

Boris Vilde in founding an underground newspaper in occupied France? And a bibliographic check would have spared us 'Lausanne: Universite de l'Geneve' (p.254); 'Closer' instead of Coser (p.182), Norman 'Cohen' instead of Cohn (p.262), or 'Vonsaitski' instead of Vonsiatsky (pp.229-30). Pity the reader who tries to use this book as a bibliographic tool!

No editor could be expected to make up for the fact that the authors do not appear to have read some of the books they cite. Menshevik attitudes are not 'outlined in Boris Nicolaevsky's, *The Letter of an Old Bolshevik*' (p.263), and I doubt that Richard Pipes would be pleased to see his *Struve: Liberal on the Right* classified under 'major Menshevik biographies' (p.263). The sources that follow biographical entries are often quirky or trivial, but then some entries list no sources at all.

In all fairness, compiling a satisfactory 'telephone book' of the Russian emigration appears to be more difficult than expected; breathing life into such a work has proven all but impossible. The *Russkoe zarubezh'e: zolotaia kniga emigratsii* cited above, John Glad's *Russia Abroad: Writers, History, Politics* (Washington, DC, 1999), or the impressionistic collection, *The Other Russia*, edited by Norman Stone and Michael Glenny (London, 1990), leave one somehow dissatisfied for not having gone to the heart of the phenomenon they are describing. The book under review, however, leaves one far more dissatisfied for many more reasons.

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Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001. Pp.xvi + 416; illustrations; notes; index; map. £26.95 (hardback). ISBN 0 691 057028

This is a compelling and provocative first book. Amir Weiner's goal is to show how the ways that Soviets 'made sense' of the Second World War both confirmed the fundamental bases of the Bolshevik project and re-centred the grand revolutionary narrative on the great ordeal of the war. By using an impressive array of archival sources, Weiner argues that accounts of the exhaustion of the revolutionary drive in the 'Thermidor' of the 1930s are highly exaggerated. Instead, the war proved to be the moment when the Revolution matured. This is an original argument that encourages historians of the Soviet Union to view the entire Soviet project through the lens of the system's apogee in 1945 rather than its inception in 1917 or its dissolution in 1991. Though Weiner is making the argument that the war mattered greatly, it should be noted that this book is largely focused on the post-war period. It was in the late 1940s, Weiner argues, that the dominant interpretations of the war were consolidated. Not coincidentally, it was also in this period that the author found the most sources for his study.

Weiner pursues his theme in three parts of two chapters each. Part I, 'Delineating the Body Politic', examines the 'new' post-war Communist Party. Weiner has a nice discussion here of the ways that popular war fiction helped

to provide a nationwide model for the post-war communist/army veteran. Leaders would be marked by their military persona, complete with a frontline 'can do' spirit, personal initiative, obedience to hierarchical authority, and ruthless but honourable decisiveness. These traits were contrasted with the flabby cowardice of 'rear' communists and the anarchic tendencies of former partisans, setting up a political showdown between these three important segments of the party based on their wartime roles. This showdown was fought both in symbolic realm and in the bare knuckles world of patronage politics, in which wartime comradeship constituted a more reliable basis for political cohesion than any ideological or regional interest. Army veterans won.

The end of the struggle between rival clans was not the end of the post-war party upheaval, however. Instead, a new round of massive party purges occurred in which all party members (especially those who had lived in occupied areas) had to account for their behaviour during the war. If found to have been insufficiently active in the fight against the Nazis, party members acquired a 'stain' that nothing short of new evidence demonstrating combat valour could remove. This was the largest post-war purge, and it gutted the party in areas that fell under German or Romanian occupation. More than half of the local *nomenklatura* lost their party cards in these verification campaigns, mainly for having been guilty of 'passivity' (p.85). In his chapter on these purges, Weiner stresses his favourite theme: the quintessentially 'modern' attempt of the Soviet state to purify its population in order to erase social, political or cultural antagonism.

This notion that the Bolshevik policy was based on an obsession with purity is taken too far at times. In Chapter 3, 'Excising Evil', Weiner explores the conflict between the Soviet state and Ukrainian ethno-nationalists during and after the war. After linking the campaign against Ukrainian nationalists to the wartime punishments of 'enemy nations' such as the Crimean Tatars, Weiner argues that 'while the Soviet practice of violence was triggered by specific circumstances such as military necessity, its logic was anchored in ideology ... and was incorporated into an all-encompassing drive to purify the socionational body' (p.172). But the evidence Weiner provides does not always support this interpretation. The battles were marked by increasing brutalisation, a take-no-prisoners attitude on the part of the government forces, public executions and targeting of civilians suspected of collaboration, but they never assumed the guise of an attack on Ukrainians as Ukrainians. It seemed to me throughout this section that the goal was not 'to purify the socionational body' but to exterminate armed opposition to the state through a concerted and broadly targeted counter-insurgency campaign. Surely these are processes that can be distinguished from each other.

Chapter 4 was much more convincing. Here Weiner argues that the fundamental clash between the Soviet state and Soviet Jews in the late Stalin era was over the meaning of the war. Claims that Jews had been specially victimised during the war struck at the heart of the war myth that both veterans and Soviet leaders had adopted. Not only were Jews denied this special positive status, but Soviet discourse soon marked them with a special stigma as well. Traditional accusations that Jews were unpatriotic, cowardly shirkers, which the Political Administration of the Red Army had vigorously suppressed in the 1920s and 1930s, were allowed to flourish openly both

during the war and after it. Soviet Jews were thus shut out of the civic community and denied a part in the powerful myth of the war. The 'anti-cosmopolitan' campaigns are now more fully understandable and more deeply tragic.

