

the Reds as of the west and its pusillanimous liberalism. To be sure, it was the pro-western, liberal Provisional Government—not Vladimir Lenin’s Bolsheviks—that overthrew the Romanov dynasty (while Nicholas was with his troops in harm’s way at the front). This perception of the west and its liberalism as inimical to the very existence of the Russian state is deeply rooted in Russian political culture and is echoed in Putin’s rhetoric, especially of late. Veneration of Russian statehood and its expansive nature (imperialism?), however, is nothing new. It was central to Vasilii Kliuchevskii’s magisterial nineteenth century history of Russia, and is implicit in the “Statist-Juridical School” of Konstantin Kavelin and Boris Chicherin.

Putin has stated on numerous occasions his belief in the primacy of the *dirigiste* state and his hostility to western ideas of cultural and political liberalism/pluralism. It is hardly surprising that Konstantin Malofeev, among others, has urged him to assume the title of tsar in order to restore the true form of Russian government. The authors conclude that “the Putin regime. . . indirectly fosters the rehabilitation of tsarism” (112).

The text of *Memory Politics* is literate, readable, and informative. The question of its intended audience is less clear. If the general reader or student, it is too detailed. For the specialist it is an excellent summary, rather than an introduction to new information. The Selected Bibliography is exemplary for its literary examples and citations, yet comparatively light on historical background and analysis of the crucial Civil War period.

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Russian Politics and Response to Globalization. By Lada V. Kochtcheeva. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020. xvii, 250 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$89.99, hard bound; \$59.99 paper; \$49.99 e-book.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2022.303

Russia’s fascination with and, at the same time, resistance to globalization is a popular topic in political debates in the country. Those who are in favor of embracing global trends point out the enormous benefits that economic and technological openness brought to Russia. Meanwhile, those who oppose globalization contend that it challenges Russian values and identity and subjects it to a secondary status on the international arena. Despite its relevance, this subject received limited attention from scholars in Russia and in the west.

Lada Kochtcheeva’s book helps to bridge this gap. Accounting for the forces of globalization helps Kochtcheeva to “resolve several puzzles of [Russia’s] distinctive behavior” (2) on the domestic and international arenas. Namely, that in its policies—often seen in the west as enigmatic—Russia’s leadership was not only reacting to domestic circumstances, or to challenges from foreign actors, but also responding to complex global trends of interdependency and reduced sovereignty.

The book’s methodological approach provides a good foundation for its intellectual contribution and novelty. By relaying predominantly on Russian primary sources (monographs, polls, and articles), as well as over sixty original semi-structured interviews with Russian policy experts, Kochtcheeva enlightens readers with a “largely Russian, rather than a Western perspective on Russia’s domestic and international behavior” (18) and its understanding of globalization. This narrative presents an authentic, albeit not always pleasing for western readers, account about what Russians think. Not surprisingly, many Russians consider globalization a western

(American and European) endeavor, which is “being promoted to the detriment of Russia” (15).

The book’s main argument that Russia’s adaptation to the forces of globalization is key to understanding its foreign and domestic politics is presented across six chapters, which display Kochtcheeva’s thoughtful theoretical and detailed empirical analysis. Chapter 1 lays out the unique conditions of geopolitical retreat in which Russia joined the global world in the 1990s. This contributed to Russia’s positioning as a power that ultimately resists the role that it was assigned on the world arena, making it a “country laying between adaptation to and confrontation with the current global world order” (3). These themes are further developed in Chapter 2, where Kochtcheeva maps perceptions of globalization among the Russian expert and political elites that vary according to their political views.

Chapter 3, which deals with Russia’s political reactions to global pressures, makes the most powerful contribution to contemporary scholarship on Russia. Kochtcheeva describes how the historical tradition of a strong Russian state became an obstacle for embracing globalization. Russia’s geopolitical position between east and west, its vast territory that lacks natural borders, and ethnically diverse demographics dictated a tendency towards a centralized state apparatus. This became a complex point of departure for transition to a global neoliberal system, where the state is expected to relinquish some of its powers. This structural Russian condition can explain its slide to authoritarianism differently from conventional wisdom. It may suggest that it was not democratization that failed in Russia in the 1990s. Rather, the neoliberal expectation of a weaker Russian state complicated the country’s ability to integrate into the global system. In other words, Russia may be unsuitable for neoliberal globalization, rather than unprepared for liberal democracy. This is a novel understanding of Russia’s development.

Kochtcheeva’s decision, however, to “offer a largely Russian. . . perspective” (18) limits this book’s analytical scope. The defensive position taken by many Russian scholars with regards to globalization reduced their reflexivity in relation to this subject. This defensiveness resonates in the book. It removes nearly all responsibility from the Russian elites, leadership, and Russian society for the social and political processes that made Russia a danger to itself and to its neighbors. Such Russian deflection of blame is an authentic outlook. But without a reflexive discussion about these views, the book often restates Russian narratives instead of critically dialoguing with them. For instance, describing Ukraine as being “pulled in different directions between Russia and the European Union,” while the “West (supported) regime change in Ukraine in 2014. . . without regard to Russia’s view of the situation as an unconstitutional coup by radicalized militant nationalistic forces” (118) is a well-known Russian narrative. Repeating it does not help to explain Russia.

The book’s final empirical chapter, which deals with cultural responses to globalization, gives a glimpse of hope in these tragic times of war. Kochtcheeva observed that “the Russian official discourse still stays flexible, appealing to different constituencies, maintaining a balance between anti-Western conservative attitudes and universal values, and promoting global cooperation” (198) with themes of globalization and integration especially popular among the younger generation. This offers hope that one day Russia will rejoin the global system and help “develop a strategy for managing globalization, which would allow all nations to enjoy its benefits” (241).

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