

BOOK REVIEWS

Ivan Krastev and Alan McPherson (eds.), 2007, *The Anti-American Century*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 162 pp.

Author: *Andrea Tevdovski*
MIREES, University of Bologna

The term Anti-Americanism covers a wide range of different perceptions, theoretical views and attitudes towards the United States of America as a whole, and represents a phenomenon which exists in the contemporary world. This book, with its attractive title "The Anti-American Century", a collection of six articles written by different authors and edited by Ivan Krastev and Alan McPherson, focuses precisely on this phenomenon. The authors define the twentieth century as "the American century", in which the United States won the Cold War, tremendously increased their influence and became the only superpower by all meanings of the word. In their view, the beginning of the 21st century marks the end of "the American century" and the authors are convinced that the era we are entering may be freely recalled as "the anti-American century". This book examines the nature of the phenomenon of anti-Americanism in present days, as well as in the past, searching for its roots in different parts of the world.

Lead by this thought, it explores several questions in terms of how the phenomenon should be seen from different perspectives such as political, social and/or cultural, what are the historical roots and turning points of it in certain parts of the world, and what are the links with anti-Semitic sentiment. The particular value of this book is in its wide framework. It is a combination of different pieces by different authors, with a background in different academic disciplines. These pieces are in a continuous dialogue with each other, voicing different national experiences, intellectual traditions and personal approaches. Moreover, as the editors define, *they share neither the same politics, nor the same obsessions but at the same time they are united by a common intuition: we are living in the anti-American century* (p.2).

In the first part, entitled the same as the book, Krastev focuses on the anti-Americanism mainly in Europe, arguing that anti-Americanism has not changed much, but what has significantly changed is the world. What the author sees is not so much the rise of anti-Americanism in singular as the rise of anti-Americanisms in plural, connected with real problems that people all over the globe face, the globe lead by the United States. He points out that *people are against America because they are against everything – or because they do not know exactly what they are against* (p. 12). In the second part, written by Janos Matyas Kovacs, the book focuses on Eastern Europe referring to this area as “Little America” and on Eastern European feelings and behaviors towards the United States, as well as their influence and expressions in the European context. He starts the chapter quoting a common eastern European citizen: *Why do we want to become members of the European Union? Because we haven't been invited to join the United States* (p. 27). The author concludes that as the argument goes on, the whole world is becoming increasingly anti-American, yet, as usual, Eastern Europe is an exception to the rule.

The third chapter focuses on anti-Americanism in Latin America and it is elaborated by Alan McPherson. Here, the author explains how different generations of “anti-Americans” have defined themselves vis-à-vis the United States and how their strategies evolved over time. Through the three generations depicted in this chapter– the 1920s, the 1960s and the 2000s the author concludes that *the state was the locus of power, but not always of anti-American activity. Anti-Americanism arose outside the state when United States power acted within it, and inside the state when United States power loosened its hold on it* (p. 70). In the fourth chapter, through Youngshik Bong's and Katharine H.S. Moon's extensive analyses, the book seeks to explain the new anti-Americanism in a traditionally partner country of the United States, such as South Korea. Examining the assumptions that new nationalism among Korean youth generates anti-Americanism and its influence on Korea's bilateral relations with the United States, the authors argue that numerical correlations between age and so-called anti-American sentiments are both limited and inconsistent. They conclude that there is no doubt civic activism will continue in addressing and protesting against

the United States military presence. But, they point out as well, in the long run, democratic consolidation is likely to have a stabilizing effect on feelings of anti-Americanism among the young people and lead to its pragmatic manifestations. In the fifth part of the book, the author, Farish Noor, concentrates on understanding the new phenomenon of religiously inspired anti-Americanism among the Muslim communities in Southeast Asia and underlines the need of some understanding of the history of this region itself and of its convoluted relationships with the United States. The conclusion of the author exposes the reality of *Washington's failure to appreciate the fact that in this region two realities exist: the islands of wealth, power and cosmopolitan culture of the cities and the under-developed seas of poverty and relative backwardness of the countryside as well as the urban slums* (p. 123). Moreover, he emphasizes that in these poor, Muslim-dominated areas, "the battle for hearts and minds" has been won, not by the United States and its local allies, but by the Islamists of Southeast Asia. The final part, presented by Brian Klug, deals with the popular notion of connecting anti-Americanism to anti-Semitism. The author examines the view that the two phenomena are inseparable. Nevertheless, although the author assesses that anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism are occasionally connected, he denies that they constitute a double-headed monster that is stalking the earth.

