Zbigniew Wojnowski. *The Near Abroad: Socialist Eastern Europe and Soviet Patriotism in Ukraine, 1956-1985*. U of Toronto P, 2017. xx, 324 pp. Maps. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. $55.50, cloth.

This book by Zbigniew Wojnowski, who is currently a senior lecturer at the University of Roehampton, manages to merge two lines of research: on the one hand, the history of the transnational relations between Soviet citizens and (in this case) other Eastern European socialist countries and, on the other hand, the line of research on the cultural and value transformations of Soviet society after Stalinism that has its milestone in the famous *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* by Alexei Yurchak. Wojnowski's goal is to verify the extent to which and how relations between Soviet citizens and citizens of the countries of the external empire shaped a specific form of Soviet identity.

The starting point is the finding that "after the death of Stalin, citizens of the USSR did not 'speak Bolshevik'; they spoke Soviet instead. . . . Ultimately, Sovietness was not an ideology that the party vanguard bestowed upon society, but a set of values and goals that citizens formulated in dialogue with—or indeed in opposition to—other nations around the globe" (24). Wojnowski investigates how the relations with the near abroad contributed to shaping this feeling of a "geographically defined patriotism," which was destined to play an increasingly important role in the last decade of Soviet history and in the post-Soviet identity-building process. The definition of this kind of Sovietness clearly intersects with the formation of a specific sense of national belonging within the different nations of the USSR. And so, this study focuses on the Ukrainian case, which is interesting owing to Ukraine's geographical location and its past of particularly complex relations with neighbouring peoples.

The book *The Near Abroad* is organized chronologically, in chapters that analyze five phases of the international political climate: the 1956 crisis (chapter 1; 33-69), the reconciliation in the decade that followed (chapter 2; 70-104), the 1968 unrest (chapter 3; 105-40), the hardening of the relationship in the 1970s (chapter 4; 141-73), and, finally, the years (1980-85) preceding Gorbachev's perestroika (chapter 5; 174-206). This periodization may seem unusual, but it has an internal logic, which is based on the evolution of Soviet reaction to foreign-policy stimuli. In almost every chapter, Wojnowski is able to identify three main trends in the construction of a Soviet geopolitical identity: conservative patriotism, reformist patriotism, and a third element, which I would call "middle-class patriotism." One of the most interesting discoveries of this research, in fact, is that

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regardless of the existence of two opposing visions—one, of those who hoped for a return to a more authoritarian management of international relations and the other, of those who dreamed of a new era of neo-Leninist internationalism—tourism in socialist countries and the public discussions about relations within the Warsaw Pact were, above all, the prerogative of an aspirational Soviet middle class, which, through a specific interpretation of international relations, tried to build its own group identity, make political demands, and affirm its role within Soviet society.

Another very interesting aspect of this research is the attention paid to these dynamics in the western border regions of Ukraine, where a particular form of Ukrainian Soviet identity developed. There, Ukrainians could overtly emphasize and celebrate their own Ukrainianness, but only as far as such behaviour remained within the rhetoric of Galicia and Volhynia being regions intrinsically linked with the rest of central and eastern Ukraine. However, they were allowed to stress their Ukrainian character in confronting the Poles and their claims concerning the Polishness of those western regions. As the book rightly points out, the construction of a regional identity thus contributed to the Sovietization of that newly acquired part of Soviet Ukraine. Wojnowski, in the course of his analysis, successfully shows how the construction of a Soviet patriotism was strengthened over decades by the adoption of increasingly xenophobic and, in some cases, even anti-Semitic traits—well described, for instance, in relation to the case of the editorial fate of Wojciech Jaruzelski's 1981 speech in the Soviet press.

Perhaps the least convincing part of the book is its conclusions, where the author tries to trace the evolution of the three forms of Soviet patriotism and looks for a correspondence between specific political positions in Ukraine after the Revolution of Dignity. Even if one accepts part of the conclusive remarks, a more in-depth analysis would still, perhaps, be necessary—one that would be tasked, for example, with testing the influence of conservative patriotism on right-wing Ukrainian nationalism without automatically limiting this patriotism to pro-Russian movements nostalgic for the Soviet Union. Despite this drawback, it must be acknowledged that *The Near Abroad* deals with a topic that is very interesting and, at the same time, very difficult to study. One can only praise Wojnowski's ability to identify the different types of sources and to analyze them in such a way as to bring out information about the most significant aspects of the cultural and political development of the post-Stalinist USSR.

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