

The work stands as an undeniably valuable resource for social scientists studying individual, community, or national agency. Additionally, scholars specializing in the Soviet Union will find the Georgian case an exemplary model for the discussion of nationalism in the Soviet context. Furthermore, the comparative analysis with neighboring post-Soviet nations such as Armenia and Azerbaijan offers a deeper examination and very nuanced approach.

Allen J. Frank. *Kazakh Muslims in the Red Army, 1939–1945.*

Brill's Inner Asian Library 42. Leiden: Brill, 2022. v, 216 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. \$108.00, hard bound.

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Allen J. Frank's book will be of interest to World War II historians, Sovietologists, and Central Asianists, particularly those in cultural and literary fields. The description of Kazakh life-ways on the eve of WWII and the discussion of letters written by Kazakh soldiers was fascinating and potentially crosses over multiple disciplines. Frank discusses literary genres, the military history of the Kazakh steppe, and pre-Soviet and early Soviet Kazakh culture. His work with Kazakh-language sources is truly admirable, and a valuable contribution to scholarship of Soviet Central Asia, though one wishes that Frank took into account the work of Central Asianist scholars of cultural history and anthropology (Diana Kudaibergenova, Jeanne Féaux de la Croix, Margarethe Adams, Julie McBrien, Eva Dubuisson), putting his work in a broader context and in dialogue with recent scholarship.

Frank's is a very rich subject, one on which little is written, particularly in English. The author's contributions to the literature are considerable (as seen in his previous works, *Muslim Religious Institutions in Imperial Russia: The Islamic World of Novouzensk District and the Kazakh Inner Horde, 1780–1910* (Brill, 2001), *Qurban-'Ali Khalidi: An Islamic Biographical Dictionary of the Eastern Kazakh Steppe* (co-edited with Mirkasym A. Usmanov, Brill, 2005), *Bukhara and the Muslims of Russia: Sufism, Education, and the Paradox of Islamic Prestige* (Brill, 2012), and *Saduaqas Ghilmani: Biographies of Islamic Scholars of Our Times*, 2 vols., ed. by Ashirbek Muminov, Allen J. Frank, and Aitzhan Nurmanova (IRICA, 2018). He writes in English, but uses a many Kazakh-language sources and references Kazakh scholars, including ethnomusicologist Gulsym Baytenova (58). He also accesses German-language sources, adding breadth to the subject of Soviet soldiers during WWII, including the fascist and racist assumptions about Central Asians.

This book focuses on a particular kind of Kazakh-language genre, often in verse, called *khat-oleng* (letter poem). Frank writes specifically about the Kazakh focus of these missives, indicating that the letter writers often write about a unique wartime experience they underwent as Kazakhs in the Soviet Army. The genre seems to have a lot in common with spoken and sung poetry, and the author has possibly missed an opportunity to make significant connections between Kazakh spoken and written verse forms. Though Frank mention other verse genres (38–39), he does not delve into the similarities and relationships between oral and written genres. For example, he mentions that accounts of famine are not mentioned in wartime correspondence. But maybe they are present in oral forms of the day, such as *aitys*? The fear of reprisals and censorship would clearly be greater in written verse, making oral

forms of poetry important in communicating wartime experiences. It also would have been worthwhile to relate the battle descriptions in *khat-oleng* to Kazakh epic poetry (*zhyr*).

What I really liked and learned from was Frank's discussion of Kazakh kinship, religion, and literature. This discussion touches on what seems to be a specifically Kazakh form of moral storytelling (though to be sure one can place it within a larger Central Asian context). Frank writes about the fluidity of Kazakh kinship (16), and the importance of Kazakh lineage. He also writes convincingly about the *aul* (encampment) as a center of Kazakh society, and the role of kinship in these gatherings (18). For those interested in religion, one of the great contributions of this book is the exploration of ancestral holy lineages (*qozhalar*), ancestral spirits (*aruaqtar*), and the link between ancestral spirits and kinship. This discussion, though sorely needed in English language scholarship, could have been strengthened a bit by referring to other scholars of religion and culture in Central Asia.

In Frank's discussion of Soviet conscription and Kazakh participation in the Soviet army, his description of the Kazakh battle cry (*uran*) deserves particular mention. He relates how the Kazakh clan-based battle cry (*uran*) shows up in early epic poetry (27), and then explains that after the 1916 conscription of Kazakhs, the laborers' battle cry essentially replaces the clan *uran* (35). This acceptance of Kazakhs previously excluded from conscription, Frank writes, symbolized Soviet solidarity and ethnic inclusion.

Allen J. Frank's valuable scholarship on the letter-poems written by Kazakh soldiers during WWII illuminates many aspects of Kazakh life and literary forms during this crucial turning point in the consolidation of Soviet Central Asia.

Ed. Immo Rebitschek and Aaron B. Retish. *Social Control Under Stalin and Khrushchev: The Phantom of a Well-Ordered State.*

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2023. xii, 353 pp. Notes. Index. Figures. Tables. Maps. \$90.00, hard bound.

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This book is a compilation of twelve chapters authored by an international group of scholars. It is organized chronologically, with four chapters on the 1930s, three on late Stalinism, and four on the Khrushchev era, all dealing with various aspects of Soviet criminal justice or other methods of social control. The editors assert that "social control in the Soviet Union was not entirely about the monolithic state imposing its vision with violent force" and that "agency" at various bureaucratic levels and among the general population made social control a messy and contradictory process (3). Such arguments are less novel than claimed in the introduction, but the volume succeeds in providing fascinating glimpses at "pockets for agency [that] persisted between and within state institutions" (14). This was a state comprised of people, we are reminded, who had conflicting values and loyalties and who often worked at cross purposes.

The first chapter by Aaron B. Retish investigates court-mandated alimony and child support payments, designed to prevent juvenile delinquency and enforce the social norm of equity in Soviet society. Yet this was not straightforward. Judicial officials and the public