

Reviews and Abstracts

Edward Harper Parker, *A Thousand Years of the Tartars*. London: Kegan Paul, 2002. xiii + 288 pp., maps. ISBN 0710307462 (cloth), \$127.50.

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The volume under review represents yet another addition to the growing collection of classic works in the Kegan Paul History of Civilization Series which are now available to the student of history. It is a reprint of the 1894 edition of E. H. Parker's history of the nomads of Inner Eurasia, those whom he characterized as people "whose country was on the back of a horse" (p. i), and whom he placed under the broad label of "Tartars."

A distinguished professor of Chinese at the University of Manchester, Parker, not surprisingly, produced a work representative of the scholarly tradition of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, where history and philology functioned as almost the "alter egos" of each other. The preface to the second edition reflects this reality as E. H. Parker reveals in no ambiguous terms his intention of offering readers "the substance of all the Chinese have to say about the nomad Tartars previous to the conquests of Genghis Khan," having "translated word for word, all the original Chinese authorities" (p. ix). Hence, it is the Chinese perception of the nomads that defines Parker's history, despite references to authors of other lands and times, from Herodotus and Zemarcho to Chavannes, Pelliot, Radlov, and Thomsen. The reader, however, will encounter difficulties in sorting out the configurations of the Chinese perceptions of the nomads, since Parker neither identifies the authorities whose works he translated, nor provides references to them in notes. Instead, in a somewhat imperial *dixit* fashion, he points to the existence of some 7,000 explanatory notes without including them in the body of his work, and places the burden on his readers of judging his work on trust alone.

Parker's book comprises thirty chapters organized in seven "books." Book One is entitled, "The Empire of the Hiung-nu." Here Parker focuses on the pastoralists identified in more recent

scholarship as the Xiongnu and provides a discussion of their empire. Based in the Ordos region, the Xiongnu were, along with the Donghu of Eastern Mongolia and the Yuezhi of Gansu, one of the most remarkable pastoralist associations on China's northern borderlands. Parker's discussion of the rise and decline of their empire, however, may pose difficulties for the unwarned reader. This is partly due to the fact that, by his own admission, the transliteration system he chose, "the Pekingese dialect...is about the worst that could have been chosen, so far as the chance of any resemblance to the Tartar sounds intended is concerned" (p. ix). He justifies this choice on the grounds that it is "the best known to those students in China who are likely to require references" (p. ix). This choice in transliteration makes it very difficult, if not impossible, for the unwarned reader to realize that *shanyu*, the Xiongnu designation for a tribal leader, is the *jenuye* of the Parker narrative, while *shanyu* Tumen of the Xiongnu is Parker's Deuman (p. 8). These difficulties notwithstanding, Book One offers a wealth of information of an "ethnographic" nature, allowing the reader a richer glimpse, albeit through Chinese eyes, at the worlds of the Xiongnu. In addition, its value also stems from recognizing heterogeneity as a defining quality of pastoralist cultures and from the critique, be it mild and implied, of Eurocentrism, as Parker warns that "the history of the Far East is quite as interesting as that of the Far West" (p. 12).

Book Two is devoted to "The Empire of the Sien-Pi." The focus is on identifying the Xianbei, the label the Chinese employed to refer to those tribes which dominated the northern borderlands of China after the collapse of the Xiongnu. Here, Parker traces the "genealogy" of the Xianbei to the

Donghu [Eastern Hu]¹ commonwealth without mentioning the fact that Hu was the Chinese identifier for horse riding barbarians; along with a discussion of the etymology of "Tungus" he offers rich ethnographic information about them. Although the Xianbei were not successful in forging a durable pastoral state, they experienced a brief moment of glory under their leader Tanshihuai (Parker's Dardjegwe), who defeated a large Chinese army in 177 C.E. and controlled a large federation until his death in 180 C.E. Not surprisingly, Tanshihuai receives ample coverage in this "book," which also contains information concerning Xiongnu military-political practices, as well as Chinese strategies of co-opting and "taming the barbarians" in order to establish stable tributary relationships with them. Even more interesting however, is Parker's discussion of Tanshihuai's solutions to domestic crises. Many of his decisions provide additional evidence to enhance the validity of A. Khazanov's argument in *Nomads and the Outside World* regarding the fact that the history of the pastoralists cannot be considered in a vacuum given the importance of their relations with agrarian societies and other communities.

