

*Recasting the Nation: Heroes, Monuments, and State-Building in Post-Independence Kazakhstan*  
*April 24 – August 18, 2017*  
Astana, Kazakhstan

**I. Research Abstract**

My project examines nation-building in contemporary Kazakhstan with a focus on considering ways in which the Kazakhstani state has reimagined the Soviet period of its national history as part of a larger project of asserting the sovereignty of the Kazakhstani state. My research evaluates the extent to which state-led efforts to memorialize and commemorate Soviet-era events, heroes, and experiences through monuments, museums, holidays, and other public *lieux de memoire*<sup>1</sup> contribute to a cohesive and continuous narrative of Kazakhstani history interconnected with, but separate from, that of contemporary Russia. The examination of the cultural productions of the state to build and reinforce this narrative is supplemented with interviews that illuminate how individual citizens interact with, and relate to, these *lieux de memoire*. I argue that monuments, museums and other non-ephemeral cultural productions and repositories play a substantial role in shaping the Kazakhstani national consciousness. In addition to contributing to a comprehensive model of supranational Kazakhstani identity, the project sheds lights on ways in which sovereignty is constructed and asserted by geopolitically less dominant states in the post-Soviet space.<sup>2</sup>

**II. Research Goals**

During the Soviet period, monuments, memorials and other forms of what Yurchak (2006) describes as “urban visual propaganda” were integral elements of the hegemonic representation of

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<sup>1</sup> Following Pierre Nora (1989)

<sup>2</sup> There is a growing body of literature examining the nature of sovereignty in and among the states of the former Soviet Union, e.g. Sally N. Cummings and Raymond Hinnebusch (eds). 2011. *Sovereignty After Empire: Comparing the Middle East and Central Asia*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

state ideology. This Soviet model of representation and the ritualization of participation in public memorializations and commemorations and other mass spectacles has been replicated under the leadership of post-Soviet regimes.<sup>3</sup> The overarching goal of my project is to shed light on the extent to which the “nationalizing nationalism”<sup>4</sup> of the Kazakhstani state is predicated on efforts to disentangle Kazakhstani and Soviet nationalizing experiences and ideologies from their Russo-centric counterpart formulations. Two fundamental questions drive my inquiry: First, how do formal, state-framed memorializations of Soviet heroes, events, and experiences demonstrate, reinforce, and consolidate official conceptions of Kazakhstani sovereignty? Second, how do Kazakhstani citizens from diverse ethnonational and regional backgrounds relate to, or identify with, the ideology presented through these official conceptions?

To answer these questions, I focus concretely on the memorializations to WWII soldiers in independent Kazakhstan. Among WWII heroes that features most prominently in official discourse and cultural productions is female sniper Aliya Moldagulova. Awarded status of Hero of the Soviet Union, Moldagulova has been reimagined, along with other ethnically Kazakh WWII-era Heroes of the Soviet Union, as a Kazakhstani national hero. As memorials to Moldagulova in Almaty, Astana, Aktobe, and elsewhere attest, her memorialization as both non-ethnicized World War II hero and as ethnic Kazakh is an important part of the multiethnic national narrative of identity in post-independence Kazakhstan. Her memorializations exemplify how the Kazakhstani state can shape the collectively imagined past in a way consistent with its overt goal of constructing a de-ethnicized national identity for all of its citizens.<sup>5</sup> While this identity implicitly maintains the

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<sup>3</sup> See Adams (2010).

<sup>4</sup> See Brubaker (1996).

<sup>5</sup> The Doctrine of National Unity is the programmatic policy statement articulating the official vision for a common civic Kazakhstani identity. See <http://assembly.kz/en/national-unity-doctrine>.

cultural hegemony of Kazakhstan's ethnic Kazakhs, highlighting the shared WWII experience can create a sense of territorial attachment to Kazakhstan among Kazakhstan's ethnic Russians.

I spent just shy of four months in Kazakhstan during 2017 conducting fieldwork, including documenting the locations and physical configurations of monuments and content of museum exhibits, interviewing museum curators, historians, relatives of Moldagulova, and other Kazakhstani citizens, and acquiring literature and other written materials concerning Moldagulova's legacy as a focal point for Kazakhstani identity building projects.

### **III. Research Activities**

My research activities while in Kazakhstan consisted of four distinct elements: language study, documenting museums, memorials, and other public spaces, conducting interviews, and collecting examples of relevant literature and other media.