We are dealing with an engaging book that I can freely say is a page turner. While the book gives different cultural and geographical stories in a provocative language, the overall tone remains unquestionably scholarly. Conceptually and academically it represents an extremely valuable piece of work. The phenomenon which it seeks to explain and understand is certainly controversial and so, even the definition of the term Anti-Americanism has been debated in the literature a lot. While some are trying to systematize it, suggesting a view of classical aspects of the phenomenon, others recognize that it can represent two extremely different tendencies, a form of prejudice targeting all Americans and a labeling of the criticisms of the United States as "anti-American". In these regards, the book to some extent incorporates the different standpoints. The authors have fulfilled their goals in terms of covering a huge amount of ground, from South-East Asia to Central Europe, and from Western Europe to

Latin America, and creating a volume that offers original insights into the nature and origins of the phenomenon of Anti-Americanism. They have also managed to give both culturally and academically different considerations of this phenomenon, as well as to examine the benefits or self-destructiveness to its "believers". Yet, further analyses of the response of the United States to the phenomenon and the Anti-American sentiment in general, possible developments and suggestions of how different actors position themselves towards the phenomenon are still needed. As Kohut and Stokes warn that anti-Americanism is one of the principal challenges facing the United States in the years ahead (p.152), this book could be helpful in examining this challenge both for graduate students and scholars, as well as for policy makers and will certainly suitably fit in the spectrum of literature covering the theory of Anti-Americanism.

Erzsébet Szalai, 2005, *Socialism: An Analysis of its Past and Future*, Budapest: Central European University Press , 81 pp.

Author: Pinar Sayan
Okan University

The collapse of the Soviet Union did not only change the context in world politics but also it had a huge effect on political science. Scholars from all over the world have been trying to understand this spectacular change in societal, economical, political, and ideological means. In *Socialism: An Analysis of its Past and Future*, Erzsébet Szalai also focuses on the transition in former socialist states. She elaborates the characteristics of the former regime and society, and analyzes the existing political and economical system influenced by capitalism. While doing this, she makes a harsh criticism of both capitalism and what she calls "existing socialism". The main countries the author analyzes are Eastern European countries, with a specific emphasis on Hungary. She defines the current system as "My own thesis is that the social formation called state socialism was in reality a social system located between state socialism and state capitalism – a transitory society which it would be more legitimate and exact to call semiperipheral socialism." (p. 3)

Among the eight chapters of the book, the first five are dedicated to an in-depth theoretical analysis of "existing socialism". She discusses the complex nature of existing socialism mainly in the means of political and economic power relations. The power holders, class and power structures, interest groups, actors, economical and social infrastructure are questioned in the existing socialism throughout these five chapters. Her claim is "... it was the party and state bureaucracy – the bureaucracy of the state party and the party state – and the stratum of big-company managers who possessed power. " (p. 7). She calls them a "*status group with some traits of a class*, and will call them *the status group in power.*" (p. 9). She claims that this status group in power constituted the main elite of the country and they owned the means of production. However, their interests were separate from those of society. Thus, the interest conflicts were expressed and solved through subordination and super-ordination (p. 27). She argues this complexity eventually became the source of system's disintegration (p. 54).

"Existing socialism" denotes the transitional society, it did not move towards any kind of socialism, but towards new capitalism. In the final three chapters, the author criticizes this new capitalism and underlines three possible alternatives to capitalism: fundamentalist movements, open dictatorship of the global international economic elite, and the new socialist alternative (p. 68). Her suggestion is the promotion of new-socialism as an alternative to new-capitalism. She defines it as "Without a chain of voluntarily created and accepted microcommunities bringing together free individuals, even the idea of society merely approximating communalism will remain an eternal illusion. Only the results of organic development nurtured from below are enduring, because the inherited socio-cultural patterns bind people even where the societal conditions change radically, since such changes occur or can be brought about only very slowly." (p. 64) Thus, the basis of the new-socialism lays in the bringing an end of the atomization of individuals, and prompting a change coming from below.

This is generally a well-written book about the past and future of socialism. The author is genuinely aware of the theory and related studies, embedding the study in a broader literature. She

underlines many interesting and important points about the structure of the system and most of her arguments are wisely elaborated especially about class and hegemonic relations within society (pp. 9-18). However, most of her claims are not supported by any empirical work. The arguments about big company managers as the main power holders (p. 5), the structure of economic system, which is named as *indirect socio-economic mechanism* (p. 26), or her comments about the system such as "existing socialism socialized people into passivity, servility, and slyness in relation to estranged conditions, and that we suffer the consequences to this day" (p. 23) are strong claims made by the author but lack any empirical proof. She solely depends on her personal observations and knowledge, using other studies only to support her theoretically, not empirically. This decreases the scientific value of the book and, when it coincides with certain claims of the author (p. 64), makes it look like a personal manifest rather than an academic study.

