

Book Reviews

Thompson, Jenny, and Sherry Thompson. *The Kremlinologist: Llewellyn E Thompson, America's Man in Cold War Moscow*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018. Paperback. Illustrated. \$39.95.

The two daughters of the American ambassador to the Soviet Union, 1957-1962 and 1967-1969, have written a memorial biography of his career that covers much of the Cold War. Unlike most diplomats associated with that country, Llewellyn Thompson grew up on a ranch in Colorado and after brief attendance at the University of Colorado entered the foreign service in 1930, initially posted to Ceylon (Sri Lanka).

The first paragraph sets the stage:

A long, lean, graceful, and absurdly quiet man, Llewellyn E Thompson Jr. is and was a mystery. He was sociable and made friends easily, yet he was reserved and self-effacing. He gained respect from his subordinates but was never domineering. He was a ladies' man, but not a playboy. He joined and stayed in the Foreign Service both to feed his desire for adventure and from a deep sense of duty.

What follows is 587 pages of large page, small print elaborations on this theme, that includes many substantive endnotes and a large number of unindexed illustrations, mostly from the Thompson Family Archives (TFA), location of which is not disclosed. The result is a surprisingly professional book from two obviously dedicated but amateur writers (no previous publications). They had much guidance from well-known historians, diplomats, and analysts such as Bohlen, Foy Kohler, Jack Matlock, George Kennan, William Taubman, Raymond Garthoff, Sergei

Khrushchev, John Gaddis, and many others. The daughters missed no relevant sources from National Archives, presidential libraries, recorded oral testimonies and major secondary sources--and handled them superbly. A delay in publication of the book, was due to a long wait in vain for release of Freedom of Information Act material from the Central Intelligence Agency.

Thompson married late, in his 40's, to, from all accounts, was one of the best diplomatic accomplices, Jane Monroe, who brought a daughter from a previous marriage into the family and encouraged her and her new daughters to live freely in Moscow. Where else would you find tales of the escapades of young girls' adventures in the basement of the ambassadorial residence, Spaso House, where they found a secret pantry of supplies and, of course, raided it--or running past frustrated guards to join Russian children in games in the outside square and then to invite them in for refreshments. Jane clearly wowed Nikita Khrushchev, adding to Thompson's success as ambassador and resulting in repeated invitations to the Soviet leader's dacha outside Moscow, a high mark in peaceful co-existence.

Thompson's introduction to Russia occurred much earlier when assigned as second secretary to the Moscow embassy during World War II, essentially as caretaker of Spaso House when both it and the Kremlin were chief targets of German bombs and artillery and many of their usual tenants had moved to the East, out of range of German guns. His real debut to kremlinology, however, took place in Austria, when serving as American ambassador in Vienna during the negotiations of the Austrian State Treaty in 1955, for which he is rightfully given credit for achieving the dignified withdrawal of Soviet forces from its occupation zone, no doubt an important consideration for his promotion to the same position in Moscow in 1957, when Spaso House became a community center and guest house for peaceful coexistence, hosting among many pianist Van Cliburn and Vice President Richard Nixon for his "kitchen debate" with Nikita Khrushchev. Thompson was a strong supporter of the new cultural exchange programs that began and flourished during his tenure.

As the authors stress, their father's strong point was patience, which he demonstrated especially during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Back in Washington as a special advisor in the State Department on Soviet affairs, he added a powerful voice of moderation for the quarantine-blockade policy with those such as Dean Rusk, McGeorge Bundy, Robert McNamara, and others against a strongly advocated immediate military option. His winning the trust and respect of Soviet leaders, especially Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin, were crucial in this regard. He also advanced cooperative relations in the era of detente in the Johnson administration toward non-proliferation of nuclear missiles and SALT. Although unsuccessful in halting President Johnson's persistent policy of bombing the north during the Vietnam War, he succeeded through Dobrynin in obtaining pauses during Soviet visitors to Hanoi.

Thompson's life was cut short at age 67 by pancreatic cancer without having the opportunity to write his own book as did his close friend, Charles (Chip) Bohlen, who gave the eulogy at the service in the Washington Cathedral. Burial followed at his hometown of Las Animas in his beloved Western ranch country.

Jane would join him there on the same date seventeen years later. Their daughters certainly have filled the gap he left in those diplomatic years with a scholarly, informative, and well-written book, a must read for all students of the Cold War.

