

The remaining chapters of the book deal with Russia's public diplomacy in specific (sub)regions: Southeast Asia; the Baltic Sea Region; Latin America; and the Middle East. The specific regions, selected vividly, portray the tendencies towards strategic decline in their main actors' relations with Russia. Additionally, this section sets out Moscow's awareness of the widening gap between Kremlin's strategic vision of world order and the semi-alternative vision/s of the varied national audiences in the (sub)regions discussed here.

The book is a useful addition to the library of current writings on "soft power," especially for adding public diplomacy of an ambitious state case study to the more theoretical scholarly literature.

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Jean-François Caron (ed.), *Kazakhstan and the Soviet Legacy: Between Continuity and Rupture*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

While the nature of the Soviet legacy has often been dealt with superficially, this multi-chapter book edited by Jean-François Caron is one of the first to offer a country-specific assessment of the subject-matter. The book examines practices and institutions in Kazakhstan involving the appropriation and recycling of what constituted the core of the Soviet ideology in the past. For instance, political culture, judicial practices, environmental policies, bureaucratic practices, and the political exploitation of youth continue to remain the same in Kazakhstan despite regime changes after the fall of the Soviet Union. The book investigates this issue from a diverse range of angles including those of political culture, foreign policy, environmental policy, judicial affairs, political economy, youth affairs, religious affairs, and urbanism in interrelation with nationalism.

The book starts with an introduction by Jean-François Caron arguing that the ongoing importance of the Soviet legacy in

Kazakhstan is not an empty claim and noting the connection here with the country's geographical proximity to the superpower Russia (1–2). Caron's introduction to the book suggests a fresh account of what can be expected of Kazakhstan in the future, yet pessimistically warns the readers that: "old habits die hard...and Kazakhstan...might very well be the quintessential example of such a proverb" (5).

Several chapters of the book deal with the theme of continuities in (Soviet) habits and behaviors. Aziz Burkhanov and Neil Collins trace the threads of Sovietness in the political culture in Kazakhstan. By political culture, they mean "deeply held beliefs and attitudes" (8) of the Kazakh people. In the chapter, they argue that since Soviet times centralization and bureaucratization have constituted the main pattern of governance in Kazakhstan (19). They theorize that the socialization of the new generation of politicians has contributed to the continuity of the old political culture (22). This hypothesis chimes with Dina Sharipova's conclusion in her chapter on youth organizations, where she sees similarities between the Soviet Komsomol and today's Kazakh youth organizations. In this regard, she asserts, "The [post-independence] creation of the youth organizations—*Zhas Otan*, *Zhas Ulan*, and *Zhas Kyran*—is a good example of this statist model in Kazakhstan as they are aiming at promoting patriotism and, most importantly, providing support to the policies of the country's president" (142). She borrows the concept of "ideological recycling" from Kendall and Koster (2007) to argue that the aforementioned Kazakh youth organizations are the re-appropriated versions of the Soviet Komsomol reintroduced by the contemporary ruling elites in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan (141). She calls this phenomenon "Soviet in shape and Kazakhstani in content" (149).

In their chapter, Barbara Junisbai and Azamat Junisbai discuss the issue of generational differences in political and economic attitudes. They argue that the Nazarbayev generation (those under the age of 30) in contrast to the Soviet-educated generations are more accepting of inequalities, nepotism, and the status quo (103). Addressing "the problem of the creation of new political attitudes" (104), that is, as elaborated by Sidney Verba in 1965, the problem of how to "create citizens out of each new generation," they argue that

in Kazakhstan, the new generation has not been directly exposed to the Soviet ideology and is distinct from the Soviet generation, despite the fact that the new generation is not democratic in their attitudes (132–33). They argue that as the youth are better off now, they support the state policies and institutions. At the same time, however, the Soviet generation is still nostalgic about the Soviet time when the welfare state was a part of their reality (113).

Charles J. Sullivan's chapter "End of an Era?" discusses Kazakhstan's options regarding relations with Russia. While Sullivan admits the risky nature of distancing from Russia by referring to the examples of Ukraine and Georgia, he argues that Kazakhstan should nevertheless promote a pro-Western direction in its foreign and economic policies (32, 40). He argues that the only way to check Russia's influence is by adopting a policy of proactive multi-vectorism (37). He calls this an "attractive" albeit "high-risk project" (47). He argues that Kazakhstan missed the opportunity to play the constructive negotiator on the issues of Georgia, Ukraine, and Syria; this offered a chance to show the world that Kazakhstan is a sovereign state (42).

