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# P.G. Grigorenko: Soviet general, Soviet dissident - A guide to primary, secondary, archival and related materials

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Introduction.

Among the “dissidents,” those who, starting in the mid and late 1950’s, began to speak up against the Soviet government and work to organize a viable civil society, P. G. Grigorenko quickly rose to prominence, and then to a nearly legendary status. Older than many of his comrades, he came from a thoroughly different background. Born and reared in a small Ukrainian village in 1907, he rose through the ranks of the Soviet Army to a position of relative privilege as a department head at the USSR’s premier post-graduate military educational institution, the Frunze Military Academy. He was a decorated World War II veteran (who at one point served under Brezhnev), a respected and prolific author of works on military theory and tactics, and, as of 1959, held the rank of major general.

On September 7, 1961, he made a major step towards throwing all of that away, by stepping up at a district Party conference and openly criticising senior party leaders for “violating Leninist principles and norms.” (Grigorenko, 1981). Retribution was swift, and Grigorenko was promptly exiled to a relatively insignificant post in the Soviet Far East. There, he founded an underground group, the Union of Struggle for the Revival of Leninism; its main activity was printing and covertly distributing flyers calling for, among other things, free and open elections.

On February 1, 1964, Grigorenko was arrested, stripped of rank and all decorations, and placed in a psychiatric hospital. Following his release (after Khrushchev was removed from power), Grigorenko became one of the founders of the organized Soviet dissident movement, until being arrested in 1969 and again confined to psychiatric care. Released in 1974, he was allowed to visit the US for medical care in 1977, and while abroad, was stripped of Soviet citizenship.

P.G. Grigorenko died on February 21, 1987, in New York.

Many questions can be asked about the role of Grigorenko within the dissident movement.

Perhaps the most interesting one, the one to which there may not even be a simple answer, is just what led someone in his position to rebel – when thousands of others did not. At the most basic level, this question has distinct relevance to the greater topic of civil-military relations in Russia, both historically, and certainly with respect to the modern Russian military.

But before any question of this type can even be asked, there needs to be an effort to collect information about Grigorenko and his milieu. Relevant items are scattered in different countries, locked up in official and private archives, stashed away in dozens of books and articles written in Russian, English, Ukrainian, and other languages. The purpose of this research guide is to bring together these disparate sources, extract and evaluate the relevant citations, and make this information available to any researchers who are interested.

## Materials in English

Before we can begin to look at either the primary or the secondary sources having to do with Petr Grigorenko, it is important to identify the terminology that both Western and Russian research uses to refer to him, and to the broader Soviet dissident movement. Library of Congress Subject Headings use 'dissidents' as a lead-in term for 'dissenters', which can then be subdivided geographically to produce 'dissenters – Soviet Union.' 'Grigorenko, P. G. (Petr Grigor'evich), 1907-' is also a valid authority heading. And given how relatively limited the amount of English-language research in this field is, working with various keyword searches may actually prove to be quite effective.

The first step, however, is to retrieve the subject bibliographies on the Soviet Union that have been published in approximately the past thirty years, emanating in both directions from Schaffner's (1995) *Bibliography of the Soviet Union: Its predecessors and successors*. Organized by LCSH subject heading, it lists a 'Dissent' section containing five monographs, two biographies, and a biographical dictionary (De Boer, Driessen & Verhaar, 1982). Sullivan's (1994) *Russia and Eastern Europe: A bibliographic guide to English-language publications, 1986-1991* is organized contextually, which makes it rather difficult to identify which section a theme like the dissident movement will fit. Thankfully, fortunately, the subject index includes the entry 'dissenters' (seven items scattered throughout the volume). The results are again a mix of monographs and memoirs. Since the Sullivan volume is effectively an update of the three subject bibliographies on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe that Stephan Horak compiled between 1978 and 1987, it is actually useful to jump straight to them. *Russia and Eastern*

