

refusing to accept its authority, and of how SADUM's centralized authority was sharply dented by Khrushchev's antireligious campaign. Yet, he persists with his maximalist argument about the centrality of SADUM to Central Asian life. I also have to profess deep skepticism of Tasar's claim that CARC bureaucrats of the late Stalinist period were motivated by a desire "to consolidate a rule-of-law society" (95) and a "sense of responsibility for the communities they served" (100).

Tasar paints a picture of an unbroken continuity in the place of Islam in modern Central Asia. In this, he is part of a cohort of scholars today who insist on the essential Islamicness of Central Asia. The region, they assert, is innately Islamic and can only be understood through Islam, defined as a reified tradition of authority embodied in the ulama. The upheavals of the Soviet period did nothing to dent the authority of Islam and Islamic elites in the region, while other groups that emerged in the modern period, whether Muslim modernists, nationalists, or communists, remained uninfluential and insignificant. This view is not new, but if its previous iterations had seen the reified Islam in a heroic mode, battling adversity. Tasar effaces all adversity from his account, leaving us with a view of Islam never having been trampled at all. This is a serious mischaracterization of the cultural and religious dynamics in Central Asian society. It is achieved by ignoring everyone except the officials of SADUM and CARC. The only Muslims worthy of Tasar's attention are those connected to mosques and shrines. Non-observant Muslims, Muslims in the Communist Party or in local government, or the urban intelligentsia, many of whom were deeply hostile to SADUM, are completely banished from the narrative, leaving the ulama of SADUM as all-important. Tasar also willfully ignores all expressions of national discourse in his sources, for Central Asians for him can only be Muslim, and pious and observant ones at that. There is no place in his account for challenges to Islamic authority, its displacement under political assault, or its fraught relationship to discourses of ethnic nationhood. To his credit, Tasar describes (but does not explain) SADUM's shift from a Sufi-centered traditionalism to rigorist scripturalism, but beyond that, "Islam" remains unproblematized in the book. Tasar's argument is profoundly essentialist and, as such, fundamentally flawed. It does little to advance our understanding of the complexities of Central Asia's modern history or of the place of Islam in it.

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***Raised under Stalin: Young Communists and the Defense of Socialism.***

By Seth Bernstein. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017. xi, 254 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Tables. \$55.00, hard bound.

doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.299

Although historians have long been interested in the subject of Soviet youth, relatively few academic studies have ever focused squarely on the communist

youth league—the Komsomol—in their investigations of state and society in the USSR.<sup>1</sup> This is surprising, insofar as the experience of the Komsomol dovetailed with that of the party in many ways, especially during the interwar years. Loosely-structured in its early days, the Komsomol gradually swelled into a massive monolithic institution. Originally a radical group intent on overthrowing the status quo, the youth league later became a central part of the USSR's increasingly conservative cultural establishment. And if the Komsomol began as an organization intent on freeing Soviet youth from the constraints of the past, it eventually assumed a key role in shaping and disciplining those it claimed to be liberating.

In his monograph *Raised under Stalin: Young Communists and the Defense of Socialism*, Seth Bernstein provides a needed analysis of the history of the Komsomol between the late 1920s and 1941. Writing largely within the genre of institutional history, Bernstein traces the evolution of the Komsomol from its founding in 1918 as a revolutionary organization to its maturation as an instrument of rulership, administration, and control.<sup>2</sup>

As is well known, the early youth league was a party organization designed to mobilize young radicals into the service of the revolution. Once enrolled in the Komsomol, these activists became associated with some of the revolution's most radical, anti-establishment actions, whether in the workplace (the baiting of bourgeois specialists), the home (the denunciation of traditional family hierarchies and superstition) or society at large (the disruption of organized