In her contribution, Beatrice Penati attempts to highlight the problematic nature of the Soviet policy-making system and its consequences for today's Kazakhstan (69). According to Penati, Kazakhstan continues to suffer from the ongoing consequences of Soviet environmental policies (51, 52). She gives examples of the Soviets' heavy investments in cotton and rice production and the atomic test in Semipalatinsk as practices that have caused water pollution and have had direct negative effects on the public health of the Kazakhs (53–56). She also mentions "the quick-pace heavy industrialization" as another example of the Soviet legacy that ignores the problem of air pollution for the sake of economic growth (64).

The chapter by Alexei Trochev and Gavin Slade chapter offers a concrete example of the Soviet legacy by taking the readers through the Kazakh justice system. They classify the Soviet legacy into institutional and behavioral elements (75). They argue that new institutions are in fact decorated fragments of the old system, and that the attitudes, values, and behaviors of people in these

institutions have not changed much despite attempts at reform. For instance, they argue that judicial institutions including police, intelligence, and so forth have remained the same. Also, the practice of torture to extract confession, so-called “telephone justice,” (“a Soviet-era practice of telephoning police chiefs, prosecutors and judges with orders or requests of making favorable legal decisions”), and corruption continue to resist reform. Finally, judges are still living in the past with old norms and ways of thinking (77–82). Similarly, H el ene Thibault’s chapter on the management of religious affairs suggests that while in the Soviet time, all religious institutions were deprived of access to power, in post-Soviet Kazakhstan regardless of the state’s secular nature, it still has a fearful approach towards Islam (155, 158, 166). Despite the fact that Islam is allowed to be practiced more than before, it is highly nationalized and managed by the secular principle of the state (162). Kazakh secularism, according to Thibault, plays an assertive managerial role when it comes to religion; the state does not remain neutral, but imposes limitations on freedom of religion (168). Finally, as in Soviet times, religious groups are used to support and propagate for the state (173).

In the last chapter, Jean-Fran ois Caron writes about the official civic Kazakhstani discourse versus unofficial “Kazakhization” (that is, the privileging of an ethnic concept of the nation). While acknowledging the rational policies of the Kazakh leadership regarding the constitutional protection of minorities from vengeful discriminatory treatment, the author argues, via a case study of urban planning in Astana, that in reality, it is Kazakhization that leads (182, 185). Caron uses the term Kazakhization to refer to “the desire to implement gradually and in a subtle manner ‘the dominance of ethnic Kazakhs in the economic, cultural, educational and political spheres of independent Kazakhstan’” (182). The author argues that under this implicit strategy the population of Kazakhs increased drastically in the North after independence (187). Caron bases his argument on the study of urban planning in Astana. He cites the replacement of old street names with the Kazakh names, the positioning of monuments of Kazakh cult figures in the city, and the celebration of the Kazakh

khanate as examples of banal nationalism that normalize the rise of Kazakh nationalism. According to Caron, such practices cost the exclusion of Russians in contradiction to the constitutional guarantees (187, 191, 199, 201).

To conclude, this book provides several concrete examples of the Soviet legacy and helps us understand why it is still relevant to talk about the Soviet past casting a shadow on the present of the ex-Soviet republics. On the other hand, the book sheds light on the discontinuities, as manifested in the nationalization of urban spaces and Kazakhization. The book will appeal to a wide range of readers including those with a general interest in Central Asian politics. The book is rich on context; it offers less when it comes to theoretical discussions about nation-state and state-building. In places, it briefly mentions theories of banal nationalism, ideological recycling, state-building, reformation, and multi-vectorism. Definitions of these concepts would have been welcome. Overall, however, the book will be a relevant read for those interested in studying Soviet policies and governance in post-Soviet states.

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Jelena Subotić, *Yellow Star, Red Star: Holocaust Remembrance After Communism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019.

In *Yellow Star, Red Star*, Jelena Subotić examines the appropriation of Holocaust memory as a tool for managing national identities in Eastern Europe, both during and after the communist era. In particular, the monograph focuses on how Serbia, Croatia, and Lithuania, and to some extent other states, intervened in Holocaust remembrance to resolve their own contemporary “ontological insecurities,” which have stemmed from changing national identities, the states’ international status, and their relationships with other international actors. Their acts of memory appropriation, according to Subotić, involve “narcissistic identification”—turning