One of the most impressive signs of the revival of Russian art history in the post-Soviet period is the ongoing publication of the massive Свод памятников архитектуры и monumental'ного искусства России (Compilation of monuments of architecture and monumental art of Russia), a nationwide survey of architectural monuments and related art in the eighty-nine territorial divisions (oblast, krai, republic) of the Russian Federation. Projected eventually to reach some two hundred volumes, the survey is administered by the State Institute of Art History (Institut iskusstvoznaniia), a major research institution supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation. In scope the project can be compared to the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), also a national survey of architectural monuments, albeit on a smaller scale. In both cases teams of researchers and photographers compile field data that is filed, edited, and prepared for publication. (In the case of HABS, the related series is Buildings of the United States, published by Oxford University Press.)

The Russian national architectural survey is a genuinely collaborative project, whose origins date from the Soviet period. Individual monument files gathered during the past several decades have been reviewed and updated by specialists who write the respective articles under the supervision of an editorial board. This board includes scholars with a broad knowledge of Russian architecture, such as Aleksei Komech (director of the State Institute of Art History) and Evgeniia Kirichenko. Although funding problems in the years immediately surrounding 1991 delayed publication of the initial volumes, the series now seems to have achieved a measure of financial stability with the support of the Russian Foundation for Fundamental Research. Major factors currently affecting the publication schedule include the scrupulous editorial standards in preparing each work. Published regions now include Smolensk, Tver’, Kursk, and Ivanovo. It would be something of an understatement to say that Ivanovo oblast is not known as a tourist destination. A major industrial (textile) region to the northeast of Moscow, this relatively small oblast seems more a “filler” between centers of historic culture and architecture such as Iaroslavl’, Kostroma, and Vladimir. All the more remarkable, then, to see in this three-volume edition the variety and density of the region’s architectural heritage, from seventeenth-century churches to industrial design of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The structure of this edition, as of the project’s other oblast editions, is a model of clarity and logic. After a foreword with acknowledgments and comments on methodology, the first volume includes an extensive (117 pages) introduction to the architectural history of the oblast. This is followed by almost four hundred pages devoted to the oblast capital, Ivanovo, with welcome attention given to industrial and administrative buildings from both pre-Soviet and Soviet periods. This material will be particularly valuable to students of Constructivism and Soviet factory planning, including workers’ housing. In addition to an exhaustive collection of articles on individual monuments, Ivanovo, like each major city in the project, has its own introductory survey. As for the articles themselves, major monuments are given priority, while secondary monuments (predominantly houses) in densely built urban areas are arranged by street, with a general plan for each street. Many of the articles conclude with brief references to
published literature and archival holdings on their specific structures. The volume concludes with a detailed bibliography and indices of monuments and personal names.

The second volume begins the survey of Ivanovo oblast beyond the city of Ivanovo itself. The basic organizing principle here is the raion (roughly equivalent to county), of which there are twenty-one, arranged in alphabetical order with a map at the head of each section. Towns and villages within each raion are presented in alphabetical order, with the exception of the district’s main town, which comes first and has its own historical survey. Among the high points of this volume is Palekh, one of the major centers of Russian icon-painting. Like the first volume, the second concludes with indices and a bibliography related to specific areas and monuments within the book. The third volume is organized along the same principles, which could not, it seems to me, be clearer or easier to use.

This is, in short, a reference work of the highest order, astonishing in its depth and variety. Equally astonishing, however, is this edition’s view of the widespread vandalism and despoliation inflicted on the architectural heritage of this region, which, it should be emphasized, was never occupied by the enemy during the Great Fatherland War. Although the quality of the photography varies from the competently professional to the amateurish, the visual documentation is unrelenting: page after page of desecrated and decapitated churches, ransacked church interiors, and dilapidated houses.

Of course these scholarly volumes are not intended for promotional purposes, and the documentary approach is just as it should be, unpretentious and direct. Nonetheless, in paging through these volumes one gets the sense of an exhausted, impoverished land in the aftermath of a series of unrelenting catastrophes. Anyone familiar with twentieth-century Russian history understands the reasons for this impoverishment: the sacrifices required to create a military-industrial superpower, the material drain of World War II, and the continual attacks on organized religion. The editors mention some of these issues (particularly the last) in the foreword. They also note that with few exceptions the documentation and photography largely end with the 1980s, so that one can assume improvement in the appearance of some of the churches. (The caption under each image wisely includes the photograph’s date, and in a number of cases the editors have included prerevolutionary photographs for contrast.)

In this regard, my one major criticism of all the volumes in the Svod pamiatnikov is their continuation of the Soviet practice of describing churches as though nothing had happened in the twentieth century, while the visual evidence is howlingly obvious. Individual articles should at least include the date of a church’s closing by the Soviet authorities and, where possible, information on major damage inflicted on the shrine. Is there any legitimate reason why even a state-supported reference work should withhold this information? To those nervous about the litany of desecration, the editors might add a notice on the restoration of specific churches. But to ignore the damage in such a fundamental reference work is simply unacceptable.

However much we might rationalize Russia’s devastation in the twentieth century, the overall visual impact of these volumes still has the power to disturb and gives rise to questions with no ready answers. How could a nation act so barbarously toward its own culture? Will the situation improve in a new Russia often indifferent to historic preservation? Should one even expect the resources to preserve anything more than a fraction of the buildings so thoroughly compiled in these volumes? My own experience, as a photographer and an architectural historian, suggests that a number of these buildings will soon exist only in photographs. At least this magnificent series of books will serve as yet another requiem to Russia’s past.

William Craft Brumfield, Tulane University, Russian Academy of Architecture and Construction Sciences
“Pushkin’s Secret” is the first of three volumes of papers presented at a Pushkin bicentennial conference organized in 1999 by the Neo-Formalist Circle at Mansfield College, Oxford. Its twelve articles—arranged chronologically, from Joe Andrew’s overview of the theme of reading as a character-formation experience in literature after Pushkin, and Lubov Kiseleva’s study of A. A. Shakovskoi’s dramatizations of his younger contemporary’s works, to Helena Goscilo’s survey of late twentieth-century recastings of The Caucasian Captive—examine responses to Pushkin’s legacy by various nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian writers. Andrew’s Introduction provides a useful guide to, and a summary of, contributions.

Even though individual articles are called chapters, suggesting the volume’s monographic character, the collection offers neither comprehensive chronological coverage nor coherent treatment of the announced (but not interrogated in any serious theoretical way) topic of “rereading and rewriting.” The collective effort to “desacralize” Pushkin’s mythical image, promised in the introduction (p. 4), also is not consistently undertaken. The “desacralization” calls for an acknowledgment that Pushkin did not begin Russian literature from scratch but worked with an established literary tradition, foreign as well as native. To give but one example, before Pushkin’s Tatiana ever learned how to read, reading had shaped many literary characters, both male and female, foreign and Russian—most importantly, those of Karamzin. Furthermore, it was Karamzin who, in Russian tradition, was the first to explore the roles of culture and nature in shaping human emotions, and it was the title character in his “Natalia, the Boyar Daughter” who was the first among Russian heroines to exclaim upon seeing her future beloved: “This is he!” Granted, the subject of Andrew’s article is post-Pushkin literature, and he could not therefore devote much attention to Pushkin’s predecessors, but a mere acknowledgment of Karamzin’s contributions would have put the record straight and chipped at the image of Pushkin as the mythical father of Russian literature. Regrettably, some articles in the collection validate, rather than deconstruct, this image. Both Jekaterina Young, writing on Dovlatov’s prose, and Valentina Polukhina, writing on Brodsky’s poetry, present their respective subjects as following Pushkin’s well-trodden path. Young sums up her reading of Dovlatov’s Sanctuary: “In his quest for the narrative manner appropriate to his purpose it is to Pushkin that Dovlatov turns, finding in Pushkin’s prose both a style of writing and an approach to the persona of the narrator that serve him well” (p. 147). Polukhina concludes her comparison of Pushkin’s and Brodsky’s self-portraiture: “I will say that in his relationship to Pushkin Brodsky remained true to himself: on the one hand he followed in his steps, just as he, in general, followed the tradition but, on the other hand, he made a decisive break with tradition and, in many ways, departed from Pushkin’s course but only, by doing so, to continue his work” (pp. 169–70). There is no doubt that both Dovlatov and Brodsky knew better than simply to accept Pushkin as their “everything.”

At the same time, the volume contains a number of excellent individual articles. Barbara Lönnqvist offers new evidence of the crucial importance of Pushkin’s prose, particularly The Tales of Belkin, for the artistic method and structure of Anna Karenina. Henrietta Mondry theoretically frames and productively explores Vasily Rozanov’s subjectivist reading of Pushkin’s literary and cultural legacy. Diana Burgin gives a rereading of Marina Tsvetaeva’s “Pushkin text” that is fruitfully informed by gender theory. Stephanie Sandler examines Olga Sedakova’s extensive references to Pushkin that allow the poet to formulate her own concept of poetry as an ongoing conversation with one’s predecessors, which sustains the eternal flow of poetry. Helena Goscilo discusses the latest and least known reincarnations of the Caucasian captive plot and
offers an astute reading of Vladimir Makanin’s provocative contribution to this tradition. These articles make “Pushkin Secret” a valuable contribution to the field.

Irina Reyfman, Columbia University


The present study is the second of the three volumes to appear out of “Two Hundred Years of Pushkin,” a conference held at Mansfield College, Oxford, in 1999. In his introduction, Robert Reid writes about the gathered essays as a reflection of the “welcome tendency” to define Pushkin as “an equal to his European predecessors, rather than their brilliant student” (p. 1). In fact, most of the articles included in the volume follow the familiar path of showing Western influences upon Pushkin’s creations. The editors themselves write that the first five chapters “reveal the extent to which Pushkin’s classics were inspired by some of the great mythic archetypes of European culture” (p. vi).

The concept of the artist’s personal myth was brought to life by Roman Jakobson in his pioneering work on Pushkin’s sculptural imagery (1937; Eng. trans. 1975). The articles under review appropriate Jakobson’s findings to a variant degree. David Bethea in his “Pushkin’s Mythopoetic Consciousness: Apuleius, Psyche and Cupid, and the Theme of Metamorphosis in Evgenii Onegin” supplements Jakobson’s sculptural myth (previously expanded in R. Schulz’s monograph on the Cnidian temple legend in Pushkin) with the tale of Psyche and Cupid. According to Bethea, Tatiana in Onegin’s library is similar to Psyche: “this is the moment in the Tatiana-Psyche story when she, holding the lamp, sees her lover exposed” (p. 30). Marguerite Palmer’s observations in “La Beatrice Nuova: The Process of Tatiana’s Beatification in Evgenii Onegin” owe a great deal to B. Gasparov’s study of Dante and Pushkin, and R. Picchio’s “Dante and J. Malfilatre as Literary Sources of Tatiana’s Erotic Dream” (the latter she does not mention). However, Palmer is quite original when she writes: “Virgil as Dante’s guide is severely limited in his role; and just as Lenskii will not see the triumph of Tatiana in St. Petersburg, neither may Virgil enter into the Earthly Paradise to see his pupil’s rebirth after the baptism by fire nor witness the unveiling of Beatrice there” (p. 44); or when she suggests that Viazemskii acted as a pander, and the letter Tatiana is reading “is from Pushkin himself and not from Onegin at all” (p. 48). According to Palmer, it is Pushkin who wins in his rivalry with Onegin and takes possession of Tatiana, his Muse (p. 48). Si non è vero…

The volume includes Leone Burnett’s “The Enigma of Pushkin’s Cleopatra” and Andre G. F. Van Holk’s “Don-Juanism and Stylistic Code in Pushkin’s The Stone Guest.” Robin Aizelwood, in “The Alter Ego and the Stone Guest: Doubling and Redoubling Hermann in The Queen of Spades,” goes a little too far in maintaining that Hermann is the doubling of the countess’ husband: “in both cases the male figure is sexually subordinate and inadequate” (p. 95).

Four of the chapters center on The Bronze Horseman: Tatiana Smoliarova’s “The Bronze Horseman and the Tradition of Ekphrasis” (understood as eulogistic poetry about artifacts); Michael Basker’s “Notes of Confusion: On the Footnotes to The Bronze Horseman”; Priscilla Meyer’s “How The Bronze Horseman Was Made”; and Alexandra Smith’s “Pushkin’s Imperial Image of St. Petersburg Revisited.” In her bravely titled chapter (following the tradition of the Russian formalists) Meyer suggests the influence of Aimée Harelle’s The Flood at Nantes in...
Pushkin’s depiction of the flood. She must be complimented on having discovered a significant and plausible source of some of Pushkin’s descriptive details. But does this source indeed explain how The Bronze Horseman is made? Basker in his commentaries notices a parallel between The Bronze Horseman and Maturin’s Melmoth the Wanderer. It is a welcome addition to the plentiful literature on Pushkin and Maturin (Alekseev, Nabokov, Blagoi, Lotman).

Alexandra Smith’s contribution is disappointing, coming from a scholar as gifted as she is. In order to discredit the established studies, Smith maintains that Pushkin’s references to the popular image of Peter the Great in Peter the Great’s Feast “suggest an imitation of the popular imagination to parodic effect” (p. 126). Smith also believes that “abundant references to cannons and guns produce a negative effect on readers” (p. 127) and that “the statue itself was to some extent a parody of Italian equestrian statues” (p. 128). Unfortunately, statements of this kind themselves appear to be a parody of some recent Pushkin scholarship.

Robert Reid in his “‘A Hundred Years Have Passed…’: A Ditheyan Approach to Time in Pushkin” examines temporality and psychology in Pushkin’s shorter narratives. William Mills Todd III uses a more traditional approach in his analysis of “Pushkin’s History of Pugachev and the Experience of Rebellion,” paying tribute to Pushkin as a historian of that period. The History of Pugachev indeed remains underappreciated; however, it is difficult to deny that, as a historian and thinker, Pushkin proved himself most effectively through his art, as was pointed out originally by Kliuchevskii.

The volume is, in a sense, representative, and its shortcomings are symptomatic of some current trends.

Irena Ronen, Ann Arbor, MI


It is now almost commonplace to refer to something called “the Petersburg text.” Not simply “a Petersburg text,” but “the,” although whether this is supposed to be a text “about” or “of” St. Petersburg is not clear. We owe the phrase to V. N. Toporov, one of the most brilliant of late Soviet and post-Soviet critics, but the real ur-daddy of the idea is Nikolai Antsiferov, whose early postrevolutionary book Dusha Peterburga eloquently evoked a city with a “soul,” a definitely formed character intense enough to impose itself as a personality, with the shape and consistency of a personality, on those who wrote about it in prose or verse, so that in a certain sense writings “about” were at the same time “of” it. From the 1930s until almost the end of the Soviet regime official scholarship did not welcome talk of the city’s soul, or any “romanticism” about what Antsiferov had called the genius loci. Indeed, Antsiferov spent many of the Soviet years in jail. Now, however, with Antsiferov long since departed, and in the wake of the great jubilee, it turns out that not only Petersburg has a text, but Moscow as well, and not only Moscow, but even Perm and Cheliabinsk.

Ian K. Lilly’s interesting little volume, published in New Zealand, had its origin in a symposium that took place before the jubilee. All the speakers contribute something to the notion of a city’s “character,” without necessarily falling back on the Romantic idea of its “soul.” Its character is determined by its history, both actual and legendary, by its landmarks, its monuments, its architecture, its economy, its significant relationship to other cities, domestic and foreign, and the impressive works of art, visual and verbal, that have been produced in and about it. In this sense, Moscow, too, undoubtedly has a text. I am not sure about Cheliabinsk. But Moscow’s text is not as distinctive or vivid as Petersburg’s, and is perhaps best seen as a
Sara Dickinson discusses the representations of Moscow under Napoleonic occupation in 1812, on which Tolstoy based his depiction in *War and Peace*. She demonstrates effectively the sentimentalist strains in these, but fails to point out Tolstoy’s subtle deconstruction of that strain. The patriotic blowhard Count Rostopchin who appears in Tolstoy’s novel is not the Rostopchin of the memoirs. In Tolstoy, the scene is depersonalized. French and Russians alike are in the grip of larger forces; sentiment has little place. There is, of course, a Tolstoyan Moscow. But it is best seen in contrast with Tolstoyan Petersburg.

