

she shows that ideas about “a well-ordered and respectable home” (31) appealed to the Russian, as much as European, middle class. Unfortunately, opaque references sometimes substitute for explicating notable dissimilarities. For example, Friedman claims that “the nexus of time and space” can shed light on “the regional nature of modernity” (7); that “moderns were conscious of how temporal frames are ‘riddled with issues of power and hegemony’” (79); and that the Bergsonian idea that time was unknowable was “appealing to a Russian Orthodox audience” (83). Elaborating on what was regional (or national?), how religious sensibilities figured into Russian perceptions of the modern, and what hegemonic forces were at play for educated and privileged Russians might have added another dimension to this book. That said, it fully accomplishes its challenging objectives: to depict how the modern revealed itself in domestic space, and to capture Russian consciousness of the modern. The result is a beautifully atmospheric study that transports the reader back to fin-de-siècle Russia.

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Cold War Mary: Ideologies, Politics, and Marian Devotional Culture. Ed. Peter Jan Margry. Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2021. 432 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. \$65.00, paper.
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Cold War Mary, edited by Peter Jan Margry, offers interesting insights into a previously poorly investigated subject: Marian apparitions and their instrumentalization for political purposes in the modern world. For many years within the Eurocentric academic tradition, visions, miracles, and other supernatural phenomena were related to the Third World and pre-modern societies, while in Europe itself, politics were perceived as something rational, secular, and public.

This volume is novel, ground-breaking and necessary, as it illuminates the role of vision and the supernatural in the modern western world. Here, Marian apparitions are interpreted as social constructs, as stories that have been developed, distributed, believed, and legitimized to some extent.

It is widely known, that with modernization and secularization, the number of Marian apparitions did not decrease but increased instead, against all odds. The core premise for analysis is that Marian apparitions happen as reaction, or response, to some social stress, social tension, or social discontent such as secularization, decline of traditional authorities, and/or liberalization of social norms. Whereas modernization was a huge social stress itself, the Cold War, political division of the European continent, and fears associated with the threat of the Soviet style communism have further increased the feelings of anomie and uncertainty.

The volume focuses exclusively on the Cold War period, when numbers of Marian apparitions were extremely high. It illuminates social and political dynamics around miracles, visions, and apparitions. There are different agents involved—seers, typically children, who are perceived as being innocent, that is, having no personal interests or their own political agenda; local communities who “consume” the narrative of the apparition to articulate their own concerns; the media, seeking profits and sensations; Catholic communities struggling for influence under domination of Protestantism or Calvinism; right-wing and left-wing political powers, using apparitions for their own agenda; and the church, which is partially supportive yet partially afraid of events happening outside clerical control.

The edited collection covers broad a geographical scope: Poland, the US, Italy, Netherlands, Germany, Australia, the Philippines, and other. First, it illuminates the role of Fatima in shaping anti-communist rhetoric and merging Catholicism with the anti-communism, in different contexts and at the international level. The volume also explains the role of Madonna and Marian apparitions in the Italian elections of 1948, when the leftist popular front was about to win political power; and a series of apparitions in Belgium that occurred in response to Nazism and later to Communism. In the Dutch case, Marian piety was strengthened as a response to the growth of global communism and of local Catholic communities to the Calvinism that they had historically been dominated by.

The book likewise covers the interesting case of post war West Germany, where a series of apparitions, such as that of Heroldsbach, served multiple purposes, including as response to postwar traumas and uncertainties; as an instrument in the struggle against Soviet communism; as response to the guilt of Nazism that was seen as an anthropocentric trend that began with the Renaissance; and as a tool in the struggle between Catholic and Protestant communities. The authors point out a certain *Wunderlust*, or desire for miracles and the need for postwar re-evangelization. Interestingly, the clergy was always fascinated and simultaneously threatened by vernacular enthusiasm, and only after bringing a copy of the Fatima statue and initiating multiple Church sanctioned ceremonies did the clergy regain full control of the Marian narrative.

Two chapters cover Marian piety and Marian apparitions in the US, where multiple apparitions happened in the peak of Cold War political antagonism. The apparitions served to express and articulate collective discontent and popular fears of nuclear apocalypse after American- inflicted tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is interesting and politically significant that the apparitions ended with the fall of the Soviet bloc.