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Laurence Bogoslaw, ed. *Russians on Trump: Press Coverage and Commentary*, Minneapolis, MN: Eastview Press, 2018, i. 402pp. Indices. \$24.95, Paper.

Russians on Trump collects a variety of sources from Russian media: opinion pieces, reportage of events, interviews of well-placed officials among them. Mark Galeotti's foreword nicely encapsulates the logic of such a collection, arguing that Donald Trump is something of an empty vessel into which both Americans and Russians off-load our "hopes, prejudices and fantasies" (ii). As of this writing, questions as to Donald Trump's political and business connections in Russia retain a certain salience for many Americans. We may well wonder, then, what Russians think about the same sorts of questions. *Russians on Trump* addresses this issue roughly chronologically, beginning with items such as Trump's visits to Russia before his campaign, and concluding with Russian-American diplomacy as of late 2017. A source-book on this topic is as "relevant" as they come, and this collection carries both the inherent interest and the inevitable problems that obtain when discussing current events.

One immediately wonders, *which* "Russians on Trump"? The volume includes a quite varied range of perspectives. There are Russians who celebrate Trump's victory in full-on "party mode." There are Russians who see the President as a weak tool of the fetid political "swamp" he promised to drain, and everything in-between. There is, however, one consistent thread that unites the chosen sources: the identified authors are largely members of the media commentariat, while none are sociologically comparable to the classes of individuals mostly responsible for electing Donald Trump in the first place. One Vladimir Frolov is the author of thirteen columns included in the volume, roughly eleven percent of the total. Frolov is a longtime political columnist for the *Moscow Times*. In that capacity, he has more in common with Lucian Kim, the current Moscow correspondent for *National Public Radio* and former *Moscow Times* columnist himself (according to his current NPR biography), than with an average attendant at a Trump rally or a Russian fan of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. So, the book contains many and varied opinions on Trump, but not a particularly wide variety of types of individuals who express those opinions.

From a different point of view, the book's tendency to sociological narrowness in source authorship has a real benefit: it illustrates that Russian media were and are no better than their American counterparts at explaining, much less predicting, the Trump Phenomenon. Galeotti says as much, when he observes that 21st century "truth" is less a function of authority than a "subjective commodity

traded, haggled over and asserted by everyone who wants to get in on the act,” and so neither Russians nor Americans really have much solid ground from which to assess the Trump presidency (i, iv).

Galeotti’s hesitance to make pronouncements was wise: in the short time since the book’s publication, events have proven false any number of definite statements and predictions made by the authors therein. In a 26 December, 2016 column for *Republic.ru*, the aforementioned Frolov confidently predicts that moving the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem “will lead to a new Arab-Israeli conflict, risking a “third intifada.” Frolov further implies that even the Israelis themselves might not be entirely thrilled with such a decision (136). Four months later, Reuters reported that the U.S. would in fact be moving its embassy to Jerusalem, “a move that has delighted Israel and infuriated Palestinians” (Reuters, 7 May, 2018). So, Frolov’s skepticism was shortly proved half-right at best; the forecast third intifada has yet to materialize.

The next day, the *New York Times* reported that the United States would be withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal concluded during the Obama administration (*NYT*, 8 May, 2018). Unfortunately for Russian analysts, on 1 Feb, 2017, *Izvestiia* had reported that “Politicians and experts believe that Russia will be able to persuade the new head of the White House to keep Washington’s signature on the [Iran nuclear deal]” (239).

American politicians and mainstream media “experts” have not been visibly better at predicting Donald Trump’s policy goals, or their results. So, American readers of *Russians on Trump* will come away reassured (if that’s the right word) that Russian analysts are just as in the dark as we are, as to what our mercurial 45th President will do or say next. As a thorough illustration of this collective nescience, the sources in *Russians on Trump* are excellent.

While some of the sources in this collection are originally English-language, most of them are translated from the original Russian. This makes the collection of real value for students, for whom current events are of genuine interest. From a faculty point of view, documents such as these are likely to lead to good discussions about Russian-American relations in history. Undergraduate students of American History, Russian History, and International Relations, will all benefit from these translations, as will members of the interested public, who may understandably wonder what “they” think about “us.”