Stressing a broader femininity than mere sentiment in his “Moscow text,” Ian K. Lilly endows Matiushka Moskva with sexuality. Drawing on literary works by Nikolai Karamzin and, especially, Ivan Bunin, he produces a richer Moscow text, though it could be argued that these works belong more to countryside than city and only reinforce the image of Moscow as Bol’shaia Derevnia. As to the urban blight of prostitution, which Lilly also discusses, it haunted Moscow, too, but Petersburg as a major Imperial port, the capital, and with a huge military garrison, had a much higher proportion of males, and serves to demonstrate that prostitution is fundamentally a masculine, not a feminine phenomenon.

The two most interesting chapters are by George Munro and Emily Johnson. While the Petersburg text has been preponderantly associated with the forcibly imposed rationality of Petersburg—its ambivalence, its darkness, and its light—Munro calls to our attention two religious figures, undoubtedly a part of the Petersburg text, utterly alien to any image of enlightenment: St. Xenia and Kondratii Selivanov. The former, whom Kirill Potoutenko in his introduction to this volume calls “Russia’s transvestite saint,” was the widow of a court singer in the reign of Catherine II; when her husband died, she gave all his possessions to the poor, keeping for herself only his shabbiest outfit, in which she wandered the streets of the city. Selivanov was the founder of the sect known as *Khlysty*, which had a profound influence on Russian culture and which has been much written about recently. Members practiced a stern ascetic discipline, sometimes including self-flagellation. Catherine’s religious tolerance, in contrast to Peter’s persecution of Old Believers, attracted many of Selivanov’s followers to Petersburg. In this way, Petersburgian enlightenment sheltered a sect the “enlightened” commonly abhorred.

Johnson concludes the volume appropriately with an essay on Nikolai Antsiferov. All of us who write about the city are indebted to his romantic, eloquent, very literary, and superbly informed accounts, many of which have been republished recently, along with his memoirs. She is right to call his view of the city an “esthetic Utopia.” But it is a “Utopia” intellectually metamorphosed from the cruel history of the city itself.

*Sidney Monas, University of Texas at Austin*


“Something special awaits me tomorrow (I think). I’m going to a concert of Arnold Schoenberg; you know, that most modern of Vienna composers,” the painter Franz Marc wrote to his future wife on 1 January 1911. “The uncanny thing about him,” Marc continued, “seems to be his complete abandonment of tonality ... which seems to be related to Kandinsky’s ideas” (p. 17). The next day, Marc, Vasilii Kandinsky, and other artist friends were in the audience at Munich’s Jahreszeitensaal and heard some of the composer’s most radical new compositions. The
performance prompted less scandal than the sometimes tumultuous Viennese premieres, but most left the concert hall dumbfounded or outraged. For Kandinsky it was a revelation, and on 18 January he wrote the composer: “What we are striving for and our whole manner of thought and feeling have so much in common that I feel completely justified in expressing my empathy. In your works, you have realized what I, albeit in uncertain form, have so greatly longed for in music ... ‘today’s’ dissonance in painting and music is merely the consonance of ‘tomorrow’” (p. 25).

In the autumn of 2003 an exhibition at The Jewish Museum in New York documented the contacts between the two men (mostly postal) that followed Kandinsky’s painting the day after the concert of the magnificent Impression III (Concert), that was on view in the United States for the first time, and his January letter to the composer. (One of two preliminary sketches for the painting was also on display. Like many such works by the artist, it makes clear what he abstracts in the painting proper, in this case the upright black lid of a grand piano on the stage of a concert hall becomes a huge black shape from which surges a great yellow “sound” enveloping the canvas, with audience members simply cursory curves infused with brilliant color.) The New York show also featured works by members of that remarkable exhibiting society, the Blue Rider, founded by Kandinsky, Marc, Gabriele Münter, August Macke, and others, which had appeared at its first exhibitions in 1911–12. Among them were some of Schoenberg’s troubling small paintings, the anxious self-portraits and his challenges to the visible world, the elusive “gazes” (or “visions”) that at times hover on the brink of abstraction. Also on display were paintings and documents reproduced in the 1912 almanac of the same name, whose contributors heralded the dawn of a new “therapeutic” art that would free mankind from the “serpent” of materialism and usher in a new epoch of the “Great Spiritual,” as Kandinsky had called it in On the Spiritual in Art. The dream confronted sobering reality two years later with the outbreak of a war which scattered its participants and killed two of its finest painters, Marc and Macke.

Thankfully, we have the catalogue as a permanent record of the exhibition. The adequate color plates reproduce all the paintings that were shown, while most of the other materials that were there—musical scores, letters, books, photographs, concert programs—are pictured in the context of the generally good essays. They explore the relationship that developed between the two men after the 1911 concert (Fred Wasserman), the composer as painter (Esther da Costa Meyer), the Blue Rider (Reinhold Heller), abstraction as a visual metaphor of “emancipated dissonance” (Magdalena Dabrowski), and Schoenberg’s revolutionary compositional principles in the context of the Viennese classical tradition (Christopher Hailey). Chronologies of the lives and works of the composer and painter compiled by Gabriel de Guzman round out this finely produced volume, which also comes with a “bonus” CD. Tracks 1–12 contain the Schoenberg compositions performed on 2 January 1911 at the Munich concert (Second String Quartet, op. 10; Three Piano Pieces, op. 11; and Five Songs, opp. 2 and 6). A facsimile of the score of the last track, Herzgewächse, op. 12, was reproduced in the Der Blaue Reiter Almanac.

Did Schoenberg’s atonal music help Kandinsky make the break to what he called “pure painting” in 1911? Doubtful, even if the composer’s practice certainly reinforced Kandinsky’s sense that he was on a similar and true path in visual art, with both men committed to an intense art of “inner necessity” (Kandinsky) or “inner likeness” (Schoenberg). We must be grateful to this exhibition and the catalogue that chronicles it for making us pose and ponder such questions about the relationship between the arts in the “heroic” early phase of European-wide modernism.

John E. Malmstad, Harvard University

The authors in this issue of Armenian Review had three reasons for publishing this work: Armenian film studies are a wasteland that needs to be explored; director Sergei Paradjanov is a well-known figure, but there is not enough information about him in English; and in the 1990s Russian archives opened their doors for scholars, making materials accessible to English-speaking readers.

The issue is a collection of articles by American, Armenian, and Georgian authors, translations of archival materials and of Paradjanov’s scenario The Passion of Shushanik, his biography and bibliography in English, Russian, and French, and filmography. It is a collage, an art form most suitable for Paradjanov himself. The issue focuses on the director’s Transcaucasian works: The Color of Pomegranates (1969), The Legend of Suram Fortress (1984), and Ashik Kerib (1988), giving the most attention to the first film.

The editor, James Steffen, overcomes the simplistic Cold War opposition of the artist versus the state to reveal the underlying, more universal tragedy of the noncommercial artist in the contemporary world. He points out that because of a strong emphasis on ideology in the USSR, party authorities were involved in discussions of filmmakers’ issues (in our case Paradjanov’s). This is why many artists mistakenly thought that the party needed them and that their art might be funded without a concern for box-office returns. As James Steffen quotes Paradjanov: “The audience does not understand the film, and I have no desire to apologize to them” (p. 17). In his “From Sayat-Nova to The Color of Pomegranates,” Steffen presents a detailed account of The Color of Pomegranates’ production and censorship, arguing that in a country where national politics of internationalism trumped the development of a cinematic language, national studios were understood to be organizations of Soviet minorities. Paradjanov took advantage of this situation; he played the national card.

It is commonly known that Paradjanov’s cinematic world is full of myths and rituals that are not ethnographical but rather products of the author’s personal fantasies. In their articles Levon Abrahamian and Giorgi Gvakharia, who both knew the director personally, offer invaluable insights and analysis of these fantasies. The authors analyze the constant metamorphosis of symbols, metaphors, and colors, which create a world of endless fluidity, and show that Paradjanov accepted movement not as a replacement of subjects, but as their transformation. For example, in “Toward a Poetics of Paradjanov’s Cinema,” Abrahamian writes about Paradjanov’s obsession with “displacements and transformations” (p. 88), “fascination with the possession of metamorphosis” (p. 81), and “distant associations” (p. 80). Similarly in his analysis of The Legend of Suram Fortress in “Ecumenical Vision,” Gvakharia connects “the precise goal of Paradjanov’s aesthetic philosophy—to create a ‘pre-Oedipal,’ ‘pre-patriarchal,’ prehistorical world in which there is a room for everything and everyone” (p. 99) with the festive spirit of old Tbilisi where traditions coexisted, “foreigners” were tolerated, and the ideologically homeless Paradjanov felt at home.

This issue touches on many areas that future scholars interested in Paradjanov’s art might explore—for example, the authors draw parallels between Paradjanov and Italian director Paolo Pasolini and Iranian director Mohsen Makhmalbaf, and use psychoanalytical theory to understand a hidden sexuality and bisexuality in Paradjanov’s images. But while writing about the poetical school of Ukrainian cinema, the authors ignore the strong connection between Paradjanov and Dovzhenko. The parallel between these directors would be a fruitful topic for future research.

In this issue of Armenian Review Steffen places Paradjanov’s works in the context of Soviet reality as seen without the blindness of Cold War prejudice. He makes readers understand
that “Parajanov’s language is ‘classical’ enough to be used as a quoted source” and helps rectify a situation where “few are aware of the source” (p. 81).

Galina Aksenova, Middlebury College


What does a collection of articles on Bakhtin and the Classics have to offer the readership of The Russian Review, a readership which is sure to consist, in the main, of Slavicists? Two things at least. On the one hand, the book provides a welcome opportunity to enter and explore a vital part of Bakhtin’s own inner intellectual world, the better to understand him. As Branham points out in his editorial Introduction, Bakhtin himself began as a classicist, and it is hard to underestimate the importance of that early training for the genesis and development of essential components of his theory—the importance of polyglossia and heteroglossia as culture-forming forces, the origins of the novel in popular culture and the significance of the Hellenic period in that regard, the distinction between epic and novel, and between lyric and novel. Bakhtin’s tantalizing sketches of an unfamiliar era, lists of names and works scarcely recognized, are fleshed out and contextualized in this volume by scholars who share his training and who are able to help us form a judgment as to the reliability and value of Bakhtin’s interpretation of the Ancient world. On the other hand, the book transcends its subject matter in terms of its critical examination of a wide variety of aspects of Bakhtinian theory, an examination which expands and revises that theory even as it applies it. Thus for example the demonstration of the dialogic potential of certain of Catullus’ lyrics through (delightful) close reading persuasively establishes, but in no way exhausts, Batstone’s general contention that a dialogic lyric may and will exist wherever the poet is engaging with a “psychology of the divided self” (p. 104). This “strikingly Roman and rhetorical view of self” (p. 105) is exploited to expose the Romantic bias which informs (and limits) Bakhtin’s conception of the lyric “I” as purely self-expressive and therefore self-objectifying. Other contributors achieve similar insights with regard to lyric (Tissol on Ovid), carnival (Edwards on Aristophanes), epic (Nagy and Peradotto on Homer), and the eschatological chronotope (Nightingale on Plato).

The quality of the essays is extremely high. Most of them display an exceptional degree of integration of scholarship, theory, and critical practice, approaching a kind of ideal for contemporary academic discourse. The writing is clear and free of jargon, and the articulation of Bakhtinian concepts is always precise and informed: these readings are not ruined, as is too often the case, by the superficial appropriation of such popularized terms as “carnival” and “dialogism.” Branham has edited the volume well (there is a full Bibliography and useful Index), though his Introduction does little more than summarize the contributions. Just occasionally the Author/Date reference system is unhelpful for obscuring the date of a text’s composition where it would be useful to know this, notably in Dunn’s historical survey of philosophies of time.

The volume is framed by contributions from Caryl Emerson and Gary Saul Morson, eloquent testimony to the continuing dominance of these two figures in North American Bakhtin studies. It is striking how many of the articles have recourse to their Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics (1990) as the interpretative text of choice for Bakhtin. Perhaps this is a cause for concern. Nevertheless, it would be churlish not to be thankful that their generous patronage continues to result in important publications of the calibre of this one. Still, their presence here
will, I suspect, be most useful to the books’ Classicist readership. For us Slavicists, it is precisely the Classicists’ contributions which, as “other,” will most enrich us.

Ruth Coates, University of Bristol, UK


Frank Beardow’s *Little Vera* is a useful guide for students to what is arguably the signature film of the glasnost era. For the general reader, it also provides an insightful summary of the film’s narrative and of the cultural and social significance of the conflicts within it. Valuable background material includes brief biographies of the film’s creators (director Vasilii Pichul and his wife, screenwriter Maria Khmelik), their comments on their artistic intentions, general information about key aspects of the Soviet Union’s political and economic system, an overview of the reforms introduced by Gorbachev which made production of such a startling film possible, a summary of the quite varied critical and public response to the film, and brief comments from the actors on how they interpreted their roles. The film’s starkly honest treatment of working-class life and youth culture in the industrial port city of Zhdanov (today’s Mariupol) gave rise to a storm of controversy.

In an article written in the wake of this intense reaction (in *Wide Angle*, 1990), I argued that the dominant structural and thematic characteristic of the film was its consistent reliance on indexicality, in C. S. Peirce’s sense: the film presented life through signs which could be immediately understood as parts of the actual life they signified. This strategy was important because the film aimed to discredit incontrovertibly the idealized fictional picture of Soviet life advanced by decades of Socialist Realist films. In his book’s two main chapters (“Analysis” and “Themes”), Beardow does an excellent job of explaining the object-signs which together constitute this indexicality: authentic settings; details of decoration and furnishings; the characters’ clothing; their vocabulary and their typical turns of speech. Beardow shows how larger issues are signified by their parts: degradation of the local environment (the smokestacks, the pervasive smog, the industrial waste strewn along the shoreline); the monotony of everyday life (repeated routines, high-rise apartment blocks, institutionalized furnishings); class differences (designer clothes versus workers’ attire); women’s continuing responsibility for homemaking (canning, food preparation). Beardow glosses many details whose significance might escape the viewer: that the radio mounted on the apartment’s kitchen wall can play only one frequency, the state’s station; that the “college” to which Vera awaits acceptance indifferently (but in which her parents seem to put great stock) is actually an *uchilishche*, a low-end technical school.

In the “Analysis” chapter, Beardow embeds his comments on the significance of such indices in a detailed description of the actions and dialogue in the film’s thirty principal sequences. This extended summary also includes some observations on the way scenes were filmed, but not a sustained or organized consideration of the stylistic means that Pichul used to enhance the film’s indexicality by making it seem, both visually and in terms of the nature of the dialogue, like some sort of home movie. In spite of the level of detail about most scenes, a few distinctly unusual moments receive no commentary. For example, Beardow notes that Sergei’s expressed view of married life involves Vera cooking for him and his waking next to her in bed, but he omits mention of Vera’s reply—that she can’t cook and she hates sleeping with anyone; this remark and the film’s infamous sex scene arguably underscore Vera’s insistence on being a
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sexual subject rather than object and Sergei’s surprising acceptance of this. Beardow also makes no mention of the scene where the ten-year-old biracial half-brother of Vera’s best friend Lena watches a cartoon version of Doktor Aibolit in which Africans are depicted as primitive savages. The youngster is unaware of the implicit racism of which he is sure to be a target.

The chapter entitled “Themes” actually is comprised of three rather distinct parts—a detailed consideration of the film’s spaces, both public and private; an analysis of the relationships of the characters to one another; and a brief summary of two recurrent visual motifs, the freight train and the city panorama. The chapter allows Beardow to expand on cultural and social signification and on the characters’ psychologies in interaction, stressing the growing alienation and conflict regardless of setting. Beardow presents in perhaps too definitive a tone his own opinions about the characters’ beliefs and motives and his own conjectures about how we, the audience, react to certain character actions, but this does not detract from the value of the book for those who have seen the film and are in a position to make their own independent judgments (as Soviet young viewers did in applauding Sergei and Vera’s rebellion against Communist and patriarchal notions, in spite of the protagonists’ self-centeredness and lack of spirituality).