Szalai is successful in reaching the first part of her aims – providing a criticism of socialism and capitalism. However, the second aim of the book which is suggesting a new-socialist alternative is not that successful. It is not clear what she means by new-socialism or how it can be realized because she does not define it systematically, and does not provide a solid theory. It seems like she perfectly analyzed the failure of Soviet socialism, and the reasons behind it. And now she knows what *should not be done*, but is not sure about what *should be done*. The lack of conceptualization of "new socialism" is one of the major shortcomings of the book, in addition to lack of empirical evidence.

The author provides valuable information and observations about Hungary while analyzing existing socialism. Nevertheless, she does not mention any other "East Central European countries" as she claims. She overgeneralizes her observations about Hungary to other Central and Eastern Europe countries, which also decreases the scientific value of her work. The use of language and terminology is appropriate. The most important shortcoming about the writing style is the frequency of using long quotes. The placement of long quotes so often may distract readers.

Consequently, *Socialism: An Analysis of Its Past and Future* is a valuable book from an important scholar. Szalai makes very bright comments but fails to provide enough empirical evidence to support them. So, the book should be read as a very personal essay, rather than an academic work. It is a good resource for scholars dealing with Eastern Europe or Soviet studies and for advanced political science students interested in these issues.

John M. Headley, 2008, *The Europeanization of the World: on the origins of human rights and democracy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, xvi, 290 pp.

Author: Kristin T. May
University of Bologna

Globalization, imperialism, and Americanization are all terms that have dominated current political and cultural theory. While accepting these theories as relevant, one must consider their origins, stemming from European culture and a tradition of universalizing aspirations. John Headley's *The Europeanization of the World* is a fascinating and very much captivating work on the effects of what today is thought of as Western civilization on the rest of the world, most importantly the ideas of human rights and democracy. This book addresses very complex and relevant ideas in a fairly short number of pages. It provides a geographical, political, historical, theoretical, and philosophical background for the European influence on the origins of human rights and democracy throughout the modern world.

It is clear that a great deal of research and consideration went into this book. Headley uses evidence from some of the world's most important scholars and philosophers, from the earliest writings of Ptolemy, St. Augustine, and Machiavelli, to the later theories of Immanuel Kant, John Locke, Martin Luther, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. By examining the influence that these writers and thinkers had during their historical periods, Headley introduces the framework for the debates on human rights and democracy, specifically the use of dissent, all the while incorporating the evolution of globalization throughout this period.

The book is divided into three main chapters, the first of which identifies the Renaissance and the Enlightenment periods as the periods which set the stage for the "Global Arena"; the second which then uses the Reformation and Christendom as a "universalizing" force, up to the signing of the United States constitution in the evolution of natural rights and freedoms; and the third chapter which explains the figures and theories behind political dissent. While these previously described chapters provide an immense amount of substantial research and information, it is the "Aftermath" which connects the three chapters and reinforces how significant the implications of these political and social ideas have been for the modern world.

Headley offers numerous examples of how the interchanges of peoples would be characterized by European cultural expansion, settlement, commerce, and evangelization, with religion figuring as one among several civilizing factors (p. 46). When European explorers finally discovered that the entire world was populated, it provided a new space for expansion and spread of ideas, especially by the Church. Headley then goes on to relate this to the emergence of the Protestant Reformation, and Martin Luther as an origin of political dissent. Headley argues that in a religiously penetrated and ecclesiastically constructed society, religious dissent was the only type to prove effective. Democracy as a philosophical concept can be traced back to Plato's dialogues, but it is the idea of "self-criticism" which Headley sees as the basis for democratic thought, which he believes emerged with the surfacing of dissent.

In each respective section, the emergence of human rights and the ensuing spread of dissent and democracy, Headley does not use the actual phrase "human rights" or "democracy" except for on a few occasions. The downside to this is anyone just skimming the book may not be able to grasp the main focus of the chapter. It is somewhat difficult to grasp what concept he's attempting to examine amidst the pages of philosophical thought and historical details. Yet this is also an interesting way to approach the idea, which allows the reader to put the information together for himself. Headley provides the specific facts, general theories and philosophies and then by the time the reader comes to the "Aftermath" he is able to relate the history to the modern

world and the modern view of human rights and democracy. Some readers might find it helpful to read the "Aftermath" first and then start from the beginning. It is the "Aftermath" and subsequent Epilogue that provide the evidence for how these philosophies, actions and changing theories from Europe have had an impact on the debates of human rights and democracy.

