

The Private World of Soviet Scientists from Stalin to Gorbachev. By Maria A. Rogacheva. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. xi, 211 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. \$99.99, hard bound. doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.257

Maria Rogacheva begins a chapter of her study of the scientific center of Chernogolovka with Andrei Sakharov's recollection of being a "soldier . . . of the scientific-technical war" (49). The great physicist's awakening of conscience and his role in the human rights movement has colored popular views of the late Soviet scientific intelligentsia, according to which scientists were natural dissenters against the Soviet order. In this well-crafted and persuasive monograph, Rogacheva argues that most Soviet scientists refused to follow Sakharov in rejecting the USSR's "scientific-technical war," instead remaining its soldiers until the regime's collapse.

The Private World of Soviet Scientists pursues this agenda through a microhistory of the scientific town of Chernogolovka in Moscow province, a research testing ground for the military-scientific complex in the 1950s that then developed into a "full-fledged scientific center dedicated to fundamental research" (2). Unlike the better-known Akademgorodok in Siberia, Chernogolovka's status as a hub of science came from the efforts of its founders, including Nobel Prize laureate Nikolai Nikolaevich Semenov, to exploit the "room for innovation" (20) that emerged in the Soviet system after Stalin's death. While the book discusses the institutional development of the city, its main thrust is a collective biography of Chernogolovka's scientists, which is pursued using extensive oral research and archival work.

The author explains the scientists' commitment to the Soviet state in different frames. Adopting a generational approach, she argues that the scientists' commitment to the Soviet project emerged from childhood experiences in the Great Patriotic War and its aftermath, Nikita Khrushchev's support of science as a means to reinvigorate socialism, and the autonomy that scientists came to enjoy under developed socialism. The book then turns to social history, providing an account of everyday life in the science city as being marked by relative privilege and a strong local identity.

The heart of the book is its discussion of the political situation in Chernogolovka in the Brezhnev period. In a masterfully researched chapter, Rogacheva shows that party organizations were an integral part of the town's everyday life, as scientists enjoyed the relatively liberal dispensation of power the party allowed for the scientific intelligentsia while also actively shielding themselves from the inroads of the communist apparat. The scientists were so reconciled to party power that they sought to smooth over moments of political disruption, with the scientists closing ranks against isolated voices of dissent that arose during the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia and the arrest of a resident of the town, the dissident Kronid Liubarskii, four years later. A final chapter addresses scientists' travel abroad, taking aim at the common narrative that Soviet citizens' contact with the wider world, and particularly the west, triggered political opposition. While acknowledging that international travel contributed to a "diversity of thinking" among Chernogolovka's scientists (174), Rogacheva stresses that it also provided an opportunity to take pride in Soviet scientific achievements.

As is inevitable with any strongly-argued scholarly work, *The Private World of Soviet Scientists* is not beyond questioning on some points. An attempt to categorize the spectrum of beliefs of the scientists in Chapter 5 is cursory, while the treatment of the "exuberant atmosphere of the Thaw" (37) will give pause to scholars who see uncertainty and confusion as characteristic of the Khrushchev years. Far more notable are the book's many merits. The monograph shows that professional interests, meaning large-scale state support for relatively autonomous scientific research, was more important to scientific elites in the postwar USSR than political freedoms or wider

liberalization. The positing of a “trustworthy relationship between scientists and the state” (118) challenges longstanding views of a reformist or “liberal” intelligentsia, which should spark new thinking about the place of educated elites in the late Soviet Union. In a wider sense, the book presents a novel account of the informal yet decisive “rules of the game” (151) through which the conservative Soviet state of the Brezhnev years maintained the loyalty of an elite social group. In the process, the book sheds light on the roles of localism, social privilege, and personal relationships that are too often passed over in discussions of conformity and dissent in the Soviet context.

The Private World of Soviet Scientists is an important contribution to historical scholarship on the post-Stalin period as well as on Soviet science, and it deserves a wide audience.

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American Girls in Red Russia. By Julia Mickenberg. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017. viii, 427 pp. Notes. Acknowledgements. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. \$35.00, hardbound.
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“Go East, Young Woman!” could have been the mantra of the women and some men discussed in Julia Mickenberg’s fascinating new book. It is hard now to conjure up a time when the Soviet Union was a promised land to which US idealists flocked. Mickenberg documents the diversity of those who made the pilgrimage and the reasons that impelled them to go, ranging from belief in the Bolshevik revolution, escape from US racism and sexism, cultural opportunities, or simple curiosity.

The title of the book is a misnomer, as Mickenberg describes in detail the adventures not of girls, but of many fascinating grown women who traveled to Russia and the Soviet Union. Her book is comprehensive, covering well-known journalists and creative artists, such as Isadora Duncan, Lillian Hellman, Anna Louise Strong, Louise Bryant, Jessica Smith, Dorothy West, and Margaret Bourke-White, as well as lesser-known but important sojourners. Their experiences ranged from idyllic idealism to various levels of disillusionment, to sexual harassment and rape.

Although she mentions some pre-revolutionary female travelers to Russia, and Russians who came to the US, most notably Catherine Breshkovsky, the bulk of Mickenberg’s account centers on US travelers to the “Red Russia” of the twenties and thirties and the wartime forties.

Dancers were among those drawn to the socialist paradise, such as twenty-three-year-old Pauline Koner. First exploring her Jewish heritage in Palestine, Koner came to Russia as a place where, in theory, national identity was not stigmatized. One of the young dancer’s “gravity-defying leaps on the Leningrad beach” (241) graces the cover of the book. Koner followed in the footsteps of Isadora Duncan and other modern dancers who sought to experience the new, revolutionary society, and bring their techniques and philosophy to young Soviet women. In the process, like Duncan, she became romantically involved with a major cultural figure. Duncan married the poet Sergei Esenin; Koner had an affair with the married filmmaker Vsevolod Pudovkin. Mickenberg observes the transformational and problematic aspects of both dancers’ encounters with the ideals and reality of Soviet life: “Duncan and Koner cited their time in Russia and the Soviet Union as crucial to their work and their social conscience. But neither woman publicly acknowledged the personal or ethical concessions that were necessary to finding love and dancing revolution in Soviet Russia” (241).