelson decided to bank on the Soviet state-sponsored program ostensibly aimed at developing Yiddish culture of high caliber. To all appearances, he did not see any future for his life, as he envisioned it, in the environment dominated by the press and publishers pandering to the tastes of common people. This fateful decision defined the ensuing trajectory of his life: moving to Moscow in 1934 and becoming a celebrated Soviet Yiddish writer; playing leading role as a member of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee formed soon after the beginning of the Soviet-Nazi war; being spuriously accused of anti-Soviet plotting, and executed with a group of other committee members. The execution took place on August 12, 1952, which happened to be his birthday.

The novel *Mides ha-din*, aptly translated as *Judgment* by Harriet Murav and Sasha Senderovich, is a product of the transitional period in Bergelson's life. By that time, he had already positioned himself as a pro-Soviet author, but continued to live in Berlin, holding a Lithuanian passport. An extract from the novel appeared in the first issue of the short-lived Soviet-sympathetic journal *In shpan* (In Harness), launched by the Boris Kletzkin publishing house. In 1929, *Judgment* came out as a separate book under the imprint of that publisher (Bergelson's old friend) and, in the same year, of the Kiev Kultur-Lige. There are clear parallels between *Judgment* and Ilya Ehrenburg's *The Life and Downfall of Nikolai Kurbov*, published in Berlin in 1923. Like Ehrenburg's Kurbov, Bergelson's protagonist, Filipov, is a Soviet security officer. Both embody the merciless power of the Revolution.

Both perish when they discover some human feelings in themselves. Bergelson could see the mission of such people as Kurbov and Filipov in realizing the Bolsheviks' (rather than God's) redemption: like the first messiah (Ben Joseph in Jewish eschatology), they were doomed to die after completing the purification of humanity, and then the second messiah (Ben David) could come bringing the everlasting peace.

There are a few problems with the "critical introduction" to the novel. The statement that "the Socialist Revolutionaries ... sat in Russia's Provisional Government between February and October 1917, but later split from the Bolsheviks" can mislead the reader into thinking that the Bolsheviks participated in the Provisional Government (p. x). Bergelson (and earlier Sholem Aleichem) lived for many years in Kiev, which was outside the Pale of Jewish Settlement, but the "critical introduction" describes the Pale as "a territory outside the boundaries of which Russian Jews were permitted to settle only after 1917" (p. x). It would be useful to mention that some categories of Jews had the right of residence "outside the boundaries." Also, single-party rule was not "proclaimed by the Bolsheviks in January 1918" (p. xi). In fact, until July 1918 Lenin's government contained representatives of the Socialist Revolutionary party. In 1926, Bergelson cut his links with the *Forverts* and joined the New York daily *Morgn-Frayhayt*, which was an openly communist rather than a "more leftist" (p. xvi) newspaper. Bergelson's son, Lev, moved to Israel in 1991, rather than in the 1970s (p. xviii).

To a significant degree, the impulse for studying-cum-translating Bergelson came from Joseph Sherman (1944–2009), a South African and later Oxford literary scholar. It was his initiative to work on the collective volume *David Bergelson: From Modernism to Socialist Realism* (2007). He translated Bergelson's works, most notably the novels *Descent* (1999) and *The End of Everything* (2013). Harriet Murav and Sasha Senderovich's masterly translation—and Murav's recently released monograph *David Bergelson's Strange New World: Untimeliness and Futurity* (2019)—can be seen as a continuation of this tack.

Gennady Estraikh, New York University

Rodgers, Michael. *Nabokov and Nietzsche: Problems and Perspectives*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018. xii + 176 pp. $110.00. ISBN 978-1-5013-3957-8.

As a contribution to Russian literary studies, this book brings together two liminal figures with major reputations throughout Western Europe and North America. However, both of them did have significant links with Silver-Age Russian culture, Nietzsche as a force in various intellectual currents as well as in literature and the arts, Nabokov due to his youthful immersion in the period's poetry and modernist fiction. Under the Soviet Union these Russian connections were ignored, though they attracted some attention abroad; and eventually Nabokov enjoyed a certain prominence as an émigré author legitimized by glasnost.

Michael Rodgers pays some attention to this history, but only in its general outlines; instead, it becomes the basis for a larger interpretive project. How does Russia's participation in the widespread Nietzschean ferment at the turn of the last century linger on to sharpen understanding of key issues raised by Nabokov's fiction? In "Nietzschean Engagements," the first of the book's three parts, discussion opens with how Nabokov's complex practices of memory writing, especially in his autobiography and in *Pnin*, develop in dialogue with Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence. In a second chapter, the philologist-philosopher's admonitions on probing the multiple dimensions of a text give added significance to the writer's demands on his readers, with "The Vane Sisters" as a case in point.

The chapters in "Nietzschean Readings" bring the philosopher's positions on morality and his perspectival epistemology to bear on critical debates over what are generally held to be Nabokov's best English-language novels. If *Lolita* does have a "moral in tow," a much-discussed topic despite the author's flat denial in his "Afterword" to that novel, Rodgers argues that it takes the form of moral critique. It amounts to an ongoing Nietzschean "revaluation of all values" (p. 90) that targets

the blind spots in Humbert Humbert's aestheticism as much as the implicit moralities of the other characters or the didactic assertiveness of John Ray, the fictitious author of the novel's foreword. At issue in *Pale Fire* is the host of competing claims over which of the two main characters is the "real author" within that book's fictitious world—the poet Shade and his commentator Kinbote in their respective portions, just Shade or just Kinbote for the entire book, some spectral third figure, or a verdict of undecidability. Perspectivism can resolve this situation by uncovering the distinctive values that inform each option, values that coexist to facilitate a wider, more encompassing sense of the whole.

Rodgers's final two chapters, in "Beyond Nietzsche," address Nabokov's divergences from well-known, even notorious Nietzschean positions. The supremely creative individual, or *Übermensch*, resonates with Nabokov's admiration for the summits of artistic perfection in Pushkin and Tolstoy, or Joyce and Kafka. But his novels also feature sardonic portraits of would-be artists like Herman in *Despair*, whose "genius" is a megalomaniacal delusion. Whereas Nietzsche dismisses the value of pity, Nabokov's artistic credo, which included tenderness and kindness (albeit parenthetically), also allowed for pity, though expressed in a tight-lipped style that rings false to some readers. The topic of Nabokov's "other world" (the *potustoronnost'* singled out in his wife's preface to a posthumous collection of his poetry) has inspired commentary on ghostly undercurrents in his writing. This trend conflicts with Nietzsche's mantra, "remain true to the earth"; but Rodgers contends, in a reading of *The Gift*, that Nabokovian otherworldliness also has a this-worldly dimension, understood as a defamiliarized attentiveness to sense perceptions taken from everyday experience.

Nabokov and Nietzsche identifies a new, previously unexamined and capaciously illuminating intellectual context for the writings and opinions of this émigré Russian novelist turned international celebrity, even as it provides a wide range of insights into contemporary Nabokov criticism. Rodgers's conclusion, in alluding to the "uneasiness" provoked by this author's long career, reminds us that, in the Anglophone world where he ended up, Nabokov could still be seen as an outsider, though less insistently so than in the Russian worlds where he started out.

John Burt Foster, Jr., George Mason University

Krzhizhanovsky, Sigizmund. *That Third Guy: A Comedy from the Stalinist 1930s, with Essays on Theater*. Translated and edited by Alisa Ballard Lin. Foreword by Caryl Emerson. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2018. xxii + 301 pp. $79.95. ISBN 978-0-299-31710-2.

Sigizmund Krzhizhanovsky has become widely known as a brilliant absurdist writer since his fiction began to be published decades after his death. But although he held a part-time position at the Moscow Kamerny Theater's school for twenty-five years, his theater writings have received comparatively little attention. *That Third Guy: A Comedy from the Stalinist 1930s, with Essays on Theater* addresses this gap by revealing the richness of a lesser-known side of this belatedly appreciated writer.

This fascinating volume, skillfully translated and edited by Alisa Ballard Lin, is structured thematically and roughly chronologically. Its four sections present theoretical and critical pieces and a play, *That Third Guy* (*Tot tretii*), which appear in English translation for the first time. Krzhizhanovsky's writings are deftly interwoven with scholarly commentary—both short introductions and longer analyses—by Lin and the ever-eloquent Caryl Emerson. Part 1, "Krzhizhanovsky on Theater" (a name that recalls similarly titled collections on Brecht and Meyerhold), features seven essays, including five of the writer's sixteen "vibrant theoretical defenses of the theater" that appeared in *7 Days of the MKT*, a 1923–24 newspaper "dreamed up" by Krzhizhanovsky and Kamerny Theater director Alexander Tairov (pp. 58, 5). Of these essays, "The Kamerny and its Theme" is one of the most cogent articulations of the Kamerny's core principles ever to have been penned by one of its collaborators. Two longer pieces, "A Philosopheme for the

Theater" and "The Stage Direction," reveal the brilliant meanderings of Krzhizhanovsky's theatrical mind.

Part 2 presents *That Third Guy* along with an insightful companion essay by Lin that muses on what it meant to be a "third"—an outsider, a misfit, an individual—in Stalin's 1930s. Krzhizhanovsky's play, a farcical extension of the Russian modernist femme-fatale theme, was initially inspired by Pushkin's "Cleopatra." In *That Third Guy*, the Egyptian queen offers a night in her bed in exchange for the lives of three suitors willing to share it. The third, a scrawny, middling poet who remains nameless, lulls Cleopatra to sleep with bad poetry and escapes. Insignificant though he may be, by resisting death, he resists state authority—a point that would not have gone unnoticed in 1937, had the play reached the stage. This intertextually dense play is valuable as a document of Krzhizhanovsky's expansive literary knowledge and as evidence of creative resistance to Pushkin's "politicized" and "weaponized" death centennial (p. 269). Parts 3 and 4 of the book, "Krzhizhanovsky on Shaw and Shakespeare" and "Krzhizhanovsky on Pushkin," illuminate Krzhizhanovsky's critical engagement with writers who fueled *That Third Guy* and Krzhizhanovsky's *Eugene Onegin* adaptation, written but never performed for the Kamerny.

Emerson's expertly researched essays frame the book. Her lyrical foreword introduces the stakes of Krzhizhanovsky's theatrical output and the tragedy of his outsiderness, and her concluding essay uniquely contextualizes Krzhizhanovsky's varied dramatic output. Lin's similarly valuable introduction outlines Russian modernist acting debates and skillfully interweaves Krzhizhanovsky's ideas with those of Appia, Artaud, Evreinov, and Kantor. One small clarification for readers: the authors intentionally use the word "cosmopolitan" in its positive, pre-World War II sense rather than in the later, anti-Semitic sense used to justify the Kamerny's 1949 liquidation.

This beautifully crafted volume is so compelling that one hopes a monograph on Krzhizhanovsky's theatrical life will follow. Suggestions for improvement are minor: this reader was hungry for full bibliographical information beyond included essays' publication years; Lin's superb renderings of Krzhizhanovsky's complex Russian could occasionally have benefited from a practitioner's eye (cue script vs. "role," upstage vs. "back plane"); and the play translation has a slight literary bent. Far more important is this book's valuable intervention into Soviet studies, its advocacy for reclaiming the value of the "third," in the face of which totalitarian binaries become impossible—and the artist-individual again becomes possible. After all, as Emerson concludes, "theater—and especially the comedic stage—can save a trapped or threatened human being and return to it what is most flexible, creative, and real" (p. 288).

Dassia N. Posner, Northwestern University

Arsenjuk, Luka. *Movement, Action, Image, Montage: Sergei Eisenstein and the Cinema in Crisis*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018. vii + 251 pp. $27.00. ISBN 978-1-5179-0320-6.

Luka Arsenjuk takes on the complex task of untangling Sergei Eisenstein's theory of film art, which, since the publication of Eisenstein's *Method* (2002), the expanded publication of his *Nonindifferent Nature* 2006), and the translation of his *Notes for a General History of Cinema* (2016), has been at the heart of new Eisenstein scholarship. Eisenstein "stands in the history of cinema a central, unavoidable figure," Arsenjuk notes at the start, "projecting a shadow as imposing as the one thrown by his Ivan the Terrible on the cavernous walls of the Kremlin" (p. 1). Beyond his immense contributions to film art and film form, Eisenstein was also the first to develop a poetics of cinema, thereby laying the foundation for the entire discipline of film theory. The fact that his theoretical contributions have been less examined and far less understood than those of his fellow film theorists in the West has everything to do with Eisenstein's canonical status both in the USSR and abroad: lionized by Soviet culture more for their ideological rather than artistic force, and relegated to the "pre-history" of modern cinema by Gilles Deleuze (who attributes the contributions of Soviet montage

practitioners to a cinema primarily of movement, rather than time), Eisenstein's works appear foundational but without, seemingly, anything "new" to offer the contemporary film scholar.

Moreover, as Arsenjuk argues, the contradictory accounts of Eisenstein over the years have allowed for something fundamental to be missed about his work: that in his theory of cinema, Eisenstein "managed to articulate an idea of cinema that is somehow consistent and *as such* struck through by tensions and contradictions" (p. 5). His thought, while unified and therefore able to exert a tremendous force, is also, at the same time, structured by inherent conflict and division. Thus, the contradictions in the way Eisenstein's theory has been perceived originate in and are indeed fundamental to Eisenstein's own conceptualizations. Eisenstein's dialectic is neither teleological (predetermined) nor simply binary. His dialectics almost always include a kind of impossible additional division: not just A <–> B is resolved by C, but A is always in dialectical tension with another dialectic B1 <–> B2, which creates a contradiction within a contradiction that can never be fully resolved, a "ceaselessly dividing" dialectic, as Joan Neuberger has put it. Thus, in the first chapter on drawing, Arsenjuk shows how Eisenstein distinguishes the movement of the line from the subject/figure of the drawing, and how that division into two—movement of line and figure/subject—is itself subject to new divisions into dialectical opposites. The figure both accepts (or *is*) and resists being a mere figure (B1 <–> B2). It is therefore, a figure "in crisis": it suffers (pathos) and exceeds its own body (ekstasis), and it exists in an impossible space (the groundless, imaginary space of pure movement).

Working through the problems of movement (the figure in crisis), action (the grotesque versus the epic tendency in Eisenstein's films), and image (which, much more than mere symbol, becomes something like a "symptom/*sinthome*" in Eisenstein's conception), in his first three chapters, Arsenjuk turns to montage. In chapter 4 he articulates the notion of the "not one"—a formulation that (reminiscent of Luce Irigaray and Jacques Derrida) develops out of Eisensteinian dialectics and the idea of montage as both art and technology. As Arsenjuk puts it, each of the concepts presented in the first three chapters of the book—the ideas of movement, action, and image—have to be understood as dialectical unities (that is to say, unities of opposites) that "require not one term, but a juxtaposition of two terms to bring to light the nature of their dynamism" (p. 167). Each concept is a unity that depends on splitting and division. Thus each concept—of movement, action, and image—is one only insofar as it also is not a unity. Or, to put it another way, "what makes the Eisensteinian concept thinkable as a unity is that it is not one" (p. 168).

