

the core value of the rule has been to protect life: even the genocide of Jews by the Nazis was carried out to *protect* the alleged Aryan blood and form of life attached to it. Therefore, in other western examples of biopolitics, the societal danger has been linked to an *excess* protection of life. Stalin's biopolitics turned into thanatopolitics (politics of death), that is, into a total eradication of previous forms of life—a war on nature, human and physical.

Through theoretical elaborations on the interplay of ideology and form of life, as well as the empirical analysis of the Soviet and post-Soviet eras, Prozorov shows that Stalin's rule and its rehabilitation in contemporary Russia can be understood with the help of biopolitical analysis. Prozorov leans on secondary research material, thus the book does not contain any new archival data and may not interest hard-core historians. It is exactly because of this, however, that the book is brilliant: it is the author's approach, his specific methodology that is able to unveil how in Russia the relationship between the rulers and the people, and especially rulers' views about preferred and permitted forms of living, has evolved over the course of history. Moreover, all the efforts to de-Stalinize Russian society, both during the Soviet and post-Soviet eras, have failed precisely because the focus has been on ideology and implementation, rather than the place that political power has had vis-à-vis the people and their forms of life. Thus, the book demonstrates the logical path why in the 2010s many Russians continue to see Stalin as a patriotic and positive figure, and how Putin can be represented as Stalin's heir and as an "effective manager." The valorization of Stalinism is not risk free for Putin's reign, however, as Putinism is not about transformation, as in Stalinism, but about preservation.

The book is not just about unveiling harmful practices, as many Foucauldian studies have been accused of, but about proposing new approaches to empower people. Prozorov proposes to battle the ideology-poor Russian society, since "(a) pure biopolitics 'without ideas' is in fact a particularly powerful ideological construct" (256), with a tool he calls affirmative biopolitics. Hence, the idea (equity, sustainability) should not be imposed on people, as in Stalinism, but it should be diffused, as was the case with socialism in early 1920s Soviet Russia, with the help of affirmative biopolitics. Moreover, the biopolitical-emancipatory perspective can reveal, for example, how fragile the truth claims of neo-Stalinism under Putin's rule are. Thus, one should not be discouraged by the fact that in today's Russia it is exceptionally hard to influence politics and policies via rational arguments, as naked power prevails over rationality. The dangers of genuine re-Stalinization, however, might be the key to a positive transformation along the lines of affirmative biopolitics.

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***Beyond the Euromaidan: Comparative Perspectives on Advancing Reform in Ukraine.*** Ed. Henry E. Hale and Robert W. Ortung. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016. xiv, 322 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Figures. Tables. \$70.00, hard bound.

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Henry Hale and Robert Ortung have compiled a book on a crucial issue: What is the likely future for Ukraine after the Maidan revolution? In doing so, they have gathered an impressive group of scholars to address this question. While one can quibble with the focus suggested in the subtitle—the potential for “advancing reform”—the

volume will be of considerable interest to scholars of Ukraine and the post-Soviet states generally.

The volume addresses a number of topics—the identity divide, corruption, the constitution, the judiciary, patrimonialism and the oligarchs, and the economy—each central to Ukraine’s future. The volume not only devotes a separate chapter to each topic, but pairs each with a chapter by a different specialist written from a more comparative angle. While in practice the boundary between the comparative and Ukraine-specific chapters becomes blurred, the multiple takes on each topic proves beneficial.

Thus in addressing what the book terms the “identity-memory divide,” Oksana Shevel (relying on earlier work by Jan Kubik and Michael Bernhard) suggests that the Ukrainian state would be better served by adopting a “mnemonic pluralist” approach to history rather than a “mnemonic warrior” approach, where one view of history is given legitimacy. In the companion chapter, Lucan Way argues that Ukraine faces a dilemma: if national divisions promote political competition while simultaneously undermining governance, greater national unity following Maidan might help reform but could strengthen autocratic tendencies.

Highlighting a similar dilemma, Maria Popova’s chapter notes that while greater democracy is assumed to foster judicial independence, political competition within a hybrid framework can increase the incentive to corrupt the courts, helping to explain why corruption has increased rather than decreased in years when Ukraine appeared more democratic. Indeed, though the chapters are explicitly devoted to various topics, much of the discussion is focused on corruption, tied as that is to questions of the rule of law, the oligarchs and patrimonialism/patronalism. As Hale and Orttung note in their preface, “Ukraine’s problem with corruption . . . represents a deeply embedded social equilibrium” (x).

