

Spain and Italy. Yet in terms of the big picture, this would have added only individual nuances (such as the important role of anarchism in the Argentinian case). However, in this way, syndicalism is presented as an exclusively European and North American phenomenon (South Africa, which has been the subject of recent works by Lucien van der Walt, is equally overlooked). In addition, the work would have benefited from more careful copy-editing (above all in the case of the foreign names and expressions).

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GOLDMAN, WENDY Z. *Terror and Democracy in the Age of Stalin. The Social Dynamics of Repression* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge [etc.] 2007. x, 274 pp. £40.00; \$75.00; doi:10.1017/S0020859009000078

The nature of the Great Terror has long been one of the most debated issues in the historiography of Stalinism. With the new findings from the Russian archives, even the scholars who view the Great Terror as a series of centrally directed punitive actions now rarely deny the presence of a social dimension to it. Despite the established vision of the Great Terror as a *socio-political* phenomenon there has not been, until the publication of *Terror and Democracy in the Age of Stalin*, a special comprehensive study of popular participation in repression.

How did it happen that normal and, by and large, decent people destroyed themselves? To answer this question Wendy Goldman examines the mechanisms by which the repression engulfed Soviet society. More specifically, she uses archival materials of the All-Union Central Council of Unions (VTsSPS) to explore how the terror spread through the unions of factory workers, a network that encompassed 22 million members. She argues that “repression was a mass phenomenon, not only in the number of victims it claimed, but also in the number of perpetrators it spawned” (p. 7).

In her thorough, almost anatomic, analysis of terror Wendy Goldman marks out the factors that pushed and facilitated its development. She recognizes the role of the political tensions for the beginning and the development of the terror: Stalin’s demand for absolute loyalty and his fear of a “fifth column” on the eve of a war, as well as the aggressive role of the NKVD, and particularly of Nikolai Ezhov, in broadening the “murder plot” after the assassination of Sergei Kirov.

However, she goes far beyond these traditional political explanations of terror by exploring the interplay between the central party authorities and the factory unions, local party committees (*partkomy*) and workers. She documents how and why the “demand” for terror that came “from above” penetrated the society and involved everyone. In doing so, she stresses the importance of socio-economic and institutional issues. Thus, while in the second half of the 1930s, many industrial and everyday problems caused by forced industrialization remained unsolved, the transformation of the unions, in the course of the 1920s, made it difficult for workers to pursue their grievances collectively. By the second half of the 1930s unions ceased to play any role in defending the interests of their members. They turned into “cheer-leaders for production”, and “watchdogs over the wage fund”, their function differing little from that of a capitalist manager.

The central party leaders managed to find a “language of terror” that appealed to the masses and helped to channel the workers’ grievances into repressions. Wendy Goldman’s *Terror and Democracy* proves that the mass membership in social organizations (particularly unions) became one of the crucial factors in the rapid spread of repression. By analyzing the role of VTsSPS, unions and factory *partkomy* in the progression of repressions, Wendy Goldman’s *Terror and Democracy* presents terror not only as a social

but also as an institutional phenomenon. An institutional interplay between the Party, VTsSPS and NKVD had a snowball effect.

While the factors that escalated terror were many, the ones that blocked its development were few. Among them were the respect that the old cadres of workers had for the leaders of the 1920s oppositions – Trotsky, Bukharin, Kamenev, Zinoviev, who remained in the workers' eyes the recognized leaders of the Russian revolution; a preoccupation of the workers and local leaders with industrial and everyday problems rather than with political struggle; and workers' disbelief in the existence of any organized anti-Soviet opposition among their own ranks; as well as local apathy, disorganization, "a good measure of common decency", and belief that the "hunt for enemies" was a function of the political police and not of the unions, *partkomy*, or workers. However the major firewall against the spread of repression was built by the "family circles" (*semeistvennost'*) and mutual guarantee (*krugovaia poruka*) which existed among the local union and party leaders. Only when the central party authorities and NKVD managed to destroy this buffer did the repression become a mass madness.

Using the VTsSPS statistics and documents, Wendy Goldman shows exactly when and why the initial apathy in the unions and factories descended into mass madness. Through 1935, and until the fall of 1936, despite the demands of the central party authorities to start looking for oppositionists among their ranks, the local unions and party leaders remained largely spectators of the trials rather than participants of terror. Thus, the 1935 verification and the 1936 exchange of party documents did not result in many expulsions for political reasons. "Nationwide, about 8.8 percent of those excluded from the Party (3,324 people) were expelled for Trotskyism or Zinovievism" (p. 89). However, the central party leaders and NKVD, fearing that it was impossible to remove all oppositionists by action "from above", continued their pressure on the local *partkomy* and factory unions.