#### **a. Language study**

As a recipient of a Title VIII Combined Research and Language Training Program fellowship, my activities in Kazakhstan were organized around 80 classroom hours of intensive individual Russian language instruction. This Russian language instruction was designed to complement my existing high-level knowledge of Kazakh. Language instruction took place in Astana, with a professor of linguistics from Eurasian National University, beginning within a few days of my arrival to Kazakhstan in late April. 70 of the 80 hours of instruction took place during the first six weeks in-country, in order to build my capacity to accomplish the other research objectives for the award period. In summer 2016 I completed an intensive summer session of Russian instruction at Indiana University Bloomington which concluded with an ACTFL Official OPIc proficiency exam, on which I scored "Advanced Mid" (level 8 on a 10 level scale). While this level of attainment demonstrates the foundational knowledge of Russian necessary to conduct

fieldwork in the Russian language, prior to my arrival to Kazakhstan in April I had few opportunities to practice the language outside of the classroom.

Language instruction, therefore, was focused on several objectives: building my confidence using the language as a language of everyday communication, expanding my vocabulary on themes related to my research interests, such as military terms, learning patterns, structures, and vocabulary appropriate for formal interviews, and deepening my productive knowledge of Russian grammar. In addition to developing my technical competencies and improving my confidence with the language the classes also directly contributed to attaining my research goals. My course tutor frequently organized our lessons around Soviet-era and contemporary biographies of the heroes whose memorializations this project is concerned with. Through the language lessons I was also able to access state-sponsored history textbooks published for Kazakhstani schools, and document the narrative that was presented. From this I will be able to assess how the school curriculum reinforces the nation-building ideology of the Kazakhstani state.

**b. Documenting memorials and museum exhibits**

Outside of language study, one of the major tasks I hoped to accomplish during the award period was to identify and document the public *lieux de memoire* dedicated to Aliya Moldagulova, as an example case of the recasting of Soviet heroes as sources of specifically Kazakhstani patriotism. With that goal in mind, I located and carefully photographed monuments and memorials in Astana, Almaty, Aktobe, and Uralsk. Of the monuments, memorializations and museum exhibits that I examined, those that particularly reflect the post-independence nation-building goals of the Kazakhstani state and the intersection of the Soviet experience with those goals include:

### Astana and Surroundings

- *Otan-Ana* (Motherland) monument located within the *Otan qorgaushylar* (Defenders of the Motherland) memorial park.
- Aliya Moldagulova monument at the intersection of *Zhenis* (Victory) and Moldagulova streets (and evidence of the renaming of 9<sup>th</sup> of May Street to Moldagulova Street).
- Raqimzhan Qoshqarbayev monument at the intersection of Qoshqarbayev and Baitursunuly streets.
- Monument to the 1932-1933 famine at the intersection of *Respublika* (Republic) and Abai streets.
- Exhibits presenting Kazakhstan's participation in World War II at the National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
- Exhibits presenting Kazakhstan's participation in World War II at the newly opened Military Historical Musuem of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
- ALZHIR Memorial Complex and Museum to Victims of Political Repressions and Totalitarianism in Malinovka
- KARLAG Memorial Complex and Museum to Victims of Political Repressions and Totalitarianism in Dolinka.

### Almaty

- Monument to Aliya Moldagulova and Manshuk Mametova located at the Old Square (Astana Square).
- *Zheltoksan* monument at the intersection of Zheltoksan and Satpaev streets.
- Exhibits presenting Kazakhstan's participation in World War II at the Central State Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

### Aktobe and Surroundings

- Monument to Aliya Moldagulova at the intersection of Moldagulova and Brat'yev Zhubanovykh streets.
- Alley of Heroes paralleling Aliya Moldagulova Street.
- Monument to the unknown soldiers on Aliya Moldagulova Street.
- Bust of Aliya Moldagulova at the intersection of Sherniyaza and Koblandin Streets.
- Monuments and memorials in the village of Aliya, including exhibits at the "Aliya" Center for Patriotic Upbringing.
- Monuments and memorial in Aliya Moldagulova's birth village of Bulak.
- Monument to victims of political repression at Tuitobe (*Verbliuzh'ya gora*)
- Manshuk Mametova Musuem located within the Aktobe Medical College
- Exhibits at the Aliya Moldagulova Museum in Aktobe City

### Uralsk

- Monument to the "Glorious Daughters of Kazakhstan" (Aliya Moldagulova, Manshuk Mametova, and Khiuaz Dospanova) located at the intersection of Dostyk-Druzhby Avenue and Manshuk Mametova Street.
- Exhibits at the Manshuk Mametova House Museum
- Exhibits at the Aktobe Regional Museum

The hundreds of photographs and detailed notes that I took while visiting these sites enriched my understanding of how the Kazakhstani state continues to engage practices of memorialization that adhere to, and even aggrandize, the Soviet form, while incorporating ideological content that is specifically Kazakhstani. This infusion of ideological content includes both reimagining Soviet-era memorials and monuments in Kazakhstani terms, as well as deploying new memorials, monuments and exhibits in ways that specifically advance the nation-build goals of the state.

