MASS DICTATORSHIP IN THE 20TH CENTURY

EVERYDAY LIFE IN MASS DICTATORSHIP

COLLUSION AND EVASION

Edited by Alf Lüdtke

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Everyday Life in Mass Dictatorship

Collusion and Evasion

Edited by

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palgrave
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Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2016 978-1-137-44276-5

First published 2016 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

ISBN 978-1-349-56036-3 ISBN 978-1-137-44277-2 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/9781137442772

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Everyday life in mass dictatorship : collusion and evasion / edited by Alf Lüdtke, Honorarprofessor Historische Anthropologie, Universität Erfurt, Germany.
pages cm. — (Mass dictatorship in the twentieth century)
Summary: "Dictatorship implies oppression and arbitrary violence from above. However, this volume and the Mass Dictatorship in the 20th Century series to which it contributes dismantles that general assumption. Everyday Life in Mass Dictatorship explores the multiple forms and practices of ordinary people as they became active participants in the grand mobilisation of society not only promised, but actively pursued by dictatorial regimes in the 20th century. The volume is centrally concerned with two aspects of collusion and evasion: warfare and ruthless policies of exclusion. The impact this avalanche of unbounded violence had on survivors and successive generations is the overarching theme of the studies presented in this volume on post-colonial and post-Stalinist dictatorships. The extent to which post-colonial regimes carried on non-democratic asymmetries of power or established them anew is breathtaking. Yet the prospects of better living and 'modern times'; met with overwhelming popular support in the East and West, as well as in the global North and South" — Provided by publisher.

1. Totalitarianism—History—20th century. 2. Dictatorship—History—20th century. 3. Political psychology—History—20th century. 4. Post-communism—History—20th century. 5. Social history—20th century. I. Lüdtke, Alf, 1943– contributing editor.
JC481.E83 2015
320.5309′04—dc23 2015020081

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Part III Postcolonial Settings 1950–1990: Dimensions of Subjectivity

Acknowledgements

The impetus for this book dates back to a conference held in Seoul, South Korea in June 2005. Professor Jie-Hyun Lim and his co-organisers at the Research Institute of Comparative History and Culture at Hanyang University (RICH) convened junior and senior scholars from trans-Pacific and trans-Atlantic circuits for three days of inspiring exchanges at a 'locus amoenus', a countryside hotel east of Seoul, beyond the reach of the megacity's summer humidity. The organisers chose for the topic of this 3rd conference in the series 'Mass Dictatorship and People's Everyday Lives'. In particular, they proposed a focus on the inter-relationships and interchanges between 'desire and delusion'. This volume is the product of the stimulating discussions and lively debates at this conference.

This book has been realised with the help of many friends, colleagues, and institutions. The Korean Research Foundation (KRF) was the principal financial sponsor of the project and the multiple international conferences that inspired the series. I would like to express special thanks to the programme managers and administrative staff of the Humanities and Social Sciences Section of the KRF, and to Hanyang University for its financial support. Dr. Kim Chong Yang, the former president of Hanyang University, was highly supportive of the project. More than a hundred scholars from around the world participated in the conferences, including most of the contributors to this volume. I am particularly grateful to Charles Armstrong, Stefan Berger, Paul Corner, Roger Griffin, Minoru Iwasaki, Konrad Jarausch, Kyu Hyun Kim, Claudia Koonz, Volodymyr Kravchenko, Marcin Kula, Peter Lambert, Robert Mallet, Hiroko Mizuno, Karen Petrone, Martin Sabrow, Naoki Sakai, Feliks Tych, and Michael Wildt for their multiple commitments.

The research fellows of the mass dictatorship project, research assistants, and the administrative staff at RICH made it possible for this book to shift from the realm of ideas towards concrete reality. The painstaking work of the staff and fellows at RICH produced the optimal conditions that enabled scholars from more than a dozen Asian, European, and North American countries to participate in the scholarly exchanges.

Not the least, I would like to thank the contributors to this volume for their unfettered patience and superb cooperation in bringing this work to publication. After an overly long break, the book was revived in 2009. During the first two and a half years Peter Lambert (University of Wales, Aberystwyth) co-edited, then Dennis Galvan (University of Oregon, Eugene) took on co-editorship for another year and a half. Both resigned due to ever mounting demands at their respective universities: my heartfelt gratitude to both of them!

Finally, on behalf of all the contributors I extend our thanks to Jenny Wang Medina (Columbia University) for her invaluable assistance in editing and assembling the manuscript. At the same time, our warmest thanks to Jenny McCall at Palgrave for her professionalism and willingness to be flexible with our editorial needs. In the final stretch towards the publication of this volume, health issues precluded me from any strenuous reading and writing. It is only the absolute support of Jenny Wang Medina and our series editor, Jie-Hyun Lim, that has brought our undertaking to fruition. Helga Lüdtke, my wife, was also pivotal for her engagement with this project and her unlimited and affectionate support for me. I have no adequate words to express my deepest gratitude to the three of them!

Alf Lüdtke, Erfurt/Berlin/Göttingen, June 2015

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Peter Lambert lectures in Modern European History at Aberystwyth University. He has published widely on twentieth-century German history and on historiography. His books include *Making History: An Introduction to the Practices of a Discipline* (co-edited with Phillipp Schofield, 2004, of which a second, revised and expanded edition is currently in preparation) and another volume in the present series: *Mass Dictatorship and Memory as Ever Present Past* (Palgrave, 2013, co-edited with Jie-Hyun Lim and Barbara B. Walker). He is currently editing a collection of essays on Historical Culture with Björn Weiler.

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Part I
Scope and Perspectives

1
Introductory Notes

Alf Lüdtke

How the project evolved

This collection of essays shares its origin with many similar publications. It began with a scholarly conference convened and organised by Professor Jie-hyun Lim (Hanyang University, Seoul) and his colleagues at the Research Institute for Comparative History and Culture (RICH) titled 'Everyday Life in Mass Dictatorship'. The organisers proposed as the specific focus 'Desire and Delusion', emphasising in their invitation the impact of programs and schemes issued by the dominant for a better future for ordinary folks. The discrepancies between grand plans and actual results would, however, stimulate widespread discontent with, if not resistance to, the ruling bodies and their policies. The conference papers and the ensuing debates they sparked showed that the principal distinction between the dominant and the dominated missed crucial elements of both mass dictatorship and people's everyday lives. It is this concept that takes up the proposal to analyse rulers and domination as a rather open field of forces and social practices. The key to this argument is that the so-called dominated are oftentimes (very) active in determining the course of events, asymmetries in resources or means of action notwithstanding. Moreover, the proposed focus did not take notice of ordinary people's genuine desires, longings, or anxieties. Imaginaries of the future were therefore not only the prerogative of those who occupied the 'heights of command'. Two contributions to this meeting in particular provided concrete examples for both points: Charles Armstrong's outline of the reconstruction of North Korea after the Korean War in the late 1950s, and Harald Dehne's reconstruction of practices of consumption in East Germany from the 1950s to the 1970s and 80s.

These discussions were inspiring and opened up many fields of research. In particular, the forms and tactics of cooperation and collusion with the mighty and their agencies, whether in metropolitan dictatorships or in post-colonial regimes. Still, the work on the volume did not follow directly from there. The multiple daily demands of the contributors' respective scholarly environments intervened. It was only in 2009 that we were able to restart

the project. Five of the chapters in this volume are substantial reworkings of the conference papers: Charles Armstrong, Harald Dehne, Peter Lambert, Alf Lüdtke, and Kevin McDermott. The seven other contributors were recruited to participate in this endeavour: Paul Corner, Dennis Galvan, Won Kim, Michael Kim, Richard Rathbone, Andre Schmid, and Michael Wildt.

The finalised volume follows a well-known pattern: to explore a wide-ranging theme through studies that focus on one particular region or (nation-)state. The reader is invited to reflect on possible relationships and trace resonances between the included studies. It is only in this way that comparative insights may become possible. Certainly, in this context comparison does not necessarily entail the strict pursuit of one specific item or even a limited number of similarities. Cases in point may be the edited volumes *The Modern Girl Around the World*, or less global in scope, *Beyond Totalitarianism*, the latter of which closely compares German Nazism and Soviet Stalinism.[1]

In our volume we present a mix of two types of studies. The first group consists of assessments of European dictatorships: Italian Fascism, Soviet Stalinism and German Nazism. In addition, two case studies explore facets of Japanese imperialism, primarily during the Second World War. Another piece traces consumerism in post-Stalinist East Germany. In the book's subsequent section the reader will find five studies discussing non-European post-colonial settings. Three of the contributions deal with North or South Korea. Thus, East Asia is one 'dot' on the landscape under scrutiny here. By contrast, we offer two explorations of West African sites: post-colonial Senegal and post-colonial Ghana. Again, we hope that this approach will invite readers to consider yet another set of differences and similarities outside the usual purview. One of these issues may be the lasting impact of the colonial encounter. Is not 'coloniality' (Walter Mignolo) a recurrent feature of the very efforts to overcome colonial domination and exploitation? Certainly, the lacunae are immense, but nevertheless research is, to a large extent, just that: triggering new questions and demanding further research.

Everyday life: Anytime, anywhere

Historians of everyday life are interested in people's practices.[2] What do they do, and how do they do what they do, on workdays and on holidays alike? How do they win their bread? How do they encounter space and time and appropriate those as spatiality and temporality? How do they play out (or subdue) friendships with, and hostility towards, work mates or neighbours, family and kin?

'How' questions unsettle binaries as they criticise seemingly clear cut distinctions and homogenous notions. Take for instance, the Berlin blockade of 1948–49. Common wisdom holds that the three western sectors of Berlin were totally blocked from any connection to the West for eleven months. In

this view, only the airlift of the western air forces managed to counter the devastating cut off of train, truck, and boat connections.

Meanwhile, recent research on the everyday practices of Berlin's citizens have revealed the broad range of smuggling, as of barter-connections.[3] They also show that Soviet border controls existed around West-Berlin but allowed for exceptions. In addition to this, certain segments of industrial workers and office employees lived across the respective borders and were almost impossible to police around the clock. In other words, the term 'blockade' stands for a political myth and thus obscures the effort to get an adequate sense of people's experiences and practices.

At the same time, the study of everyday life tries to grasp as many details of people's activities as possible. Such details do not matter for nostalgic or antiquarian reasons, although those never can be totally ruled out. The specifics, however, of a certain configuration or a specific moment become visible or tangible (or even audible) when the concrete manner in which one who kept a notebook scribbled his or her thoughts is scrutinised for its every detail: is it a first scribbling or does the writer take obvious care in putting down each letter? Does he or she employ color marks for specific entries? How does she or he refer to an outing with friends or a speech given by a political dignitary or other important figure?

It may be a truism by now, but the history of everyday life does not refer to a 'field'. Rather, it stands for a perspective applicable to every issue or question, object, or theme. The contours of this perspective remain fuzzy because the items too often overlap. Thus, the effort to explore subtleties and nuances ironically faces people's 'muddling through' (Steege), i.e. the multiple grey areas of 'neither/nor' actions and choices.

Such a view focuses on the ways and means historical actors dealt with the settings and environments with which they were confronted. In other words, whatever individuals or collectives are doing (or neglecting) and how they do this has become central to the study of the everyday. The (re-)making of one's livelihood and the ways of transforming or destroying it are also central objects of interest, and the spectrum of means and practices that are part and parcel of (un-)doing the everyday has no limits.

Research must examine physical exaction, from hands and feet to muscular strength – yet at the same time one has to register people's speech, songs, writing, and visual presentations of any sort. It is the interplay of people's corporeality with their mental, psychic, and emotional faculties that has to be taken into account.

Several aspects are crucial here. For one, people's subjective dimensions are a major focal point. What are the ways people encounter and perceive the situations with which they are confronted? How do they cope, respond, or ignore the incentives and demands they face? Moreover, can one trace experiences and feelings as well as anxieties or longings related to the present or future?

In Western thought, the individual subject has held the pivotal position since the 17th and 18th centuries and was considered the ultimate and unshakeable *fundamentum* of mankind. More recently, historians of the working classes have considered human agents as the pivots of resistance against the influence of the ruling powers for comprehensive control and unlimited exploitation of everyone they could bring under their control. Totally lost in such an account is a whole range of human longings and activities that enjoyed the cruelty of torturing people – and oftentimes the related killing – especially of collectives that had been branded as outcast or unworthy of survival. Uncovering the pleasure of inflicting pain and death is part of the quest to uncover the subjective dimensions of individuals and groups.

Surprisingly, (self-)critical appraisals of an understanding that considered the subject the homogenous basis of every human expression and action went unnoticed in such research. But psychoanalytical deconstruction did become rapidly influential from the late 19th century on among literary authors and in some areas of the humanities. Historians, however, did not join forces with them. They ignored or despised any dismantling of age-old certainties. What's more, post-colonial studies have recently shown that the notion of a coherent or undivided individual does not work too well in – broadly speaking – non-Western contexts. Dipesh Chakrabarty has explored notions and practices of 'sociality' that demonstrate the intricate overlappings of what Western views consider individual and collective. He discusses this with an example from colonial Bengal and shows the multiple-facets of this kind of sociality in the 'Adda' (a semi-private sphere and space mostly among bourgeois males).[4]

Also related to this is the situational. What did the concrete setting look like to the historical actors or agents? Did they exist in solitude, in cramped urban living quarters, or in tightly-knit neighborhood or village contexts? How can we unpack their religious offerings and needs? How do people find and situate themselves in the asymmetries of power, violence, economic opportunity, and status? Or even closer to home, what did their living spaces look like? Were there paths, or streets and roads? Were there railways, ports, and/or airports that were part of their concrete everyday lives?

