The Development of Russian Environmental Thought: Scientific and Geographical Perspectives on the Natural Environment. By Jonathan D. Oldfield and Denis J. B. Shaw. London: Routledge, 2016. xi, 196. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Figures. Tables. Photographs. Maps. $160.00, hard bound.
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The authors seek to understand how Russian geographers have "conceptualize[d] the physical environment" (1). They begin with the reign of the westernizer Tsar Peter the Great (1682–1725) but focus on the 1880s–1960s, exploring enduring themes and changing concepts and circumstances. Among the former are an emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge in the service of useful outcomes, rather than for its own sake; the varying but ever-present role of the state; and the unique relationship of Russian/Soviet science to its international context. These last two are well-exampled (in opposite directions) by Peter's wholesale importation of western science in the eighteenth century and Stalin's rejection and repression of "western" and "bourgeois" tendencies in Soviet science in the mid-twentieth century. Another theme is the notion of geography as a discipline at the boundary of natural and social sciences, inherently connected to both the academic and the political, and thus a valuable barometer of trends in both.

In charting the evolution of geography over this period, Jonathan Oldfield and Denis Shaw—themselves geographers—see five main periods. They devote a chapter to each. Chapter 2 runs from Peter the Great to 1880 and emphasizes the central role of foreign specialists and the use made of them by the state in assimilating, controlling, and exploiting its vast and growing territorial acquisitions in Siberia and beyond. This was done via the organization of ambitious geographical expeditions, particularly the First and Second Kamchatka Expeditions (1725–31; 1733–42) captained by Vitus Bering. These led to the discovery of the Bering Straits and Alaska in 1741. The authors also claim plausibly that a consequence of these sorts of expeditions was naturalists' "increasing . . . consciousness of the interdependence between organisms, and between them and other phenomena in nature" (32). In other words, Russian geographical expeditions were among the incubators of early ecological thinking.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the pioneering soil scientist V. V. Dokuchaev (1846–1903), whose work not only established a new field but "resonated with scientists from a range of disciplinary areas" (48) by providing "a template for comprehending other natural phenomena as the product of a variety of interacting elements" (75).

Chapter 4 treats the early Soviet period, focusing on the work of rivals L. S. Berg (1876–1950) and A. A. Grigor′ev (1883–1968), who developed his thinking in the late Imperial period, proposed an understanding of geography based on "landscapes": "law-like repeating groupings not only of forms of relief but also of other objects and phenomena on the surface of the earth" (111). After the Stalinist "Great Break" beginning in 1929, Berg's work was for other reasons criticized as merely descriptive. Grigor′ev's geography by contrast found favor, at least for a time. His conceptualization of a "single physical geographical process" (131) was lauded as more practical—focused on applications—but also for its obeisance to Dialectical Materialism.

Chapter 5 explores the late Stalin period and emphasizes two things: the implications for geographical science of the Great Stalin Plan for the Transformation of Nature (1948–53) and the atmosphere of intense and changing political scrutiny to which geography, and all intellectual work, was subjected during the anti-"imperialist" witch hunts of Stalin's final years. Both had damaging effects on the discipline and its practitioners. Although the Stalin Plan—which advanced the goal of improving agricultural harvests by ameliorating steppe climates via the mass planting of forest "shelter-belts"—at first allowed geographers "to boost their science and to proclaim

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its capacity to make a positive contribution to the building of socialist society," in the long run the failures of the program and its eventual cancelation following Stalin's death contributed to a "crisis" in the discipline (127).

The final chapter highlights the diversity of geographical thought under Khrushchev and in the wake of the latter's 1956 denunciation of the dictator. It also treats the debut of modern concerns about environmental protection in the Soviet Union.

This is a well-organized, concise, and informative history of geography, written in the style of the social sciences. Primary sources are the published writings of the relevant geographers supplemented in some cases by archival materials. There is frequent, if somewhat terse engagement with scholarship on environmental thought and action in the Soviet Union developed over the past two decades by historians including Douglas Weiner, Paul R. Josephson, Andy Bruno, and many others; as well as with the literature on the history of Russian and Soviet science.

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Soviet Street Children and the Second World War: Welfare and Social Control under Stalin. By Olga Kucherenko. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016. vi, 245 pp. Photographs, Glossary, Appendix, Notes, Bibliography, Index. $114, hard bound.

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This work is a heartbreaking account and searing indictment of official Soviet treatment of its homeless and unsupervised (*bezprizornye* and *beznadzornye*) children during the Second World War. Olga Kucherenko contends that the wartime state "enacted some of the most abusive policies concerning minors in its history" (5). Her prodigious research of street children aged ten to sixteen, based on voluminous documentation from thirteen archives in Russia, Ukraine, and Lithuania, as well as many memoirs, published document collections, and scholarly studies, amply supports her thesis that the state prioritized social control of the waifs over their welfare, at least for those who remained under NKVD supervision. While she acknowledges that the children's suffering stemmed largely from the extraordinary deprivations produced by the Nazi onslaught, she assails the Soviet myth that the Soviet state was a nurturing surrogate parent. Instead, it became an "oppressive authoritarian parent" (169).

The richly detailed text (printed in very small font size) is divided into three parts. The first, entitled "The Time without Fathers" (*Bezottsovshchina*), describes the masses of children rendered homeless by the Nazi invasion, who were reduced to begging and massive thievery as they migrated eastward. In "Step-Motherland," Kucherenko describes how children's rights were grossly violated in two particular ways. Approximately one million children, including unsupervised ones, were brutally and forcibly relocated eastward in the massive deportations of Poles, Germans, Chechens, Tatars, Finns, and other ethnic groups. In addition, youths were included in the large-scale arrests of violators of the draconian labor law of June 26, 1940, which criminalized absenteeism and unauthorized changing of jobs.

The heart of this study is the third part, "In Beria's Care," which describes how the NKVD rounded up homeless children in children's receiver-distribution centers (*detskie priemniki-raspredeliteli*, DPRs) and then channeled those deemed to be rowdy and deviant into labor colonies for minors (*trudovye kolonii dlia nesovershennoletnikh*, TKs) and children's labor educational colonies (*detskie trudovye vospitatel′nye*

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