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Web address for Reuters reference: (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-israel-diplomacy-jerusalem-explai/why-is-the-u-s-moving-its-embassy-to-jerusalem-idUSKBN1I811N>)

Web address for NYT reference: (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/08/world/middleeast/trump-iran-nuclear-deal.html>)

Marvin Kalb, *The Year I Was Peter the Great: 1956, Khrushchev, Stalin's Ghost and a Young American in Russia*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2017, xiv, 290pp. Index. \$24.99. Cloth.

The year 1956 was not an ordinary one in the history of Russian-American relations and the Cold War in general. Marvin Kalb, the well-known news correspondent for CBS and NBC, provides a fascinating personal account of his year in the Soviet Union as a staff member for the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. This memoir mixes Kalb's personal reflections with the larger events of an eventful year.

Kalb reveals that he was reluctant to write a memoir. After a lifetime of reporting on events around the world, he did not seem to think his voice was worth hearing. Yet, he relented to his grandchildren who wanted the story to be told. The first chapters of the book look at Kalb's personal background. His parents were immigrants from Eastern Europe and his older brother, Bernard Kalb, was an up and coming journalist. Kalb recalled how he was conflicted about whether he should become an academic or a journalist. After completing his undergraduate studies in New York, he decided to pursue graduate work at Harvard in history with Richard Pipes and Michael Karpovich. He adopted the belief that journalists needed to have expertise in order to be credible. His plan was to get a PhD in Russian history in order to report more effectively on current Soviet affairs.

During his graduate work, though, in late 1955, he was asked to go to Moscow to serve as a translator in the US Embassy. Most of his duties were to translate news reports coming into the embassy. Kalb spent a year in this position that changed his life. The title of the book comes from an encounter with Nikita Khrushchev where the Soviet leader referred to the towering Kalb as "Peter the Great" in reference to their similar heights. Much of Kalb's work while there was translating news items, but he also had a time to travel across the Soviet Union.

Some of the most revealing passages are when Kalb was away from Moscow, in Central Asia and other locations. Kalb is well versed in Russian history so he was able to contextualize nearly every thing he saw and experienced. His memoir reveals the Soviet Union as a complex place with many differing views of foreigners, Jews, Stalin, America, Khrushchev and many other topics.

In the end, this is valuable insight into the life of a young American diplomat in the heat of the Cold War era. His insights are informed very much by the long trajectory of Russian history. Kalb's account is long overdue. It seems that his view of the Soviet Union would have been more valuable if it had been published during the Cold War since it offers such a sophisticated view of the Soviet Union at that time. Regardless, Kalb's memoir is a valuable addition to the growing literature of more contemporary travelers in the Soviet Union and Russia.

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Alexander Etkind, *Roads Not Taken: An Intellectual Biography of William C. Bullitt*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017. xiv+ 290 pp., Index. \$24.95. Paper.

Writing a biography of such a person as William Bullitt is never easy. He was the first US Ambassador to Soviet Russia and an Ambassador to France; a man with an excellent knowledge of US politics who never held top offices in a Washington Administration; he participated in negotiations with Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin, Winston Churchill and Charles de Gaulle; he knew US Presidents Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Delano Roosevelt well; he was friends with the greats of his time on both sides of the Atlantic; he cherished daring ambitions and possessed a magnetic personality; he loved life and knew how to live well.

Alexander Etkind, Professor at European University in Florence, a well-known literary scholar and historian of culture, offers his readers a provocative biography of his hero. It is written in a captivating and elegant style and based on Bullitt's personal papers held in Yale University, on his letters and memoirs, on his journalistic and literary works, as well as on memoirs and letters of his contemporaries. This biography was first published in Russian in 2015¹ and then in English in 2017.²

Unlike his predecessors,³ Etkind strives to write a biography of Bullitt, who is an intellectual infatuated with the ideas of his time and overcoming their temptations, a person who combined the legacy of American liberalism and European cosmopolitanism, a critical observer sometimes capable of predicting the course of events, but never gaining the recognition he deserved from either his country or its leaders.

The readers are offered a special genre of an intellectual biography, since Etkind is primarily interested in the history of ideas, in their specific embodiment in Bullitt's views, and in his own influence on those ideas' evolution. These ideas were many and different. It was Bullitt's own idea of the need to collaborate with non-communist socialists to fight the spread of Bolshevism in Europe; this idea formed the foundation of Washington Administrations' European policies after World War II [p. 26-28]. It was Bullitt's intellectual contribution to discussing the

¹ Alexander Etkind, *Mir mog byt' drugim. Uil'jam Bullit v popytkah izmenit' XX vek* (Moscow, Vremja, 2015).

