

Nationalities Papers

VOLUME 31 NUMBER 2 JUNE 2003

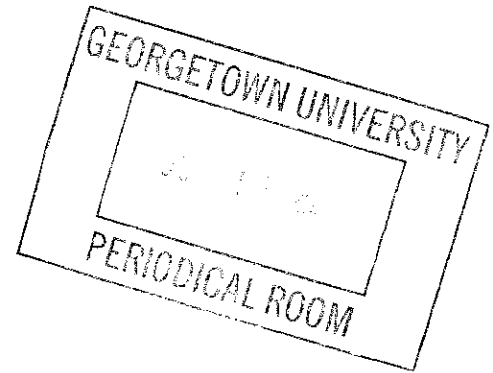
CONTENTS

ARTICLES

- Sources of Post-communist Democratization: Economic Structure,
Political Culture, War, and Political Institutions
Shale Horowitz 119
- Kyiv's Troeshchyna: An Emerging International Migrant Neighborhood
Blair A. Ruble 139
- Islam, Identity and Politics: Kazakhstan, 1990–2000
Azade-Ayse Rorlich 157
- Ethnic Social Distance in Kyrgyzstan: Evidence from a Nationwide
Opinion Survey
Regina Faranda and David B. Nolle 177
- “Us” or “Them”? Belarusians and Official Russia, 1863–1914
Theodore Weeks 211

BOOK REVIEWS

- Aviel Roshwald, *Ethnic Nationalism & the Fall of Empires: Central Europe,
Russia & the Middle East, 1914–1923*
(Marc J. O'Reilly) 225
- Uradyn Bulag, *The Mongols at China's Edge: History and the Politics of
National Unity*
(Xin Wang) 226
- Bo Petersson, *National Self-Images and Regional Identities in Russia*
(James Alexander) 228
- Jeffrey Kahn, *Federalism, Democratization, and the Rule of Law in Russia*
(Andrew Konitzer-Smirnov) 229
- Robert W. Ortung, ed., *The Republics and Regions of the Russian Federation:
A Guide to Politics, Policies, and Leaders*
(Christopher Marsh) 232



BOOK REVIEWS

national players, and the internal dimension that provides images of Russia's attempt at democracy and perspectives on internal threats to Russian unity. Overlapping both categories is the exploration of the interaction between internal and external images, such as views of Russia's mission in the world *vis-à-vis* the former Soviet republics and beyond.

Petersson is manifestly aware that his study is open to criticism for its small sample size yet is perhaps too sensitive to such possible criticism. In fact, in carrying out his project in five geographically distinct regions, his study presents a more generalizable perspective than varying similar studies by Shiraev and Zubok (*Anti-Americanism in Russia*, 2000), and myself (*Political Culture in Post-Communist Russia*, 2000), while providing greater depth than a chapter in Dryzek and Holmes's book (*Post-Communist Democratization*, 2002). Additionally, his nuanced findings reflect differences in geography and demography, particularly as shown by comparisons across cities, generations, sexes, and party affiliation.

The findings of this study also carry broad similarities to various aspects of those presented in the aforementioned studies. As for the general population, there is a persistent anti-Americanism among elites that goes to the essence of American foreign policy and the American way of life. Indicative of the contradictions in a tumultuous era, the United States is seen as both one of the most preferred partners for Russia and one of its most prominent security threats. Furthermore, while the United States' systemic model has lost favor, with Russia's internal economic troubles often linked to shock therapy, the Chinese, Swedish and German models of varying paternalism and state involvement have gained greater relevance.

Questions of democracy and democratization are often linked to economic troubles, leading to scepticism about whether a democratic polity should exist in Russia, or to the degree that societal problems in post-Soviet Russia have turned democracy "into a dirty word" (p. 156). It is unsurprising that other models might be seen as more relevant than American liberal democracy, since a number of respondents still perceive democracy in the sense of the positive rights of a more socialistically oriented state. Out of the turmoil of Russian society, it is perhaps unsurprising as well that political leaders do not offer much optimism for the creation of a "Russian civic national identity." Petersson finds that a propensity to blame the "Other" for domestic and international problems leaves little room for pluralist development, particularly since the greatest threats to national security emerge from the internal arena.

The study of Russia's political culture continues to be relevant to our understanding of, and expectations for, the country's future development. By stressing the perspectives of national and regional political elites, Petersson presents the broad outlines of how Russia might be led into that future. This well-researched and theoretically founded study is an excellent resource that is both accessible to advanced undergraduates and valuable to graduate students and senior scholars.

James Alexander
Northeastern State University

Jeffrey Kahn, *Federalism, Democratization, and the Rule of Law in Russia*. London: Oxford University Press, 2002, 300 pp.

