DOMESTIC SERVICE IN THE SOVIET UNION

This innovative study is the first to explore the evolution of domestic service in the Soviet Union, set against the background of changing discourses on women, labor, and socialist living. Even though domestic service conflicted with the Bolsheviks’ egalitarian message, the regime embraced paid domestic labor as a temporary solution to the problem of housework. Analyzing sources ranging from court cases to oral interviews, Alissa Klots demonstrates how the regime both facilitated and thwarted domestic workers’ efforts to reinvent themselves as equal members of Soviet society.

Here, a desire to make maids and nannies equal participants in the building of socialism clashed with a gendered ideology where housework was women’s work. This book serves not only as a window into class and gender inequality under socialism but also as a vantage point to examine the power of state initiatives to improve the lives of household workers in the modern world.

Alissa Klots is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Pittsburgh. She specializes in Soviet history, focusing on issues of gender, labor, and aging. Her work has been supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Open Society Foundations, Dan David Foundation, and the Humboldt Foundation.
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DOMESTIC SERVICE IN THE SOVIET UNION

Women’s Emancipation and the Gendered Hierarchy of Labor

ALISSA KLOTS
University of Pittsburgh
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