Weiner concludes with two chapters on the 'Making of a Postwar Soviet Nation'. Here he is most interested in seeing if and how the Soviet peasantry was finally brought into the Soviet project in the wake of the momentous shocks of collectivisation, invasion, occupation and reoccupation. Weiner argues that instead of an 'entrenched, nationalist, anti-Soviet constituency or an exhausted, passive body, an active Sovietized community was emerging' (p.304). The war experience turned villages previously united mostly by hostility to collective farms into villages bound together by their victimisation at the hands of occupiers and the sense of a common fate with the Soviet Union brought about largely by the large number of rural men serving in the Red Army. Weiner argues that 'it was the war that finally connected the ordinary peasant in the small collective farms of this remote region to a Soviet myth in which he (rarely she) was not the culprit but the hero' (p.314).

Weiner's arguments throughout this book are challenging and iconoclastic. For the most part, however, he writes as if important counter-arguments simply did not exist. He does not address the conflict between his conclusion that the war was the climax of the Soviet project and the conclusion of many other scholars that it represented a definite deviation from the trajectory of state policy established in the First Five Year Plan period. Important recent articles on the decentralisation, indeed de-Stalinisation, of power and initiative in the military, in the media, in the religious and cultural spheres, and in the economy in the war years are ignored. The slim literature on the post-war era is likewise sidestepped. He dismisses Nina Tumarkin's argument that there was a significant difference between the public representations of the war and private memory of it in a single footnote by making the tenuous claim that there was an 'effective fusion of personal and public imagination' (p.17) in the Stalinist period. His conclusion that the Soviet peasantry was effectively incorporated into the polity in the post-war era directly contradicts Elena Zubkova's argument that the peasantry remained alienated and bitter. These are substantive historical debates, but Weiner does not engage with them.

There are significant methodological differences between Weiner's work and that of previous authors on the war experience as well. Weiner's method is Kotkinesque. He takes a single case study at a crucial moment and makes broad claims about the Soviet project as a whole on the basis of that study. There are obvious strengths to this tactic. Vinnytsia does indeed prove to be a lovely 'testing ground for the evolution of Soviet mythology' (p.9). Collaborators, partisans, Red Army veterans, communists who had 'hid in the rear' during the war, Ukrainian peasants and outcast Jewish populations made Vinnytsia a particularly vibrant site to examine. In addition, looking at the Soviet project from outside of Russia provides a needed corrective to previous Russocentric analyses. But the fact that Vinnytsia makes for a great case study does not mean that it was somehow *locus sovieticus*. A certain amount of restraint would seem to be called for, a recognition that citizens of Tomsk and Tashkent probably experienced the 1940s differently, and that this difference might call into question large general claims about the war, the revolution and

the Soviet project as a whole. Weiner does not exercise this restraint, and the result is a book that is consistently thought-provoking but not always fully convincing.

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Roger D. Markwick, *Rewriting History in Soviet Russia: The Politics of Revisionist Historiography, 1956–1974*. Basingstoke and London: Palgrave (formerly Macmillan Press), 2001. Pp.xx + 327; notes; bibliography; index. £50.00 (hardback). ISBN 0 333 79209 2

An emergent civil society has become a standard element in the story of the Soviet Union's collapse. Moshe Lewin and other historians have convincingly argued that the Soviet Union's emergence in the post-Stalin era as a newly urbanised and highly professionalised society produced a growing urban elite that sought greater control over their personal and professional lives. Many inside the party, some of whom were themselves products of post-Stalinist society, were cognisant of the mounting pressures for autonomy coming from the Soviet Union's new elite, and they recognised that the Stalinist methods of administration and control that had modernised peasant Russia could not effectively administer modern Russia.

This awareness, Lewin and others write, became an impetus for reform. The Soviet Union's final act began when Gorbachev loosened Communist Party controls over popular expression and professionals, intellectuals, students and other elements of post-Stalinist society seized control of the reform process, exposed the party as an obstacle to progress, and swept the CPSU into the dustbin of history. By placing the Soviet Union's collapse in the context of historical trajectories and broad social phenomena, such as urbanisation and modernisation, these explanations for communism's collapse have tended to downplay human agency. Roger Markwick's study of revisionist Soviet historians offers a reminder that the social forces that contributed to the Soviet Union's collapse consisted of heroic individuals who risked their careers and reputations to challenge the Communist Party's grip on Soviet society. Markwick sees revisionist historians of the 1950s and 1960s as a resurgent Russian intelligentsia and he argues that the struggles of these and other *intelligently* with Stalinist bureaucrats and officials started the Soviet Union down the road to communism's collapse.

Markwick's book is structured around four historiographical episodes dating from the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras. Markwick begins his study only months after Stalin's death when he recounts the campaign by Eduard Burdzhakov and other editors of the journal *Voprosy istorii* to move historical investigation beyond the interpretation mandated by the Stalinist *Short Course*. The author then explores the essays and articles written in the late 1950s and early 1960s by a small group of historians known as the 'New Direction Historians'. In this section Markwick offers an especially interesting and detailed account of Viktor Danilov's struggle to write and publish a new history of collectivisation. Markwick also recounts the rise and fall of the