

Czechoslovakia, East Germany); get much-coveted *putevki* to an elite Crimean summer camp (albeit in the off season); have access to closed canteens with scarce goods; and know which official to call when in trouble. His mother, moreover, is in charge of building a local resort for the Soviet Ministry of Health—a luxury outfit with Swedish curtains, French sconces, American glass, and Italian tiles (p. 25). Weiss-Wendt is at his best when he describes this kind of minutiae, and one of the book's great values is the insight it provides into the peculiar hierarchies of late-Soviet life. Soviet life was defined by perennial scarcity, which meant that status was connected with access to deficit goods, especially from the West. Products were valuable as much for function and quality as because having access to them conferred status on their owners. The book offers revealing and sometimes devastating stories of ordinary people's ingenuity in making do—for instance, sawing a couch in half to turn it into “a cute little sofa” (p. 45), prolonging the life of a television by sticking a paintbrush into the back (p. 85), or turning an *invalidka* into a race car (p. 80). Scarcity was also relative: what was considered scarcity in Moscow was “a cornucopia by Valдай standards.”

For specialists and nonspecialists alike, Weiss-Wendt's account will offer insights into the extent of Western penetration into Soviet cultural and consumer life, even in the provinces. Readers of Sergei Zhuk's comprehensive *Rock 'n' Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dnepropetrovsk, 1960–1985* (2010) will find this story familiar, but nonetheless distinct. In part, this is because, for a Western reader, Weiss-Wendt places unfamiliar elements in the familiar world of childhood, such as his poignant hobby of collecting empty soda cans left behind by Western tourists at a nearby rest stop. One of the book's best passages is the description of his first Fanta, which he acquired in barter with an elderly German tourist in exchange for a battered book about Novgorod (p. 138).

Small-Town Russia offers unique access into provincial childhood in the late-Soviet period, and would be a great asset in courses on Russian history. But the book ultimately has two distinct aims that do not always fit together. On the one hand, Weiss-Wendt is telling us the story of his own Soviet childhood; on the other, he is telling the story of broken lives on behalf of those who could not tell it themselves. Inasmuch as the book directly condemns the systemic failures of the Soviet system, it obscures the opportunity to view the world through the eyes of a Soviet child. The book would have also benefitted from more careful stylistic editing. Returning to Weiss-Wendt's thesis, there is no doubt that the Communist state broke many lives, and that its ideology demanded active engagement, interfering in people's private worlds. But are social status and age ultimately irrelevant to one's relationship with the state and its ideology? The great benefit of *Small-Town Russia* is that, unlike the multitude of memoirs of adults remembering the Soviet system in its prime, it offers a view of what it is like to be a child in a decaying empire.

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Snyder, Sarah B. *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network*. Human Rights in History. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. x + 293 pp. \$85.00. ISBN 978-1-107-00105-3.

In this meticulously researched, intelligently organized, and interestingly written book, Sarah B. Snyder, Lecturer in International History at the University College London, offers an interpretation that can be read, first, simply as an organizational history of the preliminaries to and consequences of the Helsinki Final Act of August 1, 1975; second, as a chronicle of how human rights gradually moved from the fringes to the middle of Cold War diplomacy; third, as an account of the harsh experiences suffered by the individuals and groupings in those East European signatory countries where human rights advocates continued to be

viewed with suspicion or worse; and, fourth, as the story of the increasingly important role NGOs played in international diplomacy during the later decades of the Cold War period. In addition, we can read about how a quartet of U.S. presidents—Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan—differed in their perception of the importance of human rights, some, such as Jimmy Carter being strong advocates from the beginning, and others, such as Reagan, changing their minds during their tenure. And then there was Mikhail Gorbachev, a memorable figure during the final stages of the Cold War, for whom, and for the society he presided over, the gradual acceptance of the importance of human rights principles in the Helsinki Final Act proved to be much more than signing and ignoring another international accord.

The corpus of materials the author had to research to disentangle these intertwined themes was immense and vastly complicated, but the effort has produced a well-crafted piece of research about a period of international relations that is becoming almost ancient history for those who did not live through it. The author's choice to follow the chronological principle in the presentation serves the subject well. The Helsinki Final Act was the result of a series of earlier pre-1975 meetings under the aegis of the multiyear Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The Final Act was followed by another series of monitoring conferences (Belgrade, 1977; Madrid, 1983; Vienna, 1986; Moscow, 1991; and others), and this chain of meetings in real time created a kind of axis around which subordinate narratives about personalities, negotiations, and conditions could be made to revolve. Knowing that the larger story has a conclusion—the end of the Cold War—tempts the interpretation toward the belief that a “good” outcome was inevitable and that the “side” that took human rights most seriously was bound to triumph, but the author does not succumb to this temptation and instead underlines the significance of human effort, dedication, doggedness, persistence, and endurance (in short, agency)—among the members of various national-level and international Helsinki monitoring organization as well as among diplomats and bureaucrats over almost an entire human generation. All this kept the “Helsinki process” in motion. The author's central argument that “the Helsinki process and the transnational network of human rights advocates also contributed to the transformation of Europe and that the development of this network established human rights as an integral component of international relations” (p. 244) is altogether persuasive, as is her conclusion that precisely “human rights advocacy”—activism—and not just “the power of human rights norms” did the job. The book, however, ends with sobering paragraphs that briefly survey the endangerment of human rights in contemporary societies (including the Russian Federation) and warns that the Cold War experience should not lead to “triumphalism” (p. 249).

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SOCIAL SCIENCES, CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA, AND OTHER

Vetik, Raivo, and Jelena Helemäe, eds. *The Russian Second Generation in Tallinn and Kohtla-Järve: The TIES Study in Estonia*. IMISCOE Reports. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011. 242 pp. \$49.50 (paper). ISBN 978-90-8964-250-9.

Tallinn, Estonia's capital, is a city of two tales. They hinge on the Soviet soldier's statue the Estonian government relocated in 2007, leading to ethnic riots. One tale is that he liberated Tallinn in 1944. The other is that he enslaved it. These conflicting tales are parts of two broader tales about Estonia. One tale is that of an age-old province within a grand Russian empire, where the Russians naturally move around. To call them immigrants during the rare abnormal interruptions is ludicrous and insulting. The other tale is that of a distinct