

reader. He offers an in-depth exploration of internal philosophical debates on Russia's national myths, aspirations, and public perceptions, which are often inaccessible to the non-Russian speaking audience. This book would be an excellent guide for anyone who wishes to get a better and more nuanced understanding of Russia for academic, professional, or personal purposes.

AIJAN SHARSHENOVA
OSCE Academy, Bishkek

Anna A. Velikaya and Greg Simons (eds.), *Russia's Public Diplomacy: Evolution and Practice*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.

After Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014 (and Georgia in 2008), the realities of the new world (dis)order triggered a global debate on "hybrid warfare," with its key mechanisms and instruments of "hard power" and "soft power" (re)balancing into "smart power" integrity. Experts and analysts have focused in particular (and have tended to over-estimate the importance of) the Kremlin's so-called "Gerasimov Doctrine." Meanwhile, public diplomacy, which has become a quite significant geostrategic issue for Russia as well, has generally not received the serious attention that it deserves.

This book not only contributes to the debates on "soft power," but also goes some way towards filling the gap in the scholarship on "smart power." The contributors raise several important issues that merit ongoing consideration. Those issues are not only conceptual but, first and foremost, empirical.

The book's contributors, who come from a range of different countries and fields, analyze the history and practice of Russia's public diplomacy, with the aim of portraying the achievements, struggles, frustrations, and highlights of the crucial "soft power" mechanism. They also try to evaluate how the public diplomacy elements of "smart power" might be used effectively in order to support the Kremlin's "geostrategy of revenge" policies, both internally and externally.

Olga Lebedeva's chapter, "Russian Public Diplomacy: Historical Aspects" offers an initial reference guide to the evolution of public opinion influences and manipulations in Russia. The chapter is based on in-depth knowledge of the historical facts, debates, and trends in the subject area. The chapter, which conveys along the way a sense of nostalgia on the part of the author, is an optimal way to start the analysis of the new public diplomacy with its striking departure from the classical foreign policy rituals of confidential interactions that has become more and more widely recognized and enacted by Russia's "soft power" actors.

Chapters on nation branding, development diplomacy, and international cooperation set out the framework for Russian cultural policy initiatives such as the "Russian World" mega-project. Such initiatives are aimed at strengthening Russian statecraft and diplomacy so as to face new structural challenges such as the "clash of civilizations" (Huntington), and using culture and heritage so as to challenge anti-Russian sentiments with greater confidence.

Natalia Tsvetkova's chapter on Russian digital diplomacy reflects on the speed of change that digital communication technologies are leading to in foreign policy and world politics. But enabling true innovation in a highly bureaucratic and conservative policy-making system like Russia's seems to remain a real challenge for Russian public diplomacy. The book also includes related chapters on Russian soft power policies in the spheres of higher education and science diplomacy.

Elena Stetsko's chapter on the role of civil society in Russian public diplomacy explores the new dynamics, developments, trends, and theories in Russian foreign policy, where (at least formally) "non-state" actors play quite an active role. Stetsko also examines how social technologies are allowing for more pressure to be put on the government by public opinion.

Maria Chepurina *et al.* present an institutional framework, exploring Russian public diplomacy in international organizations.

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.

OLEKSII POLTORAKOV

Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv

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