

is undoubtedly a monumental achievement. The main strength lies in the unique combination of an extensive narrative scope and exceptional attention to detail. With the “Korean Problem” as the central motif, Jager’s chronicle masterfully weaves together the histories of Russia’s expansion in Asia, China’s demise, the simultaneous rise of Japan, and the interests and policies of western Great Powers in East Asia, portraying the region’s transformation from Confucianism and Sino-centrism to a modern Westphalian order.

Attention to detail and the key individuals involved in shaping this new order enlivens the narrative, allowing the reader to almost time travel to events that occurred many decades ago. One notable anecdote is the depiction of the 1876 talks between Japan’s envoy Mori Arinori and China’s Li Hongzhang regarding tensions in Japan-Korea relations, which illustrates the ongoing transformations in East Asia but also the continuities. During the talks, Chinese leaders were still appealing to Korea’s traditional status as a tributary state while the Japanese leadership was driven by the pursuit of “modern” interests. Despite this obvious gap in worldviews, the conversation between Mori and Li was conducted by writing on pieces of paper in literary Chinese (49–50).

Jager’s narrative places geopolitics at the core of the “other Great Game.” The actors are driven by anxiety related to the actions of the others and realpolitik interests. As someone interested in identities and ideologies, I hoped to see references to non-material factors in shaping the actions of the state actors, such as Russia’s “Eastern identity” briefly mentioned by Jager in the Preface (xv). I am also not entirely convinced that the narrative fully supports one of Jager’s key arguments (xvii): the importance of Korea’s agency in this history. Korea appears in the narrative ridden with corruption and incapacitated by persistent internal power struggles, incapable of taking decisive action while unsuccessfully attempting to play other actors against each other.

These reservations, however, are minor and do not diminish from the magnitude of the achievement portrayed in *The Other Great Game* in depicting the monumental transformation of East Asia during the second half of the nineteenth to the early twentieth century and the importance of the Korean Peninsula in this process. Jager’s monograph is a must-read for all those interested both in East Asian history and in its present. Numerous key themes of the narrative, such as Russia’s expansionism, divisions in Korea related to its relations with Japan, and Japan-China tensions, are visible in today’s regional relations. One is left to wonder whether the phrase “In Russia, every ten years everything changes, and nothing changes in 200 years” attributed to Pyotr Stolypin may actually have universal relevance.

Evgeny Sergeev. *The Bolsheviks and Britain during the Russian Revolution and Civil War, 1917–1924.*

London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. xxi, 270 pp. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Bibliography. Chronology. Index. Photographs. Maps. \$103.50, hard bound; \$39.95 paper.

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Evgeny Sergeev is Chief Research fellow at the Institute of World History in the Russian Academy of Sciences and also Professor of International and British History at the Russian

State University for the Humanities. He has written several books and articles, including *The Great Game, 1856–1907: Russo-British Relations in Central and East Asia* (2013).

His newest book examines how the October Revolution and advent of the Bolshevik regime affected the Anglo-Russian relationship from 1917 to 1924, a tumultuous period of transition from World War I allies to hostile military confrontation to an unsteady and mistrustful resumption of diplomatic relations. This is already a much-studied topic, with important contributions by E.H. Carr, Richard H. Ullman, Richard Debo, Stephen White, Michael Jabara Carley, Keith Neilson, and several others. Sergeev's book does not alter the broad outlines of that tortuous London-Moscow relationship, already sketched in by previous scholars, but, with access to more recently available documents, he is able to add some fascinating details. Most importantly, he utilizes newly accessible British intelligence service archives as well as Soviet foreign policy archives.

A strength of this book is the author's exploration of debates and disagreements among decision-makers in both London and Moscow. Sergeev highlights a pattern of conflict among British leaders who sought to heal the breach with Russia and establish "normal" relations, who were opposed by inveterate enemies of the Soviet experiment. The first group included Prime Minister David Lloyd George and subsequent Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald (supported by the Labour Party and the Trade Union Council), while their opponents, led by Winston Churchill and Lord Curzon, intended the destruction or at least the isolation of the Bolshevik menace. On the Soviet side, the author demonstrates the commitment of Ambassador Leonid Krasin and Deputy Commissar of Foreign Affairs Maksim Litvinov to create an Anglo-Soviet rapprochement, frequently in opposition to the views of Comintern boss Grigorii Zinoviev and Red Army chieftain Lev Trotskii, with Vladimir Lenin often occupying a middle ground between the two sides.

