

## Chapter 1 : Project MUSE - Cars for Comrades

*The party and government elite might have cars and drivers at their disposal, but very few people actually owned a motor vehicle. Only after World War II did Stalin make a slight concession to the comrades.*

Detailed info The automobile and Soviet communism made an odd couple. The quintessential symbol of American economic might and consumerism never achieved iconic status as an engine of Communist progress, in part because it posed an awkward challenge to some basic assumptions of Soviet ideology and practice. In this rich and often witty book, Lewis H. Siegelbaum recounts the life of the Soviet automobile and in the process gives us a fresh perspective on the history and fate of the USSR itself. Ultimately, Siegelbaum shows, the automobile epitomized and exacerbated the contradictions between what Soviet communism encouraged and what it provided. To need a car was a mark of support for industrial goals; to want a car for its own sake was something else entirely. Because Soviet cars were both hard to get and chronically unreliable, and such items as gasoline and spare parts so scarce, owning and maintaining them enmeshed citizens in networks of private, semi-illegal, and ideologically heterodox practices that the state was helpless to combat. The book is a pleasure to read and. It deserves to be heralded by a whole Moscow traffic-jam full of tooting horns. Siegelbaum explores the curious antinomy between the car and Communism. On the one hand, the production of cars was a symbol of Communism. The building of car-producing factories was an important criterion for catching up with and surpassing America. On the other hand, almost nobody had a car in their personal possession in the early Soviet years. The production itself was important, not the result, which is not surprising if we take into account that a car was a symbol of personal independence. This inclusive approach carries the reader on raised suspension over the worst potholes and inconsistencies in the road surface. He sheds unexpected light on all manner of subjects: Soviet relations with the West, industrialization and urbanization, and private life and consumption. Elegantly constructed and impeccably researched, this book is a substantial contribution to the study of Soviet civilization. It is a work of passion and terrific imagination, not to mention prodigious and resourceful industry. It is also wonderfully original. Siegelbaum tells a compelling story that moves right along and does so with clarity and wit. Cars for Comrades will take its place among the indispensable works on Russian and Soviet history. On the Road in Cuba Cars for Comrades "What seems to me particularly innovative in this rich and intriguingly written book is the idea that automobiles live their own lives like humans. Siegelbaum adds a lot to our understanding of how the Soviet regime actually ruled and how ordinary people really lived. Siegelbaum links the important themes of Soviet history with new and less familiar issues of private life, consumption, and the everyday. Cars for Comrades has something for everyone: Koenker, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, author of Republic of Labor and coeditor of Turizm Cars for Comrades "This comprehensive history of Soviet cars relies on unique data and presents many interesting and intriguing historical episodes and details. In many ways unanticipated by the leaders of the Communist Party and the State Planning Offices, automobiles drastically changed the social and cultural scene of the whole country by planting the seeds of possessive individualism in the minds of many Soviet citizens.

### Chapter 2 : Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile

*Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile and millions of other books are available for Amazon Kindle. Learn more Enter your mobile number or email address below and we'll send you a link to download the free Kindle App.*

Detailed info Winner of the Ed A. The quintessential symbol of American economic might and consumerism never achieved iconic status as an engine of Communist progress, in part because it posed an awkward challenge to some basic assumptions of Soviet ideology and practice. In this rich and often witty book, Lewis H. Siegelbaum recounts the life of the Soviet automobile and in the process gives us a fresh perspective on the history and fate of the USSR itself. Ultimately, Siegelbaum shows, the automobile epitomized and exacerbated the contradictions between what Soviet communism encouraged and what it provided. To need a car was a mark of support for industrial goals; to want a car for its own sake was something else entirely. Because Soviet cars were both hard to get and chronically unreliable, and such items as gasoline and spare parts so scarce, owning and maintaining them enmeshed citizens in networks of private, semi-illegal, and ideologically heterodox practices that the state was helpless to combat. The book is a pleasure to read and. It deserves to be heralded by a whole Moscow traffic-jam full of tooting horns. Siegelbaum explores the curious antinomy between the car and Communism. On the one hand, the production of cars was a symbol of Communism. The building of car-producing factories was an important criterion for catching up with and surpassing America. On the other hand, almost nobody had a car in their personal possession in the early Soviet years. The production itself was important, not the result, which is not surprising if we take into account that a car was a symbol of personal independence. This inclusive approach carries the reader on raised suspension over the worst potholes and inconsistencies in the road surface. He sheds unexpected light on all manner of subjects: Soviet relations with the West, industrialization and urbanization, and private life and consumption. Elegantly constructed and impeccably researched, this book is a substantial contribution to the study of Soviet civilization. It is a work of passion and terrific imagination, not to mention prodigious and resourceful industry. It is also wonderfully original. Siegelbaum tells a compelling story that moves right along and does so with clarity and wit. Cars for Comrades will take its place among the indispensable works on Russian and Soviet history. On the Road in Cuba Cars for Comrades "What seems to me particularly innovative in this rich and intriguingly written book is the idea that automobiles live their own lives like humans. Siegelbaum adds a lot to our understanding of how the Soviet regime actually ruled and how ordinary people really lived. Siegelbaum links the important themes of Soviet history with new and less familiar issues of private life, consumption, and the everyday. Cars for Comrades has something for everyone: Koenker, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, author of Republic of Labor and coeditor of Turizm Cars for Comrades "This comprehensive history of Soviet cars relies on unique data and presents many interesting and intriguing historical episodes and details. In many ways unanticipated by the leaders of the Communist Party and the State Planning Offices, automobiles drastically changed the social and cultural scene of the whole country by planting the seeds of possessive individualism in the minds of many Soviet citizens.

