

announced in the 1918 Declaration on the Unified Labor School was revoked, and early experiments in problem-based learning combining intellectually and socially useful manual work within the collective dropped in favor of the dual vocational and academic system. The effect was lasting; the conditions for the formation of a new Soviet intelligentsia engaged in “mental labor” were created, and, in line with Stalin’s conception of the school as “a microcosm of a disciplined and hierarchical society,” education became a conduit for indoctrination, conformity, and unquestioning loyalty to the Party and its leader (144). Later reforms by Nikita Khrushchev (1958) and Mikhail Gorbachev (1984) to revive the original Bolshevik principle of linking life to learning through labor by promoting professional-technical schools and compulsory labor training in general schools (for pupils up to age fifteen) ultimately failed to dislodge the two-track vocational and academic structure.

Works of synthesis are notoriously challenging undertakings not least because of their inbuilt constraints on coverage and the demands of narrative coherence. If, here and there, the level of background detail provided by Dowler strays into the territory of a Russian history primer, the book demonstrates quite powerfully the central importance of education as a site for understanding the mechanisms of socio-political change, the economy, top-down and center-periphery dynamics, even the cultural transfer of ideas (in this case, pedagogical theories) across borders. Perhaps, though, the real value of this study lies in its findings regarding the culture of learning. As Dowler mentions in his introduction, in most countries, education has a dual function: to develop knowledge, know-how, and intellectual understanding, but also to help foster good moral behaviors, a sense of self, and shared values as citizens. It is well known that the Russian language distinguishes between these functions, but the point to note is that while the terms *obrazovanie* and *obuchenie* (formal education, instruction, or training) are fairly straightforward, the meaning ascribed to *vospitanie* (moral upbringing, character building) is indicative of regime interests and priorities. From its original “enlightenment” context, where it was linked to ideas concerning individual empowerment and ideals of (secularized) citizenship (true, also, of some nineteenth-century liberal thought), *vospitanie* became, in the idiom of Soviet ideology, a byword for indoctrination and state control. Today, in Vladimir Putin’s vision of Russia, education qua upbringing is the pathway to national unity and patriotism based on shared Russian historical values and culture. “The line between upbringing and indoctrination,” Dowler writes, “is fine; there is room for disagreement as to when it is crossed” (2). Given the current climate in Russia one might wonder if there is any need.

FRANCES NETHERCOTT
University of St Andrews

A Full-Value Ruble: The Promise of Prosperity in the Postwar Soviet Union. By Kristy Ironside. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2021. 293 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Chronology. Glossary. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Figures. Tables. \$45.00, hard bound.
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Story of the ruble in the postwar Soviet Union economy

Kristy Ironside’s book *A Full-Value Ruble: The Promise of Prosperity in the Postwar Soviet Union* focuses on the attempts to increase living standards and create prosperity during Iosif Stalin’s late leadership and the Nikita Khrushchev era. The book argues that money—in the case of the Soviet Union full-value ruble—was essential

for the state's project to create prosperity in the postwar Soviet Union. The book aims to show that in the attempt to create prosperity there was a continuity from Stalin to Khrushchev. The book's time span is from Stalin's currency reform in 1947 to the currency reform during the Khrushchev leadership era in 1961.

Everyday life in the Soviet Union and attempts to increase living standards especially under Khrushchev's leadership has been studied from different perspectives, but money-related issues such as the value of the ruble and its purchasing power have not been in the pivot of the research. Ironside shows convincingly why the full-value ruble was essential for creating postwar prosperity during the Stalin administration and why it was continued by his successor. As she shows, the leaders believed that a ruble with real purchasing power would boost labor productivity and economic growth, and create abundance.

Ironside creates the story through five thematic chapters each focusing on one aspect of the process or state promises: low retail prices; income redistribution (reducing income inequality); socialist security (pensions); wages (taxes), and real return (state bonds, savings). She shows that there were serious attempts to create prosperity, but the intended outcome proved to have a series of unintended consequences. The money reforms did not have their desired impact, but the ruble had an important role in Soviet economic development and Soviet citizens' everyday lives. Partly due to the unintended outcomes of the reforms, money became one of the diverging factors between the city and countryside. Khrushchev's optimistic vision of communism shimmering on the horizon was based on the Soviet economic experts' calculations that the 1961 money reform would create much needed economic growth. The optimism was premature, and their calculations proved to be unrealistic less than a year after the launch of the reform. "The imbalance between money and goods to spend it on had grown severe and undeniable by the spring 1962" (195). Most of the promises were postponed, and increased prices of food products led to wide and violent protests.

The book shows how retail prices, income, and other taxes, state bonds, and other money policy-related issues were connected to state economic policy, and how the attempts to create prosperity and economic growth influenced Soviet citizens' everyday lives. Although the outcome was hardly ever the desired one, Soviet citizens had the possibility to gain material incentive in the form of consumer goods. The Soviet government's cash-and-goods lottery that was introduced in 1957 in the context of the World Youth Festival in Moscow, provided an opportunity to win cash and the desired consumer goods. This was the case despite the lottery being the Soviet government's attempt to create a low-cost solution to the economic woes. As the author points out, discussion about money, prosperity, and lotteries in the Soviet context is not typical, but the aim behind all attempts to create prosperity was to attain a moneyless economy.

Ironside's *Full-Value Ruble* is a thorough and informative book about the role of money in the Soviet economy and everyday life in the Soviet Union. Her study is based on a decade of research and wide archival work. Materials have been collected from the State Archive (GARF), the economic archive (RGAE), and historical archives (RGANI) and (RGASPI) in Moscow. It is based on archival material and extensive literature of related topics combining the main economic discussions and analyses but also the main findings in the literature, and offers profound information such that that is possible to use it as a reference book for the research. Although the book covers a relatively small period of Soviet history, it shows the importance of money in the economy and the continuity of the aim to increase living standards and create prosperity with the help of a full-valued ruble from Stalin to Khrushchev.

SARI AUTIO-SARASMO
University of Helsinki