

its capacity to make a positive contribution to the building of socialist society,” in the long run the failures of the program and its eventual cancelation following Stalin’s death contributed to a “crisis” in the discipline (127).

The final chapter highlights the diversity of geographical thought under Khrushchev and in the wake of the latter’s 1956 denunciation of the dictator. It also treats the debut of modern concerns about environmental protection in the Soviet Union.

This is a well-organized, concise, and informative history of geography, written in the style of the social sciences. Primary sources are the published writings of the relevant geographers supplemented in some cases by archival materials. There is frequent, if somewhat terse engagement with scholarship on environmental thought and action in the Soviet Union developed over the past two decades by historians including Douglas Weiner, Paul R. Josephson, Andy Bruno, and many others; as well as with the literature on the history of Russian and Soviet science.

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Soviet Street Children and the Second World War: Welfare and Social Control under Stalin. By Olga Kucherenko. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016. vi, 245 pp. Photographs, Glossary, Appendix, Notes, Bibliography, Index. \$114, hard bound.

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This work is a heartbreaking account and searing indictment of official Soviet treatment of its homeless and unsupervised (*bezprizornye* and *beznadzornye*) children during the Second World War. Olga Kucherenko contends that the wartime state “enacted some of the most abusive policies concerning minors in its history” (5). Her prodigious research of street children aged ten to sixteen, based on voluminous documentation from thirteen archives in Russia, Ukraine, and Lithuania, as well as many memoirs, published document collections, and scholarly studies, amply supports her thesis that the state prioritized social control of the waifs over their welfare, at least for those who remained under NKVD supervision. While she acknowledges that the children’s suffering stemmed largely from the extraordinary deprivations produced by the Nazi onslaught, she assails the Soviet myth that the Soviet state was a nurturing surrogate parent. Instead, it became an “oppressive authoritarian parent” (169).

The richly detailed text (printed in very small font size) is divided into three parts. The first, entitled “The Time without Fathers” (*Bezottsovshchina*), describes the masses of children rendered homeless by the Nazi invasion, who were reduced to begging and massive thievery as they migrated eastward. In “Step-Motherland,” Kucherenko describes how children’s rights were grossly violated in two particular ways. Approximately one million children, including unsupervised ones, were brutally and forcibly relocated eastward in the massive deportations of Poles, Germans, Chechens, Tatars, Finns, and other ethnic groups. In addition, youths were included in the large-scale arrests of violators of the draconian labor law of June 26, 1940, which criminalized absenteeism and unauthorized changing of jobs.

The heart of this study is the third part, “In Beria’s Care,” which describes how the NKVD rounded up homeless children in children’s receiver-distribution centers (*detskie priemniki-raspredeliteli*, DPRs) and then channeled those deemed to be rowdy and deviant into labor colonies for minors (*trudovye kolonii dlia nesovershennoletnikh*, TKs) and children’s labor educational colonies (*detskie trudovye vospitatel’nye*

kolonii, TVKs). Altogether, some 1.15 million were processed by the DPRs, and the numbers arriving in each of the three institutions reached a peak as the USSR was winning the war in 1944 or 1945. Many of the children were arrested illegally and/or excessively punished. Their living and working conditions were atrocious. The institutions, often located in remote areas, were severely overcrowded, and the children suffered from lack of clothing, poor hygiene, disease, and starvation. Some ate snow for hydration. Often, they received no basic education, and some of their assigned mentors were hardened criminals, for whom “the youngsters became easy prey . . . [the adult criminals] pimped them out to fellow inmates and free workers . . . took away their rations and forced them to gamble, commit crimes or take responsibility for the crimes of others” (162). Savage beatings by the adults were not uncommon. Not surprisingly, the children challenged the oppressive authorities in several ways. There were numerous escape attempts, and groups of children rioted fairly frequently. Kucherenko concludes that “the colonies did more harm than good” and often initiated children’s “odyssey across the Soviet penal system” (167). She also contends that the colonies “indirectly introduced the juvenile delinquent culture into wider society” (170).

Although there were some attempts at humanitarian reform of the system, they were “rarely prompt or effectual” (169). Only in June 1943 did the NKVD establish a “Department for Combatting Homelessness and Neglect” to supervise the DPRs and labor colonies, but it “failed to improve the situation” (53).

What is missing in this impressive study is some consideration of the alternative: how many children might have died on the streets, or how many other people might have been robbed or assaulted by roving gangs of hungry youths (mainly boys), if the state had not implemented some sort of system to care for the homeless and unsupervised children? In addition, the author could have organized her findings more clearly and situated her research within the larger context. For example, only toward the end of the book does the reader learn that only a small fraction of children in DPRs were sent to TVKs. Information from the detailed appendix reveals that far more children who were cycled through DPRs were, in fact, sent back to relatives or transferred to orphanages (*detdoma*), especially the younger children, than were sent to all other institutions combined, including factories, trade schools, and the labor colonies. Despite these shortcomings, this work is a formidable and valuable contribution to the expanding scholarship on the Soviet home front during the war.

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Kyiv as Regime City: The Return of Soviet Power after Nazi Occupation. By Martin J. Blackwell. Rochester Studies in East and Central Europe, Vol. 16. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2016. xiv, 239 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. \$99.00, hard bound.

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Soviet forces triumphantly watching the German Wehrmacht flee depopulated Kyiv in November 1943, just in time for the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, found quite a mess on their hands, which only became worse as large numbers of people continued to seek haven there. It took the authorities years to sort out the complexities. The first winter was especially difficult: bitter cold, torn clothing, little food and renewed Luftwaffe bombardments. Integral to the authorities’ success, as Martin J.