

demonstrates that this appellation was far from an empty symbolic gesture. Rather, the recognition of collective “worthiness” (implicit in the conferral of “Hero City” status) mediated the late Soviet “socialist contract” in important ways. Specifically, individuals (and regional elites) felt entitled to—and went on to demand—a level of material provisioning “worthy” of their cities’ newfound status. The central authorities, for their part, hoped that recognizing wartime heroism would inspire city-dwellers (and especially younger generations) to heroic labor “worthy” of their forebears. In some sense, then, the implicit acceptance and strategic negotiation of the “heroarchy” of Soviet cities contributed to the (however precarious) hegemony of official war memory.

Mijnssen’s argument is largely convincing, and should encourage historians to reexamine the significance of symbolic incentives, typically dismissed as the irrelevant, empty rituals of late Soviet discourse. However, further work is needed to test and refine Mijnssen’s model. As the author admits, Tula was ultimately unsuccessful in leveraging its “Hero City” status for superior material provisioning. “Its connections to the elite were good but not excellent,” unlike those of Novorossiysk, which secured massive housing and infrastructure investments (231). This disparity goes to the heart of the matter: Novorossiysk and Tula became “Hero Cities” (and received attendant benefits) primarily due to the efforts of their respective patrons. The Party’s Central Committee and the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet did not proactively extend this honor to either. Rather than a truly two-way “socialist contract,” then, “Hero City” status could have been more a rhetorical instrument in clientelist struggles for resources and prestige. Perhaps the central authorities never did seriously expect to improve labor discipline by recognizing wartime heroism, but were “discursively entrapped” to act as though they did.

However that may be, *Russia’s Hero Cities* charts promising directions for further inquiry. Furthermore, for those less familiar, the book will serve as an effective introduction to the contours of war commemoration in the late Soviet period. Tragically, the study has an acute contemporary relevance: as Mijnssen points out, between 2007 and 2015, the Russian government recognized forty-five new “Cities of Military Glory.” While the significance and meaning of such designations has partially shifted, understanding their genealogy is crucial; the Russian regime is using war memory to fuel its new war.

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***Survival on the Margins: Polish Jewish Refugees in the Wartime Soviet Union.*** By Eliyana R. Adler. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2020. xviii, 433 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Tables. Maps. \$49.95, hard bound.

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This book examines the history of the 150,000–300,000 Polish Jews who managed to survive the Holocaust after fleeing Poland for the Soviet Union and were then evacuated to the Soviet interior. By integrating the experiences of those Jews who spent the war years in the Soviet Union into the realm of Holocaust studies, Eliyana Adler fills an important historiographical lacuna. As the author notes, “Despite the fact that the majority of Polish Jews fortunate enough to see the end of the war did so in the Soviet interior, little is known about their experiences” (279). This double shift—both geographic and paradigmatic—is Adler’s most important intervention in the study of

the Holocaust and related fields, including modern Polish history and the history of the Soviet Union.

Basing her impressive study on a large number of interviews with Holocaust survivors that were conducted and preserved by the University of Southern California's Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University, and other institutions in Jerusalem and Washington, DC, as well as a wide array of ego-documents published in Hebrew and Yiddish, Adler divides her book into five chronologically-oriented chapters: Jewish flight from Poland to the Soviet Union, expulsion into the Soviet hinterlands, life in labor installations, relocation to other parts of the Soviet interior, and Jewish return to post-war Poland.

The turn to memoirs leads to a detailed, moving narrative, one that is particularly apparent in Adler's skillful account of the experiences of Jewish deportees in various "labor installations" in the Soviet interior. Through the author's discussion of these events, the reader learns a great deal not only about the trials of forced labor and moments of dire poverty and hunger in absolutely bewildering conditions, but also about attempts to maintain human dignity and continue various aspects of pre-war Jewish life, including the observance of religious holidays and the organization of different Jewish communal activities (136–43, 171–74). After the Soviet Union granted Polish and Polish-Jewish refugees amnesty in 1941, many Jews migrated to other, oftentimes warmer locations in the Soviet Union, including, but not only, Kazakhstan. Still loyal to their country of origin, many of these Jews joined the Polish Anders Army in exile and then continued on to British Palestine where approximately 3,000–4,000 Polish Jews, including Israel's future Prime Minister Menachem Begin, remained (199). In a twist of historical fate, most of those Jews who fled Poland and were then deported to the Soviet interior survived the trying experiences of flight and refuge, and many were even able to record their experiences as survivor-witnesses in the final decades of the twentieth century.

