part of the period covered. While in terms of Soviet archival sources the latter years of the Cold War are still somewhat less accessible and documented than the earlier years, making such a chronological scope understandable if often regrettable, it is less clear why the latter part of the Cold War is neglected here given the relative openness of the archives of the former Warsaw Pact countries. Especially considering the efforts in the late 1970s and 1980s by Warsaw Pact countries, including the USSR, to support an increasing number of "countries of socialist orientation"—Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Nicaragua, not to mention Cuba and Vietnam—economically, politically, and militarily, the lack of attention paid to this period is particularly striking in the final section on aid.

Geographically, the weight of the books falls on the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. One wonders if this is a reflection of the direction of the activities of the NSWP countries, or rather an accident of the selection of chapters, but the most notable geographic absences are South and Southeast Asia, which were central fronts of the Cold War competition in the Third World. To give just one example of something that might have merited attention, Poland's presence on the International Control Commission in Vietnam would present an interesting test for the assertion made by Przemysław Gasztold in Chapter 8 that "Moscow often took advantage of Warsaw's ideological blindness" (207). Of particular note are three excellent chapters on sub-Saharan Africa in the 1960s by the two editors and George Roberts. Telepneva's chapter on Czechoslovakia and the Congo and Muehlenbeck's on Czechoslovakia's diplomatic activities in East Africa both illustrate the degree to which the USSR was reliant on its allies in this part of the world, as well as the ways in which the ambitions of NSWP countries were ultimately vulnerable to the failures of Soviet foreign policy. Roberts' chapter offers a close reading of East Germany's attempts to influence the Tanzanian media, what he argues is an ultimately futile attempt by a "scavenger state" to collect whatever diplomatic crumbs might fall to it in the interstices of the Cold War (166).

Overall, the book is a useful step towards bringing the NSWP countries more prominently into the emerging literature on the Cold War in the "Third World." The book does not necessarily significantly revise the broad stroke narratives of each individual country's foreign policy—the GDR is still seeking recognition, Poland and Hungary are looking for economic gain, Bulgaria seeks to be a loyal ally, Czechoslovakia is ideologically supportive of "liberation," and Romania seeks to chart its own geopolitical path. However, the book does advance our understanding of the foreign policy dynamics of the Warsaw Pact as a whole, illuminating the ways in which the interactions of the various states in the alliance combined to advance or inhibit the interests of the Soviet Union in the Cold War.

Jeremy Friedman
Harvard University

Chernobyl: The History of a Nuclear Catastrophe. By Serhii Plokhy. New York: Basic Books, 2018. 404 pp. Notes. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Maps. $32.00, hard bound.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2019.131

In "Chernobyl," History Professor and Director of the Ukrainian Research Institute at Harvard University, Serhii Plokhy, presents yet another definitive story of the worst nuclear disaster in history, arguing that Chernobyl was the straw that broke the Soviet Union's back, and laid the groundwork for Ukrainian political independence.

Plokhy maintains that his account is based on new sources, which unfortunately are completely hidden in the endnotes, as the volume lacks a bibliography. The author spends a majority of the book's evocatively titled twenty-one chapters on recounting the events of April 1986 and beyond, in order to show that the Chernobyl tragedy was a direct result of Russian mismanagement. The book is written as a novel, which makes it readable, but also allows for a fair amount of poetic license. Some readers may enjoy this, others, myself included, cringe at the imprecision this technique encourages.

Plokhy's book is strongest where he presents the engagement of Ukrainian leaders in the post-disaster decision-making process (especially chapter 18): he evokes the confusion, frustration, and resentment among those grappling with decisions that affected the public, for example, whether or not to hold a May Day parade in Kiev, while the radiation situation was unclear at best, and dangerous for human health at worst. The book's major weakness is the author's apparent lack of familiarity with the expansive scholarship on the disaster, and his reliance on a few, dated sources to retell a story that has been revised and rewritten many times since. Furthermore, where the author attempts to address technical issues, his narrative is full of errors—a flaw that could have been prevented by consulting existing literature or a technically trained editor.

In terms of methodology, Plokhy combines some new primary sources with documents from online repositories, as well as published monographs in several languages. Apparently, the realization that the KGB would at times produce nuanced information came as a surprise to him. In fact, there were many channels for criticism within the Soviet system, including the KGB and the Communist Party—Viktor Sidorenko, one of the leading architects of the country's nuclear industry, has reconstructed many of them in his edited volumes (*Istoriia atomnoi energetiki Sovetskogo Soiuza i Rossii*, five volumes, Moscow, 2001–4). As far as I can tell, Plokhy has not conducted any new interviews. The "eyewitness testimonies" that enliven his story are second- or third-hand citations from published sources, unlike the compelling, first-hand accounts presented in, for example, Olga Kuchinskaya's *The Politics of Invisibility* (2014) and Adam Higginbotham's *Midnight at Chernobyl* (2019).

