

of industrialization. In his turn, Josephson looks down upon the east European “proletarian aesthetics” (chapter 2) through the eyes of a typical American tourist. He does not notice the extraordinary amount of designated green space that preceded the supposed birth of modern environmental consciousness, instead reproaching the city for its “grayness” (69) due to reliance on concrete as a building material. I can partly understand his feelings: from my own office window I also see not only the West Coast mountains but rectangular concrete, the same international 1950s fashion locally called “modern brutalism.” But Nowa Huta was built, not for upper-middle-class professors from the postindustrial era, but for industrial laborers, mostly yesterday’s peasants coming from impoverished places devastated by the war, and they saw its dwellings in a very different light.

For the third chapter about technology in North Korea, Josephson relies on secondary English-language sources that are few and far between and guesses much by analogy. The discussion substitutes for the conspicuous absence of a key example—China—for which incomparably more detailed sources can be found. Arguably the largest case of technology transfer in history, Chinese industrialization was also the most Stalinist of all, assisted by massive socialist aid, complete engineering blueprints and know-how, thousands of visiting Soviet specialists, and tens of thousands of Chinese students educated in the USSR. For the teleological approach to history, however, the story lacks the required finale and the “we now know” moment, because instead of collapsing in 1989, the Chinese Communist Party suppressed protesters at Tiananmen. What can one do if a crucial example of socialist industrialization does not fit preestablished conclusions? The fastest way is to ignore the case altogether.

Further chapters deal with nuclear power, environmental problems, industrial safety, and socialist efforts to achieve women’s equality. To an interested reader, they offer additional illustrations of how one can substitute historically sensitive analyses with ahistorical comparisons based on criteria deliberately drawn from a much later cultural epoch, exaggerated propaganda, an unrealistic ideal, or the mythological “west,” all in order to reconfirm rhetorically the ideological “end of history.”

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Stalin’s Last Generation: Soviet Post-War Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism. By Juliane Fürst. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. xiv, 391 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. \$99.00, hard bound.

For a long time, the postwar Stalin years were the least studied, least understood period in all of Soviet history. Recent scholarship has begun to fill this void, and Juliane Fürst’s new book makes an important contribution to our understanding of this crucial era. Fürst focuses in particular on Soviet youth who came of age immediately after the war. This generation, although deeply affected as children by their experiences on the homefront, had not fought in the war and had an outlook distinct from that of the wartime generation. To portray postwar Soviet youth, Fürst explores a range of topics, from crime and hooliganism, to social and sexual mores, to fashion and dancing. She finds that youth of this era were preoccupied with consumption, western-influenced subcultures, and shirking the system—all hallmarks of the systemic decay that emerged full-blown during the Brezhnev era.

Fürst argues that the war, not Nikita Khrushchev’s thaw, was “the decisive turning point that set Soviet society on a trajectory leading to increasing alienation, failed reforms, stagnation, and eventual collapse” (6). In particular she highlights the generational tensions sown by the war. Due to enormous wartime casualties, the generation that had fought in the war was depleted, but its surviving members wielded a disproportionate degree of authority. Returning veterans were awarded leadership positions in virtually all Soviet institutions. Fürst’s examination of the Komsomol, for example, reveals that women and young men who were leaders during the war were replaced by male veterans after the war. The demographically small cohort of veterans in the Komsomol lorded it over

rank-and-file members made up overwhelmingly of postwar youth. Those who came of age after the war, then, lived very much in the shadow of veterans. Indeed, young people were supposed to revere and emulate veterans, but they could never replicate the heroic deeds of wartime valor that were constantly heralded in official propaganda. Increasingly disaffected, postwar youth paid lip service to official norms but turned their real energies and interests elsewhere.

Here another legacy of the war sowed seeds of change, as contact with the west helped spread interest in jazz music, western fashions, and dance steps from the foxtrot to the tango. While most of her evidence concerns intelligentsia youth, Fürst asserts that working-class youth participated in the postwar dance craze as well, in factory clubs and open dance squares. Fürst points out that Soviet young people's preoccupation with light-hearted entertainment ran very much in tandem with contemporary trends throughout postwar Europe. She includes an insightful discussion of the parallels between the *stiliagi*, fashion-conscious youth in Moscow and Leningrad, and the Teddy Boys in Britain, who also displayed a dandy-like appearance and a preference for boppish jazz. American-inspired youth subcultures throughout Europe represented a form of youthful rebellion that, as Fürst writes, "worried an older generation devoted to the ideal of reconstruction rather than reinvention" (248).

A crucial difference in the Soviet case was that the government drew sharp lines of confrontation by condemning western cultural influences as anti-Soviet. Under all political systems there exist segments of society that are disaffected, and cultural rebelliousness among youth is particularly common. But the Soviet system left little space for nonconformism, which could be accommodated in more pluralistic societies. From its beginning, the Soviet state was a mobilizational regime that used military-style institutions and practices to marshal people and resources, and it did so extremely effectively during the industrialization drive and World War II. But as Fürst shows, the forced involvement of youth in postwar ideological campaigns bred performative behaviors whereby Soviet citizens went through the motions of marching in parades and reciting slogans while simultaneously pursuing their own individualistic interests.

My only cautionary note in connection with Fürst's book is one that relates to much scholarship on Soviet history. Given the rapid demise of the Soviet system under Mikhail Gorbachev, historians are constantly in search of the roots of this collapse. While the downfall of Soviet socialism demands historical explanation, in attempting to explain this collapse we may tend to overemphasize fissures within the system and overlook sources of stability. This caveat aside, Fürst's book is a well-researched work of scholarship that deserves a wide audience among historians of the Soviet Union and of postwar Europe more generally.

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Tashkent: Forging a Soviet City, 1930–1966. By Paul Stronski. Pitt Series in Russian and East European Studies. Central Eurasia in Context. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010. xv, 350 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Photographs. \$65.00, paper.

In this new book, Paul Stronski analyzes Tashkent's mind-boggling urban development in the twentieth century. In the late imperial period, a Russian trade and administrative city was simply attached to the old Uzbek town, reflecting the governor-general's hands-off approach toward Muslims and Islam. The Soviets, by contrast, determined to bring modernity directly into the life of the Uzbeks. In the 1930s, though, urban development largely concentrated on Sovietizing the Russian city, with magnificent plans for parks and government complexes according to Moscow models (and mostly by Moscow architects). The turmoil of World War II made all this nice planning obsolete: millions of refugees passed through Tashkent, and the city suddenly had to integrate a considerable amount of industry evacuated from the USSR's European parts. After the war, and again follow-