

of illiteracy, and the development of Belarusian art and literature. Marková's own research, interpretations, and conceptualizations offer much to think about. Most notable is her understanding of the Belarusian nation, which has been called everything from marginal to provincial to underdeveloped. Rather than understand the Belarusian nation as an ethnic one, she posits that the Belarusian nation is civic, bound not by shared language or culture but to statehood. This understanding of the Belarusian nation as civic applies well to the 1920s, as the promotion and development of Belarusian identity was tied to the formation of the state. Even some intellectuals noted that classic ethnonational characteristics did not apply to the Belarusian nation, notably religion, which was not uniform among those living in historical Belarusian territories.

In many ways, the story of Belarusization is reminiscent of the early to mid-1990s, in its intention to revive Belarusian culture and language through official channels against a public that had largely been discouraged from embracing this for many years. Indeed, in examining this work readers may learn more about Belarus in the post-Soviet era, especially when it comes to questions of language and to ideas of identity and citizenship. Marková's proposal of a civic understanding of Belarusian identity resonates today, as citizenship seems to be the common denominator for Belarusians. Those who speak, study, and fully engage with Belarusian are far fewer and operate largely outside of mainstream life.

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Stalin's Millennials: Nostalgia, Trauma, and Nationalism. By Tinatin Japaridze. Lexington, KY: Lexington Books, 2022. xii, 159 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$95.00, hard bound.
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The millennial-aged author of *Stalin's Millennials*, Tinatin Japaridze, was born in Georgia to a prominent family. This is an important plot point: her great-aunt Nina Chichua-Bedia was the wife of the executed director of the Tbilisi Institute of Marx-Engels-Lenin and part the "tightly knit milieu known at the time as the Soviet aristocracy who openly opposed the Great Terror and its organizers" (8). She spent part of her childhood in Moscow before emigrating to the US. From this unique perspective, Japaridze sets out, through "a combination of sociopolitical commentary with autobiographical elements" (11), to explore the legacies of Iosif Stalin and their implications for her own generation in Georgia, Russia, and beyond.

Building on the idea of two separate and distinct constructs of Stalin, one in his Georgian homeland and another in Soviet Russia, over which he became the Bolshevik tsar, Japaridze posits the existence of a "third Stalin" for a new generation, combining elements of both yet simultaneously transcending them. After deep-dives into the enduring image of Stalin as Koba, "Man of the Borderlands," in Georgia and his role as "usable past" in Soviet and then post-Soviet Russia for legitimizing those regimes as a world power that built a new industrial civilization and won the Great Patriotic War before dominating half the globe, it is this "third Stalin" that is central to the author's ruminations, a "phantom of Stalin" that is "tirelessly manipulated as a cultural trope" by historians and more so by political leaders "to both criticize and justify, condemn and condone policies and decision making" (10). The mystique of the "third Stalin," as seen through the prism of the post-Soviet millennial generation, propels her "on a journey to understand this paradox within our society and my own

identity that was pining for answers, already suspecting that these answers would likely result in even greater, unanswered questions” (9).

Referencing an array of social science studies and concepts, the chapters on the first two (Georgian and Russian/Soviet) Stalins and those on personality cults, trauma, nationalism, and nostalgia have the feel of a thesis literature review. Despite the extensive citations, the framing on Stalin—however multifaceted—seems to me ultimately a somewhat limited lens through which to understand Soviet history and its legacies and consequences. In the reflections on Georgia, for instance, it seems to me that Soviet nationality policy, with its ascribed ethnic individual and territorial identities and resulting ethnoterritorial hierarchy of nationalities in competition for status and resources provides for a more comprehensive and profound understanding both of the paradox of Stalin’s centrality to Georgian nationalism (resulting in and deriving from, as I’ve argued elsewhere, a “Georgian national Stalinism” or a “Stalinist Georgian nationalism”) as well as for the dominance of primordial ethnonationalism there by the end of the Soviet period. Japaridze at points discusses a larger “*sistema* of Soviet totalitarianism,” in the construction and elaboration of which clearly Stalin played a gargantuan role. Yet that *sistema*, its fundamental ideologies, aspirations, and structural forms, as well as the ways in which they functioned and were understood and internalized in various periods, surely went far beyond either the individual or the mythologized constructions of Stalin. What is more, while the author purposely sets out to ask questions that provoke further ones, the endlessly pondering style of the prose tends to become a bit exhausting (“Gazing through a kaleidoscope of memories, a mosaic of diverse pieces culminating in a legible portrait, we find that there are few definitive answers and even less accurate ones—swirling in perfect harmony, as though casting pebbles upon water, constantly reverberating in additional question marks like never-ending ripples on a blank shore that are meant to remain unresolved” (12) and “the broken, often disjointed fragments of the past that construct identities in the present will continue to build and grow upon the ashes of a ruptured past, constantly and inevitably returning to their roots like circles wrapped in a mysterious spiral, possessing no concept of an ending or a beginning, spinning endlessly, trapped inside the perpetual wheel of time” (131).

Nevertheless, the author makes clear from the outset that the work is neither a biography nor an academic historical study but rather a subjective and personal reflection on her own journey (figuratively and literally) to understand the legacies that shape the outlooks of her generation and her multiple homelands. This is surely a first foray of a voice that has much to say and will be worth listening to.

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Stalin as Warlord. By Alfred J. Rieber. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022. xiv, 360 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Chronology. Glossary. Index. Plates. \$38.00, hard bound.

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The experience of World War II was arguably the central moment in the Soviet experiment. It legitimized Iosif Stalin’s regime, made the USSR a superpower, and persists as a formidable episode in historical memory in the region. The policies that Stalin enacted to contend with the war are a source of curiosity that Alfred Rieber examines in this volume.