*Europe: A bibliographic guide to English-language publications, 1981-1985* (1987) annotates its subjects, including the aforementioned biographical dictionary, as well as the English translation of Grigorenko's memoirs (1983b), extensively, and lists one volume (Marshall Schatz's *Soviet Dissent in Historical Perspective*) that may be extremely useful for connecting not only the movement as a whole, but Grigorenko specifically, with the pre-Communist tradition of opposition to the state. Because Horak retains a largely identical structure through all three of his volumes, it is no surprise that the same section exists in *Russia and Eastern Europe: A bibliographic guide to English-language publications, 1975-1980* (1982). Highlights here are the first English-language publication of Grigorenko's writings, which includes Edward Crankshaw's excellent introductory sketch, and one more potentially interesting monograph, *Dissent in the USSR: Politics, ideology, and people*, by Rudolph Tokes. Finally, *Russia and Eastern Europe: A bibliographic guide to English-language publications, 1964-1974*. (1978) shows the origins of English-language writing on the Soviet dissent movement, such as Abraham Rothberg's 1972 *The Heirs of Stalin: Dissidence and the Soviet Regime, 1953-1970*. In all three volumes, the annotations themselves offer interesting commentary on Grigorenko.

The fifth Russian/East European Studies subject bibliography published between the late 1970's and the early 1990's, Raymond Pearson's (1989) *Russia and eastern Europe, 1789-1985: A bibliographic guide* presents a thematic organization that is repeated for each country covered, and with some extremely interesting naming conventions (such as 'tourist' for personal accounts by foreigners. But, even with over ninety entries in the Opposition – Post-Stalin Period (1953-85) section, it does not add to the combination of the other works to any meaningful extent. And disappointingly, one of the two Russia subject bibliographies published in approximately the last

ten years, Boilard's (1997) *Reinterpreting Russia: An annotated bibliography of books on Russia, the Soviet Union, and the Russian Federation, 1991-1996* is organized so broadly (the USSR is covered in four chapters over some 110 pages that it is basically useless. Two more volumes, Sullivan's most recent (2001) continuation of Horak's legacy and Edelheit's (1992) *The rise and fall of the Soviet Union: A selected bibliography of sources in English* may also contain additional items, but are not available in the IU library system.

At this point, with a list that includes two primary sources and several potentially-interesting English-language monographs, it may be worth the while to attempt to locate any additional sources in IUCat and WorldCat via keyword searches. Simply browsing the subject dissenters – Soviet Union brings up the 2005 *Conscience, dissent and reform in Soviet Russia* at one extreme of the spectrum, and, at the other, a 1971 conference paper on *The general pattern of Soviet dissent*, which, although interesting in general, does not specifically deal with Grigorenko. On the other hand, expanding the search one step farther to WorldCat and searching for P.G. Grigorenko in all fields results in what appears to be the only English-language monographic evaluation of his career and particularly, his career as a dissident - a master's thesis on *The role of ex-Major General Grigorenko in the Human Rights Movement* (Kowalewski, 1971). WorldCat also lists a translation of a military science text Grigorenko co-authored (USAF Foreign Technology Division, 1970), and his evaluation of US Army Doctrine (Grigorenko, 1983a). At this point, searches also retrieve several Russian-language items, including the two Russian-language editions of Grigorenko's autobiography (Kozlov, V. & Mironenko, S., 2005; Grigorenko, 1997; Chakshova, 1995; Grigorenko, 1981), .

The biographical dictionary referred to earlier is de Boer, S., Driessen, E. and Verhaar, H. (1982), *Biographical dictionary of dissidents in the Soviet Union, 1956-1975*, which provides probably the single most comprehensive English-language reference on Grigorenko that can be accessed fairly easily. Another reference work, Stevanovic, B., and Wertsman, V. (1987), *Free voices in Russian literature, 1950s – 1980s: A bio-bibliographical guide* goes a good way towards completing the list of books and articles that Grigorenko wrote after his dismissal from the Soviet Army.

The next step in evaluating English-language sources on Grigorenko involves a general search in several online databases of journal abstracts and full-text articles, including ABSEES and EBSEES. Even a simple cursory search in EBSCO Academic Search, Historical Abstracts, JSTOR, and the Sage Full-text Politics and International Relations Collection with ‘Grigorenko’ as a keyword brings up a significant number of hits. As Grigorenko’s letters and memoirs were published in original and in translation, they were reviewed in the leading Western journals of Slavic studies (Birch, 1977; Ulam, 1983; Garthoff, 1984). The Garthoff review is particularly interesting, because alongside Grigorenko’s autobiography, it looks at Viktor Suvorov’s infamous *Inside the Soviet Army*. Running the search individually through the four databases provides several additional relevant results. ABC-Clio Historical Abstracts proves especially useful, retrieving in the initial keyword search, Gaius, M. (1982). Major General Pyotr Grigorenko: Soviet heretic. *Military Review*, 62(10)., as well as two Russian articles (Petrovski, 1994; Petrov, 1990). Going directly to this database and running the search with ‘Grigorenko’ as a keyword brings up twenty-two items, two of which are both relevant and do not appear in a broader OneSearch query. In fact, these two articles Grigorenko wrote for English-language