**c. Interviews and informal conversations**

I conducted interviews and had informal conversations with over 30 Kazakhstanis concerning the themes of my project. While most people were very willing to discuss the nature of Kazakhstani identity policy and the role of WWII in shaping official identity policies, I was surprised that many informants were unwilling to allow formal interviews to take place. In Astana the most productive discussions were those that I had with history and anthropology faculty from Eurasian National University and Nazarbayev University. These discussions helped me identify relevant Russian and Kazakh-language primary and secondary sources, and helped me refine the scope of the project. Perhaps most importantly these conversations opened up avenues for future collaboration with Kazakhstani researchers and academics working on similar themes of collective memory and sacralization of public spaces in Kazakhstan.

In addition to meeting with faculty at the local university, I was also able to conduct formal interviews in Aktobe with local journalists and with Galymzhan Baidarbes, a prominent local historian and activist who has devoted much of his scholarship and public activism towards increasing popular awareness of Moldagulova and fellow Soviet WWII heroine Manshuk Mametova in contemporary Kazakhstan. Similarly, in Almaty I was able to conduct a formal

interview with Bayan Moldagulova, the closest living relative to Aliya Moldagulova. Curators at museums in Aktobe and Uralsk were far more willing to have informal conversations with me about their exhibits than were curators at the museums in Astana and Almaty.

#### **d. Media**

During the grant period I collected materials relating to national identity formation in Kazakhstan and especially those which focused the role of WWII and the heroes that emerged from WWII. The materials I collected include four books devoted to glorifying the role of Aliya and Manshuk as important figures in independent Kazakhstan, all published in the first several years after independence. I also collected three books published since 2010 that attempt to offer a more academically grounded justification of the contemporary importance of these heroes as foundational to the sovereign Kazakhstani state. In addition, I acquired several more books that address the impact and legacy of the Soviet experience in shaping identity and state-citizen dynamics in independent Kazakhstan. While I was able to locate a number of Soviet-era treatments of WWII which focused on my heroes of interest, I was less successful in obtaining permission to borrow or photograph these works. However, in total I collected over 3000 pages of materials that I will systematically examine as I develop this project further. Most, if not all of the materials I collected were published in limited quantities and are unavailable outside of Kazakhstan. See the bibliography at the end of this report for a selection of the materials I collected.

#### **IV. Important Research Findings**

My research in and around Astana, Aktobe, Almaty, and Uralsk has highlighted how both the Kazakhstani state and ordinary Kazakhstanis continue to regard the Soviet legacy as an important element of what it means to be Kazakhstani. State-directed projects to inculcate a Kazakhstani national consciousness deliberately and overtly draw from Soviet experiences to

produce a continuous national narrative. Not only does this national narrative offer a foundation for expressions of civic patriotism by all Kazakhstanis, regardless of ethnonational identity, it also asserts and legitimates the sovereignty of the Kazakhstani state.

Grappling with the Soviet legacy presents particular challenges for the Kazakhstani state. Unlike other post-Soviet states, Kazakhstan has a large population of ethnic Russians and shares a lengthy border with Russia. Moreover, a large proportion of ethnic Kazakhs, particularly those in the educated elite, prefer to, or in some cases only, speak Russian. This existing demographic, cultural, and linguistic russification precludes the Kazakhstani state from pursuing exclusively ethnocentric identity policies, and precludes the state from rewriting the history of Kazakhstan in a way that fully excludes non-Kazakhs from the nation-building narrative. As the conflict in eastern Ukraine has demonstrated, the Russian state is willing to intervene on behalf of ethnic Russians in other states when the interests of those Russians are perceived to be threatened and the sovereignty of neighboring states is perceived to be weak. These are among the incentives for the Kazakhstani state to legitimate elements of the Soviet experience as distinctly Kazakhstani.

