eighteenth century) they were expected to serve in the military and personally raise and finance military units that were cripplingly expensive. Similarly, more mundane matters such as collecting rents, providing dowries, discharging seigneurial obligations, and insuring the continuation of the family name all insured that nobles' lives were more difficult than is normally supposed. A second theme concerns the nature of nobility itself. As Professor Lukowski shows, the definition of who was noble and who was not constantly changed over the course of the century and the nobility was by no means a closed institution. Rather, it was within the nobility itself where different degrees of class and status mattered. As such, one comes to realize that European society during that era was stratified in a much more diverse and varied way than a simple dichotomy of nobles and peasants.

Professor Lukowski's book is a scholarly effort of high order. It is well researched and brings to general readers a significant amount of information that would be otherwise difficult to come by. The author also has a sense of levity that makes the book easy to read and follow. As for the audience of the book, it seems targeted to specialized readers and would not be suitable for students of history on the undergraduate level. Teachers of European history would be well served to use the book's perspective, however, and bring to students a more comprehensive and varied understanding of European history and society.

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Vera Tolz. *Inventing the Nation: Russia*. London: Arnold Press. Pp. viii, 307. Paper, $24.95; ISBN 0-340-67705-8.

During the Cold War, Americans often used, and confused, the term Soviet with Russian. Indeed, they were often synonymous in the American mind. Vera Tolz, however, asks the relevant question: Who are the Russians? The Soviet state was a multi-national one, as was the tsarist empire and what remains of modern Russia. Two competing views of the state and the nation emerged in the mid-nineteenth century that have dominated ever since, both of which evolve around Russian similarities with and differences from the European perception of a modern nation and state.

Tolz begins the work with a brief, but very useful examination of the theoretical framework, citing the works of Hans Rogger, Roman Szporluk, Geoffrey Hosking, Ronald Suny, and others. Her work subsequently follows a linear path through Russian history, arguing that Peter the Great established the foundation by which Russians viewed themselves and the nation in comparison to surrounding peoples. This theme is repeated throughout the book and the author does an excellent job maintaining a relatively simple, but intellectually sound, analysis of the material. Tolz is able to incorporate effectively critical topics in Russian history, such as the Decembrist revolt,

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the Slavophil and Westernizer movements, the populists, and the manner that each group influenced and defined Russian-ness without losing a fluid and clear writing style. Her attention to the larger theme in the work is notable, yet never turgid or mundane. The Soviet period is capably examined, particularly regarding the competing forms of identity that shaped Russian images and concepts of themselves. The author's conclusion is thoughtful and somewhat thought-provoking: Russian state building has consistently and systemically obstructed Russian nation building.

This work is a fine contribution to the growing literature that examines national identity formation in Europe. It has a useful, but limited, bibliography that might not be new to the specialist but certainly provides a thorough guide for students. As a history of Russia, the book's focus on national identity and its evolution in Russia has limited appeal and utility. It does, however, supplement and inform the wider view of Russian history that is often absent from standard works. It is suitable for advanced undergraduate and graduate courses, but anyone lacking a foundation in Russian history will find it difficult. Nevertheless, the author's central thesis that, as the Russian empire expanded, the state intervened evermore deeply into the lives of its citizens in ways that hindered the development of an equally recognizable identity is a valuable contribution. Throughout the centuries Russians have attempted to provide the definition, with limited success and, the author argues, that process will continue in a post-Soviet Russia that will have consequences for Russia's future.

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Robert Johnson. *British Imperialism.* Histories and Controversies Series. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. Pp. XV, 284. Paper, $22.50; ISBN 0-333-94726-6.

This handy book, as the series title indicates, "aims to explain some of the histories and controversies about British Imperialism. It offers an introduction, critical analysis, and overview of the debates that surround the British Empire from its origins to the return of Hong Kong to Chinese rule in 1997." The author is also aware of the debate between those who claim to be "Imperial Historians" and those who see themselves as post-colonial theorists and subaltern scholars. Frequent references are made to the recently published, monumental *Oxford History of the British Empire* but not to the Companion Series.

Chapters 1–4 deal with definitions of imperialism, the nature of British imperialist rule from its Angevin Origins to the early nineteenth century, imperialist thinking, and the idea of "New Imperialism." Here the Robinson and Gallagher and Cain and Hopkins theses received considerable explication. The second section, Chapters 5–9 examines a number of themes in the high noon of British imperialism (c.