Angry at the inability and often unwillingness of the local party and union officials to purge the lower organizations of oppositionists, the central party leaders and NKVD moved to mobilize the rank and file. For that, they shifted the public focus of the repression from political assassins in "the Kirov affair" to industrial wreckers. The emphasis on wrecking, first seen in the Kemerovo trial (November 1936), became a major focus of the second Moscow show trial (January 1937). This reshaped the message of terror to a wide popular audience by emphasizing workers as victims and witnesses, rather than spectators, and helped dispel apathy and mobilize the rank and file in the party and unions. It is not clear (if possible to answer) whether the shift occurred as a deliberate plan of mass mobilization or happened as a side affect of the hunt for certain prominent former oppositionists, such as G. Piatakov, a deputy commissar of heavy industry, but because of this shift the hunt for enemies successfully spread into every factory and union. Workers grasped the utility of the wreckers' case for addressing industrial and everyday problems. The question of whether they believed in the case, or utilized it for their own purposes, remains open.

The February–March 1937 Plenum took a further step in the spread of mass repression by giving workers the instruments to insure a more thorough purge. Among such "instruments" were secret ballots, direct elections, single candidates in the place of lists, open debate of the candidates's merits, and criticism from below. Wendy Goldman associates these procedures with democracy, and stresses the paradox of using democracy for a mass mobilization to terror. In her own comparison, if the hunt for oppositionists was a fire, democracy played the role of gasoline.

The democratic procedures used in the elections and the mass mobilization of the rank and file destroyed the "family circles" that controlled the regional and local party committees, thus taking down the most effective buffer against the spread of repression. Soon the unions were turned upside down. The "democracy" allowed by the central party

authorities was therefore not a “smoke screen”, not a collection of meaningless slogans designed to mask Stalin’s leadership’s true intentions; it was the very means by which the repression spread. Arguing against the thesis that Stalin and his supporters used democratic slogans to mobilize the lower ranks against regional leaders in order to bring them under Moscow’s control, advocated by J. Arch Getty, Gabor Ritterspon, Oleg Naumov, and James Harris, Wendy Goldman believes that the use of democratic procedures had only the goal of extricating the former oppositionists from the midst of local leaders by eliminating *kooptatsiia* and *semeistvennost’*. While, in her opinion, Stalin’s true intentions cannot be known, a careful reading of his speech at the 1937 Plenum suggests that Stalin “aimed for a ruthless yet limited attack on former oppositionists” (p. 129). However the democratic procedures that gave a free hand to workers quickly amplified the hunt beyond the set parameters. Tragically and predictably, workers lost this battle. Many of them became victims of terror while the “language of terror” could not solve the problems rooted in rapid industrialization.

Wendy Z. Goldman’s *Terror and Democracy* is a great contribution to the social history of Stalin’s repression. It is of high value for scholars of Stalinism and graduate students. Clearly and vividly written, it will also make interesting reading for undergraduate students and a wider audience interested in Russian history.

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PIRANI, SIMON. *The Russian Revolution in Retreat, 1920–24*. Soviet workers and the new communist elite. [BASEES/RoutledgeCurzon Series on Russian and East European Studies, Vol. 45.] Routledge, London [etc.] 2008. xiv, 289 pp. \$160.00; doi:10.1017/S002085900900008X

In 1917, Bolshevik demands for “soviet power” resonated broadly with Russian workers, who embraced participatory democracy as essential to their dream of social liberation. In this multi-faceted study of working-class politics in Moscow from 1920 to 1924, Simon Pirani offers new insight into a “traditional” topic – the revolution’s retreat away from its original democratic promise towards one-party dictatorship. Drawing on rich new materials from local party, factory, and police archives, he documents workers’ ongoing struggles to keep a broader, more politically inclusive revolution alive, against the Bolshevik party’s increasingly intensive efforts to consolidate its rule in the process of rebuilding a shattered economy. While not minimizing the Bolsheviks’ reliance on repressive tactics, Pirani emphasizes the party’s success in forging a new “social contract” with workers under the New Economic Policy (NEP): capitalizing on their shared desire for economic recovery, the party promised workers better working and living conditions in exchange for their political voice.

In late 1920, Pirani begins, the “super-optimism” of civil-war communists was quickly eclipsed by a crippling crisis in food supply and transport. Suffering from hunger and postwar exhaustion, Moscow workers – especially those in the male-dominated and traditionally Bolshevik metalworking industries – were still quick to protest against non-egalitarian policies like unequal rationing and shock work. Rank-and-file communists, like those associated with the strongly workerist Bauman group, spoke out with equal outrage about evidence of increasing privilege and corruption within the party, and (echoing earlier concerns of the democratic centralists) demanded the shifting of more authority to local soviets. Mounting discontent resonated in heated party debates, and in a revival of working-class collective action, most notably, in the mass strikes of February 1921.