Particularly significant, in terms of contributing to understanding the intersections of nation-building and collective memory are the seemingly contradictory choices made by the state, in terms of what aspects of the Soviet experience should be commemorated and memorialized. One dimension of memorializations focuses on the positive contributions of Soviet Kazakhstanis towards Kazakhstan's path to independence. Soviet-era Kazakhstani heroes provide continuity that transcends the break from being a constituent part of the Soviet Union to being an independent republic. This is observed in the glorification of World War II heroes, and, in particular, the way that Soviet-era heroes are positioned in public spaces. In Almaty, for example, the monument to Moldagulova and Mametova was erected in 1997 where the central statue of Lenin once stood (see

Figure 1). Replacing Lenin and the ideology he stood for with two female heroes that died in defense of their motherland elevates the importance of sovereignty against external threats; the fact that both heroes represented are ethnic Kazakhs hints at the Kazakhstani-forward, not Soviet-forward or Russian-forward nature of this conception of sovereignty.

Monuments and museums in Astana and Aktobe further demonstrate how the Kazakhstani state has reimagined the participation of Kazakhstanis in WWII as integral part of Kazakhstan's path to independence, and how Kazakhstani-centric interpretations of WWII are replacing Soviet and/or Russo-centric interpretations. In Astana, for example, the monument to Aliya Moldagulova is located on the intersection of *Zhenis* (Victory) and Aliya Moldagulova streets. Until 2008, Aliya Moldagulova street was named 9<sup>th</sup> of May street, commemorating Soviet victory in WWII. This renaming effectively claims the Soviet victory for Kazakhstan in the name of ethnic Kazakh Moldagulova, which is portrayed in the somewhat haphazard and incomplete replacement of signage along the street (see Figure 2). Similar efforts to visually and spatially create continuities between Soviet-era memorializations of WWII and post-independence memorializations are found in Aktobe and Uralsk.

Other monuments further blur the line between memorializing a Soviet past and invoking a specifically Kazakhstani patriotism. One of the most recently installed WWII-related monuments in Astana is the monument dedicated to Raqimzhan Qoshqarbayev, erected in late 2016 at the intersection of Qoshqarbayev and Baitursunuly streets (see Figure 3). Qoshqarbayev is remembered in Kazakhstan (and officially recognized by Moscow from 2007)<sup>6</sup> as one of the first Soviet soldiers to fly the Soviet flag over the Reichstag in 1945. The monument shows

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<sup>6</sup>Prior to this recognition, Soviet and Russian historiography asserted, for propaganda reasons, that it was an ethnic Georgian and ethnic Russian who together raised the first Soviet flag over the Reichstag. See <https://www.zakon.kz/86909-znamja-nad-rejikhstgom-vodruzil.html>.

Qoshqarbayev waving a flag, but the flag is devoid of any ornamentation or state symbol; unlike earlier depictions of Qoshqarbayev with a flag, there is neither a hammer and sickle nor the brigade depicted, letting observers instead impute the ornamentation that should be there (if any). Further anchoring the monument as clearly depicting a Kazakhstani experience is the base of the monument, which is shaped as overlapping squares consistent with a *Rub el Hizb* in a subtle nod to the influence of Islamic values in contemporary Kazakhstan.

In addition to offering narratives and visual portrayals of how the heroism of individual soldiers contributed to Soviet victory in WWII, many monuments and museum exhibits present the participation of Kazakhstani soldiers in WWII as part of a continuous history of military suzerainty over the steppe. As earlier mentioned, ethnic Kazakh Soviet WWII heroes, by defending the Soviet Union, are now portrayed by the state as having defended the interests of not-yet-independent Kazakhstan. These individual portrayals are complemented by memorials that either intermingle elements of khanate-era military prowess with evidence of military prowess from WWII and beyond (see Figure 4), or as in the case of the Otan-Ana statue in the Defenders of the Motherland Park offer a linear depiction of Kazakhstani history from the khanate-era to present, including WWII (see Figure 5). This reimagination of Kazakhstani participation in WWII as part of a linear, continuous, historical narrative clearly demarcates the Kazakhstani experience from the Russian and Soviet experiences of the war.

While the memorializations of WWII serve as a source of national pride, state-sponsored memorializations at sites of Stalinist repressions within the territory of Kazakhstan present a competing vision of the Soviet experience as traumatic. There is a tension between glorifications of the Soviet past and an acknowledgment of the atrocities associated with Soviet rule. Interestingly, the Kazakhstani state appears to have taken ownership of these *lieux de memoire* to

memorialize them to preserve awareness of the atrocities that took place so that nothing similar ever happens again on Kazakhstani soil. I did not anticipate that memorializing the Soviet-era repressions would be incorporated as a constituent element of the post-independence state-produced narrative of Kazakhstan's history, and exploring how these tensions and contradictions are reconciled for consumption by Kazakhstani citizens will be pursued going forward.