Chapter 3 : Cars for comrades : the life of the Soviet automobile (Book, ) [calendrierdelascience.com]

*Lewis H. Siegelbaum is Jack and Margaret Sweet Professor of History at Michigan State University. He is the author of Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile and the editor of The Socialist Car: Automobility in the Eastern Bloc, both from Cornell.*

In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content: Per Lundin bio Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile. Cornell University Press, The history of the automobile in the Soviet Union has by and large been ignored by scholars. One explanation, perhaps, are the strong connotations of freedom, individuality, and privacy that have surrounded—and continue to surround—the auto, which has become one of the more powerful symbols of Western capitalism. He deals with the production, consumption, and use of automobiles, as well as the infrastructure that surrounded them. In doing so he challenges our understanding of the auto as an inherently Western artifact and argues that it is possible to talk about a specific Soviet car culture. If Soviets were skeptical about Henry Ford the entrepreneur, they believed that Fordism would help them to achieve the productivity goals set up in the Five-Year Plans, and when it came to the production of automobiles Detroit worked both as blueprint and measure. Soviet car manufacturers relied heavily on foreign expertise and technology. Although the vehicles produced were derivatives of Western models Ford, General Motors, Packard, Fiat, their design and engineering were adjusted to the conditions and the climate of the Soviet Union. The authorities tried to tackle this problem from several angles: But road building continued to lag throughout the communist era. While the production of automobiles and the construction of roads never really contradicted communist ideology, the consumption and use of automobiles was a much more intriguing case, and it is when Siegelbaum approaches the unhappy relationship between the Soviet citizen and the automobile that he delivers his most interesting insights. For ordinary people, national lotteries were the only possibility for obtaining a car. In the Soviet system under Stalin autos were distributed, not sold. During the s, under Khrushchev, the state began to pursue contradictory policies regarding the production and provision of durable consumer goods. The production of cars, as well as other items, was increased in order to narrow the gap between the Soviet Union and Western capitalist countries. But the number of cars available for purchase remained limited. Eventually the Soviet Union entered the era of mass motoring. In the mids there were about 5. You are not currently authenticated. View freely available titles:

**Chapter 4 : Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile | Reviews in History**

*Cars for Comrades. Deeply researched and engagingly told, this masterful and entertaining biography of the Soviet automobile provides a new perspective on one of the twentieth century's most iconic—and important—technologies and a novel approach to understanding the USSR.*