While this formulation may sound like a tautology, it is not one. As we know from David Bordwell and others, as well as directly from Eisenstein himself, what underpins each concept found in Eisenstein's theoretical writings and made visible in his drawings and films is conflict: the dialectical split, the "unity of opposites," and "negation of the negation." Eisenstein's cinema works (or fails to work) by forcing opposing and opposite elements into direct conflict with one another and by using the laws of dialectical materialism to move beyond cinema's insistently representative, mimetic function. This, fundamentally, is what Eisenstein means by "montage," and this term/concept is what organizes the others—the ideas of movement, action, and image—and makes them legible. "Montage" is not simply a form of film editing (as most non-Soviet definitions would suggest), but a way of thinking at once a concept and its opposite. It is the split or cut not only between images, but also within the image itself; or rather the dynamic tension that arises from juxtaposing the cut between two images and the divisions within each of the images on either side of the cut. It is the way each movement is at once kinetic and suspended; the way each action is both epic (heroic, looking into the future) and grotesque; and the way each image is both its symbolic meaning and its symptomatic repetition.

Movement, Action, Image, Montage is a return to Eisenstein (like Lacan's "return to Freud") that attempts to read, reread, and read again his theoretical writings together with his artistic production—both drawings (which are becoming more and more central to our understanding of his works) and films (which perhaps here, are somewhat displaced from their position of privilege). What the book does is to take seriously, rather than to dismiss or gloss over, all of the ways in which Eisensteinian concepts *don't make sense*: which is to say, the way their meaning is both unified and,

at the same time, always pulling in different interpretive directions; thereby creating something dynamic, evolving, constantly in the process of transformation. Neither of the two possibilities (movement and stillness; symbol and repetition; the assemblage and the cut) can assume "primacy without either being overcome or undermined" (p. 202), and this is the tension maintained by Eisenstein's poetics that Arsenjuk is able to show us by means of a thorough, close, careful rereading.

Lilya Kaganovsky, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Taroutina, Maria. *The Icon and the Square: Russian Modernism and the Russo-Byzantine Revival*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2018. xvi + 271 pp. $89.95. ISBN 978-0-271-08104-5.

The encounter between Russian icon painting and the Russian avant-garde took place at the exhibition of Ancient Russian Art in Moscow in 1913 in honor of the three hundredth anniversary of the rule of the Romanov dynasty. While this fact has been learned and taught for decades, Maria Taroutina's beautifully illustrated and informative book demonstrates convincingly that the story is much more multifarious and complicated than has so far been shown.

As her starting point, the author uses the architecture and the embellishment of the Kazan Cathedral in Petersburg, where no influences whatsoever can be discerned from Byzantium or old Rus'. In the following section she briefly dwells upon the revival in Russia and the West of interest in Byzantium beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. Much space is then given to a thorough discussion of exhibitions of Old Russian and Byzantine art before 1913, as well as to the development of public collections of icon painting in Russia, the main restoration work performed at that time on ecclesiastical objects, and the construction, for example, of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow. Rich collections of old icons were built up over the decades before the Revolution not only in the State Russian Museum (founded as the Russian Museum of His Imperial Majesty Alexander III) and in the Tretyakov Gallery, but also, for example, in the Russian Historical Museum and the Rumiantsev Museum in Petersburg. Most of the artworks came from donations by private collectors.

The icons had also been discussed in scholarly literature before 1913, for example, by Nikodim Kondakov. It would have been interesting to read more about the involvement, or rather the lack of involvement, of the church in this process. One important and controversial issue in Russia today concerns what to do with icons that had been confiscated by Soviet authorities and now reside in various museums. How did it happen that such a huge number of icons ended up in the museums before 1917 without any protests on the part of the church and its representatives?

Beginning in 1913, icons came to be regarded as high art, rather than as folk art, as the *peredvizhniki*, for example, considered them. The link to the avant-garde was stressed in many ways—for instance, in the Russian Museum, where the icons were hung in a room next to the paintings of Kazimir Malevich and Vladimir Tatlin. The art critic and future husband of Anna Akhmatova, Nikolai Punin, claimed that icon art was the predecessor of the avant-garde. The Byzantine and Old Russian tradition "could actually pave the way for an international artistic revolution" (p. 46). Art in the West had reached an impasse at the beginning of the twentieth century with the Impressionist movement. This view was underpinned or even blessed by Henri Matisse, who commented on the deep impression Russian icons made on him during a visit to Russia in 1911. Another track in Russian culture of the time mentioned in the book connects the icons with a more or less nationalistic Russian narrative. This double use of Russian icons is not always noted in the literature, but Taroutina dwells on this very important fact.

In subsequent chapters, Taroutina considers the relationships to Byzantine art and Russian icons of four artists of the period—Mikhail Vrubel, Vasily Kandinsky, Malevich, and Tatlin—using their motifs, styles, and composition, along with ample quotations from the artists' own texts and biographies. The evidence presented is not only convincing but also overwhelming. Some of the lengthy quotations from modern art historians could have been left out, as could some speculation about meetings and contacts, and in some cases it might have been better to maintain a little more

distance from statements about the link between icon painting and the avant-garde. I would question the sharp distinction made between Kandinsky and Tatlin, on the one hand, and Natalia Goncharova, on the other, with respect to high art and folklore. This difference is perhaps relevant for the first part of Goncharova´s history as an artist (p. 150).

Malevich's *Black Square*, the most famous Russian painting of the period, is not as important a topic as one might have expected in a book with this title, but it is given its due. The sharp distinction often drawn between Malevich and Tatlin is convincingly questioned. The author aptly suggests that icons do not exist in a two-dimensional world, in view of which Tatlin's striving for three-dimensionality no longer seems contradictory in relation to icon paining. All four of these artists used icons to find new ways to abandon the mimetic approach to art in exchange for a more or less abstract artistic language, and all were deeply influenced by the Christian tradition not only in their relationship with icons but also in their worldview. Many parallels are drawn to the Russian Religious-Philosophical Renaissance of the time and especially to Pavel Florensky.

The Icon and the Square will change our understanding of the epoch. Taroutina dramatically ends her book with the onset of the Bolshevik Revolution. This is in all ways true, but there is yet another story to tell, about the role of icons both as hard currency in Soviet foreign trade and as a building block in the Soviet narrative of the cultural heritage with artists such as Pavel Korin or Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin. The events of 1917 were not only a sad and tragic end but also a very special beginning of a new and ambiguous relationship with Byzantine and Old Russian art in the Soviet Union.

Per-Arne Bodin, Stockholm University

Minkova, Yuliya. *Making Martyrs: The Language of Sacrifice in Russian Culture from Stalin to Putin*. Rochester Studies in East and Central Europe. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2018. viii + 237 pp. $85.00. ISBN 978-1-58046-914-2.

In *Making Martyrs*, Yuliya Minkova embarks on the ambitious task of identifying "a course in the development of the discourse about the sacred victim" (p. 1). Minkova organizes the monograph chronologically, dedicating each chapter to a particular type of hero characteristic of the period in which he or she achieved martyrdom, and tracing the evolution of sacrificial imagery. She analyzes the language of canonization and vilification in Soviet and post-Soviet media, as well as fiction, memoirs, and films. Although her examples stem from different eras and nations, 1930s to the present, she argues that they all entered the Soviet or post-Soviet pantheon of heroes primarily because of their status as victims, and she elucidates the specific usefulness of such examples. In addition to delineating this persistent trend in Soviet discourse, she endeavors to trace its influence on contemporary Russians' self-perceptions. Minkova situates her work within scholarship of cultural mythology that juxtaposes Russia's discourse of self-sacrifice with the Western emphasis on human-rights discourse. In her introduction, she introduces a theoretical framework that relies largely on Giorgio Agamben's concept of the *homo sacer* and uses Oleg Kharkhordin's extrapolation of the relationship between collective and individual to demonstrate the *homo sacer*'s relevance to Soviet and post-Soviet martyrs.

In her first chapter, Minkova analyzes the treatment of the human body and the tension between bodily needs and the needs related to the ideological development of consciousness. She argues that Soviet culture created two types of *homo sacer*: the defendant body at show trials, a camouflaged body which must be stripped away to reveal the "body" of crime, and the self-sacrificing wartime bodies as objects of torture and violence, bodies that she argues disappear. She uses the example of Zoia Kosmodemianskaia, considering the posthumous life of Kosmodemianskaia in Margarita Aliger's 1942 narrative poem *Zoia*, versions of Lidov's 1942 newspaper account "Tanya," and the hagiographic biography written by Zoia's mother, Liubov Kosmodemianskaia and a ghost-writer *The Story of Zoia and Shura*— as well as Zoia's relics. Minkova includes a fascinating, nuanced reading of Aliger's narrative poem. In spite of detailed descriptions of brutality in martyr texts, Minkova

points out that Soviet heroes' voices often replace heroes' bodies, and she reminds the reader that bodies of Soviet heroes are often buried in unmarked graves and commemorated in memorials to unknown soldiers.

Minkova's second chapter demonstrates that the metaphor of the sacred martyr remained relevant through the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s by introducing the example of flight attendant Nadezhda Kurchenko and discussing how journalists linked her to other heroes. Her discussion of middle-aged Zoia-type martyrs within the 1960s context as depicted in in Shepitko's *Wings* is particularly successful. She traces the tendency to link hijackings to politics and to shape victims into heroes into the post-Soviet period.

In a short third chapter, Minkova explores the relationship between ritualization of language and performance as evident in representations of Chilean martyr Victor Jara in Soviet media, and notes efforts to associate him with World War II heroes. Minkova's fourth chapter commences by examining voices included in Svetlana Alexievich's published books, primarily *Zinky Boys*, and points to a discrepancy between sacrificial discourse and new truths apparent during the Soviet Afghan war. However, most of the chapter analyzes the works of Zakhar Prilepin, German Sadulaev, and Dmitry Cherkasov, arguing that all three demonstrate a resurgence of neo-Soviet nationalism and redistribution of heroic agency and victimhood. Her discussion of Russian interpretations of Ukrainian fighters and the Donbass—heroic, sacrificial, and above all Russian—contributes to our understanding of this complicated recent episode of warfare. She concludes by acknowledging that while recent wars did not produce a "cruel and dehumanized external enemy," a "universal claim to victimhood characterizes Russia's post-Soviet search for identity, and its reliance on sacrifice as a meaning-giving concept testifies to its continued relevance in contemporary culture" (p. 140).

The fifth chapter, "Robber Baron or Dissident Intellectual," considers the unlikely case of oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky's transformation into a martyr figure through his suffering while imprisoned. Minkova concludes by addressing the appeal of sacrificial mythology in contemporary culture and the usage of this mythology to promote specific political agendas. She considers recent examples of sacrificial language and symbols, such as Immortal Regiment marches, and returns to examples of World War II martyrs, pointing out recent controversies involving Kosmodemianskaia and Panfilov's 28.

Making Martyrs contributes a great deal to our understanding of the martyr figure's enduring significance in Russian culture in a wide variety of genres and spheres. The first chapter lays the groundwork for the rest of the book and Minkova refers back to the case of Kosmodemianskaia for the duration of the monograph, so any shortcomings in that chapter hold disproportionate weight. I found the wartime disappearance of Kosmodemianskaia's body to be not entirely convincing, as Russians frequently reference Sergei Strunnikov's photograph in both creative work and casual conversations. Many representations in print media, literature, and visual art include a literal undressing of the partisan's body, and most mention the bitten lip and frost-bitten feet. Furthermore, this foundational chapter would have benefitted from more discussion of other wartime martyrs; archival wartime materials would have enriched the analysis of Kosmodemianskaia. Since Minkova analyzes Kosmodemianskaia primarily through wartime texts, Liubov Kosmodemianskaia's 1942 biography *My Zoia* might have served as a more appropriate source than her postwar *The Story of Zoe and Shura*. *Making Martyrs* is simultaneously primarily ahistorical, yet chronological—looking at martyrs and examples of self-sacrifice from 1930s onward—yet the jumps in chronology within chapters can be jarring.

Nevertheless, *Making Martyrs* furthers the scholarly debate in numerous fields, illuminates the enduring role of the martyr in Russian culture, and enriches our understanding of cultural mythology by drawing connections between wartime martyrs and later heroes into the present day. Though well written in clear prose, this lasting contribution is most accessible to those well-versed in theoretical works and secondary literature related to discourse, mechanisms of power, and the language of physical pain. Scholars of Russian culture will find the case studies, the references to a breadth of primary sources in various genres about these martyrs, and the analysis of language as specific moments in time, such as these martyrs' initial appearance in culture, to be of particular value.

Minkova offers nuanced, timely analysis of recent conflicts and contributes to our understanding of the deteriorating relations between the West and Russia.

Adrienne M. Harris, Baylor University

Khapaeva, Dina. *The Celebration of Death in Contemporary Culture*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017. vii + 256 pp. $65.00. ISBN 978-0-472-13026-9.

In this book Dina Khapaeva argues that the emergence of death as entertainment in late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century Russia and the United States (evoked by, among other things, vampire and zombie films, Harry Potter novels, the new acceptance of cremation, and the Santa Muerte cult) is evidence of a devaluation of human beings traceable to Friedrich Nietzsche, Theodor Adorno, Michel Foucault, and other thinkers. Khapaeva, a professor of Russian at Georgia Tech and author of *Gothic Society: A Morphology of Nightmare* (2007) and other works, methodically lays out her thesis first with a survey of the literature on death by scholars whose names will be familiar to the specialist: Geoffrey Gorer's "The Pornography of Death" (1955); Ernest Becker's *The Denial of Death* (1973); and Philippe Ariès' history *The Hour of Our Death* (English translation 1981). She then turns to a consideration of animal rights, posthumanism, and transhumanism, which she maintains all fall under the category of antihumanism for their rejection of human exceptionalism.

Devoting the next chapters to case studies drawn from nineteenth-, twentieth-, and twenty-first-century literature, film, fashion, and holiday culture, Khapaeva identifies a "gothic aesthetic," which chiefly involves the representation of monstrosity and nightmares, as a predominant manifestation of the aforementioned antihumanist expression. Her arguments resonate to some extent with those of Pope John Paul II, who denounced war, abortion, and the death penalty as part of an emerging "cult of death" (though Khapaeva sticks mostly to popular culture expressions). "The cult of death transforms violent death into a popular culture commodity and an acceptable form of entertainment," she concludes. "Its specificity consists in the dehumanization of humanity in general, rather than any particular social group or ethnicity, as it was in the case of communism and fascism in the previous century. ... The cult of death expresses a nascent cultural paradigm—a profound contempt for the human race" (p. 182).