The chapter on Australia reveals how the Marian cult was instrumentalized in the struggle against the threat of communism, both local and global. The fear was strengthened by the growing influence of Russia and its role in the WWII defeat of Nazism, and also by the growing local support for the leftist ideas, as well as by general cultural liberalization, secularization, and concerns about “dying Christendom.” The case of the Philippines and the Miracle of Roses at Lipa, also called the Asian Fatima or Asian Lourdes, the first miracle on such a scale outside so called “western world,” reveals how elites imposed their own anticommunist perspective on the event.

The case of Poland is interesting as it is the only case from the Soviet bloc where the research materials are limited due to political restrictions, yet the chapter illuminates completely different dynamics. These include the political persecution of seers; attempts by the Soviet authorities to silence the miracles and apparitions by reducing them to insignificance; and the reserved role of the Church as Church being forced to compromise with the requirements of the regime.

The last chapter illuminates radical transformation of religious discourse and the end of the anti-communist rhetoric after Russian annexation of Crimea. Here one can observe certain moral realignment—shift of sympathies towards Putin’s Russia as an outpost of traditional values and the transfer of fears, previously associated with the Soviet communism, towards processes of liberalization and secularization in the Western block.

There is one question that remains unanswered, or partially answered. This is the question of the seers’ personalities, comprised of individual and personal factors like the life stories and traumatic experiences of the seers themselves, including family tragedies, orphanhood, loss of a child or loved one, unrecognized suffering, and

the search for support and consolation outside the secular realm. My own research on apparitions in Soviet Lithuania revealed that they are in response to trauma, both personal and political, beginning with personal trouble and extending later into general political discontent.

This volume sends a very clear message that is fundamental for social sciences: the facts are perceived only through our own net of attitudes, premises and beliefs. Truth is always subject to interpretations, and our notion of reality is a social construct. The most important contribution of this book to the social sciences and humanities is that it brings supernatural visions and miracles into the modern European political landscape. As it has been said earlier, traditional western scholarship attributed magic, visions, and miracles to pre-political societies or the so-called Third World, while distinguishing the west as modern, rational, and secular. This volume illuminates the role of religious visions, miracles, and prophecies in the middle of the twentieth century in western countries, thus destabilizing the boundaries between the modern and pre-modern.

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The Russian Cold: Histories of Ice, Frost, and Snow. Ed. Julia Herzberg, Andreas Renner, and Ingrid Schierle. New York: Berghahn Books, 2021. vii, 261 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Figures. Tables. Maps. \$145.00, hard bound.
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Cold forms one of Russia's most distinctive natural features. More than two thirds of its soil is permanently frozen. Here are the coldest inhabited places in the world, and its continental position brings long winters, frost and snow, which shapes the environment within Russia. And yet, to date few scholars have explored how the cold climate has been experienced, studied by scientists, or represented by artists or writers. In the last few years, scholars have increasingly explored the history of climate and its science in Russia and the Soviet Union. This collection represents a fascinating addition to this growing body of scholarship as it tries to historicize cold in Russia by understanding how people have experienced climate and culturally engaged with the cold. In so doing, the editors argue for including climate as an influential, even central factor for historical causalities by simultaneously assigning "human actors more scope for action" (6). The editors want to break with the tradition of a majority of other works within environmental studies of the Russian empire and the Soviet Union that consider nature only as "a target of human activity" (6) and that concentrate on political and economic factors. Instead, this volume seeks to emphasize the mutual interrelationship between society and nature through the phenomena of cold. Following theories from disaster studies, climate is seen here as a trigger or as a catalyst but not as a factor determining Russian history.

The book follows a thematic structure, in which the cold is approached through science, aesthetics, and sports. While the themes are of course very diverse, they are still connected by the common idea showing how knowledge about or experience with the cold has changed over time, as have the social and political realities. Cold is not only a question of degrees, but also a cultural construct. In most of the case studies cold is associated with some sort of heroism, strength, and invincibility; it is often used by historical actors to drive their own histories. Using different approaches, sources and covering different periods, this essay collection succeeds