² The English-language edition is more logically constructed, more academic in presentation of its material; it relies on a larger number of primary sources including collections of documents published relatively recently in Russia and documents from the Alexander Yakovlev Archive available on the Internet. Additionally, the author's alternative history versions still take him quite as far as they do in the Russian-language edition, yet they are construed in a more appropriate form.

³ Beatrice Farnsworth, *William C. Bullitt and the Soviet Union* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967); Will Brownell and Richard Billings, *So Close to Greatness: The Biography of William Bullitt* (New York: Macmillan, 1988); Michael Casella-Blackburn, *The Donkey, the Carrot, and the Club: William C. Bullitt and Soviet-American Relations, 1917-1948* (Westport: Prager, 2004).

central issue of the inter-war era: is Bolshevism really capable of creating a new man? It was the mutual influence the ideas of Bullitt and George Frost Kennan, the author of the “Long Telegram” and a leading Cold War expert on Russia, had on the concept of containment of Communism. Etkind stresses that both were interested in the invariably expansionist nature of the Russian authorities, the rootedness of authoritarian traditions in the political culture and mass mindset linked with the Tatar-Mongol yoke and preserved unchanged under the Romanovs and under Stalin. In his book *The Great Globe Itself*, Bullitt completely ignored the tradition of resisting the authorities in the imperial Russia and in Soviet Russia [p. 229] as he adhered to a harsher variant of the containment doctrine, while Kennan later abandoned the thesis of an invariable Russian national character, paying attention to the evolution of the Soviet society.

Etkind primarily considers Bullitt in the context of Soviet-US relations, since the “Russian theme” is a thread that runs through Bullitt’s entire life.

As was typical of many left-wing Americans, Bullitt went through a period of fascination with the Russian revolution and socialist ideas after World War I. Subsequently, it transformed into utter disappointment following Bullitt’s acquaintance with the reality of the Soviet system. Etkind offers a detailed description of Bullitt travelling to Russia in 1919 upon instructions of Edward House to hold talks with Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks. In exchange for diplomatic recognition at the Versailles Conference, the latter ultimately promised to renounce control over the larger part of the Russian Empire concentrating their power in Moscow, Petrograd, and adjacent European territories. That was not to pass. Etkind rightly remarks that the “Russian trail” can be found in Bullitt’s novel *It’s Not Done* both in the main hero quoting Nikolai Nekrasov and in the title itself referring to the popular novel *What is to Be Done?* by Chernyshevsky. Etkind expands those Russian-American literary crossings by dwelling on unresolved problems of love, sex, and marriage in the post-war world of modernism that arrived in the United States as well [p. 61].

However, Bullitt’s ties with Soviet Russia lay primarily in his serving as the first US Ambassador to the USSR following its diplomatic recognition in 1933. Bullitt arrived in Moscow in 1934 during the short Soviet-American “honeymoon”; he was inspired by the idea of his new “Russian mission.” He put George Kennan and Charles Bohlen on the Embassy staff giving their careers a powerful impetus. Bullitt was bitterly disappointed in the Soviet Union, and Etkind pays special attention to his attempts to “sober up” Roosevelt, who still believed that the USSR was building a democratic society of its own kind. Finally, the President recalled Bullitt from Moscow in 1936 accusing him of the cooling off in the USSR-US relations. Bullitt left being certain that Bolshevism was a kind of global religion. This idea echoed previously formulated ideas of Nikolay Berdyaev and later musings of American “fellow travelers” disillusioned in the Soviet power. Together with the sharp criticism of the Soviet totalitarianism this conviction led Bullitt to his belief in the “eternal Russia” so typical of the Cold War period. As he wrote, “Russia has always been a police state... Scratch a communist and you will find a Russian” [p. 173].

