

had siege experiences, yet are tacked on even though only marginally related to the Sarajevo story.

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Frustrated Democracy in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan. By Audrey L. Altstadt. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2017. xxiv, 317 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Tables. Maps. \$60.00, hard bound.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.148

Audrey L. Altstadt's book, *Frustrated Democracy in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan*, discusses several key factors of Azerbaijan's political, economic, and social configuration and their evolution over the twenty-five years since 1991. Any examination of the current challenges that the country faces, such as respect for the rule of law and democratic values, violation of human rights, the unresolved Mountainous Karabakh conflict with Armenia, the threat of political Islamism, the likelihood of sectarian conflict, marginalized opposition groups, oil revenue related to corruption and distributive justice, must all be contextualized by an awareness of Azerbaijan's history since 1918. As a historian, with significant background on international relations, Altstadt examines and analyzes the failure of democracy-building that was started by the Azerbaijani Popular Front (APF) in 1992 and the notorious cases of corruption of the ruling Aliyev family and the oligarchs associated with it, as well as the establishment of authoritarianism behind a western façade.

The book is divided into seven chapters. Each chapter examines a particular theme: the impact of history and geopolitics on the establishment of a prosperous and democratic Azerbaijan; the Mountainous Karabakh conflict; the rise and decline of democratic government in light of APF's misunderstanding of democracy and how to apply it "in the shifting sands of 1992 Azerbaijan" (57); the impact of the oil and gas industry on Azerbaijani society and on the corruption of the ruling circles; the suppression of opposition groups, journalists, and human rights defenders; institutional Islam in Azerbaijan and the threat of radical Islamism to the Azerbaijani secular regime; and Azerbaijan's choices ahead.

The author explores three main areas to give a full picture of politics and society in post-Soviet Azerbaijan. First, the failure of democratic transition and pluralism after the first relatively free and fair multicandidate elections in 1992. The notion of democracy was impeded by rents from hydrocarbons, especially when oil became Azerbaijan's "source of fame in the world and supported its independence and security" (23). Second, the impact of oil money on Azerbaijani society. Altstadt investigates stunning levels of corruption in ruling circles, theft, fraud, bribery, and money laundering. Corruption penetrates every level of Azerbaijani society and government. Political change in Georgia, Ukraine, and the Middle East threatened regime stability and provided a pretext to crack down on civil society organizations and an excuse to avoid domestic reform and quash internal critics. Instability is the greatest danger to commercial interests from oil business to tourism. Altstadt convincingly argues that "the personal wealth of the Aliyev family and their inner circle depends on oil investments, construction, and globalization, which the oligarchs are not likely to jeopardize" (45). Third, the diminishing of western pressure by the European Union and the United States for the observance of human rights and of political democratization in Azerbaijan. The Aliyev regime has mastered the art of buying influence in Washington. It pays expensive consulting contracts to lobbyists and makes gifts

to think-tanks and congressmen in order to turn a blind eye to Azerbaijan's failings or excused inaction, its low level compliance to democratic values and violations of human rights because Azerbaijan is "in a tough neighborhood" and a "young democracy" (78), even though these excuses rang hollow for many domestic and foreign critics.

The Aliyev regime continues to violently repress dissent by civil society, political parties, the media, and journalists, who are arrested, beaten, or thrown in jail. Nevertheless, western, particularly American diplomats continue to visit Baku and meet with Aliyev because the "United States policy in Azerbaijan is built on a tripod of energy, security, and democratization, but the worsening record in the third has become a source of worsening tension" as the author reiterates (4). It is crucial to emphasize that when "the United States, the United Kingdom, and other European states continued to do business with Aliyev in the face of arrests and dirty elections, Azerbaijanis became convinced that energy and finances trump democracy and human rights" (207–8).

Altstadt's book "is not about chance but about choice" (1). The topic is very well explored and the narrative is coherent. The author provides ample evidence to support her arguments. The book is a must read to US policy makers and to all those who are interested in geopolitics and the South Caucasus region. By adopting a historical and critical approach, Altstadt sends clear signals to both the Aliyev regime and US policy makers that if Azerbaijan does not initiate responsive public policy, tolerate opposition, address the gap between the regime and the state, distribute the national wealth, and diversify its economy, the inevitable change in the next decade may harm the partnership between the two countries and cause chaos in Azerbaijan.

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Holocaust Education in Lithuania: Community, Conflict, and the Making of Civil

Society. By Christine Beresniová. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017, xxvii, 189 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$90.00, hard bound.

doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.149

During the Second World War, almost the entire Jewish community in Lithuania was killed. Yet, throughout the whole Soviet period, the Holocaust never really existed as a topic in the official discourse. Soviet historians could only write about "the murder of peaceful Soviet citizens." These prohibitions no longer remain in post-Soviet countries; however, this does not mean that the memory of the Holocaust has easily found its place in Lithuanian society or in other post-socialist countries. This book by Christine Beresniová is dedicated to one aspect of this phenomenon: Holocaust education in Lithuania. It is based on her dissertation in education policy, and applies ethnographic methods of participant observation and interviews in a critical ethnographic framework.

The book analyzes not only the motivation of teachers working with Holocaust programs, but also many other contexts which influence the success or failure of these programs: the historical narratives that dominate in Lithuanian society; the activities of the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes that was founded by the Lithuanian president; various organizations that engage in Holocaust education; the role of foreign actors involved in this field; and the strengthening of right-wing radicalism. The author relates the support of Lithuanian government institutions for Holocaust education programs to the fact that one of the requirements for joining the European Union and NATO