Headley justifies his structure of the book in the introduction by stating that "the present study seeks to pursue a historical analysis and deliberately eschews any polemical, much less triumphalist, exposition of its two themes... the object here is to deepen our historical appreciation of two distinctive features of our civilization" (p. 7). He wishes to prove how Europe and Europeans "have come to identify and define a distinct civilization" (p. 3), providing the construction for a universalizing principle which led to the emergence of human rights and democracy. He argues that at the core of this development is a universalizing principle that has its basis in the construction of humanity as idea and fact. He advocates that it was not accidental that this changing concept of humanity "fell to a society so conceived and structured to create the global arena for the realization of the universal jurisdiction of humanity, among other better-known and less attractive enterprises" (65).

Too often scholars today are discussing the Americanization of the world and overlook the origins of the American political and global policies in Europe. Headley therefore tries to avoid using the terms "West" or "Western" in order to represent the whole of European civilization. The response by the rest of the world today to the idea of the "West" is greatly reflected in the "universalizing" techniques used during the Renaissance and Reformation periods, but it is important to also acknowledge the positive aspects that evolved during these periods. And while many scholars simply focus on the science and technological achievements by "Western" civilization, Headley focuses on the advancements of human thought and a type of universal brotherhood and the evolving belief that every human on this earth is entitled to equal rights and human dignity.

While the work may appear obsequious towards Europe, Headley acknowledges the "dark sides" of Europe, but prefers to remain

committed to the positive outcomes throughout the work. Thereby he justifies the fact that the book ends before the nineteenth century and the periods of colonialism and imperialism, two eras that were dominated by Europe and are in many ways in conflict with the ideas of human rights and democracy. The shortcoming of this is that while he argues how these unique ideas may have their origins in Europe, it struggles to hold up against the readers instincts and the present and more modern views of human rights and democracy in the world and the horrific consequences of these ideas that occurred during the 19th and 20th centuries, such as imperialism, most obviously WWI and WWII, and the highly controversial Iraq War, all of which were done with the intent of "spreading democracy". From this point of view, can one truly say that these principles have been entirely positive? To withstand this argument, Headley refers to the ideas as simply "unique".

This work is essential for anyone studying or interested in the foundations of human rights and democracy, as well as political theory and globalization, regardless of where one is in the world. Headley himself recognizes that "without the principled reference, study, and appreciation of the Western development as the continuing agent and source of global initiatives, the pursuit of cultural diversity becomes baseless" (p. 212).

Georgiy Kasianov and Philipp Ther (eds.) 2009, *A Laboratory of Transnational History: Ukraine and Recent Ukrainian Historiography*, Budapest: Central European University Press, 310 pp.

Author: Alexandra Wangler
Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences

Ukraine's gaining independence and the fall of the communist regime was a milestone for historiography, since it allowed the revival of banned historical studies which hitherto were kept alive only in the Ukrainian diaspora. But the study of history in independent Ukraine purely in terms of the requirements of state- and nation-building and ethnicizing interpretations came into conflict with the prevailing cultural, social, and political diversity. By taking into consideration that a multitude of languages,

religions, and cultures as well as the various empires that have ruled Ukraine have made a lasting impression, the authors of this edited book go beyond the established national paradigm and present its history from a transnational perspective, involving disruptions and episodes of a "lack of coherent history". The book is based on the fundamental argument that a narrow ethnonational narrative cannot offer a comprehensive or balanced Ukrainian history.

A Laboratory of Transnational History is sectioned into a theoretical and an empirical part. The theoretical section, which consists of four chapters, focuses on the deconstruction of major historical events by stressing the importance of local perspectives in the light of the multi-national coexistence in the region of present-day Ukraine. In line with the recent "spatial turn" in history, the authors stress that the nation-state is only one category of space among others. Thus, with the concept of *histoire croisée* – an area studies approach – Ukrainian history is suggested to be conceptualized as a Ukrainian-Polish-Russian-Jewish narration. The transnational approach is presented as a complementary perspective to find new units of analysis, such as sublevels like towns, villages and regions, families and individuals or, on the other hand, supranational levels, such as the history of Orthodoxy.

