

Broadening the interpretation of what may constitute an “energy weapon” may help to incorporate other, more subtle, strategies that Russia has used both in the West and East, involving the manipulation of flows, prices, and discourses (cf. Högselius 2020).

The book is recommended for everyone interested in the Russian gas sector and the history of East–West energy relations.

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Maria A. Rogacheva, *Soviet Scientists Remember: Oral Histories of the Cold War Generation*. Lexington Books, 2020.

This study is devoted to the interesting but under-studied topic of the life of the elite in the USSR. Actually, oral histories about Soviet times are currently quite popular in many social sciences such as history, sociology, anthropology, and so on. One of the main reasons for this is the fact that people who not only remember this time clearly but worked for the Soviet state are now in their seventies. And scientists are very interested in preserving firsthand information about the country which disappeared almost thirty years ago.

The author gathered information from a quite close and small social and professional group—scientists from the “scientific town” of Chernogolovka, near Moscow. So-called scientific towns were located next to the main scientific cities (such as Moscow, Novosibirsk, Dnipropetrovsk) or near their research sites (such as Nauchnoe in the Crimea, and the so-called “scientific towns” in the Caucasus, Siberian, and Central Asian regions).

Maria Rogacheva’s interviewees are six persons who worked in Chernogolovka almost all their life as state employees in physical and chemical research laboratories. On the one hand, all the stories are of a common character, covering topics such as wartime childhood, studying in an institute (university), reactions to Stalin’s death and Khrushchev’s Secret Speech, how they ended up in

Chernogolovka and so on. On the other hand, every life-story is unique. It is great that the author felt where she needed to ask a bit more about some events in her interviewees' lives or which moments were better passed over quickly.

The most common theme in those oral histories is gratefulness to the USSR authorities for the possibility to do research in good conditions. Interviewees recall material benefits such as the fact that they were able to bypass the long queue to obtain own apartments (usually this was a very long process, lasting years or even decades), and even had the possibility to buy everyday products by parcel delivery (also something that wasn't common for average people). One of the common memories of interviewees is red caviar in their store at the Institute which could be bought in bulk at 5 rubles per kilo. In conditions of total deficit, it was surely the one of the brightest memories after starving and hard times in childhood and student years.

The interviewees' answers to the author's questions about the Liubarskii affair (the case of the dissident scientist Kronid Liubarskii, who lived and worked in Chernogolovka and was arrested there in 1972 for distributing uncensored literature) are also an indicator of the nature of this closed scientific society—everyone knew about this case, but (with the exception of a few individuals who were interrogated by the KGB in this connection) did not pay attention to it because Liubarskii was not a part of a research team at the time. In fact, only two of Rogacheva's six interviewees knew some details about the case, while others had only heard about its existence, and were not interested in it.

These oral stories also open up for us not only the everyday life of scientists but the history of a scientific elite. This elite was different from other types of Soviet elites—artists, writers, trade workers (directors of stores and above) and so on, in that their path to high social status depended more on hard work than on talent (*habitus*). The main leitmotif of all these stories is that these people were free in their work but not free in their everyday life. For most of them it was not necessary to be free outside of their research—they were doing what they loved and were happy. So, it is not a surprise that nostalgia for that time is present in each of the cases here,

regardless of whether they supported Gorbachev and Yeltsin's reforms or not.

Every interview has its own specifics which helps to highlight some details of everyday life of successful scientists—from trade trips to Noril'sk and the reading of foreign scientific magazines to having refrigerators, radio-sets, and cars (note that not everybody could afford to buy a TV-set in that time).

Some terms which were used in the USSR commonly (such as *trudovaya knizhka*, *subbotnik*) have been transcribed here rather than translated into English. Well, this is useful for non-Russian speaking scholars who are interested in the USSR. Anyway, it would have been useful to include in the introduction some general information about the educational system in the USSR, which differed from its Western counterparts. For example, the Soviet system did not feature the *college* in one of its classical meanings as *part of the University* (as in the USA). It included institutions such as the professional technical school (*professional'noe tekhnicheskoe uchilishche—PTU*) on the base of “incomplete secondary school” (where students obtained a complete secondary school education and/or a professional qualification) or on the base of complete secondary school (ten grades) (with the possibility to obtain a professional qualification). Also, in the USSR there was no difference between *Institute, University or Academy* in the educational sense—graduates of all these institutions obtained the same “state diploma of higher education.” Moreover, there were two levels to obtain a status of scholar—*aspirantura* (for the “candidate of sciences” (*kandidat nauk*) formal scientific degree, PhD equivalent) and the higher scientific level of *doktorantura* (for further “doctor of sciences” (*doktor nauk*) formal scientific degree, Dr.Sc.).

It would have been useful to include interviews with scientists who were not only born in the village (in the countryside) but who grew up and got their secondary school education there. Such cases may be quite rare, due to the fact that “collective farmers” (peasants) did not have the right to leave the village without a passport or special certificate from local authorities (most peasants did not have passports till 1974). In the event that no such cases could be found,

it would be worth noting this in the introduction as one of the serious social inequalities in the USSR.

My next suggestion would be to add in the next edition several interviews (if possible) with scientists who ended up in Chernogolovka in the 1970s and 1980s. Comparison of their histories with those of the founders of this town (from the 1960s) would be useful for building a dynamic picture of the evolution (development) of typical scientific non-closed or semi-closed towns in the USSR and how the privileged status of scientists in the USSR did or did not change from the period of the so-called “Thaw” (*Otтеpel’*) through to the end of the USSR.

However, this book is a good contribution to the library of the research on the everyday life of different social groups in the USSR. Moreover, this book is a nice guide for scholars who study different Soviet social groups, elites, and scholarly life; it would make a useful companion for example to the various series of notes and books about sociologists of that time that have been published in Russia and abroad. More broadly, it will have appeal for everyone who is interested in the history of Soviet everyday life and Soviet science in particular.

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Zuzanna Bogumił, *Gulag Memories: The Rediscovery and Commemoration of Russia’s Repressive Past*. Trans. from the Polish by Philip Palmer. Berghahn Books, 2018.

This book is devoted to a formative period for Gulag memory, from the collapse of the USSR to 2015, when the Russian Federation became actively involved in the formation of memory of the Soviet repressions. The chapters focus on the distinctive features of Gulag memory in four Russian regions (respectively the Solovetsky islands, the Komi Republic, Perm Krai, and Kolyma).

In the first chapter the author mainly analyzes the late Soviet and post-Soviet activities of memory actors on the three major