One of the results of this type of pastoralist/agrarian interaction was the emergence of symbiotic polities created by the Xianbei of the Manchurian borderlands. Parker discusses the deeds of Murong Hui (Mujung Hwei) the Xianbei shanyu who was the founder of the first polity of this kind, as well as the deeds of his successor Murong Huang (Mujung Hwang), and notes their membership in the "most illustrious of Sien-pi houses" (p. 101). Such an evaluation echoes, no doubt, the "voice" of the Chinese sources which most likely praised the Chinese educated Murong Hui, who adopted China's sedentary ways by encouraging farming and establishing a capital city in Manchuria. As well, they probably praised his equally Sinicized successor Murong Huang, who proclaimed himself Emperor of a new dynasty in 337 C.E. In doing so, he launched the pattern of Manchurian dynastic rule in China.

In this "book" Parker provides ample ethnographic/anthropological information about the Xianbei, as well as the Toba, or the Northern Wei of the Chinese, who by the middle of the fifth century C.E. had become powerful enough to control

Northern China, most of Mongolia, and the lands west of it. Most valuable here is the information Parker provides concerning the Sinification of the Toba/Wei, which included prohibitions of their customs, "Tartar language, weights, standards, and measures" (p. 104). Read critically, it is this kind of information that may prove useful to the student of history and anthropology today.

Book Three, entitled "The Empire of the Jwen-Jwen or Jeu-Jen," offers a brief discussion of the Juan Juan, whose confederation became so powerful in the sixth century under Anagui (Anakwe) that the Wei emperor recognized him as an equal. Much of this "book" is devoted to discussing the conflicts between the Toba/Wei and the Juan Juan, as well as the Sinification of the latter, whose king "had Chinese literates in his employ" (p. 120). Parker argues that after the death of Anagui the Juan Juan were completely annihilated by the Turks and refutes Chavannes's contention that the Juan Juan are identical with the Avars who replaced the Huns in Hungary. He also considers "totally devoid of foundation" (p. 121) Gibbon's claim that it was Attila who vanquished the khan of the Juan Juan, or *Geougen* as they are identified by Gibbon. Despite the extensive discussion of the "ethnic" roots of the Juan Juan in this "book," Parker fails to provide a definitive answer. Today, there is still no consensus on either their linguistic or "ethnic" origin and identity: Mongolian, Turkic, and Hunnic/Avar all figure as possibilities.

Book Four is called "The Empire of the Turks." Parker begins it by stating in no ambiguous terms that "the ancestors of the Turks were a group of Hiung-nu families bearing the clan name Assena" [Ashina] (p. 130). This statement, however, should be viewed with caution. Despite the fact that most historians agree that the language spoken by the people who ruled the eastern regions of Inner Eurasia in the sixth and seventh centuries was a form of Turkic, opinions on the origins of the Turks vary. Parker, not surprisingly, reflects the thinking of the "Chinese school" which traces their origins to the Xiongnu, but in many other accounts the Turks appear as the descendants of more ancient groups who were enslaved by the Juan Juan and worked as miners for them.

It was the victory of the Turks led by Tumen over Anagui, the Juan Juan leader, that marked the emergence of the first empire of the Turks (551-630 C.E.). Parker's mention of the fact that Tumen took the title "ili khakhan" in the aftermath of this victory

¹ Terms in brackets indicate author translations, or Pinyin equivalents for Parker's version of terms and names. Parentheses indicate Parker's version of names or terms.

offers a better opportunity for understanding the "dual rule" of the Turk empire. Hence, Tumen was the supreme ruler of its eastern wing and Ishtemi (Istami) ruled its western wing, and upon Tumen's death his son Muhan (Mukan) joined Ishtemi in the equation of "dual rule." Rich in information on the customs, social structure, language, and food culture of the Turks, this "book" also provides information on the relationship of these two rulers as well as of their successors. In particular, Parker's discussion of the relations of Dalobian with China (pp. 132-139) contributes to a better understanding of the fragmentation and demise of the Turk empire as one of the episodes of the pastoralist/agrarian interaction.

