

Editor's Note

This issue begins with an article by John Delury discussing how the Communist rulers of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and North Korea sought to contend—in very different ways—with the thorny issue of political succession. In the absence of free elections and institutionalized rules for the transfer of power in Communist states, succession struggles became a notable feature of every Communist system after the death of the highest leader, often causing great instability. To mitigate the potential for destabilization, leaders in the PRC and North Korea staked out disparate approaches to the question of succession in the 1980s. The successor to Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, announced in 1980 that the Chinese Communist Party would eliminate “feudalism” from its structures and uproot the “feudal practices” that emerged under Mao. Just a few months later, the long-time ruler of North Korea, Kim Il-Sung, disclosed that he was laying the groundwork for his eldest son, Kim Jong-Il, to succeed him. Kim's announcement seemed to indicate that North Korea would be embracing feudal practices at the very time that the PRC was abandoning such practices. These contradictory approaches to the succession problem were so stark that they could have engendered serious tensions in Chinese–North Korean relations during the final decade of the Cold War. Officials in the two countries had to take steps to ensure that their diverging notions of how to manage succession would not detract from their shared objectives on the international scene.

The next article, by Christopher Nehring, discusses a controversial aspect of Soviet-Bulgarian relations under Todor Zhivkov and shows what it reveals about Cold War alliance dynamics in the Warsaw Pact. In secret contacts with Soviet leaders on at least two occasions—with Nikita Khrushchev in December 1963 and Leonid Brezhnev in August 1978—Zhivkov proposed that Bulgaria could be incorporated into the USSR as the sixteenth Soviet republic. These overtures had long been rumored but could not be confirmed until after Bulgaria's Communist-era archives were opened. Neither Khrushchev nor Brezhnev took up the idea, and indeed Nehring is doubtful that Zhivkov genuinely wanted to have Bulgaria be integrated into the Soviet Union. But even if the proposals were not fully sincere, Zhivkov was skillful in using them to foster good will with Kremlin leaders and to gain much-needed economic assistance for Bulgaria. Zhivkov's desire to have Bulgaria seen as the closest Soviet ally took concrete form in the extremely close relationship that developed between the Soviet State Security Committee (KGB) and the Bulgarian State Security (DS) agency in the 1970s and 1980s. The DS essentially functioned as an arm of the KGB, fulfilling in the security field Zhivkov's proposal for Bulgaria to be absorbed into the USSR.

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The next article, by Mariana Budjeryn, explores one of the key legacies of the Cold War and of the disintegration of the USSR. After the Soviet Union broke apart, strategic nuclear missiles from the enormous Soviet nuclear arsenal were left on the territory of four newly independent countries—Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Ukraine. In the months prior to the breakup of the USSR in 1991, Western governments were concerned about the potential implications of the fragmentation of the Soviet Union for the security of Soviet nuclear forces. Western leaders were desperate to avoid the possible dispersal of nuclear weapons and nuclear materials to unauthorized groups and criminals, and they sought to consolidate jurisdiction over nuclear armaments and the nuclear weapons complex as much as possible. This is one of the main factors that prompted them to insist that the Russian Federation be designated the “legal successor state” to the Soviet Union, a status that gave Russia the perquisites of a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council and centralized control of the ex-Soviet nuclear arsenal. But because strategic nuclear missiles were still based on the territory of three other states, Western governments worked with the Russian government in forging agreements with those three countries that would provide for the dismantling of their missiles and the transfer of relevant items to Russian territory. Budjeryn makes use of recently declassified materials to recount how this difficult and often contentious process was ultimately carried out.

The next article, by Ettore Costa, examines how the Socialist International underwent a far-reaching transformation during the early years of the Cold War. Costa discusses the evolution of the short-lived journal *Socialist World*, published by the International Socialist Conference (which soon became the Socialist International) from 1947 to 1949, a period that included the Soviet-backed Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia in February 1948, the rapid consolidation of Soviet control over East-Central Europe, and Joseph Stalin’s imposition of a blockade of West Berlin in June 1948. Examining the publication records of *Socialist World* as well as other archival materials, Costa shows that the coup in Czechoslovakia was a watershed event for the Socialist International and that developments soon afterward reinforced the trend. Initially, the various participants in the body regarded *Socialist World* as a useful forum for debate about the nature of the postwar world and viewed themselves as a bridge between the powerful Communist parties in Eastern Europe (and Italy and France) and the anti-Communist socialists in most Western countries. But in the wake of the Communist seizure of power in Czechoslovakia, the tenor and content of *Socialist World* changed. Far from seeing the journal any longer as a bridge between East and West, prominent contributors came to use it as a forum for militant anti-Communism. By the time the journal published its final (seventh) issue in 1949, it reflected the reorientation of the Socialist International during the opening phase of the Cold War.

The issue includes a discussion forum comprising a series of commentaries on an article published in the Winter 2020–2021 issue of the journal, “The Weight of the Soviet Past in Post–1991 Russia,” by Andrea Graziosi. The article is one of numerous items we have published or will be publishing about legacies of the Cold War (Mariana

Budjeryn's article in this issue and James Goldgeier's article in the Fall 2020 issue are other examples). Because of the large volume of reader correspondence generated by Graziosi's article, we decided to ask four prominent experts on Soviet history and Soviet politics—Nina Tumarkin, Ronald Suny, Elizabeth Wood, and Stephen Hanson—to offer their own perspectives on Graziosi's article and on legacies of the Soviet past in Russia. Their commentaries raise numerous issues that will be covered in future articles. We gave Graziosi an opportunity to respond to their commentaries, and he used the opportunity to expand on and clarify his own thoughts about the enduring legacies of the Soviet past.

The issue ends with seven book reviews.

On 24 February 2022, as the journal was already at press, Russian President Vladimir Putin launched what he called a “special military operation” against neighboring Ukraine. This unprovoked invasion has caused immense bloodshed, suffering, and destruction in Ukraine and has been accompanied in Russia by the reimposition of Soviet-style censorship and severe repression against anyone who questions the war. Whatever Putin's motives may be, his brutal actions and cruelty deserve unequivocal condemnation. Over the past quarter century, the JCWS has been pleased to publish articles and book reviews by scholars from Ukraine and Russia as well as from other countries, and I deeply regret that Putin's malignant war has killed and endangered so many people and cast doubt on the future of scholarly cooperation and archival openness.