## **V. Policy Implications and Recommendations**

My research into the nature of state-framed identity construction in contemporary Kazakhstan is relevant to U.S. analysts and decision-makers in multiple ways. Considering Kazakhstan specifically, it is important for these analysts and decision-makers to understand the objectives of the Kazakhstani state and the methods that the state uses to construct and maintain a cohesive identity among its citizens. My project explains the objectives and methods of identity-building in Kazakhstan, some aspects of which are generalizable across the non-Russia post-Soviet space. Indeed, the problematic nature of national identity creation in the post-Soviet space cannot be overstated. As the strained relations between Russia and Ukraine demonstrate, especially since Russia has made claims of sovereignty over some of Ukraine's territory, the issue of national belonging in the post-Soviet space remains contentious. Like Ukraine, Kazakhstan shares a substantial border with Russia and is also home to a sizable population of ethnic Russians, and there is considerable concern among some Kazakhstanis that a similar situation could occur in northern Kazakhstan.

By better understanding what it means to be a Kazakhstani, and what factors contribute to Kazakhstan's ethnic Russians maintaining an attachment to Kazakhstan rather than their Russian "homeland," policymakers will be better equipped to understand political dynamics in the region. In addition, policymakers will be better able to engage with senior Kazakhstani bureaucrats on

topics such as Kazakh-US relations, Kazakh-Russian relations, and, in the event that protests like those in Zhanaozen in 2014 should recur, on humanitarian issues like crisis management and violence prevention.

Most policymakers are likely to be familiar with the regional politics of Eurasia, especially the prominent role of Russia in asserting regional policy priorities and directions on issues including military policy, migration policy, and economic policy. However, what is less understood is the level of autonomy that the non-Russia regional actors (principally Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan) have. My project suggests that the Kazakhstani state created a domestically and internationally legitimate ideology of sovereignty, and should be understood as one of many independent actors in the post-Soviet space. My research suggests that the Kazakhstani state is not subjugated to Russian interests. Both domestically and internationally the Kazakhstani state can decisively implement policy without concern for Russia as an external homeland for the country's ethnic Russians. Indeed, my research demonstrates that there is more ideological substance to Kazakhstan's claims of sovereignty beyond the more reactionary 2015 declaration of 550 years of Kazakh statehood made in response to Putin's remark that the country "never had any statehood."<sup>7</sup>

Finally, it is important to note that the state-led memorializations of WWII heroes in Kazakhstan has not proceeded without controversy. David Rieff suggests that we understand collective memory as a way of building solidarity and community, and the building of monuments as a way of reflecting that vision.<sup>8</sup> With that understanding in mind, domestic policymakers can

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<sup>7</sup> This comment by Putin caused a minor scandal in Kazakhstan and appears to have directly informed recent Kazakhstani efforts at legitimating Kazakhstani sovereignty. See <https://www.rferl.org/a/kazakhstan-statehood-celebrations/27242674.html>

<sup>8</sup> From an interview with Zachary Laub for the Council on Foreign Relations (2017). See <https://www.cfr.org/interview/why-battles-over-memory-rage>

look to how the Kazakhstani state has used both the heroism and traumas of the Soviet experience for examples of how to incorporate the Confederate legacy into a narrative the contributes towards American community building.

## **VI. Co-Curricular Activity**

During the award period I had several opportunities to share my research and expertise with US Embassy officials and other scholars. In Astana I shared my research agenda and discussed my past policy relevant research<sup>9</sup> with staff from the US Embassy, including Megan Tetric, Attaché for Culture and Education, Bradford Hopewell, Political Officer, and Ningchuan Zhu, Political Counselor.

In addition to the formal meeting with embassy staff, I had informal interactions with a number of scholars, government officials, and NGO representatives through my attendance at three conferences: Eurasian Migration Past and Present (Nazarbayev University, 18-19 May), 4<sup>th</sup> National Congress of Historians (Eurasian National University, 25 May), and the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Security in Central Asia (Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies and Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2 June).

