

psyche. Andrea Cossu's article on *Giorno del Ricordo* introduces Jeffrey Alexander's concept of 'cultural trauma construction' to the study of national myths and symbols. Finally, Enric Castelló and Rafael Castelló offer us fresh data compiled from registers of participation in different celebrations in Valencia which has three separate diades, or national days.

There are some unfortunate examples as well. Hence it is not clear why Warren Pearson (himself the Chief Executive Officer of the National Australia Day Council) and Grant O'Neill's contribution, a eulogy to 'Australian multiculturalism', found its way to an 'academic' collection of essays – instead of ending up as a tourism brochure. Informative as it is, Nyssönen's article on Independence Day in Finland suffers from a similar blurring of lines separating the scholar from his object of investigation when he talks about 'our focus on the end of' the Winter War of 1939–1940 (p. 142, emphasis added). There are also problems with Michael Skey's polemical reading of Michael Billig's influential *Banal Nationalism* (for a more extended version of Skey's critique and Billig's reply, see *The Sociological Review*, vol. 57, no. 2, 2009). Billig never 'overlooks' the link between 'banal' and 'hot' (what Skey calls 'ecstatic' – nothing more than an exercise in academic name-calling, to use Walker Connor's terms!) nationalisms. On the contrary, one of the core arguments of the book concerns the role of small, largely unnoticed, reminders of nationhood in turning the background space into 'national' space and in paving the way to extreme manifestations of national feeling in times of crisis.

All in all, though, *National Days: Constructing and Mobilising National Identity* is a valuable contribution to the study of national days, not so much in theory as in application, thanks to its eye for historical details and, more generally, the wealth of information it contains.

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Serguei Alex Oushakine, *The Patriotism of Despair: Nation, War, and Loss in Russia*, Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London, 2009. 312 pp, \$24.95 (pbk), \$78.95 (hbk).

This book reveals the crucial role played by traumatic narratives and memories of loss in shaping a sense of national belonging in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Serguei Oushakine examines various forms of what he calls "the trope of loss" – images of the nation's demise, trauma stories of Chechen war veterans, public commemorations of fallen soldiers – to show that all these practices emerged to forge a new sense of solidarity, which he defines as "the patriotism of despair." The book argues that, in a time of profound transformations with no other navigational tools in sight, it was the "discourse on the Russian tragedy" that served to render the transitional experience meaningful. Tracing how various communities struggled to rebuild themselves through articulations of trauma – real or imagined – Oushakine locates these developments in a broader cultural perspective and frames the entire discussion in terms of Russia's long-standing tension between the notion of the state and that of the nation. The book masterfully demonstrates how the state-oriented identity that had traditionally commanded strong public support in Russia became increasingly ambiguous, with the collapse of the institutions that had forged it.

Simultaneously post-Soviet Russia saw a rise of ethnocentric discourses, with their ultimate focus on wounds, violence and pain—discourses which, as the book highlights, tend to supplant the expressions that support state identity.

“Communities of loss bound by solidarity of grief” (78) – this definition of modern Russian nationalism, applicable to the entire country, grew out of the author’s fieldwork in the Altai region, with Barnaul as its administrative and cultural center. Three sorts of data support Oushakine’s conclusions: his interviews with ordinary Altai inhabitants and political activists; textbooks, articles, and leaflets written by local journalists, university professors, and graduate students; and, finally, the political constructs articulated by Moscow academics and high-profile politicians, predominantly national-Bolsheviks. The very juxtaposition of these multiple sources is revealing: embedded in a larger body of current xenophobic rhetoric, this material displays the interaction between the center and the province and vividly demonstrates how intellectual constructs are translated into politics on the ground.

Oushakine offers a nuanced, well-argued, and theoretically informed interpretation of the “myth of ethnotrauma” in modern Russia, and the book will undoubtedly occupy a significant place in nationalism studies. But the question inevitably arises: to what extent is the Russian “patriotism of despair” unique? Post-Soviet Russia is certainly not the only country that has utilized recollection of loss and war memories to elicit a patriotic response. Do nationalist ideologies of other countries play this card differently? Are such practices more intense, or of different quality, in Russia than elsewhere? A comparative approach to the role of trauma in shaping a sense of national belonging could have vastly strengthened the central argument of the book. And it would have been particularly illuminating had the author looked (at least briefly) at how other post-imperial societies coped with the disintegration of their polities and used the trope of loss.

