

Kontorovich's text is full of interesting and important historiographical reminders, like this one on page 54: "Textbooks and readers on the Soviet (or socialist, or planned) economy were the most frequently written books in the discipline, with 47 separate editions appearing between 1948 and 1992." Perhaps economics too should be revived, and put in conversation with other Sovietological fields, a practice economists famously shun, as demonstrated in Marion Fourcade, Etienne Ollion, and Yann Algan, "The Superiority of Economists," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 29:1 (2015): 89–114. As the authors might have predicted, Kontorovich here engages only economists. With robust historiographical dispute receding as a thing of the past, here's hoping this vigorously argued intervention finds the debate it seeks.

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Opasnye sovetskie veshchi: Gorodskie legendy i strakhi v SSSR. By Aleksandra Arkhipova and Anna Kirziuk. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2020. 536 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. P432, hard bound. doi: 10.1017/slr.2021.50

Those who lived in the Soviet Union during the 1970s and 1980s may still remember various mass rumors and horror stories about the psychological danger of rock and roll music, which "poisoned the mentality" of the Soviet youth, "transforming them into the psychotic slaves of capitalist America," or the physiological danger of American chewing gum, which destroyed the health of Soviet children. Both those "anti-American legends" were promoted in the Soviet mass media by Soviet ideologists, who tried to persuade Soviet young people to stop imitating the western pop-cultural practices, using the rumors about American hippies who sacrificed virgin girls and drank their blood, for example. Moreover, even the official KGB reports to the communist leadership in 1968 and 1972 included such anti-American legends to justify the KGB persecutions of the Soviet imitators of American hippies (I just recently found such KGB reports in Kyiv, at the SBU archive). It looked like the communist ruling elites of the USSR, using rumors, tried to engineer mass panic against American cultural influences on Soviet youth.

That is why I was pleasantly surprised to discover a meticulously researched and well-written study by two Russian anthropologists and folklorists, Aleksandra Arkhipova and Anna Kirziuk, devoted to a history of such "city legends," rumors, and fears in the USSR. Arkhipova and Kirziuk try to explain the origins and functions of various rumors, connected to mass fears among the Soviet population. They devoted their study to answering three major questions: "how did the texts about dangerous things, objects, and phenomena appear in the USSR, what was the reason for their popularity (among the Soviet population), and how did they influence the people's behavior?" (9).

In chapter 1 of their book, the authors offer a popular historiography of the western studies of the "city legends." They analyze and interpret various theories and concepts of such rumors and folktales, including horror stories, mercantile legends, consumer rumors, elite-engineered panic, and food contamination stories, which became the object of the recent research by western (mainly English-speaking) anthropologists, sociologists, and folklorists. Eventually, using various interviews, memoirs, and archival documents, Arkhipova and Kirziuk successfully applied these theories in their own study of numerous Soviet city legends.

Chapters 2 and 3 analyze elite-engineered rumors and legends in the Soviet Union. The authors begin their exploration with the official propaganda of Stalin's

Great Terror, which initiated various campaigns to expose the “enemies of the people,” and proceed with research about “how a city legend became an ideological weapon,” concentrating on the efforts by Soviet ideologists to use rumors and legends for influencing and shaping the “mood of the population” (11).

In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, the authors describe those city legends and rumors that were initiated by ordinary Soviet people after Stalin, especially during the 1970s and the 1980s, about the danger of the various forms and objects of everyday consumption and the threat of the real and imagined “aliens” in Soviet society—from Soviet Jews to the foreign visitors and “their gifts” (307–74). According to the authors, the Soviet legends became not only a symbolic language of the Soviet people to transfer their non-official information to each other, but also the special “language of the Soviet institutes of power, which influenced the behavior of people” (471).

Despite the authors’ attempts to cover some aspects of the cultural consumption of western rock music in initiation of various rumors about “the dangers from the West,” they ignored the studies that addressed these topics with material from the so-called closed Soviet cities, like Dnipropetrovsk, where Soviet ideologists spread “elite-engineered rumors” about Ukrainian imitators of western hippies and punks (Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dnepropetrovsk, 1960–1985*, 2010, 246, 262, 267–79). At the same time, instead of using the available documents from files of the KGB in fond sixteen in the archive of the SBU in Kyiv, Ukraine, the authors referred to the dubious internet links and photocopies from Israel’s archives in Jerusalem with incorrect allocation of the original documents (see especially their confusing endnotes, 500–1).

Despite my critical remarks, Arkhipova’s and Kirziuk’s brilliant book is a pioneering and path-breaking study of everyday life in the Soviet Union during late socialism, which could be recommended as the required reading to any serious expert in Soviet history.

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Russian Nuclear Orthodoxy: Religion, Politics, and Strategy. By Dmitry Adamsky. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019. xvi, 354 pp. Notes. Index. Tables. \$90.00, hard bound. \$30.00, paper.

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What do you get when you cross the fields of strategy, church-state studies, and Russian politics? You get Dmitry Adamsky’s latest book, *Russian Nuclear Orthodoxy*, which—despite the somewhat awkward title—is a tour d’horizon of the Russian Federation through the prism of these fields of academic inquiry. While not fitting neatly into any one of these fields individually, the work’s greatest contribution is its bridging of these too-often separated areas.

The nexus of Orthodox Christianity and Russian politics is a field that has been well-developed over the past decades, indeed even during the Soviet period when religion was officially banned. The field was quickly resurrected in the final days of the Soviet Union and then rapidly flourished through the 1990s, as did religious belief itself in Russia. Adamsky does a solid job tracing the literature on this phenomenon, though that is not the point of his book. Instead, the author investigates the nexus between Russian Orthodox Christianity and the Russian nuclear weapons complex.

Though certainly not the first to highlight the fact that military units have saints assigned to them by the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), nor to ascribe significance to