journals (*Diplomatic delusions*, in *Reason* 13(9) and *The Ghost of Stalin*, in *Freedom at Issue*, 50) are not even listed in any of Grigorenko's biographical sketches. In JSTOR, searching for 'Grigorenko' in the full text retrieves 218 items. This is not an overwhelming number to browse through, but can be limited further by adding full-text search terms like 'general' and 'Soviet.' A majority of the items retrieved, however, either cite one of Grigorenko's works or mention him in passing. Howard Biddulph (1972) is one of the few that makes a significant contribution to analyzing Grigorenko. No searches in the Sage collection result in any hits. And finally, going directly to EBSCO Academic Search leads to a classic trade-off between precision and recall; all text 'Grigorenko' returns over 900 hits. However, a simple addition of all text 'Soviet' reduces that to 108 hits, while using Grigorenko as the search term in the People field cuts the total down to 19. Of these, the most interesting is an article (Rich, 1991) in the British medical journal *Lancet* that reports on the official reversal of Soviet psychologists' declaration of Grigorenko as psychologically unstable.

Since ABSEES Online used LC subject headings, 'Soviet Union – Dissenters' brings up 143 articles. Somewhat disappointingly, however, expanding that with a full-text search for Grigorenko gives zero hits, and none of the articles the subject heading search retrieves appear to be directly relevant. The same search does, however, retrieve what appears to be the one of the only existing dedicated subject bibliographies on the Soviet dissident movement – Peter Reddaway's (1993) *Sovietology and dissent: New sources on protest*, published in the January 29, 1993 issue of the RFE/RL Research Report. Since ABSEES Online overlaps with the publication of the print volumes of ABSEES by about four years, it is not necessary to examine *de visu* the last four volumes (1990-1994) of the latter.



With Grigorenko being stripped of his rank and dismissed from the Soviet Army in 1964 (Petrov, 1990), 1965 is the first physical volume of ABSEES that needs to be examined. It is not until the 1968-69 volume that the word 'dissent' is used in an article title. Starting with the 1970 volume, however, 'dissent and human rights' is a distinct subdivision under Government and Law, Russia and the USSR, and from this point on, every volume includes an increasing number of articles. The same volume lists, in *Survey: A Journal of Soviet and East European Studies*, 17(1), 'The dilemma of dissidence' (Harris, 1971), and in 16(4) of the same journal, the publication of 'Grigorenko's prison diary.' (1970). Between 1971 and 1989, in addition to the monographs, collections and articles already mentioned, those that may be interesting are Sobran (1978) and Shtromas (1985).

From the first volume, in 1975, and through to the twentieth, in 1994, EBSEES maintains a consistent structure, and entries on 'Dissent, opposition, and political samizdat' are classified 07.08 under the relevant country. Through the volumes, however, unique items on Grigorenko are limited to citations for one Russian-language interview (Grigorenko, 1978), several items in the Ukrainian émigré press, and various European reviews of his memoirs. In the online EBSEES, the 2001 – current version of the site allows a search by ABSEES subject heading, but 'Soviet Union – Dissenters' results in all of one hit, and an all-fields search for Grigorenko, either in English or in Russian, does not produce any.

Finally, searching the 1991-2000 EBSEES requires essentially transferring into digital form the experience of browsing through one of the print volumes. In the 'countries and subjects studied

field, 'ru 07.08' represents Soviet Union, Dissidents and political samizdat. Limiting that to items published in English yields 34 items, none of them directly relevant, in Russian, twelve, again none relevant.

