and events unexplained. To give one of many examples, the book states that the Soviet government divided Turkestan into new territorial units, but it never bothers to tell us why!

The book's attempts at analysis are also weak. The initial chapter presents various theories of nationalism; but, since the authors never relate them to the rest of the material in the book, they are superfluous. The discussion of the tsarist regime amounts to reciting russification incidents without qualifications, nuances, or explication of the evolution of Russian official nationalism. The polarity the authors establish between pre-nineteenth-century toleration and later chauvinism is simplistic and neither explains the relative disinterest in ethnic identity in the earlier period nor shows whatever flexible or haphazard qualities there were to the russification drives later on. It is not enough to say that nationalism was in the air and seeped in from Europe. What specific purposes did it serve for the rulers of this empire? How did it compare to policies in the Austrian, Ottoman, or other multiethnic empires? We never find out.

Treatment of the Soviet era is similarly deficient. Nolte et al fail to compare the fate of the ethnics under the various Communist rulers, unlike Andreas Kappeler's outstanding book, Russland als Vielvölkerreich, which scrupulously analyzes the continuities and changes before and after the revolution. An uninitiated reader would not learn that there were differences between the nationalities policies of Lenin, Stalin, or Khrushchev. In particular the extent of Stalinist brutality is unclear. To give a few noteworthy examples, there is no indication that Jews might have been overrepresented in the Gulag, that the Ukrainian famine of the early 1930s has been suggested as Stalin's attempt to crush regional autonomy, or that some peoples (e.g., the Nivkhi) lost almost half their populations in the Great Terror.

The treatment of the Gorbachev and El'tsin eras is unsatisfactory as well. This section of the book is a lengthy summary of recent events without thematic links to anything else in the book. It also has some big holes: there is nothing here on the nationalities' struggle for control of local natural resources, such as diamonds in Yakutia or the fossil fuels of the Caucasus—important issues before and after the breakup of the USSR.

The book ends by proposing that the Swiss cantonal model be applied in the region of the former Soviet Union, where clearly defined ethnic boundaries do not exist. This specific arrangement may suit Switzerland, with its four languages. But it is easier said than done in Russia, where tens of ethnic groups of varying sizes exist and suspicions between Moscow and the regions linger. Furthermore, it ignores the successes the El'tsin government has had in forging a new federal system. The authors' concluding suggestion, without organic connection to the material presented previously, is indicative of why the book is not to be recommended.

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Shamanic Worlds: Rituals and Lore of Siberia and Central Asia features the work of highly respected scholars from the former Soviet Union. Edited by American Siberian
specialist Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer, who comes to the project with over twenty years of field experience in Siberia and who is the only Western contributor, *Shamanic Worlds* introduces the unfamiliar reader to important names and concepts; readers already conversant with the subject will enjoy and appreciate the essays. The book offers an overview of the history of popular, political, and scholarly attitudes toward shamanism, not presented as an obsolete, exotic, or antiquarian phenomenon, but as living tradition in the various cultural contexts of contemporary post-Soviet Siberia and Central Asia. Some examples are, in fact, chillingly modern: an Evenk woman shaman's purification ritual for her grandson after his return from the war in Afghanistan, and a more recent ritual for young Buriats drafted to fight in Chechnia. It probably goes without saying that many Western readers will find this serious, professional treatment a refreshing relief from all too frequent sensationalistic treatments of shamanism—even among academics—ranging from "new age" infatuation to fundamentalist Christian condemnation of shamanism as demonic.

The introduction by Balzer describes the range of essays in the book. She points out some areas of theoretical debate and describes contrasting interpretations of various aspects of shamanism. She offers a critique of various theories and notes who stands where on debatable issues. The writing in the collection represents the broadening and deepening of Soviet and post-Soviet thought on traditional religious life. The volume reflects a post-Soviet concern over indigenous categories and concepts, and how to integrate academic theory with indigenous meaning. The core of the volume consists of distinguished Native Siberian scholars writing about their own cultural traditions in diverse ways. They are Nikolai A. Alekseev (Sakha = Yakut), Mongush B. Kenin-Lopsan (Tuvan), Anatoly Alekseev (Even = Lamut), and Nadezhda Ia. Bulatova (Evenk = Tungus). These writers are joined by Russian scholars Elena S. Novik, Vladimir N. Basilov, and Dmitri A. Funk.

The essays unfold nicely. Basilov ("Chosen by the Spirits") opens with a critical review of ongoing theoretical debates about various aspects of shamanism. N. Alekseev's "Shamans and Their Religious Practices" is a survey of practices and beliefs among the Turkic peoples of Siberia, and uncovers the Turkic and Mongolic roots of Sakha culture. M. Kenin-Lopsan's "Tuvan Shamanic Folklore" explores various themes and genres of Tuvan shamanic poetry, with many examples in the original Tuvan and English translation. A. Alekseev describes "Healing Techniques Among Even Shamans." D. Funk's "The Teleut Ritual Chymyr: Exorcism and Explanation" is also rich in examples of texts in the original and English translation. Working with the Teleut of the Altai Mountains, Funk collected one of the longest recorded exorcism incantations. E. Novik's "The Archaic Epic and Its Relationship to Ritual" is concerned with indigenous genre distinctions and offers a structural analysis of the interrelationships of shamanic folklore and shamanic ritual in various cultures. This is probably the most technical and theoretical essay in the book, dealing with origins and causal relationships, how the present forms of ritual and epic came to be, and their relationship to each other. Presented as a "Final Tribute" is N. Bulatova's "The Evenk Alga Ritual of Blessing." This contribution documents and honors the late Evenk shaman Matriona Kurbeltinova, who died in 1996, to whom the book is dedicated, and who was featured in the film *Time of Dreams* by the late Latvian filmmaker Andres Salpins.

The various contributions take many different forms. Basilov presents a theoretical framework to questions about shamanism in general. N. Alekseev, A. Alekseev, Kenin-Lopsan, and Bulatova offer perspectives from the life and tradition of various cultures of