

## Book Reviews

Eva Dillon. *Spies in the Family*. New York: Harper Collins, 2017. 285 pp., plus abbreviated endnotes and index. Hardcover, \$28.99.

Spies and espionage are always hot topics, as the success of the International Spy Museum in Washington, D. C. demonstrates. Consequently, Eva Dillon's book, *Spies in the Family: An American Spymaster, His Russian Crown Jewel, and the Friendship that Helped End the Cold War*, has a leg up over many other books on the Cold War when it comes to attracting a general readership. But Dillon's book stands on its own merits, as well. *Spies in the Family* is a well-written exploration of Cold War espionage and spycraft told through the lens of a few select individuals, primarily the author's father, Paul Dillon, and the Soviet spy he "handled," the Soviet general and the CIA's highest ranking agent, Dmitri Fedorovich Polyakov.

Paul Dillon began working for the CIA in 1950, and over the course of his career he would operate in Germany, Mexico, Italy and India. For three decades, he worked with Soviet spies, recruiting and training them, and then serving as the contact for the exchange of information. One of the spies he oversaw was Dmitri Polyakov, an agent for the GRU (Glavnoe Razvedyvatel'noe Upravlenie), a Soviet intelligence agency whose mission was primarily to steal military technology and monitor foreign threats, especially enemy spies. Polyakov came to the United States undercover as a member of the Soviet Mission to the United Nations Security Council Military Staff Committee, but his real job was to oversee a network of Soviet spies who were living in the United States as legal citizens. Over the course of a decade, however, from his first posting in the United States in 1951 through the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961, Polyakov became disenchanted with the direction of the Soviet system and its leaders, particularly Nikita Khrushchev, whom he saw as an uncouth, hot-headed boor. Polyakov feared that Khrushchev's

temperamental, rash nature might lead to an actual war between the two superpowers. Believing that he was doing what was best for the Russian people, Polyakov gave the CIA the names of Soviet spies in the United States and elsewhere, secret technical data, directives on military and foreign policy, information on the North Vietnamese and Chinese militaries, and copies of military journals. In the end, Polyakov provided American intelligence officers and military analysts with literally reams of classified documents. The author's father was Polyakov's contact for only a small period in the Soviet general's long career, however, making the book's subtitle a bit hyperbolic.

Though Polyakov's story is more compelling than Dillon's in many ways, both men's careers reveal the dangerous world of espionage in the Cold War era and intersect with several names and events that are familiar to the general public. So, for example, early in Dillon's career he worked in Germany, training teams of spies to be inserted into the Soviet Union. All of these spies were captured and executed thanks to information provided by the British Secret Intelligence Service officer and Soviet spy, Kim Philby. Later, in 1958, Dillon was sent by the CIA to the World's Fair in Brussels as part of the agency's plan to sneak copies of Boris Paternak's forbidden novel, *Dr. Zhivago*, into the Soviet Union. Finally, *Spies in the Family* also reveals that Polyakov's exposure as a spy, his arrest, and execution (in 1988), were a direct result of the spying activity of the CIA's own man, Aldrich Ames, who had been working for the Soviet government.

*Spies in the Family* is well-written and readable. (Dillon gives credit in her acknowledgments to a "writing partner," David Chanoff, whom she thanks for "wordsmithing," but she is the only person listed as an author.) The book's source base is largely primary and secondary English-language sources, including memoirs of both Russian and American agents, and some documents obtained through online sources. Dillon thanks several translators, but there are very few Russian sources, and no archival research is evident. This is no surprise, since the author is not a scholar of history, but rather someone who has spent her life in the magazine publishing business. Nonetheless, Dillon's book is a fascinating and useful addition to the popular literature on this particular aspect of Russian-American relations during the Cold War.

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Kate A. Baldwin, *The Racial Imaginary of the Cold War Kitchen: From Sokol'niki Park to Chicago's South Side*, Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2016, xviii. 236pp. Index. \$45, Paper.