Within this context, the author of the fourth chapter outlines the weakness of national histories with their internalist perspectives of state-territorialization and then offers a new paradigm which is oriented toward agency, that is externalism, transcending the boundaries of one culture or country. This new "transfer history" approach concentrates on agents of cultural exchange and aims to view societies or social groups without idealizing contacts between two countries but rather includes multiperspectivity and comparison. In this respect the author pleads for a modification of the structural definition of East Central Europe in which places and axes of cultural exchange, not the nation-state, shape the mental mapping of Europe.

The second part of this book offers four empirical chapters which in their abundance and thematic variety flesh out the theoretical section. The articles embrace periods of Ukrainian history ranging from early modern times to the nineteenth century, World War II,

and the post-independence years. The authors of the book succeed in overcoming the methodological nationalism and offer a distinctive and alternative reader of Ukrainian history – be it the chapter about the etymological process of Ukraine’s self-definition in its various social and historical contexts, the presentation of the different versions of Ukrainian history with its short Cossack history and the long Kyivan one that evolved within diverse networks of the local szlachta, or the ideological significant discourse about Latin and Cyrillic Alphabets on the two stages of Galicja and Dnipro Ukraine. Finally, the analysis of the collective memory of World War II in the Ukrainian Diaspora in North America on the basis of a documentary film premiered in the year 2003, and the quantitative as well as qualitative study about the hierarchy and dynamics of group identity in today’s Lviv and Donetsk connect history with the present.

The book points to delicate topics such as the contradictory images of Bohdan Khmelnytsky and the Ukrainian revolution of 1648, the Ukrainian People’s Republic and Symon Petliura’s anti-Jewish inclination, as well as the Second World War in the collective memories of Ukrainians, Poles, Jews and Russians. The analytical undertaking to handle collective memory not from the victimization perspective but to also include the narrative of Ukrainian executioners involved in massacres successfully contributes to promote understanding of other perspectives and interpretations of history. As the authors show, there are many different Ukrainian histories; we cannot understand the politics of today’s Ukraine without an analysis of indirect Russian, Polish, German, and the Habsburg contributions, pressures and power relations. Gaps in Ukrainian national narratives, such as the absence of Jews in most history textbooks published before and after 1991 point out the arbitrary character of historical narratives.

Of special interest are the arguments that any relationship thus defined may turn out to be discontinuous. For instance, the Galician Ruthenians were torn between different national alternatives and finally adopted the Ukrainian culture from Ukrainians in Russia – whose culture itself had taken form in the encounter of East Ukrainian nationalists with Polish culture in the Russian Empire. The book reminds the reader also that the

German nation, which may be classified as a “historic” and well defined nation, was itself undergoing complex processes of formation and redefinition. The rise and fall of empires is closely connected with the history of ideas. The contributors pay attention to the individuals and the collective instances which compete to define and disseminate the ruling identity projects, such as particularly the language as symbolism of ethnicity and the ideological significance of the alphabet. At the same time, however, the book indicates that while the transnational methodology and its objects have their own ways and history, nevertheless the trajectories of goods, people, ideas, capital and power are still shaped by the history of national, regional, or global formations. Although the authors do not dismiss the prevailing ubiquity of national histories and mention the difficulty of installing or imposing historical narratives in mass consciousness, they do not say how contemporary citizens could be reached with these transnational insights to alter prevailing interpretations of history. Deeply routed sentiments and experiences of grievances are not easy to overcome; since this book is embedded into present-day debates of national narratives, an allusion to ways of how to transmit these new academic insights to mass society would be of interest.

To study connections and to put them in context with the social units requires an approach in different languages, familiarity with several archival systems and historiographical traditions and questions – a methodological aspect that the reader is not confronted with in this book. How does one track the movement of objects, people, ideas, and texts using the sources at one's disposal? Even though this is a far reaching point the book was not trying to make, it could serve as an incentive for readers to consider methodological matter. The inclusion of empirical research, as for example the comparison of Lviv and Donetsk, successfully complements the archival source selection and examines how cultural practices and ideologies shape, constrain, or enable the economic, social, and political conditions in which people act and goods circulate. Furthermore, it shows which far reaching impact history has on current states and attests that *long durée* factors are indispensable in cultural studies, as well.

The authors contribute to a debate about national identity, collective memory, and alternative Ukrainian history by providing very abundant, yet well structured and documented information. In line with the aim of the book, it manages to present a new historiographical method by highlighting the comparative possibility of transnational history of Ukraine and other countries as a means to contribute to a new history and interpretation of the world.

Stefan Ihrig, 2008, *Wer sind die Moldawier? Rumänismus versus Moldowanismus in Historiographie und Schulbüchern der Republik Moldova, 1991-2006*, vol. 76, Ibidem, Stuttgart, 332 pp.