Thirdly, how did they do what they did and how did this relate to their manifold aspirations and anxieties? To what extent did people experience pain or pleasure, toil or delight when doing what they did? What were their physical actions like, and what imprint did they leave on people's bodies? How did this resonate with people's feelings? In this sense, the question of 'how' easily touches on what is so difficult to obtain: information about specific practices and understandings of work and non-work that may have been self-evident decades ago but are now gone, and to a large extent, actually forgotten.

Here, a fourth element comes into play: these investigations are pursued by both professional and amateur researchers. How do they approach their

interests and questions? And how open are they about their observations of the observed, who may act strangely on some matters that may just remain mysterious or enigmatic? To what extent do they – and do we try – to establish an open dialogue with the observed? Of course, in most of these instances there are no reciprocal partners of observation left alive in the contexts we are trying to research. At any rate, it is necessary to be particularly attentive to the limits provided by our source materials and the traces on hand.

Finally, our focus on the specificity of issues and source materials allows us to scrutinise the ambivalence, if not multivalence, of both historical actors (and their contexts) and of the researchers themselves. The effort to critically assess one's own impact on the object of research is not only important for ethnographers or oral historians. Rather, this kind of awareness enhances the subtlety of one's research approaches as well as the results they produce.[5]

To be more concrete as to the historical actors: was the pride of Korean forced labourers in Japan during World War II enforced by the situation they were in, or were they driven by the effort to beat the conditions, if not the coloniser, in the long run (see in this volume the contribution of Michael Kim)? Or is the gardening activity of a German industrial worker in one of Germany's central armament factories of the Third Reich a constant retreat into a niche, or was it a contribution not only to his family meals, but also to the war effort at large? Moreover, how can we grasp the 'shifting involvements' (Hirschman) of these historical agents?[6]

Individuals may meander from mute subservience at their workplaces to a range of active engagements: as a member or captain of an amateur sports team, or as a player in a music band, for instance. They may have become very outspoken in the context of work when they encountered forced labourers in the close vicinity of their own workplace or even directly in the next aisle, as happened during World War II. This is readily apparent in the settings that are dealt with in this volume: forced Korean labourers in Japanese armament factories who did not blink when facing their authorities, but who managed to establish a second tier of hidden everyday life and strictly forbidden pleasures in gambling and so forth; or take the young women who were recruited to South Korean factories in the 1970s and 80s who endured physical and even sexual violence on a large scale; they also maintained a stern face to keep their wages for their families at home and to finally achieve recognition as worthy compatriots. And the Ghanaian cocoa farmers not only meander, but were present on two levels at the same time: public acceptance of the ever-worsening regulation of their markets and concealed activities of managing at least some of their harvest to make a little profit of their own.

Of course, observations about various forms and rhythms of meandering allude to a potential that may be activated, but very often seems to be ignored or wasted. At any rate, people's 'shifting involvements', whether

individually or in small or larger groups, directly obstruct seemingly brazen structures as they did in European state-socialist societies in the summer and fall of 1989. In these cases dictatorships imploded, and they did so peacefully, but for a very few exceptions.

Dictatorships as regimes of (self-)mobilisation

In 1952 the English historian Alan Bullock published one of the first comprehensive studies on Nazi Germany. He entitled his book *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*.[7] Accordingly, the author took the individual Adolf Hitler as the symbol and prime mover of the dictatorship Germany had embarked upon in January 1933. 'Tyrant', however, invoked a damnation that was deeply inscribed into European thought since antiquity. The 'tyrant' was the epitome of a despotic ruler who acted utterly ruthless and with total disregard for ethical codes and legal norms.

Bullock portrayed Hitler as an individual who performed multiple roles, from agitator to commander in chief, from party boss to the sacrosanct *Führer* of the *Großdeutsche Reich* (after 1938) who prepared and unleashed the war in 1939 and endorsed genocide and holocaust, in particular in the would-be German colonies of 'the East'. Thus, Hitler's final orders for the self-destruction of Germany at war's end reveal a certain logic of annihilation: a tyrant of sorts.

In similar ways Benito Mussolini and Josef Stalin dominated popular and scholarly narratives. The personification of unlimited despotism, brutality and killing violence focused on the 'tyrant'.

The excessive, if not exclusive, attention on the 'big crooks' like Hitler, Himmler or Göring (in the German case) is not over yet. Still, scholarly research has moved beyond this since the later 1950s. Crucial to the German context were analyses of the deportation and annihilation of German and European Jews and other peoples prepared in the wake of the Auschwitz-trial in the early 1960s.[8] Yet, it was particularly the studies on the National Socialist Party (NSDAP) and its affiliates, clashing or interacting with state agencies and societal associations that opened new insights. Most importantly, these explorations overcame the focus on a single person's rule as one overshadowing 'tyrant'.

In this context, the research by Martin Broszat and Hans Mommsen stood out, at least, in the German case. They scrupulously traced these multiple institutional moves and changes. Mommsen particularly touched upon the interference of low level officials and functionaries in the everyday life of ordinary citizens.[9] One of his examples was the omnipresence of about 600 or 700,000 local 'block' or 'cell leaders' (*Block- und Zellenleiter*). Mommsen provided nuanced information about the range of surveillance and denunciation that developed on this base level of domination.

Broszat showed in painstaking detail how party functionaries and state officials time and again reshuffled the organisational matrix of both state

and party. In this context they also incorporated most of civil society's organisations, including the enforced unification of employers associations with trade unions. Broszat labelled this unstable mix of competition and struggle a 'polycracy', thereby emphasising the 'profound fragmentation' of the system and administration of rule.[10]

At the same time, it was also pivotal to activate people or to support their self-energising. The German case was exemplary in many ways. In Nazi Germany as well as in Fascist Italy or the Stalinist Soviet Union, people were constantly stimulated to rally to the common cause: boosting the nation's grandeur.

However, only those deemed acceptable to the *Volksgemeinschaft* as defined by the Nazi understanding of the 'Aryan race' were welcome to contribute to the common cause. Those deemed 'unworthy' were to be excluded or, if possible, expelled, and were in the end deported and killed by the millions.

(Self-)mobilisation was ultimately connected to the potential of unlimited violence.[11] After the war had been started, in particular, violence rapidly turned from the ultimate result to the only means of treating those whom the authorities, but also a vast majority of *Volksgenossen*, were ready to exclude from their community. Again the 'polycracy' operated not only between overlapping or competing institutions, but can also be traced at the German home front and in the occupied countries. Here the range of the occupiers obviously increased, especially in the areas where the population held, on the Nazi scale, a low position, i.e. primarily in the East.[12]

The characterisation of 'mobilisation regimes' also fits Italian Fascism and Soviet Stalinism. Grand programs of societal and economic (re)construction on a large-scale (in the Soviet Union, to some extent Italy), or further industrialisation (the latter in Germany), and efforts to expand and renew infrastructural arteries and capillaries occupied prominent places in the respective policies of these regimes.

Contemporaries in the late 1920s and the 1930s declared this new kind of statehood *stato totalitario* (Mussolini). The latter resonated with the dissolution of borderlines between the 'civil' and 'military' spheres during WWI that triggered the notion of 'total war'. Primarily, critics of the anti-liberal and anti-democratic regimes preferred the term 'totalitarian rule' or totalitarianism. For the next two or three decades after 1945 this became the general label for authoritarian or fascist, as well as Soviet-style dictatorships. Again, the emphasis was on a rigid and encompassing top- down-perspective.

In this view the dictatorial systems that emerged in many, if not most, post-colonial states in Asia and Africa (and Latin America, let us not forget) escaped a critical eye. In fact, they embarked on the trajectory of mobilisation, as we see in Section III of this volume.

The goal of the new elites (who in many cases built directly on the status of their colonial predecessors even if they weren't identical to them) repeated the push for industrialisation and the build-up of a nationhood

that would form a body of self-mobilised and self-energised people joining forces to achieve the goals prescribed by their leaders.

Violence: (Self-)mobilising and (self-)energising

During World War II large numbers of draftees and volunteers in the *Wehrmacht* were wageworkers. In their civilian lives they had worked in blue-collar or white-collar jobs (and many had grown up in working-class neighborhoods and milieus). In other contexts I have made use of letters that soldiers from these backgrounds sent home to work mates from their companies in their respective hometowns – in this case Leipzig-based companies.

Regardless of whether these letters were mailed in 1940 from France or two or three years later from the Eastern front, up until the spring of 1945 the writers emphasised how much soldiering resembled working in an industrial plant or, for that matter, an administrative office. They stressed tediousness, routine (or boredom), physical toil, exhaustion, and also the division of labor and the lack of supervision. Comrades are present too in these letters, as is 'cooperation of necessity' (but less so 'trust'). A rare find, however, came in the form of a letter written by an Air Force sergeant in June 1943. He describes a flight in which the plane circled over Warsaw a few days after the ghetto uprising had been crushed by the *SS*. After referring to this destruction, he concludes with this remark: 'Our troops did a pretty good job [in the original *gute Arbeit*] when destroying the Jewish quarter of that city.'

Such destruction obviously included killing inhabitants of the area or other people seeking shelter. Thus, the writer summarily took soldiers' activities as 'work'. This tendency is very similar to other letters written to company employees by former colleagues, mostly from the Eastern front. Here the writers are appalled that their mates at home have to work with Soviet prisoners of war (or *Russkis*): would these guys ever grasp the notion of 'German quality work' and the finesse of German machines?

The lack of more nuanced words can be understood as a 'telling' reference to a void. Of course, this void, when submitted to analytical rigour, seems to be totally filled if one considers feelings and their driving power among the historical actors themselves. It is that simultaneity of coolness and fulfillment, of terror and furor, and of numbness and utter activity that is found in these materials that give note of small and large battle settings as well as fighting and killing actions.[13]

Twofold focus: Collusion and evasion

Hannah Arendt, in her magisterial study *On the Origins of Totalitarianism* points out the combined onslaught of ideology and the 'apparatus of

violence' to enter the 'inner side' of people's minds. Thus, 'people are being terrorized and dominated from within'. In turn, so she claims, totalitarian domination eradicates the difference between dominant and dominated. Hence, the 'totalitarian leader is becoming the true exponent of the masses whom he leads'.[14]

Interestingly, Arendt does not elaborate on this point, but perhaps one can read her report on the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem (1961) for further elucidation. In an extended post-script she depicts an individual who was an agent of the dominant. Arendt emphasises, however, that Eichmann was obviously driven by the impetus to establish and maintain an impeccable and most efficient system of deportation of the European Jewry to the Nazi gas chambers. In his self-stylisation in court, he presented himself as nothing more than an overzealous official who eagerly executed legal and lawful orders. In essence, that he had done a good job. In the following decades further exploration of Nazi or Nazi-style killing actions, such as massacres in colonial wars[15] have revealed eagerness, if not outright enthusiasm, among the perpetrators. Other instances of over-fulfillment also speak to a dimension of the efforts to participate actively in power and domination that effectively erase any distinction or borderline 'from below'. And it is this kind of self-energising that triggered and drove collusion to ever new dimensions.

Yet, collusion had many faces. They ranged from explicit and willful cooperation to more passive wait-and-see attitudes and other forms of 'let-it-happen' by ignoring or looking the other way and keeping a discrete, if not willfully malicious silence.[16] Only situational explorations can show the respective 'hows' in their specific concreteness.

Enhanced study of practices of collusion (as of active cooperation or determined collaboration) has unearthed a crucial flipside: evasion. People occupied niches – they took momentary if not extended refuge in moments and spaces that allowed evasion of the gazing eyes and listening ears of the authorities and their agents.

One of the myriad forms of evasion surfaces in the literary account of one survivor of the Nazi concentration camps. Imre Kertész, a 15 year old Hungarian Jew, who was deported to the concentration camp Auschwitz in August 1944, claimed to have had moments of joy and *Eigensinn* (stubborn willfulness) in this environment that was so much dominated by torture, death, hunger, and bloody competition with other inmates.[17] This articulation, which was published in 1996, stirred a wave of disbelief bordering on disgust among other survivors and the wider public, whose reaction perhaps further underscores the truthfulness of Kertész's recollection in its very denial.

This second tier requires further scrutiny: to what extent did it provide space for individual *Eigensinn* or other forms of evasion?