Parker's analysis of the second Turk empire (683-734 C.E.) is launched with the discussion of "the rise and fall of Mercho's Empire." Here he refers to Mocho, who ruled from 691 to 716 but was not the architect of the second empire. It was Elterish Kagan (r. 682-692) who accomplished the brief revival of the Turk empire, but the fact that Mocho is privileged by Parker may be indicative once more of his "China bias," since it was Mocho who maintained good relations with China while engaging in warfare with Turkic tribes. Not surprisingly then, Parker provides here information on Turkic warfare. In this chapter in particular, however, he also offers discussions of etymologies and "ethnic" identities, drawing on the authority of scholars such as Chavannes and Pelliot, but particularly Thomsen and Radlov, who gained prominence for their role in deciphering the inscriptions on the Orkhon Stellae.

Book Five focuses on "The Empire of the Western Turks." This is, no doubt, one of the "books" most difficult to follow because of the tediousness of chronicling the events that marked the last moments of glory for the Ashina clan, whose decline began with the death of its last leader in 659 C.E. This chapter also contains a discussion of the Kyrgyz. Parker's claim that "the history of the Kirghiz is traceable with almost perfect clearness" (p. 185) could not withstand critical scrutiny and should be discounted; the ethnographic information he provides, however, is useful for testing the validity of those sources that contain similar information.

Book Six is a brief account of "The Empire of the Ouigours [Uyghurs]." Tracing the founding of the Uyghur empire to the Tiele (Ting-ling), Parker launches a long etymological discussion, and advances another sweeping claim that "the Kirghiz

and the Ouigours spoke the same language" (p. 196). This too is a statement that would hardly withstand serious scrutiny. Parker's whimsical rendition of names is cumbersome and represents a serious hindrance throughout. Despite this, however, his account of Guli Peilo (Bira), the founder of the eighth century Uyghur empire, together with that of his son Moyancho, along with the discussion of their relations with China and their conversion to Manichaeism, do make a contribution to piecing together the complex picture of the metamorphoses undergone by various types of pastoralists as a result of their interactions with other types of societies.

Book Seven, entitled "The Empire of the Cathayans [Khitans]," contains a detailed discussion of those military and political developments on China's northern borderlands that were responsible for projecting Manchuria into prominence. Parker focuses on the two dynasties that rose from Manchuria to conquer most of northern China: the Khitan (Cathay) and the Jurchen (Nuchen), who founded the Liao (907-1125 C.E.) and the Jin (1115-1234 C.E.) dynasties, respectively. In addition, he offers an account of the Karakitai, who founded the western Liao kingdom in eastern Central Asia after the defeat of the Khitan by the Jurchen in 1124. Not surprisingly, there is ample information on lifeways, military, diplomatic, and political matters. What should be noted in this context is Parker's perceptiveness in highlighting the fact that even as rulers of northern China, the Khitans proved to be very resilient in safeguarding their nomadic traditions and practices: "Cathayans appear to have adhered to one fixed principle — never to abandon their ancient wandering habits of life" (p. 233). Still, they were changed by their interaction with the Chinese, just as the Chinese changed as a result of their encounters with the nomads. Parker's conclusion highlights this reality, as he points to the fact that after the Han and Tang dynasties "no native ruling house has ever held North China for long," and after 1643, China's rulers were the Manchus, "an obscure tribe affiliated to the Nuchens" (p. 271).

From the Xiongnu to the Khitan and the Jurchen, Parker's historical stage featured tribes and peoples of impressive diversity across the Mongol, Turkic and Siberian "ethnic" landscape. Yet, he crowded them all under the label of "Tartar" as a generic term for the pastoralist nomads beyond China's northern borderlands. The question that begs for an answer as one reviews Parker's book is: at a time when the student of Inner Eurasian studies can reach out for the excellent works of scholars such as

Thomas Barfield, David Christian, Morris Rossabi, Denis Sinor and Khazanov, to name a few, why read *A Thousand Years of the Tartars*? Perhaps, to measure the road the field traveled, to sharpen one's critical skills, to test one's command of the basics, and to tease out interesting ethnographic details.

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Balzhan Zhimbiiev, *History of the Urbanisation of a Siberian City: Ulan-Ude*. Cambridge: Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit, University of Cambridge, 2000. Inner Asia Book Series. 121 pp., notes, bibliography, illustrations. ISBN 1874267464, \$65.00.

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It is all too easy to assume that provincial Soviet cities in non-Russian regions are the wholly artificial creations of the politically dominant ethnic Russians called into being by the dictates of an all-powerful central government. Supposedly these cities are the passive recipients and obedient executors of policies determined in Moscow, virtually static islands of purely Russian culture, population and language in an indigenous non-Russian sea. Yet this rather monochromatic picture is in need of coloration: the history of provincial cities situated in nationality areas is far more complex and nuanced than we often assume, as is shown by Balzhan Zhimbiiev's study of Ulan-Ude, the capital of the Buryat Republic (formerly the Buryat Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, or ASSR) in southeastern Siberia.

