



# **Soviet Communal Living: An Oral History of the Kommunalka (Palgrave Studies in Oral History)**

*Paola Messina*

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This book brings together fascinating testimonies from thirty inhabitants of the "Kommunalka," the communal apartments that were a common feature of Russian cities during the Soviet era. Beginning in 1920, multiple Russian families - purposefully selected from different social classes - were relocated and crammed together into single apartments. The intent was not simply to level out class differences, but also to create spy networks within homes and extend the government's surveillance and control over citizens. Possibly the most important social experiment undertaken by the Soviet regime, the Kommunalka arguably had as much as if not more of an effect on the experiences of inhabitants than external political realities. Soviet Communal Living offers a fascinating glimpse into the circumstances that defined daily life for millions of citizens during the seven decades of communist rule - and, in some cases, long after.

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