Adler's decision to write a history based on sources narrated by Jewish survivors reflects the changing nature of Holocaust studies as well as the growing importance of the survivor-witness in this and other, related fields, including Genocide studies. As Adler notes, "Truly integrating the Polish Jewish refugees into Holocaust history, and thus memory, would necessitate rethinking the paradigm. A victim-centered chronology, as opposed to the conventional perpetrator-one, would go a long way to enabling this transformation" (287). While some may question Adler's turn to these sources, the author's extensive use of memoirs, diaries and other ego-documents helps create a rich, detailed narrative that emphasizes the fundamentally human aspects of this history.

At the same time, the book's methodological framework, narrative structure, and disciplinary borders often reflect the survivor-witness accounts that Adler carefully mines. As other scholars have shown, however, memoirs, archives, and other ostensibly objective source collections often have deeply-rooted agendas that help shape scholarly studies and communal memories. In this case, the large amount of source material that USC's Shoah Foundation, Yale's Fortunoff Archive, and other invaluable institutions have amassed have been produced and preserved to present a particular perspective on the past, one that emphasizes the role of Jews as victims of Europe's short, bloody twentieth century. Hence, even Adler's claim that by "narrating a marginal story, this book thus encourages a reexamination of existing maps of the war and the Holocaust—expanding the compass of survival" reflects the fundamental guidelines that shape this particular field. As in many other cases, historical narratives are often grounded in and bound by the very sources that institutions preserve and that scholars then use as the discipline of history repeatedly exposes itself to be a wicked circle of memory, history, and more memory (279).

These digressions, however, should not detract from Adler's impressive scholarly achievement. This is a rich, detailed, and moving analysis of a critical chapter in Jewish, Polish, and Soviet histories that was often overlooked by earlier scholars who preferred, for whatever reason, to research the history of the Holocaust in Polish lands. One can only hope that other scholars and students will embrace Adler's call to integrate the story of Jewish survivors from the Soviet Union into the larger history of the Holocaust.

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***The Things of Life: Materiality in Late Soviet Russia.*** By Alexey Golubev. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2020. xvii, 220 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Plates. Photographs. \$39.95, hard bound.  
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The last two decades have witnessed a surge in scholarship on Soviet material culture, as historians have revisited the former empire's built environment from fresh vantage points. Scholarly attention has generally concentrated on the creation of buildings, urban spaces, and objects from the 1920s through the 1960s as part of a broader reconsideration of communist futures past, as evidenced in the spate of studies on monuments, city planning, housing, and cultural institutions. In recent years the scope of inquiry has widened beyond documenting the shock of the new, with growing interest paid to the more quotidian aspects of Soviet modernity.

Alexey Golubev's innovative new book on material life in late Soviet Russia reflects this new development. In it he pursues the ways in which these bold dreams of radical reconstruction were materialized, miniaturized, and literally domesticated for and by ordinary citizens. In *The Things of Life*, Golubev casts his net widely in reinterpreting common material forms of everyday life from the Nikita Khrushchev era through the fall of the regime. He is good on the faith and frustration of Soviet planners (ranging from designers to bureaucrats) who believed that the material environment determined consciousness and would help create new enlightened Soviet citizens, often maintaining an "animist" ideological attitude toward the power of everyday "materiality" to reshape social life to their liking. Golubev moves beyond the world of intention and ideals to explore how the production of Soviet spaces and objects created "hybrid social creatures" who managed to fashion their own lives and habitus beyond the norms of proper Soviet citizenship.

These Soviet spaces and things were inherently heterogeneous and multi-layered, and pointed to the imaginative creativity of ordinary Russian people who used them. In particular, he is interested in in-between social spaces, such as hallways, stairways, and basements, revealing how people (especially teenagers) inhabited, co-opted and repurposed available domestic spaces for their own ends. One example was the boom in male bodybuilding in the 1980s, which usually took place surreptitiously in residential block basements, serving as a "grey zone" of sport in that it was seen as defying socialist models of youth (bodybuilders were accused of being self-obsessed and uninterested in collective life). Notable too is how television recast Russian domestic space and behavior in the late 1980s, best seen with the huge popularity of televised paranormal healing séances and the advent of fitness shows that converted living rooms into home exercise centers.

No less interesting is Golubev's analysis of how the Soviet material forms often carried with them multiple visions of history. One chapter takes up the popularity