such a degree that a half-century of Soviet domination, despite the massive movement of Russians and others into the region, could not destroy it.

The controversies over minority and majority national rights in Latvia in the 1990s can only be understood by studying the background. Plakans' book should be required reading for anyone who wishes to make a judgment about current problems in Latvia or generally in the Baltic. The book includes a very brief outline of the political evolution of Latvia from 1918 to the 1990s and a nineteen-page bibliography.

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Divided into four parts, *The Kazakhs* deals with the development of Kazakh society from the formation of the three hordes (c. AD 1500) to the completion of Khrushchev's Virgin Land Project (parts 1-3) and the creation of the independent republic of Kazakhstan (part 4). It is a comprehensive study of the social, economic, political, religious, and educational facets of Kazakh life to the present. The book includes a Foreword by Wayne S. Vucinich, two maps, sixteen appendices of comparative data, a glossary, endnotes per chapter, an extensive bibliography, and an index.

Olcott contends that the Little, Middle, and Great Hordes were a natural outgrowth of a military aristocracy rather than, as usually suggested, of a post-Golden Horde-era feudal society. In this context, she presents a detailed discussion of the socio-political situation in the region before the rise of the Kalmyks and of Russia's initial unwillingness to extend support to the Kazakhs. Olcott shows how Russia gradually involved itself militarily in the affairs of the Little and Middle Hordes and how Russian mercantile interests methodically expanded into Central Asia and beyond. Olcott avers that the scarcity of materials, unreliability of Soviet historiography and, most important, cultural biases—unfair treatment of Islamic mores, distortion of Shamanism and animism, and suppression of tribal customs of the steppe aristocracy—made this part of her study the most difficult to accomplish.

Russia's conquest of the hordes and of Central Asia was slow but deliberate. It crushed all resistance. Olcott shows that, by capitalizing on inherent internal divisions in nomadic societies, the Russians succeeded in controlling the judicial, educational, and religious affairs of the hordes. And similarly that, by deemphasizing the role of the old aristocracy (the white bone) and by exaction of taxes through black-bone appointees, they forced the Kazakhs to settle on farms and to engage themselves in mercantile activities. Gradually, the control of the economy of the steppe, too, passed into Russian hands. The conquest of Central Asia, according to Olcott, was a natural consequence of these vital preliminary steps and of the requirements of Russia's greater involvement in international diplomacy.

The disciplinary approach allows a comprehensive and focused study of the history, economics, politics, and cultural values of the Kazakhs. Ukazes and statutes are presented in a timely manner and their impact is carefully assessed. Indeed, Olcott underscores important facets of Kazakh life that would otherwise have merely received
mention. She clearly delineates the disastrous impact on the Kazakhs and their herds of Russian policies that ignored the nomadic realities of the steppe; the benefits of those same policies for the Russian farmers are also forcefully indicated. Similarly, she explains the difficult north-south differences without getting bogged down in clan relations, sectarian divisions, and tribal squabbles.

There are also drawbacks. The 1916 uprising was not just Kazakh, but a major regional revolt fueled by forces from inside and outside the region. Isma'il Gaspirinskii and Sadreddin Aini, for instance, were as much a part of that movement as any Kazakh leader. Here the complex forces of ideology, modernism, and ethnicity demand a more "global" approach. Are not the 1905 demands of the Kazakhs echoed by the Russians, the Young Turks, the Young Bukharans, and the Iranian masses? Economics and Islam were issues, of course, but the greater issue was freedom, especially for the Kazakhs who had been denied it and who had been humbled every time the issue had been raised.

Relative to the development of the other aspects of the book, a considerable amount of space is given to the Alash Orda after the fall of the Provisional Government. Olcott follows the activities of the Red and White Armies closely and puts the Kazakhs' struggle for autonomy in perspective. Furthermore, she successfully defends the Kazakhs by showing that the blame for the post-Civil War difficulties should be squarely placed at the threshold of the Soviets. They had eliminated the herds and failed to deliver appropriate means for creating a viable settled, agricultural economy. She also illustrates how the failure of NEP gave rise to a revival of class structures within the bounds of the Soviet bureaucracy. In view of the Kazakhs' love for their yurts and herds, Olcott argues, it was not prudent to introduce rapid collectivization that could only lead to the creation of settlements and a breakdown of the educational system. Olcott advisedly dwells on education because the Soviet system was carefully crafted to draw on education for the formation of its cadres. Poor quality of education automatically translated into incompetence, an inability to understand the goals of the socialist system and, consequently, into attempts at its subversion. At best, a situation could obtain wherein the Russians would run the Soviets, the native bais the communities.

These inconsistencies in the system, Olcott argues, led to national problems which, on the surface, to a person with a siege mentality like Stalin, appeared as sabotage. To resolve the problem once and for all, Stalin revamped the Party's recruitment strategies, tightened access to the upper echelon of the bureaucracy, and carried out his well-known purges.

The Kazakhs was written primarily about the developments mentioned above, leading to an exploration and analysis of Khrushchev's failed Virgin Land Policy. In spite of the paucity of reliable sources and the even more difficult task of accessing primary archival materials, Olcott has created a solid base for the further study of facets of past and contemporary Kazakh life. The new addition details Nazarbaev's rise as a result of Kunaev's mismanagement and of Kolbin's inflexibility in the face of an urgent need for religious, political, and cultural rejuvenation. Olcott argues that Nazarbaev, following El'tsin's example, established the independence and economic sovereignty of his republic by sagaciously manipulating the interests of his rivals, especially those