Oushakine traces the origins of the “myth of ethnotrauma” back to late Soviet ethnography (Yulian Bromley and Lev Gumiliev) and the dissident movement (Alexandr Solzhenitsyn and Alexandr Zinoviev). The author thus effectively highlights the continuity of Russian ethnocentric discourses. But the experience of the nation’s suffering, martyrdom, and traumatic survival has been mythologized in Russia since the nineteenth century, when the ideological groundwork for modern nationalist discourses was laid down. The author convincingly argues that it is difficult to understand current Russian nationalism without analysis of the late-Soviet legacy. But the Soviet (in fact, anti-Soviet) thinkers’ efforts to reshape Russia’s history in ethnic terms did not come out of nowhere. They developed, enriched, and sometimes subverted a long and diverse tradition of ethnocentric narratives from the Slavophiles and Dostoevsky in the nineteenth century through twentieth-century philosophers and politicians, including Eurasianists, the direct predecessors of Gumiliev. To set up the correct context for the phenomenon under investigation, it would have been helpful had the author offered at least a brief explanation of the previous tradition and highlighted its differences from the material analyzed in the book, which firmly situates “the patriotism of despair” in the post-socialist ideological vacuum.

My final question pertains to the issue of which strata of Russian society subscribe to the rhetoric Oushakine outlines. Does this tragic version of national belonging, with its overtones of conspiracy and militarist underpinnings, appeal to all social groups and enjoy overwhelming support in modern Russia? Does this rhetoric represent all of Russia, leaving no hope of public support for civic nationalism? Providing answers to such questions would have given fuller context to the material the book analyzes.

Notwithstanding these shortcomings (which are inevitable in any work, and particularly in a project that seeks to fill the many gaps in our understanding of modern Russian nationalism), this is extremely valuable reading for specialists in Russia and for those who study nationalism elsewhere. It will be of particular interest for graduate students and for college instructors who teach courses like "Russia Today." Interdisciplinary, intellectually sophisticated, elegantly written, and well organized, the book combines the theoretical frameworks of anthropology, history, and cultural studies and reveals the fundamental importance of the rhetoric of negation in post-Soviet Russian patriotism.

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André Lecours & Geneviève Nootens (eds.) *Dominant Nationalism, Dominant Ethnicity: Identity, Federalism and Democracy*, Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2009. 234 pp. £35.90 (pbk).

As the sub-title implies, this edited volume covers an impressive set of related issues within the study of ethnicity and nationalism, from identity to federalism and democracy. The contributors generally argue (or discuss, where they don't agree) that state nationalism 'is often penetrated by the culture and traditions of a dominant group,' (p. 26). The collection consists of an introduction and nine pieces separated into three sections: the first dealing with theory and historical analysis; the second with specific case studies of dominant nationalism and ethnicity; and, the third consisting of a single piece that focuses on federalism and democracy from below. While these sections represent rather arbitrary divisions (with case studies appearing in the first and considerable theoretical reflections in the second), the contributions represent a balance between normative and qualitative approaches, covering a number of cases (Canada, Spain, United States, France, Netherlands and Indonesia – however, Canada certainly receives the majority of treatment).

The introduction succeeds at covering the various issues tackled in the rest of the book. Lecours and Nootens succinctly provide context of the relevant debates within the study of ethnicity and nationalism, while illuminating the links between the issues (if somewhat disjointedly). Section One begins with a particularly strong chapter by Kaufmann that provides a clear and brief overview of his pioneering work in the area of dominant ethnicity. This is followed by a useful analytic tool to better understand dominant nationalism (by considering referents, lenses and resources), which is then applied to the Canadian case and followed by some brief normative reflections arguing for 'liberal ethnicity' where dominance is 'exercised within strict liberal limits' (p. 54).

With Kaufmann's piece and the introduction providing the theoretical backbone of the volume, a number of other related theoretical and historical issues are covered in Section One. Conversi links dominant ethnicity to state-building by looking at the use of dominant nationalism by elites to impose their culture, with a focus on Spain. Erk then highlights the role of international factors at play in the 19th century (particularly geopolitics and security) in the formation of a unified and centralized France and more diverse and loose Netherlands. Section One is closed off by Tierney providing a useful framework to understand the link between constitutionalism and dominant nationalism, while arguing that liberal democratic constitutionalism (and its enforcement by the courts) crystallizes dominant national identity.