Notes

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2. Cf. also Paul Steege, Andrew Stuart Bergerson, Maureen Healy, Pamela F. Swett, 'The History of Everyday Life: A Second Chapter', in *The Journal of Modern History*, 80 (June 2008), 358–78; Alf Lüdtke, 'Alltagsgeschichte – ein Bericht von unterwegs', in *Historische Anthropologie* 11(2003), 278–95.
3. Paul Steege, *Black Market, Cold War. Everyday Life in Berlin, 1946–1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2008).
4. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Pr., 2000), chapter 7.
5. Cf. Richard Price, *First-Time: The Historical Vision of an African American People*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press, 2002).
6. Albert O. Hirschman, *Shifting Involvements* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1991).
7. Alan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (London: Odhams Press 1952).
8. Cf. also the path-breaking study by Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1961; the substantially expended 3rd edition in 3 vols.: New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2003).
9. Hans Mommsen (ed.), *Herrschaftsalltag im Dritten Reich. Studien und Texte* (Düsseldorf: Schwann im Patmos Verlag, 1988).
10. Martin Broszat, *Der Staat Hitlers. Grundlegung und Entwicklung zu einer inneren Verfassung* (Munich: dtv 1969), p. 363.
11. Christian Gerlach, Nicolas Werth, 'State Violence – Violent Societies', in Sheila Fitzpatrick, Michael Geyer (eds.), *Beyond Totalitarianism*, pp. 133–79; Michael Wildt, *Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung. Gewalt gegen Juden in der deutschen Provinz 1919 bis 1939* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2007).
12. *Kooperation und Verbrechen. Formen der ‚Kollaboration' im östlichen Europa 1939–1945* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2003) (Beiträge zur Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus. 19); Robert Gildea, Olivier Wieviorka, Anette Warring (eds.), *Surviving Hitler and Mussolini. Daily Life in Occupied Europe* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2006); Dominique Veillon, *Vivre et Survivre en France 1939–1947* (Paris: Ēd. Payot & Rivages, 1995); Jean Baronnet, *Les Parisiens sous l'Occupation*. Photographies en couleurs d'André Zucca. (Paris: Gallimard, 2008).
13. This passage relies on a section of Alf Lüdtke, 'War as Work: Aspects of Soldiering in Twentieth-Century Wars'. In: Alf Lüdtke, Bernd Weisbrod (eds.), *No Man's Land of Violence. Extreme Wars in the 20th Century* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2006), p. 145–6.
14. Hannah Arendt, *Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft* (German rev. ed. of the American first ed.) (Frankfurt am Main: Europäischer Verlag, 1955), p. 488.
15. Cf. The Nanjing Massacre in November/December 1937 by Japanese forces.
16. Fritz Stern, *Das feine Schweigen: Historische Essays* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1999), p. 163.
17. Imre Kertész, *Roman eines Schicksallosen* (Berlin: Rowohlt Berlin, 1996), p. 157–9.

2

Ordinary People, Self-Energising, and Room for Manoeuvering: Examples from 20th Century Europe

Alf Lüdtke

Back to historical actors: 'The Masses' or 'The Many'?

Analyses have come a long way. Mid-20th century studies of then recent dictatorships almost exclusively focused on individual foes – Hitler, Himmler, or for that matter, Stalin. These individuals would personify grand evil. One or two decades later the scope changed to anonymous socio-economic and political-administrative processes, institutions, and mechanics. Latterly this fixation has been dropped as well; historical actors are back on the stage. One might say, however, that most of these actors are entering it for the first time.

Irrespective of the shifts in the attention of researchers and the wider public, the driving question has remained essentially unchanged. From first to last, historical reconstructions of dictatorial rule in the modern era, and in particular in the 20th century, have persistently revolved around one primary issue: what did 'the masses' do, and how did they do it?

The very notion of 'the masses' was, of course, contested. In the late 19th and 20th centuries emphases not only differed, they contradicted one another. Left-liberal and various democratic or socialist (or Marxist) activists claimed 'the masses' to be the true agents of societal transformation, if not revolution. By contrast, a mistrust similar to the distance between a noble lord and his servants prevailed among academics and intellectuals that was well-known, but also camouflaged. Here, a rigid attitude of contempt was maintained whenever 'the masses' appeared on the scene, whether in Europe or 'in the colonies'. In the later part of the 19th century, the continuous uprooting of parts of the rural population and large scale intra- and international migrations caused both observers and agents of state and other authorities to envision these masses as the epitome of those 'dangerous classes' that had already obsessed writers and, more broadly, the ruling classes in the early 19th century.[1] In their destitute appearance these masses

seemed to embody the absolute 'other' of the well-established bourgeois and aristocratic circles of society and polity. Would they not represent an even more threatening dynamic geared towards that catastrophe that some read as revolution? To the social echelons who claimed dominance these were the louse-ridden 'many' whose bodily presence would grossly insult the refined senses of the well-established classes. Therefore, the latter applauded the 'iron fist' of the state and strongmen in politics and other positions of command.[2] Furthermore, those stemming from the propertyless that had acquired this or that token of respectability tried to join forces with the ruling dominant elites. Thus, notions of orderliness operated in different ways but in a parallel direction across Europe, resulting in calls for 'sweeping the nation' free of such unruly elements.[3]

It is this history of the re-formation of the notion of 'the masses' that calls for some caution in using the term as an interpretive or analytical tool today. Yet the issue here is not political correctness. Rather, the analytical use-value of the term is hampered by the divergent meanings attached to these 'masses'. In particular, it conveys the assumption that masses represent a unity not only in appearance but also in other ways, as a manifest socio-political body. In order to avoid such problematic, if not invalid, meanings, I would prefer to speak of 'the many'. Thus, the emphasis shifts from a presumed unity to a multitude of historical actors. Their distinct and even individual profiles should be underlined. At any rate, this expression is far less – if indeed at all – encumbered by association with such concepts as 'collectivity', 'community', and 'homogeneity'.

Historical process: From teleology to multiple practices

Since the early 1920s Fascism – in addition to, and perhaps even more so than the Russian Revolution and Bolshevism – became pivotal for Central European intellectual observers and academic analysts. Whether they were left-leaning journalists like Ernst Ottwalt[4] or Marxist theoreticians[5] aiming for an all-encompassing analysis of the potential for societal transformation as in the cases of Otto Bauer and Franz Borkenau, or 'marxisant' academics like the historian Arthur Rosenberg or the philosopher Ernst Bloch, all were under the spell of the massive support or, at least, of the acceptance Italian Fascism seemed to enjoy in the 1920s. Moreover, from 1930 onward, they were all faced with the sweeping electoral successes of the Nazi Party in Germany. Here, Nazi supporters were not only dominant among small-holding Protestant peasants and shop-keepers.[6] Similar levels of support were registered across different regions and milieus, from Catholic Upper Swabia to Protestant (if not agnostic) Saxon industrial workers, but likewise within the bourgeoisie, for example among state and communal employees and officials as well as school teachers and university professors.[7]

To the left-wing commentators, this behaviour of most of 'the masses' was a complete disaster. They personally longed for a different course of events, and worse still, their interpretive efforts, constitutive of both their self-perceptions and their public personae, were disproved. Thus, their politics lay in ruins.

Their analyses of social processes had revolved around structures and configurations of social groups or classes. This view resonated with notions representing history as unfettered progress towards an ultimate era beyond the needs of (re-)production, benignly ruled by harmony and modernity. Accordingly, individual and collective actions were determined by anonymous forces that drove their respective transformations, and the latter might be impersonated by individuals or mere *Charaktermasken* (Karl Marx). However, in their respective practices such activists would execute 'given' schemes but not create, constitute, or produce their own trajectories through their own agency. In this view, dynamic forces operated 'behind people's backs' – especially forces of production – and, thus, determine human practice.

Their differences notwithstanding, left-wing intellectuals as mentioned above agreed that the task was to overcome mechanical approaches to history as they assumed a linear process and, hence, progress. These critics attacked established authorities of socialism like Friedrich Engels. The latter had in the early 1890s bolstered an understanding of history as just another case of mechanics. The critics of such doctrinal views held that, on the contrary, historical processes did not exhibit one single pattern. Rather, one ought to acknowledge the rich potential of history's 'uneven development'. This was a concept that had been conjured up, though briefly, in Karl Marx's introduction to the *Grundrisse*. Marx had drawn on it in an attempt to make sense of his contemporaries' enthusiasm for art from other contexts, like those of ancient Greece or Shakespearian England. In his view, such tastes were out of step with any 'general direction' of the historical process.[8]

In other words, critics of the 1920s recognised contingencies and their presence in the diverse and multiple forms of people's activities and practices. Two of these approaches deserve particular attention since they touched on, or even crossed the limits of interpretations acknowledged by the political actors of the Left. I will start with Ernst Bloch's notion of the 'synchronicity of the asynchronous'.[9] Bloch's effort was to grasp a specific simultaneity alongside sober calculations of interest and profit. He saw the vibrant presence of different and 'deviant' modes of life originating either in early modern contexts or in the dynamics of industrialisation. These modes of life revolved around images of a lost paradise and depicted forms of sociability that favoured excessive consumption. They also allowed for different temporalities that might stimulate 'subversive-utopian' projections of a 'multi-spatial' dialectics. Bloch traced the driving energy of (day-)dreaming

and of cherishing symbols – like the red flag. For all their sensitivity, however, Bloch's ideas were still embedded in a general teleological Marxist framework: the 'asynchronous' figurations were just that. Therefore, their contemporary impact notwithstanding, they would ultimately be defeated or overcome.

Another of these unconventional contemporaries was Wilhelm Reich, the psychoanalytically oriented activist and author. In his view, it was not only the dynamics, but also the mechanics of sexuality and their repression that drove subjects to their behaviour and action – in particular, to support the seemingly powerful, and their leader or *Führer*.[10] Thus, although he focussed more than most others on individuals – albeit individuals in a society – his frame of reference was a structuring process that operated behind people's backs (and their sexuality). In this respect he saw subjectivity not as a potential for enhanced self-determination but as a deceptive surface the analyst had to penetrate to get to the 'essence' of things. And this, of course, was the entrenched majority position of social scientists of whatever political stance.

In the first place, these accounts reflected concerns not so much with Nazism as with Italian Fascism. Observers attributed far-ranging impact on the population at large to Fascist techniques that symbolically (re)presented opponents as 'foes' of the 'people' and of the 'nation' (or 'empire') who deserved nothing but contempt and exclusion. However, contemporary efforts to analyse the production of such 'hegemony' fell short of exploring the connections between the symbolic realm and people's practices of accepting, supporting, or even demanding domination.[11] In particular, the brute force the *stato totalitario* (and, in due course, the Nazi state and party) did employ against actual or potential opponents[12] appeared in contemporary analyses solely from the victim's point of view, and frequently from an assumed one. The setting of such violence and the everyday of its perpetrators, accomplices, and bystanders (Raul Hilberg) remained a blind spot – as was the inner face of 'normalising' harassment and mutilation, killing, and extermination.[13]

Thus, it may not be a surprise that the split in personality appeared as a suitable figure for explaining how the *gros* of a bourgeois society would swiftly embark on both dictatorial rule and forms of violence and warfare.[14] In due course this move pushed the limits of war, but also of street action, until they became practices of total annihilation and collective extermination as in Nazi Germany. Yet the dynamics of anti-bourgeois politics triggered or allowed for comparable practices of ruthless killings. Massacres had become part and parcel of the Bolshevik revolution. Still, large-scale violence systematically executed against its own population emerged as a basic feature of the Stalinist mobilisation for industrial growth and modernity. Thus, before and after the Second World War people in the USSR could operate on contradictory scores at the same time: as orderly citizens and as agents of brutality.[15]

Friend vs. foe: Antagonistic schemes of development

Contemporary propaganda constantly referred to the 'adversary's side' as barbaric and utterly ruthless. This holds for Fascism and Nazism vis-à-vis Bolshevism. In fact, the Nazi line tried to enhance distance by mobilising anti-Semitic codes when depicting Bolshevism as the ultimate Jewish conspiracy.[16] The Soviet portrayal of both followed the same logic, only the omen was reversed. Even more so, many on either side were shocked when this line was suddenly suspended in August 1939 (and held until June 1941) in the wake of the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact. In turn, the option for an instant re-charging of the respective 'foe' labels and images remained at hand, and on the German side it was no surprise that derogatory labels for Russia and Russians resurged full swing at the very moment the Nazis unleashed their attack on the Soviet Union.

Prior to this, during the Stalinist Great Terror of the late 1930s, the Soviet project of building a better future for mankind began to lose some of its appeal, not the least among staunch adherents of Marxism. In turn, the emphasis of Communist leaders and functionaries on both total control of the people and long-term planning of their socio-political development met with increasing distance and occasional outright refusal. Ex-communists like Arthur Koestler, chastised as a 'renegade' by former comrades, lashed out against the centrality of Stalinist terror 'from above' in all of Soviet life, especially after 1935–36.[17] By the same token, however, he ignored or willfully shied away from popular cooperation with agents of domination and actual terror from below. Denunciation, even of family or close friends, had become rampant.

Yet, the Soviet Communist Party employed grossly violent forms of remodeling Soviet society even before the Great Terror. Even more, these interventions continued during WWII and carried on into the 1950s and beyond. The hunger catastrophes and forced migrations of the early 1930s had already shattered the claim of Soviet Communism's unmatched potential for humanity. Still, visions of society's steady progress kept their valence for decades, especially when depicting concrete scenes of the new world to come. Such visions resonated strongly with people's desires for a tangible betterment of their everyday.

At the same time, however, the rapid pace and apparent success of industrialisation plans showed an alternative trajectory. The jump-start of giant production plants, power plants, and of new cities seemed to prove both the benefits of planned change and 'historical backwardness'.[18] Hadn't Soviet industrialisation avoided the pitfalls that had hampered previous industrialisations? Surely, Soviet (self-)mobilisation would catapult society into a 'better future' beyond what Western societies or even Japan had accomplished.

The intensity and range of such expectations are mirrored in recent studies of Stalinism, and of Nazism as well. In both cases these studies stress the attraction of almost any effort that would lead people into more 'modern times'. For instance, the German example shows how widespread 'modern' Bauhaus architecture remained after the Nazi seizure of power in 1933. Its rigid and sober functionalism dominated much of private housing construction and even more so the erection of industrial complexes. Moreover, such studies reveal renewed emphasis on rationalisation, and German companies were pivotal to this. Domestic households were to follow suit. Yet, it was not just an appendix when engineers, architects, and political leaders joined forces to remodel landscapes, for instance, through the new expressways (*Autobahnen*).[19] What is more, studies of Italian Fascism and German Nazism show the constant and enthusiastic usage of 'modern' media, from film (whether feature films or newsreels) to radio, and early experiments with TV. Eagerness for velocity is a theme that cuts through all of these fields of planning, practice, and (self-)presentation. The promise of fast movement was embodied in streamlined trains and engines; it resonated with (civilian and military) airplanes and their pilots, as with motorbikes, cars, trucks, and, of course, tanks. Finally, velocity was also one of the wonders of wired and wireless electric telecommunication.

