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Steven E. Harris, *Communism on Tomorrow Street: Mass Housing and Everyday Life after Stalin*  
Communism on Tomorrow Street: Mass Housing and Everyday Life after Stalin by Steven E. Harris

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*The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 87, No. 2 (June 2015), pp. 500–502

Published by: [The University of Chicago Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/681202>

Accessed: 05/06/2015 08:30

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But none of this detracts from what is an important book and valuable contribution to the historiography of European collaboration. As the Rožman case demonstrates, Kranjc's book is also a timely addition to the history of wartime Slovenia and contemporaneous debates about collaboration.

MARK BIONDICH

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**Communism on Tomorrow Street: Mass Housing and Everyday Life after Stalin.** By

*Steven E. Harris.*

Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press; Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2013. Pp. xxii+394. \$60.00 (cloth).

This well-researched book is among the first to examine in detail one of the most significant social reforms in Soviet history—the government-initiated mass construction of affordable housing during the 1950s and 1960s. Relying on a wealth of previously untapped archival evidence, Steven Harris has written an important social history of this reform, which was crucial to the transformation of Soviet society known as the Thaw.

Harris traces the origins of Soviet housing policies back to the nineteenth century, examining them as an offspring of Marxist ideology but also contextualizing them within the contemporary Western search for a scientific answer to the challenges of urbanization. Notably, the book discusses the German-Russian career of the “sanitary norm,” a concept that originated in the nineteenth-century ideas of minimal sufficient housing space per individual. Advanced by German hygienists, the concept was later adopted by the Soviets, although in a reduced form. It was this “norm” that dictated, from early on, the Soviet construction and distribution of housing. The norm conditioned the design of separate apartments in the 1950s and 1960s, explaining among other things why most of them were so pitifully small. Harris also pays much attention to the modernist ideals of creating new individuals and communities by means of housing design. Many of these early twentieth-century futuristic visions were revived in the 1950s by Soviet architects who, Harris argues, thus were in tune with Khrushchev's idea of building communism in the foreseeable future.

Against this conceptual background, Harris examines the actual Soviet housing policies from 1917 on: the expropriation of propertied classes during the Revolution and the Civil War, the creation of the communal apartment and its proliferation since the 1920s, as well as the gradual return to the idea of a separate single-family apartment. This return, he suggests, took place in the 1930s, simultaneous with the Stalinist rehabilitation of conservative family values. However, the genuine implementation of the separate apartment came only with the housing reform of the Thaw. Although Harris shows the Stalin-era origins of the reform, what was lacking under Stalin, he argues, was a concerted effort to build single-family separate apartments for a broad public, not only the elites. Unlike Stalin, Khrushchev launched the construction of affordable housing with modern amenities on an unprecedentedly massive scale. The separate apartment became essential to the new interpretation of socialism premised on improving the material life of ordinary Soviet citizens.

In a sociocultural analysis of this reform, Harris then discusses how the new separate apartments were built and distributed. He focuses on two major methods: “people's construction” and the more elite-oriented “housing co-operatives.” This is a rich story, which brings together the intricacies of Soviet local politics as well as the multiple claims, expectations, and ideas of social justice—egalitarian or, depending on the moment, strikingly individualistic—with which citizens and institutions approached the distribution process.

What is worth highlighting is Harris's discussion of class. Claims to obtaining separate apartments created (or brought out of the closet?) a peculiar logic of reasoning, in which nativism and ideas of state service were closely intertwined. Thus, the notion of a "native Leningrader" (much of Harris's evidence comes from the Leningrad archives) frequently surfaced as a justification for someone's claim to receiving an apartment from the state. Definitions of "native" origins often included a record of state service, endurance of wartime hardship, or other similarly politicized claims of entitlement. Parenthetically, this is one part of the book where Harris could have pushed his analysis a bit further, as the material promises broader conclusions. Underneath the ideas of socialism or communism, the Thaw apparently revealed the persistence of archaic, deep-seated elements of mentality that, may this reviewer suggest, dated back way before 1917.

With regard to class as well, Harris emphasizes the discrepancy between ordinary Soviet citizens—workers, collective farmers, or lower-grade intelligentsia such as schoolteachers or engineers—and what he calls the "cultural intelligentsia." He proposes that in the 1950s and 1960s this latter group—for instance, architects with their neomodernist visions—sought to dictate preferences in housing design, furnishing, consumption, gender, and so on, to the rest of the population. However, he argues, the realities of Soviet material culture were a far cry from these aesthetic prescriptions. Not only did the architects come under massive criticism from the audience (the apartments were small, the quality of materials and finishing substandard, the "modern" furniture both uncomfortable and hard to find in stores)—but what people actually had in those apartments did not match the aesthetic visions of the cultural elite. With interesting archival data, Harris shows that few Soviet families owned the electric home appliances or other modern household goods massively advertised by the media and that the real quality of life in a Soviet home was appallingly behind that of a British or French, let alone American, one. Yet he also shows that material life was improving dramatically for millions of Soviet families during the Thaw, as it was then that people began to buy their very first refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, laundry machines, and so on.

