

of mixed identities. Constructed with rich data, the book provides valuable insights into the lived experiences of intermarried families in Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. By taking a longer-term view, Edgar invited readers to consider how the salience of nationality persists socially and politically in the pronouncements and policies of these two states in the post-Soviet era. Engaging and thoughtful, it affords a unique opportunity to integrate the multi-ethnic Soviet experience with approaches to intermarriage and its link to the conceptualization of social distancing elsewhere. Future work, delving more deeply into the debates and discussions over insistence on a single categorization response and recognition (which categories are made official and which are not), can clarify the structural settings affecting the nationality labels and provide more context concerning which identities might be hidden or shed, and which cannot.

Edgar clearly states this work is not a demographic or sociological analysis. She provides valuable insight into how families navigate the intimacies of identity and highlights the importance of moving well past primordial clichés. This work's interdisciplinary insights are particularly useful to social scientists, demographers, and other scholars examining ethnic and racial identity, offering a fresh perspective and new avenues for research. Additional work on the third aim proffered, placing the experience of intermarriage in a comparative context, would be especially welcomed, and a good starting point would be found in this fine book.

## **Sheila Miyoshi Jager. *The Other Great Game: The Opening of Korea and the Birth of Modern East Asia.***

**Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2023. xvii, 602 pp. Notes. Index. Maps. \$39.95, hard bound.**

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doi: 10.1017/slr.2024.417

The term “Great Game” is generally attributed to Arthur Conolly, depicting the mid-nineteenth century rivalry between the British and Russian empires in Central and South Asia. Sheila Miyoshi Jager’s recent monograph focuses on a different “Great Game,” which unfolded in East Asia during the second half of the nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries and involved both Russia and Britain, but also other western Powers as well as Japan and China. Jager places the struggle for control over the Korean Peninsula at the center of the narrative, illustrating the processes that led to the emergence of a new East Asian order following the gradual demise of China and the collapse of the Sino-centric order.

The monograph is divided into six sections, each further segmented into several chapters. The narrative commences with the 1860 Peking Treaty, which resulted in Russia, for the first time in its history, sharing a border with Korea. From there it guides the reader through the major conflicts of the second half of the nineteenth century involving European Great Powers, the US, Japan, and China, all directly or indirectly related to control over the Korean Peninsula. The narrative peaks with Japan’s two-step colonization of the Korean Peninsula, following its victory over Russia in the 1904–05 “World War Zero” (David Wolff, et. al. eds., *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero*, 2006) and the emergence of the new East Asian order with Japan and the US in key roles.

While some historians may raise questions related to the depiction of certain events, for example, the reasons behind such a brief reference to the Battle of Tsushima in the Russo-Japanese War, which is often seen as synonymous with Russia’s defeat, Jager’s work

is undoubtedly a monumental achievement. The main strength lies in the unique combination of an extensive narrative scope and exceptional attention to detail. With the “Korean Problem” as the central motif, Jager’s chronicle masterfully weaves together the histories of Russia’s expansion in Asia, China’s demise, the simultaneous rise of Japan, and the interests and policies of western Great Powers in East Asia, portraying the region’s transformation from Confucianism and Sino-centrism to a modern Westphalian order.

Attention to detail and the key individuals involved in shaping this new order enlivens the narrative, allowing the reader to almost time travel to events that occurred many decades ago. One notable anecdote is the depiction of the 1876 talks between Japan’s envoy Mori Arinori and China’s Li Hongzhang regarding tensions in Japan-Korea relations, which illustrates the ongoing transformations in East Asia but also the continuities. During the talks, Chinese leaders were still appealing to Korea’s traditional status as a tributary state while the Japanese leadership was driven by the pursuit of “modern” interests. Despite this obvious gap in worldviews, the conversation between Mori and Li was conducted by writing on pieces of paper in literary Chinese (49–50).

Jager’s narrative places geopolitics at the core of the “other Great Game.” The actors are driven by anxiety related to the actions of the others and realpolitik interests. As someone interested in identities and ideologies, I hoped to see references to non-material factors in shaping the actions of the state actors, such as Russia’s “Eastern identity” briefly mentioned by Jager in the Preface (xv). I am also not entirely convinced that the narrative fully supports one of Jager’s key arguments (xvii): the importance of Korea’s agency in this history. Korea appears in the narrative ridden with corruption and incapacitated by persistent internal power struggles, incapable of taking decisive action while unsuccessfully attempting to play other actors against each other.

These reservations, however, are minor and do not diminish from the magnitude of the achievement portrayed in *The Other Great Game* in depicting the monumental transformation of East Asia during the second half of the nineteenth to the early twentieth century and the importance of the Korean Peninsula in this process. Jager’s monograph is a must-read for all those interested both in East Asian history and in its present. Numerous key themes of the narrative, such as Russia’s expansionism, divisions in Korea related to its relations with Japan, and Japan-China tensions, are visible in today’s regional relations. One is left to wonder whether the phrase “In Russia, every ten years everything changes, and nothing changes in 200 years” attributed to Pyotr Stolypin may actually have universal relevance.

## **Evgeny Sergeev. *The Bolsheviks and Britain during the Russian Revolution and Civil War, 1917–1924.***

**London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. xxi, 270 pp. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Bibliography. Chronology. Index. Photographs. Maps. \$103.50, hard bound; \$39.95 paper.**

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doi: 10.1017/slr.2024.421

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