

the end of 1916, “belief in pervasive treachery,” had “robbed people of hope in victory,” making a “mockery” of sacrifices at the front (212).

Stockdale’s claims ultimately stand or fall on her explanation of the upheavals of 1917. Did the February Revolution give Russian patriotism a new lease on life, or was it the final nail in the coffin of the war effort? Stockdale concedes that the “national unity” born of the revolution was “short-lived” (245). Jarringly, her conclusion cites a Russian who wrote, after the Bolsheviks came to power in November 1917, that “the very idea of . . . a Russian nation, was a mirage . . . there is no nation in Russia, nor is there a people” (247). So were those bitter generals right after all?

To resolve the riddle, Stockdale might have examined the reams of defeatist propaganda Lenin and the Bolsheviks, aided by German subsidies, threw at the Russian army in 1917. Lenin figures only in a footnote aside (223n30), however, and in one patriot’s warning about “Leninism” (226): he is not even listed in the index. This is a glaring omission that undermines Stockdale’s argument just when it should be reaching its climax. Perhaps she could add a chapter in the next edition.

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Underground Petersburg: Radical Populism, Urban Space, and the Tactics of Subversion in Reform-Era Russia. By Christopher Ely. Dekalb: Northern Illinois Press, 2016. xi, 325 pp. Notes. Glossary. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Maps. \$39.00, paper.

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In 1883, soon after *Narodnaia Volia* (The People’s Will) accomplished the unthinkable by assassinating Tsar Alexander II, Sergei Kravchinskii published *Underground Russia: Revolutionary Profiles and Sketches from Life*. The book was an instant sensation as it gave a morbidly fascinated European public a glimpse into the motivation and experience of the young Russian radicals who embraced terrorism in an effort to topple the Romanov autocracy. Much has been written since then, both by the revolutionaries who were involved in this subversive enterprise and the historians who study them, in various efforts to explain how and why otherwise peaceful propagandists turned to violence. Christopher Ely’s *Underground Petersburg: Radical Populism, Urban Space, and the Tactics of Subversion in Reform-Era Russia* is much more than just the latest in this series. Although Ely certainly intends to invoke the memory of Kravchinskii’s book through his monograph’s title, he insightfully realigns and narrows our historical focus to the city of St. Petersburg and the revolutionary underground that “established a novel way to occupy and control urban space” (5) in the critical decades of reform. Instead of trying to make sense of the shifting and sometimes contradictory ideological objectives among this relatively small group of radicals, Ely convincingly explores “the material constraints, the tactical decision-making, and the practical strategies that built the underground into a political weapon to be used against the autocracy” (x).

Underground Petersburg is a perceptive, well-written, and compelling monograph that explores well documented instances of revolutionary activity with an utterly fresh perspective by using the lens of space—both urban and underground—to present the city of St. Petersburg as a co-conspirator in the radical populists’ battle with the tsarist state. Ely brilliantly imagines the development of revolutionary populism as a dialectical process fueled by the practical reactions of politicized urbanites to the state’s alternate creation and restriction of public space in reform-era Russia. Ely

argues that with opportunities for public engagement eliminated, civically-minded young Russians responded by fashioning an alternative space in which the counter-culture of youth flourished.

In Ely's description of the historical process that forged a revolutionary underground, we first encounter the nihilists, whom the author contends flourished amid the "theater of urban life." The reader's journey through St. Petersburg and its underground continues with an examination of the so-called "underground pioneers," including, most significantly, the Chaikovtsy. As he charts the continued development of the urban revolutionary underground, Ely takes his reader away from St. Petersburg with the "Go to the People Movement." In moving the perspective outside of the urban sphere and into the village, Ely's argument becomes especially convincing as he depicts this seemingly quintessentially rural movement as "less an anomalous detour away from the city" and more "a formative stage in the urban rebellion that had been developing throughout the reform era" (118). By describing the Go to the People campaign as an enterprise conceived of and planned for in an urban setting, Ely makes a persuasive case that the removal of the constitutive urban elements from this particular populist crusade doomed it to failure and required a fresh relocation back to an urban setting.

With the populists' return to the capital, Ely presents the revolutionary underground reaching a crescendo that not-surprisingly built to a climax with the assassination of Alexander II and the retributive state's ensuing evisceration of the radical threat and its underground. Along the way, the author deconstructs St. Petersburg's urban space and the subversive heterotopia it created to give insight into the radical tactics that relied upon the populists' earlier history and the city itself. *Underground Petersburg* beautifully examines not only the familiar revolutionary devices of political trials, illegal literature, and false passports but also the "armor of invisibility" that urban space bestowed through its theaters, restaurants, taverns, streets, and courtyards.

The works of Michel Foucault and Jürgen Habermas loom large in *Underground Petersburg* as do studies of urban history, city planning, and modernization. Christopher Ely's intimate familiarity with the historical context beyond Russia greatly enriches his study. It is his extraordinary use of memoir literature and revolutionaries' testimonies at police inquiries, however, that allows the reader to grasp the rationale for and appeal of the subversive underground for Russia's radical youth. In presenting urban space as fundamental to the revolutionary drama that defined Alexander II's reign, Ely prioritizes the tactics of the populist crusade over any ideological aims its participants imagined. In what is essential and fascinating reading for any student of the revolutionary movement in Russia, Christopher Ely convincingly demonstrates that the best historical perspective of this time might be found not in a view from above, but instead from underground.

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Was Revolution Inevitable?: Turning Points of the Russian Revolution. Ed. Tony Brenton. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. xviii, 364 pp. Notes. Chronology. Index. Maps. \$27.95, paper.
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This is a work of counterfactual history, a mode of studying the past—often referred to as the "what if" school of writing history—that many scholars dismiss as pointless.