The book comes to the conclusion that, despite its problems, the housing reform of the 1950s and 1960s was an important success. The separate single-family apartment became a standard of the Soviet way of life, as more and more families—eventually the majority—obtained those apartments. Thereby, Harris argues, the housing reform strengthened the regime, contributing to its relative longevity. At the same time, he notes, the surge in construction did not entirely solve all housing problems. Rather, the reform created what he terms a crisis of rising expectations, whetting the consumers' appetites and prompting them to expect a yet better quality of life—in a cumbersome, deficient economy incapable of keeping pace with those expectations. Thus, although expanding the social basis of the regime, the housing and consumption reforms of the Thaw also exacerbated its numerous troubles.

If there is a slightly questionable aspect of Harris's argument, it is perhaps the great emphasis he places on the aforementioned discrepancy between the cultural intelligentsia and the rest of Soviet society. He often calls this intelligentsia a privileged class, demonstrating that it had greater access to consumer goods, including apartments. However, his evidence, such as in chapter 6, also seems to indicate that in material possessions the intelligentsia was not all that high above the rest of the urban population. Also, strictly speaking, the term *privileged* hardly applies to the majority of the intelligentsia, cultural or otherwise, as its access to most goods was not really regulated by formally bestowed privileges. And even where privileges did exist, numerous sources indicate that many among the cultural intelligentsia who enjoyed them (e.g., members of the Union of Writers' housing cooperative in Moscow) moved to separate apartments from truly appalling housing

conditions, not any better than those suffered by other urban social groups. (This, of course, does not refer to the few truly privileged members of the top cultural establishment.) The evidence (e.g., on p. 256) also suggests that very different classes during the 1950s and 1960s, from the urban intelligentsia to collective farmers, frequently subscribed to periodicals and attended libraries and thus, culturally speaking, tapped from the same sources rather than stood miles apart from each other. Alongside class distinctions in late Soviet society, class commonalities are worth noting as well.

The slight criticism notwithstanding, this is an important and persuasive book that tells the reader a lot about how Soviet society functioned during the Thaw. This reviewer recommends the book to all academic audiences—students and scholars of modern Russian history.

DENIS KOZLOV

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**The Readers of *Novyi Mir*: Coming to Terms with the Stalinist Past.** By *Denis Kozlov*.  
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013. Pp. 431. \$55.00 (cloth); \$55.00 (e-book).

Among the Soviet-era archives that opened their doors to foreign researchers in 1991, the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI) was unusual for its informality. Document inventories were available for browsing on open shelving, and staff members, in their interactions with researchers, appeared to operate on the principle of benign neglect. Only once did an archivist attempt to steer me away from documents. In the early 2000s, I requested several files from the collection of *Novyi Mir*, the preeminent Soviet “thick journal” of the 1950s and 1960s. The reading-room attendant politely told me that I could look at the files, but that I should be aware that “Kozlov has read them all.”

Kozlov was Denis Kozlov, whose erudite and elegant book *The Readers of “Novyi Mir”: Coming to Terms with the Stalinist Past* is based on three thousand unpublished readers’ letters sent to *Novyi Mir* between 1948 and 1970 (these letters are preserved among more than twelve thousand in the journal’s archive at RGALI). An heir to prerevolutionary Russia’s great thick journals, *Novyi Mir* was notable during the post-Stalinist “thaw” for its daring editorial decisions. It famously published Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s laconic account of the gulag, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, in 1962, and Ilya Ehrenburg’s unsparingly honest memoir, *People, Years, Life*, between 1960–63 and 1965. Previous scholars, conscious of Cold War stereotypes, traditionally couched the publication of these and similar literary landmarks as evidence of “permitted dissent” or a liberal line in post-Stalinist politics. Kozlov calls this the “theme of ‘literature and power’” (11), which predominates existing historical analyses of the Soviet Union’s literary and cultural establishment. Although the politics of *Novyi Mir*’s two extraordinary editors during the thaw, Aleksandr Tvardovskii and Konstantin Simonov, figure prominently in *The Readers of “Novyi Mir,”* Kozlov skirts the old theme by accepting that the interface of Soviet literature and power was multifaceted and multidirectional. This allows him to explore more interesting territory, the theme of “literature and society” (12).

Kozlov argues that *Novyi Mir* played an oversized role in the “unmaking of Soviet subjectivity” by highlighting the “centrality of mass violence” in the recent past and by encouraging readers—explicitly, through responses to their letters and, implicitly, through the