Ulan-Ude (which bore the name Verkhneudinsk until 1934) has witnessed and participated in the major dramatic events and phases in the Russian and Soviet past. Yet despite its status as the capital of the Buryat Republic and as one of Siberia's larger cities (with a 1996 population of 386,000), Ulan-Ude remains relatively little studied. To be sure, we do have at our disposal several Russian-language studies of the city as an object of historical and sociological investigation written during the Soviet era, for example L. K. Minert's *Arkhitektura goroda Ulan-Ude*, and *Pamiatniki arkhitektury Buriatii*; P. L. Nataev's *Ulan-Ude: kraevedcheskii ocherk*; and N. V. Kim's *Ocherki istorii Ulan-Ude*. Predictably, such works emphasize Soviet-era achievements in the areas of industrial growth, educational and cultural institutions, and housing construction, although post-Soviet works on Ulan-Ude such as G. M. Semina's *Iz istorii goroda Ulan-Ude* and *Ulan-Ude v proshlom i*

nastoiashchem, edited by V. A. Shapovalov et al. have helped to provide a corrective. The ethnic Buryat population of Ulan-Ude appears as the object of anthropological study in a number of works, such as K. V. Vyatkina's *Ocherki kul'tury i byta buriat* and K. D. Basaeva's *Sovremennyi byt i etnokul'turnye protsessy v Buriatii*. Yet we have no monographs in English on Ulan-Ude's history.

Zhimbiiev, a research fellow of Cambridge University's Mongolia and Inner Asian Studies Unit, has gone a long way in filling this gap by presenting us with his investigation of the development of Ulan-Ude and its environs from antiquity to the present. As befits the author's training in architecture and town planning at the Moscow Institute of Land Utilization and the Moscow Architectural Institute, Zhimbiiev's study emphasizes the "historical stages in the growth of the built environment" (p. 2). In other words, he focuses upon Ulan-Ude as a physical space utilized and manipulated by its inhabitants and economic and political authorities, rather than on the history of the political, social, and cultural developments that have occurred in the city. Thus, changes in the city's planning, layout, construction, and architectural types; the provision of housing for the population; and the interaction between humans and their physical environment occupy pride of place in most of the work. At the same time, Zhimbiiev provides a wealth of valuable information relating to the ethnohistory of the indigenous Buryats in and around Ulan-Ude. For the student of the nationalities of Russia east of the Urals, it is perhaps these contributions that are the most valuable.

In the book's first section, "Settlements and Housing Patterns in the Region," Zhimbiiev

investigates the history of Ulan-Ude and its environs before the October Revolution. He notes that Tsarist and Soviet observers and historians of Siberian urbanization treated Ulan-Ude and other Siberian cities as creations *ex nihilo*, and assumed that the native inhabitants had never established settlements in the area prior to the arrival of the Russian invaders and colonists, nor had many dealings with the new colonial cities and their Russian inhabitants during the Tsarist period. This assumption was not only flawed, it was self-serving from the point of view of the ethnic Russians: if the Buryats were indeed a "migratory and backward" (p. 14) population whose hand lay light upon the land, then this "suggested the lack of real ties of the 'migratory population' to particular areas, thus enabling the claims of newcomers to be validated by their 'closer' ties to the same land" (p. 13). But as Zhimbiev points out, Ulan-Ude and its environs had been occupied long before the arrival of the Russians. Archaeologists have found "remains of ancient towns and encampments, tumuli, scattered dwellings and grave sites" (p. 12) constructed by the Buryats and their predecessors the Xiongnu, Turks, Qidans [Khitans], and Mongols. Once Russians began to fashion their own settlement at the confluence of the Uda and Selenga Rivers in the late 1660s, they did so on the site of a Buryat settlement, not in an unpeopled wilderness. The notion that Verkhneudinsk/Ulan-Ude was a purely Russian city with which the Buryats had little contact is equally erroneous: there were frequent interactions between urban Russians and Buryats who came in from the countryside to trade their meat and dairy products, grain, various crafts, wool, and leather. Russians predominated in Verkhneudinsk's population, to be sure, but there were always Buryat inhabitants alongside them, and these urban Buryats were by no means the passive recipients of Russification and Russian influences. Zhimbiev notes that even though Verkhneudinsk's Buryats often built wooden housing in the Russian style, they hired Buryat builders or instructed Russian contractors to construct homes that took into account the Buryats' specific needs (such as sacred spaces for storing and displaying *ongons*, the statues of shamanist deities).

