the respective dramatic art. One of the major sources the author relied on were numerous interviews with actors and directors that also take up a substantial proportion of the book. Through the interviews Johnson introduces the reader with individual theatrical ensembles and their plays. He also adds views of critics, actors and directors on each of the themes of the plays. This way, his account has gained an insider perspective. Naturally, the author drew many comparisons between the republics in order to provide a better understanding of the differences in dramatic styles.

This publication also contains a great number of black and white pictures of actors and plays. There is a description of the play and its significance under each picture. At the end of book is a list of footnotes, bibliographical sources and an index. Most of the used sources are in English but Johnson also relied on Estonian, Lithuanian and Latvian sources that he had translated. The index includes a list of plays, playwrights and key drama terminology.

The New Theatre of the Baltics is a very useful reference book for any reader who wishes to find his way through the dramatic work in the Baltic republics. It not only offers a summary of the most important playwrights, actors and plays but also attempts to make the author ponder over the function of theatre in post-communist societies. Johnson offers a great insight into a hardly accessible topic to anyone who is not familiar with the local languages, but a topic that is no less interesting than any other European theatre.

Olga Brabcová

Polly Jones (ed.), ***The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization. Negotiating cultural and social change in the Khrushchev era.*** London: Routledge, 2006, 279 pp. ISBN 978-0-415-54588-4.

This collection of papers focuses on the period after Stalin's death that was characteristic of manoeuvring between reforms, for so long needed to maintain the Soviet system. Popular topics such as the importance of N. S. Khrushchev, his struggle for power and political reforms are left aside for the sake of an often underestimated aspect of the post-Stalinist period: social and cultural reforms, their impact on the population and people's reactions to the reform. The authors of the anthology strive after emphasising the dynamics of the reform movement and creating a new framework for cultural and social changes of the Khrushchev era.

The volume comprises of three parts, whereby the first one is devoted to public opinion and the reaction of society to the reforms. The first study by Miriam Dobson from the University of Sheffield examines a poorly researched area of Destalinization –

amnesties and the fate of released prisoners. Dobson shows how problematic the consequences of the amnesties had proven to be. Released prisoners (*zeks*) could not, and often did not want to, re-integrate into society. Also the reaction of society to the return of prisoners was quite negative. Criminality rates rapidly rose. Miriam Dobson uses the examples of concrete soldiers in order to demonstrate the unreadiness for the consequences of amnesties not only of the freed prisoners but also of Soviet society. It is thus clear from this study that Destalinization had not always been enthusiastically welcomed. Not even official authorities and media knew how to react, especially after the wave of criminality broke out. Who were the *zeks*? Victims of Stalinist purges, or bandits? The new Soviet leadership refused to fill Gulags once again and thus appealed to the public for help to re-educate the released prisoners. On the example of amnesties Dobson demonstrates that Destalinization was more than a well-planned process; it also was not unchallengeable and was by no means only welcomed.

The editor of the anthology, Polly Jones, analyses in her study the official Destalinization rhetoric of the Soviet state as compared to the reaction to the process from below. The author clearly shows that the Soviet leadership was far from expecting the popular reaction to Destalinization that followed Khrushchev's speech at the 20th Congress. The party welcomed verbal expressions of Destalinization, rejection of the cult of personality etc., but disapproved of all other practical actions towards this direction. The period from 1956 to 1961 was thus quite uncertain as for the practical repercussions of Destalinization. The party leadership had learnt from this development and when the second wave of Destalinization was launched at the 22nd Congress, a very clearly defined line of criticism of Stalin was set; any attempt to divert from it was punished. The author thus proves that Destalinization was conceived in such a manner that it would be kept within the party's power and so that the party could overcome "the mistakes of the past" and continue the same course. Public discourse about Stalinist past was thus ended as swiftly as it started.

Susanne Schattenberg goes along the same line in her paper on the impact of Khrushchev's "secret" speech at the 20th Congress on the everyday life of ordinary people. Similar to the findings of the preceding study, the author comes to the conclusion that the party was not ready for the reaction of the public. Schattenberg examines the course of Destalinization in workplaces. Immediately after the start of the process, the party tried to regulate it and the call for democratization was soon replaced by effectiveness of work and fulfilment of the plan. Also the workplaces thus witnessed a suppression of liberalization at the very start, whereby steps towards radical reforms that Destalinization could have meant were foredoomed to fail. The first part of the anthology ends with Denis Kozlov's article on the work of the writer Vladimir Dudintsev that had stirred up the already troubled waters of the post-Stalinist USSR. Through a bold mosaic of recollections and memories of ordinary Soviet people on Dudintsev's novel, Kozlov creates an image of the period immediately after the

20th Congress. He shows that for Soviet society the novel "Not by Bread Alone" embodied a mirror set against the Stalinist state order that provoked anti-bureaucratic reactions rather than pure anti-Stalinist sentiments. Kozlov depicts that Dudincev's readers identified with the characters and transferred even negative characters of the novel into the real life. In the course of time, the mirror created by the novel naturally lost its clarity and relevance and was put into the shade of, for example, Solzhenitsyn's "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich".

