

of the organization and its role in the broader project of ensuring regime stability. In other words, we have written about the state and what it was up to.

Hemment offers something altogether different. Sure, she says, Nashi was a top-down project, but once out of the head of the Kremlin technologists and into the world, it becomes so much more than that. The argument builds upon participant observation at one of the famous Nashi summer camps, Seliger 2009, and numerous interviews with different kinds of participants both before and after the camp. Hemment shows that, far from being dupes caught up in a political theater of the Kremlin's creation, young people, from the most enthusiastic to the quite disenchanted, brought their own hopes, talents and energies to the project, transforming it each in their own way.

She analyses too the heady mixture of sex, geopolitics, (post) post-feminism and neoliberal fantasies about the unchained self-realizing entrepreneur freed from the burden of the university that swirled around Nashi and was at the core of the summer camp curriculum. The enemy was liberalism and the west—and the straight-laced liberal academic—but also bureaucracy, the state and Russia's fools and idlers. In doing so, she crystallizes brilliantly the spirit of the age of "oil-and-gas-glamour" in Russia. Nevertheless, as Hemment reminds us, these elements are not uniquely or even particularly Russian. Each of these themes can be found around the world in the early 21st century. What makes the Russian experience different is less important than what makes it similar. This is a lesson well worth remembering as the Russian regime barricades itself more and more in its besieged fortress and NATO countries dig even deeper trenches between "us" and "them."

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Human Rights in Russia: Citizens and the State from Perestroika to Putin. By Mary McAuley. London: I.B. Tauris, 2015. xiv, 353 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Illustrations. Index. Plates. \$110.00, hard bound.

Russia and European Human-Rights Law: The Rise of the Civilizational Argument. Ed. Lauri Mälksoo. Law in Eastern Europe Series, vol. 64. Leiden: Brill Nijhoff, 2014. xii, 235 pp. Notes. Index. EUR 115.00, hard bound.

Mary McAuley too modestly describes her latest book as a "hazardous undertaking" by "a sympathetic outsider" (x). In fact, this is an excellent and valuable resource, full of observations by someone who spent most of the 1990s in Russia, the "ten golden years" (66) says Liudmila Alekseeva, the doyenne of its human rights community. First as a British Academy scholar, then as head of the Ford Foundation's Moscow office, McAuley knows well Russia's *pravozashchitniki* (rights defenders). This book chronicles from her close perspective that community's development out of Soviet dissidents, *zastupniki* (intercessors), *zakonnye* (legalists), *politiki* and other striations of, and divisions within, a group collectively known as "human rights activists."

The book also traces the development of several key organizations, and the influence of their leadership, in the face of an array of forces and events that for good and for ill (and sometimes both at the same time) affected the larger human-rights movement. McAuley notes the successes of those whose *carpe diem* efforts made the most of "a few years of uncertainty over the future" in the 1990s, successes nevertheless limited by the lack of any "significant changes to the internal hierarchical running of the institutions" and a path-dependency from Soviet rule, which "produced a public

used to its exclusion from participation in decision making . . . and that acquiesces in the continuation of harsh policies” (243).

McAuley deliberately tries “to recreate the early post-Soviet environment” for her readers, some of whom may have forgotten it and an ever-increasing number of whom never experienced it (41). This anthropological thick description helps the reader to calibrate metrics by which success or failure might be judged in the context of the political, economic, and social rubble of a just-collapsed empire. The “*Dramatis Personae*” (usefully summarized [335–38] and pictured [plates 1–28]) are humanized beyond their accomplishments; the reader comes to know them as people. This reader, for one, likes knowing that a law professor from Krasnoiarsk not only influenced a rising cadre of human rights lawyers, but also had “a rare talent for composing humorous limericks to mark any occasion” (74).

Beyond the story of the evolution of a post-Soviet human rights movement, the book devotes several chapters to substantive reforms—notably, prisons, juvenile justice, conscription, and domestic violence. The chapter on the pluses and perils of western assistance is particularly excellent, as is the chapter on the growing role of young lawyers (this reviewer’s own professional bias is now exposed). But the style of the book is mostly a very lightly footnoted narrative, mixing personal reflections with undated interviews of “perhaps 50 activists, from the elderly to the young, from Moscow and regional cities” (xii). The book is, therefore, not a precise chronologue or meticulous record. Nor is it error free: the European Convention on Human Rights was *ratified*, not signed, in 1998 (226); Chechnya declared its independence in November 1990, not “[f]ollowing the break up of the USSR” (67); Gorbachev “introduced” *glasnost* and *perestroika* well before 1987 (8). But these are quibbles not really at the heart of the book McAuley wrote—which in some ways defies easy characterization. It is well worth reading and stands on its own as a collection of reflections on a turbulent two decades.

