

TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE AND THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

In the twenty-five years since the Soviet Union was dismantled, the countries of the Former Soviet Union have faced different circumstances and responded differently to the need to acknowledge their communist past and redress the suffering of their people. While some have adopted transitional justice and accountability measures, others have chosen to reject them; these choices have directly affected state building and societal reconciliation efforts. This is the most comprehensive account to date of post-Soviet efforts to address, distort, ignore, or recast the past through the use, manipulation, and obstruction of transitional justice measures and memory politics initiatives. Editors Cynthia M. Horne and Lavinia Stan have gathered contributions from top scholars in the field, allowing the disparate postcommunist studies and transitional justice scholarly communities to come together and reflect on the past and its implications for the future of the region.

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Transitional Justice and the Former Soviet Union

REVIEWING THE PAST, LOOKING TOWARD
THE FUTURE

Edited by

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Mark Kramer, personal interview with Yakovlev, at International Democracy Foundation, Moscow, June 11, 2001

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Cynthia M. Horne is a Professor of Political Science at Western Washington University. Her research area of specialty is transitional justice in the post-communist sphere, with attention to the conditions under which lustration and vetting programs have promoted transition goals of democracy, trust in government, trust in public institutions, and inter-personal trust. She has published extensively on the use of lustration, file-access provisions, and public disclosures in the postcommunist transitions in journals such as the *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Problems of Post-Communism*, *Law & Social Inquiry*, and *Europe-Asia Studies*. She has contributed to the *Encyclopedia of Transitional Justice* (2012) and *Post-Communist Transitional Justice: Lessons from Twenty-Five Years of Experience* (2015) on similar topics of trust building and transitional justice. Her book *Building Trust and Democracy: Transitional Justice in Post-Communist Countries* (2017) explores the impact of transitional justice on democratization and trust building across Central and Eastern Europe.

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Acknowledgments

The idea for this project started with a relatively simple question posed to us while on a roundtable discussing a book project on twenty-five years of transitional justice in Central and Eastern Europe, namely “what about states in the former Soviet Union?” At that moment, we didn’t have much to add to the discussion, as little had been written about transitional justice attempts in the former Soviet Union (FSU). The relative dearth of measures in the FSU and outright rejection of accountability measures in many regional states had left this topic underexplored. In many ways, the dog that didn’t bark had largely been ignored by both postcommunist and transitional justice scholars. This struck us as problematic. Both the absence and the instrumentalization of measures, not just the implementation of measures, seemed important areas to study, especially as the FSU was approaching its own twenty-fifth anniversary of the dissolution of the USSR. Hence, the idea for this project was hatched from one deceptively simple question.

Tackling this research question proved more challenging than its genesis. We are very pleased that we were able to assemble a group of scholars from diverse research backgrounds and perspectives, willing to collectively dive into this research lacuna. Everyone was empirically challenged to engage with new concepts and cases, or apply narrower research agendas to the broad FSU space. Contributors learned about unfamiliar countries in order to apply their knowledge of transitional justice, or, alternatively, learned about different transitional justice measures in order to evaluate their particular country case(s). We are very grateful for the willingness of many authors to stretch beyond their comfort zones and bring their particular areas of expertise to bear on this collaborative inquiry. We have learned a lot from this opportunity to work with them.

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Personally, Cynthia is most appreciative to have worked with Lavinia on this project. Lavinia is not only an intellectual power-house, but she is a detail-oriented, administrative dynamo, capable of providing thoughtful, timely feedback. Her sense of humor helped pull this project over many a hurdle. Cynthia feels so fortunate that our chance coffee table conversation morphed into this project. In turn, Lavinia is no less grateful for Cynthia's willingness to put up with her hectic administrative duties that often called her attention for days, even weeks, at a time and slowed down progress for this manuscript. Indeed, this volume would not have seen its final stages without the unwavering dedication Cynthia demonstrated in contacting contributors, keeping track of revisions and revisions of revisions, unifying the referencing style, and bringing all chapters, tables, references, and blurbs together. Lavinia also wants to thank Lucian and Luc Turcescu for their love and support, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for generously financing her research on various transitional justice themes.

Despite our best efforts, there is much that remains unexplored in this volume. Not all FSU cases are covered, not all measures are accounted for, and the impact of newly implemented measures remains to be seen. We are hopeful that this volume starts a conversation about the presence and absence of transitional justice in the FSU for others to build upon.