The convergence of cultural studies and diplomatic history poses complex dilemmas within Cold War scholarship. The interplay between Joseph Nye's "soft power" and its relationship to "hard power" has been subsumed by a new term—that of "smart power." It is this latter term that perhaps best encapsulates what Kate Baldwin investigates in *The Racial Imaginary of the Cold War Kitchen*. Cul-

ture became increasingly politicized and politics became acculturated throughout the ideological conflict. The personal was political, domestic, and universal; at once a microcosm within which to gauge larger identity implications.

Baldwin attempts to unravel such constructs by focusing on a particular portion of the house—that is, the kitchen. She argues that the kitchen should be construed as a rhetorical conceit (xi) within which historians can analyze the omission of women and race from Cold War narratives (xviii). This typically proscribed female realm served as a backdrop for two powerful male leaders to sound-off about the commodity race, space race, and the East-West binary relationship in the 1959 “Kitchen Debate” at the American National Exhibition in Moscow (ANEM). Vice President Richard Nixon and Premier Nikita Khrushchev quarreled about American exceptionalism in the model of an American kitchen replete with appliances that eased capitalist housewives’ duties. Baldwin argues that Nixon used universal gendered connotations to denote the American kitchen as a symbol of freedom and democracy.

Yet Nixon conflated “woman” with “housewife” (pg. 6)—the latter term not easily translated into Russian; *khoziayka* is the closest lexical equivalent. Such a seemingly simple linguistic blunder underscores Baldwin’s argument: the elision of gender and race from Cold War scholarship neglects key cultural and political components. Baldwin reconstructs an examination of Cold War “smart power” by using the kitchen and its gendered, racial identity constructs as a symbolic stand-in for silenced narratives. A place for intimate, private familial conversations and a public hub-bub during get-togethers, the kitchen serves as an ideal cultural space against which to analyze Cold War gender and race relations.

Baldwin’s study examines literature and film, although the scope of her chosen mediums is a bit myopic. She examines *Glimpses of the USA*—a short film showcased at ANEM—as well as the Hollywood musical *Silk Stockings*—a 1957 remake of *Ninotchka* (1939). Baldwin argues that both films sold America and its ideals of white, feminine beauty. *Glimpses of the USA* played on Henry Luce’s 1941 declaration of the “American Century.” *Silk Stockings* in some ways mirrored this mentality by recalling David Riesman’s 1951 essay entitled “The Nylon War.” Both movies sought to undermine Soviet Communism through the infiltration of American cultural objects and exceptionalism. Yet these filmic renditions of American life showcased an inherent conformity. As Simone de Beauvoir posited in *The Second Sex* (1949), women are deemed passive objects while men are rendered active subjects throughout history; “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.” Moviegoers witnessed this transformation in *Silk Stockings*. The central character Nina converts from an androgynous, drab Soviet to a consumer-oriented female adorned with the title garment. Capitalist consumerism proves no match for a staunch Soviet female. Yet, as Baldwin states, many moviegoers proved adverse to such filmic renditions; Soviet females did not necessarily display the envy the United States Information Agency (USIA) had wanted to elicit. Baldwin’s parallels with Luce’s “American Century” would perhaps therefore been more effective had she instead incorporated a discussion of Henry Wallace’s rebuttal of Luce’s piece entitled “Century of the Common Man.” Attainable ideals played more to Soviet sensibilities. Russians’ ingenuity in disseminating jazz

records on X-rays points to a new crossroads where East meets West. It is not so much an American century as it is a triumph of commonplace resourcefulness.

Baldwin's impressive examination omits some key comparisons. She mentions that African Americans fought for a double "V" in World War II—freedom abroad and freedom at home—as well as the double shift expected by Soviet females. Yet she does not contrast the counterparts to these identity issues—that is, the double shift also experienced by American women and the Cold War's rejection of the World War-II era reformulation of femininity with "Rosie the Riveter" and "Jenny on the Job" propagations. Much of what Baldwin examines stems from the wartime re-characterizations of gender, hence the underpinnings of conformity and the whitewashed mentality that prevailed during the Cold War period. Part of safeguarding American society from fifth-column threats meant shoring up its defenses against divergent ideals. An incorporation of these reactionary norms would have propelled her assertions and better situated them within their historical contexts.

