

had more to gain under capitalism than under socialism. Capitalism seemed to offer all the answers to their economic frustrations and sense of vulnerability. The destruction of socialism and turn toward capitalism meant that they could “own the means of production, not just manage them. They would be able to legitimately accumulate personal wealth. They could assure their children’s future, not just through contacts and influence, but through the direct transfer of wealth” (p. 114). Members of the party-state elite increasingly came to this conclusion, and when, around 1990, Gorbachev lost the support of this critical group, the USSR’s demise was virtually assured. Communists had become advocates for capitalism and began to argue that Soviet state socialism could not be salvaged.

Kotz and Weir’s work debunks several dominant myths about the USSR’s end. They stress that the collapse of the USSR resulted not from a lack of economic viability, but from a conscious decision by members of the elite to abandon socialism. The authors also do not see popular unrest from below as the key to the Soviet Union’s collapse. National independence movements, and political and religious dissent outside the powerful party-state elite played some small role in the USSR’s fall, but did not provide the main impetus for the collapse. Kotz and Weir assert that without the backing of the party-state elite these groups would have remained largely mute and marginalized. This study also challenges the notion that the party itself was filled with reactionaries and obstructionists who clung to state socialism with all their might. While some, especially older, party members rejected reform efforts, Kotz and Weir have identified an important, powerful stratum of the party that turned its back on reform and actively sought the destruction of the Soviet system. Ultimately, the authors stress the importance of not viewing the collapse of the USSR as evidence that socialism itself is unworkable and that capitalism offers the only possible form of economic organization.

The book is well written, engaging, and an excellent choice for undergraduate courses that explore the end of Soviet rule from the perspective of economics, politics, or history. Kotz and Weir’s work raises some interesting questions for those on the left and will challenge students to re-examine their assumptions about the so-called New World Order. This study deserves to find a broad audience and should inspire much debate.

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Graham Smith, Vivien Law, Andrew Wilson, Annette Bohr and Edward Allworth, *Nation-Building in the Post-Soviet Borderlands: The Politics of National Identities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 283 pp. + index.

In any postcolonial context, the leaders of a newly independent state have a number of challenges, including the need to create a national identity that clearly distinguishes the current nation from its colonial past. In the post-Soviet context, the nation-building process within each newly independent state is complicated by the existence of multiple ethnic groups, including the Russians, who are now being reconstructed in the non-

Russian borderlands as the “colonizing” Other. *Nation-Building in the Post-Soviet Borderlands* examines the ways in which state actors are creating and manipulating national identities by promoting new versions of national history, by reinventing boundaries between their nation and others, and by legislating new language policies. The book also examines the impact of nation-building processes on ethnic minorities living in each state.

One of the greatest strengths of this book is the inclusion of case material from different regions. Four geographical regions (Baltics, Ukraine and Belarus, Transcaucasia, and Central Asia) are explored in depth by different regional specialists, all affiliated with Sidney Sussex College of Cambridge University. Most chapters are based exclusively on published materials, rather than fieldwork data. Nevertheless, the book is exceptionally well researched, with the extensive use of native and English-language materials. By providing substantive accounts of several different regions, readers can understand the uniqueness of each post-Soviet state.

For example, in the Baltic states of Estonia and Latvia, rigorous citizenship laws, requiring knowledge of the titular language, serve to exclude Russian populations from full citizenship, while in Ukraine and Belarussia significant populations of Ukrainians and Belarussians, who speak Russian as their first language and identify with Russian culture, make it difficult for nationalizing state actors to establish strong national identities. Though the book is comparative in scope, the focus is on the former union republics. Consequently, there is little discussion of the nation-building processes among ethnic groups that did not achieve independence, with the exception of the Abkhazians and the Ossetians, who are discussed briefly in Chapter Three.

Unlike many other volumes with multiple authors, this book does not suffer from a lack of coherence. The introductory chapter presents a clear theoretical framework for understanding post-Soviet nation building in various settings, and this theoretical framework is evident in each of the subsequent chapters. Borrowing Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of habitus, the authors argue that the nation-building process in borderland states is shaped by the ways in which social and political actors perceive their past, present and future in terms of colonialism and postcolonialism. In other words, the politicians and intellectuals who are actively engaged in the nation-building process are influenced by various ideas about their nation’s relationship with the Soviet empire and the Russian state. These ideas include the assumption that Soviet rule had a negative impact on national identities, the view of today’s Russian minority populations as “colonizers” and “occupiers,” and the fear that the post-Soviet Russian state harbors an expansionist vision of the future. In reaction to these ideas about the postcolonial condition, the nation-building process consists of three components: the removal of Soviet symbols and political institutions, the reinvention of national boundaries, and the standardization of the national culture and language. As this process ensues, the relationship between nationalizing regimes and an ethnic minority group varies depending on the extent to which the group constitutes a regionalized community and whether or not the group associates with a patron state.

After the introduction, the book is organized into three sections. Part One examines how national histories and national myths are being rewritten and contested in the post-Soviet states. For example, new versions of Ukrainian history, which emphasize

Ukraine's historical ties to Europe not Russia, compete with the russophile version of Ukrainian history, which stresses the common origins of all Slavic peoples. In Transcaucasia, homeland myths and ethnogenetic myths are employed by states and minority groups as they contend for certain territories. And, in Central Asia, post-Soviet historians are still unable to break from the Soviet tradition of writing monoethnic histories for a past with supranational identities.

In Part Two, the authors describe the ways in which nationalizing policies create conditions where the titular ethnic groups are included and minority ethnic groups are excluded. The chapter on the Baltics explores the rationale for strict citizenship laws in Estonia and Latvia, and the Russian reaction to these laws. Rather than organizing in protest, most Russians are opting to assimilate, by encouraging their children to become bilingual. The chapter on Ukraine emphasizes that the significant population of russo-phone Ukrainians makes it difficult for the nationalizing state to establish a firm boundary between Russian and Ukrainian identities. And, finally, the chapter on Central Asia describes the nation-building process as "nationalization by stealth," where national constitutions guarantee some rights to minority languages and cultures, yet covert nationalization policies involve the displacement of ethnic minority groups from public sector employment.

Part Three focuses on the role of language politics in the nation-building process. Chapter Eight, for example, argues that myths about language serve as an important part of group identity formation in post-Soviet Georgia. Myths about the Georgian language, which stress its superiority, uniqueness and independence, serve as a substitute for a disturbing ethnohistory characterized by conquest and conflict. And, finally, Chapter Nine examines compares the 1989 and 1995 language laws of Uzbekistan, and their impact on non-Uzbek populations. Although the Russians resent the new language laws, they possess neither the political opportunity to protest nor the desire to assimilate to what they view as an inferior national culture. Thus, most Russians are opting to migrate or to adapt without assimilation. Meanwhile, the Tajik population is much less affected by the language laws, due their previous experience as a minority population and their knowledge of Uzbek as a second language.

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Jüri Viikberg, ed., *Eesti Rahvaste Raamat: Rahvusvähemused—rühmad ja killud (The Book of Estonian Nationalities: National Minorities and Ethnic Groups—From the Largest to the Tiniest)*. Tallinn: Eesti Entsüklopeediakirjastus, 1999, 598 pp.

The social sciences in Estonia inherited all the ills characteristic of Eastern Europe, that is, underdeveloped methodology and the institutionally predominant position of ideology. Regretfully, those shortcomings seem hard to die even after eight years of independence.

It should be considered a brave undertaking to arrange over 60 people with different academic backgrounds to write on a given topic. *The Book of Estonian Nationalities* is