1. Most recent work on the Komsomol focuses on its first decade. See Matthias Neumann, *The Communist Youth League and the Transformation of the Soviet Union, 1918–1932* (New York, 2011); Neumann, “Revolutionizing Mind and Soul? Soviet Youth and Cultural Campaigns during the New Economic Policy, 1921–28,” *Social History* vol. 33, no. 3 (2008): 243–67; Sean Guillory, “‘We Shall Refashion Life on Earth!’: The Political Culture of the Young Communist League, 1918–1928” (PhD. diss., University of California Los Angeles, 2009); Guillory, “The Shattered Self of Komsomol Civil War Memoirs,” *Slavic Review* vol. 71, no. 3 (Fall 2012): 546–65. This is also true in regard to older work on the organization, including Isabel Tirado, *Young Guard! The Communist Youth League, Petrograd, 1917–1920* (New York, 1988); Lynne Viola, *The Best Sons of the Fatherland: Workers in the Vanguard of Soviet Collectivization* (New York, 1987); Ralph Talcot Fischer, *Pattern for Soviet Youth: A Study of the Congresses of the Komsomol, 1918–1954* (New York, 1959); Allen Kassof, *The Soviet Youth Program: Regimentation and Rebellion* (Cambridge, 1965); Peter Gooderham, “The Komsomol and Worker Youth: The Inculcation of ‘Communist Values’ in Leningrad during NEP,” *Soviet Studies* vol. 34, no. 4 (1982): 506–28. For more general work on Soviet youth, see Corinna Kuhr-Korolev, Stefam Plaggenborg, and Monica Wellmann, eds., *Sowjetjugend 1917–1941: Generation zwischen Revolution und Resignation* (Essen, 2001); Pitirim Derkachenko, ed., *Molodezhnoe dvizhenie Rossii v dokumentakh 1905–1938 gg.*, (Moscow, 1999); Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin* (Cambridge, 2006); Igal Halfin, *From Darkness to Light: Class, Consciousness and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia* (Pittsburgh, 2000); Halfin, *Stalinist Confessions: Messianism and Terror at the Leningrad Communist University* (Pittsburgh, 2009); Anne Gorsuch, *Youth in Revolutionary Russia: Enthusiasts, Bohemians, Delinquents* (Bloomington, 2000); Peter Konecny, *Builders and Deserters: Students, State and Community in Leningrad, 1917–1941* (Montreal, 1999); William Husband, “Godless Communists”: *Atheism and Society in Soviet Russia, 1917–1932* (DeKalb, 2000); Ol'ga Nikonova, *Vospitanie patriotov: Osoaviakhimi voennaia podgotovka naseleniia v Ural'skoi provintsii (1927–1941 gg.)* (Moscow, 2010).

2. Bernstein's approach thus differs from the more “bottom-up,” grassroots perspective afforded by studies such as Neumann, *The Communist Youth League and the Transformation of the Soviet Union, 1918–1932*.

religious practice and incitement of generational conflict). Komsomol members also served as the shock troops of the revolution during the so-called Great Break (1928–1929) and the period of collectivization and dekulakization (1929–1933).

Bernstein argues that over time, however, the Komsomol came to be more than just a vehicle for the party's mobilization of popular radicalism. The youth league served as a context for social experimentation as Bolshevism was transformed from an oppositionist political movement into a model of social and cultural practices on a massive, society-wide scale. It offered an opportunity to fashion and shape the radicalism of its membership through propaganda activities that were both agitational and indoctrinational. It attempted to train its recruits through educational and cultural programming. And it did much of this in a surprisingly bureaucratic way, tracking its membership through personnel reports, statistics, and the surveillance of opinions, habits, and practices expressed within the ranks.

Aside from being a recruiting tool for the party, the Komsomol fulfilled a variety of functions designed to ensure that its upwardly mobile membership possessed the necessary professional, cultural, and ideological qualifications. Early priorities like education and indoctrination were thus complemented by physical fitness and paramilitary exercises during the later 1930s as national defense became a high priority. These forms of physical, educational, and political training for the rank and file were, in turn, matched by efforts to identify and purge unworthy elements from the ranks, either through self-criticism, document verification, or investigations into social origin and past political affiliations.

Above and beyond its role in preparing Soviet citizens for party membership, the Komsomol fulfilled other important administrative functions as well. Early on, youth league members frequently served as party auxiliaries when card-carrying Bolsheviks proved to be in short supply. This was particularly visible during the cultural and political agitation drives of the late 1920s and the collectivization and dekulakization campaigns of the early 1930s, as well as in the aftermath of the 1937–38 Great Terror, when Komsomol activists were promoted *en masse* into the party. The same would later be true during the Second World War. During the mid-1930s, the Komsomol's mobilizational service to the party and state was augmented by a new mandate, according to which the league was now to offer Soviet youth training in culture, personal conduct, and good manners. Becoming cultured was now an intrinsic part of becoming an upstanding citizen of the proletarian dictatorship.

Bernstein complements *Raised Under Stalin's* institutional point of view with regular attention to the Komsomols themselves.<sup>3</sup> There, he notes that

3. Much of this grassroots material is deliberately drawn from outlying regions and the non-Russian republics, at times based on archival research conducted outside of Moscow. It is presented anecdotally, much like Sheila Fitzpatrick does in her epic studies of the 1930s, rather than in the form of more systematic case studies. Such an approach offers considerable breadth, but at the cost of both depth and a better sense of regional variation and change over time. See Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization* (New York, 1996); and *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York, 2000).

Soviet youth were simultaneously an asset and a liability for the party during the interwar years. After all, if many of these recruits proved to be easily rallied to the revolutionary cause, they also required a huge amount of discipline and direction. Such issues became more pronounced over time, aggravated by a growing generation gap that has been most thoroughly discussed by Anna Krylova. According to Krylova, Soviet youth in the mid-1930s were forced to confront a crisis of authenticity, insofar as they were expected to make their way in a revolutionary society despite having been too young in 1917 to have actually participated in the USSR's foundational events. As a result, Soviet youth sought out revolutionary credentials wherever they could find them—in the village, on the shop floor, in higher education, or in their Komsomol organizations. This crisis of legitimacy and authenticity was in many cases only fully resolved at the front during 1941–45.<sup>4</sup>

As Bernstein sheds light on the experiences of individuals in the Komsomol, he repeatedly returns to a handful of central youth league leaders. In some senses, this history of the Komsomol could have been written through the biography of A. V. Kosarev, who served as the seventh general secretary of the organization from 1929 to 1938. A radical with three grades of formal education, Kosarev worked on the shop floor in Moscow factories during the First World War before joining the pro-Bolshevik Union of Worker Youth in the fall of 1917. An early member of the Komsomol in 1918, he came to personify the youth league, rising from a rabble-rousing local activist through the Red Army ranks into a series of leadership posts during the mid-1920s, pausing only twice for remedial schooling in political and administrative work.