The chapter by Serhiy Kudelia argues that while the Euromaidan punished the egregious corruption of Viktor Yanukovich, it proved unable to dismantle the broader incentives underlying systemic corruption. Taras Kuzio makes a convincing case that oligarchic patrimonialism is especially hard to break, in part because western economic and political institutions have proven reluctant to challenge oligarchic wealth. Georgi Derluguian argues that, in theory at least, Ukraine could have followed the East Asian and Chinese path of elite cooperation leading to a developmental state, instead of devolving as it did down the road of elite predation.

Oleksandr Fisun explores how that elite predation led to constitutional changes, which have reflected struggles between “patronal presidents” and “rent-seeking entrepreneurs” (107), with the former pushing for presidential power and the latter for stronger parliaments with political parties under their control. Following this insight, Hale argues that “divided-executive constitutions” appear to be the best of the bad possible constitutional arrangements (such as presidentialist or parliamentary systems) since divided executives are less likely to form a single rent-seeking coalition. Needless to say, the consequences of this oligarchic patrimonialism weigh heavily on society. Two revolutions over the last 25 years have proven unable to bring about deep structural change in this system, and Ukraine’s economy per capita still remains lower than it was before the Soviet collapse.

The challenges facing Ukrainian society are thus quite complex, greater than any single volume could possibly address. Still, a few additional questions could be raised. First, greater attention could have been given to Ukraine’s conflict with Russia (though to be fair, the project was well underway before the Maidan revolution even began). Much of Ukraine’s future depends on how this conflict is ultimately resolved, and some brief speculation would prove helpful. Might the Donbass remain a “frozen conflict,” and if so, with what impact on Ukraine’s economy? Can Ukraine

successfully disentangle its trade with Russia, and what products can it profitably export to the EU or elsewhere? Yet in their concluding chapter Hale and Orttung note one important “non-finding”: the chapter authors place very little weight on Russia as a negative influence prior to 2014, attributing most of Ukraine’s challenges to domestic rather than external causes.

Another set of questions revolves around the central notion of “advancing reform,” especially since twenty-five years have passed since Ukraine first embarked on this path. For example, the chapter on the economy by Alexander Pivovarsky blames Ukraine’s problems on a lack of reform, but the discussion makes reform sound like an end in itself rather than a means to better outcomes for Ukrainian citizens. Other chapter authors point out that simply calling for further reforms is of limited utility. As Paul D’Anieri notes in a useful introduction, “the lack of reform in Ukraine seems in many respects to be overdetermined” (9). In their concluding chapter, Hale and Orttung acknowledge the “fundamental reform challenges” of a more structural nature, such as the impact of the communist legacy, the identity divide, and the long historical reach of patrimonialism /patronalism. Yet they do draw out some policy conclusions from the chapters: a divided-executive constitution; proportional-representational voting; political decentralization both to check state power and to take some steam out of identity conflicts; a policy of mnemonic pluralism; the de-monopolization of the economy; professional organizations for judges and civil servants; reforming the traffic police and expanding e-government.

Yet the authors acknowledge that even these steps will prove challenging. For example, the chapter by Alexander Libman and Anastassia Obydenkova points out the trade-off between radically transforming the bureaucracy while simultaneously maintaining, if not increasing, state capacity. They also note how the imperatives of the on-going conflict with Russia can contradict the perceived necessity of reform, with the former a potentially useful pretext for ignoring the latter.

The seemingly intractable nature of these problems—revolution without reform—leads a number of the chapters to suggest that outside institutions, most especially the EU, might make greater use of conditionality, by making reforms a requirement for external support. Yet one problem in doing so is that, as Pivovarsky concedes, “social preferences” remain an obstacle to reform, since “a large share of the population depend[s] on public pensions and other social transfers and, thus, prefer[s] the status quo to disruptive change” (234). Likewise, D’Anieri notes, “what counts as reform to some observers or participants appears to others as an unacceptable injury to their interests” (13). Thus EU conditionality, even were it to be imposed, might contradict democratic preferences, leading to further social disruption, or resulting in the sort of populism seen elsewhere in Europe. Yet pointing this out only heightens the dilemmas so usefully addressed in this volume, since for Ukraine the status quo is also unacceptable.

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***Building an Authoritarian Polity: Russia in Post-Soviet Times.*** By Graeme Gill. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2015. ix, 230 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Figures. Tables. \$28.00, paper.  
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Graeme Gill has written a concise, readable, yet remarkably detailed account of the construction of contemporary Russia’s particular brand of authoritarianism, the