Plokhy's insider perspective as an ethnic Ukrainian, certified former Soviet citizen, and Chernobyl "downwinder" is both an asset and a curse: his lived experience gives him an easy familiarity with esoteric Soviet traditions and renders his account instantly credible. But he often does not grasp the intricacies of the Soviet system he was born into, for example, what role science and technology played in the Soviet economy, industry, and politics. None of the scholarship produced at Harvard and elsewhere on this topic (suffice it to mention Loren Graham's extensive oeuvre here) is referenced. In following Legasov's memoirs closely, he also misses on the fact that the IAEA's International Nuclear Safety Advisory Group had to fundamentally modify its initial report on Chernobyl, INSAG-1, which was based on Legasov's account. Their revised report, INSAG-7, came out in 1992 and benefitted from more comprehensive accident investigations published in the years since.

When it comes to technical details, Plokhy's story is particularly shaky. To give just one example, he uses the terms "safety" and "security" interchangeably, not realizing their distinct meanings in the nuclear context (279, 280; 322; 325; 342). He also struggles with the differences and overlaps between civilian and military applications of nuclear energy, and reproduces western clichés about how Chernobyl could have been prevented had only the military taken charge of nuclear power plants. Most unnerving, however, are unfounded safety comparisons (66, 131); offhand assessments of how nuclear expertise was distributed across Soviet ministries (19); and the striking unfamiliarity with the literature on the history of the Soviet nuclear sector

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(David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb*, 1994; Paul Josephson, *Red Atom*, 2005; Sonja Schmid, *Producing Power*, 2015).

Overall, with the exception of the final section (part VI), this volume does not add much to the vast existing scholarship on Chernobyl; in fact, by overlooking so much of it, Plokhy's narrative presents a skewed view of the disaster's origins, powerful impacts, and lasting implications for the future of the world's nuclear industry, and for the Ukrainian state. The accessible style in which Plokhy presents his narrative will appeal to readers who engage with the disaster for the first time, and unfortunately, it offers them a partial, technically inaccurate, and at times outdated perspective. Readers with familiarity in the matter will likely dismiss this volume as expendable.

Sonja D. Schmid
Department of Science, Technology, and Society, Virginia Tech, National Capital Region

Ukraine and the Empire of Capital: From Marketization to Armed Conflict. By Yuliya Yurchenko. London: Pluto Press, 2018. xvi, 284 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Figures. Tables. Maps. $27.00, paper.
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Yuliya Yurchenko's is a Marxist account of recent Ukrainian history, arguing that Ukrainian labor has been exposed to the brutality of domestic and foreign capital in a process supported by international financial institutions and various governments. Unabashedly polemical, the book reads like a manifesto dedicated (as it is) "to the victims of capital." The goal is to make sense of the recent armed conflict in Ukraine, and the verdict is stark: "Russia, the EU, and the USA, together with Ukraine's oligarchs are responsible for the fresh blood that has been shed in the name of markets and power" (22). Rooting her inquiry in Antonio Gramsci's notion of control, the author suggests that "the expansion of the empire of transnationalizing capital" (3) in Ukraine was secured through elite-manufactured "myths" that reference the elusive transition to market democracy, create artificial cleavages in Ukrainian society, and brand Russia as "the Other." Empirically, the book mostly relies on an array of Ukrainian media sources, government reports, and select western scholarship.

Unorthodox from the perspective of positivist social science, the book succeeds in several respects. By rattling conventional interpretations of the Ukrainian crisis, it is thought-provoking and draws attention to class analysis and the power of myths as potentially fruitful lenses for examining post-communist Ukraine. The book's trenchant criticism of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement as it has been applied by the EU in Ukraine merits attention. The investigation of the organizational history of the main foreign business lobby groups in Ukraine will be of interest to scholars of state-business relations in the region. The author's discussion of Ukrainian national identity—its evolution and its manipulation—is simply fascinating.

The book could have been more compelling on several fronts, too. The author's rhetorical edge is sharp but not always backed up by evidence. Proceeding from its ideological foundation, the account goes to great lengths to establish a moral equivalence between Russia and the west: "Russia's manipulation toolbox is not dissimilar to that of Ukraine's Western partners as both groups pursue their economic imperialist interests; yet the latter's selection contains a few pressure devices