The drive to become visible in these fields of modernity may have been even more prevalent in Soviet Stalinism.[20] In fact, it is the simultaneity of grand designs for the development of society (and the Soviet Union) with practices of (self-)mobilisation and (self-)energising that would perfectly combine visionary imagination and good physical workmanship.

However, large scale planning did not vanish with the defeat of Nazism and Fascism in 1945 or the transformation of Stalinism in the mid-1950s. In fact, the focus on dictatorship tends to overlook programs for the (self-)mobilisation of the many that were designed and implemented in democratic policies as well: the American 'New Deal' of the 1930s is just one example, which was geared towards the re-start of economic growth and socio-political modernisation. It was a conspicuous one, however, especially with its presence in, and usage of, the mass media.[21] Reverberations between US, Italian, German, and Soviet designs and politics were particularly strong in the arenas of the aesthetics and media of modernity.

On a more technocratic level, concepts of an 'organized capitalism' (Rudolf Hilferding) had already gained momentum during and after the First World War, particularly in Central and Northern Europe.[22] Organised cooperation and compensation across the divides of class, milieu, and political party were central to this. The aim was to prevent socio-economic strife and, in the end, a potential collapse of the existing blend of parliamentary polity (occasionally turning rather authoritarian) and capitalist economy. Plans for building or bolstering community at work and in people's neighbourhoods were part and parcel of this agenda. From this angle communist

Five Year Plans or Nazi plans for implementing the 'people's community' (*Volksgemeinschaft*) – or their Four Year Plans for economy and re-armament – could appear as continuations, at least to some extent.[23]

The disasters of WWII did not overthrow such planning euphoria. Rather, this was one of the last resources for the many to achieve economic recovery and provide space for societal modernisation and political participation across political boundaries after 1945. In fact, the antagonisms between state socialism under Soviet tutelage and Western style 'free market' capitalism (increasingly under US hegemony) tainted all facets of living on either side. One conspicuous field was the manifold effort to outwit the 'other camp' in the poor or (so-called) 'underdeveloped' countries of the Third and Fourth Worlds. Neither the Soviet nor Western powers bothered much with the heavy dictatorial components of the governments they supported or put in power. From the western and eastern heights of command, the claim for a worldwide struggle against 'the respective foes' (the 'Reds' or 'the Imperialists') seemed to justify any blend of repressive, and oftentimes military, violence with socio-economic and cultural intervention. Thus, from the late 1940s Western agencies engaged themselves intensely in Argentina, Spain, and Portugal as well as in Iran, the Arabian Peninsula, Malaysia, and Taiwan; just as the USSR and its allies did in India, Cuba (after 1959 or since the late 1950s), and in an increasing number of post-colonial statehoods in Asia and Africa. Proxy wars like the decades in Vietnam demonstrated and, in turn, exacerbated regional and global rivalries. The only case where the two camps 'hotly' clashed was the Korean War (1950 to the armistice in 1953). In turn, the devastation of most of the country in the north and the south grossly alleviated dictatorial regimes for decades on both sides that were heavily (if not completely) dominated by the military.[24]

The 'new' Third-/Fourth-World countries seemed to fit especially well under the umbrella of 'developmental regimes' or, less camouflaged, 'developmental dictatorships'.[25] However, all of these top-down labels tampered with the actual performances of post-colonial governments, their agencies, and their henchmen. Thus, it may not be only adequate for Sub-Saharan Africa that the ruling elites and cliques turned a blind eye to their own 'politics of the belly' (J.F. Bayart) and its mix of exploitative and violent practices against their populations.[26]

Simultaneously, the 'developed' capitalist societies of Western Europe and North America (and Japan, which was rapidly rebounding to economic growth like West Germany thanks to Western rehabilitation efforts) enjoyed roughly 30 years of an unprecedented economic boom, from the late 1940s to the mid-1970s. However, this 'Golden Age' (Eric Hobsbawm)[27] came in many different shades. The specific trajectories of each nation-state – further modulated by regional distinctions – influenced people's responses to these unexpected gains. In the end, these gains reached almost everyone in the Western countries (if at widely varying degrees and times).

In post-war West Germany public optimism and *joie de vivre* were a recurrent backbone, at least in the mass media and in popular culture. To a large extent notions of 'jolly times' (as of 'small happinesses') fed on traits of the 1920s and 30s that the Nazis had mostly tolerated, if not fostered. Still, on a second tier, uncertainties, doubts, and anxieties about the future popped up.[28] They also seemed to blend with nagging concerns about the Allies' exacting revenge on the Germans for having prompted WWII, as well as for individual war crimes. In turn, such fears blended into anxieties shared by many survivors of the war: ex-soldiers and civilians alike had encountered or even employed killing violence. The resulting emotions of sorrow and loss could fuel fears of a future war and its nuclear dangers and prompt a longing for security, as strongly surfaced in the 1950s and 60s in West Germany. Alternatively, feelings of pride (or pleasure) for professional excellence in soldiering were kept silent. Still, they might have spurred the minority of West Germans who showed readiness for yet another re-armament.

The emotional shadows of WWII did not colour people's everyday lives only in West Germany.[29] The claim of the East German leadership to build a new and better Germany implied the promise to completely discard the legacies of capitalism and militarisation. Yet East Germans' daily experiences too often proved otherwise. Even offerings of limited participation in (local) planning or debate from the mid-1960s on did not overcome the widespread scepticism – or mistrust – of the vast majority of East Germans.[30]

People's ways of coping with the given post-1945 dictatorial rule combined selective acceptance with a broad spectrum of practices of keeping their distance.[31] Occasionally, people turned to determined, and at times hostile, apathy. The never-ending flood of demands and 'obligations' stimulated people to actively ignore them. At work, for instance, colleagues stubbornly refused to respond to calls for yet another competition or a new round of over-fulfilling work norms. Part and parcel of these efforts to be left alone were the manifold tactics of ordinary folks – be they seasoned or inexperienced – to outwit the people in charge. Yet, to be with oneself could likewise entail shedding colleagues, friends, neighbours, and family. In turn, it became common to strive for private space and time that one could regularly set apart. Since the 1960s the *dacha* (or *Datsche*) became a symbol and actual site of this drive for a personal niche or safe haven, even if only a temporary one. One popular rhyme for Fridays, i.e. the beginning of the weekend, reflected this common sense: '*Arbeit bis halb eins, dann macht jeder Seins*' ('Work until half past noon, when everyone turns to his own').

The pivotal East German policy line of the 1970s and 80s was to 'unite economic and social policies'. The aim was to satisfy not only collective demands, but also individual (and family) needs for better living and security. We must not forget that in the early 1980s the Cold War-environment was revitalised, and both sides demonstrated their capacity to deploy ever-new means of mass destruction. Anxieties of a future war may

have resonated with the stubborn, and perhaps egocentric, willfulness that was rising among East Germans in the 1980s. People increasingly realised that the promises of further progress and well-being put forth by the ruling party remained unfulfilled. The grim prospect of an ever more uncertain future mobilised East Germans across the board. While self-mobilisation gained momentum in the early spring of 1989 with dissidents and young adults, it gradually also affected other groups and age cohorts. This was – or became – a process by which mutual mobilisation prompted the energy to activate oneself, thus turning into a self-energising that quelled fears of repression and permanent insecurity. It was this self-energising of the many that triggered the revolutionary implosion of the East German dictatorship in the fall of 1989.[32]

Interlude I: The use-value of the concrete

After developmental frames of reference had lost their appearance of certainty, scholarly interest for concreteness resurged. The empirical in its multiple nuances seemed particularly promising at this time. More precisely, a renewed and refurbished curiosity about the specific and concrete inspired a shift in perspective that fundamentally reshaped the field. Thus, since the late 1950s new vistas opened onto the sites and forms of historical dynamics, thereby allowing fresh looks on historical actors and what they did or did not do. It was here that attention to detail sparked an interest in everyday settings and everyday practices. Accordingly, micro-historical views should render visible historical actors and their criss-crossings in ways that were missing in the 'diagonal' accounts of most statistical or structuralist accounts.[33]

Attention to the concrete also echoes an interest in 'surface'. Surface is visible 'everywhere' yet unfolds, at the same time, into a zillion individual facets and their configurations, from the traits of a single letter or report to pictures of all genres. Nevertheless, this is not a plea for a 'total history' in the manner of the French *Annales* group. That would not only be impossible in pragmatic terms, but also in a literal sense, it would also be a deadly enterprise. As Umberto Eco has argued (following an intriguing portrait of Jorge Luis Borges), any effort to produce a totalising one-to-one replica of the past would be detrimental. Such a 'second edition' of the world of the past would actually have to sit on top of the current one – thereby abolishing the atmosphere that all living species depend on.[34] Therefore, what is called for is a selective presentation of non-linear connections, relationships, and in particular, echoes. This implies recognition of the simultaneity not of different 'beings', but of their different temporalities: what is the sense of time and timing people encounter or employ and express when moving forward (and backwards and sideways) in concrete fields-of-force? What meanderings do they perform?

'Atomisation' of man and society?

Let us return to Arendt's Origins of Totalitarianism, in which she combines wide-ranging explorations of political thought with a sharp eye for the characteristics of specific political settings and social practices to scrutinise various genres of (self-)representation of Nazism and Stalinism. By this token, she focussed on the *longue durée* of societal transformations. In her view, since the late 18th century such wide-ranging changes had resulted in 'isolating man', and so had 'atomised' individuals.

Arendt's suggestion that 'social atomisation' was the pre-condition of totalitarian domination[35] that was to be enhanced when the latter took over has appealed greatly to many scholars and intellectuals. Despite, or perhaps because of this, it is a hypothesis whose empirical fit with the societies it purports to describe has never been seriously scrutinised. Any such investigation would necessarily begin with a series of questions: what were the actual drainages or breakdowns of social relationships and interactions that the notion 'atomisation' implies? How did they occur, and how did 'atomised' individuals and their behaviour register with others? Even more importantly: did people then, within the context of 'totalitarian regimes', venture to reconfigure or develop new forms of social inter-relationships and bonds?

This perspective also requires debate in another respect. In Arendt's appraisal of the 'redeeming grace of companionship', she portrays man as *homo politicus*, fundamentally dependent on the possibility of bonding.[36] Such bonds restrain people from longing for or practicing that violence which is a necessary component of totalitarian regimes. In other words, she renders violence and the infinite varieties of cruelty as fundamentally non-human. Here, Arendt's moral stance may limit the explorative capacity of her approach. For one thing, close inspection of actual forms and meanings of social bonds shows their inherent ambivalence. Family ties and comradeship at the workplace or in a military unit not only offer comfort, but also function as a last resort in times of hardship or distress. The very intensity of the bonds makes possible violence not only against 'others', but also amongst those 'bound' or binding themselves to each other.

Again, however, from this perspective anonymous logic and faceless processes determined and regulated the behaviour of historical actors, turning them into mere dependents without any sense of themselves or of others as human beings.

Subjects of history: Room for manoeuvre and self-energising

It is here that a new interest in the subjective side of history has made an impact both on research agendas and on the ways of narrating and presenting history: subjectivity and people's agency returned to the desks of the historians. This was and still is a rather slow process, but this move also alerts historians to the multiple forms of people's perceptions, expressions, and activities.

A focus on the subjective does not discard analyses of social relationships and interactions. The emphasis, however, changes. Structuralist or functionalist views underline 'integration' into and 'acceptance' of existing orders and rules (whatever their specifics may be). The related core topic is 'consensus' (or 'consent'). All of these notions operate on a similar level: they address an established state of behaviour, attitudes, and expectations. Thus, the very terms indicate a 'state of things' but omit the ways this state was produced, is sustained, or can be changed or dismantled. In other words, this perspective ignores the broad range of practices that historical actors try or apply – and especially those revealed on closer inspection. However, time and again the very enterprise of looking closely shows the variety and contradictions or dissimilarities in people's practices and modes of conduct. Still more, it shows that these variances and differences occurred among people of the same group – in the same military unit, industrial firm, or bureaucratic organisation, for example.

What in Germany has been called *Täterforschung* ('research on perpetrators') has begun with efforts to do close-ups of specific situations and actions.[37] But at the same time this approach misses the point. The search for perpetrators from whatever background (SS, police, military, Nazi party; people outside the institutions of state or ruling party) focusses on the 'either/or' binary of juridical definitions. It follows the rules of the juridical examination of 'facts' as rendered by police and prosecutors' protocols. Thus, the interest is in those clear-cut distinctions that allow a ruling. Traces of 'muddled' situations and of the ambivalent and multivalent behaviour of people have to be disregarded, or may even be reconfigured in order to make them fit to these very categories.