Siegelbaum, *Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile*. Cornell University Press, NET by Perry L. Along the way, the author provides a wide new range of stories that illustrate the functioning or dis-functioning of the Soviet command economy, and that help explain occasionally puzzling cultural and economic phenomena associated with Soviet cars and roads. Siegelbaum also suggests that the problems associated with this sector were not isolated, but reflected general challenges to the formal economy and its political management. Siegelbaum approaches his subject from several angles. The first three chapters provide individual histories of three major producers: A fourth chapter concentrates on the road and highway system; a fifth reflects on the ways in which the early Soviet state chose in part due to military concerns to promote the acquisition of driving skills; and a final major chapter analyzes the sometimes grudging post-WWII transition from trucks to cars and into something more of a consumer culture. As incomes and economic complexity grew over time, the Soviet state found it necessary to produce more and more vehicles of all sorts, and private cars in particular. But policymakers also discovered that the existence of cars generated additional demands for consumer services, and discontent when the economy could not provide them. As Siegelbaum puts the matter,? Worse perhaps for the Soviet state, private automobiles and the culture that grew up around them also opened up numerous ways for individuals to evade and undermine the official command economy. For example, cars facilitated private conversions, private dealmaking, the generation of? *Cars for Comrades* is a richly and eclectically documented volume. In addition to a wealth of archival material, Siegelbaum considers a variety of pop-culture sources, ranging from propaganda posters to literature to the pages of the Soviet car aficionado magazine *Behind the Wheel* [Za rul? This approach provides a sustained and detailed picture of how cars and trucks fit into the Soviet economy and its cultural mindset, and how this? For example, the regime sought early on to popularize car driving via auto rallies, races and exhibitions, but at the same time made very few provisions roads, service stations, garage space to make private ownership a? As private cars ultimately became more available, the horror stories associated with such ownership seemed to multiply. This book is replete with tales of bribery on the road and at the gas station, and of owners whose lives came to be consumed by the search for spare parts or by the constant need to prevent the theft of existing parts, such as windshield wiper blades. The author has also documented well the rise of a macho car culture that seems to have stemmed in part from the frequent breakdowns that early Soviet vehicles incurred, along with early cultural assumptions that women were not? For economists, Siegelbaum has captured in this microhistory of the car a wealth of truths about the Soviet economy more generally. He masterfully illustrates many of the consequences of pervasive price controls, of state decisionmaking regarding the quantities and types of consumption goods, and of a world where property rights are not supported fully either by the state or by the populace. He describes well why, despite attempts by the state, a collective rental market solution for the use of cars never seems to have flourished? Simultaneously, he reminds that, even at the height of political repressions, there existed semi-private clubs of hobbyists and amateurs? The state, however, was not particularly responsive to such lobbying efforts. Written as a cultural history, *Cars for Comrades* will leave economists wishing for more sustained and consistent time series data on auto production and ownership and on road construction, as well as on the efficiency aspects of output in this sector. Most readers would benefit from more careful attention to adjustments for inflation, and to comparisons between car prices and typical incomes and accumulations of savings. At times, the book becomes a bit overly detailed regarding the nomenclature and technical specifications of particular vehicles? More detail would have been welcome, however, on the implications of the Soviet past for the future of the post-Soviet auto industry, the highway system, and car culture. As of , it appears that remaining Soviet-era car brands have been largely supplanted by new and used imports and locally-manufactured foreign brands. Despite the above limitations, many

readers will relate to and learn from this very fine book with ease. The book could thus readily serve as an introductory text designed to motivate undergraduate students to explore the Soviet and other command-style systems in a broader context. It will provide an enjoyable and thought-provoking read for students and researchers from a wide variety of social science and humanities disciplines. He has published on Soviet and post-Soviet financial markets and macroeconomic policy, and is currently working on a textbook entitled *Economics for a Multicultural Future*. Copyright c by EH. This work may be copied for non-profit educational uses if proper credit is given to the author and the list. For other permission, please contact the EH. Net Administrator administrator eh. Net reviews are archived at <http://>

### Chapter 5 : "Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile" - The Truth About Cars

*Because Soviet cars were both hard to get and chronically unreliable, and such items as gasoline and spare parts so scarce, owning and maintaining them enmeshed citizens in networks of private, semi-illegal, and ideologically heterodox practices that the state was helpless to combat.*

In many ways unanticipated by the leaders of the Communist Party and the State Planning Offices, automobiles drastically changed the social and cultural scene of the whole country by planting the seeds of possessive individualism in the minds of many Soviet citizens. Siegelbaum links the important themes of Soviet history with new and less familiar issues of private life, consumption, and the everyday. *Cars for Comrades* has something for everyone: Koenker, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, author of *Republic of Labor* and coeditor of *Turizm* "What seems to me particularly innovative in this rich and intriguingly written book is the idea that automobiles live their own lives like humans. Siegelbaum adds a lot to our understanding of how the Soviet regime actually ruled and how ordinary people really lived. On the Road in Cuba "This is a great book by a great historian, working at the top of his game. It is a work of passion and terrific imagination, not to mention prodigious and resourceful industry. It is also wonderfully original. Siegelbaum tells a compelling story that moves right along and does so with clarity and wit. *Cars for Comrades* will take its place among the indispensable works on Russian and Soviet history. He sheds unexpected light on all manner of subjects: Soviet relations with the West, industrialization and urbanization, and private life and consumption. Elegantly constructed and impeccably researched, this book is a substantial contribution to the study of Soviet civilization. This inclusive approach carries the reader on raised suspension over the worst potholes and inconsistencies in the road surface. Siegelbaum explores the curious antinomy between the car and Communism. On the one hand, the production of cars was a symbol of Communism. The building of car-producing factories was an important criterion for catching up with and surpassing America. On the other hand, almost nobody had a car in their personal possession in the early Soviet years. The production itself was important, not the result, which is not surprising if we take into account that a car was a symbol of personal independence. It deserves to be heralded by a whole Moscow traffic-jam full of tooting horns. The book is a pleasure to read and. He is the author of *Cars for Comrades: Automobility in the Eastern Bloc*, both from Cornell.

