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Russia Abroad: Prague and the Russian Diaspora, 1918–1938. By Catherine Andreyev and Ivan Savický. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004. xxiv, 246 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. Maps. $40.00, hard bound.

This book by Catherine Andreyev and Ivan Savický is the latest contribution to the growing body of literature on the Russian interwar emigration in general and the Russian émigré community in interwar Prague in particular. The authors, whose fathers were prominent members of the émigré community in Prague, faced a difficult task: they wanted to add a new dimension to a subject which has lately become a well-researched part of Russian historiography and at the same time avoid the peril of letting emotions sway their narrative.

In the introduction, they dismiss, perhaps with unnecessary condescension, some of the studies of the Russian emigration in Czechoslovakia between the wars, and they choose to ignore others. While they make use of the framework-forming monograph by Marc Raeff (*Russia Abroad: A Cultural Study of the Russian Emigration, 1919–1939,* 1990), they overlook his key concept of Russia abroad as a cluster of émigré enclaves in several countries. They praise Robert Williams's study of the Russians in Germany (*Culture in Exile: Russian Emigrés in Germany, 1881-1941,* 1972), while they make no mention of a monograph on Russians in France by Robert Johnston (*New Mecca, New Babylon: Paris and the Russian Exiles, 1920–1945,* 1988). The blurb on the cover is misleading, because it presents the book as the "first full account of Prague's Russian émigré community from 1918 to 1938." The authors, for reasons best known to them, do not mention in the review of literature my own study of the Russians in Czechoslovakia (*Russians outside Russia: The Emigré Community in Czechoslovakia, 1918-1938,* 2001). Their use of primary sources is equally idiosyncratic. In their bibliography they name seven archives, while only three references to actual archival material appear in the text of the study.

The book consists of an introduction, five chapters—"Relations between Czechs and Russians," "Politics and the Emigration," "The Russian Academic World in Prague," "Identity and Attitudes," "The Russian Diaspora"—and an epilogue. The structure of the book seems somewhat haphazard. The final chapter, "The Russian Diaspora," introduces the reader to an overview of Russian communities abroad and would be better placed at the beginning of the book, as it provides a context for the story of the Russians in Prague. The first and the second chapters are concerned with well-known stories; here the authors prefer plain narrative to analysis. The local, that is Czechoslovak, and the international setting of the Russian Action are both treated as marginal matters. The political concept of the Russian Action, its financial provisions and the international refugee regime, then in its making, are not treated with the care they deserve. The narrative doubles up on itself: for instance, the politics of emigration, discussed in chapter two, is again given extensive attention in chapter four. The logic of the fourth chapter's composition remains particularly unclear. As the authors abstain from stating what they believe to constitute the concept of identity, their choice of subjects in this chapter—the Russian Orthodox church, the Russian émigré press, the Czech language, émigré politics, Eurasianism, Young Russians, new links with the local community, the Day of Russian culture—appears haphazard.

Nonetheless, a feel for detail does the authors a good service when they discuss particular organizations and individuals. This is true, for instance, in the case of Aleksei S. Lomshakov, one of the key figures of the émigré community. Although his role was acknowledged by other scholars as well, the book provides a much fuller account of his activities than had been given before. The book will be of interest to scholars of Russian emigration; as an introduction to the subject, however, its structure is too forbidding.

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Return to the NEP: The False Promise of Leninism and the Failure of Perestroika. By Oscar J. Bandelin. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002. xii, 173 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. $64.95, hard bound.

This is a strange and intriguing book. It is intriguing because it seeks to explore the fundamental contradictions of Leninism and how they played out in public policy practice during the 1920s and 1980s in the Soviet Union. It is strange because it finds the source of the contradictions of Leninism in epistemology and the philosophy of science that Vladimir Lenin adhered to. In fact, Oscar Bandelin goes as far as to write in one footnote, in discussing the ideas of Nikolai Bukharin, the architect of both the policies of War Communism and New Economic Policy (NEP), that "it is this philosophical aspects [*sic*] of Bukharinism to which we devote our attention. An attempt to analyze Bukharin's social and economic theories in detail would not be justified in the context of the present work" (31*n*42). But the target of the historical analysis is the *economic policies* of the 1920s (NEP) and 1980s (perestroika), their contradictions, and their ultimate failure. If a tight connection can be drawn between the epistemology of Lenin and Bukharin and the way they proceeded in the realm of public policy, the problems that the public policies confronted in practice need to be addressed.

In fact, F. A. Hayek, a towering figure in economics and social philosophy, has done this; yet Bandelin makes no mention of Hayek. Hayek won the Nobel Prize in Economic Science in 1974, and he was a well-known combatant in the mid-century debate over the feasibility of market socialism. Building on the earlier work of Ludwig von Mises, Hayek argued that the Achilles' heel in socialist proposals for economic planning was that in the absence of private property rights in the means of production there would be no effective way to coordinate the dispersed knowledge in a society so that an economically efficient organization of exchange and production could be achieved. Later, Hayek chose to dig deeper and look for the underlying epistemological arguments that explained the appeal of socialism to the modern mind. This resulted in his book, *The Counter-Revolution of Science: Studies on the Abuse of Reason* (1952) and his indictment of rational constructivism. Don Lavoie would update Hayek's epistemological critique of socialism with his *National Economic Planning: What is Left?* (1985). Neither of these books make the bibliography of Bandelin's book and this is for the worse, as these works address the philosophical issues he talks about, but more directly tie the philosophical critique to the practical policy problems.