Notes:

General and subject bibliographies

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## Russian-language Materials

In a way, the search aids that are available for accessing all types of Russian-language publications make finding relevant information by and on Grigorenko a significantly easier process than it was with locating English-language resources. In addition, even the time frame of possible publication is reduced, since any real analysis of Grigorenko's biography or role in the Soviet military establishment or the dissident movement by definition could not exist until the late 1980's. Furthermore, even the process of locating English-language materials itself already lets us identify a number of relevant items, including most of the primary sources.

As with the English-language sources, the first step is to identify the locations of some basic biographical records. The relevant volumes of *Bol'shaia Rossiiskaia entsiklopediia* and *Novaia Rossiiskaia entsiklopediia* have not been published yet, but a short article is available in the *Kratkaia Rossiiskaia entsiklopediia* (2003). The other relevant source, although it was originally written in English, is Vronskaya and Chuguev's (1994) *Kto est' kto v Rossii i byvshem SSSR: Vydayushiesia lichnosti byvshego Sovetskogo Soiuz, Rossii i emigratsii*. Grigorenko is not listed in the eight-volume *Voennaia entsiklopediia*, but that can be understandable since his military biography was solid, but essentially unremarkable.

Looking at the Russian Academy of Sciences database, with 'Григоренко' as the search keyword retrieves 78 hits, including a chapter (Pomarnatskii, 2001) in a longer study and the Moscow edition of Grigorenko's (1997) memoirs. Since the original 1981 New York edition of the volume concludes with the author being stripped of his Soviet citizenship, a preface to this edition, written by one of Grigorenko's sons, briefly describes his life between 1977 and 1987,

including the process of working on the English translation of the memoirs. The preface is joined by Sergey Kovalyov's (1997) short essay on Grigorenko's unique contribution to the Soviet dissident movement.

The record for the volume has 'диссиденты' listed as a subject, and searching by the subject alone produces 60 hits, three of which are particularly interesting (Ko, 2000; Bezborodov, Meier & Pivovar, 1994; Gruzdeva, 1994). An interesting issue here has to do with the debate in Russian historiography over the use of the term 'диссиденты' as opposed to 'инакомыслящие'; searching by the latter retrieves over 170 items. Narrowing the search to the subjects 'инакомыслие' and 'СССР' decreases that to 122. Worth noting are *Dissidentstvo kak obshchestvenno-politicheskii fenomen* (Korolev, 1998) and *Diagnoz – inakomyslie* (Blokh, 1998). The number of search options that it offers makes the EastView Social Sciences and Humanities database absolutely invaluable – if used correctly. While a search for 'Григоренко' retrieves over one hundred items, that can be limited by proximity, for example 'Григоренко' /5 П. or Григоренко' /5 'генерал,' returning, respectively, twenty-eight and forty-four items. Pyzhikov (2003) presents a rare, if brief, discussion of Grigorenko's subversive activity while still a serving officer. Naumov (1997) talks about Grigorenko's arrest against the usual perception of the post-Stalinist thaw. Two more items, in the first publication of Aleksand Tvardovskiy's (2003, 2002) personal diary reveal the relationship between Grigorenko and the great Soviet writer, at that time the editor of the literary journal *Novyi Mir*. Grigorenko's view of the same meetings is represented in two letters he wrote to Solzhenitsin in 1975, published for the first time in *Novaia Gazeta* (1995) some twenty years later. More references (Afanasieva, 1995; Bredikhin, 1994) can be found in the citations to these papers. The article (Petrov, 1990) on



Grigorenko that appeared in that year's October issue of *Voенно-istoricheskii Zhurnal*, the leading Russian journal on military history (and an official Ministry of Defense publication) is similarly interesting, both for its content, much of it is drawn from Grigorenko's personal files (two annual evaluations and a letter he wrote criticizing one of his professors at the Frunze Military Academy), and because the article promises a follow-up look at Grigorenko's career after 1945. Unfortunately, apparently, no such follow-up ever made it into print. On the other hand, Petrov also points to the first official publication related to Grigorenko in the Soviet press: an abridged version of his memoirs was published over the entire twelve issues of the 1990 volume of *Zvezda*.

