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MALTE GRIESSE: Communiquer, juger et agir sous Staline. La personne prise entre ses liens avec les proches et son rapport au système politico-idéologique. Frankfurt a.M. [usw.]: Lang, 2011. XI, 536 S. ISBN: 978-3-631-60446-5.

The opening of the formerly secret archives in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union vastly expanded the historical sources available to scholars, making it possible to study the minds of Soviet citizens under Stalin who were not free to speak. Interestingly, the study of the Soviet people as individuals led to diametrically opposed views of them, one camp (the “Subjectivist School”) emphasizing their integration into the regime (which left no or little separate space for the public and the self) and the other camp (the “Resistance School”) stressing the ubiquity of their open and hidden resistance to the regime. While Malte Griesse notes that the Stalinist regime was not monolithic, he asserts that the manifestations of critical thinking in Soviet society were certainly marginalized. Griesse takes issue with the Subjectivist School, criticizing it as preoccupied with the vertical link between a Soviet subject and the regime: the state sought to fashion the soul of the individual, who in turn tried to perfect a self in which the public and the private were merged without contradiction. The fact that Soviet idealism and reality diverged inevitably created room for critical thinking. According to the Subjectivist School, however, even such critical thinking was trapped in the mode of Stalinist discourse (concepts, vocabulary, and logic), which in turn demonstrated the degree to which Soviet individuals were integrated into the Stalinist system. By taking the Soviet subject’s discourse at face value, according to Griesse, the School’s approach becomes inevitably ahistorical.

Rather than a dominant vertical relationship between the individual and the state, Griesse sees micro spaces of horizontal, inter-subjective relations among individuals. It was in these spaces of inter-personal communication that inherently subjective views and opinions were confirmed and strengthened or repudiated. It was inter-subjectivity that clarified subjectivity. Griesse’s work therefore is devoted to elucidating the existence, structure, functions, and use of inter-personal

links under Stalin. Griesse uses the term “*lien*” (“link”, “tie” or “connection”), instead of “*réseau*” (“network” with utilitarian connotations) in order to stress its ideational significance. Likewise, he avoids the terms “subject” (too “Foucauldian”) or “individual” (too close to the liberal concept of “autonomous individual”), using instead “*personne*” (“person”). In this attempt Griesse seeks to avoid the dichotomies of “repressive vs. constructive/productive”, “reactive vs. proactive”, “exclusive vs. inclusive”, “collectivism vs. individualism”, and “illiberal vs. liberal”. Focusing on Old Bolsheviks, Griesse deploys a wide array of “ego documents” such as diaries, personal correspondence, autobiographies, memoirs, and others. These include records of well-known people such as Stepan Podlubnyi (1914–1998, the subject of work by Jochen Hellbeck) and newly found sources such as private correspondence between the couple Anna G. Kravchenko (1890–1984, an official in the People’s Commissariat of Enlightenment) and Aleksandr P. Spunde (1892–1962, also a Soviet official).

Griesse’s overall argument is persuasive to a degree. It is particularly strong in rebutting the Subjectivist School’s preoccupation with the vertical line between state and person. Among the many examples Griesse discusses, he singles out Kravchenko and Spunde as especially illuminating. The couple and their children (particularly their son Iakov, 1918–1921) left voluminous records of correspondence (some 1,200 letters). In this family space they discussed matters of common concern (social and political issues). Letters with sensitive subjects were delivered by trusted friends. Although exactly when they began to entertain doubts about the Stalinist regime is not entirely clear, by 1940–41 definitely they had developed very critical views of Soviet political life. Griesse emphasizes that it was only in this micro space of communication that they helped one another to think critically. In the process they did not abandon their Bolshevism. Rather they used the old vocabulary of revolutionary idealism (egalitarianism, comradeship, mutual respect, reciprocal engagement) to come to criticize the Stalinist regime. When Griesse discusses Podlubnyi and others who provided ex-

amples for the Subjectivist School, he sees, instead of a closed self, many inter-personal links in which each person actually lived (see pp. 270, 273 and 276 for Podlubnyi, and p. 340 for A. G. Man'kov, 1913–2006).

