

As always with case studies, the question of the degree to which the central figure of the study was representative—and of what—lurks in the background. By dint of his family background and the resources on which he drew, Shabdan was in some respects an exceptional figure. But this quibble should not diminish the importance of Akiyama's accomplishment. Just as Michael Khodarkovsky used a biographical case study to detail the "bitter choices" intermediaries faced during the tsarist conquest of the Caucasus, Akiyama has wonderfully illustrated the reaction of nomadic Central Asian elites to a world changed by imperial conquest. Russian dominance foreclosed some paths and opened others; to engage with imperial officials was neither to resist nor collaborate, but simply to adapt.

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Black Earth, White Bread: A Techno-political History of Russian Agriculture and

Food. By Susanne E. Wengle. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2022. xv, 309 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Figures. Illustrations. Maps. Tables. \$79.95, hard bound.

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By my rough estimate, since 1992 there have been about forty books and at least 400–500 articles written about Russian agriculture across all disciplines. That's not to say that we know everything or there is nothing new left to discover, but the bar to make an original contribution to this ever-growing literature is high.

Despite its title, *Black Earth* is not a history of Russian agriculture in the mold of the seminal *A Century of Russian Agriculture* by Lazar Volin (1970), who produced the most comprehensive one volume study of Soviet agricultural policy. Instead, *Black Earth* is an interpretative analysis with selective coverage that spans the Soviet period to the present. The purpose of the book is to provide a broad history of Russian agriculture during the past 100 years. As such, most of the content of *Black Earth* is well-known by specialists and has been previously discussed by authors both western and Russian. Further, the basic story line—the recovery of Russian agriculture and its transformation from food importer to food exporter—likewise has been analyzed by numerous scholars. Thus, the book provides a useful review of previously known information and brings together evidence from disparate sources, but does not break new ground.

The strength of the book is the analytical framework rather than uncovering new information.

The author employs a "technopolitical" lens to analyze Russian agricultural policy. The term refers to the use of technology to pursue political goals. This basic hypothesis, that technology has been used for political ends in Russia (and elsewhere) is undoubtedly true. In many countries, developed and developing, there is a marriage between technology and politics, so Russia is not unique. The interesting question is how technology is used to strengthen those in power. At the same time, during a period of rapid technological change and economic development, it is fair to ask which is the independent and which is the dependent variable, and do they stay constant over time? One might suggest that technology and its offshoots impact politics and not just vice versa. The impact of technology and specialized knowledge is evidenced by the development of special interest groups who, although controlled by the Communist Party during Soviet times, nonetheless existed to defend the vested interests of their members in the agricultural system. In the post-Soviet period,

various commodity unions attempt to influence agrarian food policy. The success of Vladimir Putin's food policy rests on the ability to coopt these groups for their support of government policies.

The analytical framework yields some interesting insights and works best in the chapter on food production. The use of technology for political ends is especially germane to the period since 2010 as Russia has emerged as a food exporter. That said, the argument is not entirely convincing. The application of technopolitics at times seems forced. For example, the argument that technology was used for political ends seems curious for an agricultural system in which manual labor accounted for about two-thirds of labor into the late 1960s and early 1970s. Further, the political purpose of importing western agricultural technology is not clear. In other places, the framework seems inappropriate, for example in the discussion of household plots (*lichnoe podsobnoe khoziaistvo*), which the Soviet regime wanted to keep rudimentary and unmodern so as to avoid challenging *kolkhozy*.

The last two chapters, about food consumption and nature, veer away from the technopolitical framework and thus are disconnected from the early chapters of the book. Once again drawing on previously-known material, the consumption chapter discusses access and availability, processed foods, consumer options for eating out, and the rise of fast food. The coverage in the consumption chapter has considerable overlap with my *Russia's Food Revolution* book, which was published in September 2020, although that book does not appear in the endnotes. The final chapter, on nature, likewise has little to do with technopolitics but does contain some interesting information on cattle breeding.

Finally, the title of the book is confusing. It is well-known that in Russian culture white bread is considered inferior to Russian black bread, which represents the "soul" of Russia. It is not clear what meaning the choice of "White Bread" in the title is meant to convey.

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"Islam, Imeiushchii mirnuiu i dobrouiu sushchnost": Diskurs o traditsionnom islame v srede tiurok-musul'man evropeiskoi chasti rossii i kryma. Ed. R. I. Bekkin. *Studia Religiosa*. Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2021. 278 pp. Notes. Glossary. Index. P950.00, hard bound.

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The present volume *"Islam with a Peaceful and Kind Essence": The Discourse on Traditional Islam among Turkic Muslims of the European Part of Russia and Crimea* brings together six contributions examining a dichotomy that, while not new in the history of Islamic societies, has acquired particular salience in the twenty-first century: "traditional" vs. "nontraditional" Islam. While the book does not advance a central argument, its main point is perhaps best summarized by a Crimean respondent quoted in one of the articles: "There are probably more sects here in Crimea than in a society of one hundred million people" (255). In the competitive religious sphere of contemporary Russia, Islamic organizations have deployed, and in some cases weaponized, the discourse of "traditional" Islam in disputes that often crystallize along generational lines.

The number of official mosques in Tatarstan increased from eighteen in 1985 to 1,531 in 2019, operating within the aegis of two competing muftiates (17). As of 2020, neighboring Bashqortostan boasted 1,173 official mosques, also divided between the