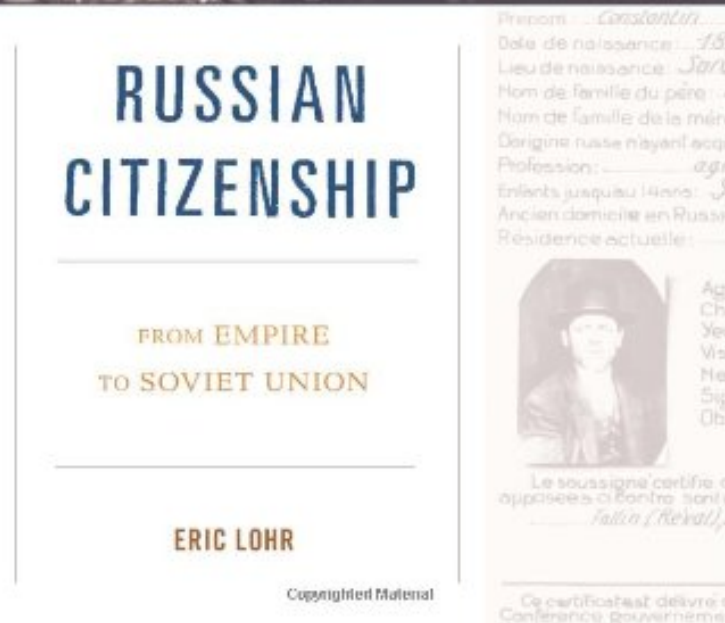


Russian Citizenship: From Empire to Soviet Union

Eric Lohr

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#3601818 in Books 2012-10-31 2012-09-17 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.40 x .80 x 6.40l, 1.25 #File Name: 0674066340288 pages | File size: 22.Mb

Eric Lohr : Russian Citizenship: From Empire to Soviet Union before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Russian Citizenship: From Empire to Soviet Union:

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A new standard work in the history of citizenship in RussiaBy ReaderRussian citizenship, an oxymoron? Proponents of a Russian Sonderweg (special path in history) might like to depict a continuum of totalitarian rule from Czarist empire to communist state, but this refreshingly argued and deeply researched book turns conventional wisdom on its head by uncovering the rich and forgotten history of expanding

citizen rights in Russia's past. Lohr was not satisfied with the dark and rather caricatured picture historians have painted of an eternal Russia that divides and conquers its powerless subjects by using narrow categories of acceptable ethnicity. That image came partly from undeniable imperial and Soviet practices, but partly because there was no obvious place to go to find the story, no single ministry responsible for citizenship policies. So Lohr looked in unexpected places such as police archives and foreign ministry records and found a wealth of materials that allow him not only to analyze evolving legal regimes, but to narrate fascinating accounts of enforcement practices at the local level. He uncovers startling evidence of a conscious and far-reaching effort by the nineteenth-century Russian empire to develop its links with Europe and foster increased trade by encouraging the immigration of foreign businessmen. The steady expansion of access to citizenship rights places Russia much more in line with European trends in the understanding of citizenship, and challenges the notion that Russia isolated itself from the early phases of market integration and governance norms we call globalization. Acute security concerns during the First World War derailed this process, as the state grew wary and more hostile to non-Russian minorities. Soviet rule only intensified suspicion of minorities, foreigners, and investors, bringing the expansion of citizenship rights to an end. The book is a model of scholarly practice and fine writing, and an inspired corrective to some weathered myths about Russian exceptionalism. With its insight that liberal notions of citizenship are not merely Western imports but also have Russian roots, and the sober analysis and good judgment throughout, the book is a vital resource for anyone interested in Russia's contemporary political challenges. Lohr, who holds a chair in Russian History at American University, is already a recognized expert on Russian nationalities policy; this book places him among the leading authorities on the contested relationship between individuals and the state in the broad sweep of Russian history.

Russian Citizenship is the first book to trace the Russian states citizenship policy throughout its history. Focusing on the period from the mid-nineteenth century to the consolidation of Stalins power in the 1930s, Eric Lohr considers whom the state counted among its citizens and whom it took pains to exclude. His research reveals that the Russian attitude toward citizenship was less xenophobic and isolationist and more similar to European attitudes than has been previously thought until the drive toward autarky after 1914 eventually sealed the state off and set it apart. Drawing on untapped sources in the Russian police and foreign affairs archives, Lohr's research is grounded in case studies of immigration, emigration, naturalization, and loss of citizenship among individuals and groups, including Jews, Muslims, Germans, and other minority populations. Lohr explores how reform of citizenship laws in the 1860s encouraged foreigners to immigrate and conduct business in Russia. For the next half century, citizenship policy was driven by attempts to modernize Russia through intensifying its interaction with the outside world. But growing suspicion toward non-Russian minorities, particularly Jews, led to a reversal of this openness during the First World War and to a Soviet regime that deprived whole categories of inhabitants of their citizenship rights. Lohr sees these Soviet policies as dramatically divergent from longstanding Russian traditions and suggests that in order to understand the citizenship dilemmas Russia faces today including how to manage an influx of Chinese laborers in Siberia we must return to pre-Stalin history.

Lohr tells a fascinating and important story. He traces the grand arc of Russian policy toward citizenship, which was characterized by a move toward globalization that accelerated in the 1860s, but was superseded by a shift toward autarky in the Soviet period. Russian Citizenship will appeal to any reader interested in late imperial Russia, Russian law and international relations, nationality policy, and the Jewish question. A truly original book. (Paul W. Werth, University of Nevada, Las Vegas) An extremely rich and thought-provoking book. Lohr's work will have a powerful impact upon the field of Russian history, and its arguments will feed into broader debates about citizenship, globalization, and the way in which Russian conceptions of membership in the state were or were not similar to those found across Europe. To my mind, Russian Citizenship is unique: there is nothing like it any language. (Dominic Lieven, London School of Economics) Lohr's fine study examines Russian citizenship across a broad time period, tracing both underlying similarities and important ruptures across nearly one hundred years. Ranging across the entire Russian empire, from the Russo-German border to the Far East, he examines the laws which framed citizenship, but probes beneath these laws to show how citizenship operated in practice. Fluidly written and deeply researched, this book will be of interest to historians of Russia and the Soviet Union, to historians of Europe more broadly, and to all interested in questions of citizenship and nationality. (Peter Holquist, University of Pennsylvania) About the Author Eric Lohr is Susan E. Lehrman Chair of Russian History and Culture at American University.