

polemical goal to fight Stalin's rehabilitation colors his interpretation, as well as his engagement with other scholars.

Khlevniuk keeps the focus on personality. Social history is conspicuous by its absence. Thus, in July 1917, Lenin's "implacable obstinacy was the only real argument in favor of insurrection" in the July Days (51). As Alexander Rabinowitch has shown, however, worker, soldier, and sailor radicalism were powerful arguments for insurrection and important contexts and constraints for Bolshevik decisions. In Khlevniuk's book, great men make history; they create contexts more than the other way around.

Khlevniuk usefully debunks a number of myths about Stalin that are unsupported by documentary evidence. These include: Stalin was a Tsarist police agent, that he was unimportant in 1917, that the 1932 famine was genocide against Ukrainians, that Stalin killed Kirov, and that he broke down and secluded himself for three days after the 1942 German invasion. It is therefore curious that he entertains other equally unsupported myths. Citing Stalin's quote that his father did not treat him badly, Khlevniuk is nevertheless sure his father beat him, and somehow he knows that Stalin's statement is a matter of "suppressing unpleasant childhood memories" (13). We are also told without any support that Stalin and Mao "both despised their fathers and loved their mothers" (289) and that "Stalin could be a flagrant philanderer" (255).

A popular work on a vast subject will be selective by nature. Still, it is difficult to understand why the battle of Stalingrad merits only a short paragraph (225). The famine following World War II that claimed 1.5 million lives deserved only four sentences, perhaps because it was not Stalin's doing, while his disastrous currency reform at the same time earned 5 pages. One wonders how many of the author's choices stem not only from space considerations but from the need to avoid possible mitigation of Stalin's crimes by problematizing his dictatorship.

With the stylistic advantages and interpretive disadvantages attendant thereto, this is Great Man history at its best, nothing more and nothing less. Because of the author's standing and command of the field, this important book should be required reading for Russian historians and scholars in other fields, as well as the general public. Despite the book's title, however, specialists should not expect anything new in the way of methodology or fact.

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Saving Stalin's Imperial City: Historic Preservation in Leningrad, 1930–1950. By Steven Maddox. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015. xii, 284 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. \$50.00, hard bound.

Based on extensive archival research, Steven Maddox's book makes use of formerly unread sources to elucidate the dramatic case of the preservation of Leningrad's historical sites shortly before, during, and after World War II. This episode is highly significant for the understanding of the uses of the past in the USSR and afterwards, and especially because of its historical context, the period of the first five-year plan, repressions, and wars: "the time of cataclysmic upheavals and hardships," according to Maddox (2). Maddox explains the successes and failures of historical preservation by the regime's desire to be recognized as the legitimate successor to the imperial and military glory of the Romanovs' Russia. It is a detailed account of how the conservator and architect communities of Leningrad joined all human and institutional efforts to

save museum objects and historical sites from theft and destruction during the war and how they contributed with expertise and enthusiasm to the solidification of the Stalinist imperial myth.

From the very first months after the 1917 October revolution, historical conservation supported, and was supported by, the Bolshevik government. What is known as “the turn to the past” during the 1930s, from avant-garde utopianism to Stalinist historicism, was in fact a continuation rather than a reversal of a trend. Early Soviet society, Maddox insists, was not a product of creation *ex nihilo*, but a result of “the new” heavily borrowing from “the old” while at the same time negating its significance. This shift of perspective allows him to consider Soviet re-uses of the past with an emphasis on its government, regulation, and instrumentalization, especially for the purposes of propaganda during and after the war.

Leningrad citizens’ efforts of preservation took place against the background of a truly disastrous destruction of material objects and human lives. During the first weeks of the war, while the NKVD was preparing to surrender Leningrad by planning the destruction of its infrastructure and industry (the notorious “Plan D”), Leningrad’s conservators and museum workers were protecting its historical sites and objects. This order of priorities appears even more paradoxical in the attitude of the architecture authorities who considered that in the destroyed and famished city, “it would be easier to consent to the loss of tens of residential buildings . . . than to the heavy destruction of these unique masterpieces of art, the restoration of which may not always be possible” (62–63). Alongside the strong affects underlying such rhetoric, Maddox also reveals the peculiar futuristic underpinnings in the campaign of historical post-war restoration, in the course of which architects made use of the destruction inflicted by war in order to intervene in the planning of the cityscape, the infrastructure, the everyday life, and the collective memory of Leningrad.

While post-war Leningrad citizens were eking out a miserable existence in overcrowded wooden barracks, the center was allocating resources to rebuild its historical palaces. Driven forth by imperial fantasies at the top, the project also appealed to the messianic imagination of resurrection among the expert community and the cultural elite, organizing the traumatized and destitute population under the sign of Leningrad exceptionalism. I am not quite convinced by Maddox’s somewhat uncritical explanations of the campaign as a manifestation of city patriotism and ideological unanimity between those in power and the population. Still, one cannot deny that the collective efforts in restoring the past did become a means of managing the present and the future for the regime, and for the citizens a means of acting out the trauma of the siege.

Alongside the projects of restoration, the other major campaign of commemoration was associated with the Museum of the Defense of Leningrad, 1944–53. Both projects were instrumental in organizing Leningraders into an imaginary community, but also in the silencing of what Maddox cautiously calls “issues that ran counter to the heroic myth of the war” (163). As we know from witness accounts, these issues were quite serious. The Leningrad myth of war was found wanting in loyalty and in its turn was brutally eradicated by the center in the course of the Leningrad Affair. The story of the long and torturous demise of the museum is another valuable contribution of Maddox’s book. Leningrad’s memory was for the second time sacrificed in the power struggle over the past, this time to the post-war ideological and geopolitical claims of the late Stalinist regime in the new conditions of the Cold War.

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