

The emerging democracies in the former Communist states of Eastern Europe, and the relationship between the state and civil society in these emerging democracies, are a fascinating area for contemporary research. Some contributions to *Building Democracy* provide excellent stand-alone contributions to this literature. However, the collection's lack of focus and idiosyncratic assemblage make what should have been a valuable contribution to the subject area just another book with civil society in the title.

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Olessia Koltsova, *News Media and Power in Russia* (London and New York, Routledge, 2006). xv + 271 pp.

It has been very gratifying in the past two decades to witness the increasing number of publications written by Russian academics and published in the West and the equally increasing opportunities for western scholars to be published in the Russian Federation. This cross-fertilization is undoubtedly an important step in achieving greater mutual understanding. In the field of journalistic studies, among the works published in recent years are monographs by Yasen Zassoursky, Ivan Zassoursky, Elena Androunas, as well as the book under review by Olessia Koltsova who brings her own insights to the field as a former journalist. In her preface she declares herself a pragmatist who is convinced that an expectation that those involved in news production would act in the public interest is 'quite naïve' (xi).

The book is divided into three parts: the first entitled 'Theories, Methods and Historical Context' contains two chapters, the first of which canvasses conceptual problems while the second provides a historical overview of the Russian media. The second part deals with agents of power with each of the seven chapters in this section dealing with one aspect of power relations (owners, advertisers, journalists, state agents) It is in these chapters that Koltsova provides her particular analysis of the essential features of the current media situation by revealing the agendas of the groupings and the ways in which these interests occasionally mesh, but more frequently come into conflict. The third part 'Special studies' presents

four case studies (regional media landscapes, St. Petersburg – Channel 5, the demise of NTV and changes in the coverage of the Chechen wars) illustrating the issues dealt with in the theoretical section. A brief four page conclusion sums up her findings.

This coverage provides useful insights but is probably more interesting to the non-Russian reader for the way in which the analysis is framed. Firstly although the author states that she is going to study the post-1991 period it soon becomes obvious that, apart from several pages on recent coverage of the situation in Chechnia (222–224) she is not going to broach the Putin years, except in the most marginal of ways. Her most incisive characterization of the post-2000 situation comes as a throw-away comment towards the end of the chapter on agents of power.

However, it is obvious that by August 2000 Putin's major strategy of minimizing discrepancy in the coverage of the officials' activities had already gone beyond information management and *based mainly on access to direct violence and rule-making*. (116) (my italics)

Secondly the extreme sensitivity of the authorities to the role of the media in Russian society is revealed by the way in which the author feels compelled to disguise the sources of her information. One could understand some circumspection about the identity of those providing critical information but to disguise the name of a print outlet is a very telling move. The author explores the contradictory attitude of journalists to the concept of freedom of the press and comes to much the same conclusions as Sarah Oates in her study of television. The ideal is lauded but at the same time not seen as applicable to Russian conditions. Koltsova regards the media as a form of intra-elite communication in which the general audience plays a negligible role.

Media's main clients were not audiences, and not even legal advertisers, but hidden promoters, propagandists and external owners. They, in turn, have been very busy solving their own problems: bargaining for new rules of the political game, arranging privatization auctions and distributing oil fields. The Russian audience has been silently watching this show. (160)

However, for all its pluses this book is difficult to digest. Although the author has a good command of academic English, the consistent lack of articles and

the presence of numerous Russianisms throughout make this a far from smooth read. The reader is forced constantly to reframe phrases and even whole sentences in order to negotiate meaning. The style of transliteration is idiosyncratic: Oneximbank, Gussinsky, Vestiy, Moskovski. Some of the misprints are even amusing: 'Once a top manager said to the stuff of the newsroom' (144). Too many statements are opaque, for instance, 'Several episodes involving transmission of influence from state agents by media executives could also be seen at different objects of observation' (144). Ms Koltsova has been extremely poorly served by her editor. This book could have been so much more effective had it been intelligently edited!

In conclusion it must be said that this book is of limited value because of its presentational lapses. One could not see undergraduate students successfully negotiating the stylistic peculiarities and even the more experienced scholar will find that s/he has to work hard to derive benefit from a perusal. The level of editing of academic books, a regular complaint in book reviews in recent years, should be of great concern to us all.

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John K. Cox, *Slovenia: Evolving Loyalties* (London, N.Y.: Routledge, 2005), xii + 215 pp. Select bibliography, index. (Postcommunist states and nations).

That George W. Bush could not distinguish Slovenia from Slovakia would not surprise anyone, but when senior bureaucrats in Washington or Brussels make the same mistake it is hard to deny that there is a dearth of knowledge about Slovenia, which was not only the economic powerhouse of Yugoslavia but today has a per capita GDP higher than that of Portugal and a lower percentage of its citizens living under the poverty line than Portugal, Greece, Italy or Spain (149 f.).

The book is divided up into the following chapters: 'The Slovene lands and people to 1918', 'Slovenia in the two Yugoslav states', 'Slovenia and the breakup of Yugoslavia', 'Independent Slovenia: politics, culture, and society', 'Independent Slovenia: economics and foreign policy'. A conclusion brings the various threads together and returns to Slovenian nationalism and the 'evolving loyalties'. Throughout the book Cox stresses both that Slovene nationalism was slow to