The literature sections analyze Alice Childress' *Like One of the Family* (1956), Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* (1963), and Natalya Baranskaya's *A Week Like Any Other* (1969). Baldwin does an exceptional job situating these fictional works within the confines of the kitchen and extrapolating larger implications of gender and race onto the Cold War narrative. The placement of these sections, however, would have proven more advantageous had they been organized chronologically. The study begins in 1959 and ends in 1957. Although Baldwin based her analytical assumption on the 1959 "Kitchen Debate" at ANEM, and therefore needed to discuss it early on in her book, the thrust of her arguments loses potency by jumping chronologically.

Despite these drawbacks, *The Racial Imaginary of the Cold War Kitchen* is admirable in its ambitious scope and fills a much-needed gap in the existing Cold War scholarship. As Baldwin eloquently asserts, "we must work through the Cold War logics of the kitchen in order to refute the fantasy of historical progression and its related affective racial conditioning" (pg. 128). American studies and public diplomacy historians would benefit greatly from more engaging studies such as this that probe into historical narratives' omissions as much as their rumbling bellows. As Baldwin posits, "Cold War speech is empty; it requires articulation and then translation into imprecise idioms" (pg. 66). The utility of Baldwin's study stems on her efforts to enunciate the hushed kitchen voices so they reverberate throughout the annals of Cold War history.

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Robert W. Cherny, *Victor Arnautoff and the Politics of Art*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017, xxiv, 213pp. Index. \$34.95, Paper.

The life and times of Russian-American artist, Victor Arnautoff, is examined in Robert W. Cherny's new work, *Victor Arnautoff and the Politics of Art*. Born

in the late nineteenth century in the Russian Empire, Arnautoff lived a long and complex life during turbulent times in the history of Russian-American relations. Arnautoff was the son of a Russian Orthodox priest, fought in World War I, and participated on the White side in the Russian Civil War. After the Civil War, he had to flee Russia with a stop as a cavalry officer for a Chinese warlord. By the early 1920s, he reached the United States and settled down in northern California to pursue his real interest, art.

Arnautoff studied at the California School of Fine Arts, a leading art school in San Francisco at this time where he excelled in his studies and emerged as an excellent student. After two years of study in Mexico with Diego Rivera, he returned to San Francisco to take his place as a leading muralist during the New Deal Federal Art programs. His painted murals still exist in the San Francisco area, across California, and in other parts of the United States like Texas and beyond. His work took on a distinctive political tone with images of workers, African-Americans, and others who struggled to survive in Depression-era America. Even though the country suffered from economic despair, Arnautoff's star was on the rise as in the San Francisco art community. However, tensions over the subject matter of his art made him doubt his being in the United States. Even though he fought on the White side in the Russian Civil War, he and his wife, Lydia, longed to be back in the Soviet Union.

In the late 1930s, Arnautoff joined the Communist Party of the United States at about the same time that he and his wife became citizens. Their lives during the World War II were consumed with Russian relief efforts, but after the war their lives changed radically. They became targets of investigations by the House Un-American Activities Committee for their politics and his art. After being forced into retirement from his faculty position at Stanford University in a tormented political era, he returned to the Soviet Union in 1963 until his death in 1979.

Arnautoff experienced a renaissance of sorts in the Soviet Union, but his life was very different. His wife, Lydia, had died accidentally just weeks before their departure. He left behind his long-time mistress and adult children in the United States. In the Soviet Union, he was recognized for his artistic achievements, but it came slowly. He did remarry and seemed to have a happy life to the end.

Arnautoff's life is an interesting vehicle through which to see Russian-American relations, the world of art, and the Cold War. Cherny's work is well-written and compelling. The only drawback to the work was the uneven coverage of Arnautoff's life. While his early life is probably less documented, more detail on this part of his life would help understand the full scope of his life and career.

In the end, this is an interesting study of the life and times of a lesser-known Russian-American artist whose life and work revealed much about the times in which they lived. It is a welcome addition to the growing body of all aspects of Russian-American relations.

David Ramseur. *Melting the Ice Curtain: The Extraordinary Story of Citizen Diplomacy on the Russia-Alaska Frontier*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2017. 334pp., preface, epilogue, endnotes, bibliography and appendix. Paper, \$10.00.