Nevertheless, Bandelin should be commended for exploring this link between the belief in certainty and the willingness to impose policies on the world in full confidence that they would usher in a new age of betterment, only to see them violate the basic incentive requirement for social cooperation and the dignity of the human beings that are being moved about as so many pieces on a chess board. But Bandelin never really draws the clear line from philosophy to politics to economics. The "mechanism" through which false ideas and delusional fanaticism are translated into social contradictions and economic and political consequences that are unsustainable is missing in Bandelin's account.

What is frustrating for the reader who is looking for this mechanism is that Bandelin dances around it often throughout the book. We are told that the failed philosophical doctrine of Lenin had such a lasting imprint on the Soviet experience that some seventy years later Mikhail Gorbachev could still not extract himself from it, and as a result attempts to reform the system were doomed to failure. Now, if this line of argument could in fact be established, it would be quite intriguing to say the least. But Bandelin does not engage in the historically rich analysis that would be required to even attempt to construct such a story about the persistence of a failed doctrine, how it survived, and how its contradictions finally led to its undoing. Instead, we get tidbits of arguments strung together. The exercise is not without merit, but the argument is at all times found wanting from the perspective of both historical scholarship and analytical examination of social forces.

Throughout the book, the reader is met with pregnant statements that could have reversed this conclusion of mine if further developed. For example, in discussing the efforts of perestroika, Bandelin argues that Gorbachev, like Lenin, faced the contradictory task of attempting to scale down the economic bureaucracy with a bureaucracy. But we do not go any further in examining this idea and its eventual consequences on the sustainability of the different reform experiences with either NEP or perestroika.

Probably the worst thing that could be said of a book is that what is new is not true and what is true is not new. This cannot be said of the present book. But in the end, the book cannot be recommended either. It is not that it gets the material wrong, or that it is completely incoherent in its argumentation. Instead the book is so frustrating because it has great material to work with and its central argument is compelling, and yet the book is underargued from start to finish.

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Closer to the Masses: Stalinist Culture, Social Revolution, and Soviet Newspapers. By Matthew Lenoe. Russian Research Center Studies 95. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004. x, 315 pp. Appendix. Notes. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Figures. $49.95, hard bound.

Matthew Lenoe's book is a study of Soviet newspapers during the 1920s and early 1930s. His topic is an important one, because the press offered a fundamental means for the Soviet government to disseminate information and propaganda. As Lenoe writes, Soviet journalists and Communist Party officials throughout the 1920s debated "what role newspapers and other journals were to play in the new socialist society" (27). By the First Five-Year Plan this question had been largely resolved, as Soviet newspapers came to rely upon a set of heroic images and military metaphors to galvanize activists and workers for the industrialization drive.

Lenoe devotes several chapters to tracing changes in personnel at leading Soviet newspapers. He finds that, parallel to developments in party administration and industrial management, a new cohort of proletarian journalists came to dominate the Soviet press in the late 1920s. A product of party leaders' strategy to promote workers into white-collar positions, these young journalists rejected the relatively nuanced and diverse journalism of the New Economic Policy period. Instead they preferred to convey a uniform message through blunt exhortations targeted at party officials and activists. Consequently the Soviet press became both more monolithic and more geared toward newly promoted officials, who came from the same milieu as the proletarian journalists.

Elsewhere in the book Lenoe offers a somewhat different explanation for the transformation of Soviet newspapers when he argues that party leaders dictated changes in the press. He hypothesizes that with the onset of industrialization, Stalin and his circle abandoned their attempts to educate the masses. They ordered journalists to focus instead on mobilizing party activists for the tasks at hand. Lenoe's title (*Closer to the Masses*) and terminology ("mass journalism") are somewhat misleading here, given his contention that the new style of journalism neglected the masses in favor of party cadres. But the more fundamental issue is whether party leaders actually abandoned their goal of mass enlightenment. Undermining Lenoe's assertion is the fact, which he mentions briefly, that the Soviet press during the First Five-Year Plan also targeted new workers. Sergei Gusev, the head of the Central Committee Press Department, called for a "popular mass newspaper to serve the new strata of workers," who, he said, "especially need daily political tutoring" (175). Lenoe does not elaborate on this point, but hundreds of additional newspapers, including factory newspapers, were created at this time to edify the millions of new workers entering industry.

What occurred during the industrialization drive was not the abandonment of enlightenment efforts but rather a more dogmatic approach to educating the masses and raising their consciousness. The fact that party leaders mandated political education meetings, adult literacy classes, and newspapers for newly literate workers confirms that mass enlightenment continued to be a priority for them. Indeed, party leaders saw the tasks of industrialization and mass enlightenment as intertwined—they believed that peasants who became industrial workers would change their relationship to the means of production and ultimately arrive at a higher state of political consciousness.

Also detracting from Lenoe's book are his polemics against historians who have conceptualized the Soviet system as a response to the challenges and ambitions of the modern era. Lenoe misrepresents these scholars' work when he summarizes it as follows: "the Soviet Union, Imperial Russia, and the liberal democracies of the 'West' share or shared something called 'modernity' with many nefarious consequences" (4–5). Historians who