**Chapter 6 : Buy Cars for Comrades - Microsoft Store**

*"Cars for Comrades is a complex, sophisticated, and entertaining history of cars and trucks in the Soviet Union."* • Business History Review "Lewis H. Siegelbaum explores the curious antinomy between the car and Communism.

I set out to write a book not so much about the varieties and comparative deficiencies of cars in the Soviet Union as what these objects meant to Soviet citizens. The book is structured around three axes: Contrary to Cold War-era assertions, the Soviet automobile industry was neither entirely dependent on nor completely autonomous from western technological developments. It did a lot of copying, mixing and matching, and innovating on the fly. With the proliferation of privately owned cars in the 1970s and 80s, owners appropriated state supplies of parts and gasoline too. If the particularities of Soviet socialism can better inform us about the history of cars and trucks, then the Soviet automobile can help teach us about Soviet socialism. But the twin inspirations for the writing the book came from elsewhere. Visiting Moscow and other ex-Soviet cities during the 1990s, I could not help noticing the tremendous increase in the number of cars and the difficulties urban infrastructures had in accommodating their growth. This observation made me reflect on the intricate relationships among cars, cities, political systems and the choices they offered and constrained with respect to human mobility. It also made me start to notice the presence of cars and trucks in a lot of places previously hidden in full view—in Soviet novels, poetry, films, photographs, and songs, in the speeches by Soviet leaders, in memoirs and elsewhere. Soon my project was awash with material. The other source of inspiration was my own weariness with the narrative of Soviet history that emphasized tears, state oppression, and violence—a narrative especially prominent in and appropriate to accounts of the Stalin era. This was the period in which most of my previous scholarship was situated. Of course I encountered tears and shed a few of my own as I struggled to master the vocabulary of auto mechanics. But among the unexpected pleasures of writing this book were several discoveries among the myriad of sources: From the latter, I derived the subtitle for my book. A CLOSE-UP The spatial requirements and landscape consequences of the automobile age—the roads, oil and gas refineries and stations, garages, tire and parts stores and junk yards, billboards and flashing neon signs, suburban tracts and shopping malls—hardly made their presence felt in the USSR. Hence, car owners and car parts suppliers both of whom were overwhelmingly male appropriated courtyards, alleys, roadsides and fields for the predominantly masculine activities of car work and car talk. Garages, furnished with old chairs and perhaps a heater and a cot became sites of celebration—places to drink vodka and consume sausage and pickles. They and the interiors of the cars themselves served as alternative living rooms for men seeking privacy and male companionship. The essentially private activities in which they engaged thanks to the car and the infrastructural inadequacies of the centrally planned economy were beyond the surveillance not only of their wives but of the state that inadvertently had fostered them. All of this was a long way from the vision of Valerian Osinskii, a prominent Bolshevik who did more to give life to the Soviet automobile than anyone else. Only since the collapse of the USSR have such journeys become possible, but at the same time, the post-Soviet landscape is now littered with the detritus of the automobile age. LASTLY In the late 1980s, Nikita Khrushchev, who never had been a fan of the private car, proposed a rental system as an alternative route to automotive modernity. But even before his ouster in 1964, the system that had lacked funding and provoked innumerable complaints was phased out. With it went the chance for the USSR to take advantage of its relatively late entry into the automobile age and improve on the record of its predecessors. Cars for Comrades is about more than cars. It is about the chimera of overcoming the gap in technology between the capitalist First and socialist Second world. I argue that Soviet socialism exchanged the possibility of an alternative modernity for one much more entangled with the material culture of the western world. This process was difficult to predict. For much of its existence, the Soviet Union was defined by its leaders as a more rationally organized and socially just polity than any in the capitalist world. The preponderance of trucks—those workhorses among motor vehicles—and the rare privately owned car was consistent with such difference. But eventually the comrades and other middle-echelon personnel wanted to enhance their personal mobility, flexibility, and status. They wanted the wealth within what had become a vast empire to be shared

with them not only in the form of access to first-rate educational institutions, vacations abroad, family apartments, and domestic appliances but that most representative of twentieth-century material objects—the car. In the end, they got their way, sort of. Buy the book here. Siegelbaum is professor of Russian history at Michigan State University. He received his D. His work in Soviet history has been animated by an interest in technology, ideology, and material culture.