Lauri Mälksoo’s edited volume is a very different book. First, it is mainly a reprinting of symposium papers first published in an issue of the *Review of Central and East European Law*. Second, it centers on a very specific human rights issue: the “civilizational argument,” or whether “Russia is a different civilization from the West and, therefore, does not need to fully accept Western interpretations of human rights” (vii).

This might seem an academic’s question were it not for its promotion by the Chairman of Russia’s Constitutional Court and by the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, among others. Since the European Court of Human Rights sometimes extends a “margin of appreciation” toward the varying laws and practices of the many member states subject to its review, this debate has relevance to that doctrine’s application. Indeed, several relatively recent cases pitted that Strasbourg Court’s judgments against Russia’s top courts, which have asserted their authority to limit those judgments. These factors make the decision to republish these papers fully understandable.

An explanatory preface and introduction by Mälksoo and a thoughtful forward by Angelika Nussberger (professor of law and German judge on the European Court) leads off six contributions by five authors: Mälksoo (University of Tartu Faculty of Law), Vladislav Starzhenetskii (Russian Academy of Justice), and three of Mälksoo’s former master’s students: Petr Prelik (Foreign Service, Czech Republic), Dorothea Schönfeld (Kindernothilfe), and Dara Hallinan (Fraunhofer ISI).

Readers will benefit from this generous supervisor’s volume with his students (no doubt ably assisted by the equally generous William Simons, the editor of the *Law in Eastern Europe* series). The chapters are richly footnoted and developed, even if strictly speaking they do not “enter into dialogue and speak with each other” as intended (14). Mälksoo’s own contribution explores the human-rights sentiments of

Patriarch Kirill I, evaluating these views with references ranging from Carl Schmitt to Alexander Solzhenitsyn to the Strasbourg case at the center of this volume, *Markin v. Russia*.

Preclik's chapter takes on "the reluctance of human-rights discourse to acknowledge the role of various ideas and notions behind its concepts" and seeks to break what he perceives as a post-World War II, western European-centric "monopoly on the conceptualization" of what counts as universal human goods (32–33). He does not endorse relativism but explores what he sees as a paradox: universality is unachievable, which cannot be acknowledged without corroding the international human rights framework. Culture oils that friction.

Schönfeld surveys violations of journalistic freedoms, drawing on interviews with media professionals and human-rights activists in Tartu, St. Petersburg, and Moscow (98). Schönfeld's observations lead her to prioritize "a radical bottom-up approach": to promoting such freedoms in civil society itself before insisting on government-led reforms (147).

Hallinan's chapter compares the freedom of religion under Russian law with the requirements of the European Convention. Russian laws that privilege "traditional religions" and burden "new religions" abrade a constitutional mandate for a secular state. Hallinan finds the state's special relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church so different from the state-church relationship in other European state that Strasbourg principles "are recognizable but have been emptied of much of their original purpose" (197).

Concluding thoughts are provided by Starzhensetskii and Mälksoo. The former gently criticizes the preceding authors, finding himself "looking through the same window but having a different view" (207). He views continued problems "in terms of difficulties with implementation of standards into the Russian legal system rather than any antagonism between Russian and European attitudes toward human rights" (208). Mälksoo provides a useful comparative and historical perspective in his conclusion to round out the volume.

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Sweet Burdens. Welfare and Communitality among Russian Jews in Germany. By Sveta Roberman. Albany: SUNY Press, 2015, 234 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Plates. \$85.00, hard Bound.

This book by an Israeli cultural anthropologist of Russian origin is a valuable addition to the scholarship on post-soviet immigration to the west and an insightful ethnographic study of post-soviet subjectivity. Based on Roberman's fieldwork with ex-Soviet Jews in different German lands and cities conducted between 2005 and 2010, this volume weaves a rich and authentic tapestry of the experiences among middle-aged and elderly immigrants who moved to Germany after its reunification in 1990 as "contingent refugees." Nowadays her informants find themselves living in the "golden cage" of the German welfare state that provides for all their needs (housing, healthcare, transportation, even entertainment) but excludes them from the circle of productive work, with over half of working-age adults being chronically unemployed. In a nutshell, the book explores the moral dilemma of taking and giving in these immigrants' lives.