The authors join other social historians in rejecting the "stereotype" of Russian women as irrational and lacking political consciousness. Instead, women who made up nearly half the urban workforce are shown in chapter 6 as activists particularly in a female textile workers strike movement, attempting to escalate it into a city wide protest. It was not women in line for bread or fuel who began the street protests, contend the authors, but female textile workers from plants in the Vyborg district shouting, “down with the tsar!”

While the authors show women as active in 1917, they go too far when they conclude that the formation of the women’s section of the communist party (the zhenotdel) was a result of the actions and not the “backwardness” of working women, relying for this view on a quotation from the Bolshevik, Vera Slutskaiia: “in view of the fact that at the present time an appreciable movement has come into existence among them it is desirable to direct the said movement into the channels of political action.”

Use of such a quotation concerning working women misleads. Perhaps had the authors been more immersed in the thinking of the Bolshevik female leadership such as Kollontai and other early activists in the zhenotdel, they would have themselves been convinced that the women’s section was established precisely to reach out and draw in women whom the Bolshevik leadership (notwithstanding the quotation from Slutskaiia) believed to be “dark” and unenlightened. In Kollontai’s words, “out of these backward women workers to educate conscious, active fighters for the ideals of communism.”

Specialists will find the outline of the story of female Bolsheviks and women workers familiar since so much has been written on the subject in recent years. But for students new to the revolution and women’s roles, this book provides a well-written, short study with useful background material and bibliography. Unfortunately, particularly since the authors emphasize their survey of the historical literature, too little use was made of Elizabeth Wood’s in depth The Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia.

Beatrice Farnsworth


In Bitter Waters, Gennady Andreev-Khomiakov skillfully recounts the many twists of fate that shaped his life between his release from a labor camp in 1935 after eight years of imprisonment for “counterrevolutionary activities” (p. x) and his evacuation from Moscow as the Germans advanced in 1941. Andreev-Khomiakov first worked as the director of the planning department of a sawmill in a small steppe town in southeastern Russia. Here we meet the most striking character in the memoir: the energetic factory director Neposedov, whose “enthusiasm” and “ability to lose himself completely in a genuinely creative exertion, to give his all selflessly, was contagious” (p. 11). When this factory closed down, Andreev-Khomiakov moved to the regional capi-
tal and eventually found a job as an accountant in the all-Union fish trust. After Andreev-Khomiakov was fired from this job for concealing his past, Neposedov invited him to work as the director of the planning department at a sawmill near Moscow.

In the second chapter, Andreev-Khomiakov discusses the lumber industry in prerevolutionary and Soviet times. He then describes, in the next four chapters, the life and times of the sawmill, tracing how he and Neposedov transformed it into a successful operation and how their work was destroyed when the Council of People’s Commissars stopped sending timber for the factory to process. In 1939, Andreev-Khomiakov moved to Moscow to work for the People’s Commissariat of Forestry. The last two chapters of the memoir focus on the mood of Soviet military and civilian officials before the war and the evacuation of Moscow in the fall of 1941. Andreev-Khomiakov joined the army in 1942 and was captured by the Germans. He remained in Germany at the end of the war.

Between 1935 and 1941, Andreev-Khomiakov gradually moved from the periphery of Soviet life to the center, from a labor camp to a small town, to a regional capital, to the environs of Moscow, and eventually to the capital itself. As an economic planner, he was skilled in dealing with all levels of Soviet bureaucracy. His writings thus offer insight into everyday life and popular attitudes in a wide variety of geographic and social locations. One of the most compelling aspects of the memoir is Andreev-Khomiakov’s detailed description of his job as a planner. His portrayal of the workings of various Soviet industries provides a vivid account of the illogical and chaotic nature of the supposedly planned Soviet economy. In one unforgettable scene, Andreev-Khomiakov tells how workers from two rival Soviet institutions tried to hijack each other’s logs as they were transported down a river and nearly came to blows over the scarce timber resources that they each needed to keep their enterprises running. Andreev-Khomiakov clearly demonstrates how the Soviet economic system could not possibly operate if everyone followed the rules, and how corruption, inefficiency, and the abuse of natural resources were built into the socialist economy. At the same time, he explains that in the mid-1930s, he and other Soviet officials tried “to preserve what can be termed inner decency and help others preserve it, at the same time creating something so that one’s work is not entirely wasted” (p. 99).

Although he worked for the regime, Andreev-Khomiakov hoped that the coming “war would provide a means of liberation both from Stalin and from communism” (p. 146). Describing the aftermath of the pact with Germany, Andreev-Khomiakov includes several scenes of Soviet avarice during the invasion of Poland, which he could not have witnessed firsthand. Andreev-Khomiakov returns to a firsthand account after the German invasion, recording confusion, the lack of inclination to defend the system, and the first awareness of the horrors of German occupation. His portrayal of the evacuation of Moscow emphasizes the low morale of the evacuees; he contends that “no one among this majority was thinking about helping to defend the country.... They thought about just one thing: How to leave Moscow as quickly as possible in order to save themselves and as many of their belongings as possible” (p. 182). The outcome of World War II clearly colored the lens through which the author remembered the years 1939-41. He explains why he mistakenly thought that war would bring an end to communism by saying, “we could not then have imagined that the West, both