

**Clark, Katerina, *Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural Revolution.*  
Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995. Pp. xii, 377.  
Index**

Daniel Stone

Volume 25, numéro 1, octobre 1996

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1016110ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1016110ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (imprimé)

1918-5138 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Stone, D. (1996). Compte rendu de [Clark, Katerina, *Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural Revolution.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995. Pp. xii, 377. Index]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 25(1), 70–71.  
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1016110ar>

matter. The book also includes a chapter broadly covering the entire country for the period 1945 to 1985, and here a lot of data are shown that would also have been useful in the earlier chapters, but this chapter is out of place and detracts from the focus of the book.

Mark Rose has provided a useful, though limited, contribution to the history of urban energy infrastructures, a field that has not been served well by urban or technological historians.

Morris A. Pierce  
Rush Rhees Library  
University of Rochester

---

Johnson, Eric A. *Urbanization and Crime. Germany 1871–1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Pp. X, 246.

Rosenmontag in Cologne! Anybody familiar with the long tradition of carnival in catholic Cologne will agree with the author that it is a fitting time and place to conclude a study on crime in Germany (Preface). After all, it is only on Rosenmontag that public revelry is permitted to break with the orderly routine of daily life in the city. And as carnival frolicking peaks on Rosenmontag, so does criminal activity—petty theft, drunken brawls, assault etc. However, this is not the topic under investigation. From the author's perspective crime has little to do with local traditions or opportunities for crime, and even less with any causal connection to city living. In fact, the author wishes to refute the public image of the past and present that cities are more crime prone than rural areas. He also wishes to correct existing scholarship which sees a "civilizing" process at work in modernizing society, that is, a causal linkage between industrialization and urbanization on the one hand, and on the other hand, an increase in property crimes while, concurrently, personal violence decreases.

Anybody acquainted with the author's articles on the subject will know his rejection of the modernization theory, and will also remember that his interpretation rests exclusively on statistical data and analysis. Again, the example of Cologne is informative, precisely because the city deviates statistically from the norm. Unlike other big German cities, Cologne advanced from a low crime city for most of the nineteenth century to become the crime capitol of the nation by 1900 when Germany was experiencing rapid economic expansion. As the author points out economics play no role whatsoever in the city's transformation; but statistical changes do. In 1888, Cologne extended its borders substantially, incorporating surrounding commercial/industrial areas, including the harbour. This geographic expansion changed the city's character, population make up, and most important for this study, crime statistics. It also raises the question whether it is always possible to differentiate clearly statistically between rural and urban areas in Imperial Germany. Densely populated industrial areas remained quite often legally

rural, for political reasons. One example which comes to mind is industrial Borbeck in the Ruhr Valley which, with a population of 77,000, was the largest "village" in Imperial Germany before the the First World War. Using regional statistics, as the author does, deals with the problem to some extent. But it would have been informative to know more about how the author dealt methodologically and conceptually with the rather blurred statistical distinction between urban and rural in Imperial Germany.

Although only a statistical entity in the author's investigation, the example of Cologne serves well to highlight other major findings of this study. Cologne was a bastion of Catholicism, and as the author shows, Catholics had distinctly higher crime rates than Protestants in Imperial Germany. Of course, Poles and Lithuanians in Germany, who figured prominently in the crime statistics, were also mostly Catholic. What significance does this finding have when assessing rising crime rates and also rising homicides in Imperial Germany? Supported by an analysis of the political press as well as statistical evidence, the author argues convincingly that it was the legacy of Bismarck's repressive anti-Catholic and anti-Socialist policies. And during the prosperous years of Wilhelm II's rule systemic discrimination and political repression increased, as did popular anti-foreign sentiment. Who was hardest hit? Here, the author detects a direct relationship between poverty, ethnic discrimination and crime. High death rates in neighbourhoods with large Polish speaking populations correlated with rising crime, statistically, and in the perception of contemporaries. And young catholic men in their prime working age were statistically most likely to become the victims of rising incidents of homicide. But were they indeed victims of crimes? The author uses coroner's statistics as evidence which show a decided increase in homicides while trials and convictions in the courts for homicide go down. To believe in the increasing benevolence or even negligence of the German judicial system, as the author seems to suggest, in order to explain this statistical discrepancy is difficult. In contrast, the author makes a very convincing argument that rising crime rates in Wilhelmine Germany reflected first and foremost an increasingly repressive political system groping to assert control over a deeply fragmented society.

Irmgard Steinisch  
Department of History  
York University

---

Clark, Katerina, *Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural Revolution*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995. Pp. xii, 377. Index.