The Soviet and early post-Soviet eras are the focus of the book's second section, "Town Becomes Capital." During the Stalinist industrialization drive of the 1930s, the physical characteristics and population of Ulan-Ude changed radically. Not only did the city gain new factories in the railway, aviation, glass-making, and other economic sectors,

but industrialization led to an influx of new workers. At the time of the Buryat ASSR's founding in 1923, Verkhneudinsk's population stood at 20,500, but by 1939 it had swelled to 125,700, with most of the new migrants being Russians and other non-Buryats.

During the Soviet era, Ulan-Ude suffered from the insufficient and shoddy housing typical of the USSR. To alleviate these problems, the economic enterprises and the state built housing of a variety of types from the 1930s on: workers' barracks and wood or brick single-family dwellings and duplexes (1930s), then multi-floor apartment blocks (1930s-1950s), standardized three-to-five-story modular apartments (1960s-1970s), and finally, beginning in the late 1970s, nine-to-twelve-story high-rise apartment buildings. Some of Ulan-Ude's residents were not content to wait passively for housing to be provided for them and took matters into their own hands, illegally building "shantytowns...unregulated self-built huddles of small log houses" (p. 59) near their workplaces or in areas that local authorities deemed too undesirable or dangerous for officially-sanctioned construction, such as the flood plains of the Uda and Selenga Rivers. In this way, migrants to Ulan-Ude who found themselves starved for shelter managed to carve out living spaces for themselves in the interstices of the command economy and totalitarian system.

But while departure from official norms was permitted in housing construction itself, at least during the period of the most severe shortages, the display of national characteristics in housing was another matter altogether. The repression of Buryat culture that began in the 1930s and continued in varying degrees to the end of the Soviet era meant that "Buryats became reluctant to display their national traditions in any form, including housing, because that might be treated as a form of nationalism" (p. 68). As a result, even though the continual expansion of the city's boundaries led to the absorption of surrounding Buryat settlements, the Soviet-era heritage of Ulan-Ude displays a "non-manifestation of ethnic and local characteristics in housing and architecture" (p. 68).

Yet, as Zhimbiev points out in the third section, "The City in the Late Soviet Period," just as the perestroika and early post-Soviet eras have allowed an explosion of new types of commercial structures and new individual housing for those who could afford it, so too has an element of "Buryatness" begun to flourish in Ulan-Ude and the surrounding countryside. Buddhist monasteries,

temples, and *suburgans* (stupas), as well as shamanist *oboos* (sacred cairns) began to appear. At the same time public celebrations of long-banned Buryat holidays created “a new space...for the indigenous culture to represent itself publicly” (p. 92).

Zhimbiev's slim but highly informative work fills many gaps in our knowledge of the development of Buryatia's capital city. If one were to carp at minor flaws, one would note the occasional typographic error. The reader should also be aware that Zhimbiev refers to “the History of the Tang dynasty, the dynasty that ruled in China in the fourth to the eighth centuries A.D. [sic]” (p. 28) as a source for the study of Asiatic ethnic groups whose territory included the site of the later Ulan-Ude, when the commonly accepted dates of the Tang Dynasty are 618-907 A.D. Yet these infelicities certainly do not detract from the book's overall worth. *History of the Urbanisation of a Siberian City* provides a unique glimpse of the evolution of one eastern colonial city that places Ulan-Ude's development squarely within the context of the history and characteristics of Russian/Soviet colonial cities as a whole. Although Zhimbiev's detailed treatments of city plans, architectural types, the management and ownership of housing and enterprises, and changes in the use of public space, etc., will be of interest primarily to specialists in urban studies, sociology, and economic development, the information he provides on Ulan-Ude's ethnic Buryats will prove of great value to the

student of nationality issues in the Russian/Soviet East.

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Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations*. New York: New York University Press, 2000. xvii + 272 pp. ISBN 014775543 (cloth), \$55; 014775551 (paper), \$20.

