Architecture now entered the epoch of Socialist Realism, a "process of turning Jewish architects (along with their non-Jewish colleagues) into something more akin to stage designers. . ., the entire building industry [being] redirected toward manufacturing a canvas for painting the picture glorifying the Soviet State" (III, 15), reflected in the major construction projects of the period, such as the Moscow Metro and the Moscow-Volga Canal. Not only were most Jewish architects not purged (although he traces many who were sent to the camps, yet permitted to work as architects), but some found regime patrons. The price for survival was adaptation and conformity. "A building with façade details of any one of the acceptable styles, pimped with adequate amounts of kitsch, was acknowledged as an example of *socialist realism* in architecture, especially if the *Leader* took a liking to it" (III, 85–86). This culminated in the erection of the Stalin Skyscrapers. Given the growing anti-Semitism, it is no surprise that only three architects involved in those constructions are definitively Jewish. However, Berkovich notes, amidst this stifling of creativity and failure to develop new building types or building technology, Jewish female architects were emerging.

The post-Stalin leadership addressed the profound necessity of building new housing on a massive scale. This demanded abandoning architectural embellishment, industrializing housing construction, and exploring foreign experience—that is, copying the Modernist style. Architects soon accepted Nikita Khrushchev's orders, with "Stalin's socialist realism, imitating historic styles,. . . simply converted over the next several years into the socialist realism with a modernist face of the Khrushchev-Brezhnev era" (IV, 18). "Modernized Socialist Realism" demonstrated not creativity but blind copying from the west, Jewish architects with few exceptions simply following accepted trends. Marked by low-cost standardized apartment blocks using prototype designs of entire buildings, the exceptions were "experimental" (luxury) apartments, at times reviving Constructivist ideas, built for the ruling elite. As Berkovich convincingly concludes, "With the exception of members of the Soviet avant-garde of the 1920s, Jewish architects in Russia and the Soviet Union, just as their colleagues from the country's other ethnicities, did not attain a level of global architecture in their creative work. . .. Nevertheless, they left a wide-ranging and large legacy in the architectural landscape of Imperial and Soviet Russia" (IV, 130).

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Moscow Monumental: Soviet Skyscrapers and Urban Life in Stalin's Capital. By Katherine Zubovich. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021. xiv, 274 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Illustrations. Plates. Photographs. $39.95, hard bound.
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The seven Stalin-era skyscrapers (*vysotki*, or *vysotnye zdaniia* in Russian) are, like St. Basil's, an indelible part of the memory of anyone who has ever visited or lived in Moscow. Indeed, my own first impressions of Moscow are forever linked with *zona B* (zone V), a dormitory wing in the most imposing of those towers, the main building of Moscow State University on what was then known as Lenin Hills. The summer of 1970 was a perilous time in the middle of a seemingly endless and expanding Vietnam War. We had just bombed the port of Haiphong. Yet that building, with its creaky oak parquet and capricious elevators, seemed to enfold and protect—not so much a building, but an entire universe. Little did those of us in the IREX Summer Exchange know of the ghosts beneath those parquet floors.

Katherine Zubovich's book *Moscow Monumental* provides a detailed, multifaceted history of the towers' creation. Although there have been other studies of Stalinist architecture in Moscow, such as Olga Zinov′eva's fascinating *Simvoly stalinskoi Moskvy* (Moscow, 2009), the introduction states that this book is the first study of the Stalinist towers to be "grounded in archival sources" (7). Together with references to contemporary media (newspapers, journals), this material provides detailed insights often lacking in examinations of Stalin-era systems, particularly those focusing on the regime's violent coercive policies. During a period of immense suffering and political repression, systems continued to work, even under the stress of a massive invasion and world war. Factories were built, universities and research institutes were founded and expanded, dissertations were defended, classical music was composed and performed, and the nation's libraries were flooded with editions of the classics. This book expands our understanding of the regime's ability to function within conditions of social chaos.

As outlined in the introduction, the narrative arc ranges from the conflicting perceptions and visions of Moscow as a new socialist capital to the post-Stalinist, Khrushchev-era reaction against "excesses" in architectural design—a reaction that occurred just as the vysotki were coming into use. A major part of this account is devoted to the fate of the gargantuan and ultimately unbuilt Palace of Soviets, planned for the site of the demolished Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Chapter 2 examines the multitude of conflicting impulses in the design process, including attitudes toward American architecture. Of particular significance are the roles of Boris Iofan (1896–1976) and Vladimir Shchuko (1878–1939), who had a major influence on the development of Stalin-era architecture. Indeed, Iofan is the subject of two recent monographic studies in English, both of which bear the title *Stalin's Architect*.