Herbert J. Eagle, University of Michigan

HISTORY


In this monograph Martin Dimnik, C.S.B., of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies and the University of Toronto, completes the political history begun in his Dynasty of Chernigov, 1054–1146 (1994). He succeeds admirably in his goal of rescuing the princes of Chernigov from scholarly neglect.

While Dimnik makes excellent use of archaeological, artistic, architectural, sphragistic and numismatic evidence (there are seventeen illustrations), graffiti, and saints’ lives, the study rests primarily upon chronicles as sources. The six maps and six genealogical tables are essential aids to understanding. Dimnik eschews using the epic Slovo o polku Igoreve because it contains no unique information and is unreliable in terms of political evidence; he does not mention the debate over its authenticity.

Prince by prince, year by year, generation by generation, Dimnik constructs a coherent, exceptionally dense, political narrative of the activities of the Chernigov princes, concluding persuasively that the dynasty was one of the most important in Kievan Rus’. Dimnik has immersed himself so deeply into the internecine struggles of the East Slavic princes that he achieves almost a Collingwoodian ability to analyze events from their point of view, which he utilizes to compensate for the omissions in the sources. In the second section of his “Conclusion” he synthesizes his more general observations on marriage alliances, ties to the Church, sense of internal discipline (boiar in Galich and Suzdalia rose up in arms against their princes, but nothing of the kind occurred in Chernigov), and devotion to the laws of seniority. Although Dimnik sometimes corrects his earlier publications on questions of detail, his general evaluation of the dynasty has not changed since his 1981 Mikhail, Prince of Chernigov and Grand Prince of Kiev, 1224–1246.

While Dimnik approaches the chronicles critically, carefully establishing their chronology, credibility, even text, he quotes speeches which the chronicles attribute to various princes as if they were of stenographic accuracy and sometimes regurgitates chronicle clichés about atrocities as if they could be accepted at face value. Dimnik presents Kievan politics as a zero-sum game, so dependent upon the personal attributes of the princes that few successes carried over from
one generation to the next. The main rivals for possession of the capital, Kiev, might change—from Turov, Chernigov, and Pereiaslav’i in 1096 to Chernigov, Suzdal, and Smolensk in 1196—but the rules of the game did not. Nonspecialist readers might have appreciated a broader analysis of the Kievan political system as a whole to place Chernigov princely actions in broader context, although Dimnik’s passing comments, for example on the ritual role of feasts and gifts, and frequent comparisons to princes of other dynasties, serve this function.

Thankfully, the monograph is mostly devoid of the melodramatic flourishes that might have accompanied a narrative replete with riots, murders, betrayals, abandoned wives, family feuds, large-scale rapine and pillage, even the auto-da-fé of a concubine. At times Dimnik seems too sympathetic to Chernigov princes, for example rationalizing Mikhail Vsevolodovich’s flight from the Mongols in 1240, but given his scrupulous presentation of argument and evidence, that is not a hindrance. Dimnik’s discussion of the actions and motives of the Tatars, however, includes some dubious comments. Finally, Dimnik attributes “moral victories” both to the city of Kozel’sk, which resisted the Tatars to the death, and to the martyred saint Mikhail Vsevolodovich. Dimnik even writes that by his death Mikhail in effect expiated the sin of his ancestor Oleg Svyatoslavovich in bringing “pagan” Polovtsy as his allies into Rus’. These judgments do not strike me as historical.

Dimnik is to be congratulated for giving the princes of Chernigov the historical attention they deserve.

Charles J. Halperin, Bloomington, Indiana


Although architectural history intersects with other disciplines, for example, history, anthropology, sociology, and politics, those fields have not traditionally made architecture a primary concern. In recent years, all that has changed. The essays in Architectures of Russian Identity are by historians primarily, but linguistics, literature, geography, and political science are also represented. Despite the diverse academic disciplines of its contributors, the book is remarkably seamless in tone and methodology, perhaps because architecture has long been understood as an art particularly rich in social and historical symbolism. Architecture can shape historical memory, assert national or individual “identities,” or promise ambitious feats of social engineering. We need look no farther than the controversy concerning future use of the site once occupied by the World Trade Center to understand the passion that architectural symbolism provokes.

The chronological reach of Architectures of Russian Identity is broad, stretching from 1500 nearly to the present, and this expansiveness is part of its charm. Certain motifs—the appropriation of history, or even nature, to agendas of power and control; the belief that a new physical environment will reshape human behavior—recur, each time inflected by different material circumstances and by a different vision of Russian identity, past, present, or future. While it could be read simply for pleasure, the book is also well-suited for classroom use since the individual essays engage broad themes of power and social conflict in a concrete and specific way.

The collection begins with two essays devoted to Muscovite Russia: Michael Flier on the complex symbolism of the “Throne of Monomakh” and Daniel Rowland on the building projects undertaken by Boris Godunov to establish the legitimacy of his rule. Dmitri Shvidkovsky and Priscilla Roosevelt describe eighteenth-century attempts to saturate the built environment with
symbols of ideal social order. Robert Crews’s essay on architectural projects carried out in Tashkent after its conquest by Imperial Russia is a vivid illustration of architecture’s power to create, justify, and sustain social barriers. Christopher Ely, Lauren O’Connell, and Richard Wortman deftly expose various aspects of nineteenth-century nationalism, as it was embodied in architecture, travel writing, and history of art. Greg Castillo and Andrew Day examine the organizational and material constraints that undermined the grand designs of Constructivist and Stalinist architects. Mark Bassin’s chapter deals not with architecture per se but with the symbolism embodied in Socialist Realist paintings, where the competing values of technological progress and “eternal nature” were made to coexist in uneasy synchronicity. The book ends with chapters on post-Soviet Russia by Kathleen Smith and Blair Ruble: both concern the creation of public monuments and both indicate the difficulty of finding appropriate symbolic form for a “new” Russia.

If there is any quarrel to pick with this excellent and useful collection, it lies in the introduction where—though arguing for a fruitful blurring of boundaries between disciplines—the two editors suggest that history and art history are fields with “necessary differences” (p. 1). Possibly this statement was included to reassure historians of art and architecture that their expertise is still valued, but the result is a sadly back-handed compliment. Art historians are said to be specialists in style, while historians deal with broader issues. It is unlikely that Cracraft and Rowland, both historians, truly meant to claim history for the historians while limiting art historians to questions of style and attribution; however, their statement comes uncomfortably close to doing just that. As an art historian, I would say that there is nothing in any of the essays which does not fit comfortably within the rubric of art history. Architectures of Russian Identity helps, indeed, to show how unnecessary these distinctions are.

Janet Kennedy, Indiana University


Aidar Nogmanov presents a thorough analysis of the shifting position and status of the Volga Tatars under Muscovite law until the end of the eighteenth century. Nogmanov suggests in his introduction that such an analysis of the growth of law reveals the “factual history of state power,” laying the groundwork for a study of the “historical and contemporary problems” of the Tatars (p. 3). Nogmanov concludes that the state alternated between periods of tolerance and oppression toward the Tatars’ religious freedoms, and that the interest of Russia’s secular and religious powers did not always coincide. In other words, the state’s need to govern an expanding empire could interfere with the Russian Orthodox Church’s desired conversion mission. In this way, Nogmanov’s monograph does not revise his argument presented in an article in the edited volume, L’Islam de Russie (1997).

In order to develop his arguments, Nogmanov bases his conclusions on 251 printed laws; all but six of which are drawn from the Polnoe sobranie zakonov (PSZ). Since the PSZ begins with the publication of the Ulozhenie of 1649, the entire history of the Tatars following the conquest of the Khanate of Kazan in 1552 up to the promulgation of the Ulozhenie is based upon six laws, resulting in a narrow source-base for the Tatars’ earliest history inside Muscovy. This produces a study primarily focused upon the legal developments in the central chancelleries and colleges during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Nogmanov’s argument focuses upon a few pivotal events which demarcated changes in state policy, tracing an evolving policy of simultaneous tolerance and intolerance. He begins with an interesting discussion of the legal ramifications of the conquest, when the Tatars adjusted
to Muscovy’s divided political and religious authority following the Khanate’s combined central political and religious authority. Competition between the interests of the church and the state in Muscovy allowed Muslim Tatars to maintain some limited freedoms. The promulgation of the *Ulozhenie*, however, inaugurated an era of “anti-Muslim tendencies” inside Russia’s borders. This increased intolerance continued until Peter the Great’s Spiritual Regulation ushered in a new era of limited tolerance, which was challenged by several later changes of policy, including a sharp break created by the forced conversion of Muslims in the 1740s.

Nogmanov’s primary accomplishment lies in his thorough examination of the position of the Tatars in Russian law, creating an account that serves both historians interested in the growth of law as well as historians of empire. He complicates the relationship between Tatars and the state as an evolving relationship that reacts to major shifts in state policy, without presenting Tatars as an oppressed minority struggling for their independence, as some other recent accounts have done.

At the same time, Nogmanov’s account is not without weaknesses, primarily created by its narrow source-base. With its reliance upon the *PSZ*, Nogmanov limits his discussion to the conception of the Tatars under Russian law, without exploring the enforcement of those laws. Even without working in the archives, there are numerous document collections from the imperial, Soviet, and post-Soviet eras which the author could have included to present a fuller portrayal of the Tatars. Furthermore, his categorization of the Tatars of the Volga and Ural regions as a single group inaccurately portrays the Muscovite conception of the Tatars, which in fact recognized the differences among peasants and elites, converts and Muslims. Contrasting the Tatars’ position in Russian law with other non-Russian groups brought within Muscovite borders at the same time (such as the Chuvashes, Maris, and Udmurts) would have further enhanced Nogmanov’s argument.

While Nogmanov’s work makes important strides in expanding our understanding of the incorporation of the Tatars into Russia, it fails to generalize its conclusions and so limits its contribution to the history of the Tatars and other non-Russians after the conquest of Kazan.

Matthew P. Romaniello, Otterbein College


These two volumes make no pretense to being a collection of research articles. Instead of a standard scholarly apparatus, each article concludes with a section entitled “further research” and a “further reading” list. The bibliographic guides, for the most part, point readers in the direction of secondary works; some archival citations can be found here. In this fashion, the editors assemble some of the finest Western Russian military historians/analysts who provide readers with a remarkable collection of articles. In their introduction to volume 1, Kagan and Higham set out to “trace the development of the Russian Army and Navy from their early origins to World War I” (p. 9). They complete the tale in volume 2. With such general guidance the articles that follow cover a variety of topics that range from the education, training, social composition, and financing of the army, to entire articles on specific wars or periods of reform, to articles that focus on the development of operational doctrine, to the history, role, and effectiveness of the Navy and Air Force. This diverse set of articles allows Kagan and Higham to substantiate their stated goal: to understand the “paradox of power and weakness that defines
Russian military history” (p. 9). The end result is a narrative that presents the scheme of Russian military history from its Muscovite origins, through Peter the Great and the Miliutin reforms, up to the revolutionary divide and then, in the second volume, across the Soviet period, from the formation of the Red Army to today.

The articles in volume 1 present the remarkable tale of the rise and decline of Romanov military power. The trio of Brain Davies, Paul Bushkovitch, and Bruce Menning provide readers with a welcome addition to the English-language literature on the rise of Romanov military might in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Together they define how Russia emerged from a medieval state surrounded by enemies through the infusion of Western or European ideas, encompassing Peter the Great’s reforms and defeat of the Swedes in the Great Northern War, (1700–1721), Catherine the Great’s defeat of the Turks, and the lasting implications of Paul I’s reforms. These articles are a valuable contribution to the literature, not only because of the paucity of materials on this critical period in the rise of Romanov power but also because they set the stage superbly for the culminating moment in the period—Russia’s confrontation with the Corsican peasant. Kagan leads his reader through the tumultuous Napoleonic epoch by first framing his article into the backdrop of the entire confrontation, from 1805 to 1815, and then focusing on the administrative reforms needed to defeat the French.

The decline of Russian military might is chronicled first by Kagan, and then by Robert Baumann, in the next two chapters. Both pay attention to issues such as the size of the army, financing it, recruiting soldiers, and the perpetual administrative reforms, first under Nicholas I (Kagan), and then under the direction of D. A. Miliutin (Baumann). While not their main goal, the authors do keep the readers apprised of the successive wars that occurred with Turkey in the nineteenth century and the reorientation of strategic policy that occurred in the wake of the Crimean defeat and the unification of Germany. At this point, the editors insert an important article by Jake Kipp on the emergence and technical and doctrinal evolution of the Imperial Navy, rightfully placing this service branch into the mainstream of Russian military history.

Volume 1 concludes with articles by David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye on the Russo-Japanese War, Bruce Menning on the period between the defeats at Mukden and Tannenberg, and David Jones on World War I. Here Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, through his lucid prose, provides readers with riveting narrative of the causes, course, and consequences of the Manchurian debacle; Menning confirms his status as one of the few masters who writes with grace about military reform over the course of two centuries; and Jones offers his well-supported thesis that the Russian military was in good condition to fight in the winter of 1916–17 until the political events of February, not the German army, destroyed its command structure.

Volume 2 of this collection is divided into two parts: the first covers from the 1917 Revolution and the origins of the Red Army to the end of World War II; the second examines the Cold War era. With the exception of the article on the Polish-Soviet War that he coauthored with Robert Ponichtera, David Stone wrote the first third of the book. Beginning with the Civil War, Stone skillfully writes on topics ranging from the formation of the Red Army to the relationship between political indoctrination and military training. Not surprisingly, Stone’s main goal is to reveal how the problem of military preparedness, in a world where perceived enemies surrounded the state, ultimately determined the course of industrialization during Stalin’s Five-Year plans. Then Kagan contributes “The Rise and Fall of Soviet Operational Art, 1917–1941,” in which he demonstrates how M. I. Tukhachevskii’s work culminated with the development of an operational doctrine dependent on gaining and maintaining the initiative through speed and deception. He then correctly asserts that Soviet military theory of the interwar period, while futuristic in outlook and based on prior Great and Civil War experiences, outstripped the army’s technical capabilities. Mary Habeck clearly demonstrates this point in her fine article on “dress rehearsals,” where she provides readers with the important and often minimized history of the success and failures of the Red Army in the Spanish Civil War, Lake Khasan,
Khalkhin-gol, and in Finland in 1939–40. This sets the stage for what may be John Erickson’s last article, which covers World War II from the German invasion to the Battle of Stalingrad. Kagan writes about the second half of World War II inside the framework of how technology finally caught up with the Soviets’ operational theory from the interwar period, and how this combination of ideas and capabilities culminated with decisive victory on the steps of the Reichstag in May 1945.

The first part of the second volume concludes with surveys on the Soviet Air Force and Navy, respectively. These articles serve as a suitable precursor for the second half of the book, which focuses on the Cold War period. While all of these articles stand on their own merit, here the collection starts to lose its luster, as this group of authors is more interested in providing readers with a standard military analysis of the Soviet armed forces. Nonetheless, readers should pay particular attention to Scott McMichael’s article on the Afghan-Soviet War. His analysis is straightforward, and while the story of this colossal military failure is known, in the process of describing this last Soviet military defeat he does a good job of defining operational challenges in Afghanistan. This article is followed by the well-known and prolific military analyst Stephen Blank’s insightful contribution on the internal causes for the breakdown of the Red Army between 1988 and 1991. Finally, the eminent Colonel William Odom concludes this collection with a well-measured analysis of the future of Russian military power. His article provides readers with the paradigm that, while historically the military has always been an essential element of state power, the situation today is in doubt because Soviet-trained officers are not professionally prepared to accept the liberal political atmosphere of contemporary Russia.

I found it surprising that volume 1 did not have an entire chapter on the Crimean War, since it was a vital turning point in Russian military history. Likewise, the omission of a separate article on the Army and the Purges in the second volume is equally vexing. While portions of some articles treat how the Russians constructed their empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, an article that specifically focuses on this topic would have been well placed in this collection. These concerns should not detract from the many merits discussed above in regard to these two volumes. Kagan and Higham have performed an important service to the profession by compiling this collection. It now provides people who are interested in Russian military history with the best place to start their examination of this critical part of Russia’s past. Students will greatly benefit from not only reading these articles but also from perusing the bibliographies and future research suggestions that follow almost every chapter. Since these two books are designed to attract the attention of the broader reading public, and since they are well edited and highly readable, we can hope that Palgrave intends to issue them in paperback in the near future.