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First published in the French language in 1997 under the title *La nouvelle Asie centrale ou la fabrication des nations*, Olivier Roy's work on the national transformation of Central Asia was finally made available in an English translation in 2000. Given the timeliness of the issues discussed in the volume, it should be considered essential reading for anyone expressing an interest in Central Asia. Obviously, recent developments in the region will not be covered, but that is beside the point: the book is about how the respective identities and cultures of the Central Asian states formed over a long period of time.

Beginning with early notions of “history” and “identity,” Roy quickly moves the discussion to the era of the Russian and then Soviet control of Central Asia. The theme of how the concept of “nation” was created in Central Asia is woven throughout the text. While this in itself is not a new idea, the way in which Roy outlines this evolution, especially in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, is a fascinating study. Beginning in the first chapter, Roy sets the parameters for what he calls “group solidarities,” those structures within which people identify with others. During the pre-Russian period in Central Asian history, this tended to focus on tribal and clan

relations. However, Roy is quick to note that such constructs are fluid, multiple, and can vary in importance over time. It has been the mistake of outsiders to assume that such identities, or group solidarities, can remain static.

This conceptual framework is expanded in subsequent chapters on the Russian conquest, reformist movements, and finally the Soviet takeover of Central Asia. As insightfully outlined in chapter five, the Soviet era ultimately created new entities in the region, such as the kolkhoz, around which group solidarities could form. Ironically, at the same time, the Soviet government was trying to create "national" solidarity groups in the region. Again, while numerous scholars have explained this latter notion of Central Asian history, Roy juxtaposes the creation of "national identities" with the evolution of local-level solidarity groupings, suggesting that they are inextricably linked.

Roy creates a setting in which the complex nature of competing and conflicting identities can be appreciated. His knowledge of Tajikistan, in particular, is demonstrated time and again, revealing the incredibly complex nature of intra-regional and kolkhoz-versus-kolkhoz conflict in that country. He also spends considerably more time on Uzbekistan than he does on Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Turkmenistan, a fact the author himself notes in the introduction. This balance is not really an issue until the final third of the book, which highlights the "post-independence" experiences of the Central Asian states. Because of the limited time frame in question (up through the mid-1990s), this analysis raises more questions than answers and simply suggests possible courses of actions for the respective leaders. This is particularly evident in the final chapter on the "geostrategic significance" of

Central Asia. The brevity of discussion means that the rather complex array of foreign policy, trade, and security arrangements in the region are reduced to standard perceptions of nascent *Realpolitik*.

Scholars and students already familiar with issues of tribal, clan, national, religious, and other identity questions in Central Asia will appreciate the volume more than novices. The flood of names, places and terms noted in local languages may be overwhelming to someone just getting to know Central Asia. That there is neither a detailed map of Central Asia nor, better yet, maps of the individual countries and sub-regions, will create some confusion for readers unfamiliar with the region. Lastly, minor editorial discrepancies exist in the volume, such as the incorrect noting of Faizulla Khojaev's birth year (1896, not 1898) and position in the Uzbek government (Premier, not President), as well as the name of Turkmenistan's Foreign Minister for much of the 1990s (Shikhmuradov, not Sheikhamammed). However, these are few and far between and do little to detract from the general tenor of the book.

In the end, the book accomplishes what the author set out to do. Today, over six years after the original writing of the book, much of what is said holds true. Indeed, the declaration of President Akaev that 2003 would be the "Year of Kyrgyz Statehood" can be explained by Roy's assertions regarding the political need to transcend the local group identities and create "national level" ones. In his conclusion, the author remarks that "...the attributes of statehood have their reality, beyond flags and colored spots of land on the maps of children's encyclopaediae" (p. 200). It is the discussion of the evolution of this sentiment — this national feeling — that Roy so well describes.

Daniel Heradstveit, *Democracy and Oil: The Case of Azerbaijan*. Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2001. 115 pp. ISBN 3895002402, \$32.

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The Soviet Union's disintegration in 1991 initiated a process of transition away from the monopolistic Soviet system to a new system throughout the successive independent states, which their citizens hoped would be democracy. In practice, the majority of these states have failed to build such a political system, despite differences among their polities.

Soon after independence, Azerbaijan seemed to be in a better economic situation than many other former Soviet republics to work towards the creation of a stable democracy. As citizens of an oil-rich country, the Azeris hoped that their oil exports would help them create the necessary economic basis for their desired democratic system.

