

to compare forcible memory change (like the de-Nazification of Germany) to the voluntary decision of the regime itself, as was the case in the Soviet Union.

Overall, this is an important book that provides the reader with a better understanding of the unfinished de-Stalinization of Russia, its successes and natural limits, and gives us a new base for understanding the current turns in Russia's historical politics.

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Violeta Davoliūtė, *The Making and Breaking of Soviet Lithuania: Memory and Modernity in the Wake of War*. London and New York: Routledge, 2013. 212 pp.

This book offers a fresh perspective on the Soviet period of Lithuania's history. The historical narrative that Davoliūtė masterfully creates in the book goes beyond the ideas of genocide and oppression of the Lithuanian people and Lithuanian nation during the Soviet period. The book raises the issue of the agency of Lithuanian elites and local leaders of the Communist Party as well as posing the question of their responsibility for what occurred in Lithuania during the Soviet period. Therefore, Davoliūtė's research raises very sensitive issues for Lithuanian nation building.

The structure of the book is determined by the periodization of Lithuanian as well as Soviet history. Eight chapters cover the interwar period when independent Lithuania was established; World War II and its consequences for the changes in the ethnic structure of Vilnius; late Stalinism and Khrushchev's Thaw as the time of the rise of Lithuanian modernity; the Brezhnev era in the late 1960s–1970s, conceptualized as “the rustic turn” in Lithuanian culture; and, finally, the 1980s as the time of *perestroika* and *glasnost'* in Soviet history and of the national and political awakening of the Lithuanian people. Regarding each of these periods, Davoliūtė manages to

show the continuity of Lithuanian history. By doing this, she challenges those historians who tend to consider the history of Soviet Lithuania “as an abyss, as an abnormal gap between two periods of normality” (p. 176). In this sense, the book takes an important step towards acknowledging and making sense of the experience of the majority of the Lithuanian people who tried to live their lives under the given political circumstances.

The book is nevertheless dedicated mostly to the experience of the Lithuanian intelligentsia whose representatives became the active part of the national renaissance during late socialism. One of the aims which Davoliūtė successfully achieves in her book is to demonstrate how the *Sjūdis* movement that has become the symbol of the Lithuanian national revival and resistance was formed within—and not outside of or in opposition to—the Soviet system. As the author’s argument goes, the autonomy of the cultural elite after de-Stalinization, as well as overlaps between national and Soviet interests in cultural policy, laid a foundation for the development of the modern national culture during the Soviet period. It was this development, which initially had no clear political mission, that made the Lithuanian national resistance possible during the later periods of Soviet history.

A particularly important discussion in the book is concentrated around the history of Vilnius and Lithuanization of the city after World War II. The book makes it clear how this mostly Polish and Jewish city became the center of the Lithuanian national idea and how “the theme of Vilnius as the ancient cradle of Lithuanian identity was blended seamlessly into the communist narrative of reconstruction and the creation of new identities” (p. 67). Hence the book contributes significantly to the literature on the history of Vilnius and the “Vilnius question” as one of the cornerstones of Lithuanian history.

While this is primarily an historical study, it also has a strong interdisciplinary influence. Davoliūtė uses a number of theories from cultural studies and sociology. Her sociological explanation of the behavior of Lithuanian intellectual elites seems particularly well justified and appealing. As Davoliūtė maintains, the loyalty to the

Soviet regime which the post-war Lithuanian intelligentsia demonstrated was connected to the fact that, for this generation, Soviet rule was closely associated with urbanization and upward mobility. Although the negative consequences of rapid urbanization and modernization that Lithuania experienced are also scrutinized in the book, the author also claims that the career path taken by the famous Lithuanian poet Justinas Marcinkevičius and his peers, born in villages in the 1930s, would have been hardly imaginable had they come of age during the interwar period or World War II. Again, a whole complex of factors such as the post-war anti-Soviet insurgency in the rural areas of Lithuania, the loss of Lithuanian, Polish, and Jewish cultural elites in the course of pre-war deportations, Holocaust and post-war resettlement, and the educational promotion of the peasantry during late Stalinism created the space for the birth of a new Lithuania elite with a local (village) background and cosmopolitan aspirations. Having been cut off from the bonds of traditional family and sharing the same experience of “modern loneliness” (p. 85), these people formed a strong sense of a solid community that was participating “in a great historical project” (p. 85) under Soviet supervision.

However, the author also describes the sense of disillusionment in the modernity project that the Lithuanian intelligentsia experienced in the middle 1960s. In Chapter 6, which represents a culminating moment of the book, Davoliūtė makes a strong argument about the famous visit of Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir in 1965 as a turning point for Lithuanian intellectuals whose international ambitions were crushed by Sartre’s disinterest in the literature and culture produced in the Lithuanian language. This led to a significant shift in the development of Lithuanian culture which from that point “instead of looking forward to the future life in modern city, [...] turned backward, and began a profound reflection on what was being lost during the transition” (p. 120).

As Davoliūtė argues, the disappointment in modernity was not a peculiarly Lithuanian phenomenon but was also observed throughout the USSR in general. Here the author draws parallels between Lithuanian and Russian literature where village prose started developing approximately in the same period, in the late 1960s. This

is only one example of how the book puts Lithuanian Soviet history in a transnational perspective, comparing Lithuanian developments to those of other Soviet republics and states of the Communist bloc. At this point, however, the author fails to acknowledge some important literature such as, for instance, Alexei Yurchak's famous book *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More*. It seems to this reviewer that by employing Yurchak's perspective in the introductory part of the book, Davoliūtė's study could have gained from the more sophisticated discussion about agency/structure as the modes of approaching the Soviet history. This omission, however, does not undermine the high quality of Davoliūtė's book and its significant importance for the understanding of the history of Lithuania (and that of other Soviet republics) during the Soviet period.

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Olga Malinova, *Aktual'noe proshloe: Simvolicheskaiia politika vlastvuiushchei elity i dilemmy rossiiskoi identichnosti*. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2015. 207 pp.

Our lives are largely dependent upon what we tend to forget and what we still remember. Images and symbols alluding to different events in the present and past also play significant roles in the social construction of people's identities. This new book by the prominent Russian scholar Olga Malinova deals with how Russia's ruling elites used its national past in the changing ideological contexts from the rule of Boris Yeltsin up to the second presidency of Vladimir Putin (1991–2014). Olga Malinova is currently a chief research fellow of the Institute of Scientific Information for Social Sciences (Russian Academy of Sciences), professor at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, and professor at the National Research University Higher School of Economics. She is also a former (2008–2010) president of the Russian Political Science Association and a re-