

or Bukharin, was ready and willing to wage a ruthless war to secure his will and his autocratic power. Moderates did not have a chance.

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***The Path to a Soviet Nation: The Policy of Belarusization, 1924–1929.*** By Alena Marková. Paderborn: Brill Schöningh, 2022. viii, 295 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Tables. €109.00, hard bound.  
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It was the cooperation between the Communist Party and Belarusian national elites that constituted the main driver of what became the Belarusization process in 1920s Soviet Belarus. Alena Marková's latest work—the English translation of an earlier version published in Belarusian in 2016—traces the contradictory trajectory of this collaborative effort that involved the very top echelons of the Party and state to the very bottom ranks at the local level. This process entailed developing Belarusian culture through educational reform, the promotion of the Belarusian language, art, and literature, as well as working side by side with the broader Soviet *korenizatsiia*, or indigenization policy by promoting ethnic Belarusians into leading posts at the Party and state levels. Belarusization saw its origins already in 1921, with the beginning of educational reform, and became an official policy in 1924.

Through her meticulous examination of textbooks, education and military reports, statistical research conducted by state officials, as well as the works of notable Belarusian intellectual elites, Marková reveals how the project of national development was intent on showing Belarusian uniqueness and, especially, distinction from the Russian and Ukrainian nations. Notable Belarusian scholars involved in the process highlighted Belarusian uniqueness by noting that, unlike its neighbors to the south and east, it had not been occupied by Turkic-Mongol tribes nor significant Nordic ones and therefore reflected the “purest” of the east Slavic groups. Another theory further underscoring this narrative stressed the uniqueness of the three tribes that constituted the ethnogenesis of the Belarusian nation, which saw its Golden Age during the Duchy of Lithuania.

The initiatives enacted by the Communist Party and Belarusian elites were met by their constituents in a variety of ways. Many peasants were largely indifferent to the Belarusization process. In cities where fewer ethnic Belarusians resided, there was resistance to the project, which Marková attributes to little motivation by mid-level bureaucrats to actively enact policies, to the presence of “great Russian chauvinism, as well as to the long-held belief that Russian was the language of advancement. The entire project was uneven, chaotic, and yet put forward with much effort both by the Party and Belarusian elites. Belarusian teachers, however, embraced the project as they were trained and sent out to work in schools. Despite resistance, hesitancy, and difficulties in textbook and resource procurement, 1928 marks the height of Belarusization. There seemed to be a recognition by many that the language itself was more legitimate and worthy of learning, though this was realistically practiced at various levels depending on region and work sector.

The Belarusization project ended abruptly in 1929, the year that witnessed an overall overhaul of Soviet policies across republics and ushered in the year of the Great Break with drastic turns of policy and events. Was Belarusization successful, and what were some of its legacies? According to Marková, there were important outcomes, including the surge of Belarusian schools and academic studies, lower rates

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