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Interview with Ryan Tucker Jones, author of *Red Leviathan: The Secret History of Soviet Whaling*

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Monahan, Erika. "Ryan Tucker Jones, 'Red Leviathan: The Secret History of Soviet Whaling.'" *New Books in Russian and Eurasian Studies*, 9 September 2023. Mp3, 59:49.

> The Soviet Union killed over six hundred thousand whales in the twentieth century, many of them illegally and secretly. That catch helped bring many whale species to near extinction by the 1970s, and the impacts of this loss of life still ripple through today's oceans.
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> In this new account, based on formerly secret Soviet archives and interviews with ex-whalers, environmental historian Ryan Tucker Jones offers a complete history of the role the Soviet Union played in the whales' destruction. As other countries—especially the United States, Great Britain, Japan, and Norway—expanded their pursuit of whales to all corners of the globe, Stalin determined that the Soviet Union needed to join the hunt. What followed was a spectacularly prodigious, and often wasteful, destruction of humpback, fin, sei, right, and sperm whales in the Antarctic and the North Pacific, done in knowing violation of the International Whaling Commission's rules. Cold War intrigue encouraged this destruction, but, as Jones shows, there is a more complex history behind this tragic Soviet experiment. Jones compellingly describes the ultimate scientific irony: today's cetacean studies benefited from Soviet whaling, as Russian scientists on whaling vessels made key breakthroughs in understanding whale natural history and behavior.
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> And in a final twist, *Red Leviathan: The Secret History of Soviet Whaling* (U Chicago Press, 2022) reveals how the Soviet public began turning against their own country's whaling industry, working in parallel with Western environmental organizations like Greenpeace to help end industrial whaling—not long before the world's whales might have disappeared altogether.
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> (Source: New Books Network)

In this episode from the New Books Network podcast, Ryan Tucker Jones is interviewed on his recent book, *Red Leviathan: The Secret History of Soviet Whaling.*

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  https://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/8966
- Ryan Tucker Jones and Angela Wanhalla, eds. "New Histories of Pacific Whaling," *RCC Perspectives* (2019)
  https://doi.org/10.5282/rcc/8954

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