As someone who considers the decentering of the human a good thing on environmentalist grounds if nothing else, I see problems with Khapaeva's well-researched and capacious book that go beyond our disagreement on anthropocentrism. She devotes many pages, for example, to the increased popularity of Halloween since the 1980s-1990s as proof of the cult of death's tightening grip on hearts and minds. Certainly, Halloween in recent times has become a holiday celebrated as much or more so by adults as children. But whereas such festivities only became possible in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the holiday was hardly uncommon in the States (and in some Western European countries) before that. In addition, Khapaeva downplays the fact that Halloween encompasses not merely death and terror, as attested to by the perennial debate on the appropriateness of young women's "sexy" costumes. In fact, as an avid Halloween participant in different cities for decades, I can confidently state that the majority of American Halloween costumes have nothing to do with death/terror; rather, people tend to dress more often as historical figures, politicians, celebrities, animals, fictional characters, and even visual puns. A much more "terrifying" experience would be the December Krampusnacht festivities in a number of Central European countries. (The vogue for Halloween haunted houses in the United States would serve Khapaeva's thesis better, but she ignores it.) Furthermore, Halloween-related popular films (of many genres, not just horror), attest to the ubiquity and familiarity of the holiday long before the 1980s: *Arsenic and Old Lace* (1944), *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944), the RKO animated short *Trick or Treat* (1952), *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962), *It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown* (1966), *Kotch* (1971), *The Exorcist* (1973), *Kenny and Company* (1976), and *Kramer vs. Kramer* (1979). In fact, it was precisely the recognizability of Halloween as a staple of twentieth-century U.S. culture that led Orson Welles to

broadcast his notorious adaptation of H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds* on October 30, 1938 (Halloween eve) and not another time of year.

The Celebration of Death in Contemporary Culture also suffers from missed opportunities. Khapaeva tends to restrict herself to the most obvious examples. While examining Sergei Lukyanenko's *Night Watch* and *Day Watch* novels and films, Aleksandr Veledinsky's Chechnya-themed ghost film *Alive* (2006), Dmitry Emets' Harry Potter knock-off *Tanya Grotter and the Magic Double Bass* (2002), and the rise of embalming and cremation even among Orthodox believers in post-Soviet Russia, she gives short shrift to Russian horror cinema, a truly novel contemporary phenomenon. Bringing into the conversation *The Witch* (*Vedma*, dir. Oleg Fesenko, 2006), *Dead Daughters* (*Mertvie docheri*, dir. Pavel Ruminov, 2007), and the many other examples that have followed since would, I feel, have productively complicated Khapaeva's thesis.

Similarly, she does not touch on Russian contemporary art, even though few works have been as "antihumanist" as, for instance, the performance artist Oleg Kulik's 1990s life as a dog, or various pieces by the collective Voina. No love lost for humanity there. And though Khapaeva briefly comments on Vladimir Sorokin's novel *Blue Lard* (1997), she would have derived even more evidence of antihumanism from his *Ice* trilogy (2002–8), with its denunciations of human beings as "meat machines" (*miasnie mashiny*), or for that matter the grisly works of Iurii Mamleev.

The contributions of Horror Studies and Monster Studies scholars, such as Noël Carroll and Jeffrey Jerome Cohen—who declared the monster "difference made flesh"—would likewise have refined Khapaeva's arguments. In particular, her contention that "the idealization of monsters does not promote tolerance of Otherness" is belied by two hundred years of at least partly sympathetic portrayals of Frankenstein's monster and his literary progeny. Likewise, the claims for thanatotourism as something historically recent elide the popularity of, for example, the Paris morgue as a nineteenth-century attraction and the festive atmosphere which reigned during the hundreds of "public spectacle lynchings," predominantly but not exclusively in the Southern United States, up until the mid-twentieth century.

These problems are exacerbated by Khapaeva's writing, which at times tends toward the vague and makes her claims rather slippery. Is death *really* "mass fashion's most popular trend"? Is Santa Muerte *truly* "sweeping the US," rather than being primarily taken up by some in the Latinx community? When the book reproduces a photograph of dismembered "witch finger" biscotti-like treats, with the caption "popular Halloween cookies," I found myself thinking, "Sure, they're popular—among a particular set." A far *more* popular Halloween staple (in fact unavoidable at that time of year in the United States) is candy corn, which has no obvious "cult of death" associations. A low point of such linguistic legerdemain: when the book asserts a "morphological feature in common" between the "monstrous" hobbits and vampires: "Dracula has hairy palms, while hobbits have hairy feet." By that standard, this reader is doubly monstrous.

I do not wish these critiques to give the impression that Khapaeva's *The Celebration of Death in Contemporary Culture* does not have much to offer the general reader interested in the material and issues it addresses. I found the general historical sweep of her argument convincing, and the book useful as a compendium of death imagery and death-related works, mostly in the United States (though her characterization of Halloween as exploding in U.S. consciousness seems more relevant to post-1991 Russia). But I do think the ecological crisis, overpopulation, and the late capitalist commodification of life have at least as much to do with what Khapaeva calls "antihumanism" as do animal rights.

A much more ground-breaking and incisive book remains to be written on death in contemporary Russia, and it would build on works such as Catherine Merridale's *Night of Stone: Death and Memory in 20th-Century Russia* (2000), Sergei Oushakine's *Patriotism of Despair: Nation, War and Loss in Russia* (2009) and Alexander Etkind's *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied* (2013).

José Alaniz, University of Washington, Seattle

McQuillen, Colleen, and Julia Vaingurt, eds. *The Human Reimagined: Posthumanism in Russia*. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2018. viii + 268 pp. $119.00. ISBN 978-1-6181-1732-8.

"Humanism in the European sense of the word," Nikolai Berdyaev wrote in his *Russian Idea* (1946), "formed no part of the experience of Russia." What Russia did experience, and "with some particular sharpness," he continues, was "the crisis of humanism." This crisis lies at the heart of Colleen McQuillen and Julia Vaingurt's excellent and timely collection *The Human Reimagined: Posthumanism in Russia*. The title's "posthumanism," the editors insist, is not merely a trendy academic term. Instead, posthumanism should be understood as the set of discourses that arises from that very crisis of humanism that Russia so sharply experienced—the desire to probe the limits of the human, to overcome humanity's limitations, and to understand the world from a non-human perspective.

Indeed, posthumanist thought, broadly conceived, has played an important role throughout Russian intellectual history. From the Nietzschean ethical experiments of Dostoevsky's characters, to the quest for immortality of Nikolai Fëdorov's "common cause," to the mechanized bodies imagined by early Soviet theorists like Vsevolod Meyerhold and Aleksei Gastev, the Russian imagination has often conceived of the human not as an end point, but as a frontier to be explored, expanded, and eventually overcome. Despite this rich history, however, Russian thought and culture has largely been left out of the discussions around posthumanism that have animated the Western academy for at least three decades. In their volume McQuillen and Vaingurt bring these fields into contact, enriching posthumanist thought through Russian experience and bringing the insights of posthumanist pioneers like Donna Haraway, N. Katherine Hayles, and Rosi Braidotti into North American Slavic Studies.

Their substantial and lucid introduction lays a strong foundation for future work between the disciplines. A clear presentation of the history and subdivisions of Western posthumanist thought opens the volume and provides the interested non-specialist with a reliable foothold in the field. The second half of the introduction, "Posthumanism in Russia," makes the historical case for the centrality of posthumanism (*avant la lettre*) within the Russian literary and philosophical tradition.

The introduction is followed by ten well-curated essays, divided into four parts—"Questions of Ethics and Alterity," "Natural, Built, and Imagined Environments," "Technologies of the Self," and "Politics and Social Action." The volume concludes with a section called "Artistic Practices," which includes an interview with the poet and playwright Keti Chukhrov and a short personal essay by filmmaker Alex Anikina. All the contributions are thought-provoking, each suggesting numerous pathways for further exploration, but two essays deserve particular mention. The first is Diana Kurkovsky West's exploration of late-Soviet industrial design as a mode of disciplining or "drilling" the human within domestic space. Khrushchev and Brezhnev-era home appliances, Kurkovsky West argues, were designed to encourage and direct human-machine interactions, aspiring to create a "posthuman kitchen," through which the all-too-human homemaker would be displaced by a more reliable human-machine hybrid (p. 134). The second comes from Jacob Emery, who connects the transhuman fantasy of immortality by data transfer—the possibility of uploading the contents of a human personality to an ageless hard drive or other alien medium—with "the work of an artist encoding his or her self in the medium of the artwork" (p. 137). Emery's suggestive analysis brings transhumanist utopianism into productive conversation with the central concerns of more traditional humanities scholarship.

Across the contributions, the collection takes much of its inspiration from late-and-post Soviet science fiction, with fully half of the essays devoting significant space to the speculative fiction of the 1970s or 1980s. (Symptomatically, the index's largest entry is not "posthumanism," but "Strugatsky, Arkady and Boris.") While the late-Soviet flourishing of Sci-Fi should certainly be central to any integration of posthumanism and Slavic Studies, the emphasis on this era leaves no room for a sustained analysis of Russian cosmism, for instance, or for an exploration of the mechanization (or "cyborgization") of the worker's body in early Soviet imagery. Similarly, Russian theorists working on posthuman issues today are underrepresented. The exception is Jonathan

Brooks Platt's excellent contribution, as well as the "Artistic Practices" section, which together explore several important trends in contemporary Russian posthumanist thought, and end the collection on a high note.

Despite this slight overemphasis on the late twentieth century, *The Human Reimagined* is a valuable contribution that opens up vital new methodologies and relevant paths of inquiry for the Slavic field. It will be useful for both newcomers and specialists in these subfields, and its cross-disciplinary engagement will enrich both Slavic Studies and posthumanist discussions throughout the humanities.

Bradley A. Gorski, Vanderbilt University

History

Grinev, Andrei Val'terovich. *Russian Colonization of Alaska: Preconditions, Discovery, and Initial Development, 1741–1799*. Translated by Richard L. Bland. Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2018. xvi + 328 pp. $70.00. ISBN 978-1-4962-0762-3.

With the publication of *Russian Colonization of Alaska*, Andrei V. Grinev, a professor in the School of Social Sciences, Institute of Humanities, Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University, demonstrates once again why he is considered one of the world's foremost experts on the Russian period of Alaska's history (Russian America). Though it is a translation of only the first section of Grinev's published dissertation, *Aliaska pod krylom dvuglavogo orla* (2016), the book stands well on its own. It is valuable both as historical narrative supported by an impressive bibliography of published and archival sources, and for its discussion of the usefulness of the concept of politarism (supreme ownership by the state, also known as the Asiatic mode of production) for understanding the character of Russian expansion into Siberia and North America.

Grinev's discussion of historical theory is primarily confined to the introductory and concluding chapters. In Russian intellectual circles, politarism as a framework within which to understand Russian history remains a controversial topic, and because his original work was directed at a Russian audience, the author assumes a basic familiarity with the concept's place in intellectual history. With reference to the history of Russian America, Grinev has been championing the concept's explanatory power since the 1990s (for a critique see Sonja Luehrmann in *Slavic Review* 64:4 [2005]: 851–71). The current book contains his clearest statement yet of arguments in its favor. Not all will find his arguments convincing, but he sets the ground for future debate. Subsequent histories of Russian America with a theoretical orientation will need to address the points he raises if only to refute them.

The book's historical narrative focuses on the period from the Second Kamchatka Expedition's landfalls in southern and southeastern Alaska (1741) up to, but not including, the founding of the Russian-American Company (1799). An introductory section briefly covers Russian expansion into eastern Siberia and early Russian knowledge of Alaska, both hypothetical and real. The author keeps the story moving at a good pace, confining his retelling to the most essential points for events already well covered in the historical literature and providing more detail on less extensively examined topics. He periodically pauses in the narrative flow to address points of historical dispute and state his opinions on them. Some are minor points of fact, but others, such as the nature of Russian relations with Alaska Native peoples, are of broader interpretive significance.

While the book is well indexed, a few maps would have been useful. It is also regrettable that the name of the Dena'ina people is consistently misspelled Dana'ina. Those complaints aside, Grinev has done an excellent job of summarizing a vast body of literature. Anyone hungry for more detailed information will find the extensive endnotes and bibliography an unsurpassed guide.

Katherine L. Arndt, University of Alaska Fairbanks

Gerasimov, Ilya. *Plebeian Modernity: Social Practices, Illegality, and the Urban Poor in Russia 1906–1916*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2018. xii + 275 pp. $70.00. ISBN 978-1-58046-905-0.

The author has taken his namesake, Gerasimov, the mute antihero of Turgenev's novel *Mumu*, as the central symbol of this prolix, methodologically ambitious, but at times insightful attempt to shed light on the nameless masses and forgotten majority of most social histories. The book draws deeply on archival materials from Kazan, Nizhnii Novgorod, Odessa, and Vilna, promising as rich a view of the subject as these diverse regions reflect. It plumbs the depths of the crime, political opposition, interethnic violence, and individual peccadillos in these regions, encompassing Tatar thieves, Jewish police informants, Russian pogromists, Volga dock workers, and Odessa slum-dwellers. Given this great regional and ethnic diversity, the reader is hard-put to imagine that they shared or constituted a single habitus, a "plebeian modernity." But he is rewarded by dozens of specific, local sketches that seek to lock together the fates of the various groups. Attempting to humanize these forgotten characters, usually omitted or neglected in social histories, using data drawn principally from police records, the author compares, speculates, and expatiates on the meaning of their crimes, rivalries, and violence. The links among the ethnic subjects of these satisfyingly specific and sometimes insightful stories are not always clear. The rhythm of the text is associative rather than organized into discrete and conclusive arguments, so the most valuable content is in the observations and insights of the separate parts rather than in the overall findings or in an elucidation of "plebeian modernity" as a concept.

The dynamics of Kazan's anti-Jewish pogrom in 1905, for instance, is shown to result, in part, from both a powerful enmity between Russians and Tatars and an equally powerful wariness about expressing it, leaving the Jews "as the ultimate symbol of all things non-Russian" and a less risky group to attack (p. 71). Ilya Gerasimov's focus on cities peripheral to the Great Russian heartland brings to bear third (or fourth) groups besides Russians and Jews that complicate and shed light on that binary relationship, which stands at the center of events in all the cities. It offers an alternative view of Jewish-Gentile relations in the period between two revolutions, balancing two Pale towns with two on the Volga periphery. In Vilna, by contrast with Kazan, he finds a relative harmony among the diverse ethnic populations, which he explains by the concept of "patriarchality" (author's term), a characteristic apparently unique to Vilna. The author associates it with Vilna Police Chief Deminskii's policies, with the traditionalism of Vilna's Jewish community leaders, and with male domination evident in the relative tolerance of prostitution in the city. The argument is provocative, but it is also strained and leaves many loose ends unfastened. How did patriarchality apply to Vilna's other ethnic groups, for instance, and how is it to be reconciled with a plebeian *modernity*? Although patriarchality is the lynchpin of the Vilna story, its history in Vilna and its apparent absence in the other cities remain unexplained and mysterious.

