empt from the prohibition on religious rituals outside of approved buildings) into sites of collective religious observance—demonstrates the religious innovation that political pressure elicited. It also leads to a meditation on the contrast between the short "attention span" of the paper trail, which is focused on resolving particular cases, and the longer-term legacies and processes that come to light through oral history.

Luehrmann then turns to exploring the emergence of the field of the sociology of religion in the post-Stalinist USSR in order to consider how present-day scholars might use the work of Soviet researchers. Using the documentary record and the published scholarship, she seeks to explore the contested field of knowledge production about religion from the 1950s to the 1970s, considering the affinities and tensions between scholarship and politics in the period. Finally, in the last chapter, Luehrmann visits the Keston Archive as an example of the genre of the counterarchive, one collected by a group with a particular interest and often meant to contest the state's choices about what to document and how to classify evidence. The Keston Archive, now housed at Baylor University in Texas, was founded in Great Britain in 1969 by Christians concerned about the fate of religious believers in the USSR and other socialist countries. As Luerhmann finds, it is organized according to topics of potential interest to researchers, rather than the principle of provenance that governs state archives. She demonstrates the degree to which the documents at Keston are decontextualized by this practice; she also notes how both the method of organization of Soviet police files and the files on individual dissidents held at Baylor tend to magnify these cases into evidence of activity that threatened the Soviet state.

In some ways, the book's main argument—that the history of documents is a part of their content, and that so-called hostile documents remain useful to researchers so long as we read them as tools that acted on reality as much or more than for particular factual information—should not come as a surprise to the experienced historian. Political police archives are not available in the Russian Federation where Luehrmann works (in the way that they are in Ukraine, for example), so one cannot fault her for not having examined those, but it seems odd that she does not discuss Communist Party archives as a genre. Nevertheless, this remains an intriguing study both of evidence and how it "works" and of late Soviet religious and antireligious history. It should be compulsory reading for all historians and anthropologists embarking on research on religion in post-Communist countries. If it were available in paperback, it would deserve wide use in graduate courses on Soviet history or post-Soviet anthropology and in historical and ethnographic methods.

Heather J. Coleman

University of Alberta

Soviet Space Mythologies: Public Images, Private Memories, and the Making of a Cultural Identity. By *Slava Gerovitch*. Pitt Series in Russian and East European Studies. Edited by *Jonathan Harris*.
Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015. Pp. xx+232. $27.95 (paper).

The study of the Soviet space program has entered a new phase. For a very long time, Western scholars had to perform Kremlinological analyses to answer basic questions about the accomplishments of Soviet cosmonauts. But the Soviet archives opened in the early 1990s, followed by a steady stream of memoirs written by former cosmonauts and engineers, and as a result historians have been able to describe the dynamics and conflicts behind the carefully curated Soviet narrative of triumph. Not all of the mysteries have been unraveled, but Asif Siddiqi's *Challenge to Apollo*, published in 2000, largely marked the

This content downloaded from 018.009.061.111 on June 25, 2017 07:52:47 AM
All use subject to University of Chicago Press Terms and Conditions (http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/t-and-c).

end of the fact-finding period, and now a focus on the meaning of the Soviet space program predominates.[1] Slava Gerovitch's new book fits neatly into this trend, less interested in the performance of the N-1 lunar rocket and much more on the impact of spaceflight on Soviet society. Toward this end, Gerovitch advances two arguments, one more explicit than the other. In the introduction, he deploys Maurice Halbwach's theory of collective memory to suggest that the meaning of history is constructed rather than inherent and contends that the Communist Party, aware of this insight, consistently sought to shape the public reception of the rockets, ultimately undermined by technological failures. In the body of the text, however, a second theme emerges, centered on the internal contradictions of Bolshevik ideology and the way that the Soviet space program brought them to the fore. The two narratives intersect at the end to explain the ambiguous position that cosmonauts occupy in contemporary Russian society, as reflected in popular culture and advertisements.

Throughout the book, Gerovitch demonstrates the degree to which the Soviet authorities controlled, and sometimes altered, the information available about the space program to domestic and international audiences and the unintended consequences of this disingenuous mythmaking. Although accounts of Soviet censorship and dissimulation in official discourse may not come as a surprise to most readers, Gerovitch shows how the effort to link exploits in space with the superiority of the Soviet system ultimately backfired when a series of failures undermined faith not only in space flight but in the Soviet project as a whole. During the early days of their space program, the Soviets quite effectively concealed crucial details of the various missions (such as those surrounding the landing of Yuri Gagarin's *Vostok* 1 capsule) and presented a highly sanitized version of the cosmonauts for public consumption that served to generate support for communist rule. Gerovitch describes the efforts of engineers and cosmonauts to resist the manipulation, but so long as triumph followed triumph, the Soviet public accepted the official story. Later in the 1960s and the early 1970s, however, after *Soyuz* 1 crashed, a mishap during *Soyuz* 11 killed its crew, and *Apollo* 11 successfully landed on the moon, the Communist Party lost control of the narrative, and "enthusiasm gave way to cynicism" among the Soviet public (151). Only after the fall of the Soviet Union did space flight reemerge as an object of pride, such that public opinion surveys now rank Gagarin's flight as second behind victory in World War II on the list of Russian's proudest historical achievements. But this return to respectability also reflects a manipulation of the past, carried out by Russians themselves, as they concentrate on high points in the search for a usable past. Thus one meaning of the Soviet space program emerges: a symbol of Russian national pride and competence in the modern era.