The second part of this volume deals with the question of identity and what had happened of Stalinist identity after Destalinization. Christina Varga-Harris turns the readers' attention towards the housing problem in Leningrad in the 1950s and 1960s. Although life conditions of many people noticeably improved after the war when a massive construction of houses was launched, this was done at the expense of quality. In any case the state was still unable to meet the demand. Petitions for better housing became a new type of civil activity: clerks duly dealt with these complaints and acknowledged their rightfulness but could only rarely handle it in the claimants' favour. Varga-Harris's article also demonstrates how these petitions came to be the new way of interaction between the state and the people.

The contributions of Ann Livschiz and Juliane Fürst deal with the question of children and youth related policies in the Soviet Union. Livschiz shows the impact of Stalin's death on the state policies on children and youth education. The state had to face the problem of hooliganism and youth criminality. Moreover, as Livschiz argued, there was a fear that Stalin's personality cult had stigmatized the youth, which was supposedly manifested in the absence of basic human emotions. The article further describes the zeal of reformers to reverse this development by, for example, the use of books praising exactly these qualities. As in most of the previous studies, it is concluded that the post-Stalinist period had not led to any significant change as against the preceding years. As for hooliganism and youth criminality, the situation even deteriorated after Stalin's death. Liberalization, if any, was achieved only verbally, not factually. The approach of the state towards hooliganism and delicts is also the topic of Juliane Fürst's paper that looks at the reaction of Khrushchev to the rapid growth in such cases. As proven by the author, political reforms in this area as well as in other spheres had more or less failed. Even here the dilemma between liberalization attempts and the need to keep control played an important role. Fürst asserts that Khrushchev went even further than Stalin in crushing "non-conformism" of the youth. Donald Fitzer returns to the question of workers and their position after Stalin's death in his contribution.

The last part comprises of studies on the "search after a new style". Roger Marwick in the first of these studies analyses Soviet historiography in order to demonstrate similar findings as his colleagues have come to in the previous sections, i.e. that the initial Destalinization and liberalization from soon turned into a threat

for the new leadership that interfered. Historiography experienced attempts to offer a new perspective on history whereas literature, as shown by Emily Lygo, focused on lyrical poetry that was soon forced out of the Soviet literary life. After a brief renaissance of lyrical poetry, the Union of Soviet Writers intervened against J. Brodski and thereby put an end to the poetical euphoria. On the other hand, as stressed by Lygo, the Union supported a younger generation of poets; however, only those that had some experience from the literary groupings (LITO) and that thus more or less had control over them. Renaissance of poetry is also discussed in the last article of the volume by Katherine Hodgson. Contrary to Emily Lygo, she does not focus on poets of the older generation but her conclusion is very similar: there was no major liberalization and many authors of this period were banned from publishing. However, one could still talk about an emergence of a sort of cultural Destalinization movement when these poets who experienced the war tried to reconcile with their own past.

Susan E. Reid describes the changes that ensued the 20th Congress in the realm of art. She presents a discussion that erupted between Soviet artists on the so-called modern style *(sovremennyi stil')*. She comes to the conclusion that despite disagreements over the need for a new modern style, all artists agreed – just like in any other sector – that no revolutionary changes had come about.

Tereza Vorlová

Tim Judah, ***Kosovo: What everyone needs to know.*** Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 208 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-537673-0.

Tim Judah is a correspondent of the British news weekly *The Economist* in the Balkans. His new book *Kosovo: What everyone needs to know* indirectly extends his previous work on the circumstances of the Kosovo conflict in 1999 (*Kosovo: War and Revenge*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). The main aim of his newest publication is to provide any reader with a general and basic overview of the historical, political and cultural development of Kosovo in its broader international context and to offer possible alternatives of the future evolution of the region. As the author pointed out in the introduction, the aspirations of this book do not go any further than what the title suggests. It is meant only for the general public interested in the topic that wants to acquire some understanding of the problem, and certainly not for scholars, knowledgeable of the issues.

Judah brings forward two important reasons why Kosovo should be of interest to the general public. Firstly, due to its geographical position, Kosovo geopolitically gained on importance with the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to NATO and the