Etkind surrounds Bullitt with individual and collective portraits. There was Edward House, President Woodrow Wilson's right-hand man during World War I, the author of the utopian novel *Philip Dru, Administrator* combining Nietzschean philosophy with socialism; there was President Woodrow Wilson himself, the focus of Etkind's particular attention, a politician and a person seen through the prism of joint psychoanalytical study by Bullitt and Sigmund Freud; there was President Roosevelt who sent Bullitt as the US ambassador first to the USSR and then to pre-war France; there was Walter Lippman, one of the creators of the Progressive movement's intellectual program in the US, the founder of the *New Republic* magazine, the executive director of the expert council Inquiry; there was George Creel, the head of the Committee for Public Information during World War I; there was George Kennan, Bullitt's student of sorts in the art of international relations, who had an insider experience of life in Moscow as a member of Bullitt's Embassy staff; there was eccentric Louise Bryant, a left-wing journalist who traveled to the revolutionary Russia, a proponent of free love, the wife of John Reed, Bullitt's second wife; and there is Reed himself, Bullitt's idol, who had played an important role in the development of his identity; there was Mikhail Bulgakov, one of Bullitt's closest friends in Russia, who depicted the American in his *The Master and Margarita* in the character of Woland; there was Sigmund Freud together with whom Bullitt wrote the first ever psychobiography of a contemporary and the first psychoanalytical study of politics; and there were many of Bullitt's famous contemporaries: Americans, Germans, the French, the English, Russians.

Among collective images, there were typical educated American women of the high society and, first of all, members of the "Gatsby generation." Following Kennan, Etkind counts Bullitt himself among this generation and instead of "lost" in the war, as Ernest Hemingway called them, Etkind calls them "electrified" by it.

Ultimately, Etkind's book turns into a story not only of Bullitt, but of his time, of the mores of certain classes and social groups, of Americans and Europeans with different views and desires.

The book's central character is William Bullitt the visionary, a person with particularly keen insights, whether we are talking future experts on Russia such as Kennan and Bohlen, or future creators of the unified Europe, such as Jean Monnet, or whether we are talking assessing the prospects of relations with the Bolsheviks and Soviet Russia and forecasting the way the situation will develop in Europe on the eve of World War II and after it. In some things Bullitt, indeed, proved to be right. For instance, when he wrote in May 1938 that after Spain, Czechoslovakia would be the next victim of Nazi Germany, that France would fall under the German onslaught, that Japan would win battles for China, but lose the war, and the US would end up rebuilding Europe in the post-war world [p. 180]. However, Bullitt was clearly mistaken when he stated in 1936 that Nazi Germany "for many years" would not be ready to attack Poland and the Soviet Union and in 1937 that the prospect of a Japanese attack on the United States was nonsense" [2 p. 174, 195]. At the same time, even if many of Bullitt's plans and projects had

become reality, they would have hardly effected any radical changes to the course of history in the 20th century. This is the aspect that does not merit a serious critical reflection from Etkind; he prefers to follow his hero in thrall to his charm.

Hence Etkind's passion for constructing various alternative histories. He explains it by the fact that most of Bullitt's visionary ideas failed to become reality. Ultimately, the question of "what if" become a major thread throughout the narrative.

What if Woodrow Wilson had accepted Bullitt's plan Lenin had agreed to? Etkind rightly notes that this plan had Wilson's own logic of decolonization to it. Yet the idea of avoiding the establishment of the Soviet Union, Stalin's terror, the emergence of Nazi Germany, World War II, and the Holocaust through implementing the scheme developed during the 1919 talks appears far-fetched [p. 239]. A combination of internal and international political factors, including the confrontation of the Reds and the Whites in 1919 that ran too deep cannot be ignored. Subsequently, it would certainly destroy any arrangements achieved. Incidentally, Etkind himself notes it.

What if Roosevelt had agreed to Bullitt's idea of the US steering a more active and flexible foreign political course in Europe before the war and drawing Nazi Germany into negotiations? Etkind believes it would have prevented the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact [p. 185]. What if the US President had listened to Bullitt's advice and "America had acted in real time, arming France, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Finland in order to maintain the balance of power in Europe"? Etkind thinks it possible that "the war would not have happened, or it would have remained local" [p. 240]. The proposed scheme does not take into account the profoundly isolationist sentiments in the US. After all, the "American century" had not begun yet, and it was Japan that was perceived as the principal threat to the US and it was in regard to Japan that the US was diplomatically active counting, among other things, on the Soviet aid.