The author's interpretations are, it appears, not always clear or plausible. Elsewhere he relates both a 1906 armed attack on a Cossack barracks and an armed extortion by Jewish anarchists, both in Odessa, but he treats it as a case of well-intentioned young people gone astray, qualifying the group's "ultimate goal" as "not necessarily ... revolutionary or criminal" (p. 113). The interpretation appears to be unnecessarily patronizing. Most observers would find their actions to have been both revolutionary *and* criminal, which the young anarchists surely knowingly risked due to a belief that their actions were positive political statements and/or intended to revive the ebbing revolutionary tide in 1906. The color and detail of police reports of crime and political subversion often tempt the researcher to imagine scenarios beyond what the records show. Gerasimov's book regularly gives way to that temptation by relating dozens of specific and engrossing events and giving them sometimes plausible, sometimes implausible, but always imaginative interpretations. The text is overwritten and not an easy read, but as a bold foray into the mostly unknown and unexplored history of "plebeians," the forgotten majorities of social history, it deserves our attention.

Gerald D. Surh, North Carolina State University

Le Blanc, Paul. *October Song: Bolshevik Triumph, Communist Tragedy, 1917–1924*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2017. xvii + 479 pp. $27.95 (paper). ISBN 978-1-60846-848-5.

Paul Le Blanc is a much-respected radical historian, activist, and author of numerous books on Leninism, Trotskyism, Rosa Luxemburg, American Marxism, and the civil rights movement. He has recently been engaged in a prolonged debate with Lars Lee regarding the minutiae of how Lenin's "April Theses" might have "re-armed" the Bolshevik party in 1917. Those exchanges were enlightening but were aimed, like much of Le Blanc's work, at committed Lenin scholars. The main title of this new volume suggests something less arcane and cabbalistic—something more emotional, lyrical, elevatory, even celebratory—something akin to Kurt Weill's "September Song," perhaps. To a degree *October Song* is that, and elements of the book also work touchingly well as the reflections of a senior scholar on his subject (and on its place in a changed world) after decades of toil, but the fly in the ointment is signaled by that subtitle, setting the perceived "Bolshevik Triumph" in the October Revolution against the allegedly "tragic" erosion of its ideals by the party (officially renamed the Communist party in 1918) in the turbulent and exhausting years prior to Lenin's death.

Early in his Preface the author notes the profound difference between "the party that made the October Revolution" and "the party in power after the 1917 revolution" (pp. x–xi), which is a common meme of Trotskyist and other Thermedorian approaches to the subject (although Le Blanc's emphasis is on exogenous pressures rather than any endogenous problems of Leninism). Unsurprisingly, therefore, he names Ernest Mandel and David Mandel as his chief points of reference, although his (entirely Anglophone) bibliography is rather less sectarian in its scope, as befits a work of synthesis. It is, though, distinctly idiosyncratic: what is one to make of a modern history of the Russian Revolution that fails to refer its readers to the recent, already seminal, contributions of Peter Holquist, Semion Lyandres, and Josh Sanborn but finds room for Tariq Ali, Marshal Berman, and Eric Foner?

What the book is not, then, is a broad survey of the history of October and the early Soviet years akin to others (by Laura Engelstein, Sean McMeekin, Steve Smith, Mark Steinberg, et al.) that have appeared among the plethora of publications marking the centenary of October. Nor is its author ever quite able to absent himself long enough from doctrinaire struggles to provide as vibrant and colorful a portrait of revolutionary events as that provided by China Miéville in his *October* (2018). Le Blanc's is far from being an altogether lifeless study, but it *is* a book about ideas (as revealed by its opaque "Methodological Appendix: Analytical Tools") and, more specifically, the conflict of ideas within the Bolshevik party leadership. Thus, "dictatorship of the proletariat" gets 46 entries in the Index and "imperialism" 31, while Komuch and Ukraine merit none (even Nicaragua gets 2), while E. H. Carr roundly defeats Admiral Kolchak 19:2, and General Wrangel, Petliura, Chkheidze, Tseretelli, and other vital players fail to score. That said, Le Blanc's emphasis on the historically neglected but contemporarily devastating impact of the Allied blockade on the potentials of October is an important contribution; persuasive too is his argument that Allied intervention may have failed in its effort to topple the Bolsheviks but that by arming and prolonging the White effort over 1918-20 it diverted the Reds, at a critical, post-armistice juncture, from their primary aim of exporting the revolution to a destabilized Europe (pp. 194–96). Ruminations that surface *passim* regarding the impact of centuries of autocracy, militarism, and serfdom upon the decay of the Revolution are also of merit.

Elsewhere, though, many historians would question the author's conclusions: was the New Economic Policy really a period of "peace and mellowness" (p. 372)? Surely, *inter alia*, few Soviet workers, for whom those initials signaled a "New Exploitation of the Proletariat," would not have agreed, to say nothing of the persecuted Georgians, the victims of state-sponsored attacks on the Orthodox Church, the Red Army's Basmachi opponents in the ongoing struggles in Central Asia, and the defendants in the farcical 1922 show trial of the Socialist Revolutionary party leadership. (And NEP was hardly a period of "mellowness" in the Arts.) Likewise, one blanches sharply at the predictably brief coverage of the crushing of the pivotal Kronstadt rebellion, in which the author finds room to claim that the sailors' suppressors retained a sufficient "residue of loyalty" to the

Soviet government to fight for it, while failing even to mention either the numerous mutinies among Trotsky's Red units (including the crack 27th Omsk Rifle Division) or the Cheka's heinous *zagraditel'nye otriady* ("blocking detachments") that forced others onto the ice at gunpoint and slaughtered those who resisted or retreated. Slights of hand like these detract from an otherwise often engaging, if partisan, study.

Jonathan D. Smele, Queen Mary University of London

Douds, Lara. *Inside Lenin's Government: Ideology, Power, and Practice in the Early Soviet State*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018. viii + 228 pp. $114.00. ISBN 978-1-4742-8670-1.

One question that arises with the work under review is its relationship to the pioneering study of T. H. Rigby, *Lenin's Government: Sovnarkom, 1917–1922* (1979). Lara Douds's work does not replace Rigby's but complements and adds to it. At the same time, with the advantage of access to documents in RGASPI and GARF, she is able to offer corrections to Rigby and other scholars who have addressed the dynamics of high politics in the early Soviet period.

Both Douds and Rigby, for example, arrive at the same conclusion regarding the failure of the Sovnarkom to sustain its power after the Civil War, yielding to the Politburo and party apparatus in the governance of the new Soviet state. Rigby writes that the eventual triumph of the party occurred "not [from] the fruit of some grand design, but was rather the cumulative effect of many decisions with far more limited objectives and of more or less spontaneous adaptation to specific circumstances" (p. 178). Douds comes to a similar conclusion, observing that the "authoritarian party-state was not the immediate nor conscious outcome of Bolshevik ideology and intentional policy ... but ... the result of ad hoc improvisation and incremental decisions" (p. 4).

Douds's source base is richer than Rigby's. She explains that he relied on a group of Soviet scholars who themselves had limited access to documents on the administrative apparatus of Sovnarkom and Lenin's chairmanship of that body. With much fuller access to Sovnarkom documents, she observes, they "reveal a more developed Sovnakom apparatus than has previously been acknowledged" (p. 60). It was from that growing apparatus within the government hierarchy that Lenin found his personal secretaries, Lidiia Fotieva and M. A. Volodicheva, who played such important roles as his health failed. He trusted them because they had first worked with him in Sovnarkom's Administration Department, the center of his personal bailiwick. In fact, Douds documents that the political culture of Sovnarkom revolved around Lenin's personal involvement on a daily basis in the form of receiving visitors and petitioners which consumed "much of his day as Sovnarkom chairman" (p. 75). Here lay a critical issue that emerges from Douds's study. Sovnarkom, however sophisticated its divisions and expansive its jurisdiction, still depended on Lenin's personal engagement, almost in the tradition of a pre-modern satrap. Without Lenin or a strong, committed substitute, the institution could falter despite its intricate and expanding apparatus.

One of the strengths of the work under review is the deft portraits of its protagonists. This is especially true in the case of Sverdlov, to whom Douds devotes an entire chapter. She insists that Sverdlov's "image ... as a devoted party organizer" is a "myth" (pp. 83–84). According to Douds he impeded the party's expansion at the expense of VTsIK and Sovnarkom. Only his death enabled "the expansion of the party apparatus" (p. 87). Rigby states the opposite, noting Sverdlov's concern at the Seventh Party Congress to "shift attention ... from the soviet to party bodies" on the local level (p. 178).

Douds disagrees with Rigby on another matter. She concurs with him that Lenin's illness undermined Sovnarkom because of his failure to appoint a competent chairman in his absence. Douds, on the other hand, insists that "Sovnarkom's decline was in motion well before the onset of Lenin's illness" (p. 169). She attributes the weakness of the government apparatus to at least two factors: the political culture of "collegiality," that is leaving decisions to low-ranking individuals; and the impact of the Civil War on governance, accelerating the party's role in quick, flexible responses to crises.

Douds faults Trotsky, who condemned the party's takeover of the responsibilities that had belonged to the government bureaucracy yet refused to step in as Lenin's deputy on Sovnarkom when the chairman's health failed. It should be noted that Trotsky's refusal was part of a larger abnegation of responsibility. He also balked at confronting Stalin, at Lenin's request, on the Georgian affair and the proposal to dilute the regime's monopoly of foreign trade.

Douds argues that the Left SRs in the four months they held positions with the fledgling Soviet regime "functioned more successfully [as a] coalition government than has previously been acknowledged" (p. 24). The Left SRs naturally gravitated to the Soviets and Sovnarkom. They had no ties to the party or its political culture. By the same token, Trotsky did not fit comfortably in the party. Both the Left SRs and the commissar of war were outsiders to it, former opponents who were not welcome in its culture and camaraderie forged in the emigration and revolution.

Douds has effectively recounted how Lenin tried and failed to graft a government bureaucracy onto the party. But from another perspective one could argue that the party's seeming "takeover" with the Civil War simply confirmed that the Bolsheviks had always found their identity and political legitimacy in the party. The party congresses both ratified and asserted the party's authority over rival institutions. They were defining milestones each year in the regime's political calendar. In that sense, it was not nearly so accidental and unintentional that the Politburo triumphed over Sovnarkom, as Rigby and Douds have argued.

Finally, this contribution to serious scholarship on the postrevolutionary era deserved better treatment from the publisher. Typos are numerous and mar an otherwise important text.

Alexis Pogorelskin, University of Minnesota-Duluth

Harry, Elizabeth A. *Permanent Revolution: A Study of the Early Soviet State*. Minnesota Mediterranean and East European Monographs XXII. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018. xvii + 301 pp. ISBN 978-0-9791218-8-3.

Elizabeth Harry's fascinating work tackles a paradoxically overlooked aspect of the early Soviet era. It provides a detailed look at the social underpinnings of the policy changes that resulted first, in the introduction by the young Soviet republic of the New Economic Policy (NEP), and later, its abandonment under the aegis of "Stalin's revolution."

The monograph utilizes an intriguing synthesis of the extant research, as well as a fresh look at new material to dispute the idea that the Soviet government operated in a political vacuum, governed purely by ideological convictions of Marxism-Leninism, separate and uninfluenced by the public opinion. By examining a vast trove of letters and appeals sent by Soviet citizens to party leaders, Harry attempts to move the study of this period beyond the confines of both the "totalitarian" and the "revisionist" approaches to the scholarship, but rather to move toward a new paradigm combing social and political history.

The introduction of NEP was not a decision that came easily or readily to the party, driven to it by the necessities of the economic collapse. The response by Soviet society was, if anything, even more complex. The wide-ranging overview of the archival sources that forms the backbone of the volume illustrates a deep reservoir of hostility, disappointment, and anger on the part of the lower social strata of the Soviet population, which internalized the promises of the October Revolution and grew to regard the NEP as a betrayal. This development was especially ominous since it particularly affected the most passionate supporters of the Communist experiment: the young, the veterans of the Civil War, and the grass roots of the party membership.

The monograph primarily focuses on the petitions as a window into the popular attitudes of contemporary Soviet society, and it presents an invaluable resource in that regard. Yet it could have been greatly enriched by a closer examination of the interaction with the appeals and letters by the Communist elite. While the volume issues an undeniable challenge to the top-down view of the Soviet decision-making paradigm, a direct causal connection between the party leadership's awareness of the popular mood and the policy decisions is never explicated, but rather assumed.

The economic dislocation that resulted from the relaxation of government control and reintroduction of some of the features of the free market in the early 1920s had found visible and graphic expression in the the quest for efficiency, attendant increase in unemployment, and visible growth of income and social inequality. In the wake of great utopian expectations of a perfectly egalitarian society based on rarefied collectivist principles came the crushing reality of individualist competition for jobs, education, and simple survival. There was a great sense of disappointment, not simply with the materialist aspects of the situation, but also with the seemingly receding promise that the new world would imbue the formerly oppressed with a new sense of dignity and respect. Petitions demanding redress against bureaucratic indifference, party elitism, the return of class differentiation as the white-collar professionals were being courted by the party, the corruption, and the raw sense of the Revolution having been hijacked by "former people" came flooding in.

Harry argues that the party was deeply aware of the political threat represented by the widespread disaffection and that Stalin's Great Turn was a response to the popular dissatisfaction by a politician who, uniquely among the Bolshevik leadership, had the background and the mindset to empathize with the "common man" of the USSR and to mobilize the inchoate rage of the "nizy" against the "verkhi" (which he shared) for the purposes of renewing the Revolution. Thus the monograph makes a compelling case for viewing Stalin's Great Turn as an expression of popular attitudes, enacted by someone who shared the "instinctive socialism" fueled by the traditional levelling Zeitgeist of Russian society. Unfortunately, Harry never addresses the antecedents of Stalin's reforms in the work of Trotskii and Preobrazhenskii, neither of whom could be easily cast as representative of the 'Soviet Street."

Nonetheless, *Permanent Revolution* presents a new and welcome reconceptualization of the early Soviet Union and should be of great interest to scholars of NEP, the Great Turn, and the emergence of Stalinism.

Daniel Stotland, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Cameron, Sarah. *The Hungry Steppe: Famine, Violence, and the Making of Soviet Kazakhstan*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018. xiv +77 pp. $49.95. ISBN 978-1-5017-3043-6.

A good work of scholarship can accomplish several things: inform, expand the boundaries of what we know on a subject, make us wiser, and sometimes even move us. Sarah Cameron's excellent book on the Kazakhstan famine of 1930–33 does all these things and more. The outline of the story that Cameron tells is as follows: in the late 1920s, Soviet policymakers wanted to transform and modernize the world the Kazakh people inhabited. They had been pastoral nomads for some four thousand years with an economic base centered on their livestock. Soviet economic and social planners wanted to collectivize and simultaneously make sedentary these historical nomads, destroying their former way of life so that they would become grain producers to meet the goals of Soviet economic development.

