

It was in 2003 when Putin turned away from this economic liberalism, apparently in the belief that oil prices would remain high indefinitely, and at a point when he and his *silovik* allies had had enough of Khodorkovsky's free-wheeling ways. The book details the *silovik* faction, with its footholds in both top state and economic positions, but not the "Petersburg liberals" from among whom Medvedev and other senior members of the team were recruited. The point is that the Putin system is less cohesive and, potentially, more open to further evolution, than the book suggests. As a senior presidential advisor once quipped, "*u Kremliia mnogo bashen*" ("the Kremlin has many towers").

Notwithstanding these qualifications, the book provides a thorough and persuasive account of the ways in which the contemporary Russian regime echoes the statist, repressive characteristics of the Soviet regime. In the long debate between those who stress the continuities between the Soviet and post-Soviet regimes, and those who stress the departures, White comes down on the side of the continuists. This book presents as strong a case for recognizing these persisting elements of Russian authoritarianism and overcentralization as we could hope for.

Thomas F. Remington, Emory University

Fábián, Katalin, ed. *Domestic Violence in Postcommunist States: Local Activism, National Policies, and Global Forces*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010. xii + 372 pp. \$24.95 (paper). ISBN 978-0-253-22218-3.

This volume examines the politics of domestic violence in postcommunist societies. It traces how domestic violence has emerged as a term and a public policy issue in these societies, and it analyses the interaction between transnational, national, and local actors in this process. Particular attention is devoted to the development of legislation and local women's groups' interaction with transnational feminist advocacy networks.

The volume consists of two parts. The first introduces six case studies examining domestic violence policies and the role of global actors in shaping them in post-Soviet and Eastern European countries. The second part evaluates the interactions of various actors at the international level and how they have affected domestic policies in postcommunist societies. The volume highlights how the politicization of domestic violence has been an intrinsically transnational process, in which global feminist frameworks and practices have been appropriated, "translated," and negotiated by local actors. This process has also, to some extent, entailed a rethinking of the global feminist conceptualization of domestic violence. In addressing domestic violence, activists in postcommunist societies have emphasized structural issues such as economic injustice, which are typically underplayed in liberal feminist and rights-based conceptualizations. By unpacking how local women's groups have reworked symbolic and material frameworks emanating from the West in their campaigns against domestic violence, and the political struggles surrounding these campaigns, the volume provides interesting insights not only into gender violence, but also into feminism, activism, and democratization in the region at large.

The chapters in the volume draw on political science and international relations theoretical discussions, such as norm diffusion, social movement theories (political opportunities and framing), and Margaret Keck's and Kathryn Sikkink's influential model of transnational advocacy networks. This common theoretical purview and a focus on policymaking make the volume coherent, but also bring a certain repetition toward the end. The chapters are informed by a liberal political and feminist ontology, although some chapters also voice criticism toward it (for example, Fábián's introduction). The chapters operate with discourses of patriarchy, equality, and global feminism, but do not engage in a theoretical discussion about these notions. A deeper engagement with feminist theory and a stronger intersectionalist approach to the topic would have strengthened the otherwise carefully crafted and clearly argued analyses in the volume. A couple of chapters do address the interweaving of gender and ethnicity in campaigns against domestic violence, but a more nuanced analysis of, for example, class inequality in this context would have been welcome. Thomas Chiven's

chapter in the volume is excellent and provides a compelling analysis of the complex workings of power in domestic violence policies in Poland.

The volume is an important contribution as it “interweaves the more traditional area-studies perspectives with a less conventional focus on global interactions and their effects on the local environments” (p. 28), as Katalin Fábián argues in her comprehensive introduction. By providing detailed analyses of domestic violence policies in different national contexts and how they have been shaped by various global forces, this volume constitutes a valuable source for everyone interested in transnational activism, violence, and the politicization of gender.

Suvi Salmenniemi, University of Helsinki

Caldwell, Melissa L. *Dacha Idylls: Living Organically in Russia's Countryside*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010. xxii + 200 pp. \$24.95 (paper). ISBN 978-0-520-26285-0.

Reading this book reminded me of what George Steiner once said, “Criticism arises out of a debt of love.” Melissa Caldwell is enchanted by dachas. From the time of her first dacha-like experience in Finland’s Karelia district, she has been drawn to the “magical experience” of dacha life. In *Dacha Idylls* she moves from the magic to an ethnography of the dacha’s place in contemporary Russian life and examines what dacha life might suggest about personal agency in post-socialist society, the economics of nostalgia, and the tension between urban and rural that runs through the heart of Russia’s cultural history. While Caldwell notes the growth of the recent oversized, brick dachas, often egregious in appearance that sit behind fences and high walls—the product of the new capitalist economy—these dachas are mercifully not the subject of this book.

Caldwell divides her book into seven chapters: “Dacha Enchantments”; “Intimate Irritations: Living with Chekhov at the Dacha”; “The Pleasure of Pain: Gardening for the Soul”; “Natural Foods: Feeding the Body and Nourishing the Soul”; “Disappearing *Dachniki*”; “Dacha Democracy: Building a Civil Society in Out-of-the-Way Places”; and “The Daily Dacha Soap Opera.”

For those who have lived in Russia and the Soviet Union, Caldwell’s descriptions will seem all too familiar: Russians riding the *elektrichka* on their way to and from the dacha, the often broken-down cottages furnished with discards from urban life, gardens growing in abundance, dilapidated fences that have long outlived their usefulness, the trash piled up, often deliberately, under a sign that strictly forbids throwing trash. Is all of this central or marginal to Russian life? Ethnographically can it tell us something we don’t already know about the way Russians live and think about the new order? Caldwell contends that the dacha lifestyle (*dachnaia zhizn'*), in her own words, “is not peripheral to Russian social life but is, in fact, a central even ordinary, part of Russians’ everyday lives at the personal, community, and even national levels” (p. 4).

The strength of this book is that it interweaves ethnographic research with the day-to-day lives of the *dachniki* through personal narrative. We watch as the *dachniki* go about the business of planting their gardens, communing and arguing with their neighbors, and complaining about the trials and tribulations of dacha life. Caldwell reminds us that the centrality of this life to the Russian experience was known as well to Chekhov and Gorky, who were equally compelled to write about how their contemporaries experienced this world.

Caldwell’s conclusions in this volume are not surprising. She sees dacha life as a retreat both from urban life and from the state, as a place where one can work profitably and enjoyably at one’s own labors. Significantly, even in post-Soviet society, the activities that take place outside the gaze of the state are those in which Russian citizens are able to find the greatest fulfillment. Similarly, Caldwell’s conclusions about the centuries-old intimacy between Russians and nature strike an all too familiar chord. Here, however, she adds an interesting perspective on the organic food movement in today’s Russia. She contends that the impetus behind this is less any formal alliance with a green movement or support for ethical labor practices such as one finds in the United States. She sees it