The book concludes with a chapter by Douglas Irvin-Erickson, who compares the interactions between two lawyers whose ethical and humanitarian concerns could not have been more at odds: Rafael Lemkin, who coined the term "genocide" and who led the international effort to outlaw genocide after the Second World War, and Andrei Vyshinskii, Prosecutor General of the Soviet Union from 1935 to 1939. In doing so, Irvin-Erickson reveals not only the many differences between the two men, but also some surprising similarities, namely their shared belief in law as a political tool—yet one that was to serve very different purposes.

At their core, many of the chapters in this book engage with the same question, namely how to make sense of the fact that a dictatorship like the Soviet Union, whose domestic legal system remained deeply illiberal, made productive contributions to the idea that individuals have to be held accountable for wartime atrocities—and as such played an important role in the development of international criminal law. In tracing just exactly what these contributions consisted of, and by revealing the contradictions and ambivalences inherent to this process, the book makes a valuable contribution to ongoing academic debates, while also providing a useful summary of the state of scholarship. Yet the book also has shortcomings. The chapters vary in terms of their quality and novelty, with some drawing on in-depth archival research or novel primary sources, and others providing more of a synthesis of the secondary literature, supplemented with a few primary sources. The introduction summarizes the individual contributions, but it does not really put them into conversation with each other, nor does it engage more broadly with Soviet legal history beyond select, if important, studies. In that sense, a larger, overarching argument about the nature of Soviet justice under Stalin does not emerge from the book.

Franziska Exeler
University of Cambridge
Free University Berlin

Politika pamiati v sovremennoi Rossii i stranakh Vostochnoy Evropy: Aktory, instituty, narrativy. Ed. Alexei I. Miller and Dmitrii V. Efremenko. St. Petersburg: European University at St. Petersburg, 2020. 631 pp. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Figures. Tables. ₽680, paper.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2022.52

"The Russians' love for Iosif Vissarionovich is. . .a manifestation of [their] quest for social justice." So writes Anastasia M. Ponomareva, in the volume under review" (198). This came as a surprise: I cannot remember any instances in the academic literature of Stalin being so respectfully addressed by his first name and patronymic or considered a democratic, rather than an authoritarian, symbol. Alexei Miller and Dmitrii Efremenko's volume, translated as *The Politics of Memory in Contemporary Russia and East European Countries: Actors, Institutions, Narratives*, includes twenty-nine chapters that cover an extensive range of topics, from memory laws to the recently-created learned societies and governmental institutions that are tasked with the implementation of official history politics, and from mnemonic activism to historical museums, "monumental propaganda," popular history magazines, video games, and comics. In addition to the well-researched Russian and Ukrainian cases, the volume focuses on such understudied regions as Belarus, Moldova, Transnistria, North Caucasus, Kaliningrad, Russia's Far East, and the Moscow-controlled Donbass.

It is impossible to do justice in a brief review to all the contributions in this rich collection. The book examines, in particular, the mnemonic conflicts around

https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2022.52 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the Russian conquest of the Caucasus and the monuments to General Yermolov (Amiran Urushadze); the competition between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Memorial Society in defining the meaning of communist repressions (Marlène Laruelle, Ekaterina Makhotina); the ambiguities of identity among the Don Cossacks, whose leaders of the Civil War period (such as Ataman Krasnov) became Nazi collaborators during the Second World War (Olga Rvacheva); and the debates over Cossack memorials on the Russian-Chinese border, which the local populations view as monuments to their colonizers (Alexei Mikhalev).

This reviewer was particularly interested by Elena Meleshkina's comparison between the Russian memory law of 2014 and similar legislation in Europe. Meleshkina agrees with the widely shared opinion that east European memory laws differ significantly from their west European prototypes in that they protect local national narratives rather than universal values (325, 248). She does not point out, however, that the Russian law protecting the memory of the Stalin regime is an extreme case of this east European tendency. And she inexplicably attributes to me the notion of "projective memory" (245), which I have never used.

The emphasis on the diversity of local and group memories is, in my view, the volume's most valuable contribution to the study of Russian and east European history politics. But its weaknesses are, in part, a continuation of its strengths, as its considerable attention to detail obscures the main lines of Russia's memory politics. Several themes essential to the understanding of that politics are touched upon in narrowly focused chapters but are nowhere treated systematically. Such themes include the cult of the Great Patriotic War, which under Putin has become post-Soviet Russia's foundation myth, the politics of re-Stalinization, and Holocaust remembrance. Moreover, as presented in the volume, the Presidential Administration, the government, the parliament, and the political parties appear as relatively peripheral to Russia's memory landscapes. As a result, the goals of the government's history politics remain unclear.

