

produced fertile ground for rebellion against behavioral strictures. More broadly, Fürst points out that hippies were emblematic of people's growing disillusionment in the late Soviet period.

While most Soviet hippies started by listening to the Beatles and reading about American hippies, their lives and social networks soon evolved in response to the repressive habitat in which they resided. Following mass arrests during a 1971 demonstration in Moscow, the hippie movement was no longer populated by university students but rather by hardcore hippies. These "professional hippies," as Fürst calls them, were "people who were prepared to sacrifice the advantages of a stable Soviet life for their own little corners of freedom and fun" (180). They took menial jobs, experimented with drugs, and traveled to hippie havens in other Soviet republics. Some features of Soviet life, such as guaranteed employment and the low cost of food, actually facilitated hippies' lifestyles in many ways.

On the surface, Soviet hippies looked much like their counterparts in the west. But Fürst argues that the very rigidity of the Soviet system ensured a longevity to the Soviet hippie community that was impossible to sustain in the liberal west. Indeed, Fürst concludes that hippies and the Soviet establishment had a hostile yet symbiotic relationship. She writes: "After the regime decided in the early 1970s to persecute the domestic hippie community, the two remained in a destructive, but ultimately stable embrace" (182). While counterintuitive, her conclusion is proven by the fact that Soviet hippiedom's demise was precipitated not by KGB repression but rather by its disappearance, and the arrival of capitalism in the 1990s. A counterculture based on rebellion against the Soviet system could not continue without its foil.

Fürst's book represents an impressive scholarly accomplishment. The oral history interviews she conducted allow her both to analyze and to preserve hippies' life stories, which otherwise might have been lost. Moreover, her research illustrates the unconventionality of hippie counterculture that existed beneath the façade of a tightly controlled Soviet society. While some may object that Fürst goes too far by characterizing late Soviet socialism as "in effect a *pluralistic* society" (11), her work clearly demonstrates that this society was much more diverse than is generally assumed. In addition, one cannot help but admire the hippies Fürst describes, given that—in the face of enormous repression—they spurned social conformity to pursue their own lifestyles and their own freedom. Fürst celebrates them as "beacons of 'otherness'—an exciting, colourful, engaging, rebellious, fun-loving, individual, tolerant, curious, creative otherness" (442). As the metaphor in the book's title indicates, Soviet hippies were like flowers that somehow pushed through cracks in the Soviet concrete and bloomed.

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***Racism in Modern Russia: From the Romanovs to Putin.*** By Eugene M. Avrutin. London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. 140pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Maps. \$17.95, paper; \$59.57, hard bound.  
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The story of racism in any society is complex. In the case of Eugene Avrutin's intention to provide some context for understanding it in Russia over the last four-plus centuries—"Romanovs to Putin"—the task is a prodigious one. But, as Avrutin

states: “I have no intention of providing a seamless narrative... I raise exploratory questions about the meanings and functions of race. What did racial identifications and categories mean in Russia? What was the relationship between race, whiteness and geography? How did Russia fit into the global dimensions of the color line? When and why did skin color emerge as an important element... in identity formation?” (8). Starting with the last two Romanovs (Alexander III and Nicholas II), Avrutin stretches 150 years through the Soviet era and up to Vladimir Putin’s Russia in 2017.

Racism, on a global scale, is more malleable than the United States’ black-white dynamic. It is shaped around real and perceived differences in religion, geography, language, culture, and social class. Color is only one feature. Furthermore, “otherness” has been used by ruling elites to redirect the attentions, of those they control, from their discontents with the powers-that-be to focus on scapegoats.

Since Russia did not participate in the slave trade or in the “scramble for Africa,” conventional thinking was that she was late to develop the biologically-based perceptions seen in other countries (4). But, as Avrutin observes in Chapter 1, “racial thinking existed long before the vocabulary came into being” (9). Russia had already developed her own justifications for discriminating against others. And thanks to negative popular culture imagery, not only the scientists but ordinary people believed that perceived differences and deficiencies were fixed (20). Russian serfs, Poles, Germans, and Jews to the west were targeted, as were the Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese to the east. Some could blend into the ethnic Russian population over time; others, such as the Jews and Asians, could not.

Chapter 2 explores the ways the tsars controlled people deemed a threat to the society. The Jews were crowded into certain city districts or restricted to the Pale of Settlement region (24). While antisemitic violence was left unchecked. Over 3000 people died in pogroms in the early 1900s (33). The Chinese and Koreans were limited in numbers (34), but labor shortages were such that mine owners and railroad builders circumvented the laws (41), while public concern erupted in violence and harassment (46).

