

The book successfully explicates how lower-class women were, in some historical moments, more bound by the state and the elite ideas of morality than liberated by modern concepts of emancipation. In Hong Kong, for example, the PLK as an elite institution took steps to deport lower-class women who did not meet standards of correct womanhood. Guangzhou authorities policed morality and sanctioned those who were seen as being morally deviant at the same time that women's right to work was upheld. Chin explains the enduring, and limiting, role of social conventions and public morality in the processes of emancipating Chinese women, and reminds readers that emancipation is not a linear process toward greater freedom. And while lower-class women did gain a measure of emancipation, such as freedom from bondage and greater opportunities for work in the service sector, they continued to be constrained by moral expectations for dress, sexuality, and acceptable public behavior.

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ADLER, NANJI. *Keeping Faith with the Party. Communist Believers Return from the Gulag*. Indiana University Press, 2012. Ill. 237 pp. \$70.00. (Paper: \$25.00; E-book: \$22.00.) doi:10.1017/S0020859013000382

How dictatorial regimes survive is one of the fundamental questions of history and political science. It is particularly relevant for the Soviet Union, as one of the most enduring non-democratic regimes of the twentieth century. Nanci Adler, Manager Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the University of Amsterdam and a specialist on the history of the Gulag, approaches this subject through the perspective of a particular group of Stalin-era political prisoners or their surviving family members, namely those who kept faith with the Communist Party even after having endured years in camps and exile, or lost their parents and suffered severely under the forced separation. Why is it, she asks, that they remained loyal to the party and struggled to be allowed to rejoin it? And why did some of them, as was the case with Zoria Serebriakova with whom the book starts, even express gratitude to Khrushchev and the party for releasing them?

To explain this attitude, puzzling for Western observers, Adler benefits from her interdisciplinary approach, making use of the findings of cognitive neurosciences on the workings of memory, and thus also its shortcomings. To circumvent the deficiencies and limitations of memory, she submits the narratives of victims and survivors to a "qualitative psychohistorical case study analysis", in which generalization derives from the identification of common trends in a variety of individuals (p. 6). Even so, her interpretative framework is not limited to psychology, but multi-layered, based on five explanatory factors, of which some are derived from interpretations widely found in political science and social history.

Adler's first, and seemingly dominant, interpretation is located within the approach of secularized political religions. In particular, there are two dimensions on which she insists: a faith-based belief in communism, and charisma as a powerful motivator for the attachment of the individual to the Soviet system. She refers to Max Weber's concept of

charisma, but her definition is different from his. In her view charisma is “perhaps more accurately located in the *response* of attraction elicited from adherents” (p. 13) than in the personality of the leader. She draws a careful and useful distinguishing line between these two concepts. While she considers faith-based belief as “primarily a cognitive, thinking process”, charisma, on the other hand, is “an emotional attachment”.

Her second line of interpretation is again psychological. She calls it identification with the aggressor, a psychological defence mechanism whereby victims adopt their repressor’s view of them. This holds true also for the third argument, the theory of cognitive dissonance. Adler finds it in the narratives of “loyalist communists”, who explain the repression they have been subjected to in terms of the aberration of errant leaders, or who justify it through politically necessary police tactics. Thus, they develop cognitive strategies to reduce the inconsistency between their ideology and the disconfirming evidence of their experience.

The fourth argument seems to owe more to social history than to psychology. Adler calls it functionalism, by which she understands the role of social advantages such as the fully fledged citizenship a returnee could hope for if they demonstrated loyal adherence to the system. Her last, fifth, explanatory factor, the so-called Stockholm Syndrome which accounts for the traumatic bond victims sometimes weave with the perpetrator, is again a psychological one.

These five explanatory factors structure the book, though only loosely. Chapter 1 is about the adaptive responses of some prisoners and returnees. It looks at how an ardent belief and the idea of sacrifice helped physical survival and served as a functional way of processing the experience of incarceration. Chapter 2, entitled “Reconciling the Self with the System”, then analyses how prisoners came to terms with the fact that they had been arrested and imprisoned, and how they assessed the culpability assigned to them. It distinguishes between those who assimilated themselves, thus incorporating the dominant ideology, and those who only accommodated their behaviour, but did not change their beliefs.