The effort to accomplish the cultural and economic transformation of the Kazakh people was a disaster, creating a devastating famine that the author describes as nothing short of "a crime against humanity" (p. 178). About 1.5 million Kazakhs died, roughly one-fourth of the republic's inhabitants. Another million became refugees either within the republic, or the larger Soviet Union, and thousands even fled across the border into China.

Cameron asks two questions: What were the causes of the famine, and how does the famine change the way we assess Soviet modernization? There were three causes of the famine, the most important of which was collectivization itself, which forced Kazakhs to become grain suppliers. In so doing they were forced to sell or destroy their herds because of the need to meet the harsh grain quotas. With their herds in great decline (eventually a 90-percent decrease), Kazakhs fled to find food and safety. The second cause was the confiscation of the livestock of rural elites, and the third was a drought in the summer of 1931, an unsurprising outcome in a drought-prone area.

While the horrors of the famine that struck Ukraine in roughly the same time period is much better known and documented, the famine in Kazakhstan was, with regard to population, proportionately considerably greater in its impact. The number of victims engulfed by the famine was magnified by the large number of outsiders who were brought into the republic, as for example, by the 1931 establishment of Karlag, a Gulag labor camp with hundreds of thousands of prisoners in Karaganda.

Multiple forms of violence were associated with the famine. The most obvious was the murder of thousands of fleeing Kazakhs as they tried to escape the starving collectives in which they were trapped. Soviet border troops even chased them into Chinese territory to hunt them down. Initially, the Kazakhs tried to escape with whatever livestock they could take, but as the famine wore on, there was no property to take with them and the refugees were just propertyless families on the run. A second form of violence was the inevitable outcome of hunger: the creation of a large orphan class and the cannibalism that stalked surviving Kazakhs.

One of the interesting aspects Cameron's work is that in addition to the use of archival materials in both Russian and Kazakh, she also interviewed a number of Kazakhs who lived through the famine. While the events are almost ninety years old, this was clearly the most traumatic experience in modern Kazakh history and it is riveted in their memories.

Cameron's book has a definitive quality about it, and until such time that more archives become public, it will remain the most reliable telling of this terrible tale that until now has been hidden or ignored.

William Velvel Moskoff, Lake Forest College

Velikanova, Olga. *Mass Political Culture under Stalinism: Popular Discussion of the Soviet Constitution of 1936*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. xv + 260 pp. $109.00. ISBN 978-3-319-78422-7.

This book offers a strikingly revisionist account of the Soviet 1930s that challenges not only much of the received wisdom on the period, but much of the historiography as well. It contends that a combination of international and domestic factors precipitated a serious, sustained effort to partially democratize the Stalinist dictatorship through the introduction of a new constitution and competitive elections between 1936 and 1937. A subject that has been debated over the past twenty-five years by such scholars as J. Arch Getty, Sheila Fitzpatrick, and Iu. N. Zhukov, this Stalinist constitutional experiment now finds its most thorough treatment in the work of Olga Velikanova.

Although *Mass Political Culture under Stalinism* concedes that official support for democratic reforms during the 1930s ebbed over time before finally being abandoned in late 1937, it argues that public discussion of the new constitution reveals Soviet society to have been much more ideologically diverse and multivalent than previously suspected. Traditionally, scholarship has presented highly polarized, static assessments of Soviet citizens during the interwar period as true-believers, conformists, or supplicants. In this book, however, Velikanova suggests that Stalin-era society comprised a much broader spectrum of political identity, ranging from popular support for an illiberal proletarian dictatorship all the way to enthusiasm for liberal democracy and the rule of law.

Much of Velikanova's analysis of popular belief in Soviet society is based on data drawn from party, state, and secret police information reports (the so-called *svodki*)—material that she has harnessed in four previous books and a variety of articles. *Svodki* present a set of methodological challenges for studies such as *Mass Political Culture under Stalinism*, inasmuch as they were designed to identify and register threats to the regime rather than monitor public opinion per se. For that reason, although they offer qualitative information on popular beliefs circulating in Soviet society, they do not provide quantitative data on how common such ideas were, nor do they track how they changed over time. What is more, because of the security-state mentality that frames the *svodki*, these sources tend to assume that even the most isolated expressions of opinion were indicative of the existence of larger groups or subcultures oriented around such beliefs.

Velikanova is aware of the limitations of the *svodki* and is generally quite cautious in her interpretation of the evidence they offer. She also attempts whenever possible to triangulate data drawn from the *svodki* with information from other sources—personal correspondence, diaries, memoirs, and diplomatic and intelligence reports—in order to corroborate her findings. In the end, the overall picture presented by *Mass Political Culture under Stalinism* poses a direct challenge to scholars positing a sense of social uniformity within the interwar USSR. As such, readers will be able to identify within Velikanova's account not only an array of "Soviet selves," but also "liberal subjects" and upwardly mobile promotees as well. And for every ordinary soul who "spoke Bolshevik" during this period, Velikanova's readership will also encounter individuals who articulated strikingly unorthodox, outspoken points of view.

Velikanova concludes that the impression created by the *svodki* of Soviet society—that of a fractious community distinguished by a profound lack of social solidarity—was ultimately responsible for the Bolsheviks' decision to abandon their constitutional experiment. This intriguing book ought to be read in concert with another new monograph on the subject, Samantha Lomb's *Stalin's Constitution: Soviet Participatory Politics and the Discussion of the 1936 Draft Constitution* (2017), which arrives at similar conclusions on the basis of a case study focusing on the city of Kirov.

David Brandenberger, University of Richmond

Enstad, Johannes Due. *Soviet Russians under Nazi Occupation: Fragile Loyalties in World War II*. New Studies in European History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. xviii + 255 pp. $99.99. ISBN 978-1-108-42126-3.

The Norwegian scholar Johannes Due Enstad has written a thoroughly researched book on the experiences of Soviet Russians in the regions of northwestern Russia occupied in World War II by the Germans, which encompassed what was then the Leningrad and Kalinin oblasts of the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic.

Hitherto, a number of factors served to discourage historians from turning the spotlight on this particular corner of the Soviet Union, among them, the inaccessibility of security records from the Russian archives. This problem has persisted and has doubtless made it difficult for the author to present a multifaceted picture. For this reason, his success is all the more impressive. By trawling through masses of other archival material, including the Extraordinary Commission reports, German administrative sources and postwar trial material, as well as published secondary sources, such as memoirs, he has produced a comprehensive history that covers all major themes related to the subject: prewar life in the region; initial responses to the war and the occupation; the annihilation of Jews, Roma, and prisoners of war; economic and religious life; and dilemmas confronting local people during the war, which led, as Enstad aptly puts it, to fragile loyalties.

There is no doubt that divisions among local inhabitants were seething under the surface before the war. The author begins his account with collectivization. We learn among other things that there were fewer social divisions and, hence, less opposition in villages toward collectivization than in many other Soviet areas. And, unlike Soviet western regions, there were no popular attacks on Jews during the interregnum separating Soviet and German rule.

However, these bits of valuable information alone do not explain why local inhabitants displayed relatively more pro-Soviet behavior during the German occupation. The author attributes them, and justly so, to the changing tide of the war, a natural sympathy with the winner, and the turmoil among the Northwestern Soviet Russians in the 1930s.

Yet in accounting for the locals' behavior during the war, one basic component seems to be missing from the puzzle. Had the author begun his account with the Russian Civil War, he would have noticed that local peasantry had overwhelmingly rallied to the Bolshevik flag. The reason is not hard to find. The peasants in northwestern Russian were mostly poor, and the Bolshevik Revolution benefitted them. As a result, even such a generally traumatic experience as collectivization failed to strain these bonds, which were put to the test again during the Soviet-German war (which

was in many respects a continuation of the Russian Civil War). Therefore, alongside the political and ethnic considerations that affected local loyalties, a topic the author explores in depth, Enstad reveals how the class affinity between underprivileged Northwestern Russians and the Bolshevik regime greatly impacted the locals' behavior (but not necessarily that of other Russians living in other Soviet regions).

The book's title is slightly misleading. The book focuses on only one Russian region, but there is no evidence (nor does the author make such a claim) that Russians behaved similarly in other occupied regions.

However, these quibbles aside, Enstad's work deserves acclaim not just for its insights into the Soviet Russian bifurcation during the war, but also as a model microhistory with an approach well worth emulating.

Kiril Feferman, Ariel University

Pinskii, Anatolii, ed. *Posle Stalina: Pozdnesovetskaia sub"ektivnost' (1953–1985)*. St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Evropeiskogo universiteta v Sankt-Peterburge, 2018. 454 pp. R460.00. ISBN 978-5-94380-242-3.

Since the publication in 1995 of Stephen Kotkin's *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism As a Civilization*, studies of "subjectivity" have enjoyed primacy in historiographical debate about the Stalin period. The present anthology on late-Soviet subjectivity grew out of a conference at European University at St. Petersburg in 2014. It is distinguished by the efforts of its authors to use the concept of "subjectivity," which was honed in scholarship on the Stalin period, as a general approach to Soviet history after 1953.

As Anatoly Pinsky notes in his introduction, "subjectivity" requires a bit of explanation for persons prone to attribute conventional meanings to words. It refers to a post-Kantian and explicitly Foucaultian view of the self and identity as an entities formed in discursive fields of power relations. In his pioneering 1995 work, Kotkin defined subjectivity as the process by which individuals are made, and by which they make themselves, subjects of the state. From this fertile insight came subsequent investigations by Igal Halfin, Jochen Hellbeck, Anna Krylova, and other scholars, which sought to draw out more fully the implications of the disintegrating view that the self is a "unified whole, formed by reason and its internal autonomy" (p. 11). While studies of subjectivity are comparatively rare in recent book-length investigations of the post-Stalin decades, they are not altogether absent. Denis Kozlov, for instance, privileges the concept in his investigation of the readers of the influential "thick journal" *Novyi mir*.

However, the present anthology is the first to use the concept of subjectivity to tie together otherwise disparate analyses of the post-Stalin period. Focusing principally on images of the search for individual happiness in the works of El'dar Riazanov and Vasilii Aksenov, Cynthia Hooper's contribution to the anthology challenges the idea that the ideology of mature socialism gauged individual loyalty only through the performance of ritual. The fruit of earnest belief, Hooper argues, was often presented in film and literature as friendship and love. Maria Mayofis presents one of the most popular cultural forms of the post-Stalin years—the children's choral studio—as inculcating discipline and collective responsibility. Mikhail Rozhanskii seeks to explain Soviet film's sudden interest in "going to Siberia" in the late 1950s (p. 139). Uncorrupted and unpretentious, Siberia was an apt setting for the idealist's search for authenticity and fulfillment. Pinsky sees in the prominence of published diaristic writings during the Khrushchev years evidence of a new form of subjectivity, which was able to grapple openly with the deficiencies of Soviet life. Il'ia Kukulin focuses on the spate of travel literature in the 1950s and 1960s, underscoring its didactic role in shaping interactions between Soviet citizens and their foreign counterparts. Aleksei Golubev examines the renewed importance of the Western gaze in Soviet life in the 1950s and 1960s. Golubev thus domesticates a phenomenon external to the Soviet system, seeing it as a powerful shaper of subjectivity.

The remaining essays in *Posle Stalina* are micro-historical in approach. Oleg Leibovich contributes a fascinating study about changes in the self-perceptions and values of persons who worked in the police, procuracy, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Molotov oblast during and after the arrest of Beria in 1953. Daria Bocharnikova focuses on a group of Moscow architects, who in the mid-1960s began to re-imagine the relation of the individual to the collective, and role architecture and cityscape played in mediating between the two. Bella Ostromooukhova examines the growing popularity of amateur theater groups in the 1950s and 1960s, seeing them as incubators for "horizontal" subjectivities that developed among their tightly knit participants, and for a sense of artistic authenticity that was rare in the hierarchical world of professional theater. Susan Reid seeks to explain, through oral-historical research, how the modernist interiors and furnishings of single-family apartments in the Khrushchev and Brezhnev years affected the subjectivities of their inhabitants. Finally, Benjamin Nathans reads the corpus of Soviet dissident memoirs, which began to appear in the West in the late 1960s, in a novel way: not as a window onto an opaque society, but as a highly specific form of literature that was characterized by its own tropes and formulas.

In aggregate, the essays in *Posle Stalina* stand as an important contribution to the scholarly literature on the post-Stalinist decades. Future scholarship will indicate whether the anthology's red thread, subjectivity, was valedictory—that is, a capstone on more than two decades of scholarship where subjectivity was a paramount concern—or whether the authors have successfully made the case for its continued usefulness and fertility.

Stephen V. Bittner, Sonoma State University

Kohonen, Ilina. *Picturing the Cosmos: A Visual History of Early Soviet Space Endeavor*. Bristol: Intellect, 2017. 132 pp. £27.50 (paper). ISBN 978-1-783-20742-8.

This compelling history of the Soviet conquest of space shows how photographs and artistic depictions of cosmic landscapes and space travelers facilitated the mapping of outer space and elaborated a unique and complex model of heroism. Ilina Kohonen's analysis offers the reader a wealth of insight about how images produce reality as much as they reflect it. Photographs of the Earth rising behind the moon and Alexei Leonov's cosmic landscapes made outer space known in ways that could be understood in terms of exploration or conquest.

An untied shoelace—the only dissonant detail in the highly choreographed and edited film of Yuri Gagarin's celebratory return to Moscow—signaled that cosmonauts were ordinary, but made heroes by virtue of their extraordinary achievement. Photographs of cosmonauts playing with their children and helping with housework underscored the centrality of domesticity, a new appreciation of the private sphere, and the veneration of the nuclear family in the post-Stalin era. At the same time, photographs of mourners at Gagarin's funeral, depictions of the arduous training regime cosmonauts endured, and the pensive, heavily retouched headshot of Gagarin that became iconic after his death, grounded space-age heroism in the suffering and sacrifice of World War II.

A key characteristic of Soviet space imagery was the somewhat perverse relationship between secrecy, censorship, and excessive propaganda. On the one hand, concern about revealing technological secrets meant that every image underwent extensive scrutiny before publication. On the other hand, the desire to promote and celebrate human and technological accomplishments imbued everything that was published with significance. Setting aside questions about the veracity of the images, Kohonen sees the tension between censorship and ritual propaganda as an opportunity to understand what these endlessly reproduced and recirculated images meant. Her impressive source base includes images published in the popular magazine *Ogonek* from the launch of the first sputnik in 1957 to the moon landing by the United States in 1969, as well as a database of some four thousand photographs held at the Russian State Archive of Scientific and Technical Documentation. Correlating the commonalities in how the successful manned spaceflights of the sixties were celebrated in the pages of *Ogonek* with the unpublished photographic record of prospective cosmonauts in the archive, Kohonen shows how ritualized and freighted with meaning these visual narratives were.

Published photo essays presented variations of a story that seemed to begin with triumph and official recognition. The unpublished photographs of cosmonauts whose identity remained secret because they perished or never flew indicate that a visual narrative documenting a space hero's ordinary life, happy home, childhood, and arduous training was constructed in advance but remained secret until or unless there was something to celebrate. Photographs made the hero, and they also connected the hero to lived experiences and ideals—but only if he or she returned.