John W. Steinberg, Georgia Southern University


To inquire into the sources of political power is to perform a very valuable service in our scholarship on eighteenth-century Russia. In this short but comprehensive work, based on impressive source material, Cynthia Whittaker traces the evolution of a conception of monarchical power from one based on religious origin and sanction to a secular one, in which the ruler sought legitimacy by carrying out a program of reforms, and in which he/she not only endeavored to enlist the support of an educated public but even welcomed its contribution in the preparation
of legislation. The evolution of this conceptual approach gave rise to an assumption that rulers must be elected, even informally, and that they were bound to their subjects by contractual relationships.

To develop this original and somewhat controversial perception, Whittaker—who devotes 83 of 185 pages of text to Catherine II’s reign—divides the book into six chapters beginning with Peter’s reign (another discusses the seventeenth-century background). “The Reforming Tsar” is devoted to Peter I’s reforms, including his attempt to explain them in manifestoes and introductions to major pieces of legislation, and his encouragement of so-called “projectors” who submitted a large amount of reform projects. “The Elected Monarch” evaluates the election of Anna Ivanova, the crisis of 1730, and the choice of Elizabeth. “The Legal Sovereign” begins with the overthrow of Peter III and goes on with an enthusiastic endorsement of the Nakaz which set the parameters of political discourse. Paradoxically, there is very little about Catherine’s reforming activity—the local government reform and the charters of 1785, for example—but much is made of the promotion of a legal mentality, of the monarchy being based on the rule of law. “The Agent of History” is about the writing of Enlightenment History marked by an incurable optimism about the beneficent politics of the rulers, the virtues of their dynamism, and their conviction that the dark legacy of the past must be eradicated. Of course, there was the danger of despotism, of what the “sexist curmudgeon” Mikhail Shcherbatov warned from his political retreat. But the overwhelming consensus was that the ruler must be “The Good Tsar,” who, alas, as circumstances would soon show, could easily become “The Bad Tsar” (Catherine in the 1790s and her son Paul, who paid for his bad manners with his life).

Whittaker tells an engrossing story and joins the community of Enlightenment scholars who are badly needed in Russian historiography if we are to give the study of Russian political history the sympathetic hearing it deserves. There certainly was a public opinion in the eighteenth century, if only because reforms are always controversial and do not find supporters without also creating opponents. It is Whittaker’s great merit to tell us unequivocally what the issues were in the growing debate and to show how different Russia had become by the end of the eighteenth century.

One must of course raise some questions about the nature of that public debate. In a country where the ruler and his court have always set the tone, to what extent was this debate manipulated? How much of this justification and advice literature was the product of Catherine II’s very skillful propaganda machine, abetted beyond Russia’s borders by sycophants like Voltaire? To what extent were the debates of 1730 generated by a true desire to place limits on the autocrat’s power, rather than by a strong dislike of oligarchic families like the Golitsyns and the Dolgorukovs? A side issue, but one that might be worth exploring, is that of Polish influence. Many of those Russians engaged in debates on the nature and purpose of political power must have known about the Polish nobility’s struggle against their Saxon kings, and it was interesting that Vasilii Maikov should have criticized Russian intervention in Poland in 1768. Finally, I find it difficult to accept that the eighteenth-century rulers developed a contractual relationship with their subjects. Such a relationship must be accepted by both parties for the contract to be meaningful. One may argue that the overthrow of two regents and the killing of two emperors meant that a critical mass among the elite had concluded that these rulers had violated some unspecified contractual relationships. But the rulers certainly never accepted such a relationship because that would have meant the acceptance of the legitimacy of their overthrow. Catherine played cat and mouse with her critics, until the cat got tired of the game and sent one of the mice to Schlusselburg. There was going to be no Polish-style monarchy in Russia.
We must thank Cynthia Whittaker for offering us a challenge to delve deeper into the nature of political power in Russia and to broaden our understanding of a crucial but woefully neglected topic.

John P. Le Donne, Harvard University


Most North Americans are aware of one of the consequences of the global conflict waged from 1756 to 1763—the dramatic decline of French colonial presence in the New World. While few will recall what their high school texts taught about the impact overseas, the legacy of the Seven Years War in the Old World was no less profound. As the distinguished University of St. Andrews diplomatic historian H. M. Scott points out in his new book, the stunningly effective performance of Prussian and Russian arms during the struggle heralded a major eastward shift in the European geopolitical order. Bourbon and Habsburg primacy yielded to a new configuration that now included the Romanovs and Hohenzollerns in the ranks of the Great Powers. Together with Great Britain, already a well-established member of the club, this “Pentarchy” would dominate European affairs until 1914.

Although Scott focuses on the Seven Years War and its aftermath, this study is actually about two wars and one largely peaceful invasion. He begins by describing the intricate diplomacy of the confrontation that pitted a coalition including Austria, France, Russia, and Sweden against Prussia, Britain, and Hanover. For the latter alliance much of the actual fighting in Europe was done by the Prussians, who confronted the continent’s most imposing armies virtually alone during much of the conflict under the brilliant leadership of King Frederick the Great. Despite some early successes against the Austrians and the French, Frederick’s forces were eventually exhausted by their incessant campaigns on many fronts, and defeat was only averted through the fortuitous accession of the Prussophile Tsar Peter III to the Russian throne, which transformed a formidable foe into a valuable friend. Victory in the Seven Years War saw Prussia supplant Austrian primacy among the Germanic states and earned Russia recognition as a full equal among the other European powers.

Scott goes on to examine the impact of these important developments over the next twelve years, most notably the Russo-Turkish War of 1768–74 and the first partition of Poland. He reminds us that, while Catherine the Great would come to bear most of the blame for the eventual end of Polish independence, the idea originated in Potsdam, not St. Petersburg. The author hints at another important point. Along with “the emergence of the Eastern powers,” the new political constellation that formed in the third quarter of the eighteenth century also introduced two other major features of nineteenth-century European diplomacy: the competition between Russia and Austria to benefit from Ottoman decline in the Balkans, and the Hohenzollerns’ often Machiavellian manipulations of their ménage a trois with the Romanovs and Habsburgs.

In the introduction, Scott explains that he based his book on “the conviction that the trajectory of an individual state can only be fully understood in the context of other national foreign policies and the wider evolution of the European system” (pp. 2–3). He delivers on his promise. The narrative is a comprehensive account of both the foreign and domestic politics of all of the relevant players of the time, both major and minor. Thoroughly grounded in the relevant literature
and some archives (not, however, including Russian collections), his study gives us an exhaustively detailed, almost pointillist survey. This approach has both merits and drawbacks. On the one hand, readers will be rewarded with a richer understanding of an important but often neglected period in European international history. But they will need to approach it with persistence and close attention. Like William Langer’s classic, densely packed diplomatic histories of the turn of the twentieth century, this book is not light bedtime diversion.

For those primarily interested in Russia, Scott provides a valuable service by placing the singular eighteenth-century international achievements of Elizabeth I and Catherine II (early in her reign) in broader perspective. Faculty teaching undergraduate surveys might, however, think twice before assigning the book to freshmen.

David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, Brock University


In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Mennonite immigrants arrived in the newly conquered region of New Russia (southern Ukraine) at the invitation of the Russian government, which sought model colonists to populate this raw frontier. Their communities prospered and a coherent and distinctive culture emerged among them, one rather separate from the surrounding Ukrainian and Russian population. David G. Rempel was born into this world in 1899, in Nieder Khortitsa, a village of the Mennonite settlement of Khortitsa (also known as the Old Colony) on the banks of the Dnipro River near the Zaporizhzhian cataracts. In this stimulating book—part memoir and part history—the author recounts the history of his family from its arrival in Russia to his own departure as part of a mass emigration to Canada in 1923. Rempel went on to become a history professor and pioneered the study of Mennonite history. His story is informed by decades of oral history and research in Russian-, Ukrainian-, German-, and English-language sources, while retaining the color of a personal account. Left in draft form at his death in 1992, the manuscript has been shortened, revised, and annotated by his daughter, Cornelia Rempel Carlson. The book includes an excellent introduction by Harvey L. Dyck, and helpful maps, photographs, and family trees.

Although the first few chapters dealing with ancestors on both sides of his family sketch the building up of this insular and sometimes self-satisfied culture, Rempel’s central theme is transformation. He chronicles both the class conflict within the community that had emerged by the late nineteenth century (Nieder Khortitsa was, indeed, unusually riven with social anxieties) and, in particular, the breakdown of the Mennonites’ social isolation during the revolutionary period. His portrait of interactions between Mennonites, Russians, Ukrainians, and Jews provides fascinating insight into the ethnic complexity of southern Ukraine in this period. From Old Believers who were fluent in low German to Mennonite wedding traditions that incorporated the local Slavic tradition of shouting “bitter” (gor’koe) until the groom kissed the bride and “sweet” (sladkoe) once the kiss had been planted, this was a world where ethnic difference was both prominent and constantly bridged.

The second half of the book, where Rempel turns to discussing events he himself remembers, makes the most interesting reading. In particular, Rempel offers a gripping account of the Civil War period, when the territory around Khortitsa moved back and forth between White, Yellow (the followers of the Ukrainian Socialist Simon Petliura), Red, and Makhnovite control. Amidst the litany of horrors that befell his family and his community in this period, Rempel is careful not to condemn roundly any group, presenting various cases to show the complexity of the
choices that individuals faced in this period. He chronicles the Mennonites’ agonizing confrontation of their own internal class tensions, their reconsideration of their tradition of pacifist nonresistance, and the loss of faith that some experienced in the crisis of the Civil War. An important theme throughout is his view that, during the revolutionary era, the Mennonites came to pay for their earlier blindness to the plight of their Ukrainian neighbors.

Rempel writes in a straightforward, unadorned style. He does not hesitate bluntly to counter cherished émigré myths about the Mennonites’ loyalty to the tsar or their lack of interest in revolutionary politics; or to acknowledge less salutary values such as pride or revenge at work in Mennonite responses to the Civil War. Rempel explicitly chose to focus on Mennonite secular, social life, an approach that yields fascinating insights but that still leaves the reader craving more understanding of the role of religion in what were, after all, the communities of a religious sect. On a more mundane level, one also wishes that he had included citations to archival documents he mentions (one is oddly described as being from something called the Leningrad Historical Library). These quibbles aside, this book will be of considerable interest to readers beyond the Mennonite community, especially those wishing to learn more about ethnic relations in the Russian Empire and about the revolutionary period in one of the Civil War’s great battlegrounds.

Heather J. Coleman, University of Calgary


This study tells us as much about trends in Russia today as it does about the life of Fedor Vasil’evich Chizov (1811–77). It displays contemporary Russian nationalism, the metamorphosis of Molodaia gvardiia from a press promoting the Soviet/Bolshevik canon into a press for hagiographies of Great Russian capitalists, the revival of the individual actor as historical agent in Russian historiography, and the search for exemplars of dedicated citizenship in nineteenth-century Russia to inspire civic activism in post-Soviet Russia. This biography is a largely successful rehabilitation of a major Slavophile intellectual and railroad baron. It is also a sober reminder that thinly veiled anti-Semitic stereotypes are still acceptable in Russian nationalist discourse and that the promotion of a Great Russian nationalist may rest on the invisibility or denigration of non-Russian contributions to the Russian Empire.

Simonova offers Chizov as the true “hero of his time,” in contrast to such fictive contemporaries as Lermontov’s Pechorin and the living “superfluous men” populating St. Petersburg salons or Russian émigré communities in Europe. Like Bruce Lincoln’s “reforming bureaucrats,” Chizov was the antithesis of that model. In Simonova’s account, Chizov emerges as a, if not the, primary agent in cultural works (Slavophile aesthetics, Gogol’s *Collected Works*, the Abramtsevo folk art center); economic developments and institutions (silk production in Ukraine, Russian railroad joint-stock companies, the Moscow Merchant Bank, several rail lines, the Arkhangelsk-Murmansk Steamship Company); and civic organizations. Despite arrest in Austria-Hungary for his pan-Slavic activities in the Balkans and subjection to internal exile to Kiev by the Russian government for his alleged association with the Cyril and Methodius Society, Chizov also became an unofficial advisor to Minister of Finance Reutern at the end of his life.

Simonova’s sources include Chizov’s and his contemporaries’ published works and archival *fondy*, and a handful of secondary studies. She cites only three Western scholars: Thomas Owen, Peter Christoff, and Abbott Gleason. The paucity of Western studies is striking, because
Simonova has had access to them as a fellow at the Davis Center of Harvard University and the Harriman Institute at Columbia University.

Eschewing reference to non-Russian sources, Simonova also displays little critical distance from her subject. She relies heavily—and in many sections, exclusively—on Chizov’s own testimony about his activities. The work resembles medieval chronicles and saints’ lives, with thirty-two chapters, a preface, and a section “in lieu of a conclusion” which constitutes Simonova’s panegyric to Chizov: “We urgently need selfless leaders like Chizov, whose first priority is not their own benefit, but the welfare of their country. The more people like him we have, the sooner will Russia be reborn” (p. 296). The volume includes endnotes, a bibliography, a name index, a chronology of Chizov’s life, thirty-four pages of black-and-white illustrations, and a map of Kostroma during Chizov’s childhood there.

This is a study not only of Chizov but also through Chizov. Because Simonova’s intent is reclamation of a lost strand of Russia’s pre-Soviet experience, she leaves few details out of her narrative, and few personages without a minibiography. She also provides extensive, and sometimes excessive, description and analysis of each issue or historical development Chizov addressed or experienced. She devotes several pages, for example, to the economic debates about free trade versus protective tariffs in the 1860s and 1870s. Simonova seems eager to convey to Russian readers that the contemporary issues facing the Russian Federation are not new.

In this context, the publication history of this volume in Molodaia gvardiia’s series “Lives of Remarkable People” is noteworthy. One can discern it on the last page of the volume, where Simonova thanks the persons and institutions that contributed to the book’s publication. In addition to the usual cultural organizations, these include Kostroma political figures and business leaders (the general director of the bottled-water company “Sacred Spring” [“Sviatoi istochnik”], and the president of the firm “Kostroma-Gaztransservis”). Their support suggests that Simonova has already partially succeeded in calling attention to Chizov as a model worthy of emulation.

While the biography lacks critical perspective, it abounds in atmosphere. Simonova holds a doctorate in history and is an active journalist who writes well. She brings archival materials directly into her text to good effect, quoting extensively from Chizov’s letters and diary entries in ways that make both the man and his era vivid. Her descriptions of his life in Rome in the company of Gogol and Ivanov and of the Ukrainian estate of the Galaganov family, where Chizov’s one great love affair took shape, are especially evocative.

Chizov’s attitudes are at least as important for Simonova as his achievements. In short, Chizov was a passionate Russian nationalist who promoted an economic development strategy for the Russian Empire that would privilege Russians over foreign investors and non-Russian subjects. He also envisioned a pan-Slavic federation of Slavic states with uniquely powerful Russia as the sole legitimate leader. He was a convinced opponent of serfdom from the beginning of his public life. He hailed private, individual initiative as a wellspring of national progress. Simonova also lists personal asceticism as one of his virtues; she admiringly explains that he lived simply, while generously supporting individuals and institutions as a loyal friend and patron.