As the title indicates, this book explains the origins of the relatively little-known Soviet Cultural Revolution that started in 1928 along with the Economic Revolution of the First Five-Year Plan and Collectivization; Stalin reined in the Cultural Revolution abruptly in 1930 while pursuing his economic aims. Professor

Clark finds that radical cultural ideas from Petersburg (Lenin-grad) continued that city's pre-Revolutionary culture and its rivalry with Moscow for cultural leadership. She argues that anti-Tsarist intellectuals carried their pre-Revolutionary ideas into the Soviet Era and developed a symbiotic relationship with Communists during the 1920s based on a shared "fundamental loathing for the role of the marketplace in culture." Some Petersburg cultural activists remained active in the 1930s despite the Purges and Terror.

St. Petersburg artists expressed a wide variety of opinions before the Revolution. The avant-garde broke established rules in art and hoped to abolish social and political rules, as well. Even artists who celebrated St. Petersburg's neo-classical architectural heritage held a critical attitude towards the Tsarist establishment and the last emperors' preference for Muscovite styles. As the February Revolution's guns sounded, Vsevolod Meyerhold led the Petersburg theatre in trying to break with theatrical realism (unlike Stanislavsky's ultra-realistic theatre in Moscow).

Communist leaders supported experimental theatre generously after the October Revolution, seeing its potential for propaganda. Avant-garde artists eagerly took their skills to schools and factories as state subsidies free them from material concerns. One form of experimental theatre was the mass spectacle involving thousands of participants without any clear distinction between the cast and the audience. (Dmitri Tiomkin, composer of music for *High Noon* and other westerns, wrote music for revolutionary spectacles before leaving Russia in 1925.)

Communists reduced their artistic subsidies after 1921 when the New Economic Policy replaced War Communism. Artists looked to new ways of succumbing to the cultural marketplace. Some adopted the rhythms of the Jazz Age to build a new culture based on nervous energy and technological sophistication. Others self-consciously created artistic forms based on the Proletariat. Nicholas Marr's linguistic theories provoked efforts to find a new Revolution language expressed new realities; opera librettists and composers followed particularly carefully.

The tenth anniversary of the Revolution in 1927 gave rise to an effort to "institute a collective, proletarian culture." Young radicals revived and expanded the theatrical mass spectacle which often celebrated the factory and the machine. Architects designed the New Soviet City in which communal housing reduced privacy to a minimum. Music had to be written for the masses, not for the intellectual, and other artistic forms emphasized the superiority of the common citizen over highly trained professionals. This radical movement, which came largely from Petersburg, implied that decentralizing culture might proceed to decentralizing the increasingly centralized Soviet political machine.

Stalin and the Communists brought this Cultural Revolution to a halt before it posed a political threat. The Terror of the Purges

took harsh reprisals against many former avant-garde artists while others found their feet in the new circumstances and smuggled what they could into Socialist Realism. As a result, "Soviet culture of the 1930s may have been totalitarian, but it was far from homogenous or relentlessly grim." Post-war Stalinism turned out to be far worse.

Katerina Clark has illuminated this little-known aspect of Russian cultural history with skill and analytical depth. However, her highly theoretical approach creates unnecessary difficulties for readers who are not specialists in cultural history or Russian history. These readers might turn to Solomon Volkov's attractive, but far less rigorous, narrative account *St. Petersburg. A Cultural History* (1995). In addition, the distinction between what went on in Petersburg and what went on in the Soviet Union as a whole is not immediately clear.

Daniel Stone  
Department of History  
University of Winnipeg

---

Logan, Michael F. *Fighting Sprawl and City Hall: Resistance to Urban Growth in the Southwest*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995. Pp. vii, 223. Illustration, tables, maps, index. US\$39.95 (cloth); US\$17.95 (paper).

During the nineteen fifties and sixties, Tucson and Albuquerque managed to consolidate within their boundaries, vast outlying areas. In *Fighting Sprawl and City Hall*, Michael F. Logan is less concerned with the boosters and promoters who made that possible than with those who contrary to prevailing opinion opposed urban expansion and development. His intent is to counter popular and scholarly writing which commonly depicts the Sunbelt as a region of movers and shakers who paved over God's little acre without the least opposition. Logan successfully describes the elements of an opposition dating back almost fifty years, but is less successful in showing how it altered, if at all, the shape of urban development.

According to Professor Logan, the opposition included those living in unconsolidated areas beyond the cities who feared that intrusive city government would through consolidation impose increased property taxes on them. Then there were environmentalists, including the famed naturalist and Tucson retiree Joseph Wood Krutch, concerned that urbanization might destroy the delicately balanced ecology of the desert and mountain foothills. Finally, Hispanics residing either within or outside the cities feared that a declaration of blight or consolidation might lead to their vital ethnic neighbourhoods being "urban renewed" out of existence.

Since these three groups often had little in common except opposition to city hall, the book appears at times to be more a collection of discrete essays—a form not without merit—than a cohesive study of opposition to development. Adding to the