### Chapter 7 : Cars for Comrades – Seventeen Moments in Soviet History

*"Cars for Comrades is a complex, sophisticated, and entertaining history of cars and trucks in the Soviet Union."*  
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Chapter 8 : Cars for Comrades (ebook) by Lewis H. Siegelbaum |

*Read "Cars for Comrades The Life of the Soviet Automobile" by Lewis H. Siegelbaum with Rakuten Kobo. The automobile and Soviet communism made an odd couple. The quintessential symbol of American economic might and consume.*

The Life of the Soviet Automobile Book: Oxford Brookes University Citation: Dr Erik Landis, review of Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile, review no. It is one of those rare historical studies that focuses on a particular subject but which succeeds in touching on a vast number of important themes – political, social, and cultural – that relate to the wider history of a unique epoch and its people. The first three chapters of Cars for Comrades provide case studies in the development of the Soviet car industry, each concentrating on one of the principal automotive manufacturing plants. Each developed an identity of its own, grounded in the styles and types of automobiles manufactured, but primarily through the communities that built up around the individual plant. In the latter two cases, foreign automotive companies were involved in the construction of major hubs of the Soviet automotive industry: While these chapters are filled with discussion of the commercial negotiations and decisions that determined the development of the domestic car industry, as well as details regarding the car models that came off the assembly lines of these three plants, Siegelbaum is at his best when describing the daily challenges and satisfactions of individual workers and their families drawn to these three sites of the Soviet industrial landscape. The early years in the development of the Soviet automotive industry were in the late s and s, when the motorcar represented for some an essential part of the modernization of the Soviet Union, an element of industrialization that would complement the railway network in integrating the vast, centrally planned economy. Early advocates pushing for state investment in the domestic production of motorcars echoed the growing public image of the automobile in the West as the symbol of the modern age, both as a triumph of mass production and as a product of mass consumption. While production levels remained low for many years, organizations promoting automotive development within the Soviet state arranged auto rallies across the USSR to test the endurance of both drivers and cars alike, but mainly to raise public awareness of the automobile and to boost public investment. They also raised awareness by demonstrating the distance the USSR needed to travel in order to rival the industrialized societies of the West. The roads, and the automobiles that travelled on them, were a part of individual and collective experience in the United States, in a manner that was still a distant dream for the Soviet advocates of the passenger car. Predictably, though, the greatest early advances in road construction, and indeed in the expansion of car ownership and operation, were made on national security grounds rather than on any more profound concerns relating to the transformation in the mentality of the Soviet people. Of course, the automobile is one of the most iconic mass-produced products of the 20th century, one whose connotations of individualism and independence became synonymous with popular understandings of America and American-style capitalism. Indeed, the automobile probably did more to embourgeoiser individuals and cultures than any single invention. Therefore, as a product of mass consumption, the car represented a vexing problem for Communist Party leaders committed to central economic planning and to the ideal of collectivism over pernicious individualism. Although it is surprising just how little this troubled commentators in the Soviet Union at the time of the birth of the Soviet automotive industry, the automobile became a component of a larger dilemma facing the Soviet leadership after World War II. Even before comparative living standards became a part of the Cold War struggle, the Soviet leadership faced pressures to improve the quality of life among its citizens and increase, particularly, the provision of consumer goods. The Party leadership proved responsive to these pressures, albeit not in an uncomplicated and direct manner. Private cars, however, were deemed a step too far in the direction of individualism, and inefficient and ultimately unsatisfactory rental schemes were devised as an alternative, complemented by investment in public transport. This involves a move away from public transport, of course, but it also means the development of attendant technologies and infrastructure, from roads to reliable supplies of petroleum. The history of the automobile, the iconic image of Western individualism and freedom, in the USSR, the beacon of socialism