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This well-written book is a valuable contribution to the scholarship on Russian-American studies. The appearance of David Ramseur's book is an important addition to a lamentably small literature devoted to Russian-American contact in the Russian Far East and Alaska.

The book gives a detailed account of the events of the 1990s in the Russian Far East and American North Pacific. It is divided into twenty-three chapters, as well as an epilogue, appendix, notes, selected bibliography, acknowledgments, index, and information about the author. The book tells the story of how inspiration, courage, and persistence by citizen-diplomats bridged a widening gap in superpower relations. Ramseur was indeed a firsthand witness to the danger and political intrigue of the period, having flown on the first Friendship Flight across the Bering Sea, and having spent thirty years behind the scenes with some of Alaska's highest officials.

The list of references at the book's end is admirable in content, but short and highly selective. The individual reader will probably want to make additions. The Russian-language works of N.N. Bolkhovitinov, A.N. Ermolaev, Metropolitan Kliment, and A. Petrov, for example, would be of interest in connection with various chapters of the book.

The author's arguments could be strengthened by a number of documentaries filmed in both Russia and the United States. Some of them received international recognition and prestigious awards.

His unostentatious use of his wide knowledge of Russian-American relations at the end of the twentieth century is felt throughout the book. Mr. Ramseur is especially interested in politics, so at first glance the volume seems unbalanced, such as with his discussion of the Russian period of Alaska's history. But a careful reading convinces readers that the balance is correct. Ramseur's accounts of the important engagements involved in transnational relations are critical. Unfortunately, the author has not taken the opportunity to undertake a proper evaluation of Russian scholarship on the history of the Russian-American Company. The story of Russian engagement with Alaska Natives is based on selected works to show Russian misbehavior. His account of these important engagements could be on better footing by using a variety of sources that may be found both in Russia and the United States. We would certainly be happy to help the author in this way, should he think of another edition or another volume of the fascinating subject he shed light on.

The influence of political factors or political affairs on people's diplomacy is everywhere well recognized. Ramseur's account of the most important matters in the international field, which are scattered through several chapters, are uni-

formly good. A terrific upheaval like reconstruction of American-Soviet and, later, Russian-American relations is sure to leave a plethora of material for historians, economists, and all those who believe in a new era of better Russian-American relations. Among the mass of records that Ramseur was fortunate to store in his garage were newspapers, reports, and trinkets. It is a chief occupation of Ramseur's to collect such valuable materials.

As could have been predicted, the chapters of the book dealing with Mr. Ramseur's own experience in international relations are as reliable and substantial as those concerning people's diplomacy. He is at his best as press secretary for Governor Cowper, and seconded him most ably in the development of Russian-American relations in the Far East. That is to say, he gives his own calculations. On the whole, the book gives a fair picture of the many individuals, both from the Russian and American sides, and their relative importance.

Criticism, while inevitable in dealing with a book that covers so many phases of Russian-American interaction in Alaska and the Russian Far East, seems a bit ungracious in view of the pleasure and profit so many readers will derive from *Melting the Ice Curtain* – be they students entering on their first study of the history of the North Pacific, or businessmen, or policy-makers, or general readers seeking to enjoy the fruit of the labor of scholars in the field of Russian-American relations.

The book also reveals to what an extent Ramseur's work was aided by his friends. He has the power of making friends who can help him, in both Russia and the United States. To the men who helped him or worked with him, his words were filled with kindness and gentle persuasion. Among these men were diplomats, historians, journalists, scholars, and men with significant business interests, and they were equally marked in their eagerness to help him and serve him for friendship's sake.

In conclusion, it may be said that the value of this book, written with admirable fairness, is increased by the fact that it recognizes the unity of people and people-to-people diplomacy. Ramseur's details of intellectual activity are shown to be symptomatic of life at the end of the twentieth century – to have counterparts in the social life of people across the Russian and Alaskan Pacific rim. This constant recognition gives vitality to the book and increases its power of illumination.

The book exhibits sound judgment and suggestive comment. It admirably serves the purpose for which it was intended.

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