In his book, *Democracy and Oil: The Case of Azerbaijan*, Daniel Heradstveit examines the development of democracy, including respect for human rights, since independence. To this end, he studies the role of the Azeri oil industry, dominated by Western oil companies, in the country's efforts to build democracy. The industry is Azerbaijan's core economic sector, capable of affecting the country's future political and economic development. Viewing corruption within the Azeri ruling elite as a factor with a major negative impact on the formation of a democracy, the author aims at determining the foreign oil companies' contribution to its existence and expansion.

Heradstveit assumes that a key criterion to determine whether a country is democratic is how its rulers treat the opposition. Based on that assumption, he intentionally narrows down the empirical data he uses by drawing primarily on the perspectives of Azeri opposition groups concerning the democratization process and the foreign oil companies. He also limits the scope of his analysis to the role of the Western oil companies in Azerbaijan's efforts towards democratization and human rights. He surveys the status of democratic institutions in Azerbaijan as a background for his analysis.

Heradstveit analyzes the process of state building in Azerbaijan by examining what he describes as its more or less democratic constitution, i.e., what the country is theoretically committed to, and comparing that with the existing Azeri political realities. The author pays special attention to the political system's behavior towards human rights, while emphasizing the weakness of Azerbaijan's civil society as a major obstacle to the strength of democracy and the institutionalization of human rights. For him, Azerbaijan's underdeveloped economy is another major obstacle. However, he suggests that its rich oil resources have the potential to develop the economy to support a democratic political system, if Azerbaijan does not follow the model of the Arab Persian Gulf states, which use their oil-generated income to consolidate authoritarianism.

The author also considers the importance of major internal and external threats to the democratization of Azerbaijan's state. He identifies the irredentist movement in Nagorno-Karabakh, Baku's ties with the main regional powers (Iran and Russia), the unresolved issue of dividing the Caspian Sea among its littoral states, and Azerbaijan's hostile

relations with Armenia as factors slowing down the democratization.

As indicated above, the author considers the Azeri state to be a "nominal democracy," meaning that, although the model of democracy in Azerbaijan cannot compare with Western models, the state's efforts at emulating that model are not just "window-dressing to pacify Western criticism" (p. 24). He bases his argument on the Azeri elite's steps towards developing a secular ideology with democratic tendencies, advocating close ties with the West. In his comparison of Azerbaijan's experience with other Muslim states of the former Soviet Union in their efforts to build democracy, the author evaluates Azerbaijan as a "winner" along with Kyrgyzstan (p. 25).

Considering the reasons for the failure of many "Muslim" states to create "Western-style" democracy to be mainly economic problems and "kleptocracy," Heradstveit sees better chances for Azerbaijan to achieve democracy (p. 25). His reasoning is based on the country's potential to build a strong, oil-driven economy and on its short-lived experience (1918-20) as an indigenous democratic state.

Noting some of the shortcomings of Azeri President Heydar Aliiev, the author gives him credit for his efforts to establish a secular state with a democratic direction, notwithstanding its weaknesses. He also credits Aliiev's view on the long-term nature of building a democracy in Azerbaijan, since "going too fast will only lead to alienation, frustration and a vehement reaction" (p. 25).

The main objective of Heradstveit's book is to evaluate the role of the Western oil companies in the "struggle" for democracy in Azerbaijan, i.e., whether they directly or indirectly weaken or strengthen it (p. 11). Interviews with 20 opposition figures, whose biases he acknowledges, form the primary data used for the book's analysis. The rest is secondary data drawn from the works of mainly Western scholars on state-building and democratization in Azerbaijan since independence.

Based on his interviews, the author concludes that the Azeri opposition regards the Western oil companies as "co-conspirators in the high level of corruption," (p. 103) either due to their corrupt natures or else out of necessity for preserving their interests while working in a corrupt political system. Heradstveit thinks this should be alarming to these

companies, which should demonstrate their opposition to corruption. Otherwise, the future ascension to power of the opposition will have a negative impact on their economic interests in Azerbaijan.

As an analysis of the post-independent development in Azerbaijan, *Democracy and Oil* is not a comprehensive work. It lacks elaboration on many factors important to the development of the Azeri state and its undemocratic character. These include the growing role of non-regional powers,

especially the United States, that now have long-term political and economic stakes in the Caspian Sea region. These powers exert a significant influence on shaping the region's political future. However, within the context of its intentionally narrowed focus, i.e., analyzing the viability of a stable political system that has a long-term goal of evolution into a democratic one, the book offers insights of interest to Western oil companies that have made large investments in oil-rich Azerbaijan.