Author: Tiberiu Condulescu
European Institute for Jewish Studies Stockholm

Stefan Ihrig's book "Wer sind die Moldawier?"¹ is one of the singular works published in recent years that addresses with particular care the conflict that arose in post-sovietic Moldova over the problem of national identity. After the fall of communism the problem of identity itself was not a new phenomenon in Eastern Europe, yet in Moldova it gained a different dimension through the debate between the *Moldovanists* and *Romanianists*² (both Romanian speakers) engulfing at the same time the minorities of the country that make up 35% of the population and are largely non-Romanian speakers. As such the question posed in the title is provoking, because it has not been answered for the past 200 years, with the subject of the book aiming at a public interested either in post-socialist transformations, manifestations of national identity or the historiography of Eastern European countries. The problem of identity, as already established, is the main thread leading through the post-socialist history of the country, yet the author carefully draws attention to the fact that he, as well, will be unable to provide an exclusive answer to the question "Who are the Moldavians?" but will guide us through the debate over this issue, a debate that made identity a problem.

1 "Who are the Moldavians?"

2 Terminology adopted according to the original German version of the book

The relevance and importance of the study carried out by Ihrig lies in the fact that there is not only a lack of works dealing with the recent political history of Moldova but there are also few studies addressing the two dominating and conflicting political discourses of the political elites. As such the book provides a detailed analysis of both discourses, the Moldovanist as well as the Romanianist, while specifically concentrating on the historical scientific developments in the country after 1989 and especially after 1994, as well as on the way history was taught in schools and universities in the post-socialist era. The reason for choosing this specific thread as the object of analysis is the fact that it is this particular field in which the Moldovanist faction, which has been in power in some form or another since 1994, lost the upper hand in the battle against the Romanianists. This battlefield of definitions, as the author calls it, is even more important if we consider the implications of the concepts taught and used in it, on certain types of actions affecting both the present and the future of the country as well as its foreign policy orientation. Whereas the Romanianist has a more Western inclined orientation the Moldovanist looks to Moscow for guidance.

The specific topics dealt with by the author in the chapters of the book are as follows: the political transformation in the country after 1989 with particular attention to the period following 1994; construction of self and other in school books as well as historiography; connections between identity, nation and history; the typology and effects of the political and social discourses up to 2006; the concept of "integrated history" as well as the role of Gagausia and Transnistria in the identity debate.

Already from the onset Ihrig provides a range of arguments to be developed further in order to clarify various aspects of the central question of the book: "who are the identity bearers for both historical discourses?". It is Prime Minister Tarlev's statement that is the starting argument and possibly one of the reasons the present and similar books were published. "Moldova has no history" the prime minister claimed, but this is not to be understood that the country or the people are without a history but in the sense that the existing history does not reflect the country's social realities as the author comes to prove it. The entire debate revolves around this central claim as we can see.

A second very strong argument is the fact that there has been no clear manifestation of a Moldovan or Romanian nation in Moldova for the past 200 years which makes it difficult, if almost impossible, to establish the existence of such in 2006, as the initiative of the integrated history aimed at. Until 2006 national history was taught in the form of the history of the Romanians even though the Moldovanists were in power. As such in-school history teaching became critical of the political establishment, while the government was unable to use this leverage. In 2006 an attempt occurred to create Moldovan history, named integrated history, and it is still in place, yet failed as well to fulfill its role in education of the younger generations.

At the same time while analyzing how the nation is constructed and written herein, Ihrig argues that identity per se was and is not the problem, the real problem is the identity debates and discourses. These describe the problem in post-sovietic Moldova. Yet nation remains an unclear concept for Moldova and at this point even the author encounters difficulties in defining it, especially when drawing on its linguistic as well as religious constituents. Unconvincing is his argument that the Romanian used in Moldova, which is also considered a dialect of the language used in Romania, may be regarded as a self-standing language.

A shortcoming of the book recognized by the author as well is the in-depth analysis and exact placement of the minority problem into the big picture of the identity debate. Its presence is a must, since both Gagausian as well as Transnistrian minorities have decisive leverage on the political system in Chisinau. Even so Ihrig points out that the Romanianist discourse almost ignores them, relying on the Romanian speaking majority of the country, whereas the Moldovanist one attempts to include them in some form or another without being able to put them in their proper place.

By the end of the book the author successfully demonstrates how Moldovanists and Romanianists differ in their understanding of the concept of the nation even though their narratives are similar from several perspectives. With particular attention to the

Moldovanist claims, he establishes that their idea of a nation is not a civic concept as it should be, but not an ethnically exclusive one either. Contrasting it to the Romanianist, one even the minorities are integrated in some form or another.