Like the declarations of the newly empowered republican elites in Jeffrey Kahn's text, murky notions of federalism, democracy, sovereignty and the rule of law mar current debates about Russian federalism. Lacking some foundational understanding of these concepts as applied to

the Russian context, analysts neither agree on the nature of the problems nor the potential means to resolve them and analyses frequently degenerate into subjective judgments about the intentions of political actors involved in the institution-building process. Jeffrey Kahn's *Federalism, Democratization, and the Rule of Law in Russia* comes the closest of any currently available work to providing a framework for discussions of Russian federal reform by tracing the development of contemporary Russian federalism and attempting to place it within a carefully constructed federal typology. In this respect, this work is essential reading for anyone interested in issues of federalism and post-Soviet Russia.

The cornerstone of Kahn's study is the meticulously presented treatment of federal theory in Chapter 2. Having outlined the three traditional requirements of federalism (divided government, a written constitution, and exclusive, clearly formulated jurisdictions), Kahn adds a fourth stipulation demanding a consensus within the polity over the value of federal arrangements. He then presents a "continuum of possible expressions of sovereignty" (p. 28) spanning from pure subordination at one end to complete self-determination at the other. Federalism occupies the center of this continuum characterized by varying degrees of subsidiarity—a situation that implies a "commitment to local government, not merely as units of administration for a higher authority but as intrinsically valuable institutions for the representation of interests at the lower level" (p. 29). In terms of actual institutions and policies, subsidiarity is reflected in constitutionally protected autonomy lying between the extremes of centralization (subordination) at one end and secession (self-determination) at the other. Kahn also draws linkages between federalism, democracy and the rule of law. With regard to democracy, he critiques scholars like William Riker whose treatment of federal theory allows for the existence of non-democratic federations. According to Kahn, such non-democratic regimes imply subordination and coercion—direct opposites of autonomy and subsidiarity. Turning to the rule of law, Kahn returns to the sovereignty continuum, emphasizing the fact that constitutional autonomy necessitates clearly defined jurisdictions enshrined in law. However, he takes one step beyond law in a positivist sense (legal documents) to the concept of "Law" as first principles (p. 54). The "rule-of-law" state, in Kahn's terms, is not the sole source of laws, but shares this responsibility with a common set of normative principles about governance. In light of the tendency of Russian political actors to wield law as a weapon, rather than a set of established rules, this last point is especially critical to the study of Russian federalism and appears frequently throughout Kahn's narrative.

Having established his theoretical framework, Kahn devotes the remainder of his text to tracing Russia's federal development from the Soviet era to the present with the expressed goal of finding out where Russia "fits" on his federal continuum (p. 62). In Chapter 3, he exposes the myth of Soviet federalism, arguing that the dominance of a single ruling party and the privileging of certain nationalities as protected groups undermined critical components of federalism and left a number of harmful legacies for future federation builders. Chapter 5 takes the reader through the Gorbachev era, focusing on problems presented by perverted understandings of sovereignty, democracy and autonomy (a legacy of Soviet propaganda), inconsistencies in Gorbachev's own reforms (decentralization of some responsibilities along with the retention of a centralized party apparatus), and the struggle for power between Yeltsin and Gorbachev. The latter issue is especially important for later arguments, since Kahn places much of the blame for federal institutional asymmetries on Yeltsin's gambit of encouraging republican leaders to "take all the sovereignty they can swallow." Chapters 6 and 7 delve into the Yeltsin era, examining how institutional asymmetry violated key principles of Kahn's concept of federalism, undermined democratic institutions in the republics (thereby further denigrating federal structures) and ultimately laid the groundwork for the Putin administration's equally dangerous swing towards greater centralization. This last time period is covered

in Chapter 8, in which Kahn argues that Putin's "medicine" is perhaps more dangerous than the "disease." While efforts are made to curtail some of the federation's more salient faults, these tend to be executive focused, excluding the courts that must provide the main stimulus for settling jurisdictional disputes in a rule-of-law state.

Throughout the work, Kahn demonstrates a mastery of his subject matter and supports his arguments with well-documented evidence. Nonetheless, in the course of his analyses two general issues arise which somewhat detract from the overall strength of the study. First, while Kahn justifies his focus on republics based on their special status within the federation, authoritarian tendencies, and position at the vanguard of any institutional asymmetries (pp. 5–12), his disregard for Russia's other federal subjects creates some occasional problems. These are especially prevalent in discussions regarding the federation's fragmented fiscal/economic space and the nature of regional democracy. Much of what Kahn presents as problems unique to Russian republics are found in part or in whole in Russia's *oblasts* and *krais*. As one example, Kahn points to the number of Republican executive elections where the incumbent won more than 70% of the vote as evidence of institutional control unique to republics. Nonetheless, there were 29 instances between 1991 and 2000 in which regional executive incumbents exceeded Kahn's threshold, and republics accounted for only seven (24%) of those contests. The existence of regional legislatures where deputies simultaneously hold positions as *raion* or city heads of administration (or members of the regional administration) is universal, and in a number of instances (especially prior to 1996), these heads of administration were gubernatorial appointees. Underhand election tactics (including early elections), violence, and the manipulation of courts and election laws afflict elections in all types of federal subjects. In the economic sphere, the practice of protecting regional markets through tariffs and other border controls was as prevalent in *oblasts* and *krais* as in republics. Furthermore, as Daniel Berkowitz and David Dejong have demonstrated, the federation's fragmented economic space might be better attributed to the peculiar "red belt" phenomenon than to any factors related to regional status. The singular focus on republics prevents the author from even considering such alternative explanations.