Simonova’s study is almost silent on what Chizov thought or wrote about the role of non-Russian subjects of the empire. He seems to have lacked Sergei Witte’s appreciation for talent and service regardless of national or ethnic background. Most troubling are Simonova’s references to Jews, which appear to come directly from Chizov’s reports and reflections. There are two such references. The first appears in her account of Chizov’s campaign to win the concession to build the Donetsk railroad, working with Savva Mamontov. Simonova explains that Chizov and Mamontov were competing against forty-two companies for this concession. Of those, she chose to elaborate on only one, headed by Chizov’s former friend and colleague I. K. Babst, scion of a Russified German military family. “Among the strongest rivals was Babst,
behind whose back hid the former vodka merchant and petty building contractor, and now millionaire and railroad ‘king’ Samuil Solomonovich Poliakov. In the 1860s–1870s, he and his brother, a most powerful wheeling and dealing banker (del’tsom) Lazar, developed extensive speculation in land” (p. 228). She explains that Poliakov had amassed a fortune and received the rank of Privy Councillor, and thus personal nobility, through what she describes as shoddy railroad-building projects (p. 229). The Poliakov brothers fare much worse at her hands as a historian than they have in the work of Hans Rogger and Benjamin Nathans. She concludes her paragraph on Samuil Solomonovich by writing, “Subsequently, precisely on the Kursk-Khar’kov-Azov railroad, built by Poliakov, below Khar’kov, near the Borki station, there would occur an accident with the train in which Emperor Aleksander III and his family would return from the Crimea to St. Petersburg …” (p. 229). The ellipsis is hers. What is she suggesting here? That the Jewish railroad builder Samuil Solomonovich Poliakov set up a railway accident to threaten the life of the tsar? At best, this paragraph, concluding with her own “speculative” ellipsis, shows poor editorial judgment. She also quotes, without comment, Chizov, who, upon learning that he and Mamontov had won the concession, exulted in his diary, “Babst was a screen for Poliakov, who is exploiting Russian railroads for his personal gain” (p. 229). Simonova records another episode, featuring Jewish smugglers, again without distancing herself from Chizov’s interpretation that he had been the “blind tool of smugglers” (p. 230).

Simonova’s use of stereotypical language to describe Jews as shady operators hiding behind Russified German front men, wheeler-dealers, shoddy profit-seekers, speculators, nimble opportunists, and exploiters, combined with her implication that Poliakov had some nefarious role in the tsar’s railroad accident, both reflects and appeals to the anti-Semitism as present in Russian nationalism today as it was in Chizov’s time. It is regrettable that this hagiography, explicitly intended to provide a model for “selfless leaders like Chizov,” contains this whiff of anti-Semitism. This study might best make its way into the historiography of nineteenth-century Russia with a warning label. Despite the fascinating and rich tableaux Simonova creates in reintroducing this vigorous and productive individual into our understanding of the Russia of Nicholas I and Alexander II, her lack of critical distance or comparative perspective and her apparent sympathies for negative elements in Chizov’s impassioned Russian nationalism alert us to the hazards of hagiographic history in a culture still seeking its post-Soviet national identity.

Cathy Frierson, University of New Hampshire


The collapse of the Soviet Union has clearly energized the study of cultural diversity and imperial policies in the Russian borderlands, and Paul Werth’s splendid account of confessional politics on the middle Volga is one of the finest results of this focus. His volume addresses Russian religious and bureaucratic responses to confessional conflict in the Volga-Kama region. The account opens with the challenge to Orthodoxy posed by the apostasy of novokreshchenye Tatars (particularly those baptized in the eighteenth century) and the renewal of animist practices within Mari communities of the Viatka region in the late 1820s. It closes with the 1905 tsarist decree on religious toleration.

Werth argues that during the nineteenth century there was a significant evolution in imperial and church policies with respect to Islam and animism in the borderlands. Drawing especially upon Andreas Kappeler’s Russland als Vielvökerreich: Entstehung, Geschichte, Zerfall (1992), Werth notes the contrast between earlier Catherinean and Nikolaevan views of empire based
upon traditional dynastic rule and later views emerging at the end of the nineteenth and early
twentieth centuries that associated the Russian Empire with an emerging colonial nation-state
building enterprise and obrusenie. Thus, on the Volga frontier, Nicholas I could respond with
greater tolerance of ethnic and religious diversity in the 1820s than his later counterparts would
exercise in the face of renewed waves of apostasy, particularly following “the great apostasy of
1866.” Werth’s chapter on “the changing conceptions of difference,” including the semantic
shift from novokreshchenye to inorodtsy, helps to sharpen the debate over Russification by
suggesting inter alia that the missionary enterprise from the 1860s needs to be seen as part of
a state effort to determine who could best be enlisted in the “process of national construction”
(p. 139).

For the Orthodox Church, there was a similar transformation as it confronted Islam and
animism in the borderlands. The early missionary efforts of the 1830s and the construction of
an Anti-Muslim Missionary Division of the Kazan Theological Academy would ultimately
give way to the “Il’minskii system” featuring the establishment of religio-educational institutions
employing indigenous Turkic languages. Even though the educational institutions launched by
Nikolai Il’minskii may have had the unintended consequence of reinforcing ethnic difference
on the middle Volga, the effort was part of a wider attempt to enlist indigenous elites in the
emerging colonial enterprise.

Behind the Russian responses to Islam and animism there rests the reality of cultural
diversity in the Volga-Kama region, a diversity that Werth’s book effectively helps to illumine,
even though our understanding of the internal factors driving apostasy in the region awaits the
work of Agnès Kefeli and others whom Werth cites when addressing Islam in the middle Volga.
Like the work of Ger Duijzings on the Balkans (Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo
[2000]), Werth’s study paints a picture of conflicted and fluid confessional identity on the frontier.
It is this picture of confessional fluidity, quite in contrast with the Huntingtonian notion of
sharply divided “cultural fault lines,” that makes this study such a nuanced and important new
contribution to Russian borderland studies.

Stephen Batalden, Arizona State University

Murav, Harriet. Identity Theft: The Jew in Imperial Russia and the Case of Avraam Uri
Kovner. Contraversions: Jews and Other Differences. Stanford: Stanford University Press,

Avraam Uri Kovner belonged to the second generation of the Hebrew-language Enlightenment
movement (the Haskalah) in the Russian Empire. Like such famous contemporaries in that
movement as M. L. Lilienblum, P. Smolenskin, A. S. Lieberman, and S. Y. Abramovich (better
known as Mendele Mokher Seforim), he was born in the Lithuanian region of the empire during
the middle years of Nicholas I’s tsardom; received a traditional Jewish education in heder and
yeshiva; acquired a knowledge of Russian only in his teens; and first came to public attention
through articles published in Hebrew-language journals. Unlike them, however, he soon
disappeared into near total obscurity and his death in 1909 was barely noted.

Nonetheless, however surprising it might seem, Harriet Murav’s new and thought-provoking
work is actually the third full-length book to trace Kovner’s life. As she notes, it was preceded
by Leonid Grossman’s Ispoved odnogo evreia of 1924 (a work reissued more than once since
the 1980s and published in English translation in 1979 as Confession of a Jew), and by Max
Weinreich’s biography of 1955 in Yiddish. There is, likewise, no lack of shorter studies, as
well as a volume of his collected Hebrew-language writings published in Tel-Aviv in 1947.
Why, then, is there this perennial interest in so marginal a figure? The answer would appear to be that, whether Kovner was making a false step—and he made many—or was seeking to regain his footing, he did so in highly sensationalist ways. Frittering away his exceptional intellectual gifts, he nonetheless reinvented himself so often and with such theatricality that he rendered his life a source of abiding fascination, a succès de scandale.

Three short chapters in Kovner’s life have always attracted the biographical spotlight, and Harriet Murav’s work is no exception in this respect. First, as a young contributor in the mid-1860s to the journals, he made sure that nobody would outflank him from the left in vehemently criticizing not only, as he saw it, the hopeless obscurantism of Jewish life in the Pale of Settlement, but also the pervasive conservativism of the Hebrew-language press and literature. Anyway, he insisted dismissively, Hebrew and Yiddish would disappear as living languages as soon as the Russian Jews were granted emancipation. Pursuing a strictly utilitarian line in his literary criticism, he made himself the object of furious attacks as the “Pisarev,” the “nihilist,” of Hebrew letters. Before moving on to Russian-language journalism, Kovner burnt his bridges with the Haskalah movement by secretly (but not secretly enough) informing the tsarist authorities that Hamelits, the paper for which he had mainly written, was, as he alleged, sabotaging the government’s attempts to modernize the Jewish people—and should therefore be shut down.

Wearied of his penurious life as a free-lance journalist writing for Golos, Kovner after a few years in St. Petersburg obtained a junior position in a leading bank, only then once again to burst into the limelight—this time, as a bank robber. Arguing that he could do more good with the money for people in need than could the St. Petersburg Discount Lending Bank, he made off in 1875 with a sum which, as he calculated it, represented exactly (and merely) 3 percent of the institution’s annual profits: 168,000 rubles (millions of dollars in today’s currency). Soon arrested, his trial became the object of enormous public curiosity. Inevitably speculation had it that here was a case of life imitating art: had not Kovner taken his cue from Raskolnikov? (This assumption was shared by Grossman, but is questioned by Murav.)

In all probability, it was the novelistic quality of this life story that prompted Dostoevsky to respond at length to a letter sent to him from prison by Kovner. Part of their correspondence was promptly published by Dostoevsky in his The Diary of a Writer, without revealing Kovner’s identity, and it served as the introduction to the most systematic discussion of the “Jewish question” that he ever undertook.

This extraordinary interchange between the forgotten Jewish writer become convict and the world-famous Russian author forever occupied with human criminality and the possibility of redemption was what drew Grossman to the story of Kovner; and Harriet Murav likewise treats it as a key chapter in his biography. That Kovner, in his last years, by then turned Russian Orthodox and serving as a minor tsarist official in Lomzhe, should have entered into a lengthy and bizarre correspondence with Vasilii Rozanov—another Judeophobe fascinated by the messianic and sinister life force supposedly inherent in the Jewish people—has served to attract still more scholarly attention to this maverick figure.

For all the sensational aspects of Kovner’s life, Professor Murav argues that he can be seen primarily as a paradigmatic personality, an exception that proves the rule—the rule in this case being the hopeless complexity inherent in the process of Jewish acculturation in tsarist Russia. “Kovner,” she writes, “suffers an extreme form of the generalized condition” (p. 129). If the Jews maintained their separate way of life, they were accused of being sunk in Asiatic immobility; and if they gained entry into the mainstream, they were accused of a Westernism (whether economic, ideological, or both) that threatened to subvert the national (“Eastern”) cohesion of the Russian people. Given the chronic difficulty which the Russian elites had in defining their own national identity—to embrace or reject Europe—how could they effectively integrate the Jews?
Murav suggests that Kovner’s chameleon-like changes of identity, his “impostures,” can usefully be interpreted in terms of postcolonial theory. Or, as she puts it: “The assumption of another’s identity challenges unexamined beliefs about authenticity, tradition and the sense of the naturalness of one’s own beliefs and tastes” (p. 129).

Arguably, there is a tendency on the part of the author to overgeneralize when describing both the Jewish subworld as well as Russian society and politics. After all, during the reign of Alexander II, particularly in the 1860s, multiple career channels briefly opened up for ambitious Jewish young men in the Pale. (Professor Murav herself notes that Kovner’s older brother, Savelii, not only became a doctor but also managed, with support from the University of Kiev, to publish a scholarly work on Spinoza during the course of his studies.)

Be that as it may, Murav’s analysis of Kovner’s Russian-language writings, many of them hitherto totally ignored—feuilletons, novels, autobiographical sketches, letters, a diary—is consistently original, opening up new perspectives on Kovner’s life. In so doing, she has made a most valuable contribution to the ongoing discussion about the nature of ethnic inclusion and exclusion in nineteenth-century Russia.

Jonathan Frankel, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem


In this monograph Nicolas Spulber provides us with a sweeping overview of the evolution of the Russian economic system, its political economy, and performance over the last 150 years. This period encompasses three attempted systemic transformations, each disrupting the transition begun by its predecessor, with the latest still in process. The first transition, launched under Alexander II in the aftermath of the Crimean War, aimed at transforming the quasifeudal, patrimonial economy toward a form of market capitalism, albeit still dominated by the autocrat’s bureaucracy. The second transition arose from the disastrous First World War and the chaos of the collapsing tsarist state. It involved destroying the market foundations developed in the first transition and replacing them with a militarized, state-run “command economy,” which Spulber characterizes as “state capitalism.” That system grew rapidly until it choked on its own hyperindustrialization and endemic inefficiencies, spawning the third, and ongoing, transition toward a privately directed market capitalism. In each of these transitions, the focus of the analysis is on ownership and production relations and the always significant role of the state (tsarist, Soviet, and post-Soviet) in defining and implementing them, giving it a decidedly Marxist flavor.

Each “transition” is analyzed in a separate part (Tsarist Transition, Soviet Economic Transition, and Post-Soviet Transition) consisting of nine precisely parallel chapters: “Socioeconomic Framework,” “Transition Issues,” “Economic Policies,” “Problems of Agriculture,” “Industrial Changes,” “Domestic and Foreign Trade,” “Money and Banking,” “State Finance,” and “Overall View.” The chapters are further gathered in three groups—State, Economy and Society; Sectoral Growth and Change; Social Accounting—of three chapters each, providing the analytic frame on which masses of data are hung. Each part moves from a discussion of the historical, social, political, and geographic setting through a presentation both of debates on economic development and reform, and of the policies pursued, to a discussion of the situation and changes in both production and services sectors, with particular emphasis on intermediation and the role of the state. As Spulber points out, strands of patrimonialism and subservience to both authority and the collective run like a “red thread” throughout the
entire period, subtly molding each of the transitions in a recognizably Russian way. Each part then concludes with a summary that reminds us of links to the prior transition(s) and sets the stage for the succeeding transition.

This analytic structure highlights both continuities and changes in the Russian economy, and in the ideologies and debates behind those changes, but all too often allows incoherent facts to “speak for themselves.” The reader is faced with a (generally inconclusive) debate between the opposing visions at the time, along with a mass of economic statistics, that makes this volume a useful ready reference on the state of the Russian economy during each of the transitions discussed. Unfortunately, the thrust of the economic argument, the evaluation and economic explanation of the changes and continuities, is often lost in the massive presentation of statistics that describe, but can never explain, change or the lack thereof. There is no attempt to use modern institutional economics to cast light on the reasons for the success or failure of various aspects of each transition, giving the analysis a rather dated flavor. The analysis is also weakened by a rather uncritical use of Soviet and post-Soviet statistics, ignoring problems of both index number formation and the economic meaning of those statistics. Finally, the discussion of the current transition ignores much of the current theoretical and empirical economic research on the problems and consequences of the that process, particularly relating to industrial restructuring and productivity changes.

Despite these shortcomings, this is a valuable book. It puts Russia’s ongoing struggle for economic modernity in fascinating perspective, and presents the wisdom of a true scholar of Russian economic change. Spulber has a deep and sympathetic understanding of the problems of late economic development, and in particular of the Soviet path that Russia pursued for some sixty years. He clearly outlines the arguments of those involved in launching and implementing the transformations, and the historical, social, and cultural environment in which they played out. And he elaborates the continuities and inconsistencies that hindered, and hinder, their full realization.

This volume is suitable for use as a supplementary undergraduate text in Russian economic history of the past 150 years, and as a reference to the contemporary debates and statistics in each of the periods studied. It will surely be of interest and value to the general reader, but provides little new for the specialist in Russian/Soviet history or economy.

Richard E. Ericson, East Carolina University


The Bolshevik Revolution in Turkestan was neither a revolution nor a properly Bolshevik enterprise. The local Bolshevik party was founded only in June 1918, and the ethnic and economic policies pursued by the self-proclaimed Soviet authorities in the region in 1918–19 were the object of occasional but principled criticism in Moscow. Rather, the overthrowing of the Turkestan Provisional Government, at the hand of a group of local leftist radicals (including several Socialist Revolutionaries), embodied an “inverted revolution” (as the title of this book suggests): not so much an attempt to appropriate property and power in favor of the toiling masses, as a preventive colonial counter revolution, which was basically aimed at forestalling a Muslim political and economic takeover in the region and at upholding the authority, availability of resources, and access to the land of the Russian and Slav immigrants in the region (in 1915, 800,000 people against some 6 million Kazaks, Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, Turkmen, and others). The local Soviet dictatorship also fought against the prospect of an autonomous Turkestan in the
framework of the Soviet Federation, based on compromise between Muslim traditionalists, Muslim moderate modernizers, moderate Socialists, and native, non-Slav “National Bolsheviks.” Many Slav Bolsheviks of Turkestan harbored strong prejudices against the “backward” structure of the natives’ society, the reactionary character of their religion and mores (Islam, and the shariiat), and their attachment to the free trade of the bazar. A sort of anti-Muslim united front of Russian colonists (peasants, state employees, workers, and soldiers) coalesced in the wake of the repression by the Tsarist army of the revolt of the natives which had burnt out in summer 1916, as a response to an attempt by Petrograd to mobilize part of the male population for the war economy. In retaliation, tens of thousands of native households, sedentary or nomad, were expropriated of their land or cattle, dislodged and resettled in places different from their originary lands, forced to migrate abroad (to China), or killed outright. This united front crystallized in 1917 and 1918, as the production of foodstuffs decreased and supplies from Central Russia grew dramatically thin (due to the Russian Civil War, which disrupted the vital Tashkent-Orenburg railway). Cultural, social, and political integration between colonists and colonized had been scarce or nonexistent before 1916, and the situation worsened after the collapse of the Tsarist empire. Famine became permanent, alongside a state of growing administrative chaos. The Muslim population, thought by both Slav post-Tsarist administrations (the Provisional government of Turkestan, and the Soviets) to be able to care for itself, was not included in local food-rationing schemes. Only in spring 1919 were efforts made by prominent native members of the local Bolshevik party to build up a special apparatus for their relief.