In what regards the two conflicting discourses Ihrig shows accurately that they are closed discourse systems not only because they rely on exclusivist ethnic claims but also because at the historiography level they are in dialogue only with themselves, ignoring the rest of the scientific world. Even so they have been able to neutralize other interpretations so far. What makes the identity problem even more complicated in this respect is that neither discourse is able to provide alternative histories and focuses only on what they call the "truth". Their biggest shortcoming remains the fact that neither manage to fulfill their guiding role for society, or mandate, as the author calls it, making a political battlefield of the history classes instead of protecting the younger generations; not to mention the fact that both of them show a severe incapacity to "tell democracy". They only focus on the national aspect and even though there is an envisaged national state to acquire, there is no desired form of government. This former aspect is very accurately depicted; neither discourse entailing a deep civic compound, the Romanianist because it desires unification with Romania while the Moldovanist is unable or unwilling to provide one. The dead-lock situation created by the historical narratives of the two dominating discourses have led to a situation where Western as well as Eastern European authors tagged Moldova as a failed or failing state and a state with a failed historiography.

As such the question from the title remains controversial and unclear with at least four possible answers to be found in the book, none being entirely satisfactory, with the author unable to chose between them either.

Andrei P. Tsygankov and Pavel A. Tsygankov (ed.), 2005, New Directions in Russian International Studies, Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 200 pp.

Author: Bence Németh
University of Vienna

The former Eastern Bloc countries have faced many difficulties concerning the study of international affairs after their mainstream theoretical framework lost its credibility. The book reviewed here reveals how the discipline of International Relations has developed in the biggest former communist country since the system change.

This book contains a collection of articles which attempt to point out key trends and major stages of progresses in Russian international studies. The book was originally published as a special issue of Communist and Post-Communist Studies in order to improve the understanding of western social scientists regarding the development of Russian International Relations (IR). Thus, the authors are exclusively notable Russian scholars who provide a comprehensive overview of the major processes, key debates and determining fields of research in post-Soviet Russian international studies.

The editors' explicit goals are first to map the Russian perception of the international environment and the Russian self-concept as an international actor, and second 'to move away from excessively West-centered IR scholarship'. (p. 14) They identify three different trends in Russian academic discipline – pluralisation, Westernization, isolation – and point out that Russian IR is academically open to indigenous and foreign concepts as well, however it is too diverse to find its 'own ideological mainstream'. They argue that Soviet Marxism, as the main theoretical framework of Russian IR, lost its significance after the fall of the Soviet Union, and many new concepts began to flourish, thus pluralisation has emerged in academic thinking and in the policy field as well. However, according to the editors, the observable diversity and conflicting trends (e.g. Westernization – isolation) in Russian IR are the result of the identity crisis of Russian society.

This diversity and uncertainty are well demonstrated by the introductory chapter of the book, putting Russian IR theoretical thinking into wider social and political context, in order to theorize the trends and phenomena of Russian international studies using a constructivist point of view. The following chapters describe mainly the theoretical development of the major IR-schools (liberalism, realism) and the progress of other research programs (globalization, geopolitics, ethnicity, political economy and international negotiations) in greater detail. These chapters explain these prevailing approaches and main debates regarding every subfield in a highly descriptive manner. Namely, the authors focus on introducing the bases and the evolution of ideas; in addition they provide a huge amount of information and explanation for the better understanding of these processes. These chapters also attempt to offer a clear picture of why some approaches (realism, geopolitics) have greater influence upon Russian IR thinking than it is experienced in Western countries, and why other approaches (liberalism, political economy) clearly play a less significant role there.

The authors point out disciplinary problems in Russia as well, while some astonishing data demonstrate the difficulties of Russian scholars. For instance, 'according to estimates of the late 90's, only 2-5% of Russian political scientists actually read papers of their foreign colleagues in the original form. Although the situation is slowly improving, the majority of Russian political scientists badly rely on translations, summaries and reviews of academic sources in other languages'. (p. 115.) Furthermore, many authors highlight the causes of why Russian IR is mostly mass-orientated, over-politicized and under-theorized.

Despite the useful explanation and huge amount of information provided, the book fails to fulfill its main goals which are determined by the editors themselves in the introductory chapter. It is true that the reader gets an overview of several perspectives regarding Russian IR, however a summarizing chapter on the conclusions of all these is missing from the end of the book. Thorough understanding can be problematic for readers who are unfamiliar with the main concepts of Russian foreign policy, as the quoted authors of the consecutive chapters represent

different aspects. Furthermore, there is no greater emphasis put on the more influential approaches of Russian IR (realism, geopolitics and ethnicity) than on the less influential or the irrelevant ones. Hence, we do not know exactly what the editors assume about how Russia sees herself in the world and how Russia perceives the international arena in general.