The quintessential Komsomol “promotee” (*vydvizhenets*), Kosarev demonstrated considerable political savvy during the second half of the 1920s and was appointed to head the entire organization in 1929. From then on, Kosarev would guide the league as it followed the party's increasingly Stalinist line. Kosarev himself transformed during these years from a militant revolutionary to an increasingly conservative representative of the party establishment. Along the way, he exchanged his interest in militancy, class consciousness, and internationalism for discipline, party mindedness, and Soviet patriotism.<sup>5</sup> Bernstein provides photos of the activist that capture this transition perfectly: if Kosarev, around 1925 assumed a cocky Napoleon-like pose in his worker's cap and commissar's leather jacket (44), by 1936, he had swapped his revolutionary machismo for the gravitas of a bureaucrat's double-breasted Boston suit, dress shirt, and polka dotted tie (136).<sup>6</sup>

Bernstein argues that Kosarev's eventual fall from grace was linked to his overall career trajectory. A member of the Stalinist elite in the 1930s, he built a patron-client network within the Komsomol that strengthened his hold over the organization, but which also linked his fate to those both above and below him. According to Bernstein, Kosarev's authority was called into

4. Anna Krylova, “Soviet Modernity in Life and Fiction: The Generation of the ‘New Soviet Person’ in the 1930s” (Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 2000).

5. See, for instance, his address to the 10<sup>th</sup> Komsomol congress: A. Kosarev, “Bespredel'no liubit' nashu rodinu,” *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, October 21, 1934, 3.

6. On Kosarev, see N. V. Trushchenko, *Kosarev* (Moscow, 1988); *Aleksandr Kosarev: sbornik vospominanii*, second ed. (Moscow, 2003).

question between 1937–38 by his ties to politically-compromised officials and his reluctance to engage in an indiscriminate purge of his organization. His fall in November 1938 was precipitated by a denunciation by O. P. Mishakova, a fanatical underling who questioned his vigilance as Komsomol boss. Bernstein also reveals that Kosarev was closely aligned with N. I. Ezhov—a fact that may have ensured him the latter’s protection until late 1938, but thereafter left him painfully exposed. Ultimately, if Kosarev was the quintessential Stalinist Komsomol, he also epitomized the perils of this calling.<sup>7</sup>

Bernstein completes his story of the communist youth league by examining the degree to which the organization had become an instrument of party and state rule by 1941. What had once been an autonomous organization with a militant following was now a bureaucratic apparatus tasked with supplying its membership with proper ideological, cultural, and paramilitary training. This ossification of the Komsomol’s revolutionary élan is reflective of similar processes visible throughout the late interwar Soviet experiment.

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***The Wars of Yesterday: The Balkan Wars and the Emergence of Modern Military Conflict, 1912–13.*** Ed. Katrin Boeckh and Sabine Rutar. New York: Berghahn Books, 2018. 438 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Tables. \$140.00, hard bound.

doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.300

Geographical and chronological marginalization have seriously hampered our understanding of the Balkan wars. The usual and now well-known prejudices against the supposed primitivism of southeastern Europe led many (although not all) contemporary western observers of the conflicts of 1912–13 to discount them as unimportant examples of modern warfare. And the proximity of the First World War, beginning while many of the Balkan armies were still mobilized, has regrettably (although understandably) led to an eclipsing of the conflicts, sometimes even in the combatant countries themselves. Attention, when it has fallen on this region, has not always been welcome. The conflicts of the 1990s led to some vulgarized grand comparisons that inevitably focused on violence of the societies in question. Perhaps the most notorious example of this was American diplomat and historian George F.

7. In attributing Kosarev’s fate to his institutional ties, Bernstein discounts post-Stalin rumors that regarded his fall to be the result of a personal vendetta. According to materials assembled in 1954 that led to Kosarev’s eventual rehabilitation, he had denounced L. P. Beriia while the latter was still secretary of the Transcaucasian party organization in the mid-1930s. When Beriia became NKVD chief in November 1938, he apparently took a personal interest in Kosarev’s arrest and then ordered him to be beaten into confessing to counterrevolutionary crimes. See Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial’no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI), f. 17, op. 171, d. 439, ll. 134–140. Such a simplistic account likely underestimates the degree to which Kosarev was already thoroughly compromised by the time of Beriia’s promotion.