and the promise of a Communist future, becomes a case study in the failure of the Soviet Union to construct and sustain an alternative to Western modernity. There is no single answer as to quite why car ownership would expand so rapidly under Leonid Brezhnev, but it was certainly in keeping with the ideological laxity and materialism of the day, both qualities personified by the car-loving General Secretary. The state at this time played its own significant role in undermining any popular commitment to collectivism through the creation and tolerance of shortages – long-standing characteristics of the planned economy that were only accentuated with the expansion of the range of consumer goods promised to the Soviet population. Rather than being a clear manifestation of individualism and a demand for autonomy or freedom, car ownership forced conscientious and enthusiastic drivers deeper into the underground economy because of the scarcity of spare parts, gasoline, and professional repair services. For example, Siegelbaum cites statistics that illustrate the limited provision of services for motorists at a time when car ownership was expanding rapidly: With the state unable or unwilling to meet demand for attendant services, car owners entered into the shady world of midnight auto-parts bazaars, the black market for gasoline which predictably dwarfed the official market, as well as a whole host of under-the-table interactions with the state officials, from licensing bureaus to traffic cops, that were pursued out of necessity. Mindful of the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, one is tempted to ask whether there is something essential to passenger car ownership and use that instills an individual desire for autonomy, or if the car simply satisfies an essential human need for such independence and freedom? The wealth that has soared in the country has continued that trend, making Russia one of the markets that the major automobile manufacturers with more hope than confidence will have to rely upon in the present economic climate. In spite of the authoritarian methods of the Kremlin, and the high popularity ratings of the Russian leadership, one of the groups most consistently involved in protests and acts of defiance over the past three or four years has been motorists, from disgruntled commuters refusing to respect the express lane reserved for high state officials in Moscow, to anti-tax protestors in Vladivostok. While popular revolution is not even remotely on the horizon, cars and car ownership have not only proved a manifestation of post-Soviet freedom and autonomy, but they have also proved an interesting force for the definition of collective grievances and even collective acts of protest. The author is happy to accept this review and does not wish to comment further. Perhaps not coincidentally, Siegelbaum is Professor of History at Michigan State University, located not far from Detroit and what is, at the present moment, still the home of the US automotive industry. *Hopes, Illusions, and Disappointments*, trans. Back to 5 Another recent book on Soviet automobiles – more for the non-academic enthusiast, but still thoroughly worthwhile – indirectly highlights another of these contradictions, unexplored by Siegelbaum. As such, it raises curious questions about how the Soviet Union marketed its cars abroad. Back to 6 January

### Chapter 9 : Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile - Lewis H. Siegelbaum - Google Books

*About. News; Project Team; By Year. EVENTS. February Revolution; Formation of the Soviets; April Crisis; Revolution in the Army; July Days; Kornilov Affair.*

Book review H-Net Abstract: Reviews Editorial reviews Publisher Synopsis "This comprehensive history of Soviet cars relies on unique data and presents many interesting and intriguing historical episodes and details. In many ways unanticipated by the leaders of the Communist Party and the State Planning Offices, automobiles drastically changed the social and cultural scene of the whole country by planting the seeds of possessive individualism in the minds of many Soviet citizens. Siegelbaum links the important themes of Soviet history with new and less familiar issues of private life, consumption, and the everyday. Cars for Comrades has something for everyone: Koenker, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, author of Republic of Labor and coeditor of Turizm "What seems to me particularly innovative in this rich and intriguingly written book is the idea that automobiles live their own lives like humans. Siegelbaum adds a lot to our understanding of how the Soviet regime actually ruled and how ordinary people really lived. On the Road in Cuba "This is a great book by a great historian, working at the top of his game. It is a work of passion and terrific imagination, not to mention prodigious and resourceful industry. It is also wonderfully original. Siegelbaum tells a compelling story that moves right along and does so with clarity and wit. Cars for Comrades will take its place among the indispensable works on Russian and Soviet history. He sheds unexpected light on all manner of subjects: Soviet relations with the West, industrialization and urbanization, and private life and consumption. Elegantly constructed and impeccably researched, this book is a substantial contribution to the study of Soviet civilization. This inclusive approach carries the reader on raised suspension over the worst potholes and inconsistencies in the road surface. Siegelbaum explores the curious antinomy between the car and Communism. On the one hand, the production of cars was a symbol of Communism. The building of car-producing factories was an important criterion for catching up with and surpassing America. On the other hand, almost nobody had a car in their personal possession in the early Soviet years. The production itself was important, not the result, which is not surprising if we take into account that a car was a symbol of personal independence. It deserves to be heralded by a whole Moscow traffic-jam full of tooting horns. The book is a pleasure to read and. Add a review and share your thoughts with other readers.