Kohonen situates artistic representations of the Soviet space age in the context of the changing sensibilities of post-Stalinist culture and the aesthetics of Socialist Realism, revealing how these images brought previously unknown and unimagined cosmic vistas into the Soviet imperial project and allowed for a more nuanced and less triumphant articulation of heroism. She shows how the conquest of space was accomplished with the help of photography and cartography, and how new technology provided access to previously inaccessible landscapes. Following Marshall Berman, who located a key contradiction of high modernism in the fact that technology enables and defines progress, but also has the capacity to destroy it, she helps us understand the contradictory dynamics of a history that celebrated the heroic, otherworldly and extraordinary, at the same time it honored the commonplace, earthbound, and even quotidian.

Amy Nelson, Virginia Tech

Iunakov, Oleg. *Arkhitektor Iosif Karakis: Zhizn', tvorchestvo i sud'ba*. New York: "Almaz," 2016. 544 pp. $49.00. ISBN 978-1-68082-000-3.

The life of renowned Kiev architect Iosif Iul'evich Karakis (1902–88) spanned a twentieth century that brought untold ordeals to millions of people and ruinous destruction to thousands of cities. The city of Kiev bore more than its share of these privations, and not just the destruction wrought by the ruinous conflicts of the Revolution and Civil War, and the Great Patriotic War of 1941–45. Between those two catastrophes, the ancient capital city landed squarely in the path of a rising young Futurist architecture, and when it became the capital of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1934 it could hardly avoid becoming a target for those who hoped to fundamentally alter the city's fabric by putting into practice their conceptions of the "ideal socialist city." Kiev managed to survive these trials and tribulations with honor, due in no small part to Karakis, who shared this complex century with the city: its hopes for a postrevolutionary renewal; its bitter losses in the 1930s and 1940s; the tremendous burden of postwar recovery work; and the dreams of a new "garden city." Looking back on those decades today, we can say with certainty that, thanks to the fates of Kiev and Karakis being intertwined, while the city lost much during the twentieth century, it also gained a great deal.

A thirty-year distance from the time of Karakis's passing in 1988 has allowed Oleg Iunakov, in this foundational work, to formulate a comprehensive picture of the architect's personality while gathering in deliberate fashion more than enough material to write an all-encompassing biography. The author's strictly objective approach to the presentation of his material has resulted in a work that is built upon a firm foundation of documents and facts. Iunakov has maintained maximum distance from his own personal viewpoint while presenting a significant quantity of documentary evidence that he unearthed in family and state archives. Of course, between the lines one unquestionably notices the author's favorable attitude toward Karakis, but this tone itself is "documentary" in nature, reflecting as it does the hard-working architect's gentle and inviting disposition, which attracted like-minded scholars as well as friends by dint of both his powerful talent and charming, fascinating personality. While reading these pages with their abundant documents and commentary, we follow along with Karakis's creative development and forward progress, but at the same time we witness his internal consistency and integrity, which prevented him from transgressing his principles. The facts and events of Karakis's life gradually fill out the contours of an epoch embodied by construction projects and building-sites. Indeed, one of the most interesting parts of Iunakov's book is the list he provides of construction projects, some only partially completed. It gives us a clear picture of twentieth-century Soviet architecture as astonishingly daring, brilliant,

if not a bit utopian, and how its ideas and concepts progressed, sometimes with faith that they would be implemented, but sometimes remaining mere dreams.

The youthfulness of Karakis was the youthfulness of Soviet architecture, manifested in his case in Kievan Constructivism, which Karakis defended up to 1936. This was the high point of architecture in Ukraine, an era when grandiose projects for the reconstruction of Kiev's city center were in the air, and massive public edifices were constructed across the land, such as the Red Army's Officers' House in Kiev, the Red Army House in Khar'kov, to name just two. Karakis spent the Great Patriotic War years in evacuation, working on the construction of Farkhad Hydroelectric Dam in Central Asia. And upon his return after the Soviet victory, it was his mastery of craft and talent that did much to determine the architectural history of postwar Ukraine. Karakis's deep-seated understanding of and feeling for the architectural history of the country proved crucial during the reconstruction of war-ravaged Kiev. The turret on the residential building on Georgievskii pereulok 2, for example, is highly suggestive of the "drums" that adorn the nearby St. Sophia's Cathedral: it is symbolic testament to the continuity Karakis sought to maintain.

The creative path of Karakis, who never once went beyond the borders of the Soviet Union, provides credible proof of the "self-sufficiency" of Soviet architecture even as it actively responded to developments in global architecture as the twentieth century unfolded. Iunakov provides some fascinating comparisons, for example, of projects by Karakis and the French-Swiss architect Le Corbusier, and various "arcological" projects, which sought to establish architectural design principles for densely populated, but ecologically low-impact, habitats, usually conceived as towering vertical and highly integrated cities-within-a-structure (pp. 310, 375).

With the publication of this foundational work, might we conclude that the subject of Iosif Karakis's life and work has been exhausted, and that it is, for all intents and purposes, closed? Paradoxically, I would say that this book actually has merely broached the topic, because Iunakov in his modesty, while unearthing an enormous amount of factual material, has not really allowed himself to offer his own analysis of these facts. The one exception to this is the author's richly detailed account of the conception and construction of the Babi Yar Memorial. Here the author's command of the historian's trade and tools is on full display. But otherwise, virtually every stage in Karakis's creative development awaits additional interpretation that places his career in a broad historical context.

Nonetheless, Oleg Iunakov's important book conclusively demonstrates that while the legacy of Iosif Karakis is inseparable from Kiev and Ukraine, it also must be viewed (and researched) as an integral component of Soviet and global architectural developments. This broadly conceived approach is now available to the new generation of historians of architecture, and for that we should be grateful to Iunakov, whose biography of Karakis provides a reliable signpost.

Evgeny Khodakovsky, St. Petersburg State University

Malik, Hassan. *Bankers and Bolsheviks: International Finance and the Russian Revolution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018. xx + 296 pp. $35.00. ISBN 978-0-69117-016-9.

The Bolshevik government's repudiation of the debts of the tsarist regime and the Provisional Government in February 1918 constituted the greatest financial default in history. Hassan Malik examines this momentous event in the context of international capital flows that made the Russian Empire the second-largest debtor in the world (behind the United States) in 1914. Some economists have argued that the defaults of Argentina in 2001 and Greece in 2012 surpassed the Soviet default of 1918, but in a fifteen-page statistical appendix, using 2012 dollars as a standard of comparison, Malik demonstrates that the Russian was the largest of all, equivalent to between $3.25 and 5.63 trillion. This total includes not only the domestic and international obligations of the Russian state, but also various securities guaranteed by it, including bonds and mortgages of railroad companies

and the gentry and peasant banks. When the Bolshevik government nationalized Russian and foreign corporations that lacked the state's guarantee, the value of their stocks and bonds was wiped out as well.

Signs of financial distress were clear from 1890 onward: famine, defeat by the Japanese navy, revolutionary violence in villages and factories, and, finally, the fatal costs of World War I. Why, then, did bankers in Berlin, Paris, London, and New York show excessive tolerance for risk in the market for Russian debt?

Malik provides a clear and comprehensive analysis of the grand drama. His discussions of the bond market are enriched by references to the literature on the theory and practice of international finance. The most fascinating passages are quotations from documents in fourteen archives, including several in St. Petersburg and Moscow; those of BNP Paribas, Crédit Lyonnais, and Société Générale in Paris; of the Bank of England, the Rothschild firm, the London City and Midland Bank, and Baring Brothers in London; and of the Morgan firm and the First National City Bank in New York. Trends in capital flows and investors' perceptions of risk are displayed in eighteen graphs and twenty tables. Finally, he draws on his own experience working for several banks, including at the Troika Dialog Bank (now Sberbank CIB) in Moscow.

As a historian trained in economics and finance, Malik devotes considerable attention to theory. He criticizes explanations that rely on "assumptions of investor rationality and perfect or near-perfect information," preferring the notion, developed by Marc Flandreau and others, of so-called gatekeeper finance, in which "the most prestigious banks were able to leverage their brand value" as they sought "the most successful issues" of debtor states (p. 15).

Malik finds that geopolitical realities, especially "moral hazard from Russian and Entente government guarantees" during World War I, combined with "competitive pressures within the global financial industry" to drive "the increase in risk tolerance" (p. 149). The allure of Russia's natural resources and huge population, third in size after those of China and India, focused the bankers' attention on the prospect of future profits. He also considers the social and political ramifications of his story. The French ambassador reported in 1910 that "xenophobic tendencies" were "more or less widespread." Malik criticizes the Europeans' paternalism, noting that "foreign financiers" exacerbated political and social tensions in Russia "through their often high-handed behavior, which has since been unwittingly imitated by generations of expatriates in developing countries" (p. 116).

Even as the war ravaged the economy, bankers still "saw plenty of signs for hope in Russia" (p. 159). The evidence leads Malik to the opposite conclusion: that the Provisional Government, which inherited the debts of the tsarist regime after replacing it in March 1917, would have been forced to default on at least part of its massive obligations had the Soviet regime not come to power.

Thomas C. Owen, Cambridge, MA

Pomeranz, William E. *Law and the Russian State: Russia's Legal Evolution from Peter the Great to Vladimir Putin*. The Bloomsbury History of Modern Russia Series. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. x + 228 pp. $114.00. ISBN 978-1-4724-2422-2.

William Pomeranz, Deputy Director of the Kennan Institute, has written a masterful history of Russia through a legal lens. From the *Ulozhenie* of 1649 to the latest decrees of Vladimir Putin, Pomeranz's book is an homage of sorts to the generations of scholars of Russian law whose works inform this lively survey of Russian legal history. It attests to the vibrancy and relevance of this often-neglected subfield of Slavic studies. As the nineteenth-century Russian jurist Boris Chicherin noted, "civil law—and not mass democracy—[has] served as the primary restraint on the state" (p. 52).

Writing about Soviet law in the early 1960s, Harold Berman observed that "law is more than rules; it is the legal profession, the law schools, the technique and tradition of judging, administering and legislating. Law is also the sense of law, the law-consciousness of the people" (p. 3). Defying

the image of the *sukhoi zakonnik*, Pomeranz has taken Berman's charge to heart and produced a short but surprisingly comprehensive assessment of the development of laws, legal institutions, and legal consciousness in Russia. As a scholar trained in both law and political science, Pomeranz is particularly adept at illustrating law's ability to serve as both an instrument of, and a constraint on, the Russian state. Readers whose primary interests lie well outside the field of Russian law will find important insights here into Russia's political, social, and economic development. For example, through the prism of legal affairs Pomeranz gives us a fresh and convincing analysis of the differences between the Medvedev and Putin presidencies.

Law and the Russian State develops several major themes as it carries the reader through a history of Russian law that is periodized along traditional lines of regimes and rulers. One of the most important of these themes is the absence of a uniform system of law and justice. Although Russia has moved beyond the multiple legal systems in place in the tsarist era—when justice was administered differently depending on the region of the empire and the density of the population (urban vs. rural communities)—it has not achieved the goal articulated by Lenin in the early 1920s, that justice should be the same "in Kaluga and Kazan." For example, despite Putin's efforts to create a thoroughly unified state, legal exceptionalism is still evident in places like Chechnya and Dagestan. As Pomeranz points out, it is also evident in the duality of Russian law, to use Kathryn Hendley's term, which differentiates cases that matter to prominent state actors and those that do not.

Among the other themes developed in this work are the extent to which Russia's leaders have ruled through executive decrees; the vital role of *nadzor* as a supervisory mechanism that is a poor substitute for markets and administrative law, which have never fully matured in Russia; the dominance of "state and law" values over private law values; and the bureaucracy's position as a *de facto* fourth branch of government. In the view of Pomeranz, except for the periods between 1906 and 1917 and 1991 to 2000, the bureaucracy and not the parliament has been the main legislator in Russia. Moreover, the most potent segment of the Russian bureaucracy, the ministries and agencies responsible for legal and security affairs, has generally served as an impediment to reform in the tsarist, Soviet, and post-communist eras.

What Pomeranz captures exceptionally well in this book is a tension that runs through Russian history, between a population that demands remedies from the state and a state whose leaders are reluctant to cede their discretionary power to remedy-generating institutions that adhere to the principle of equality before the law. Revealing with unusual clarity the conservative vs. modernizing strands of Russia's legal development, *Law and the Russian State* provides a superb introduction to the field of Russian law.

Eugene Huskey, Stetson University

Bailey, Anna L. *Politics under the Influence: Vodka and Public Policy in Putin's Russia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018. xi + 247 pp. $24.95 (paper). ISBN 978-1-5017-2440-4.

In order to penetrate the "'black box' of federal policy formation" surrounding alcohol production, regulation, taxation, and opposition, Anna L. Bailey stitches together an impressive array of press reports, statistical studies, television interviews, radio programs, public opinion surveys, official statements, public addresses, and legislative discussions (p. 69). She combines these with field interviews conducted in 2012 and 2013 with eighteen respondents from industry, public health, and others close to alcohol policymaking. What emerges is an exhaustively detailed account of the issues and groups important to vodka (and beer) production and regulation in the post-Soviet era with relevance not just to public health researchers but also to those interested in the workings of Putin's political system.

Bailey begins with the generally recognized issue of Russia's extensive alcohol use, but provocatively asks why anyone might assume that the government has an interest in addressing the problem or why it is assumed governments must act in the best interests of their citizens. Instead of

simply saying that the government saw a problem and acted upon it, Bailey argues for understanding vodka policy in Russia under the more nuanced approach of an "advocacy coalition framework" in which not one person or a unified government enforces a decision, but instead policy emerges within the policy subsystem when advocacy coalitions of like-minded groups with similar goals act together over time (p. 2). In the case of vodka policy, major competitive actors that emerge are vodka producers, beer brewers, government finance advocates, Russian Orthodox Church leaders, demographers, elite health advocates, and others. She follows these groups from the late tsarist period all the way until the anti-alcohol laws of the early 2000s. Of particular interest will be her chapters on the economic and production story of vodka and brewing in the Yeltsin and Putin eras, with tales of shady transactions and privatization, as well as her in-depth discussion of the issues for regulation and legislation of alcohol in the last decade, with an emphasis on the transition between issues of illegality to public health as a policy impetus.

Bailey does an excellent job of pointing out the lag in time between the revelation of increasing demographic problems related to alcohol versus the actual move to action, that is, defining that moment when alcohol became a problem to be addressed with action rather than just an issue to be discussed. It would have been nice, however, to see a more nuanced discussion of the concept of alcoholism, which is not a constant over the course of the Soviet period as Susan Gross Solomon has pointed out, and has some flexibility in definition even after. At times, the differentiation of behaviors regarding drinking rather than the binary of non-drinker/drinker is lost.

