Anna Fournier. ***Forging Rights in a New Democracy: Ukrainian Students Between Freedom and Justice.*** U of Pennsylvania P, 2012. Pennsylvania Studies in Human Rights, edited by Bert B. Lockwood, Jr. x, 214 pp. Illustrations. Notes. References. Index. $59.95, cloth.

Anna Fournier's *Forging Rights in a New Democracy* is an ethnography of a generation of youth in Ukraine coming of age within the context of post-Soviet social turmoil. Her book features three major themes that run throughout. First, she examines the concepts of rights, freedom, justice, and democracy and their relationship to childhood as a social category, which shifts in meaning over time and, particularly, during the post-Soviet period in Ukraine. Second, she relates citizenship to the changing conceptualization of the state transformed not only by the end of socialism but also by notions of Europeanism and modernity. Finally, extending her discussion of state, Fournier frames the post-Communist Ukrainian government and its supporters as, what she terms, a "bandit state"—a power structure that works by enabling chaotic formations and taking advantage of informality. While each running theme constitutes a strong argument grounded in detailed ethnographic evidence, the final theme contributes the most to discussions of contemporary Ukraine, even a decade beyond the Orange Revolution.

Fournier shows how the category *children*, or *youth*, was employed during the Soviet period—children being viewed as a "protected" or "indulged" group (59) but charged with the responsibility of contributing to the Soviet system in order to improve society at large. Following the end of the Soviet period in Ukraine, she documents the adoption of what is perceived as a more universal notion of childhood, centred on child protection. Using evidence garnered from teachers' attitudes toward children in both public and private schools in Kyiv, Fournier notes the "'re-infantilization'" of students or what she calls an "imagined return to *pre*-Soviet 'normality'" (60). In this approach, teachers feel that they must protect children from the negative influences of rampant capitalist development and the criminal elements impacting on the Ukrainian political system.

Fournier carefully considers the question of whether students accepted this treatment wholeheartedly and simply enjoyed their youth. Influenced by the occurrence of the 2004 Orange Revolution during her fieldwork, Fournier sees that students do not necessarily want to be protected; rather, they view themselves as citizens with their own rights, demanding freedom and justice within the boundaries of school and, sometimes, beyond, especially at protests. In other words, school-aged students wanted to be recognized as citizens with the same rights as teachers, parents, and authority figures. Their appropriation of powerful forms, including "bandits"

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and other criminal figures, allows them to explore their own complex relationships with citizenship and their obligations to the state.

In particular, these students—part of the first generation of youth to come of age after the collapse of the Soviet Union—draw from two repertoires to engage with the state. On the one hand, Fournier argues, they believe that their government has a responsibility to care for those living in the country (155, 157)—a belief connected with the Soviet-era notions of citizens relying on the government for their well-being and providing labour in return. On the other hand, these young people also saw the ways in which capitalist development following the end of the Communist period had resulted in huge levels of inequality (even within their own schools) and a "bandit state" that did *not* have citizens' best interests in mind. Thus, the Ukrainian government did not fit in with the notions of democracy, freedom, and justice that students were being taught in school are elements of a modern, European normality that would arise naturally in Ukraine as the country moved beyond state socialism. So, students combined elements of their country's Soviet past with parts of a European modernity that would, theoretically, empower them to challenge their position as children and become full-fledged citizens.

Ukraine's local encounter with capitalism—which Fournier describes as "carnivalesque" (160)—led to the students' widespread (if not total) distrust of the presidential candidates of 2004 as well as of other authority figures, including those within the school system itself. In this local encounter, those in power use their positions to produce uncertainty and vulnerability in order to destabilize Ukraine and consolidate their own positions. The "bandit state," as Fournier aptly terms it, formalizes the use of informal rules and practices, drawing on prison and criminal hierarchies to create a system of governance that relies on the obedience of citizens through oppression. Using bandit mechanisms, elites move from the margins to the centre of the state itself, thus blurring the boundaries between legitimate power and informal powerful forms. As Fournier notes, this makes the state difficult to fully envision *and* to avoid (105).

In this context, self-regulated, self-possessed individuals become the best alternative to state forms. These qualities are embodied in the students' and protesters' notion of themselves as modern citizens concerned about the welfare of the nation (Ukraine) rather than of the state (the Soviet Union). During the Orange Revolution, protesters distanced themselves from chaotic state bodies by showing restraint and discipline. Students proved their position as citizens by participating in the protests; as Fournier puts it, they "learned about their nation . . . in a context other than the classroom" (138). Students appropriated discourses about democracy, citizenship, freedom, and justice outside of the state (and its institutional arm—the school), and

created new paradigms for engaging with these concepts and with the government itself: "new imaginaries" and a "new political vision" for a future that would be neither fully Western nor fully socialist (160).

Fournier, certainly, documents a variety of views on the Orange Revolution and those elites who made up the "bandit state"—noting, for example, that some privileged students supported the chaos and uncertainty, because it benefitted them and their families. Such observations underscore the complexity of studies of the Ukrainian state and of the ways that specific political and economic forms mobilize categories—like *youth* and *citizen*—at given moments in time and space. Fournier's study of youth in Ukraine leads to much larger conclusions about the state itself and, thus, contributes important perspectives to the study of revolution and social change in Ukraine.

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