What if, instead of Harry Hopkins, one of the most influential persons of the Roosevelt era and a Soviet Russia sympathizer, it had been Bullitt acting as the US President's authorized representative in international affairs during World War II, which Bullitt very much wanted? Then an alternative history "ex adverso" is presented, "Securing the gigantic transfer of arms and equipment to the USSR Lend-Lease, Hopkins' shuttle diplomacy helped the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain win the war. The same strategy also led to the Yalta Conference, Soviet control over Eastern Europe, the bloody revolution in China, and the Cold War" [p. 204]. Thus, following Bullitt, Etkind inadvertently overestimates the role of the US and downplays the role of the Soviet Union in the outcome of World War II and ignores the contribution of various actors to the post-war development.

The principal question of the book is whether the world history of the 20th century could have really changed had Roosevelt and Wilson listened to Bullitt's advice and had not lost the world having won the war. Despite all qualifications and reservations, Etkind leads the readers to answering this question in the affirmative [p. 233].

In my opinion, in this intellectual biography, the talented and creative literary scholar takes the upper hand over the historian. This is manifested in the enthralling mixture of fictional and real-life persons; in the increased attention to literary texts and to analyzing their influence on political behavior (the latter is in itself a very valuable observation); this is also manifested in ignoring the seminal works of professional historians that are crucial for the subject of the book.⁴ On the one hand, it prevented Etkind from offering arguments in support of a series of fascinating ideas (for instance, the impact Wilson and House's Southern roots had on their perception of World War I [p. 9]), while on the other hand, it resulted in constructing rather speculative schemes and sometimes in mistaken statements.

Here is but one example. Presenting Bullitt as the first US expert on Russian and Eastern European socialism, [p. XIII], Etkind ignores the contribution of such "gentlemen-socialists" as Arthur Bullard and William English Walling. They are not featured in the book at all. It is all the more strange since both Americans had gone through the same cycle of hopes (pinned on socialism) and disappointment (following the results of the Russian socialist experiment of 1917) as Bullitt did. Additionally, Bullard was considered an expert on Russian affairs and in July 1917 – June 1918 he was in Russia both as a correspondent of the *New Republic* and as an authorized representative of Colonel Edward House and George Creel; he was preparing a propaganda campaign against the separate peace with Germany. Upon his return, Bullard wrote the well-known book *The Russian Pendulum. Autocracy-Democracy-Bolshevism* (1919). William English Walling described his disillusionment with Soviet Russia and his new understanding of socialism in this book *The ABC of Russian Bolshevism – According to the Bolshevik* (1920).

However, the above does not mean that Alexander Etkind's book does not deserve the attention of professional researchers and of the general audience interested in the history of the 20th century. First, this book, that is hard to put down, focuses the readers' attention on various ways of the events' development; it also shapes a multidimensional perception of history. Second, Etkind's book leads us to understand alternative approaches to studying international relations in general and Soviet-American relations in particular; it leads the readers to use research practices of social constructivists who emphasize the role of communication between various international actors (be they people or states) in creating a new reality. Finally, William Bullitt is an important and iconic person, someone who

⁴ See, for example, Thomas R. Maddux, *Years of Estrangement: American Relations with the Soviet Union, 1933-1941* (Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, 1980); David S. Foglesong, *America's Secret War against Bolshevism: U.S. Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1917-1920* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Donald E. Davis and Eugene P. Trani, *The First Cold War: The Legacy of Woodrow Wilson in U.S.-Soviet Relations* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002); Norman E. Saul, *War and Revolution: The United States and Russia, 1914-1921* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001); Norman E. Saul, *Friends or Foes? The United States and Soviet Russia, 1921-1941* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006); Boris M. Shpotov, *Amerikanskii Biznes i Sovetskii Sojuz, 1920-1930 gody: labirinty ekonomicheskogo sotrudnichestva* (Moscow: LIBROCOM, 2013).

was in the thick of events and intellectual debates of his time. Etkind succeeds in creating an original portrayal of his hero embedding him in a complex context of intertwined ideas. Many of them could in themselves become subjects of individual studies and foundations for new explanatory schemes. Ultimately, few people would argue against the notion that the person who met and was friends with the greats of his time, who attempted to influence of course of the 20th century history during its turning points, who saved Paris from destruction, who was the prototype of Bulgakov's Woland merits another book offering a new reading of his life.

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