Griesse's work is helpful in correcting the Subjectivist School's preoccupation with discourse and self-fashioning by stressing practice and inter-subjectivity. He reminds that the fact that a human-being is an inherently social-being. After all, even a hermit is only a hermit after first withdrawing from society. When Griesse discusses Oleg Kharkhordin's concept of "dissimulation", a peculiarly Soviet space of individual life different from the Western concept of the "private sphere", Griesse proposes a "half-closed door" (instead of a "closed door") in a person's life. Even under Stalin inter-subjective, communicational spaces did not disappear (pp. 383–384). In presenting his argument, Griesse puts to good use Hanna Arendt's distinction of "solitude" and "loneliness" as well as some of the theoretical concepts of "pragmatic sociology" by Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot and "ego-state" in psychological studies. Overall Griesse's monograph presents a highly readable interpretation of subjectivity and inter-subjectivity.

Griesse's account leaves some uncomfortable issues out, however. For one, Griesse fails to pose the all-important question of betrayal and denunciation in inter-personal spaces. He simply

states categorically that refusal to denounce one's comrades was a fundamental moral code (p. 325). He discusses well-known facts of police provocateurs among the revolutionaries (such as Roman Malinovskii), but emphasizes that Old Bolsheviks discussed the unsavory facts of betrayal very little in their own writing (pp. 209–211). The Kravchenko-Spunde family managed to survive the Great Terror, even though husband and wife had traveled overseas as government officials and continued to live in the famous "House on the Embankment" through the years of the Great Terror. Until 1938 Spunde, formerly a supporter of Nikolai Bukharin's "Left Communism" who even went to the dangerous country, Japan, in 1932, ate lunch daily at the canteen of the Council of the People's Commissars (Cabinet) (p. 413). The family destroyed part of their correspondence at the time of the Terror (p. 404). People must have privately asked whether they had (or were forced to have) special links to the secret police. (In his diary Podlubnyi confessed to his work as a police informer.) Were their critical views of Soviet life a reflection of their retrospective shame? However offensive such questions of betrayal may be, they need to be asked if one wants to understand Stalinist society, for Stalin took advantage of this hidden side of Soviet life to rule the country.

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RICHARD BUCHNER: *Terror und Ideologie. Zur Eskalation der Gewalt im Leninismus und Stalinismus (1905 bis 1937/1941). Ausblick bis 2011.* Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2011. 545 S., Tab. ISBN: 978-3-86583-554-3.

Richard Buchner hat ein interessantes und vielschichtiges Buch über die Verbrechen des Stalinismus verfasst, das sicher von einer breiten Leserschaft positiv aufgenommen wird. Über die Ausrichtung des Buches bemerkt er in der Einleitung: „Weltgeschichte wird hier verstanden als eine Geschichte von unten – Geschichte der Opfer“ (S. 23). Deshalb bleiben diejenigen völlig unberücksichtigt, die im Stalin'schen System funktionieren konnten und oftmals gerade seinetwe-

gen Bildung erlangten und auf der Karriereleiter nach oben stiegen. Der Autor hätte sicher zu Recht angemerkt, dass man dieselben Ziele auch mit geringeren menschlichen Verlusten hätte erreichen können – daran besteht kein Zweifel. Das Desinteresse an diesen Bevölkerungsgruppen bedeutet jedoch auch eine Einseitigkeit der Darstellung. Und gerade deshalb kann der Autor auf Seite 159 feststellen, im Vergleich zum NS-System (in dessen Fall man darüber zumindest diskutieren könne) seien der Leninismus und der Stalinismus niemals Zustimmungsdiktaturen gewesen. Sein Hauptargument ist die Darlegung der Art und Weise, wie die bolschewistische Diktatur in den Jahren 1917–1920 geschaffen wurde, wo er richtig hervorhebt, dass die Bolschewiken