Studies like Christopher Browning's *Ordinary Men*[38] have powerfully shown that scrupulous tracing of people's behaviours and activities 'on the ground' is needed in order to reveal when and to what extent they engaged, for instance, in pushing and then killing the inhabitants of Józefów (a Jewish village in occupied Poland under the so-called '*Generalgouvernement*') in July 1942, and during *Aktion Reinhardt*, one of the large scale actions of German forces to kill Eastern European Jews. The German troops made up of ordinary policemen formed into military units separated adult men from the elderly, women, and children, and killed the latter. It is this focus on the concrete details on the ground that shows that not all participated in the same way: almost every tenth soldier shied away or withdrew. Whatever their tactics were, they did not participate, and in this case their non-participation was licensed by their commanding officer. However, the same close-up also shows the eagerness of other members of the same unit. They pushed those villagers marked out to be shot and eagerly participated in the killing actions. They fired their guns and sub-machine guns over and over again.[39]

In other words, Browning's study mapped the specific room for manoeuvre that people sometimes openly, but more often in concealed ways, defined, appropriated, and used.[40] Of course, at the centre of this analysis is an

understanding of social and historical processes as malleable and not predetermined by any kinds of 'given' elements and moments that are beyond the range of individuals or collectives at a particular moment or in a specific situation. Room for manoeuvre was not always readily available. But this kind of analysis also makes clear that the strivings for, and definitions of, room for manoeuvre cut both ways. Two autobiographical accounts provide more. One is by Melitta Maschmann, a young woman and professional functionary of the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* from 1939 onward; the other by Harald Menzel, a middle-aged professional in local welfare who volunteered 'for the East' in 1942. Both recollections show that the willingness to serve and the eagerness to master one's task 'well' had a most suggestive appeal to Germans from all ranks in the Third Reich.[41]

This desire for emotional intensity did not emerge out of the blue. Nor was it a 'natural', ahistorical feature. To the contrary, high emotional charges and expressions resonated with a widely held mix of desires, uncertainties, and anxieties. Thus, for European settings since the 1920s, culturally coded and informed uncertainties and anxieties became particularly important. In the German and also Italian cases, experiences of loss and military defeat in 1918 gained momentum. This was directly connected with assumptions of national 'humiliation' (which was what many Germans meant when they lamented 'Versailles', the Peace Treaty of 1919 between the Western Powers and Germany). At the same time, economic hardship and disappointment, which were both intensified by the hyperinflation of the early 1920s in Germany and by the global economic depression that begun in 1929, resulted in a situation that massively imposed on people's everyday lives. Across Europe promises of, and perspectives on, political and economic recovery, and simultaneous visions of a 'new order' found eager audiences. Such a 'new order' would exclude and wipe out all of those forces, groups, and people who were blamed for any of the hardships and (seeming) dangers people were experiencing. In the German case this *mélange* facilitated invocations of a sense of *Volksgemeinschaft* capable of cutting across cleavages of class, religion, political camp, and cultural distinctiveness. It was a loose web that allowed and encouraged initiatives from below. The reports of ordinary SA-men from the late 1920s and early 30s speak to this, as do the aforementioned autobiographical accounts. 'Energising the everyday' might be taken as something like a common experience that again cut across the entrenched differences and cleavages in German society.

To what extent can this, or a similar historical process be traced in Italy, for instance? More studies of Italy that focus on everyday settings and activities are required to answer this question. However, Richard Bosworth's analyses of people's everyday already show the impact of local-familial contexts for cooperating and using to one's own advantage the scope provided by Fascism for phenomena such as voluntary denunciation.[42] For the Soviet Union, the similarities have inspired work by Sheila Fitzpatrick

and Lewis Siegelbaum, among others, that have re-thought Stalinism 'from below'.[43]

Interlude II: The emotional

The realms of the sensible and the sensuous must also be taken into account against this background. However, historiographical efforts to venture into this rather sparsely chartered terrain remain limited in their scope. The binary of 'rational' versus 'irrational' and its ingrained privileging of the 'rational' hamper a better understanding of the interrelationships of, and resonances between, cognition and emotion. To explore what Luc Ciompi has called the 'logic of emotions'[44] in order to overcome that fatal dichotomy has been central to the recent work of William Reddy.[45] He shows 'private' sentimental strivings as pivotal to the production of a revolutionary *élan* during the French Revolution of 1789. Ciompi maintains that verbal references to emotions operated as 'emotives' by actively evoking the very emotional charge they seemed only to name. Similarly, one might decipher the rigour that advocates for rationality invested in 'disenchantment': is it not a bold emotion that drives people's passion to 'disenchant'? These blends of the sensible and the intelligible need to be explored further.

Rituals permit, and indeed authorise, the blending of festive and instrumental action. Or to put it more concretely: in what way does work rely on, or connect to, sociability and hedonism? Rituals seem to operate precisely because they stimulate multivalent readings and forms of transgressive action or, at least, projections thereof. In this context, the studies of gatherings of the Nazi HJ (Hitler Youth) or of the East German FDJ (Free German Youth), are likewise interesting. So too are the inter-relations (and disjunctions) between public and private spheres. For example, many people in the GDR eagerly tried to preserve a sphere 'for themselves' by keeping their apartments tidy – thus making a statement that could only become visible when one could visit both spheres.

Perspectives that stress the system of rule, ideology, and calculated interest – and therefore also acceptance, compliance, and integration – tend to ignore the patchwork of practices and orientations that people co-produce and in which they themselves live and operate. At the same time, they encounter and 'make' the dynamic simultaneity of dependent and independent (and also self-willed) roles that provide space for both: compliant acceptance and active complicity.

Generations: Life-courses

In Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and in the Stalinist Soviet Union, youth was particularly open to the perspectives and promises of the new regime (and to be sure, also to modes of self-expression like the commission of

physical violence on sceptics or 'enemies' of the 'good cause'). In other words, generational difference was a crucial factor that influenced the ways in which acceptance and cooperation occurred. But among those generations beyond the bracket of 'youth', this was also pivotal to creating the various conditions of sceptical reservation or resignation. The latter, however, usually contributed to a different, or perhaps lower, form of intensity when people went about their everyday lives. But such behaviour still operated at a considerable distance from any form of non-acceptance, let alone resistance.

In Germany, the so-called 'HJ- or Flakhelfer-Generation' (i.e., those who had not been drafted into the Wehrmacht because they were born in or after 1929)[46] still had to serve in anti-aircraft batteries. These younger Germans had been members of the Hitler Youth and were familiar with the symbols, rituals, and the ideological goals of Nazism to some extent. They were also familiar with its style of leadership. In the mid-1950s and 60s, members of this age cohort constituted the core of the workforce in both Germanys. Furthermore, they were at the core of the functional elites in East and West Germany striving for respective versions of a 'new Germany'.

Members of the HJ age cohort in West Germany were often depicted as 'sceptics'. Apart from a rather small group of functionaries, this seems to hold for their East German counterparts. Here, the complexity of people's everyday lives also contributed to allowing, and indeed inviting, acceptance of, or support for the broader system of rule. Even as the everyday afforded room for action, it also demanded action in order to get industrial production up and running, for example. The very focus on one's job and the immediate task at hand was in many ways extremely demanding. At the same time, to master the widespread and almost constant irregularities in the supply chain (of raw materials or tools) was a precondition for the economic, and therefore the political and social success of the regime. Therefore, it was not ideological commitment, but the relentless effort to do a good job – whether as a turner, secretary, nurse, or cleaner – that counted. Whether one embarked on the political project or tried one's best to ignore or to outflank it made no practical difference. Ultimately, and with the sole exception of outspoken non-acceptance, every kind of activity contributed to sustaining the 'system'. Even worse was that in the long run, activities of any sort served to develop and re-new, if not dynamise, the existing forms of domination.

Investigations into coping mechanisms are often bogged down because authors conceive of historical actors in rather unilinear ways. In many accounts, people are depicted either as having 'resisted' or as having 'accepted'. What remain blind spots in these visions are the moves back and forth – and back again that become visible upon close inspection of people's everyday lives. For instance, someone might slow down work processes in a factory manufacturing aircraft or motorcars in the morning, whether

for some 'political' reason or just to get a break after an exhausting day or night before. Some moments later, the same person might enthusiastically listen to a speech given by a political bigwig on the radio or admire pictures of that very person – Hitler? Mussolini? Stalin? – in an illustrated newspaper being circulated during a break. Or s/he might join co-workers in acclaiming, say, the reunification of the demilitarised Rhineland with the Reich proper in 1936 in Germany, or applaud the launch of the first Sputnik in October 1957 in East Germany. Minutes later, the same person might return to cutting corners on the shop floor, withdrawing from a 'battle for production' in the process.

Meandering

In this vein, the reconstruction of the arenas of the everyday can reveal practices of meandering that strongly resonate with, and are re-enforced by, people's desire 'to be a part of things'. The propensity to meander is bolstered not least by the attractions of domination and, almost concomitantly, by people's aspirations for space, time, and actions of their own.[47]

The story of Rombach, a Wehrmacht private on the Eastern front from 1941–42, affords a good example of this. He strove intensely to be a good soldier and to do a good job, but it was precisely these aspirations that finally drove him away from the army. After nearly two years of front-line service, he could no longer stand what appeared to him to be a lack of professionalism and courage displayed by his superiors. His eventual desertion was, in the first place, a decision to leave his peer group behind.[48] Obviously, his ties to his mates pushed him to no longer accept their given situation. In his recollections he says he felt driven by mounting despair about the incompetence and irresponsibility of the officers who were in charge of his unit. It was thus his goal to excel in his task as a soldier that forced him to literally run away from the army.

Or take the behaviour of two people outlined in a vignette by Victor Klemperer. Klemperer had been a professor of Romance languages at Dresden Technical University since the 1920s. Born to Jewish parents in 1881, he was baptised in 1914. He volunteered to serve in the Prussian army in WWI and considered himself a 'protestant German'. However, according to the Nazis' racist schema, he was labelled and treated as a 'Jew', although married to a Gentile. In a collection of essays on his encounters with Nazism published first in 1947 as *Lingua Tertii Imperii*,[49] Klemperer described 'one single working day'. Those designated as a 'Jew' by Nazi law were forced into labour beginning in the spring of 1939, and Klemperer was assigned to a job in Dresden at a small paper envelope factory. He recalled that the atmosphere at this workplace was not 'particularly National Socialist'. The entrepreneur was a member of the SS but, according to Klemperer, 'he did whatever he could for his Jews, he spoke politely to them, and sometimes made sure

that they got something from the canteen [against the letter of the law]'. Klemperer also recalled that he was not sure which was the greater consolation: 'a scrap of horse-meat sausage or for once being addressed as "Herr Klemperer" or even "Herr Professor"!'

According to Klemperer's recollections, the 'Aryan' workers in the factory were by no means 'Nazis' either – at least not in the winter of 1943–44, a year after Stalingrad. One of the workers was a man by the name of Albert, who was sceptical about the (Nazi) German government and not fond of the war. He had lost a brother; he himself had been given repeated temporary exemptions from military service due to of stomach problems, and was anxious to avoid being drafted. Klemperer overheard a conversation between Albert and one of their ('Aryan') work-mates. The latter had responded to Albert's hope that he would continue to be spared the draft until 'this wretched war is over' with a discomfiting rejoinder: 'Look here mate, how on earth is it going to be over? No one gives in!' And Albert had even boasted in reply: 'Yes, of course. They will have to realise that we are invincible, they cannot break us because we are so well organised!'

Klemperer turned to another work-mate. This woman, Frieda, frequently ignored strict decrees not to talk to 'the Jews' at work. Occasionally, she would ask Klemperer about his wife, who was not well. On this particular day, she left an apple on Klemperer's machine. Shortly afterwards, she came over to him and said: 'Albert says your wife is German. Is she really a German?' Immediately, all the 'pleasure of the apple was gone', Klemperer recalled. 'This friendly person, whose feelings were entirely un-Nazi and humane, had been infected by the most fundamental ingredient of the National Socialist poison; she identified Germanness with the magical concept of the Aryan. Her feelings could not grasp that my wife was a German.'

None of these stories fit into neat boxes of 'loyalty and integration' on the one hand, and 'distance' or even 'resistance' on the other. On a seemingly pre-political level this surfaces from Klemperer's recollections. Here, the immediate simultaneity of humane aspiration and an abrupt rejection of just such sensitivity is so disturbing because it appears to be so evident for either one of these co-workers, Albert and Frieda. In some ways, the trajectory of the Wehrmacht-soldier can be read as efforts to primarily follow one line. Still, his attempts are made in ways that may be not straightforward, but that are driven and informed by a notion of fulfilling a task to one's own satisfaction and of achieving the recognition of comrades and superiors alike. In any case, the means of achieving one's aims and of interacting in a military unit showed a wide range of practices. Lastly, this soldier's 'acceptance' of the Wehrmacht and of the warfare in the East, but also of the Nazi system more generally, did stimulate a weird irony: his very act of desertion demonstrated that his acceptance combined with a measure of active support that remained conditioned.

The stories I outlined differ in various ways. Still, all of them suggest high charges of emotional intensity among these historical actors. The accounts of the Wehrmacht soldier, the two civilian *Reichsdeutsche* (Maschmann and Menzel), and, in different ways, the notes of the persecuted Klemperer reveal manifold meanderings ranging from conformist to various non-conformist or *eigensinnig* stances, expressions, and practices.[50]

Everyone was constantly manoeuvering to get by or to survive, as it were, and their efforts strongly resonated with the situative. It may have been a blink of eye, but everyone could seize upon this one second. In other words: what so often appears predictable and the stimulus for all sorts of categorisations may turn out to be otherwise. Close observation of the minute details of people's movements and gestures reveal manifold contingencies. For one, in such practices people claimed or actually 'made' space for themselves. Yet these very activities would also remind historical actors that they were never able to hide behind apparently 'big' structures or 'overwhelming' powers.