Expanding the EastView search to cover central newspapers leads to another significant number of relevant sources, most of them published in 1997, the tenth anniversary of Grigorenko's death and the ninetieth of his birth. Alekseev (1997) gives Grigorenko a prominent place in *Kommersant-Daily*, one of the leading Russian newspapers of the time. *Obschaia gazeta* (Leontiev, 1997) features an interview with one of Grigorenko's sons. Kardin (1996) is the source of the *Novaia gazeta* reference. And a short review in *Izvestiia* (1995) notes that while still in the U.S., Grigorenko wrote the introduction to Rapoport, V., & Alekseev, Yurii (1985). *High treason: Essays on the history of the Red Army, 1918-1938*. (B. Pierce, Trans.). Durham, NC: Duke University Press. And finally, Polianovskii (1997) summarizes the changing response to Grigorenko in the Russian popular press, which included a front-page article, spread out over the course of three issues of the newspaper in the summer of 1995, as well as two follow-up items in later issues in the same year. Perhaps the final two Russian-language references on Grigorenko and his legacy should be two items in *Krasnaia Zvezda* (1993, 1997), ironically

enough, the official newspaper of the Ministry of Defense. The earlier of these announces an order signed by Boris Yeltsin on June 6, 1993 that fully rehabilitated Grigorenko and restored him, posthumously, to the rank of major general. The second notes that on September 1, 1997, Yeltsin signed another order, directing the Moscow City Government to work towards commemorating Grigorenko by naming one of the city's streets after him. The same order establishes a Grigorenko Prize, to be awarded to students of the Ministry of Defense's Military University, where Grigorenko taught between 1945 and 1961.

## Notes

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(Between 1942 and 1959, while serving as a Soviet Army officer in the field and at the Frunze Military Academy, Grigorenko also authored, contributed to or edited over 70 volumes, chapters and individual papers on military science. The full list is available in Grigorenko, *Perechen'*.)

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## Archival materials

Although to this day, thorough research on the Soviet dissident movement that relies on primary sources other than Samizdat is still emerging, Bezborodov, Meier and Pivovarov (1994) features a valuable introduction to archival holdings on the topic. One of the major contributions of this volume is an explicit acknowledgement of the difficulties researchers on the topic will face, since a significant number of documents about the dissident movement that were generated by the Politbureau and the Central Committee are now held in the Presidential Archives, while others, especially those that consist of police and KGB case reports, are classified for seventy-five years from the date of their creation. Whichever documents may be available to the public would most likely be held at RGANI (Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Noveishei Istorii) and RGASPI (Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii). Additionally, some background materials on Grigorenko may also be available at the RGVA (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi voenno-istoricheskii arkhiv), which contains pre-1941 records of Soviet Army units and organizations. Since the assignments and posts he held throughout his entire career are known, archival work with the fonds of the relevant units may turn up documents that either mention Grigorenko, or are actually authored by him. This leaves private or non-governmental archives as the main sources of open information on the dissident movement in general, and on its specific participants. While the bulk of the records held by the Memorial Society is a part of its Archive of the History of Political Repressions in the USSR, 1918-1956, Memorial also maintains the Archive of the History of Dissidence in Russia, 1957-1987, which numbers 63 fonds and over 250,000 individual sheets (Memorial, a). According to Bezborodov et al., (1994) ЦДІА (Tsentr dokumentatsii 'Narodnyi Arkhiv') also maintains a partial collection of Grigorenko's papers. However, the relevant archival guide (Akimova, Antonets, Goryaeva &

Popova, 1998) does not have a listing for Grigorenko in its subject name index. It may be that Grigorenko's papers were first kept there, before being transferred to Memorial. Finally, outside Russia, the pre-eminent collection of relevant documents is at the Open Society Archives, in Budapest, which inherited also the archives of the Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe Research Institute.

Although there is no published guide to the Memorial holdings, the Memorial website includes an annotated listing of the archive's contents. It is somewhat out of date, since the introduction to the list only mentions 51 fondy. Fond 119 (no size given), is devoted to Grigorenko's personal papers, including letters from his wife and son, the full text of his 1961 Party conference address, flyers of the Union for the Struggle for the Revival of Leninism neo-Marxist circle, which he founded, and various official documents such as protocols of his interrogations. The fond also includes two copies of an unpublished manuscript entitled 'Nashi Budni', presumably a second memoir focusing on Grigorenko's work within the Soviet dissident movement.