Advocates of Anglo-Soviet cooperation were doomed to achieve no more than modest success because the objectives of each side were mutually incompatible. Even those British leaders who wanted to engage with Moscow expected the Soviets to repay bondholders and compensate the owners of nationalized assets, terminate the state monopoly of foreign trade, fully open Russian markets to British manufacturers and merchants, and halt all subversive activity and propaganda in the UK and the empire. Revived ties with Russia, as numerous scholars have noted, were expected to bolster Britain's shaky postwar economy by restoring a lucrative trade in British goods with the Russians. Sergeev highlights another motive for restoring relations with Moscow: Lloyd George and some of his associates believed that drawing the Soviet state into the capitalist trade network would somehow tame the Bolsheviks.

Each of those points was unacceptable to Soviet leaders. They intended to continue revolutionary agitation in Europe and the colonial lands, maintain the government's monopoly of foreign trade, while at the same time securing substantial loans from Britain on favorable terms, preventing the rise of an anti-Soviet coalition of imperialist powers, and insuring that foreign military intervention would never recur. Sergeev mentions but does not fully elaborate the painful evolution of Soviet thinking from the initial belief that spreading the revolution abroad was an existential necessity to the reluctant acceptance of the doctrine of socialism in one country and the necessity of normalizing diplomatic relations and seeking trade and technological assistance from the west that that idea implied.

Sergeev is especially interested in the impact of intelligence services on the conduct of international relations. He utilizes the recently opened files of Britain's MI5 and MI6, though he did not have access to the Soviet intelligence archive. Sergeev discusses British decrypting of Soviet messages during the abortive "Lockhart Plot" to overthrow the Bolshevik regime. He also delves into the murky "Zinoviev Letter" affair, though he takes an oddly equivocal position on its authenticity, while most scholars have condemned it as a forgery. He also explores the revived "Great Game" in the Trans-Caucasus, Central Asia, and beyond, pitting British secret agents and Chekists in a traditional competition now intensified by ideology.

Ultimately, the two sides could not overcome their mutual fears, suspicions, and hostility. The “. . . Kremlin,” Sergeev writes, “presumed that Whitehall was forming a new anti-Soviet military alliance, the [British] Cabinet charged the Bolshevik government with sponsoring the Communist groups in the countries from London to Peking” (169). Sergeev has provided a valuable addition to the literature on Anglo-Soviet relations that historians of interwar international affairs will find useful.

Paul Josephson. *Nuclear Russia: The Atom in Russian Politics and Culture.*

Russian Shorts. London: Bloomsbury, 2022. vii, 134 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. Tables. \$16.15, paper.

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Paul Josephson is probably the most prominent historian of Soviet nuclear power. He began his career as a historian of Soviet physics and, since the late 1980s, covered the Chernobyl disaster and developed a wider critical agenda to interrogate the negative impacts of large scale technologies in the Global North and South. His *Red Atom: Russia's Nuclear Power Program from Stalin to Today*, published in 2000, together with the articles on cultural and symbolic meanings of the nuclear industry, inspired generations of young scholars. Back in the 1990s, Josephson criticized western scholars and aid agencies for focusing excessively on post-Soviet Russia and forgetting Ukraine. He wrote about Ukrainian science seeking to make clear and visible the contribution of Ukrainian scholars to what was presented as “Soviet” scientific achievements.

The newly published *Nuclear Russia: The Atom in Russian Politics and Culture* is not, however, merely an updated version of *Red Atom*, but rather an entirely new attempt to rethink the established narratives that have shaped the historiography of Soviet nuclear power. *Nuclear Russia*, at the same time, presents the highly complex development of the Soviet nuclearity in a readable and accessible way, which Josephson excels at. But *Nuclear Russia* came out on March 9, 2022, two weeks after Russia invaded Ukraine. The tragic war shocked the global community of historians of Soviet science, many of whom began to scrutinize the persistent habit of conflating the contributions of scientists from different republics into the monolith of “Soviet science,” where the label of “Sovietness” masked the colonial Russification through science and technology and rendered the contributions of non-Russian scholars invisible.

Josephson’s history of “Nuclear Russia” is, in effect, a transnational history of Russian and Ukrainian nuclear power. Reading Josephson’s *Nuclear Russia* I could see the merits of a transnational take on Soviet science, although still there is a risk of falling into a trap of methodological nationalism. This said, there is much sense to consider the contribution of Soviet Ukrainian scientists as a transnational input into Soviet science. After all, Ukraine ranked second in terms of scientific output in the Soviet Union. In his *Nuclear Russia*, Josephson does not mince his words criticizing the Kremlin’s exploitation of Ukraine. He details clearly just how central Ukrainian scientific institutions were for the Soviet nuclear program; the first chapter, “Nuclear Bolshevism,” outlines the destruction of the Kharkiv physicist community