Notes

1. My sincere thanks to Peter Lambert (Univ. of Wales at Aberystwith) for his thoughtful comments and fine-tuning of the English. Dennis Galvan also offered most helpful suggestions. Cf. H.-A. Frégier, *Des classes dangereuses de la population dans les grandes villes* (Paris: J.-B. Baillière, 1840, repr. 1977). For the 1920s' debates in Germany see the intriguing discussion of the views and reasoning of, among others, Siegfried Kracauer and Bertolt Brecht and the latter's emphasis on dismantling 'the person' yet rebuilding 'the subject' by relying on collective identifications in Stefan Jonsson, 'Neither Masses nor Individuals: Representations of the Collective in Interwar German Culture', in Kathleen Canning (ed.), *Weimar Publics, Weimar Subjects: Rethinking the Political Culture of Germany in the 1920s*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), pp. 279–301.
2. Here, of course, indicative are the writings of Gustave Le Bon from the late 1890s, cf. his *The Crowd: a Study of the Popular Mind* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1947). His book gained wide-ranging popularity; and as is well known, Hitler had read it and explicitly referred to Le Bon. For contemporary literary representations see the revealing explorations by Klaus-Michael Bogdal on the German and Austrian arenas, *Schaurige Bilder: der Arbeiter im Blick des Bürgers am Beispiel des Naturalismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Syndikat, 1978).
3. Nancy Reagin, *Sweeping the German Nation: Domesticity and National Identity in Germany, 1870–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
4. Ernst Ottwalt, *Deutschland erwache! Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus* (Wien: Hess & Co., 1932).
5. See the collections by Ernst Nolte (ed.), *Theorien über den Faschismus* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer u. Witsch, 1967).
6. Jürgen W. Falter, 'The Social Bases of Political Cleavages in the Weimar Republic, 1919–1933' in Larry Eugene Jones and James Retallack (eds), *Elections, Mass Politics, and Social Change in Modern Germany* (Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, 1992), pp. 371–97.
7. Oded Heilbronner, *Catholicism, Political Culture, and the Countryside: Social History of the Nazi Party in South Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press,

1998); Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann, *Nazism in Central Germany: The Brownshirts in 'Red' Saxony* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999).

8. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*: (*Rohentwurf) 1857–1858* (Frankfurt am Main, 1970), pp. 29–31, where he also notes that these issues 'ought not to be forgotten'.
9. Ernst Bloch, 'Ungleichzeitigkeit und Pflicht zu ihrer Dialektik', in Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit (1932)*, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1962), pp. 104–60; his analyses received renewed and widespread appreciation in the late 1960s and 70s in West Germany, in the wake of the strong emphasis on 'Critical Theory' and Marx's writings among many Western academics and intellectuals.
10. Wilhelm Reich, *Massenpsychologie des Faschismus* (Amsterdam: de Munter, 1933).
11. Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del Carcere, vols. 1–4* (Torino: G. Einaudi, 1977).
12. Sven Reichardt, *Faschistische Kampfbünde: Gewalt und Gemeinschaft im italienischen Squadrismus und in der deutschen SA* (Köln, Böhlau, 2002).
13. See, however, Alexandra Przyrembel, *'Rassenschande': Reinheitsmythos und Vernichtungslegitimation im Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003); Michael Wildt, *Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung. Gewalt gegen Juden in der deutschen Provinz, 1919 bis 1939* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2007); the classical text, however, is still Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders* (New York: Aaron Asher Books, 1990).
14. See Sebastian Haffner, *Germany: Jekyll and Hyde* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1940).
15. For the Nazi-German and the Soviet contexts cf. Christian Gerlach and Nicholas Werth, 'State Violence – Violent Societies', in Sheila Fitzpatrick, Michael Geyer (eds), *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 133–79; see also Kevin McDermott's incisive analysis of the Stalinist Great Terror in this volume.
16. The debate as to whether the Nazis were 'inspired by' or had 'copied' from the Bolsheviks had a brief conjuncture in and after 1986 (triggered by Ernst Nolte's newspaper-line that the Gulag had a 'logical and actual *prius*' to Auschwitz). Meanwhile, reciprocal attention on either side and resonances of difference and hostility have been put to the fore.
17. Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953 [1st ed. 1940]), a fictional account of the Great Terror. As to the range and multiple forms of compliance among the 'many' Soviet citizens cf. Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on my Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Press, 2006). Other international resonances should be recognized here as well: a study of Berlin Communists in the late 1920s shows a fairly elaborate practice of internal denunciations among party rank and file, cf. Pamela Swett, *Neighbors and Enemies: The Culture of Radicalism in Berlin, 1919–1933* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004), pp. 214–31.
18. Alexander Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1962); cf. also Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as Civilization*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
19. Erhard Schütz, *Mythos Reichsautobahn, Bau und Inszenierung der 'Straßen des Führers'*, [2nd ed.] (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2000); Rüdiger Hachtmann, *Industriearbeit im Dritten Reich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989); Adelheid von Saldern, *Häuserleben. Zur Geschichte städtischen Arbeiterwohnens*, (Bonn: J.H.W. Dietz, 1995), pp. 193–254, Rüdiger Hachtmann, *Berlin im Nationalsozialismus*

(Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012); Carola Sachse, *Industrial Housewives: Women's Social Work in the Factories of Nazi Germany* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2014).

20. See for the German case, Peter Fritzsche, *A Nation of Fliers: German Aviation and the Popular Imagination* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992); for the German and Soviet settings, respectively, cf. Peter Fritzsche, Jochen Hellbeck: 'The New Man in Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany', in: Sheila Fitzpatrick, Michael Geyer (eds), *Beyond Totalitarianism*, pp. 302–44. For the Soviet side, cf. Kevin McDermott's contribution in this volume.
21. For a first (and so far last) effort to map these comparative lines, cf. Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Entfernte Verwandtschaft: Faschismus, Nationalsozialismus, New Deal 1933–1939*, (München: Hanser, 2005).
22. Heinrich August Winkler (ed.), *Organisierter Kapitalismus. Voraussetzungen, Anfänge*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974).
23. On the range of trajectories, cf. the comparative study on Nazi-Germany and Sweden by Norbert Götz, *Ungleiche Geschwister. Die Konstruktion von NS-Volksgemeinschaft und schwedischem Volksheim* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2001); see on Germany also Wildt, *Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung* (2007). Another case in point is Kemalist Turkey, after Atatürk had seized the presidency of the newly found republic in 1923, cf. Stefan Plaggenborg, *Ordnung und Gewalt. Kemalismus – Faschismus – Sozialismus* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2012).
24. On the final phase of the colonial domination by Japan see in this volume Michael Kim on war mobilisation for the empire and Kyu-Hyun Kim on a seemingly 'soft' side of Japanese colonial rule: intense efforts to establish Japanese as the vernacular language and, thus, to replace Korean in people's everyday. On post-1945 Korea, cf. in this volume for South Korea, Won Kim's contribution on the country's compulsive industrialisation and women workers in the 1960s and 70s. On North Korea find here two pieces: Charles Armstrong's account of re-construction policies and practices after 1953, and Andre Schmid's exploration of the domestic sphere and people's various ways of coping.
25. A large body of studies on 'modernisation' that were grossly prescriptive – descriptive parts notwithstanding – testifies to this base-line, cf. Morris Janowitz, *The Military in the Political Development of New Nations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964); David E. Apter, *The Politics of Modernization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); S.N. Eisenstadt, *Modernization: Protest and Change* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968); as to the rigid notions of the aspired form and speed of economic growth in capitalism, cf. the influential tract by Walt W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960). For a critical evaluation of 'modernisation' perspectives that draws on anthropological as well as historical research, cf. Ann Laura Stoler and Fred Cooper, 'Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda', in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (eds), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1997), pp. 1–56, esp. pp. 13–17.
26. The inter-relationships of colonial (or imperial) 'center' and 'peripheries' after 1945 are masterfully explored in Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship Between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa 1945–1960*, (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2014). See also the scathing critique of state-making by colonial and post-colonial actors in Sub-Saharan Africa by Jean-Francois Bayart in *The Global Subjects: A Political Critique of Globalization* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007 [Paris, 2004]), esp. pp. 76–82; and the 'Preface to the Second English Edition' in J.-F. Bayart, *The*

State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), pp. x–ixxv. Also cf. in this volume for analyses of West-African cases and situations the contributions by Dennis Galvan and Richard Rathbone, respectively. Galvan traces colonial and WWII experiences among Senegalese conscripts. Rathbone discusses how in post-colonial Ghana the new rulers gradually overpowered the rural masses of cocoa farmers. Thereby the dominant ignored or outwitted the farmers' various efforts to cooperate. A rather different post-colonial setting emerges in the study Won Kim contributes to this volume. He pursues the compulsive industrialisation in South Korea in the 1960s and 70s with a particular focus on women workers, thereby relating their (self-)mobilisation to the harsh treatment they encountered in male-dominated factories and families.

27. Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914–1991* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1996), Part II.
28. Michael Geyer, 'Cold War Angst: The Case of West-German Opposition against Rearmament and Nuclear Weapons', in Hanna Schissler (ed.), *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949–1968* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 376–408; for the impact of experiences of war violence on West Germans, cf. Svenja Goltermann, *Die Gesellschaft der Überlebenden. Deutsche Kriegsheimkehrer und ihre Erfahrungen im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, (Munich: Dt. Verl.-Anst., 2009).
29. Eckart Conze, *Die Suche nach Sicherheit. Eine Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland von 1949 bis in die Gegenwart* (Munich: Siedler, 2009); for the demise of the economic boom since the mid-1970s, cf. John Urry and Scott Lash, *The End of Organized Capitalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987).
30. For a more comprehensive analysis of state and party policies of consumption and people's multiple ways 'to get by', see Harald Dehne's contribution to this volume.
31. Alf Lüdtke, '*"Helden der Arbeit"* – Mühen beim Arbeiten. Zur mißmutigen Loyalität von Industriearbeitern in der DDR', in Harmut Kaelble, Jürgen Kocka, and Hartmut Zwahr (eds), *Sozialgeschichte der DDR* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1994), pp. 188–213; Andrew Port, 'Predispositions and the Paradox of Working-Class Behavior in Nazi Germany and the German Democratic Republic', in Mary Fulbrook, Andrew Port (eds), *Becoming East Germans: Socialist Structures and Sensibilities after Hitle*r (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), pp. 201–18, esp. 204–6.
32. Cf. for an overview, Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 235–47. Fulbrook characterises the GDR as a 'honeycomb state' that had developed 'benign and malign' features from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s. Thus, the authorities had demanded and enforced people's participation. More concretely, she underlines that people had to join the licensed organisations and/or contribute services to the public good. For elaboration and critique, see the contributions to Mary Fulbrook (ed.), *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961–1979: The 'Normalisation of Rule'?* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009).
33. Cf. my piece 'Alltagsgeschichte – ein Bericht von unterwegs', in *Historische Anthropologie*, Vol. 11 (2003), pp. 178–95.
34. Umberto Eco, 'Die Karte des Reiches im Maßstab 1:1', in *Platon im Striptease-Lokal: Parodien und Travestien* (Munich: Hanser, 1990), pp. 47–57.
35. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, [2nd ed.] (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985 (New York, 1966 [1st ed. 1951]), pp. 14–15.

36. Arendt, *Origins*, p. 174.
37. Klaus-Michael Mallmann, Gerhard Paul (eds), *Karrieren der Gewalt: nationalsozialistische Täterbiographien* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2004); Elissa Mailänder Koslov, *Gewalt im Dienstalltag: die SS-Aufseherinnen des Konzentrations- und Vernichtungslagers Majdanek* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2009).
38. Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).
39. On both the efforts of state prosecutors and police to trace and indict perpetrators and the subsequent court trial see the detailed account by Jan Kiepe, *Das Reservepolizeibataillon 101 vor Gericht: NS-Täter in Selbst- und Fremddarstellungen* (Hamburg: Lit, 2007).
40. See Christopher Browning, 'German Killers: Behavior and Motivation in the Light of New Evidence', in Browning, *Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) pp. 143–69).
41. Melita Maschmann, *Account Rendered: A Dossier on My Former Self* (London, New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1964); [1st ed.] *Fazit: Kein Rechtfertigungsversuch* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1963); Harald Menzel, *Zerrissene Heimkehr: Eine Autobiografie* (Leipzig: Forum, 1991). For the forms of determined or occasional collusion with the Nazi powers that be, see the controversy on denunciatory activities of ordinary Germans between Robert Gellately and Eric Johnson, cf. in this volume the meticulous account by Peter Lambert. Another dimension concerns the treatment of enforced labourers at the German 'home front', that began in 1939 and was massively amplified from 1942 on. For a general overview, cf. Ulrich Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany Under the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press: 1997); there are also telling details and multiple nuances at the local level, for instance, in Lisa Grow, Günther Siedbürger (eds), *Auf der Spur europäischer Zwangsarbeit: Südniedersachsen 1939–1945* (Göttingen: Geschichtswerkstatt Göttingen, 2009).
42. Richard Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy: Life under the Dictatorship, 1915–1945* (London: Allen Lane, 2005); cf. also Paul Corner's chapter in this volume.
43. Sheila Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Stalinism: New Directions* (London: Routledge, 2000); Lewis Siegelbaum and Ronald G. Suny (eds), *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class, and Identity* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994).
44. Luc Ciompi, *Die emotionalen Grundlagen des Denkens. Entwurf einer fraktalen Affektlogik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997).
45. William M. Reddy, 'Sentimentalism and its Erasure: The Role of Emotions in the Era of the French Revolution', in *Journal of Modern History*, 72(2000), 109–52; William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), cf. fn. 5; accordingly, articulations of feeling and reports about them always have an instantaneous impact on the very field to which they refer. From here it becomes obvious that singling out specific feelings (like 'jealousy', as Peter Stearns did in one of his studies) misses the specifics of the workings, and therefore of the meanings of feelings: they never appear in isolation. Contextualisation needs to include the fact that there will be a variety of feelings for individual actors at any one time. This is something that applies whether the analysis focuses on group action or on the behaviour of a single person.
46. Heinz Bude, *Deutsche Karrieren: Lebenskonstruktionen sozialer Aufsteiger aus der Flakhelfer-Generation* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987); Ulrike Jureit, Michael

Wildt (eds), *Generationen: Zur Relevanz eines wissenschaftlichen Grundbegriffs* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2005).