Chapter 3 considers the contradictions of racism, geo-politics, and the search for allies. The new “Soviet” Russia of the 1920s and 30s attracted American Blacks. Severely denigrated at home, these visitors embraced the Soviets’ call for internationalism and building a new, non-racial society (55). Meanwhile Jews were being persecuted for “disloyalty” (70). Following World War II, the Soviet Cold War-era outreach to students from Africa and other parts of the world attracted thousands eager to rebuild their societies. “By 1989, 36,000 students from sub-Saharan Africa, and 39,600 students from Latin America” benefited from professional and technical training (80). But they and increasing numbers of people from the country’s southern and eastern provincial areas, appearing in the large urban centers, provoked concern. “Non-Slavic migrants from the peripheries [were seen as] racial outsiders. Anyone who looked or spoke differently could be labeled as ‘black’” (96). “Blackness—a marker of foreignness and exoticism, if not alienation—increasingly occupied a conspicuous place in Soviet society” (82). As blackness denoted the “other,” whiteness marked “belonging.” By the collapse of the USSR, “People who identified themselves as ‘Russian’ became increasingly conscious of the outsized role skin color played in elevating their place” (83).

Chapter 4 considers how this sense of “whiteness” fanned conflicts in post-Soviet Russia. The social and legal checks and balances of the Soviet era were gone. Poverty and mortality rates soared. Social and formal media warned that the ethnic Russia population was under threat and their cultural ethos could disappear (86) because of these “blacks.” From 2000 to 2017, “458 people died and thousands were attacked

by extremists (87). “The slogan ‘white power’ in Russia... [was] the rallying cry” (88). Avrutin notes, while polls show that support for extremist groups is relatively low, xenophobia remains high (103), and he cautions, “an important shift took place in how ethnic Russians viewed themselves and the world around them... [now through] the prism of race and whiteness (107).”

This slim volume raises useful questions. But, it is best included alongside more detailed explorations of racism in Russia.

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***Islamic Leadership and the State in Eurasia.*** By Galina M. Yemelianova. London: Anthem Press, 2022. xx, 286 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Figures. \$125.00, hard bound.  
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Galina M. Yemelianova's *Islamic Leadership and the State in Eurasia* is nothing if not ambitious: it is a synthetic study of Islam in Eurasia (and far beyond Eurasia, in many sections) from the seventh century to the present. The book is divided into three chronological parts: the first covering history from the rise of Islam to the Russian conquests; the second detailing the Soviet period; and the final and longest section devoted to contemporary religion and politics, which is the author's area of specialization. Refreshingly, Yemelianova not only integrates Central Asia and European Russia into a single narrative, but also highlights the minority Muslim communities in Ukraine, Lithuania, and Belarus, which have received less attention, despite roots stretching back into the medieval period.

The arguments meant to unify the book's wide-ranging geographical and chronological coverage are broad and largely reflect the existing scholarly consensus: Islamic authority figures have consistently sought to protect their influence and independence from outside powers to “safeguard Islam” (1). Yemelianova views Sovietization as the single most transformative moment for understanding Islam in Eurasia today, emphasizing that Soviet institutions continue to define post-Soviet regimes, contested by globalized, Salafi Islam (2–3).

Beyond these sweeping contentions, much of the content is framed as “pure narrative,” leaving it to the reader to infer arguments based on details chosen for inclusion. For instance, immediately after beginning a fairly standard account of the first Muslim community, Yemelianova points out that ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (d. 2019) claimed descent from the Quraysh tribe (12). The implication seems to be that something indelible connects a Middle Eastern terrorist group with Eurasian Islamist groups and that the early history of Muhammad and his community is essential context for both.

There are factual errors, some of which similarly reveal subtextual arguments. For instance, Maturidi theology is characterized, repeatedly, as a synthesis between “old Persian dualistic religions, local customary norms and beliefs and Ḥanafism” (18, 57–58). There is a robust, exciting literature about syncretism between pre-Islamic Persian beliefs and Islam. However, Maturidism is in fact the standard, consensus Sunni theology in Eurasia, differing little from its Ash'ari counterpart elsewhere in the Islamic world. Later it becomes clear that this strange mischaracterization is in fact a tool for juxtaposing “local” Eurasian Islam with “outside” Salafi Islam (180).