Overall, this is a well-constructed, detailed study of recent governmental action regarding alcohol in Russia with relevance for political scientists, public health researchers, historians, and policymakers. Bailey does an excellent job, using a vast array of sources woven together in convincing narratives, of bringing illumination to the "black box" of public policy construction under Putin.

Tricia Starks, University of Arkansas

Social Sciences, Contemporary Russia, and Other

Balci, Bayram. *Islam in Central Asia and the Caucasus since the Fall of the Soviet Union*. Translated by Gregory Elliott. Introduction by Olivier Roy. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. ix + 248 pp. $45.00. ISBN 978-0-19-091727-2.

This meticulously researched and clearly argued book is the first work to tackle international Islamic influences on the Muslim majority regions of the USSR since the 1991 collapse. Relying on unique expertise cultivated over years of living and conducting research in Azerbaijan and several Central Asian republics, Bayram Balci argues for the distinctiveness of the Turkish, Iranian, South Asian, and Saudi contributions to the post-Soviet Islamic sphere, while identifying common threads in the reactions of the region's post-Soviet elites.

Balci is not the first scholar to credit Turkey with exercising the most influence in the post-Soviet Islamic arena, but is the first to convincingly attribute this success to the Gülen school network, whose appeal, the author argues, stems from its secular, civic, and even areligious orientation (p. 56). He is similarly compelling in demonstrating the ways in which Iranian influence has been grossly misconstrued, above all in majority-Shi'a Azerbaijan, whose authoritarian government has greatly limited the possibilities for Iranian propaganda (p. 91). Tehran's influence, instead, stems from relatively mundane and apolitical exchanges between Azeri students and the hawzas of Qom and Mashhad, and innocuous efforts to promote Persian Studies in the region's universities (pp. 95, 86). From a scholarly perspective the book's most pathbreaking arguments emerge in chapter 5, dealing with the Tablighi Jamaat's role in Central Asia and especially Kyrgyzstan. Here Balci offers a historically grounded and nuanced discussion of the group's emergence and particular appeal to the Kyrgyz religious establishment, which is attracted to its "minimalist" interpretation of Islam, pronouncements against alcohol, and the small economic activity its activists generate through the sale of literature, attire, and knick-knacks (pp. 153–54).

Balci situates his discussion in a body of scholarship that he transcends in some regards, but not in the significant interpretative framework of "nationalized Islam," which in turn has implications for the way other issues are interpreted. He echoes the consensus of most literature on Soviet Islam when he states that "thus—and we must bear this in mind if we are to understand the post-Soviet Islam that emerged with independence—Islamic values disappeared from the public sphere and withdrew into the private sphere, where they more or less survived" (p. 23). Communist repression was so all-encompassing that "Islam was restricted to its most localized and folklorist forms, reducing it to a form of tradition and custom" (p. 24). Here the reader finds herself squarely in the epistemological universe of the Cold War, and in particular that of one its most important statements on Soviet Islam, Richard Pipes's article in the Spring 1955 issue of *Middle East Journal*, "Muslims of Central Asia: Trends and Prospects," which argued that "Islam still survives as a powerful social bond because it serves to differentiate the native from the Russian; but instead of constituting the substance of ethnic identification, as it did before the Revolution, today it merely forms one of its many attributes." Often referred to as the "nationalization of Islam thesis," this argument, first popularized in Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay's *Islam in the Soviet Union* (1967) and still dominant in scholarship on Islam in the Soviet and post-Soviet spaces, has been challenged by several scholars in recent years, including myself, for its myopia and empirical untenability, imposing, as it does, the perspective of a vocal part of the urban intelligentsia upon the entire population, and for its reductive approach to an element of history and society as complex as religion. It leads Balci into predictable waters, with obligatory references, à la Said, to Central Asia's "brilliant Islamic civilization," buttressed by an uncritical citation of Frederick Starr's neocolonial treatise from 2013, *Lost Enlightenment* (p. 13). Balci himself is clearly uncomfortable with some aspects of this framework, for he notes that "an erudite Islam prospered to some extent" and acknowledges that employees of the official Islamic organizations were more than mere apparatchiks (p. 29).

Balci's reliance on this framework shapes his interpretation of Muslim responses to international movements. A case in point is his discussion of the Uzbek government, whose rejection of the Gülen schools and the Tablighis, and administrative control over religious sites, are presented exclusively as a consequence of the Karimov regime's "grip on religious affairs" (pp. 56, 146, 159). The implication is that Uzbek opposition to these foreign movements stems from the state's Soviet orientation; the significant misgivings harbored by the country's ulama in the early 2000s about Turkish and other groups go unmentioned. This implicit argument comes into greater clarity in Balci's discussion of the Turkestani *muhojir* community in Saudi Arabia, which, presumably unhindered by the Karimov regime's nationalized Soviet Islam, "preserve[s] a strong bond with Turkishness, as a supra-national identity syncretic of Central Asian and Anatolian ethnic elements" (p. 121). Why Saudi Uzbeks should feel greater affinity with Anatolian Islam than, say, North Indian or for that matter North American Islam, remains unexplained. If the Soviet legacy has foiled international penetration of Uzbekistan, it has had the opposite effect in a historically nomadic setting such as Kyrgyzstan, whose "superficial" Islamization in part explains the appeal of key aspects of the Tablighi movement: "peregrination in space, roaming around and meetings" (pp. 159, 153). One in general wishes that the book rested on a clearer understanding of Soviet-era developments. Twice, for example, Balci states that the newly independent republics' committees for religious affairs constitute borrowings from Turkey; the author is apparently unaware that these committees appeared in all Union republics after World War II (pp. 48, 66).

Despite my reservations, I find Balci to be a sophisticated and unparalleled analyst of the contemporary post-Soviet Muslim space. He deserves particular praise for exhibiting sensitivity to the pre-Soviet and pre-Tsarist ties binding these regions together culturally and intellectually. His strongest and most original arguments are those that do not rest on Soviet-era developments. This work will remain the primary reference on Islam in the post-Soviet sphere for a long time.

Eren Tasar, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Ohanyan, Anna, ed. *Russia Abroad: Driving Regional Fracture in Post-Communist Eurasia and Beyond*. Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2018. viii + 220 pp. $36.95 (paper). ISBN 978-1-62616-620-2.

Russia's foreign policy has garnered unparalleled attention in academic and policy circles. Moscow's militarism abroad and interventions in Western democracies have stirred up fear, frustration, and indignation around the world and rekindled political and academic debates about the sources of Russia's conduct. Though informed by rigorous analyses, these debates restate established propositions that connect the Kremlin's foreign policy to domestic imperatives (the fear of regime change and a need to distract the Russian population) or structural explanations (balancing NATO enlargement and U.S. global reach or seeking to resurrect the Soviet empire). A regrettable deficit of novel and fresh thinking about Russia's international relations has become a hallmark of Russia-centered dialogue.

Against this backdrop, *Russia Abroad* is a welcome addition to the literature on Russia's foreign policy and broader international relations. Centered in a new framework of "regional fracture," the eight chapters of the book (plus introduction and conclusion) invite us to think about Russia outside the established perspectives. Russia's foreign policy in its neighborhood and beyond has exhibited considerable variation. According to the book's contributors, these differences can be explained by variations in "regional fracture" of Moscow's vast vicinities. Fractured regions are characterized by fragmented geopolitics, which reduce the costs of domination and diminish the need for direct military intervention. The cases of geopolitical cohesion, on the other hand, invite Russia's direct and often military involvement, much like what we have seen in Ukraine. Although Russia has exploited regional fracturing, it has been both a lever and a liability for Moscow, constraining and challenging its global and regional engagements.

Russia is featured prominently in the volume. Yet the book's title is somewhat a misnomer. Jointly, the chapters do more to illuminate regional fractures in post-communist Eurasia (Part II) and the Western Balkans and the Middle East (Part III) than to explicate how Russia has engaged in the deliberate process of "un-regioning" through systematic disruption of regional ties and exploitation of regional fracturing. And, although the book's title presents Moscow as the driver of regional fracture, its chapters confer considerable agency on fractured regions where the lack of democracy, resistance to bottom-up regional engagements by political elites, deep political fissures between governments and civil societies, and rudimentary capacities of regional governance interact with external pressures.

For example, in chapter 3, "Fractured Eurasian Borderlands: The Case of Ukraine," Vsevolod Samokhvalov links regionally relevant political developments in Ukraine to the interplay of multiple factors situated inside and outside the country. In chapter 4, "The South Caucasus: Fracture without End?" Laurence Broers explains that South Caucasian resistance to regional cohesion is due in equal parts to the domestic practices of power as well as to external influences on these states. Similarly, in chapter 6, "Central Asia: Fractured Region, Illiberal Regionalism," David G. Lewis argues that obstacles to regionalization in Central Asia have evolved organically through a constant process of discursive interaction among regional elites, rather than having been imposed by Russia. The book is more successful in achieving its first objective of introducing the theory of "regional fracture" and presenting a strong case for using it as a lens for examining the international politics of states in the "grey zone" (p. 136) than it is in applying the regional fracture theory for explaining Russia's policy in its "peripheries" and beyond (pp. 3–4).

By looking at Russia's foreign policy and the politics of Moscow's "peripheries" through the lens of "regional fracture," the volume speaks to a number of important topics in contemporary International Relations. These include regionalism, post-colonialism, and power, among others. Regions have been subject of intensive and contested investigation, but systematic analysis of regional fractures has been lacking. The theory of "regional fracture" developed in the first part of the book describes "fractured regions" as being more than the opposite of regionalism. As distinct spatial organizations, "fractured regions" are characterized by unique political, institutional, and social

patterns. They lack region-wide institutions of governance that allow external powers to exploit the power vacuum. Fractured regions may evince institutional proliferation. However, they feature predominantly power-based environments as opposed to rules-based or value-driven systems. And they lack social connections between the state and non-state actors. It is this sociopolitical and institutional configuration that make fractured regions susceptible to both external influences and internal perturbations. External actors, for instance, use social connections and linkages with regional elites to leverage their power over the fractured regions. Yet these multiple, informal, and often transitory linkages and networks dilute and compartmentalize the power of external hegemons while isolating the political elites in the target countries. In this way, these linkages constrain the hegemon and reproduce the fractures in these regions.

The framework of "fractured regions" not only offers a new way of thinking about foreign relations of states "sandwiched" between multiple axes of influence, it also proffers alternative strategies for dealing with regional fracture. The book underscores the importance of regional cohesion and engagement between and among regional states as a more promising strategy for containing Russia than bilateral relationships with a powerful neighbor. It also contains ample room for further contemplating the connection between regional dynamics and global disorder, and for drawing lessons from Russia's deliberate attempts of "un-regioning," and then applying those lessons to other regional threats that are percolating around the world in this centrifugal era in international politics.

Mariya Y. Omelicheva, University of Kansas

De La Pedraja, Rene. *The Russian Military Resurgence: Post-Soviet Decline and Rebuilding, 1992–2018*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland Books, 2019. x + 382 pp. $55.00. ISBN 978-1-4766-6991-5.

Good books on Russian military affairs are too scarce. For whatever reasons, academics think they do not have to study the Russian armed forces to claim expertise on Russia. Therefore, they generally overlook the role that defense questions play in the nature of the state, the problems of democratization, Russian foreign policy, and the like. The ensuing lacunae in our understanding of Russia often cripple contemporary (as well as historical) studies of Russia.

For this reason one wants to welcome Dr. Pedraja's book uncritically. Undoubtedly, it is original and provocative, particularly its early chapters on the Gorbachev years. Indeed, Pedraja locates the origins of the disintegration of the Red Army in the legislation and manpower policies of the Brezhnev epoch, a wholly original and in many ways convincing assessment. He also repeatedly faults Gorbachev for bringing about the collapse of the empire by his decisions to abjure the use of force against ethnic demonstrators in Kazakhstan, the Caucasus, and the Baltics. He forcefully argues that this renunciation of force set in motion the processes leading to the collapse of the armed forces as an instrument that could reliably defend the state and thus the Soviet state.

But here the problems with the book begin. Pedraja is an unabashed champion of the Soviet empire and of its new partial incarnation in Putin's Russia. He evidently believes the empire could have survived, although he does not say how it and the Soviet Army could have survived after the 1980s except by the naked rule of force. He rightly points to the manpower and command-and-control reforms of Putin as being instrumental in the resurgence of the Red Army that we now see. But he goes beyond this to be an unabashed admirer of Putin's rule. Is the Crimean operation of 2014 so brilliant inasmuch as there was no state to oppose it, it reflected a panicked reaction to Ukraine's revolution that was hardly necessary, and has enmeshed Russia in endless and predictable troubles ever since? While tactically brilliant, it also was hardly an improvisation. As this author observed in 2008, Russia was already providing training for cadres to undertake just such an operation, and people Like Mikhail Saakashvili and analysts like Taras Kuzio were warning about this by then.

Likewise, Pedraja argues that the Russo-Georgian war of 2008 was wholly Sakaashvili's fault, even though Putin admitted that Russia had been planning the war since 2008 and had correlated

information warfare with military activity in ways that suggest it deliberately generated the processes leading too war. Finally, he completely overlooks Russian military thinking about the character of contemporary war and the deliberate effort to match reforms to this theory. And, finally, he also says absolutely nothing about the reform of defense industry that began in 2001–2, not 2008! Indeed, to create a new military, as this writer has observed, Putin had to reform first the state administrative structure and the defense sector to produce the machines that could produce new weapons starting in 2008, when the necessity for military reform became so clear as to be irresistible. In other words, and as great Russian historians have long known, successful reform of the military to make it adaptable to contemporary requirements (whether those be in 2018 or 1861 or 1700 and any other date anyone would care to insert) requires and must be correlated with an ongoing reform of the state. In his failure to realize these issues Pedraja vitiates what would otherwise be a truly sparkling, original, and provocative book. However, the failure is not his alone. Rather, it is a result of the fact that the "Kremlinological persuasion" continues to neglect systematic study of the Russian military either in the past or in the present, with the unfortunate results we see today.

Stephen Blank, American Foreign Policy Council

Trudolyubov, Maxim. *The Tragedy of Property: Private Life, Ownership and the Russian State*. Translated by Arch Tait. Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 2018. xii + 237 pp. $24.95 (paper). ISBN 978-1-509-52701-4.

Classical political theory tells us that the ownership of property and the attendant property rights have been the wellspring of individual sovereignty, a bulwark against tyranny, and the basis of civil rights and citizenship. By the input of labor, according to John Locke, an individual turns land heretofore available to all into a private possession. Governments are constituted, this theory continues, to safeguard lives, liberties, and property, thereby creating a "social contract" between individuals and their rulers.

The universality of this theory, which has certainly not gone unchallenged in West European and North American political thought, may be tested by examinations of the meaning of private property in polities outside the European and North American "core." Maxim Trudolybov's reflections on property and property rights in Russia, past and present, offer such an opportunity. In eleven chapters plus a conclusion and epilogue, Trudolyubov, a senior fellow at the Kennan Institute and editor-at-large of *Vedomosti*, an independent Russian daily, offers observations on such topics as personal rule, the Russian obsession with security and order, the legacy of serfdom and communal land tenure, colonialism, the "resource curse," Soviet housing, and post-Soviet privatization, with frequent forays into the ancient world and pre-modern and modern Europe.