Certainly conditions in the republics differ considerably from those in Russia's other federal subjects (no one beats Aushiev's infamous election record), but the above points suggest that other important factors besides republican privileges work to undermine Russia's federal structures. Greater attention to non-republics might have allowed the author to better isolate those characteristics that make these subunits unique and identify federation-wide tendencies that challenge the entire federal project. Ironically, while Kahn's focus on comparison *across* federations enriches this study, he fails to apply similarly effective comparative methodology to his analysis of units *within* the Russian Federation.

Another issue centers on the author's under-emphasis of the socioeconomic and historical context within which these institutional developments occurred. While taking an avowedly "new institutionalist" approach to the study of Russian federalism, Kahn focuses primarily on the role of power struggles between individual actors in determining the course of institutional development. In the process, influential events like economic crises and even the August 1991 putsch shrink into the background. By itself, this presents little problem for the author's main arguments—regardless of external events, institutional developments fall far short of Kahn's federal ideal. Nevertheless, the author's lack of focus on context conveys a sense of pontification when he compares Russian federalism's development to that of other federations. For instance, Kahn is correct in indicating that Spain achieved legitimate institutional asymmetry through broad, constitutionally accepted agreement amongst its federal subjects, but the implication that the Spanish model was an option for post-Soviet Russia is rather questionable. The August 1991 putsch, combined with a worsening economic crisis (including a real fear of

BOOK REVIEWS

famine during the winter of 1992), afforded little opportunity to pursue such a deliberate course. During his discussion of Putin's reforms, Kahn criticizes the President's removal of Primorskii *krai*'s Nazdratenko as an extra-constitutional act that undermines the rule of law. However, the author omits any mention of the chronic energy crisis that had afflicted the *krai* since at least the mid-1990s or other questionable aspects of Nazdratenko's rule. Clearly the existing democratic and legal institutions had failed, leaving many residents of Primorskii *krai* in an increasingly grave predicament. How would Russia's judicial system, which Kahn persistently (and justifiably) criticizes for its incapacity, resolve this potential humanitarian disaster? In both of these instances, one could argue that *ad hoc* federal relations resulted less from the conceptual confusion and self-interest of political actors (although these certainly are factors) than from the necessity to apply provisional solutions to very real problems.

These last comments are in no way intended to dismiss the application of comparative analysis *per se*. Instead they emphasize the need to focus more carefully on a fuller range of issues that might determine the value of a particular model for the case in question. Perhaps Spain and the United States (models most frequently mentioned in the text) are exemplary cases of federal development, but their relevance for other states hinges in part upon the external conditions facing federation builders.

Nonetheless, these criticisms only highlight the fact that Kahn presents a soundly researched, well-argued and conceptually tight work, and one might expect that a book of this quality would spark a lively debate. His theoretical treatment of the complex issue of federalism and rich presentation of evidence are sure to make an important contribution to the understanding of the problems facing today's Russian Federation and make Kahn's work essential reading for anyone interested in this subject.

Andrew Konitzer-Smirnov
Kennan Institute

Robert W. Ortung, ed., *The Republics and Regions of the Russian Federation: A Guide to Politics, Policies, and Leaders*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2000, xxvii, 645 pp., + maps, index.

In bringing together this wealth of information on Russia's republics and regions, Ortung and his associates at the EastWest Institute have done the field a tremendous service. Spanning almost 700 pages, this weighty tome includes all of the basic information on each of Russia's subjects of the federation in one easily accessible volume. The fact that this is the only place much of this information can be accessed in English also makes it extremely useful as a teaching resource, given the limited number of students with adequate Russian-language skills.

The volume opens with an introductory chapter that not only acquaints the reader with Russia's federal structure, but also covers issues such as center-periphery relations, the seven federal districts, and patterns of leadership among the regions. Readers will find some of the information in this chapter very useful, particularly the table that lists each regional leader's party affiliation, although such a table unavoidably becomes quickly out of date.

The remainder of the volume is composed of separate chapters for each of Russia's republics and regions. For each region, data are provided on territory and population as well as socioeconomic factors such as urban population, average monthly income, capital investment, etc. Basic political facts are also provided, such as electoral history for all elections from 1991