and subject (the young men). The elegance of Frederiksen's writing and impressive theoretical tool box threatens to crowd out informants' inner life. Something of a distance remains between the researcher and researched. This is highlighted by some of the narrative language used. There is a lot of third person in the past, such as, "he suggested that we go down to the beach . . . [and] explained that he was feeling increasingly lonely" (50). This reportage style is perhaps because, as Frederiksen notes, at the time of the fieldwork he was developing his language skills as he went along (there are a few mistakes in Russian that illustrate this). As a result, a kind of hazy veil intervenes between readers and the dispossessed young men like Emil. On the other hand, this distance becomes emblematic of one of the main points of the book—the feeling of being "out of joint" with space and time as an uncommunicable experience. "Marginalization" is performed in the very ethnography itself—these men's inner workings and tumultuous emotional lives are often inaccessible even to the sympathetic researcher who endlessly hangs around with them, drinking beer, sweating in airless apartments, mindlessly throwing stones into the sea. What we do learn—about the men's drug use, borderline mental disorders, endless illness, and extremely precarious lives—makes this kind of study all the more remarkable and impressive as a research achievement. In this sense, Frederiksen makes a contribution to the global youth studies of the marginalized and sets down a marker to area studies practitioners to engage much more closely with the second generation of the "losers" of transition. How does one research a generation and group living a "social afterlife" (15), characterized by boredom and inertia?

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Moscow under Construction: City Building, Place-Based Protest, and Civil Society. By Robert Argenbright. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2016. xv, 201 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Figures. Tables. Maps. Photographs. $85.00, hard bound.
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There are some books that one knows, almost from the very first page, one will enjoy. For the present writer this is such a book. Its value is in the refreshing light it throws on the Russia that has emerged since 1991. In contrast to the picture which is painted by so many journalists, politicians, and Cold War publicists of Russia as a dreary, monolithic and authoritarian land verging on totalitarianism, a perspective based essentially on Kremlinology, this book looks at Russia from "below," from the perspective of ordinary people (or at least ordinary Muscovites). What emerges is a picture which is much more interesting, colorful and, in a way, more optimistic than the mass media and its informants will commonly allow. The focus is the way in which Moscow has been constructed and reconstructed (specifically in the post-communist era)—superficially a rather dry topic. What makes this book so interesting is its emphasis on how Muscovites have responded to official attempts to rebuild the city, often to the detriment of its historical character and of its residents. According to the author, in resisting such projects by various means, Muscovites have been transforming themselves from subjects into citizens, into participants in a civil society. This is a claim that will surprise many Russia watchers.

The author is an historical geographer by provenance and this gives him a particular perspective on his topic. As an historical scholar, he is acutely conscious of Moscow, and indeed of Russia, as the product of history, not something that began

anew with the fall of communism in 1991. Thus, unlike those scholars who in the 1990s were hoping for a Russian "transition" from communism towards "normality," complete with "freedom," "democracy," and a "free" market economy, he rejects all such Eurocentric preconceptions. Too many western scholars at the time assumed that their own societies were somehow "normal" (and, by implication, superior), ignoring the historical contingencies which had produced them as well as the faults which characterize them. Russia was never likely to become just like "the west." Russians must find their own way to the future.

As a geographer, the author takes seriously the notion of "place" as a dynamic entity rather than as a mere container or framework for human action. Places are not mere givens, but are made and remade by people and, particularly in the case of those places that are distinctive and well-known or where people make their homes, they become the foci of emotional attachments. This is what makes disputes and battles over places so evocative. The author's long acquaintance with Moscow and its residents, his intensive fieldwork (illustrated by his own fascinating photographs), the interviews he has undertaken, his participation in key events, and the sources he has scrutinized, give him an almost unique authority to comment on place-making in Moscow.

While the author discusses the theoretical issues that surround the study of urbanism and understandings of Russian society in the first two chapters of his work, the rest is largely concerned with specific redevelopment projects which characterized the largely corrupt and authoritarian mayoralty of Iurii Luzhkov, ending in 2010, as well as that of his slightly more accommodating successor, Sergei Sobianin. The list includes the Patriarch's Ponds (a spot immortalized in Mikhail Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita*), the contentious rebuilding of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour (demolished by Iosif Stalin), the Hotel Moskva, the Manezh (the tsars' riding school), the Bol′shoi Theater, Pushkin Square, Tsaritsyno (Luzhkov's absurd project to "restore" an eighteenth-century palace which was never completed in the first place), and others. Conflicts involving the proposed demolition of people's homes or where homes are threatened by nearby projects are also considered. In every case the author is concerned to examine the complexity of the issues involved, the interactions between city government, developers and citizens, and outcomes, whether successful for opponents of given projects or unsuccessful.

There is much to ponder in this excellent book. What it suggests at least is that present-day Russia is a more complex society than it is often taken to be in the west. Equally, however, Moscow is not Russia. Whether the Putin regime is able to profit from Moscow's example to build a modern, forward-looking state, or slip further into reaction, remains to be seen.

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