Social divisions deepened in the Russian colony. The initial favor enjoyed by Soviet power among the Slav farmers withered away as soon as the Bolsheviks turned to the monopoly of trade and forced requisitions. The Russian villages became self-governing and self-protecting armed communities, keeping government agents at a distance, cleansing their territories of the native population, and violently preventing older and more recent native refugees from returning. Groups of Russian soldiers and workers, hungry for radical action, engaged in acts of violence, mainly against the defenseless Muslim population. Large armed bands of native basmachi (“bandits”) appeared on the scene, raiding the Russian villages and clashing with the Red army units. In this harsh struggle of everyone against everyone, it was the weakest part of the population of Turkestan (that is, the natives’ communities, urban and rural, sedentary and nomadic) which suffered the most. Between 1915 and 1920 almost 1.8 million of them died or disappeared, swept away by the compounded effects of famine, epidemics, ethnic discrimination, armed persecution, and displacement.

Marco Buttino has produced a pioneering, penetrating, and updated reconstruction of the main stages of this drama, complemented by fascinating details on places, events, and political characters. He also offers a thoughtful hypothesis on possible “alternative” settlements of the ethnic and political turmoil in “revolutionary” Turkestan.

Francesco Benvenuti, University of Bologna


In this review of some of the contemporary scholarship on Trotsky, Ian Thatcher offers a “dispassionate” survey of ideas and actions. One might say that it is not dispassionate but bland, both stylistically and critically. Political dramatization was the very essence of Trotsky. So it is less a book about Trotsky the person than about Trotskyist myths, aimed, apparently, at scholars who were taken in by them.
The introduction briefly “reviews” some of the landmarks in Trotsky studies. The first chapter, “The Young Revolutionary,” offers nothing about Trotsky’s formative years other than a one paragraph summary. The approach is antipsychological—there is no probing, no attempt to explain the steps toward a profound revolutionary commitment. Thatcher treats Trotsky’s *My Life* skeptically and uses it only with caution. A statement in Thatcher’s penultimate chapter (the Conclusion aside) implies that political ambition and dogmatism lay at the core of Trotsky’s behavior during his career as a Bolshevik.

Contemporary scholars have indeed debunked many a Trotskyist myth launched by Trotsky himself. Thatcher downplays Trotsky’s influence on the St. Petersburg Soviet in 1905 (pp. 33–36), but he does credit Trotsky with a “furtile [sic] and original mind” (p. 38) in his review of Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution. Thatcher also sees the theory as a kind of anchor for Trotsky’s later theorizing—or more precisely the set of assumptions that governed his view of the revolutionary process. Thatcher’s main critical apparatus consists of this: measure Trotsky’s views and claims against recent scholarship to see how they hold up. This “scientific” approach to 1905 gives Trotsky high marks—except for one unfortunate matter. Trotsky does not take the measure of the peasantry. The refusal of the peasantry to acquiesce when Bolshevik policies no longer pleased them, of course, forced Lenin’s successors to solve the peasant problem.

The account of 1917 simply tells how Trotsky went over to the Bolsheviks and then placed himself at Lenin’s disposal with no attempt to explain why someone who clearly had sought Soviet power rather than Bolshevik power settled for a de facto Bolshevik dictatorship. Thatcher dismisses the view that condemns Trotsky on the grounds that he could not have foreseen the dictatorship that would arise from Lenin’s policy. Conditions were sufficiently fluid both within and without Russia in 1918 to make de facto one-party rule a temporary measure rather than an irreversible step into dictatorship. Yet Trotsky and others had for more than a decade warned about Lenin and Bolshevism. They had studied history sufficiently carefully to know how chaotic conditions tended to promote dictatorship and knew Lenin and his faction well enough to cast Lenin in the role of dictator.

After each debate and each maneuver, Trotsky emerges not only as politically inept, but as a second-rate thinker, whose contribution to Marxist thought is cast in doubt. Thatcher also speculates about what might have happened had Trotsky been able to actualize his own policy proposals. The counterfactuals are generally not in Trotsky’s favor. Making Trotsky’s policies look like doubtful alternatives tends to do two things. On the one hand, it shows that there were no good solutions and confirms Trotsky’s initial view that an isolated socialist revolution would fail. On the other, alongside a debunking of Trotsky’s futile efforts to make the revolution work, a revisionist treatment of Stalin makes him, at times, a victim of Trotsky’s and others’ political mudslinging. Stalin, too, deserves dispassionate treatment. After all of the mistakes and colossal loss of life, what remains for a committed socialist of Thatcher’s school? Forgo old myths, salvage what remains sound, and live for the future.

**Philip Pomper, Wesleyan University**


Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the field of Russian history has undergone a remarkable transformation as scholars have turned their attention to new topics and approaches
previously overlooked in the established literature. To this end, histories of popular religion, gender, and masculinity have flourished, along with an ever-proliferating number of studies devoted to nationalities and national identities, spawning new avenues of inquiry, altering our understanding of Russia and its “others,” and providing a bevy of new dissertation topics for the next generation of scholars.

James Andrews’s *Science for the Masses* endeavors to add the history of science and technology to this list. The book seeks to center the discussion of science and technology within Russian history’s larger narrative by tracing the “imaginative vision of public science” across the revolutionary divide of 1917 while demonstrating how this vision was transformed into applied science and technology for the masses in the wake of the Stalinist “Great Break.”

*Science for the Masses* is divided into three roughly equal sections. The first, comprising the book’s first two chapters, examines the origins and growth of popular science under the Russian autocracy. Basing their approaches to scientific enlightenment on models adopted from contemporary Western Europe, imperial science popularizers, Andrews contends, played a vital role in “expanding the public sphere outside the purview of the tsarist state.” Through such activities as the promotion of public educational programs and the establishment of local natural-history societies, scientific educators helped “to create space for the interaction of varied social groups” (p. 35). In doing so, they furthered the cause of scientific enlightenment while contributing to the expansion of imperial civic spirit (*obshchestvennost’*).

The second portion of Andrews’s monograph (chapters 3–6) examines the challenges that science educators and activists faced in the wake of 1917. Confronted with a rapidly shifting institutional landscape and the growing politicization of social and cultural life under the NEP, science popularizers were forced to adopt new rhetorical strategies that played to the ideological prejudices of Bolshevik officials while enabling advocates of science to remain true to their pre-1917 enlightenment missions. Here, Andrews argues, science educators benefited from the patronage of key figures within the Scientific Department of the Ministry of Enlightenment. These patronage ties proved instrumental in helping scientific societies “navigate safely through new Soviet bureaucratic constraints,” retaining autonomy while securing state funding for their programs (p. 59).

According to Andrews, the situation surrounding popular science changed markedly after 1928. With the onset of Stalin’s “Great Break” and the launch of the First Five-Year Plan, Soviet officials undertook a concerted effort to enlist the scientific community into the campaign to radically transform the industrial landscape. Where NEP-era authorities had looked sympathetically upon the general “enlightening mission” of popular science, in the years following 1928 such broader educational activities gave way to more “utilitarian” programs that were intended to facilitate the fulfillment of the plan by raising industrial productivity and technical acuity. Under the auspices of new organizations such as VARNITSO and TekhMass, Stalinist administrators imposed new imperatives on popular science, constraining its earlier enlightening ethos in favor of programs that might teach factory workers new skills or that would raise the level of workers’ technical literacy.

In chronicling the fate of imperial Russian and Soviet popular science, Andrews introduces the reader to a wide array of science educators and activists. Geographers, geologists, astronomers, natural scientists, aviation and rocketry enthusiasts, Darwinists, and atheists all appear in the course of the narrative. Although the constraints of space prevent Andrews from providing the reader with complete accounts of the travails these diverse groups faced, the breadth of coverage speaks to the omnipresence of science education during the period under scrutiny. In the end, *Science for the Masses* represents a welcome effort at enlightening scholars to the importance of science and technology in the history of Russia.

Scott W. Palmer, Western Illinois University

It is a pleasure to read such a thoroughly researched and challenging book as *Teachers of Stalinism*. Ewing perceptively argues that teachers were “both the instruments and victims of repressive power” (p. 8). Both the Soviet state and its teachers demanded a disciplined classroom and equated education with the learning of a prescribed body of knowledge. When complaining of shortages, delays in pay, and bureaucratic incompetence, the nation’s instructors accepted the center’s explanation by chastising local officials and not the Kremlin. Teachers thereby “contributed, however, inadvertently, to the construction of the authoritarian Stalinist apparatus” (p. 142). At the same time, central authorities allowed instructors, especially the more experienced ones, some freedom to determine the content and methods of instruction. The state also tolerated, even as it criticized, teachers who deflected criticism from themselves by blaming parents and conditions for pupils’ poor performance or by “adjusting” that performance to meet Moscow’s expectations of near-perfection in the classroom.

It is to Ewing’s credit that a study focusing on teachers’ agency and autonomy likewise emphasizes the terror, the subject of the book’s final chapter. The terror, Ewing observes, emerged “in many ways as the defining moment for teachers of Stalinism” (p. 232). Yet the state’s need for teachers meant the arrest and dismissal of relatively few, and those fired often successfully appealed for their reinstatement or found work in more remote parts of the Soviet Union.

Readers will appreciate Ewing’s attention to the expansion of educational opportunities as part of state formation, to a refusal by local and regional organs to always follow the Kremlin’s directives, and to an inclusion of matters of gender in his analysis. Teachers’ vulnerability to pressure from Moscow and from the local community placed them in an exploited “feminine” position. Instructors nevertheless turned their professional “femininity” to good advantage by appealing for the paternalistic understanding and assistance of “masculine” authorities.

I do have some quibbles with the book’s presentation. Reference to materials in archives should indicate the nature of the particular source (an internal memorandum, correspondence, a summary of investigative reports) when the text itself yields no such information. *Teachers of Stalinism* features three full-page cartoons that illustrate teachers’ victimization and their response. I suspect the publisher, not the author, made the regrettable decision not to include more.

I am in complete agreement with Ewing’s major theses and am impressed by the use of archives, periodical literature, and interviews in support of them. However, I would suggest that many teachers felt even more vulnerable professionally after the terror’s zenith, when a horde of special commissions on fault-finding expeditions descended on classrooms to examine in excruciating detail the content and methods of instruction. To know even more about the development of teachers’ professional and personal identity, Ewing might extend his research into heretofore uncharted sources. We need to know what school directors said about their staff in their quarterly and annual reports to district departments of education and to local party organs, and what teachers themselves said at meetings of a school’s pedagogical council and at sessions of a school’s primary party organization (cell), especially when attended by nonparty personnel. Such an effort, no doubt, will require multiple trips (perhaps by multiple scholars) to regional and local archives where such sources are available.

Teachers played an even more active role as agents of the terror than Ewing admits. While he offers many examples and a splendid analysis of teachers’ letters of complaints, he slight[s] the number and importance of their letters of denunciation. Moreover, I would like to see more
evidence in support of the author’s thesis that because authorities gendered teaching as a feminine profession they held its practitioners less responsible for their actions.

Ewing perceptively suggests that critical comments regarding teachers “may have been chosen more for their potential impact on emotions and attitudes than for the extent to which they were typical of school affairs” (p. 202). I would go even further by suggesting that these documents are not just text, as the postmodernists would have it, but script for a theatrical production. (Another script, the quarterly and annual reports submitted by school directors to district departments of education, presents a far different, much more positive, scenario.)

Teachers of Stalinism is a splendid book that delivers far more than even its author acknowledges. Ewing argues that when teachers willingly supported or avoided, even challenged, official policies, they demonstrated the limits of Stalinism and the inconsistencies of Stalinist culture. It seems to me that it is not the limits or inconsistencies that are at issue here but rather a Stalinism whose very existence depended precisely on such behavior by teachers and others. This revision does not, as Ewing has argued throughout the book, make Stalinism any less repressive. But it does demonstrate that the complex interplay between the state and its teachers was a component part of Stalinist educational culture. Anyone who seeks to understand the essentials of Stalinism should make Teachers of Stalinism obligatory reading.

Larry E. Holmes, University of South Alabama


Since 1990, a flood of publications coming from Russia has made possible a serious investigation into the history of the Soviet space program. The new sources have their limitations: most texts of important government decisions, archival collections, and official protocols are still unavailable, but a number of key participants who had worked closely with the initial chief designers offered personal memoirs and recollections, and many inquisitive journalists have undertaken investigations into particular episodes once hidden from the public view. These accounts contain an enormous amount of information about hundreds of important actors, technological projects, and space missions, but they are fragmented, contradictory, and certainly less reliable than original documents. To synthesize them critically and extract a coherent overall story is a Herculean task, which Asif Siddiqi solves masterfully in his landmark two-volume study, accomplishing a quantum leap in the historical understanding of Soviet space explorations.

His work was originally published by NASA in 2000 under the title Challenge to Apollo: The Soviet Union and the Space Race, 1945–1974. Having a far from impartial organization as the commissioning agency involves certain constraints. NASA is still incapable of admitting in plain words that the USSR won the space race with the first satellite launch in 1957 and the first piloted space flight in 1961. Publications sponsored by the United States thus continue to misname the Soviet victory with the help of fuzzy metaphors, such as “challenge” to (the not yet existing) Apollo, and divert attention to the later moon race, as if the single most important non-event in the Soviet program was its failure to send a cosmonaut to the moon. This deliberately narrow outsider’s approach presents the entire space saga exclusively through the window of Apollo and tends to produce an even stronger propagandistic distortion of history than the
attempts by late Soviet officials to create an impression that they had never planned a piloted moon mission. In some degree (at least on the surface), Siddiqi’s work conforms to NASA’s self-serving vision, which is reflected in the book’s Fragestellungen, time frame, level of attention given to the aborted Soviet lunar program, and some concluding interpretations. But being a truly encyclopedic and scholarly investigation, it provides an attentive reader with so much more important information and details that a more authentic historical picture of the Soviet space program inevitably develops.

The chief designers of the Soviet breakthrough into space, including V. P. Glushko, S. P. Korolev, and M. K. Tikhonravov, developed their dreams about the cosmos and their professional skills as rocket engineers around 1930, when all sorts of utopian revolutionary projects temporarily flourished in the USSR. The threat of Nazi Germany, Stalinist repressions, and the war forced them to work on more concrete and down-to-earth military projects with small rockets. An ambitious work resumed in 1945 when the Soviet military organized an effort to replicate and further develop the most advanced missile of World War II, the German V–2. A parallel project in the United States profited from having at its disposal chief German designers and fully assembled copies of the V–2. Despite this initial disadvantage, by 1956 the Soviet team significantly surpassed its American rivals, having developed the famous R–7, an ICBM with a reach of 7000 km. Any explanation of this achievement, which ultimately proved decisive for the Soviet success in space, has to include two crucial elements. The need for ICBMs was much higher in the USSR due to the asymmetrical military situation. The United States could use its airbases and bombers to launch a nuclear attack on main cities deep inside the Soviet territory, while the USSR lacked forward bases from which aircraft could reach American shores. Plus, in 1953, before they knew the actual mass of the hydrogen bomb, Soviet officials used a higher estimate of three tons to set the target payload for the desired missile.