The next chapter looks more closely into the narrative explanations of how loyalty developed and how communist identity was maintained after the Twentieth Party Congress and Khrushchev’s speech on Stalinism. It concludes that, for the party, the notion of the personality cult served as a rather safe strategy for relocating the repression to a past that had been overcome. But this explanation of what had gone wrong was also very convenient for individual inmates and returnees “who wanted (needed) it to work” (p. 78). This chapter also underlines the importance of the war for the consolidation of a loyalist communist identity, because it allowed the merging of personal suffering with the larger one of “Mother Russia”.

In chapter 4, Adler follows returnees’ efforts to be reinstated in the party, along with their comrades, prior to the Perestroika period. She focuses in particular on the privileged group of communists recruited by Khrushchev to work within the party apparatus and on their role in creating a new party narrative. Importantly, as she shows, though victims and crimes were acknowledged in the Khrushchev era, there was no accountability or culpability. One had to wait for the Gorbachev era before perpetrators were – occasionally – discussed. The final chapter discusses the legacies of repression after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the demise of the party. Adler’s conclusions on the recent evolution of Russia are not optimistic. The Stalinist past is far from being critically historicized. Only a sanitized version has entered the schoolbooks. And citizens are officially encouraged to look at the “bright past”, not at the repression.

Important as all these findings are, this book is rather disappointing. The theoretical framework does not go beyond those developed in the Cold War period by the school of totalitarianism. This is not to say that the Soviet Union under Stalin was not a dictatorial or even a totalitarian state, aiming at the total control of its population. But an explanation of the widespread (though probably minority) identification with and/or assimilation to the system by a religious-like total belief or by individual psychological (ahistorical) reactions does not seem totally satisfying. In many of her conclusions, Adler relies only on hypotheses. She does not make clear either how she chose her corpus of sources, or her narrative excerpts. Undoubtedly, her conclusions would have been much more convincing had she chosen to develop complete cases, such as the interesting life story of Gertruda Chuprun (pp. 159–163). I wished there had been more of those.

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QUIRKE, CAROL. *Eyes on Labor. News Photography and America's Working Class*. Oxford University Press, Oxford [etc.] 2012. xi, 358 pp. Ill. \$99.00. doi:10.1017/S0020859013000394

Among labor historians and supporters of the American labor movement, the signal phenomenon to be explained is the absolute decline in the proportion of the workforce that is unionized and in actual union membership since the middle of the twentieth century. The proportion of unionized workers grew steadily from 7 per cent in 1930 to 28 per cent in 1954. In the almost six decades since that peak, labor's share of the overall workforce has declined steadily, to 20 per cent in 1980 and to less than 12 per cent in 2011.¹

Scholarship in the past three decades has examined this decline which clearly has multiple roots. Cultural issues have been understandably significant in the discussion. Carol Quirke's new book, *Eyes on Labor*, while focused entirely on the period of labor's growth, speaks to an important dimension of the origins of the labor movement's decline. She does not make the connection as strongly as she might, but in her analysis of the impact of labor and news photography from the 1930s to the 1950s she provides an important new view of the success of employers and the corporate media in the United States in setting a framework for viewing trade unionism and labor conflict in negative terms. Even during the period of the labor movement's greatest growth, its phenomenal success was undermined by the ability of capital to set the terms of the debate and to place trade unions on the defensive.

Eyes on Labor, by exploring the depiction of labor's organizing in news photography and unions' use of photography in their own publications, provides an original and

1. Gerald Mayer, "Union Membership Trends in the United States" (31 August 2004), pp. 22–23, http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1176&context=key_workplace, last accessed 14 January 2013; United States, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Union Members Summary" at <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.nro.htm>, last accessed 27 January 2012.