The website of Memorial's 'Istoriia dissidentov v SSSR' features three other important items. One (Memorial, b) is *Dissidentskaya aktivnost' 1950kh-1980kh godov: Personalii – Kratkiy annotirovannyi perechen'*, a brief listing of the basic biographical details (dates of birth and death, position if known, and extent of participation in the dissident movement) of 1185 individual persons. Currently, the list only includes last names from A to Z, but it is being updated continuously. The other (Memorial, c) is a subject bibliography of both Russian and Western writings by and on the dissident movement. Finally, Memorial offers the only online index to the 30-volume *Sobranie Dokumentov Samizdata*, published in 1972-1978 by Radio Free

Europe/Radio Liberty. The index is searchable by personal or organizational author, editor, document title, language, and date. Running a search with 'Григоренко' in the document author field returns 119 documents, almost all of them open letters of protest to various Soviet leaders, dating from the late 1960's and early 1970's. With the same in the document title field, the search retrieves 35 documents, including four that are particularly relevant to studying Grigorenko's biography. Two of these (Levitin, 1969; Tsukerman, 1969) are biographical sketches that provide a additional details about various aspects of Grigorenko's life and career. The remaining two items, authored by Grigorenko himself (Grigorenko, n.d. a; Grigorenko, n.d. b) contribute significantly to a picture of Grigorenko as an active combat officer and a prolific writer on military theory. Locating the *Perechen'*, a personal bibliography comprising a total of seventy chapters, papers, studies and journal articles on various operational and tactical topics that Grigorenko authored between 1942 and 1961 is particularly important in countering attempts to diminish Grigorenko's position and relative prominence within the Soviet military nomenclature.

Pudlowski & Szekely's *Open Society Archives* (1999) presents a useful overview of the OSA collection, but it arranged as a narrative, rather than as a guide proper. Therefore, for searching through the collection, the OSI website itself remains the main tool. It allows searching by keyword, limited by year; however, using Grigorenko as a keyword brings up only one hit, for various background materials on Grigorenko that were generated by the New York office of Radio Liberty. In the OSI classification, these are Fond 300, Subfond 85, Series 48. Series 300 in general is records of the RFL/RE Research Institute, and browsing the various subfonds under that fond number brings up several more hits. Probably the most important of these is 300-80-7,



news clippings, press agency releases, and radio and TV transcripts, and 300-85-13, biographical data assembled by RFL/RE staff in support of various research activities. Finally, 300-8-3 is the file for in-depth background reports produced for staff. These do not appear to be searchable directly, but oddly, can be searched by Google or another search engine, using a search string like “Background Reports” Grigorenko. This produces two hits (Radio Free Europe, 1968; Shtein, 1972), both of which are additional biographical sketches of Grigorenko, and available both in OCR-captured form and as PDF scans of the original print documents.

## Notes

Monographs, etc..

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## Additional resources

Despite the fact that a significant number of primary and secondary materials on Grigorenko are listed in the preceding sections, this guide is by no means exhaustive. Even a basic search on the major Russian-language search engines (Rambler and Yandex) returns at least three more relevant papers (Rusina, 2004; Rusina, 2003; Koroleva, 2002) that are not listed elsewhere. A similar search identifies three documentaries on Grigorenko, one of which was filmed in Russia and the other in the Ukraine. And finally, there is the New York City-based General Petro Grigorenko Foundation ([www.grigorenko.org](http://www.grigorenko.org)). Just some of its activities include organizing an annual conference on the history of the Soviet dissident movement and promoting the legacy and beliefs of Petr Grigorenko throughout the former Soviet Union.

## Perspectives

Since this guide focuses primarily on Grigorenko's career, both as a Soviet Army general and as one of the leaders of the Soviet dissident movement, it excludes a number of other dissidents' memoirs that mention him in passing. The guide also does not address Grigorenko's activities in defense of the Crimean Tatar national liberation movement. While publications in English and Russian are analyzed extensively, I have left works in Ukrainian and in other non-Slavic European languages outside its scope. And of course, without on-site work at the various Moscow-based archives, it is impossible to ascertain what, if any, additional information on Grigorenko may be available to the public. All of those areas present room for improving this guide. In the meanwhile, however, it remains what I believe is the most comprehensive document on the primary, secondary, archival and related sources on P.G. Grigorenko.