Trudoyubov's thesis is that, "unlike in the West, private property has not been a badge of citizenship, conferring rights and involvement in public affairs. ... Property and freedom in Russia are entirely separate: they occupy parallel universes" (pp. 3–4). In a modified version of the theory of patrimonialism, according to which Russian rulers proclaimed both imperium and dominium over territory, Trudolyubov posits that tsars and commissars alike granted property conditionally as a reward for loyalty to the leader and for government service; property was not wrested from the monarch, let alone from the General Secretary. The rulers' obsession with security and order as well as with control over resources (the "resource curse") meant that private property was never the result of "improvement," as posited by Locke, or an instrument of economic development. Property became a privilege, neither a right nor a marker of independence and individual sovereignty. Moreover, Trudolyubov argues, private property has had few defenders in the Russian population. Serfdom made private property illegitimate in the eyes of nineteenth-century intellectuals; communal land tenure undermined private property in the eyes of most peasants; and in the eyes of just about everybody, the privatization of the 1990s was illegitimate, as new owners were not seen as having put their labor into their (stolen) properties.

And yet, Russians are obsessed with one form of private property—their dwellings; they are "people behind the fence" (*liudi za zaborom*), the title of the original Russian edition. Some of the best passages of the book begin with the author's grandfather's acquisition of a private apartment in 1970 and continue with reflections on living space in the Soviet era, Stalinist architecture, the Khrushchev and Brezhnev boom in housing construction, which Trudolyubov labels "collectivization in reverse" (p. 168), and post-Soviet privatization of housing. As a result, in one of the "paradoxes" of property in Russia, ownership of housing in Russian cities dominates over rent, characteristic of the metropolises of Europe and North America; Russians attach high value to ownership of their apartments and dachas but not to ownership (and exploitation) of land, resources, and the means of production and distribution of commodities.

Aided by an effortless translation by Arch Tait, the book is an extended essay (musings, perhaps) on property, not a specialized monograph. Although the intended readership is unclear, the book is accessible to generalists. It uses a variety of secondary sources, many available on the Internet, and most of the Russian historical material could be found in any textbook. Unfortunately, the frequent digressions into the trajectory of private property in the ancient world and in the pre-modern and modern Europe seem scattershot. More seriously, they muddy the waters of Russian exceptionalism; while arguing that Russia is different, the author acknowledges that private life is a relatively recent phenomenon elsewhere and that property rights differ in time and place. For example, the author points to the parallel trajectories of Russian rulers colonizing Russia and Spanish rulers colonizing South America, both in pursuit of secure territory, resource extraction, and labor exploitation.

Nevertheless, Trudolyubov's reflections on property, Russia's legal ambiguities, and frequent "nullifications" of the institutions and heritage of previous generations is a lively contribution to our understanding of the world of post-Soviet property and of the relationship between the individual and the state.

Joseph Bradley, University of Tulsa, Emeritus

Robinson, Neil. *Contemporary Russian Politics: An Introduction*. Medford, MA: Polity Press, 2018. xiv + 290 pp. $28.95 (paper). ISBN 978-0-7456-3137-0.

This book is an unusual combination of in-depth scholarly analysis and accessible textbook-style narrative. It hinges upon the idea that every country faces the problem of balancing state-building with regime-building—the dilemma Russian political elites consistently resolved in favor of the latter. In twelve chapters, Neil Robinson navigates through the inner workings of Russian political machinery starting as early as with the Soviet system and landing at the most recent events of the 2017–18 presidential campaign. Alongside historical trajectory and economic development, he provides the reader with an analytical description of political institutions in Russia—the presidency, the parliament, federalism, political parties, and elections. The book closes with a discussion of Russia's place on the world map and the conceptual map of contemporary authoritarianism(s). Here the author makes a strong case for labeling contemporary Russia a "neo-patrimonial" polity, which combines elements of personalist and bureaucratic governance with political (but not total) control over the economy.

Rationalizing Russian politics at times feels like a daunting task—so many twists and turns the country took in the last couple of centuries. Robinson puts this problem at the center of his analysis and points to "a wide range of international and geographic factors as well as the choices made about, and possibilities for, regime stabilization and state development" (p. 17). Due to security problems and developmental tasks, Russia faces constant pressure to build stable state institutions capable of governing its vast territory and complex population; however, Russian elites tend to invest more in regime stability rather than state capacity. There is nothing pre-determined, argues Robinson, in such a development: both Yeltsin and Putin tried to rebuild the state—the former

under conditions of fragmented elites and severe shortage of economic resources (chap. 4), the latter with his power base consolidated and oil revenues filling state coffers (chap. 5). However, as Robinson shows throughout the book, both were unable to establish accountable state institutions because of the elites' fears that reforms necessary for state-building would undermine their power and wealth.

The author enlists the usual suspects among the factors that locked Russia into this trap. He analyzes presidentialism as a precondition for a personalist rule (chap. 6); increasing control over local life as an instrument to halt the development of democracy on the ground (chap. 7); and the general weakness of political parties as possible checks on the regime (chap. 8). Putin's craftsmanship in manipulating elections (chap. 9) and capitalizing on the economic growth and national pride (chaps. 10 and 11) fostered the strength of the regime at the costs of state functionality. Despite the perceived durability of the current regime, Robinson hesitates to label it as stable and predicts that it can move in many different directions, enticing readers to speculate about the future of Russian politics. And this might be the major weakness of the book, too: if neo-patrimonialism is not an equilibrium state, then it should eventually move in the direction of either a personalist rule or a "developmental democracy" (p. 251). If it has the potential to oscillate—or swing—across the continuum of options, a feature that Russia seems to exhibit, then these mechanisms of stabilization should be uncovered and explained.

Large polities like Russia are hard to pack into one category or another, and Robinson puts much effort into communicating a coherent analytical narrative of contemporary Russian politics. Unavoidably, some aspects were left behind, including the development of a civil society and the media, and the role of interest groups and the judiciary. Nevertheless, the book should definitely satisfy the demands of both sophomores and veterans of Russian studies, as it presents a compelling explanation of the developments in Russian politics combined with detailed knowledge from a highly informed scholar, who has a mind to admit that "the emergence of democracy [in Russia] will be slow and tentative" (p. 260), and the heart to allow that this possibility exists.

Andrei Semenov, Yale University

Renz, Bettina. *Russia's Military Revival*. Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 2018. 240 pp. $64.95. ISBN 978-1-5095-1614-8.

"Relinquishing armed strength and accepting the resulting loss of great power status was never an option that was seriously entertained in Russia. From this point of view, the revival of the Russian military was only a matter of time" (p. 61). This passage speaks to the fact that Russia's military might—its doctrine, organization, equipment, leadership, thinking, capacity, and will to fight and win—derives from, and cannot be decoupled from its history, geopolitics, and culture. A key function of Bettina Renz's *Russia's Military Revival* is to dispel the hyperbole and mythology that Western security practitioners, writers, and pundits have imputed to the scope and magnitude of Russia's military resurgence in recent years. As an associate professor of international relations at the University of Nottingham and a researcher and writer steeped in Russian security and military studies, Renz is amply qualified to author this grounded and topical analysis.

Russia's Military Revival comprises five chapters that show coherent writing and solid research. The topics of the chapters range from the past and present roles of the military in Russian foreign policy and Russian military reforms since the 1990s, to developments in Russian military thought and the employment of the Russian armed forces since the end of the Cold War. The logic that constitutes the essence of this book is twofold. First, the author asserts that there are three tenuous assumptions that contribute to both a general miscomprehension of Russia's military revival and to exaggerations about the magnitude of the threat that this revival poses to the West. Second, she puts forth three arguments that explore the more complex explanations for Russia's military renaissance and refutes those three simplistically flawed assumptions.

According to Renz, the first spurious assumption interprets Russia's efforts to make its military more capable as a paradigm shift in Russia's approach to international politics. To the contrary, this book argues that Russia's military resurgence is not a major change in Russia's approach to the use of military force, but that it instead reflects a combination of complex historical, political, and economic factors that have persisted for a long time. A second tenuous assumption about Russia postulates that it has undertaken this military revival to enable an aggressive and expansionist foreign policy. Renz counters this assumption with the assertion that aggressive and expansionist policies did not drive Russian military modernization in recent years. Rather, the renewal should be understood within the context of the myriad roles that the Russian armed forces have performed throughout history. A corollary to her argument here is that the military is a flexible instrument of national power and its use is not solely limited to fighting wars. The third assumption about Russia that the author finds flawed is the idea that Russia's military capacity now rivals those of the United States and the West. On this point, Renz asserts that Russia's recent military renaissance has not fundamentally changed the balance of power in Europe or beyond. She goes on to assert that this is true because states' military capacities are relative to other states' military capacities, and they are not assessed in absolute terms.

Another salient aspect of this book that merits mention is the author's analysis of the hyperbole surrounding hybrid warfare and Russia's effective operations in Crimea. She refutes entirely the idea that Russia has found a new formula for universal military success in the form of hybrid warfare. This reviewer concurs with Renz's argument here. Far from formulaic, success in war derives from an understanding of the ends sought, the will needed to pay the costs in magnitude and duration, to achieve those ends, the intuition to apply the apt means and methods, and the awareness that, once the shooting starts, interaction and escalation engender friction, chance, and uncertainty. The idea that Russia has mastered hybrid warfare as a formula for success in any and every context is as fanciful and febrile as the ideology and ignorance-fueled notions that the Rumsfeld Pentagon's poseur-strategic sages espoused, hoping the Revolution in Military Affairs would bring about shock and awe which would eliminate the fog, friction, and uncertainty of war in Iraq and the Greater Middle East.

"The Russian army is never as strong as it describes itself, but it is never as weak as it seems from the outside" (p. 59) Renz notes, borrowing from Dmitry Trenin and Alexey Maleshenko's *Russia's Restless Frontier* (2004). Although there have been empirical improvements in Russia's thinking, doctrine, and military capacity in recent years, Russia's success in Crimea should not be overstated, adds Renz. Nor, she argues, should the salience of Russia's limited use of hybrid warfare in limited contexts, like Crimea, be generalized and hyperbolized. Russia succeeded in Crimea by applying suitable means to achieve a specific end. Crimea did not signify a radical shift in the Russian way of warfare or mean that Russian strategists found a new war paradigm to outpace the West. There is scant evidence to support the notion that Russian innovations in warfare have put it ahead of the West, or that its innovations in hybrid warfare are sufficient to make up for Russia's shortcomings in conventional capabilities. Russian military thinking and doctrine reflect continuity and change, not a radical and abrupt shift to hybrid warfare as a sea change signaling a newly found superiority in Russian military capacity.

Russia's Military *Revival* is a measured and salient addition to the corpus of books and studies about Russian foreign and security policy. Indeed, because of its topicality and candor, it is an imperative read for as many scholars and security practitioners as possible. This work provides excellently researched and grounded insights about the realities and implications engendered by the renaissance of Russia's armed forces. It does a good job of debunking and refuting several of the tropes dogmatically espoused by a number of pundits and poseurs in the West who have been pretending to be prophets about Russia and Europe while advocating alarmism and militarism. However, as a critique, one could argue that Renz understates the gradual shifts, the modest realignments to the balance of power in Europe, even in relative terms. NATO and the West are stronger than Russia and its allies, in relative terms, than during the Cold War. And the Warsaw Pact

will not return. But Russia's will and capacity to use military force in the pursuit of pursue policy objectives, though more circumscribed, are discernibly greater than they were in the 1990s and in the early 2000s.

Robert Cassidy, Wesleyan University

Huskey, Eugene. *Encounters at the Edge of the Muslim World: A Political Memoir of Kyrgyzstan*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018. xiii + 251 pp. $68.00. ISBN 978-1-5381-1707-1.

This informative and accessible narrative of Kyrgyzstan's political development is based on decades of field work and various consultation activities Eugene Huskey carried out during the course of his career. Written as a scholarly memoir, the book is peppered with both references to interviews Huskey conducted in Kyrgyzstan and personal interactions Huskey had with Kyrgyzstanis in countless settings. The end result is a valuable contribution to our understanding of Kyrgyzstan's political and economic post-communist transformation. Opening the book with his impressions of Bolot Djigitekov, a Kyrgyz graduate student at Moscow State University in 1979, Huskey creatively utilizes his personal observations of and experiences in Kyrgyzstan to illuminate the complexities associated with the country's transition.

Huskey argues that Kyrgyzstan differs from the other "stans" like Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan because of a host of interrelated factors rather than a single factor like ethnicity, culture, and/or regional north-south divides. At the end of the day, however, I would argue that he emphasizes the regional north-south divide as driving formal and informal political competitions. He argues, for example, that the 2005 Tulip Revolution that ousted Askar Akaev from office resulted in a consociational power-sharing arrangement in which Feliks Kulov, a northerner, supported Kurmanbek Bakiev, a southerner, in his bid for the presidency with the understanding that Bakiev would appoint Kulov prime minister once in office (p. 89). Similarly, Huskey interprets the 2010 revolution that ousted Bakiev from office in terms of a "deepening regional divide" that eventually created a situation in which northerners ousted southerners from power (p. 142). Moreover, Huskey argues that Kyrgyz politics are not about specific policy proposals; rather, they are about regional ties, kinship, and/or personality.

In addition to the regional north-south divide, which does indeed play a critical role in Kyrgyz politics, Huskey draws attention to important factors affecting the country's political transformation like mass protests. Participants of political protests include ordinary citizens offering their voices on a voluntary basis and expecting nothing tangible in return, as well as "hired bands of women" known as OBON or Women's Brigade on Special Assignment, and general picketers involved in "a new business called Picketer!" that provides the bodies required for successful demonstrations (pp. 115, 89). Huskey's brief discussions of OBON and "Picketer" leave the reader wanting to know more about these intriguing phenomena. Huskey also introduces the reader to the *aksakal*, meaning gray beard, on two occasions. The first mention is in the context of the role a group of them played in helping to diffuse the Uzbek-Kyrgyz tension that exploded in June 2010, and the second is in the context of the role a group of them played in helping to restore calm to the halls of parliament, which were full of intraparty conflict in the aftermath of the October 2010 parliamentary elections. In both cases, elites utilized a traditional institution—unelected but highly respected elderly Kyrgyz men—to moderate disputes.

Whether he intended to or not, Bolot Djigitekov put Huskey on a career path that led him to become on expert on Kyrgyz politics. But *Encounters at the Edge of the Muslim World* is more than an analysis of Kyrgyz politics; it is a narrative of Kyrgyzstan's post-communist social, economic, and political evolution that captures the reader's attention by interspersing scholarly analysis with personal reflections. This is a must-read for experts and non-experts alike.

Michele E. Commercio, University of Vermont