In terms of more formal conversations with local academics, I gave an invited talk to summer school students and faculty at Nazarbayev University entitled “Reimagining the Soviet Past: Soviet Heroes as Symbols of Kazakhstani Identity” (June 13). I also presented a paper at the Joint ESCAS-CESS Conference in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, entitled “‘Our Heroes, But Not Our War’: Post-Soviet Nation-Building and the Collective Memory of WWII” (July 2). The invited talk and the conference presentation allowed me to share my research with, and obtain valuable feedback

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<sup>9</sup> See Kristoffer Rees and Nora Webb Williams. 2017. “Explaining Kazakhstani identity: supraethnic identity, ethnicity, language, and citizenship.” *Nationalities Papers* 45:5 (815-839).  
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00905992.2017.1288204>

from, dozens of regional scholars with whom I would otherwise not have had the opportunity to interact with.

## **VII. Conclusions**

In sum, my research this summer has elaborated the importance of the memory of WWII as a site for state-framed nation-building projects in Kazakhstan. The approach of the Kazakhstani state towards reconciling the Soviet experience with contemporary independent national ideology contrasts with the approach towards Soviet history in other post-Soviet countries. For example, the Georgian state frames the Soviet period as a Russian occupation, and presents a fragmented, periodized national history. The state-directed memory-building projects pursued by the Kazakhstani state, including those examining the Soviet legacy are, however, part of a comprehensive set of nation-building policies that appear to be designed to demarcate Kazakhstan from Russia, and in doing so reinforce Kazakhstan's sovereignty.<sup>10</sup>

## **VIII. Plans for Future Research Agenda / Presentations and Publications**

The amount of materials collected and the feedback I was able to solicit from regional scholars over the four months of the grant period combined with my prior research on the current topic provides the foundation of a book manuscript exploring the impact of the Soviet legacy on identity formation in contemporary Kazakhstan. In addition to this book length manuscript I anticipate at least two distinct articles to emerge from this work. The first, concerning the memorializations of Aliya Moldagulova specifically, has been drafted and workshopped and is ready to be submitted to an area studies journal for consideration. The second will be a more

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<sup>10</sup> From 2017 the state has framed identity and other policies as "*rukhani zhangyru*" or "spiritual renewal." Policies, in general, appear to emphasize territorialization of Kazakhstani identity and other more overt attempts to demarcate Kazakhstan from Russia, in particular the proposed transition of Kazakh to the Latin script.

traditional political science piece that explicitly engages with Kazakhstani sovereignty vis a vis Russian regional hegemony.

Given the ambitious nature of the book project, which proposes more in depth explorations of the themes outlined in this report, I anticipate that I will need to return to Kazakhstan for one or more short, targeted research trips to interview informants that I only initiated discussions with this summer and to more systematically collect books and other relevant publications from libraries in Almaty, Astana, and Aktobe.

Conference presentations will be developed from the book chapters and I will share conference papers with trusted colleagues. I have already begun incorporating material gathered during this trip into my course and lecture materials; my experiences and knowledge gained from this research experience directly led to the development of a new course, to be taught in Summer 2018 examining monuments, memorializations, and memory politics in the US and abroad.

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### Figures

All photos taken by Kristoffer Rees

**Figure 1:** Monument of Aliya Moldagulova (left) and Manshuk Mаметova (right) in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The monument was erected in 1997 on the plinth where Lenin stood until 1996. Close examination of the plinth highlights continuity along with the change: identifying information about the original Lenin statue has been sandblasted off of the monument base.



**Figure 2:** Monument to Aliya Moldagulova on Moldagulova Street in Astana. The monument is identical to a monument in Aktobe; the relief behind Moldagulova presents a continuous narrative of Kazakhstani history from khanate-era through the Soviet-era to independence. The inset image shows the incomplete nature of reclaiming Soviet ideological productions as Kazakhstani, showing the street as *both* Moldagulova Street *and* 9<sup>th</sup> of May Street.



**Figure 3:** Representations of Qoshqarbayev raising the flag over the Reichstag in 1945. The photo on the left shows the lack of state symbol on the flag portrayed in the 2016 statue, whereas the photo of the mural in the Military History Museum in Astana offers a more traditional interpretation with the Soviet hammer and sickle.



**Figure 4:** A view of the outside of the Military History Museum in Astana. Statues of khanate-era figures are intermingled with WWII weaponry; both elements are presented as integral to Kazakhstan's military history.



**Figure 5:** *Otan-Ana*, the monument located in *Otan korgaushy alany*. This monument is a prominent location for public commemorations related to WWII and/or Kazakhstan's military. On the left side of the relief is a portrayal of khanate-era warriors; on the right WWII heroes that have been valorized by the state in independent Kazakhstan.

