

ethical behavior in the Hell of biopolitics that was the Siege of Leningrad. One could imagine how analyses of these texts and their particular focus on the ethical could have structured additional exciting and disturbing “case studies,” and might have supported with their shrewdness and gravitas the observations of the rest of the book.

What are the other possible next steps, what are the questions that Yarov leaves unanswered, and which invite further investigation? It seems important to ask how ethics during the Siege were in dialogue with the rhetorical ethical code of the official Soviet regime. One wonders to what extent the Communist Party’s discourse had any validity for those suffering the Siege.

Another possible direction of analysis is that of comparative ethics: given how much research on ethics has occurred through Holocaust studies during the last decade, it seems logical to bring Yarov’s inquiry into this comparative context. Theodor Adorno’s embittered observation becomes relevant: “When even genocide becomes cultural property in committed literature, it becomes easier to continue complying with the culture that gave rise to the murder.” (Adorno, *Notes to Literature*, vol. 2, New York, 1974, 88). A scholar of Siege self-analysis could ask, what kind of ethical culture was produced by the Siege? Possibly, building a comparative inquiry between various constructions of the self during the Siege and Holocaust would open cultural exploration to more radical conclusions about the nature of ethical choices during political disaster.

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Trotskii i tovarishchii: Levaia oppozitsiia i politicheskaiia kul'tura RKP(b) 1923–1924. By Aleksandr Reznik. *Epokha voin i revoliutsii*, no. 10. St. Petersburg: Evropeiskii Universitet v Sankt-Peterburge, 2017. 382 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Chronology. Name Index. Illustrations. RUB 390, hard bound.

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Around 1988, in the fast-changing USSR, one of the signs of serious change was the appearance of officially-published editions of the works of Bolsheviks that had been banned up until then, including those of the demon-in-chief, Lev Trotskii. After initial enthusiasm driven by a naïve hope that they might contain an inspirational vision of a renewed Bolshevik socialism, most readers appeared to become rapidly disillusioned with the same old ideology, “theological” arguments comparable to angels on pinheads, and “*langue du bois*” wrapping arguments in heavy clichés. Not everyone was turned off, however, and a few devotees of Trotskii began to appear. Now, a generation later a few followers and some small groups interested in his ideas have promoted new studies like the one under review here. Aleksandr Reznik’s superbly-researched account looks in greater detail and on a deeper archival base than any predecessor at the vital inner-party struggle of 1923–25 around the emerging left opposition.

Starting with a useful survey of literature, Reznik claims he is going to follow an anthropological methodology and produce a new interpretation of the episode. Does he succeed? First of all, a reader unaware of the anthropological claim would be unlikely to deduce it from simply reading the account. What Reznik seems to mean is that he has created some relatively “thick description” of the struggle and herein lies the value of his study. Reznik has made himself the master of central and provincial party archives to give an unprecedentedly multi-layer account of the

debate. He has shown that there were few clear-cut categories but there was a bubbling fermentation of groups, mini-groups, ideas, alliances and differences, some mere nuances while others deeply divergent. It clearly bears out his claim that the opposition was heterogeneous and informally organized. One could say the party center was also heterogeneous but, and maybe Reznik underestimates this, much more formally organized.

The early chapters focus on the multi-faceted discussion. One of the two most original chapters focuses on “Techniques of political struggle” (*Tekhnologii politicheskoi bor’by*) which looks not only at the (decisive?) “struggle for votes” but also takes in the role of rumor and secrecy, party rules and enforcement (including a very valuable cameo on the work of Control Commissions) and, in a nod to the rising history of emotions, “the psychology of a Trotskyite” (191). The final chapter consists of fine accounts of the struggle and its outcome in the center and two local raions, Perm and Khamovnicheskii, in Moscow. In addition to the richness of the text the volume is superbly annotated with some eighty pages of invaluable notes.

Indeed, Reznik’s chief contribution is the depth of research. Does it convince along the lines of a new interpretation? Perhaps not. The picture of extreme fluidity he presents could perhaps be seen as general chaos in the party, indicating that, as Lenin’s health forced him into the background, the bitter factiousness of the party, which goes back to 1903, would be hard to keep in check. The constant complaint of oppositions was lack of democracy and weak worker-representation as opposed to the central bureaucracy. The very variety of positions of individuals and tiny groups around these basic orientations shows a critical failure to at least have some semblance of unity. The central bureaucracy is also shown to have major divisions but at least it adhered through this crisis. Some of its self-defense was ironic. Zinoviev argued it was necessary to centralize because of “too strong backwardness” and “the low cultural-political level of the entire mass membership of the party,” formulations which must have elicited a groan from every Menshevik who read them. The fact that the opposition remained small and isolated is perhaps glossed over. Although “emotions” are put into the picture personalities are not. What were Trotskii and Stalin’s personal relations like at this time? Stalin remained, at least overtly, friendly towards Trotskii until the latter’s fatal utterance about Stalin being the gravedigger of the revolution. While oppositionists complained about “military methods” and “administrative repression” being used against them, the picture of how this was done remains incomplete. Above all, the most fundamental cause of bureaucratization, the Bolshevik determination to lead in all aspects of society with only a handful of real “conscious” Bolsheviks, is not admitted by the protagonists or the author. Nonetheless, this an absorbing and well-written book which is compulsory reading for anyone interested in the opposition and the succession struggle. It shows there is still great value in studying party history.

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Nikolai Bolkhovitinov and American Studies in the USSR: People’s Diplomacy in the Cold War. By Sergei I. Zhuk. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017. xii, 274 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. \$110.00, hard bound. doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.345

The focus of the book goes beyond the intellectual evolution of Nikolai Bolkhovitinov (1930–2008), a prominent Soviet and Russian historian, intellectual, and a specialist