Although this first story is emphasized in the introduction and conclusion, it appears to be of less interest to Gerovitch than the second, which dominates the middle chapters

[1] On the cultural and social aspects of spaceflight, see Paul R. Josephson, "Rockets, Reactors, and Soviet Culture," in *Science and the Soviet Social Order*, ed. Loren R. Graham (Cambridge, MA, 1990), 168–91; Trevor Rockwell, "The Molding of the Rising Generation: Soviet Propaganda and the Hero-Myth of Iurii Gagarin," *Past Imperfect* 12 (2006); Steven J. Dick and Roger D. Launius, eds., *Societal Impact of Spaceflight* (Washington, DC, 2007); Cathleen Lewis, *The Red Stuff: A History of the Public and Material Culture of Early Human Spaceflight in the U.S.S.R.* (PhD diss., George Washington University, 2008); David Bell and Martin Parker, eds., *Space Travel and Culture: From Apollo to Space Tourism* (Oxford, 2009); Asif Siddiqi, *The Red Rockets' Glare: Spaceflight and the Soviet Imagination, 1857–1957* (New York, 2010); James T. Andrews and Asif A. Siddiqi, eds., *Into the Cosmos* (Pittsburgh, 2011); Andrew L. Jenks, *The Cosmonaut Who Couldn't Stop Smiling* (DeKalb, IL, 2011); and Eva Maurer et al., eds., *Soviet Space Culture* (Basingstoke, 2011).

This content downloaded from 018.009.061.111 on June 25, 2017 07:52:47 AM
All use subject to University of Chicago Press Terms and Conditions (http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/t-and-c).

of the book and explores the inconsistency in Bolshevik ideology regarding individualism and authoritarianism. Perhaps this inconsistency is best expressed in the shifting slogans of the Stalin era, which in 1931 held that "technology decides everything" but was emended in 1935 to "cadres determine everything." These word changes, Gerovitch shows, had enormous consequences for communist society in general and space flight in particular. By changing emphases so radically in the space of four years, Stalin proved that he did not know whether communism would succeed by enthroning collected wisdom and social control in the form of technological systems or by liberating the individual to find creative solutions to complex problems. Gerovitch illustrates how Soviet space engineers vacillated between these two options, usually emphasizing centralized control and automated systems, only sometimes giving in to the cosmonauts' requests for increased autonomy—while the Soviet public relations effort focused on the heroism and skill of the cosmonauts. The unwillingness or inability of the Soviet system to reconcile this contradiction resulted in repeated technological failures in space, because the limited economic resources available were spread too thinly between automated and manual control systems. Gerovitch thus provides another meaning for the Soviet space program: that of a microcosm for Bolshevism as a failed intellectual project, hamstrung by its conceptual shortcomings.

Soviet Space Mythologies succeeds in its ambition to place the Soviet space program squarely at the center of twentieth-century Russian history, and it convincingly demonstrates the benefits of using the study of technology as a means to understand broader social and political dynamics. The inherent appeal of the subject matter makes the book suitable for undergraduates and graduates alike. Those who wish to assign the book might do well to select specific chapters, since the book is to some degree a compilation of articles, with six of the seven chapters having been previously published; there is some repetition of certain points. The occasional redundancy does not hinder readability, however, and Gerovitch's combination of dramatic tales of space travel with penetrating insight about the fate of Bolshevism will likely earn a broad readership.

Stephen Brain

Mississippi State University

Stalin and the Struggle for Supremacy in Eurasia. By *Alfred J. Rieber*.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. Pp. xii+420. $105.00 (cloth); $34.99 (paper).

In this impressive volume, the distinguished elder statesmen of Russian and Soviet history, Alfred J. Rieber, lays out an ambitious agenda for understanding Soviet foreign policy in the age of Joseph Stalin. In this sequel to his recent volume, *The Struggle for the Eurasian Borderlands*, he argues that Russian foreign policy has largely been determined over centuries by four persistent factors: "a multinational social structure; porous or permeable frontiers; cultural alienation; and relative economic backwardness" (3). To these characteristics he adds two more particular "powerful existential and intellectual influences" for the period under study, 1918–45, derived from Stalin himself. The great dictator's own *Weltanschauung* was shaped by "his early life experiences growing up in the Georgian cultural milieu precariously surviving under the pressure of Russification within the shatter zone of the South Caucasus" and "his evolution as a professional Marxist revolutionary also shaped by the socioeconomic peculiarities of an underdeveloped borderland" (8). The first chapter embeds the young Stalin in the Caucasian context, which for

This content downloaded from 018.009.061.111 on June 25, 2017 07:52:47 AM
All use subject to University of Chicago Press Terms and Conditions (http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/t-and-c).