The main exception is Konstantin Pakhalyuk's chapter on the use of history in Russia's foreign policy. According to Pakhalyuk, Putin uses history to present Moscow as a virtuous "foreign policy player" in the context of the value vacuum after the fall of communism (98, 102). He further suggests that this approach differs radically from how western leaders use history to justify universal values (104, 121). This subtle observation falls in line with the opposition between universalism and particularism in the present-day memory politics that I have developed elsewhere (Nikolay Koposov, *Memory Laws, Memory Wars: The Politics of the Past in Europe and Russia*, Cambridge UP, 2017, 309–10). Pakhalyuk, however, ignores the dangerous implications of Putin's anti-universalist stand as well as the discrepancy between the Kremlin's claims to historical "righteousness" and the aggressive character of both Stalin's and Putin's foreign policy.

The tendency to normalize, and at times endorse, Putin's history politics is also evident in several other chapters, including those of both co-editors. Thus, for example, Vladimir Lapin and Viktoriia Kaz′mina speak approvingly of Vladimir Medinsky's role in Russian history politics and the government-sponsored Russian Historical Society and Russian Military Historical Society, which are deemed Russia's response to the falsification of history by her neighbors (94, 175). Medinsky, a former Minister of Culture and currently an advisor to the president, is one of Russia's principal "mnemonic warriors," claiming as he does that historians should assess the past from the standpoint of their country's interests.

In contrast to Meleshkina, who suggests that Russian propaganda is in part responsible for east European memory wars (247), Miller (cautiously) and Efremenko and Pakhalyuk (straightforwardly) accuse the east European countries of having

https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2022.52 Published online by Cambridge University Press

launched these wars and position Moscow's memory politics as essentially reactive (10–11, 71–72, 98). The disintegration of the "cosmopolitan consensus" and the re-emergence of "antagonistic" national narratives in Europe are the leading themes of Miller's introductory chapter. In light of his analysis, Putin's war cult is presented as a normal reaction to the west's hypocritical attempts to ignore the political nature of memory and repress discourses that do not comport with the Holocaust-centered narrative (9–15).

Efremenko's chapter dealing with EU history politics echoes Moscow's attempts to build a "coalition of memory" with the west against its east European opponents. He claims that the EU's official Holocaust-centered memory is compatible with the Russian war narrative, while the east European theory of "twin totalitarianisms" makes any dialogue impossible (72). The implication is that the EU should ignore its new members' commemorative concerns in order to make its peace with Moscow. But Efremenko overlooks the notion that the cosmopolitan memory of the Holocaust is based on the nation-states' repentance for their past misdeeds, while the Soviet/Russian war cult is, in contrast, a self-congratulatory national narrative.

Georgii Kasyanov's chapter offers a competent overview of the situation in Ukraine and the memory war between Kyiv and Moscow. However, he first mentions Russia's involvement in Ukrainian battles over the past *after* his discussion of the nationalistic turn taken by Kyiv's politics as a result of the 2004–5 Orange Revolution, as if the formation of Putin's authoritarian regime, the reanimation of the Soviet war cult, and the Kremlin's involvement in the 2004 presidential elections in Ukraine had nothing to do with that turn. I perfectly understand a Ukrainian historian being critical primarily of his own government. Yet focusing on the "internal" dynamics of Ukraine's history politics without sufficiently taking into consideration its international context shifts the blame for the Russian-Ukrainian memory conflicts from Moscow to Kyiv. Let me also mention one mistake made by my respected colleague: he claims that the denial of the Holocaust and the Holodomor is a criminal offense punishable under Ukrainian law (501–2). Ukraine's Criminal Code does not actually contain such a provision, although Article 436.1, introduced in 2015, outlaws "producing, disseminating, and publicly using the symbols of communist and national-socialist totalitarian regimes."

In conclusion, for all its merits, this volume raises, at least for this reviewer, serious concerns about academic freedom in Putin's Russia.

Nikolay Koposov
Emory College of Arts and Sciences

Life in Stalin's Soviet Union. Ed. Kees Boterbloem. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. xii, 247 pp. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Tables. Figures. $31.95, paperback; $90.00, hard bound; $23.72, ebook.

doi: 10.1017/slr.2022.53

In twelve essays, leading scholars shed light on the everyday life of Soviet people in the years 1929 to 1953. The book is addressed to a broad public, but also offers interesting insights for specialists.

Life in Stalin's Soviet Union covers a wide range of topics. The authors deal with different social groups in the countryside and in the cities. Kees Boterbloem, the editor, starts with an essay about peasants in collective farms, upheaval in the villages, and signs of protest and resistance against collectivization. Frances Bernstein, James Heinzen, and David Shearer focus on groups that have received little attention in

https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2022.52 Published online by Cambridge University Press