47. Cf. also Michael Wildt's study of three personal diaries and their respective authors in dealing with the first year of Nazi-rule in 1933. For a different take emphasising Nazi-terror and efforts at non-compliance if not opposition among the majority of Germans (*Reichsdeutsche* or Aryans in Nazi-parlance) see Peter Lambert, both in this volume.
48. See on this case the study of deserters from the German *Wehrmacht* at the Eastern front: Magnus Koch, '"…wenn der Tod mit seinen furchtbaren Arten seine Ernte holt". Deutungen physischer Gewalt am Beispiel des *Wehrmachtsgefreiten* Werner Rombach', in *Historische Anthropologie*, 12 (2004), pp. 179–98.
49. Victor Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI, Lingua Tertii Imperii: A Philologist's Notebook* (London and New Brunswick: Athlone Press, 2000, first German ed. Leipzig, 1947) trans. M. Brady, pp. 93–4: cf. his corroborating account in his (secret) diaries: V. Klemperer, *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years*, 2 Vols., trans. Martin Chalmers (New York: Random House, 1998; [1st German ed.] Berlin, 1995), Vol. 2, pp. 293–4 (entry of 29 January 1944), 306 (entry of 3 April 1944), and 312 (entry of 3 May 1944).
50. For a comparable approach, especially on people's 'shifting' between 'voicing' their disappointment and 'exiting' a given 'system', see Albert O. Hirschman, *Shifting Involvements: Private Interests and Public Actions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982). On '*Eigensinn*' cfl. my *Eigen-Sinn: Fabrikalltag, Arbeitererfahrungen und Politik vom Kaiserreich bis in den Faschismus* (Hamburg: Ergebnisse Verlag, 1993).

Part II

Dictatorial and Colonial Regimes 1930–1960: Practices of Domination and Modes of Appropriation

3

The Third Reich: Police State or Self-Policing Society?

Peter Lambert[1]

A largely Anglophone history of the Third Reich 'from below' was initially anchored in the neo-Marxism of the New Left. It was informed by essentially optimistic assumptions about the self-activity and liberatory capacity of the working class and of 'ordinary' Germans more generally. From the late 1960s to the early 1980s, much of the most exciting work on the Third Reich was conducted in this spirit. The later 1980s witnessed the virtual collapse of Marxism and of the New Left. However, history 'from below' not only survived the disintegration of its original intellectual home, but in fact expanded, becoming increasingly ambitious in its attempts at explaining Nazism and Nazi rule. The focus of its practitioners shifted from the study of resistance to explorations of the rise of Nazism – locating it in the context of the emergence of a demotic, populist Right whose force was felt before the Nazis' own emergence as a mass Party – and of popular collaboration with the Nazi regime.[2]

Once optimism about 'ordinary' Germans and their behaviour under conditions of dictatorship had given way to a pervasive pessimism, historians writing 'from below' began a fundamental re-appraisal of the workings of totalitarianism. They suggested, for instance, that the criminalisation of warfare on the Eastern Front is inexplicable without reference to the barbarising contributions of 'ordinary' Wehrmacht soldiers,[3] and drew our attention to the role of ordinary policemen in the mass murder of Jews.[4] This chapter addresses another strand within this rich body of literature, namely a new approach to the historiography of the Gestapo and of its functioning in the everyday policing of the Third Reich. It has endeavoured to re-cast even Nazi terror as something that operated 'from below', and has sought to contribute to the reinterpretation of the Third Reich as a 'consensus society'. To this end, it has posited a culture of popular, 'voluntary' denunciation as being the only feasible explanation for the scope and success of surveillance and terror within Germany. This revisionist thesis is as stark as it is bold. How exactly did it emerge, and how persuasive is it?

More or less parallel to pioneering American and British studies written 'from below', the history of resistance to Nazism was being re-written in West Germany as 'social history'. Not only workers, it was argued, but also religious communities stubbornly refused to surrender their identities and disappear altogether into the morass of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. They offered a peculiar and limited kind of resistance, one which often co-existed with a broadly positive attitude toward Nazi rule. Martin Broszat, the leading West German exponent of this approach to the social history of the Third Reich, characterised such displays of nonconformity as *Resistenz*, as 'structural resistance', and distinguished emphatically between that and *résistance*.[5] It was in the context of this body of work, as a sort of unintended spin-off, that reflection on the phenomenon of voluntary denunciation began. For it was Broszat himself who, in a relatively little-read essay, first sought to draw the phenomenon of denunciations to scholars' attention.[6]

Scarcely any historian of the Third Reich would now argue that there was anything less than a broad social and political consensus sustaining Nazi rule for the greater part of its duration. The questions that remain contentious are what the precise nature of that consensus was and how it was forged. One issue is (or was) what exactly Germans knew of the crimes committed in Nazi camps. Robert Gellately recently asserted that 'There was close to general agreement among historians for a long time, that the Nazis deliberately and systematically hid what they were doing, so it was possible that ordinary people really did not know.' He proclaimed that his own work 'challenges these views', though he elaborated neither on who held them, nor on when they had constituted an orthodoxy. What surprised me was that the camps he had in mind, and the 'question' of ordinary people's knowledge he was addressing, did not relate to the six extermination camps and Germans' awareness of them, but to the concentration camps and Germans' familiarity with their existence and functions in the 1930s.[7] I have been teaching on Nazi Germany for around a quarter of a century. I do not remember a time when I did not emphasise that, whereas the concentration camps' existence was public knowledge in 1930s Germany – and was intended to be so by the regime – the extent and duration of knowledge of the extermination camps between their construction and the end of the war is difficult to determine. I was not aware that, in insisting on the distinction, I was saying anything unusual or novel, and I was most certainly not setting out audaciously to challenge a consensus.[8] But my real difficulties with Gellately's work do not relate to his arguments about who knew what, nor with his positive evaluation of the work of historians like Alf Lüdtke, work which has gone a long way toward explaining the construction and expansion of the pro-Nazi consensus in the Third Reich. Rather, my problems begin with his assertion that there was consensus underpinning the Nazi terror in particular, and that it was 'active rather than passive'.[9] This, however, is a view on which there did then, for several years appear to be 'close to general agreement among

historians'. A plethora of studies of the Gestapo appearing since the late 1980s confirmed the impression.[10]

They all established that the Gestapo was very far from being all-seeing and all-knowing. As late as 1939, there were only around 7000 Gestapo agents in the Third Reich. It is inconceivable that these officers' own detective work could have generated the bulk of the cases they investigated. So, many historians of the Gestapo reasoned, the political police must have been heavily reliant on denunciation, which became a 'mass phenomenon' of 'unimaginable proportions'.[11] Hard-pressed Gestapo agents could not have instituted a reign of terror had it not been for information 'streaming', indeed 'flooding' in 'from below', from 'ordinary Germans' acting 'spontaneously' and 'volunteering' accusations to Nazi authorities. 'Voluntary' denunciation, they further argued, was by no means invariably (or even generally) motivated by a genuine commitment to the political objectives of the regime. Rather, it was commonly generated by a preparedness to manipulate the inflation of what constituted political crime for personal advantage. 'Ordinary Germans' thus used allegations centred on the political and racial crimes invented by the regime in attempts to settle neighbourhood disputes, old scores with personal enemies, and even family rows and marital squabbles. However, the motives matter less than the outcomes and, regardless of their intentions, 'ordinary Germans' made an indispensable contribution to the scope of the Nazi terror. Thanks to them, according to Robert Gellately and a swathe of historians who have followed in his footsteps, what transpired was not the emergence of a 'police state', but of a 'self-policing society'. In a 'German-on-German terror', it was they who acted, while the Gestapo, duty-bound to follow where they led, was generally 'reactive'. Through their agency, 'the Nazi terror' entered the dailiness of life in the Third Reich: it became 'everyday terror'. In lieu of armies of Gestapo agents and their paid informants, we are invited to contemplate legions of denouncers. Here, then, was a terror substantially created and operated by Germans, most of whom were not even Nazi Party members, leave officials of the party or the state. To read Gestapo records of denunciation is thus, for Herbert Werner, to view 'the mirror image of the Nazified soul of the people.'[12]

Gellately, together with a number of other historians of policing in the Third Reich, but also alongside revisionist historians of the Stalinist terror, see themselves as paradigm-shifters. On occasion, they even conjure up Thomas Kuhn's name and his concept of 'paradigm shifts' rhetorically to underscore the revolutionary historiographical intent and impact of their work.[13] Gellately and Sheila Fitzpatrick, a leading authority on the social history of the Soviet Union, do just that. And, in their advocacy of this new paradigm, they characterise it as encompassing a turn away from histories of terror written 'from the top down' and toward a perspective which views terror as working 'from the bottom up'.[14]

The social profile of voluntary denouncers may – in very broad terms – reflect that of the German population at large accurately enough to permit their collective description as 'ordinary Germans'. Even so, the over-representation of younger adults and the lower-middle and middle classes, and under-representation of workers, of women, and of the upper classes among them have been pretty clearly established.[15] This resembles the generational, class, and gender composition of the Nazi vote over the last years of the Weimar Republic more strikingly than it resembles that of the adult population in general. But even if the denouncers' profile does suggest a measure of 'typicality' in relation to social categories, how 'ordinary' denouncers really were in other respects remains open to serious doubt. For clues, and drawing on Eric Johnson's impressive research, I offer one Gestapo case he describes – without intending to suggest that it is typical.

The case involves a son's volunteered allegations about his aging father. Some of the allegations were of a sort the Gestapo were quite used to hearing, and might in principle have led to formal charges of *Heimtücke* – an offence which is difficult to translate, but has connotations of libel, malice, and perfidy. The old man had purportedly been rude about the Führer and generally derogatory about Nazism. But then, the son added, this was but one manifestation of his having lost his marbles. He had taken to wandering around the house with his flies undone and his penis hanging out. He was frequently to be observed masturbating in the yard of the family farm. And the son had only recently watched as his father first carefully wiped the backside of one of his cows, then mounted the beast. When this dutiful son reported the incident to his mother, she was apparently quite un-phased, intimating that her husband had been working his way through the entire herd. Most of the rest of the family backed the mother and her son up in the charges against the husband and father. However, the case was already running into the sand when the daughter of the house told the Gestapo that her brother and mother were making these malign allegations only because they wished to cover up their own incestuous relationship.[16]

I defy anyone to suggest that this was an 'ordinary' German family. It was, however, a family of longstanding Nazis. Moreover, the family was 'in good standing' with the local Nazi Party. Or so I would infer, given that not one of the allegations – neither any of the son's nor that of his sister – resulted in any action whatever against any member of the family. And before we follow the Gestapo in dismissing all the charges out of hand, we ought perhaps to reflect on a piece of advice given by one witness to the practice of denunciation. Writing in 1947, Paul Ronge defines the problem of the denouncer as being not 'that he accused falsely. On the contrary, his accusations were true'.[17] And, after all, the daughter in this case might readily have sought more gently to deflect the accusations against her father and to wrong-foot her brother. She need only (and evidently truthfully) to have

pointed out that the son's allegations had been levelled immediately after a family row. The row had ended in the son being thrown out of his father's house.

Gellately's research, though it furnishes us with less 'local colour' than does Johnson's, nevertheless tends to confirm the impression that denouncers did share characteristics that made them stand out from the citizenry at large. Gestapo officers themselves described numbers of their informants as 'psychopathic liars' – but still pursued the cases the latter had initiated. Here, the Gestapo called a denouncer a 'numbskull'; there, Gestapo files were unanimous in declaring another to be '"not quite right" in the head'.[18] One woman who made serial denunciations clearly did so because she was not taken seriously either by her neighbours or by Nazi authorities in her village, where her 'dubious reputation' added up to 'notoriety'.[19] While it was precisely in rural areas that denunciations for widely committed political crimes were most common, it does not follow that the denunciations came from individuals who were well integrated into their own communities. As Michael P. Hensle has suggested, these denunciations evince not so much 'the power of words' as 'a certain speechlessness'.[20] People who were otherwise unable to assert themselves in neighbourhood conflicts reached for denunciation in desperation as they sought to override local norms of acceptable conduct and to bypass local authorities. 'Social misfits' described by the Gestapo as 'limited mentally', Gellately remarked, were especially given to 'hounding their neighbours'.[21] The label 'ordinary' he otherwise attaches to denouncers, imprecise as it is, sits ill with his simultaneous depiction of them as 'misfits'.