Fulfilling the second goal – ‘to move away from West-centered IR scholarship’ – was not successful either. Most of the authors focus on the political, social, economic backgrounds of the evolution of Russian international studies, instead of a comparison between Western theoretical thinking and its Russian counterpart. Furthermore, the authors do not and sometimes can not draw a clear distinction between Russian foreign policy thinking and IR as an academic discipline. Therefore, it is often hard to follow and distinguish what kind of achievements Russian scholars have made in the field of international studies since the end of the cold war.

It is true that the authors were not in an easy situation when writing their essays, because some of the aforementioned problems of the book, on the one hand, come from the over-politicized character of Russian international studies. On the other hand, sometimes it is not obvious in Russia where the boundaries of science are and how scholars should perceive some concepts. For instance, Eduard G. Solovyev points out that some approaches see ‘geopolitics as a complex scientific discipline and it is the closest to a philosophy of foreign policy in international relations. Another school tends to interpret geopolitics as a branch of a broader discipline, political geography.’ (p. 140.) Others question that geopolitics would arise from a scientific base at all. Thus, the author’s attempt – ‘to move away from West-centered IR scholarship’ with the help of Russian international studies - can not come true in such a situation, where politics and scientific research do not separate clearly from each other, and scholars do not agree on basic matters.

Despite the flaws of the book, it is worth reading for everyone who is interested in Russian foreign policy. Even though it does not fulfill its main goals and does not enrich the IR discipline with a novel theoretical framework, it contains much useful

information and offers a very good overview of the evolution of contemporary Russian thinking concerning international politics. Thus, this book can help in understanding the steps of members of the Russian foreign policy elite and the concepts which circulate among them. In addition, by reading the book, the appropriate interpretation of Russian foreign and security policy related documents – like The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation and The Russian National Security Concept – become more evident.

In general, the book provides insight into the conceptual transformation of the fields of policy and academic thinking of a great power which has recently undergone an identity crisis, and offers an opportunity to track the steps of development of Russian international studies in many fields. However, it fails to fulfill its main goals and the reader does not get the answer regarding Russian self-concept in world politics and Russia's perception of the international system. In addition, the authors can not generate a new dialogue and move away from "West-centric" IR as intended. Nevertheless, scholars who are interested more in Russian foreign policy than in theory per se can benefit a lot from this compilation, because each chapter separately represents high quality in describing the key processes of different subfields of Russian international studies.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Roxana Radu holds a BA from the University of Bucharest and is currently enrolled in a 2-year MA program in Political Science at the Central European University, Budapest. Email: radu_roxana@student.ceu.hu

Nelli Babayan is a PhD student at the School of International Studies, University of Trento, Italy. Her main research interests are in the fields of comparative politics and international relations and she is primarily interested in strategies of democracy promotion. Email: nelli.babayan@unitn.it.

Frédéric Falkenhagen is a PhD candidate at CEVIPOF- Sciences Po (Center for political research at Sciences Po, Paris). Email: frederic.falkenhagen@sciences-po.org.

Sudeep Basu is Assistant Professor of Sociology, Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion, National Law School of India, Bangalore, India. Email: sudeepbas@gmail.com; sudeep12345@rediffmail.com.

Kristin May is a student at the University of Bologna in Forlì. Currently she is working on her Master's at the "Roberto Ruffili" School of Political Science, focusing on Eastern European studies. She received her BA in History and Global Affairs from George Mason University in the United States. Email: kristintaymay@gmail.com.

Pinar Sayan is a Research Assistant in the Department of International Relations, Okan University. E-mail: sayan.pinar@gmail.com.

Alexandra Wangler is pursuing a Ph.D. in Social Sciences at the Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences, Germany. E-mail: awangler@bigsss.uni-bremen.de.

Condulescu Tiberiu is MA in Political Science from Central European University, Budapest. He is currently a fellow at Paidea, the European Institute for Jewish Studies in Stockholm. Fields of

Bence Németh is a doctoral student at the Political Science Department of University Vienna. He holds an MA in International Relations and European Studies from Central European University and an MSc in Security and Defense Policy from Zrínyi Miklós National Defense University. He specializes in Hungarian foreign and security policy. Email: nemeth.bence@yahoo.com.