This showcase project came to a full stop during the Great Patriotic War, and Chapter 3 correctly notes the wartime revival of interest in traditional (ecclesiastical) Russian architecture (70). Here a leading role was played by Aleksei Shchusev (1873–1949), a supremely adaptable talent whose work ranged from exquisite prerevolutionary churches to streamlined Constructivist buildings (not to mention the Lenin Mausoleum) and a return to traditionalist designs during the years of reconstruction. Neoclassism, particularly in opposition to Constructivism during the late 1920s, also suffuses Stalin-era architecture. (See my "Anti-modernism and the Neoclassical Revival in Russian Architecture, 1906–1916," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 48: 371–86; and "Restating Classicist Monumentalism in Soviet Architecture, 1930s-early 1950s," in *The Oxford Handbook of Communist Visual Cultures*, 2020, 65–88.)

The narrative reaches the planning and designation of the vysotki in Chapter 4, beginning with the 1947 decree for construction of the towers at highly visible points in Moscow's Soviet plan. The following three chapters address the human impact of these thunderous construction projects, from those displaced (Chapter 5), to those who built—including Gulag labor—(Chapter 6), to those few who moved in—and those excluded—(Chapter 7). The allocation of apartments was a fraught topic during in a period of extreme scarcity (the irony of "model" socialist projects limited to a well-connected few), but to gain a sense of the rage and despair on the part of unfree construction labor in the late Stalinist period, one must turn to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's novel *V kruge pervom* (First Circle, 1968). The voices of the victims must be heard.

Despite its detailed explorations—so essential to an understanding of the period beyond the plethora of books about Stalin, his politics, and his henchmen—this book largely ignores a context that would have enriched an understanding of the monumental, at times grotesque, enterprise of the vysotki and even their connection with American architecture. We associate the buildings with the epitome of Stalinist

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culture, and yet their creative breath can be traced to the pre-revolutionary Russian architectural profession, which lay the foundations for much of the technical and design expertise in later projects.

Moscow at the beginning of the twentieth century is described (10–11) as a backward, provincial territory, and there is evidence to support this impression. Yet Russia's vibrant prerevolutionary architectural press, as well as the popular media, were filled with references to Moscow's near future filled with skyscrapers rivaling those of America. Beginning with a chapter in the book *Reshaping Russian Architecture: Western Technology, Utopian Dreams* (1990), I have written in detail about these informed and often fulsome perceptions of American urban architecture. Far from gape-mouthed expressions of wonderment, these reports in journals such as *Zodchii* were often interested in specific technical details, especially related to skyscraper construction.

One of the most intriguing figures in this architectural cohort was Viacheslav Oltarzhevskii (1880–1966), whose flourishing pre-revolutionary career is given cursory mention in this book. Others, such as Lev Rudnev (1885–1956) and Sergei Chernyshev (1881–1963), the lead architects for Moscow State University, were also superbly educated in imperial Russia's best art academies, as was Vladimir Gelfreikh (1885–1967), a lead architect for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs building on Smolensk Square. His collaborator, Mikhail (Moisei) Minkus, belonged to the following generation but was thoroughly grounded in the same educational culture, inspired by Ivan Fomin (not mentioned in the book), Shchuko, Leontii Benois, and Andrei Belogrud. Indeed, this quadriga pulled the early Soviet architectural profession through Constructivism to a reaffirmation of traditionalism in design, supported by the critical help of Ivan Zholtovskii, another major contributor to the professional environment that produced the vysotki. With their love and knowledge of Italy, as well as a thorough grounding in classical architecture, these and other architects had created before 1917 an intellectual and aesthetic milieu that would be essential for shaping the towers that so visibly link Moscow to the Stalin era.

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Avant-Garde as Method: Vkhutemas and the Pedagogy of Space, 1920–1930. By Anna Bokov. Zurich: Park Books, 2020. 624 pp. Appendix. Notes. Glossary. Index. Illustrations. Plates. Photographs. $65.00, hard bound.
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At 624 pages and weighing over six pounds, *Avant-Garde as Method: Vkhutemas and the Pedagogy of Space, 1920–1930* might initially seem to aim above all at rendering the Soviet Union's most famous school of art, architecture, and design both accessible and enticing for the Anglophone reader already in possession of a heavily reinforced coffee table. Between its oversized covers, the book presents a stunning array of archival images—965 in color; 80 black-and-white—procured from private and institutional collections in North America and Russia. Many illustrations cover an entire page for maximum visual impact; many are previously unpublished; and some reproduce entire historical pamphlets in useful facsimile. Countless photographs show objects or installations that no longer exist, making them especially tantalizing guardians of the historical record. Given the centrality of VKhUTEMAS within the history of modern architecture as well as the paucity of Anglophone scholarship on the school, any presentation of its pedagogical structure and approach is