resistance movements, which typically escape written record entirely. The book thus provides a valuable archive of a troubling, transformative time in India's history, and the world's.

Some readers may dislike how *Out of This Earth* emphasizes the ecological-cultural wisdom of Orissa's *adivasi*s. The integrity of social systems like kinship, the environmental wisdom of religious traditions, and the pure simplicity of life expectations among *adivasis* are described as the greatest losses wrought by the aluminum industry. The authors explicitly reject post-colonial critiques of cultural holism, arguing that such critiques threaten the well being of indigenous people. However, unlike implicit assumptions of cultural holism, by making explicit their beliefs in the coherence of traditional cultures, the authors raise troubling questions of how we can otherwise account for the kinds of loss they describe as "cultural genocide" (p. 245).

As a student of public culture in Odisha, I was interested in the authors' approach to accounts of political deals and corruption at the heart of the book, accounts that circulate as conspiracy rumors in Odisha. The anthropology of conspiracy talk has shown how it acts as a cultural form making sense of modernity, inequality, and violence. Padel and Das, by contrast, treat such talk as transparent accounts of corporate and government activities. As the authors are unable to provide official verification of such clandestine actions, this raises questions about scholarly knowledge in situations of extreme inequality: what sort of verification of reported events should scholars seek when official misinformation is a feature of the reported event? Though I expect there will be disagreements about the verifiability of some of *Out of This Earth*, anthropologists and historians will find the authors' faith in local knowledge compelling.

This book was written for a general, well-educated audience in English-speaking India, and is broadly accessible. But for the high import price in the United States and Europe, it would be an engaging addition in both undergraduate and graduate classes on indigeneity, mining, social movements, and global inequality. I hope it will nonetheless reach scholars in these fields, for they will undoubtedly find it informative, as well as passionate, frustrating, and inspiring.

———Katherine Martineau, University of Michigan

Donald Filtzer, *The Hazards of Urban Life in Late Stalinist Russia: Health, Hygiene, and Living Standards, 1943–1953*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 379 pp., $110.

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The late Stalin era of Soviet history—the years immediately following the end of World War II (1945–1953)—once signified the quintessence of mind-numbing political conformity, cultural conservatism, and aesthetic drabness.

Since the opening of Soviet archives twenty years ago, scholars have been discovering other things: crime rackets, rampant juvenile delinquency, anti-Soviet guerilla bands inflicting heavy casualties on army units, a subculture of Soviet *fashionistas* known pejoratively as *stiliagi*, lindy-hop dancing, and underground jazz clubs to mention a few. Leave it to Donald Filtzer, venerable labor historian whose previous books chronicled the bad deals the Soviet elite gave the country's working class, to throw cold water on the festival of diversity and cultural vitality portrayed by other historians.

The Hazards of Urban Life, according to its author, "rarely deals with real human actors" because "the nature of the documentation" did not provide evidence of "individuals, their accounts of their daily experiences, or the actions they took in response to them." Reading the book is not for the squeamish, however, for much of it deals with things that are disgusting. With a fierce commitment to methodical exactitude and in relentless detail, Filtzer documents the sheer awfulness of living conditions in Russian cities of the post-war era. The cities he includes were not destroyed by Nazi occupation and bombardment, but rather are in the Russian hinterland that, with minor exception, remained under Soviet control throughout the war. In discussing sewerage and sanitation facilities, water provision and treatment, diet and nutrition, personal hygiene, and infant mortality the book moves from west to east starting with Moscow and proceeding to Gor'kii; Kazan' and Kuibyshev (Samara) in the Volga region; Sverdlovsk (Ekaterinburg), Molotov (Perm'), and Chelyabinsk in the Urals; and the mining towns of western Siberia. One among many of this book's original features is that it subjects to inspection not only these well-known (at least to specialists) cities, but also smaller provincial towns that few outside the regions in which they are located have ever heard of. This is important because, as Filtzer observes, "Historians of Soviet labor and industry … have tended to pay insufficient attention to the particularities of life in the USSR's smaller industrial centers. Yet … [t]aken together, the populations of these towns could be equal to, or even several times greater than, the large industrial metropolises that dominated each region's economy." If the infrastructural gap between Moscow and the "large industrial metropolises" was enormous, it was no less so between the latter and Solikamsk, Arzamas, Asbest, and other towns of twenty-five to fifty thousand people.

The Hazards of Urban Life relies primarily on data contained in annual reports that local public health inspectors sent to the State Sanitary Inspectorate, as well as records in the USSR and Russian Republic (RSFSR) Ministries of Health and statistical administrations. The data testify to the woeful inadequacy if not total absence of waste disposal systems, water treatment plants, and other public health infrastructure. To the extent that central authorities (typically, individual ministries rather than municipal soviets) had invested in such infrastructure in the 1930s or earlier, it had deteriorated in the course of the war. To the extent that funds were allocated for such purposes after the war—which,

given other priorities, did not amount to much—population increase and expanded industrial activity outpaced improvements. As a result, many towns were "literally drowning in their own waste." Kazan', for instance, had "around 1,000,000 cubic meters of uncollected wastes, 70 percent of it excrement" in 1944. Yet, a common refrain of the book is that as bad as conditions were in some cities, they were worse in others. As late as 1954 Kazan' had only twenty-three trucks and horse-drawn vehicles to remove waste, but the city was "privileged compared to some parts of the Urals and Western Siberia" and in Molotov oblast' "the situation … was even more dire." Water quality was bad in Kineshma and Shua but "worse still" in Furmanov. Words like "horrible" and "horrendous" recur with depressing regularly in descriptions of streets, courtyards, dormitories, prisons, train stations, and the like.

And yet, remarkably, with the exception of the famine year of 1947, major outbreaks of epidemic diseases were avoided and infant mortality declined significantly throughout the RSFSR after 1950. While correlations are difficult to make with any degree of assurance, it appears that massive state health educational campaigns, liberal use of rudimentary pharmaceuticals, and stringent controls involving quarantining of carriers of diseases succeeded in overcoming the deleterious effects of neglect of infrastructure. It remains to cite, and praise, the comparative dimension of this study. Filtzer occasionally refers to the hazards of urban life that afflicted Russians before the war and persisted after Stalin. But, drawing on the extensive demographic and epidemiological literature, he offers systematic comparisons with England, France, Germany, and less frequently other countries around the world. Soviet Russia, it turns out, crossed demographic thresholds that Western Europe had achieved forty to eighty years earlier, depending on the particular metric. But, to paraphrase the nineteenth-century Russian poet Fedor Tiutchev, it did so in its own way.

———Lewis H. Siegelbaum, Michigan State University