

**Roman Adrian Cybriwsky. *Kyiv, Ukraine: The City of Domes and Demons from the Collapse of Socialism to the Mass Uprising of 2013-2014.*** Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014. 352 pp. Preface. Illustrations. Tables. Postscript. References. Index. \$115.00, cloth.

**R**oman Cybriwsky's book is an evocatively written, timely account of urban change in Kyiv after the end of socialism. It draws on extended fieldwork undertaken during 2010-11, as well as on a series of follow-up visits to the streets, markets, malls, museums, and public squares of this ancient and understudied European capital city. Written by an urban geographer with extensive research experience in cities around the world, the book documents tensions and conflicts over land use, commemorative topographies, and access to public space within the context of rapidly increasing social inequality during Viktor Yanukovich's presidency. Cybriwsky uses the term "domes and demons" (in the subtitle) to indicate the contrast between Kyiv's pre-existing urbanism—driven by the national elite's pursuit of wealth and power and its conspicuous display of both—with the possibilities for an urbanism that balances development with the preservation of Kyiv's rich history, architecture, and natural spaces. While Cybriwsky acknowledges that the circumstances he observed in Kyiv had resulted from transformations initiated with the demise of socialism, he argues that Yanukovich and his cronies are the primary villains in the drama of the rapacious destruction of Kyiv's historical and natural landscapes. In making this argument, the author thus adopts his key interlocutors' moral outrage at the nontransparent and often coercive practices of urban development in and around Kyiv.

The book's twelve chapters cover a broad range of topics, and each chapter consists of a series of shorter essays on incidents relating to an overarching theme. The first chapter, "Far from Heaven," takes its name from graffiti observed in Kyiv's metro and introduces us to feisty, outspoken Kyivans who are publically contesting the government's encroachment on public spaces and curtailment of civic freedoms. The second chapter, "The Missing Museum of the History of the City of Kyiv," describes the process by which this museum was ousted from the building in which it was located through the practice of "raiding" and the controversy surrounding the construction of the new building that eventually came to house it. The museum's displacement and the incoherent narrative of its new displays are taken as emblematic of the ruling elite's indifferent attitude toward their adopted city (many hail from eastern Ukraine) and, indeed, toward the country they ruled. Subsequent chapters adeptly escort the reader through the topographical history of Kyiv's central districts and through suburban

areas where new neighborhoods, malls, hotels, elite homes, and entertainment venues have sprung up.

One of the book's prominent themes is the impact of the dramatic increase in car ownership since 1990 on the cityscape (cutting down of trees), city life (traffic jams and cars parked on sidewalks), and planning priorities. New housing developments for the middle class are often premised on car ownership and are much less convenient for pedestrians and carless homeowners than their Soviet predecessors were. Under the heading "Bullies with Bentleys," Cybriwsky describes the elites' (and their chauffeurs') blatant disregard for traffic regulations, a phenomenon that reached new levels of excess during Yanukovich's rule. In one case, a deputy boasted on his Facebook page that he had driven from Kyiv to Odesa in two hours—a journey that would normally take 4-5 hours. In another, a chauffeur ignored a traffic officer's signal to stop at an intersection on Kyiv's main thoroughfare, Khreshchatyk, and thus caused a nine-car pileup. Cybriwsky also witnessed a "political crash," in which the driver of a modest Lada deliberately rammed into a Hummer. Tellingly, perhaps, Cybriwsky's reflections on Kyiv in March 2014, after the Revolution of Dignity, note a dramatic reduction in the number of Bentleys; he assumes they exited the country with their outlaw owners after Yanukovich himself fled.

A second prominent theme in the book concerns the controversies and protests that emerged as a result of the aggressive appropriation of prime land plots in the city centre by President Yanukovich and firms connected to him. A particularly strong flashpoint was the appropriation of parkland along the bluffs, not far from the renowned Caves Monastery, for the construction of a presidential helipad. In the end, however, after having destroyed the bluffs—in the opinion of one Kyivan (100)—the helipad was apparently never used, allegedly because Yanukovich realized that the spot was vulnerable to attack. Cybriwsky's final chapter is devoted to antidevelopment protests in Kyiv, organized by the groups Save Old Kyiv and Right to the City. It includes an extended discussion of the protests concerning Hostynnyi Dvir (Welcome Courtyard) in the historic Podil district, which erupted after the nontransparent removal of the building's heritage status and its transfer to a developer. Protesters used tactics such as occupation (sleeping in the courtyard), speeches, performances, and film screenings in their attempt to oppose the lack of transparency and public consultation in urban-planning practice.

The book's lively descriptions of Kyiv's changing social geographies and built environments as well as the emerging conflicts around urban development are indispensable reading for anyone who wants to understand contemporary post-socialist urbanism and the origins of the moral outrage that fuelled the 2014 Revolution of Dignity. However, the conflation of the

author's stance with that of his informants limits the book's analytic contribution. Although Cybriwsky cites literature on urban transformation, he does not engage in sustained comparative analysis of the processes that drive it. The book compares what Cybriwsky convincingly describes as a "demonic" present with a vaguely defined ideal, rather than with tensions in other existing urbanisms, including the ways in which the latter accommodate and curtail powerful actors and market forces. This broader context would have helped provide a deeper understanding of the extent to which Kyiv's transformation resembles or diverges from what is happening in other post-Soviet and postcolonial cities.

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