At least some of the engineers who designed the R–7 were fully aware that it would also be capable of reaching into space but had to discuss their youthful dream with caution, for the military had no such plans. Only in 1956, having impressed the political leadership with contributions to the country’s defense, did Korolev receive permission to use one missile for launching a satellite—provided this did not cause any delay to the all-important military work. On 4 October 1957, six weeks after the successful test of the R–7 as an ICBM, a Soviet rocket opened the space era by launching the first artificial sputnik into an Earth orbit. That day, the utopian idea of cosmic travel captured the minds of millions and suddenly became a chief political priority for Cold War superpowers. With its newly acquired propagandistic importance and political support, the space race began in earnest, and three-and-a-half years later its main prize was once again claimed by the Soviet Union with the first manned orbital flight by Yuri Gagarin on 12 April 1961. The frustration of that defeat made President Kennedy announce the next national priority for the United States—the moon landing—and devote tremendous resources to its achievement.

Soviet leaders defined their next national priority differently. ICBMs provided them for the first time with some deterrence against the U.S. nuclear threat, but the Soviet strategic weapons potential was still approximately one-third of the American one. During the next decade their main efforts were spent on achieving an approximate strategic parity in nuclear might, which required new generations of mass-produced missiles, but had no use for a moon rocket. Their satisfied national pride, in contrast to the offended American one, did not provide sufficient motivation to dramatically increase spending on spectacular space initiatives without military importance. Engineers who pushed for further activities in space lacked unanimity on what their next major goal should be, leaning towards a docking station near the Earth that would have allowed an orbital assembly of ships for deep-space missions. Some loss of
momentum was probably natural at the pinnacle of success, for the same also happened in the U.S. space program after Apollo. What was not inevitable was the disappearance of administrative coordination. The chief designers who had once worked as a team on the R–7, plus a few powerful newcomers in the space business who came from the aircraft industry, now headed separate design bureaus each. Tensions developed among them, with a particularly damaging split between the two heavyweights, Korolev, the prime mover, and Glushko, the genius of rocket engines. Personal egos and a genuine clash over the important choice of propellants played their roles, yet ultimately, I think, it was the lack of political leadership at the very top that failed to rule over individual designers’ disagreements, allowing them too much leeway in pushing for separate, uncoordinated goals and fragmenting limited resources.

After three years of jockeying for patronage from various ministries and occasionally subverting each other’s projects, Soviet engineers noticed with alarm the steady progress of the American Saturn-Apollo program. In their eyes, NASA had learned how to apply the truly socialist management they lacked at the time: a concentration of resources and decision making into one major project with full state support. Although the Soviet military remained uninterested, at the end of 1964 Korolev managed to get the government to approve his proposal of a manned mission to the moon. Other major bureaus by Glushko and V.P. Chelomei did not cooperate in what they saw as a belated and underfunded attempt to cut corners and gamble on finding a cheap solution. They continued to pursue rival projects accomplishing, in particular, the first automatic landings on the moon, but this meant more a duplication of tasks than help for Korolev’s piloted lunar effort. The latter was still at an early stage when Korolev died in 1966, but the project continued under his successor. It was finally closed in 1974 after the failure of the first four launching tests of the new N–1 rocket, but primarily because the Soviet government had lost further interest after the spectacular success of Apollo.

Having been defeated in the race to put a man on the moon and with their own national pride now offended, Soviet space engineers finally regrouped and achieved a modicum of cooperation. In 1971 they combined several ongoing projects from rival design bureaus to launch the first orbital space station. Long-term flights on stations Salyut and Mir became the new chief priority for the Soviet space program, reunited under Glushko’s leadership, and opened up a new period of important successes for it. The strategic choice of space shuttles by the U.S. program did not appeal to Soviet engineers, who calculated that its main promise of providing more economical launchers than single-use vehicles would not be fulfilled. Political leaders ordered them to build a reusable ship anyway, because they feared that the American machine had an undeclared military purpose. The shuttle Buran flew a successful test in 1988 but was never used again. The orbital stations, however, restored the Soviet sense of leadership in space, and in the post-Cold War era, their ideas and accumulated experience have provided the basis for the major collaboration on the International Space Station and for the existing hopes regarding the possible next stage in human explorations of the cosmos.

One can expect more revelations and important corrections to the history of the Soviet space program, especially once the original documents finally become accessible. But it is hard to expect in the foreseeable future a study that would approach Siddiqi’s book in encyclopedic scope, level of detail, and the quality of information. This monumental accomplishment is even more astonishing in light of the fact that this work, which certainly qualifies for tenured professorship, belongs to an author who is still, technically, a Ph.D. candidate.

Alexei Kojevnikov, University of Georgia
SOCIAL SCIENCE, CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA, AND OTHER


Those who have argued that the study of civil-military relations is unimportant or conceptually irrelevant would be wise to take a careful look at Taylor’s outstanding study.  Regardless of whether one accepts Taylor’s methodology, he has done an excellent job of applying a new paradigm to the evolution of the civil-military relations from 1689 to 2000; something no one else in the field has attempted.  It is a book that specialists in the field will not be able to overlook.  It is also a must read for anyone working on Soviet/Russian politics or history.

First, some comments on what Taylor tried to do.  Taylor begins by providing an overview of the main models that have been used to analyze Russian/Soviet civil-military relations over the years.  He decides that four of them—which he calls the domestic structure, organizational structure, corporate interest, and organizational culture framework—were the most promising.  In the process he focuses on two aspects of the political process, what he calls its “opportunities and motives” (p. 37).  He then uses this framework to set-up a “two step method for explaining these interactions.”

In utilizing this two step model, Taylor argues that “domestic and organizational structure accounts help explain the *opportunities* that officers face, whereas corporate interests and organizational culture perspectives focus on officers' *motives*” (p. 29).  He provides an example, noting that insofar as opportunities were concerned, a weak state will be unable to stop military coups.  Conversely, when a state is strong the chances for military intervention will be lowest.

He then makes a very important statement in which he notes, “organizational culture can often inhibit military coups, or make them weak and likely to fail, even if the opportunities are relatively high ... and there are strong corporate interest motives for intervention” (p. 30).  Finally, he maintains that military power can be divided into three types of behavior—intervention, military arbitration, and no military involvement.

Taylor then turns to the meat of his book—his overview of Russian/Soviet military relations over the last four centuries.  This part is divided into seven sections—the Imperial Army, the Bolshevik Revolution, the interwar period, the post-World War period (World War II is not covered), the Gorbachev period, and the Yeltsin period.

In his conclusion, Taylor argues that the “Russian military is not a threat to democratization.”  When the military did become involved in politics, as in the Revolution and the collapse of the Soviet Union, it did so because it was dragged into politics by politicians—not because the generals were out to seize power.  Based on my own work on these two periods, as well as that of others’ research on the Soviet period, Taylor is right.  It may sound strange to Americans who concentrated on the ideological aspects of the Soviet period—for example, the effort to indoctrinate the military according to Communist ideology—to hear that the Soviet military was less political than the American military has been, but it is true.  Ideological indoctrination was one thing; actually getting involved in politics was another (and a forbidden action).  Zhukov’s action vis-à-vis Khrushchev was personal, not one by the armed forces; the use of regular military officers during the Revolution a necessity, but by no means aimed at a coup; and the important aspect of the military’s behavior during the collapse of the USSR appeared strange to some—because it refused to get involved.  The military helped save Yeltsin, and attacked the White House, but only because the generals were smart enough to understand that turning the clock back would have led to a civil war.

While historians will find the heart of the book interesting, it is the conclusion that anyone interested in the dynamics of this topic should read carefully.  Taylor provides an excellent discussion of his model and Russian/Soviet civil-military relations.  For example, he notes that
his study shows that “militaries with a relatively apolitical political culture will endure serious blows to their corporate interests without pulling a coup” (p. 328)—a very important statement because it flies in the face of many who have argued that if the military’s corporate interests are attacked, the chance of a coup goes up.

One of the aspects of this book that I found most impressive was Taylor’s use of sources. I have written on many of the areas Taylor covers and as a result, I think I know the field in both English and Russian well. As a result, I think I can say without fear of contradiction that Taylor’s use of sources was very impressive. I am not aware of a significant article or book omitted from his study. In that sense it was exhaustive—and his footnotes are an excellent source for anyone planning to work in this area.

In this reviewer’s opinion, Taylor’s conclusion that the Russian Army has never represented a major danger to the political structure is accurate. He assigns more weight to the Zhukov affair as a “military” action than I do, but that is a nit pick. This is an excellent, well-written, and well-argued book, although those who are not used to dealing with models and conceptual frameworks may find it hard going in places.

Dale Herspring, Kansas State University


Nikolai Ssorin-Chaikov is a promising anthropologist lecturing at Cambridge University. He has straddled multiple worlds by growing up in Russia, studying in Moscow, doing ethnographic fieldwork in Siberia, and attaining a Ph.D. from Stanford. As he explains in his conclusions, he finds “the genre of historical ethnography the most suitable for the organization of this narrative” (p. 205). Where his text provides glimpses of the rapport that he established over two long-term field trips (pp. 88–99, 93–95), he provides the reader with perceptive anthropological analysis as well as an historical perspective. It is symbolic that archival rather than contemporary field photographs adorn the monograph.

Archival and some personal field data are integrated here to refract the fragments of multiple failures influencing the lives of the reindeer-breeding Evenki of Katonga. The crux of these failures, Ssorin-Chaikov argues, is not the demise of a series of state policies or the impossibility of penetrating remote indigenous communities. Rather, the state has constantly but inconsistently permeated remote camps without bettering the lives of minorities whom state representatives were ostensibly meant to help, or at least control. A series of compounded failures from seventeenth-century tsarist fur tax times forward has meant that any return to some image of a traditional nomadic life is a mirage. Vladimir, one of Nikolai’s closest Evenki associates, explained in 1995: “We are always busy building something ... we always live in an unfinished building ... Who knows, however, what we build and where we live” (p. 207). One can only wish for more such voices, painful though they may be.

Vladimir’s construction metaphor is appropriate for Ssorin-Chaikov’s “constructivist” approach to anthropological theory and it partially affirms Bruce Grant’s 1996 monograph on the Siberian Nivkh, subtitled “a century of perestroikas.” Ssorin-Chaikov builds on Antonio Gramsci’s understanding of the constructed “naturalness” of power, Michel Foucault’s work on power and knowledge, Eric Hobsbawm’s on the invention of tradition and Akhil Gupta’s on corruption. The author concludes that the Soviet state’s “failures themselves constitute regimes of naming. They form an abbreviated speech that designates belonging, and that needs (in conversations with old Nikolai, the collective farm director, or members of the staff of the District Administration) no elaboration or theorizing but a simple nod of the head” (p. 204).
The reader wonders whether nods of the head became too easy in a community where people may not have welcomed penetrating questions and long discussions. More extensive explanation of methodology, and of a range of relationships, would make this ethnography more accessible for students.

The impossibility of return to idealized traditional nomadic states is embodied in the life story of a boarding school dropout nicknamed Churchill, who has turned into a paragon reindeer breeder in the discourse of some removed-from-camp Evenki national leaders. Ssorin-Chaikov ironically recalls the youth’s first blunders in the forest, when elders railed against his incompetence. While Churchill and others of his generation are hardly “children of nature,” Churchill’s skills and his atypical rejection of alcohol eventually reached a level of adaptation that at least one crusty cynical elder could appreciate. In an impoverished land of huge reindeer losses, intrusive multiethnic “newcomers,” racism, barter, lost chances, and numerous disconnects in family lives uneasily stretched between village and camp, Churchill’s attainments, however modest, can be read in multiple ways.

The most original passage in this text comes from a 1988 reindeer breeding moment that Ssorin-Chaikov relates to concepts of “a feel for the game,” merging Pierre Bourdieu, Lev Vygotskii, Lev Tolstoy, and Michel de Certeau. A proper herd is “held together only if the right tempo of movement is maintained” (p. 150). It arises “organically” and holds together, ideally, with mastery and minimal yelling. “Instruction is redundant” (p. 151), and riding reindeer, herding, or speaking the Evenki language should become “self-evident” (p. 153). Yelling in Russian, cursing, and herd splits are increasingly common, Ssorin-Chaikov suggests. But the “toddler” (p. 151) herders of the late Soviet period are the elders of today, especially given indigenous Siberian life expectancies. Are they still out there failing? Does each generation go through similar processes, or was this the last generation to do so? Is a socioeconomic underclass created if they do not have the consciousness of a perennial underclass, in Paul Willis’s sense?

Ssorin-Chaikov’s monograph should be placed in the context of a flock of recent ethnographies of Siberian peoples, including those of Gail Fondahl, Alexia Bloch, Petra Rethman, Patty Gray, Andrei Golovnev and Gail Ocherenko, David Anderson, and John Ziker. With very few exceptions, he does not engage his peers, and only minimally analyses or cites works by a few Western anthropologists who had access to Siberia in the Soviet period. Perceptions of relevance vary, but publications specifically on the Evenki could have been better assimilated into the text. Fuller discussion of the classic ethnographies on the Evenki by S. Shirokogoroff (including the missing The Psychomental Complex of the Tungus) and A. Anisimov also would have enabled more direct correlation with the current world views (cosmologies and perceived causations) that animate or debilitate reindeer breeding and hunting practice.

In sum, Ssorin-Chaikov’s work reminds us of the travesties of much Soviet “organization” of labor, the disintegration of many clan-based communities, and the futility of any romantic search for an ur-indigenousness, among the Evenki or anyone else.

**Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer, Georgetown University**


In this engaging work, Ned Walker argues that the institution of sovereignty “killed the USSR.” His point is that sovereignty, as embedded within all Soviet constitutions from 1922 on, provided a crucial mechanism for anti-union forces in the republics to challenge the center. In making this argument Walker takes for granted the emergence of nationalist demands; he asks why, given their existence, such demands played out in different ways in different places. Thus, all
of the union republics were recognized as independent states by the international community, whereas none of the ethnically defined autonomous republics were so recognized, even in cases—such as Chechnya and Abkhazia—where national-separatist demands were powerful. This pattern, Walker argues, is explained largely by the legal right of succession granted to union republics, but not to the autonomous.

Walker nicely delineates the ways in which sovereignty mattered: the power of the norm itself—the international legitimacy of sovereignty facilitated efforts by nationalists to resist the Soviet center; the constraints this imposed on Gorbachev’s choices; and the international community’s response to secessionist demands. In addition, he points to a purely domestic ideological factor: Lenin himself had explicitly (albeit for purely tactical reasons) endorsed the notion of sovereignty enshrined in the Soviet constitution, which gave it a sacrosanct quality that Gorbachev and other defenders of the union were unable to challenge in legitimate terms. Yet while the well-codified nature of sovereignty clearly mattered, so too did its lack of specificity in Soviet usage. Walker argues persuasively that the very ambiguity of sovereignty—that is, its applicability to various political, economic, and juridical issues—actually strengthened its effectiveness as a tool of resistance. Because it might imply anything from increased political autonomy to outright independence, sovereignty appealed to both radicals as well as moderates, and therefore provided a powerful slogan for mobilizing nationalist movements.

As finely argued as this thesis is, a few questions remain unresolved. Walker acknowledges the widespread agreement, on the part of Soviet authorities as well as Western governments, that redrawing internal boundaries “would have opened up a Pandora’s box of potentially violent border disputes.” However, this suggests a different, entirely pragmatic source of constraint on Gorbachev’s actions, quite apart from the efficacy of sovereignty as a norm. Ditto the fact that the autonomies had relatively little political leverage to use in pressing their demands. Not only did they generally lack resources and formal representation in central institutions, but their inclusion in the “union treaty” negotiating process was opposed by all republics—even those without potentially troublesome autonomies—because this would have diluted the bargaining strength of the republics themselves. These observations highlight a tension in Walker’s account between normative-legal and rational-consequentialist logic. To be sure, this is far from an insurmountable problem, but one wishes it had been confronted head-on.

One last semicritical remark concerns the use of source material. The author has done an impressive job of cobbling together information gleaned from newspaper accounts, memoirs, and Western secondary sources. Missing, however, is direct evidence of the views of principals involved in the secessionist movements, either in the form of personal interviews or memoirs. This is a pity, inasmuch as such evidence might have elucidated the discursive uses of sovereignty, and thereby offered a way of testing Walker’s hypotheses.

Still, this is a coherent and plausible argument, and one that draws deserved attention to a set of factors all too often neglected in studies of Soviet disintegration. Moreover, Walker’s account remains balanced throughout; while highlighting the underappreciated role played by normative-legal issues, he also rightly points to the importance of economic and ethnoterritorial factors in driving the federation apart. In sum, this fine little volume combines an enviable grasp of the issues with a lucid theoretical framework and a readable style. Advanced scholars and graduate students alike will benefit from a close reading.

Douglas W. Blum, Providence College

Dr. Josephine Andrews’s valuable contribution to Russian area studies and political science examines the Russian parliament under Boris Yeltsin and Ruslan Khasbulatov. Under Yeltsin the parliament was broadly split between two contending sides: democratic reformers and conservative Communists. A stable majority nevertheless declared sovereignty and established the office of Russian president. Under Khasbulatov, however, deputies confronted increasingly complicated political and economic issues, with far less success. Although still operating primarily under procedural rules designed for a one-party system, deputies were split into a shifting and growing number of factions, blocs, and coalitions. Dr. Andrews focuses on the deputies’ particularly ineffectual debates over a new constitution. She asks why, and how, the parliament changed so dramatically from a successful to a failing one.

Dr. Andrews’s answer is that, under Khasbulatov, the parliament was beset by the related problems of vote cycling and agenda setting. A parliamentary vote cycles when an unstable majority prefers option *b* to *a*, option *c* to *b*, but option *a* to *c*. Absent a strong party system to organize deputies, or a strong committee system to structure legislative choices, the parliament may cycle back to the originally discarded option. Whoever controls the sequence for discussing these options, therefore, can lead deputies to select the one that agenda setter most prefers.

After reading the first two chapters, one may be forgiven for believing that Andrews is about to argue her worst-case scenario: a cycling parliament in the hands of an ambitious agenda setter. According to Andrews, Khasbulatov was “an agenda setter ... in a legislature with no stable majority [who] could manipulate the agenda and so use the legislature to achieve his most-preferred outcome” (p. 11). Parliament, she says, “abandoned” its responsibilities to Khasbulatov (p. 7), becoming “the obedient dupe of an ambitious politician” (p. 106). These are strong statements, particularly when the problem seems to have been the making of opinionated but disorganized deputies, not obedient or irresponsible ones. But as her analysis unfolds, it turns out that cycling and agenda setting were successive problems, not simultaneous ones. After her technical analysis of roll call votes during debates on key chapters of the draft constitution (in which she contends that the most important example of cycling occurred), Andrews concludes that “there is no evidence of the harsh agenda control that would have been necessary for Khasbulatov to achieve his ideal political outcome” (p. 242). In fact, “Yeltsin continued to set the legislative agenda throughout the summer of 1992” because Khasbulatov had “not yet consolidated his power as agenda setter” (p. 241). When, according to Andrews, Khasbulatov was in control of the agenda, during debate on the Law of the Government in the following session, no vote cycling occurred (p. 214). Andrews’s argument is ultimately that vote cycling contributed to delay in working on a draft constitution to the point where conflict with Yeltsin’s *ad hoc* executive branch was inevitable.

The first half of the book is devoted to a good, nontechnical presentation of vote cycling and a detailed look at the Russian parliament’s political composition, institutional and leadership structures, and the issues of the day. Nonspecialists in the quantitative methods of political economy (such as this reviewer), will find the second half of the book a much tougher read. Effort is rewarded, however, although there is a considerable amount of technical jargon to wade through in the process.

There is some room for criticism of Andrews’s judgments of the political preferences of deputies and factions, judgments that are crucial to determining whether cycling occurred. The
relative paucity of interviews (fewer than six by my count of the footnotes) is surprising, especially considering that these are the apparent source for many of the author’s views on Yeltsin’s and Khasbulatov’s chairmanships. Likewise, Andrews’s core data on the positions taken by different factions rests mainly on published manifestos of one or two pages. And although her extensive work with the parliament’s stenographic records is obvious, the reader lacks the benefit of tables showing the vote tallies on which Andrews relies to conclude that majorities were “bare,” unstable, or otherwise exhibiting indicia suggesting possible vote cycling.

Compared to her book’s achievements, however, these are small criticisms. By focusing on the “poorly institutionalized environment” of the Russian parliament in the early 1990s, her book may well be said to succeed in its objective to “render ... moot” criticism that vote cycling is merely an interesting theoretical puzzle (p. 4).

Jeffrey Kahn, Washington, DC


China, India, and Russia are among the fastest-growing economies in the world. According to a much-noted study by Goldman Sachs, the investment bank, they may well be—together with Brazil—among the six largest economies in the world by 2050, joined by the United States and Japan. Such projections are always highly uncertain. They are based on simple growth theory, an assumption of policies conducive to growth, and a conviction that as economies grow richer, their currently undervalued currencies will grow stronger in real terms, boosting the U.S. dollar measure of their economies. But such calculations should all the same be taken seriously. They are the best that we can do, and whether in the end they prove accurate or not, a major shift in the relative size of economies in clearly underway. The rise of China has been the major economic change of the last three decades. Whether China or India will be the dominant change in the future remains debated among experts.

Given the scale of the stakes, any comparative analysis of these stories is welcome. Unfortunately, they have been very rare, basically because few area specialists are knowledgeable in all of these economies. Prem Shankar Jha, the Indian journalist and scholar, knows much about China, India, and Russia. But laudable as his project has been, its execution leaves much to be desired. Perhaps this is unavoidable given the challenges he has faced.

Part of the problem is conceptual. Though Jha is right to emphasize that the three countries have been undergoing change that is in some respects similar, he really never comes down to saying what the basic similarity is. He starts by emphasizing the Washington Consensus as the fundamental similarity, but his understanding of this approach seems superficial and flawed. “This is the time-honored IMF formula for curing a persistent disequilibrium in the balance of payments” (p. 2), he asserts, but surely the matter in China, India, and Russia has not been about balance of payments.

Jha concludes that an exit from the command economy (yes, in his view Nehruan India was a command economy) cannot mean that the state should be eliminated from production and consumption. On the contrary, “the market has to be created first and the state is the irreplaceable agent of its creation” (p. 5). But when he argues that India has been more successful than the others in transition because it already had a nationwide system of markets in place before the transition, he casts serious doubt on his own postulate of the similarity of the Indian case with those of China and Russia.

Part of the problem is empirical. Though Jha has a useful discussion on the inaccuracies of both Chinese and Indian statistics, he relies far too much on scattered pieces of data usually
taken from other journalists’ articles. The discussion ends in Summer 2000, and Jha has therefore been unable to comment on the fast Russian growth since. Overall, he is pessimistic on both China and Russia, much more upbeat about India. But the former two attempted to change too fast, he says, while India has been too slow.

Many readers will be disappointed by this book. But though unreliable, it deserves to be read with care. Jha has many highly sensible comments to make. Some of them concern the deterioration of the tax base in transition, though Jha again undermines his argument by seeming to imply that governments should aim at maximal tax revenue.

Pekka Sutela, Bank of Finland


The main argument of this short book is that the structure of attitudes toward economic reform changed significantly in the earlier part of the Yeltsin era. Of course, we know that support for economic reform collapsed in the 1990s. The book shows this collapse was most precipitous between 1993 and 1994. But its focus is on the structure rather than the level of support. In the late 1980s support for reform was tied to pervasive disillusion with the old regime and pervasive hopes of a better future under a different regime. The evidence seemed to indicate that those most pessimistic about the Soviet economy were most strongly in favor of reform. By contrast, personal expectations had a very weak (and statistically insignificant) impact—though again, those most pessimistic about their own personal situation were at least slightly more in favor of reform than others.

But as early as 1992 personal circumstances had come to have a much greater impact on attitudes toward reform—and the pessimists were now the ones least favorable to reform. Two things had happened: first, responsibility was now attributed to the new regime rather than the old, and second, individuals had begun to feel that reform was not likely to produce universal benefits even in the longer term.

Apart from a final chapter of short essays by four “opinion leaders”—which are printed without comment or analysis—the book is based on VCIOM archive surveys from 1989 to 2000. The authors claim this permits them to “offer insights on trends that are otherwise missing in the literature” (p. xiii). And they succeed in highlighting both trends and, more important, changes in patterns of support for reform during the Yeltsin years. On the other hand, VCIOM surveys add up to less than the sum of their parts. The archive is not a coherent research project. How could it be? So the questions change from survey to survey, making comparisons difficult and imprecise. And, as always with archive-based research, the authors’ analysis is limited by the scope and relevance of the questions that have been asked. There seem to be no questions that directly address respondents’ feelings of being “transition winners” or “transition losers” for example. Questions about the current or future “material situation of your family,” or even social background data on occupation or education, have to be pressed into service.

The text is full of insight—one of the authors is a Russian, living and working in Russia. The broad thesis is convincing, and the VCIOM data do broadly support it. The notion that “transition winners” might support the transition more than “transition losers” might seem self-evident, but the authors are able to cite some American literature which has argued that Russians were “sophisticated voters ... willing to continue to sustain losses in the hopes of securing long-term economic gains” (p. 48). If they were ever that sophisticated, this study
The Russian Review confirms that their patience ran out very quickly once they felt able to hold the new regime responsible for their plight.

But the authors also argue, more from gut instinct than data, that Russians have substituted a blind faith in a succession of new “leaders” (easily renewed with each change of leader) for their loss of faith in new institutions. In that sense nothing has changed since 1989.

William L. Miller, University of Glasgow, Scotland


This study addresses the implications of the collapse of communism for young people’s transition from youth to adulthood in contemporary Russia. In chapters 1 and 2 the authors employ theories of “risk society” (primarily Beck and Giddens but also Douglas and a number of Russian sociologists) and comparisons with Western Europe and America to illustrate the nature of the relationship between youth, state, and society in contemporary Russia. It is argued that, while the shift to a “risk society” in the Western world has had important implications for young people there, the transformation of Russia since the late 1980s has made it a qualitatively different—“unstable”—“risk society.” This argument is supported by the authors’ exposition of changes that have occurred in the socioeconomic and political spheres in Russia since the disintegration of the USSR, which have engendered myriad new risks for the Russian population. It is argued that whereas in stable societies risk may have a “latent” character due to the presence of effective integration mechanisms and a high level of social cohesion, the long-term instability experienced in Russia has disrupted core mechanisms of social reproduction.

In chapters 3–6 the authors illustrate the way in which young people’s lives have been affected by Russia’s transformation, drawing particular attention to the spheres of education and employment, and thus the transition from school to work. These chapters draw on recent Western literature as well as the results of four large-scale empirical surveys conducted by the authors in Russia over the period 1990–99 to illustrate a general trend for youth transitions to become more complex, but also a particular tendency in post-Soviet Russia for socialization agencies to hinder rather than facilitate transition. In the Soviet period, it is argued, the state had facilitated the smooth integration of youth into society. In contrast, today young people are free to choose the route they take in education and careers, but privatization of the education system and rising unemployment have severely constrained their opportunities to do so. Thus, in the West young people need to be reflexive in calculating the relative benefits of the many choices they now face, while young people in Russia appear, at best, to be confronted by a straightforward dichotomy of success or failure and, at worst, “doomed to failure and degradation” (p. 160).

The thrust of the authors’ argument is that the peculiar coincidence in Russia of the shift from pre- and simple modernity to reflexive modernization with the transition to post-socialist society has produced a set of peculiar risk-production factors that have undermined the very mechanisms of social reproduction in Russia. While this is the book’s claim to innovative analysis, it also produces a frustratingly functionalist set of arguments, which highlight the possible risk to society as a whole of the failure of young people to “integrate” and thus achieve their reproductive “mission.” While there is occasional reference to the “innovative” function of young people in society, there is little room for understanding young people’s responses to the risks of late modernity as the product of reflexivity. For example, readers are led to interpret the trend among young people to live together before (or instead of) marriage as a further factor
inducing social disintegration rather than as young people employing rational calculations about the meaning of marriage and the risk factors involved (not least the high chance of failure given current divorce rates). Moreover, such excessive functionalism appears frequently at odds with the thrust of the authors’ arguments about risk society and late modernity, leaving one with a strong impression of the separation of the original research design (survey-based) from the theoretical context in which the results are presented. In this way the book fails in its aim to seek out “concepts that would facilitate comparisons of the position and status of young people in various societies, East and West,” rather than simply to follow “the current sociological fashion” (p. 2).

A further disappointment is the poor standard of editing of the book. Not only are there numerous typographical, bibliographical, and transliteration errors but frequently the argument is unclear and empirical illustrations appear misplaced. Moreover, the authors slip into broad and unsubstantiated generalizations (for example, “in overall terms our findings suggest that one in five young Russian people have an identity crisis” [p. 184]) and adopt a normative tone that borders on the pathologization of young people (for example, “Most young Russians live for today and prefer not to think what tomorrow will bring ... they do not care about the consequences of their actions” [p. 78]). While the inability to do justice to the meanings attached to behavior might be forgiven, bearing in mind the quantitative nature of the data upon which the book draws, this essentializing tendency precludes a proper analysis of intragroup differentiation, which should have been a strength of the book.

Hilary Pilkington and J. Charles Walker, University of Birmingham, UK


Simon Clarke and his collaborators, in both Russia and the United Kingdom, have conducted, over more than a decade, a systematic ethnographic research on post-Soviet industrial relations since 1990. They have analyzed, among other issues, the labor market, property transformations, wages, particularities of the Russian enterprise, and managerial strategies, in the context of post-Soviet transformation.

The research methodology has two remarkable aspects. First, it is broadly comparative. By comparing a large number of enterprises which are located in various regions of Russia, Clarke and his team have mapped out the particularities of the post-Soviet change, also paying attention to the continuities with the Soviet era’s structures and forms of agency. Second, the researchers have used a broad range of sociological and anthropological methods such as analyzing official statistics, conducting large-scale surveys, and doing extended ethnographic fieldwork. The result has been the publication of a range of exceptionally original monographs on post-Soviet labor studies, and on the political economy in general. These monographs are indispensable for understanding post-Soviet change not only in Russia but also in the former east bloc economies and societies.

While the book under review is organically linked to other monographs, it also could be read as a self-contained work. The book describes and analyzes the strategies of survival which the working class and other dispossessed groups used under the dire conditions of the 1990s. Using the broad comparative method of research and combining various research techniques, Clarke identifies the following resources for survival: income from primary and secondary employment, social benefits, private transfers, and produce from garden plots. Clarke argues that while a given family may depend on a combination of these resources, the main resource
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for the majority of families remains primary wages. Besides this, social benefits, particularly pension, play a significant role. There is a considerable difference between urban and rural areas. While in the cities wages are the main source of income, in the countryside the main source of income is pensions.

The income from secondary employment and gardens plays a marginal role in the economy of urban households. Although regular supplementary employment often yields higher income than primary employment, only a small minority of households could have such employment on a regular basis. Most people cannot divide their time between primary and secondary employment. The reason is that, in spite of the dire poverty, the majority of people are not able to get involved in economic activities beyond their primary employment.

While the contribution of dachas to the income of urban households is insignificant, the poorest families do not own a dacha. However, dachas provide a sense of security and are definitely an important source of income for families who have no other resources. In the case of rural households dachas play a significant role. Many households produce their own staple foodstuffs in their dacha gardens. Moreover, the sale of agricultural produce is a very important source of cash (15 percent of income in the household).

Private transfers through reciprocal exchange provide a significant supplement to household income, and the majority of households are involved in one way or another in such transfers. However, these transfers occur on a regular basis mostly between parents and children. People are less inclined to help distant relatives or neighbors. The parents usually help their children until they retire, and then children help their parents after the parents' retirement. The pattern of private transfer between neighbors and friends is that they often occur between richer households, though the richer family may help marginally poorer ones.

Clarke emphasizes the role of social connections in all of these strategies of survival, particularly primary and secondary employment. While skills, education, and experience are important in employment, Clarke argues, those who have proper social connections are more likely to access better jobs. Paradoxically, the inequality emerging out of the post-Soviet change tends to weaken social connections, resulting in the decrease in reciprocal help.

To sum up, Clarke demonstrates that supplementary incomes from secondary employment, private transfers, and dachas cannot compensate for the drastic decline of wages and social benefits. Therefore only the provision of primary employment and the restoration of wages and pensions to previous levels can alleviate dire poverty in Russia.

Jakob Rigi, Cornell University