Johnson's work on Cologne and Krefeld presents a sequence of important challenges to the literature on the Gestapo written 'from below' and to the characteristics and role the latter assigns to the phenomenon of voluntary denunciation.[22] The overwhelming majority of Cologne's non-Jewish population, Johnson's evidence suggests, did not even fear getting into trouble with the Gestapo. Not one in a hundred actually did get into such trouble, although the overwhelming majority appear to have committed illegal acts – such as listening to the BBC during the war – at some time or other. One wonders: just how many voluntary denouncers can there then have been? While it is perfectly true that not all denunciations necessarily arrived on Gestapo desks, and that the Gestapo almost certainly dismissed many allegations without troubling the accused, it strikes me as being likely that, at any rate until the war, still fewer Germans volunteered denunciations than were victims of Gestapo investigations. After all, it was very common for a single denouncer to get several people into trouble – either in a single denunciation or through serial denunciations. Johnson is emphatic that most 'ordinary Germans' never denounced anyone at all. This is fundamentally at odds with the impression given by Gellately and others, whose arguments suggest that beneath the surface of the Nazis' ideal of a harmonious *Volksgemeinschaft*

there lay a seething morass of back-stabbing, back-biting, self-serving, or fanatical snitches, dobbing one another in to Nazi authorities ubiquitously and persistently. Having demolished the myth of the all-knowing, all-seeing Gestapo, these historians have come perilously close to constructing a substitute myth – of an omnipresent army of snitches. Bernward Dörner, on the other hand, while noting the considerable numbers of denunciations, has sounded a timely note of warning against the temptation to 'fetishise' them.[23] Hensle is likewise disinclined to see an exceptional proclivity to denounce in the Third Reich. Nor does he regard mass denunciation as necessary to the spread of terror, since a relatively small number of denouncers could generate disproportionately widespread fear.[24]

Historians who argue up the extent and significance of voluntary denunciation create a paradox of which they seem unaware. For the higher the rate of denunciation, the harder it becomes to see denunciation as being voluntary. Where numbers of denouncers rises – to (say) 10 per cent or more of a population, and the circle of people suffering denunciation widens at least in proportion – a regime more or less programmatically inclined to believe and so also to encourage denunciations is liable to grow more alarmed by the apparent scale of its unpopularity than satisfied by the evident willingness of comparable numbers of citizens prepared to do its dirty work. Such conditions might lead to a circumstance which may be observed – if only patchily – at the height of the Stalinist Terror in the USSR: the only way of demonstrating loyalty to the regime and of minimising the risk of becoming a victim of allegations was to make preemptive allegations oneself. The result was that 'preemptive' denunciations 'fattened the dossiers of the NKVD'.[25] It is thus hard to see genuinely voluntary denunciation as compatible with mass denunciation. Besides, none of the historians who have mined Gestapo archives have found evidence of systematic 'pre-emptive denunciation'. Pre-emption appears to have played a part only under highly individual conditions, such as those pertaining when one man was denounced by a host of his neighbours for listening to foreign radio. From his accusers' perspective, the perpetrator's real offence was that he had made no effort to conceal his activities, and they acted out of fear lest they be held to be complicit in his crime.[26]

If Ronge was right in insisting that most denunciatory statements were in fact substantively true, a puzzle emerges. Why was it that it was not only cases involving allegations against Nazi Party members that had a habit of failing to reach the courts, or ending in the dismissal of charges, 'not guilty' verdicts, or relatively light sentences? The charges brought were often far less serious than might have been levelled. It appears that, if the misconduct alleged could be construed as a relatively harmless letting-off of steam, and unless the victim of an allegation fell into one of the categories of the Nazis' target groups, the system was highly likely to be lenient. But it was also unpredictable, which was no doubt one of its strengths.

The commission of offences that were *heimtückisch* was clearly very common, and became increasingly so in the later years of the war; illegally listening to enemy broadcasting during the war was the norm. Nevertheless, only a small minority of offenders – and of course an infinitesimally minute minority of individual offences – were brought to the authorities' attention. And even then the bulk of the offenders got away with their conduct. Yet allegations concerning these offences, and others like them, were the coin the denouncers generally dealt in. This constitutes a further ground for treating the claim that voluntary denunciation was essential to the functioning of the Nazi terror with scepticism. Nazi terror struck the Left first. But large numbers of voluntary denunciations were neither necessary to the Nazis' destruction of the organisational fabric of the Left, nor were they forthcoming.

Certainly, some voluntary denunciations did hit the Left from time to time and in some localities, especially between 1933 and 1935 and again in the period from 1939 to the end of the war. Studies of the Communist resistance, for example, have always acknowledged the fact. However, for the communities he studied, Johnson could find scarcely any evidence of volunteered denunciation playing a part in the destruction of the Left at all. Here, the Gestapo was decidedly pro-active, not reactive. It had the resources it needed to smash the Left, neither needing nor receiving aid from voluntary denunciation. The same holds for the next target group, namely Roman Catholic and Protestant priests. It was not their parishioners who denounced them to the Gestapo. They got into trouble for what they wrote in the Church press and for what they said from the pulpit. Keeping them under surveillance did not tax the secret policemen.[27]

In relation to Jews, however, Johnson's findings do on the whole bear out Gellately's: here, the contribution of voluntary denunciation to Gestapo case-work that culminated in successful prosecutions was unquestionably substantial. As the legislation specific to Jews mounted, so too did the number of 'crimes' Jews committed. Significantly under-represented in the crime statistics of the Weimar Republic, Jews were markedly over-represented in those of the Third Reich. And, predictably, they were far more likely to get stiff sentences than were non-Jewish Germans. Many German Jews were therefore denied the opportunity to emigrate that they might otherwise have enjoyed. On the other hand, the friendly behaviour Jews encountered from many Germans could paradoxically have the same effect – simply by dint of encouraging Jews to feel that they did not need to emigrate. In any case, the suffering of German Jews in consequence of voluntary denunciation pales into insignificance by comparison with what was visited on them through the round-ups in the aftermath of the *Reichskristallnacht* pogrom and with the Holocaust. Nor is there any readily discernible link between the readiness of some Germans to inform against Jews on the one hand, and the Holocaust on the other. Only indirectly, by identifying the potential of denunciation to

cause Germans to think twice before maintaining social relations with Jews, to promote ostracism, and help secure an increasingly common attitude of indifference toward Jews, may a connection be established.

Both the public pronouncements of leading Nazis and their media, and the behaviour and case-work practice of the Gestapo demonstrate ambiguities in their attitudes toward the 'self-policing' of German society. Denunciations were, on the whole, welcome; their authors were not. And sometimes denunciations themselves were deemed to be more trouble than they were worth, and the intentions, trustworthiness, and judgment of denouncers were questioned. In late January 1934, the Oldenbourg Gestapo noted a warning from the Berlin Gestapo:

> That it has recently repeatedly been established that the conversations of harmless travellers have been listened in on by the transport service staff on international routes [...]. While the collaboration of every single *Volksgenosse* in the fight against elements hostile to the state is welcome in principle, and is indeed expected by the Führer, then this frequently applied procedure is nevertheless prone significantly to create false impressions [...]. We are referred to the consequences of ill-considered actions in such cases; in as much as arrests are necessary at all, they must be conducted with tact and discretion. In a majority of cases, observation of the persons under suspicion is more appropriate and will guard against error.[28]

Similar warnings proliferated.[29] The regime was perfectly aware that the promotion of a denunciatory culture sat ill with the image of a harmonious community of the Volk.

One of those forms of behaviour criminalised by the regime was the act of listening to foreign radio. Here, denunciations made a hefty contribution to the persecution of the 'perpetrators'. Indeed, the evidence that, in relation to this kind of offence, voluntary denunciation did furnish the Gestapo and the courts with the bulk of their business is incontrovertible. Cases involving the offence scarcely ever originated in Gestapo detective-work. And this in spite of the fact that, six days after the practice of listening to enemy radio stations had been rendered criminal by a law of 1 September 1939, the Gestapo was ordered to ensure its complete enforcement. Gellately points out that denunciations made a far larger contribution to policing in relation to this offence than to cases involving race,[30] and we can comfortably conclude that the divergence was still greater in relation to the persecution of the Left and of clergymen.

Yet the operation of the judicial process seems to have conspired increasingly to undermine any intent rigorously to enforce this law. Thus, while breeches of this law accounted for over 16 per cent of 'war-specific' recorded crimes in 1939, and for just under 10 per cent of such crimes in 1940, their share declined to less than 4 per cent in 1941, 2.4 per cent in 1942 and

1.7 per cent in 1943. The point at which the percentage had been highest – 1939 – was also the point at which the share of war-specific recorded crime was at its very lowest (standing at under 0.1 per cent). Only 36 sentences were handed down for listening to foreign broadcasts in that year. It was in fact in 1942, when war-specific crime rocketed upward as a proportion of all recorded crime, that sentences for 'radio-crime' reached their numerical high-water mark with just over a thousand successful prosecutions. Trials and sentences concerning the offence were widely and deeply unpopular. Many judges, caught between their desire to curry favour with the regime and their wish, if not to court popularity with the German public, then at least to avoid excessive unpopularity, compromised. They imposed relatively lenient sentences.[31] But – and this seems to me to be crucial – Gestapo investigations led to eventual sentences only in a tiny minority of all cases involving this new 'radio crime'. In the four months of 1939 that had produced 36 sentences for commission of the crime, the Gestapo had arrested 1100 people suspected of having committed it. Gellately reasons that even this figure must have represented a small proportion of the cases the Gestapo had investigated.[32]

The ubiquity of commission of the offence stands in inverse proportion to its successful prosecution. 'Ordinary Germans', to whom the criminalisation of listening to foreign radio should have appeared invasive and menacing, only very rarely actually experienced the theoretical totalitarian and terroristic implications. In this context, denunciations can therefore hardly be said to have been pivotal to the terror. Saying that the persecution of ordinary Germans for listening to foreign radio constituted a 'terror' campaign at all seems to me to be stretching the definition of terror. Had denunciations typically led to arrests, and had arrests typically ended in verdicts of 'guilty' in the context of a genuinely 'self-policing' society, there could only have been two possible outcomes. Either ordinary Germans would have stopped listening to foreign radio stations, or millions of them would have been incarcerated. In the former event, the strains on the *Volksgemeinschaft* would presumably have become unbearable. In the latter case, Germany's war economy would obviously have suffered inordinate damage.

However, it is likely that more frequent and harsher sentences would in fact have produced a signal decline in rates of denunciation. In the course of the war, the judiciary itself became increasingly prone to bewail a general lack of willingness to denounce 'perpetrators' of crimes that people knew would probably be severely punished. Gellately has himself observed a decline in rates of denunciation in the later war years, when sentences meted out for a range of offences were becoming increasingly draconian.[33] The inference, though Gellately does not draw it, is that relatively high rates of denunciation for what the Gestapo and the courts alike considered relatively low-level offences, like spreading malicious gossip and listening to foreign radio stations, were dependent on denouncers' own awareness that, on the whole, they were not putting their victims at serious risk.[34] If this

opens up further questions as to denouncers' motives, it also suggests one final ground for challenging the view that the Nazi terror was largely a product of pressures welling up 'from below'. The Gestapo must have expended a great deal of their limited time and energy on 'radio crime', an offence they themselves did not take particularly seriously and in relation to which they knew that they were unlikely to secure convictions. Here, voluntary denunciations necessarily distracted Gestapo officers from hounding the kinds of offenders who fell four-square into the categories of their racially and politically defined target groups, and in relation to whom they stood far better chances of success. Because it obliged the Gestapo to explore unpromising avenues, voluntary denunciation could actually impede the radicalisation and expansion of the terror.

The new historiography of the Gestapo has been at its most persuasive where its methodology has been relatively conservative, and where its gaze has fixed on the Gestapo as an institution. Thanks to historians like Mallmann, Paul, Johnson, and Gellately, we now know how small the Gestapo was, and how over-worked its officers were. Where some of these historians have, in particular in relation to the phenomenon of voluntary denunciation, gone on to reinterpret the Nazi terror 'from below', their own research has thrown up anomalies. These are sufficiently numerous and significant to warrant scepticism about the claim that denunciation was pivotal to the capacity of the Gestapo to function effectively. At their least guarded, such claims threaten to allow an undifferentiated thesis of 'collective guilt' to return into historians' debates through a back door.

Gellately and Johnson see the way in which the Nazi terror functioned in fundamentally different ways. What strikes Gellately as essentially a story of a reactive Gestapo struggling to come to terms with floods of voluntary denunciations appears to Johnson as a tale of a mere trickle of denunciations arriving in the context of a Gestapo onslaught on the Left and selective attacks on the major Christian denominations. Then, suddenly, these two historians' divergent paths meet. From diametrically opposed premises, each concludes that what he has shown is unambiguous evidence of the enormously popular reach of a pro-Nazi consensus in German society. To Gellately, a populist terror resting on vast popular collaboration culminated in a circumstance in which 'The silent and not-so-silent majority backed the regime'.[35] Johnson infers overwhelming support for the regime precisely from the failure of the vast majority of Germans to denounce anyone at all to the Gestapo.[36]

More recently, Johnson and Reuband have sought to explain what they consider strikingly low levels of fear of arrest for political crimes as being chiefly a consequence of the fact that 'the majority of citizens supported the regime or at least conformed to the system'. Their conclusion is more pointed still: 'Many of the non-Jewish respondents' to the questionnaire-based survey they had conducted in the 1990s 'were certainly not of the

opinion that the Third Reich had been imposed upon them against their will. Indeed, many shared the view of Rolf Heberer who said he had been "ecstatic" when Hitler came to power and that "for sixty million Germans, that was what the people really wanted."' Rolf Heberer had been interviewed as part of the Johnson/Reuband project. One would scarcely have guessed it from the way he was re-introduced into their text, but Heberer had been five or six years old when Hitler came to power. His 'ecstatic' response had been to Hitler Youth trips and a general feeling of community, not to the advent of the Nazi regime.[37] Nor does Johnson and Reuband's evidence really provide 'strong evidence' in support of Heberer's surmise about the attitude of '60 million Germans'. A very considerable majority of the respondents had been born between 1917 and 1928. Among the tiny minority born before 1911, the levels of support for Nazism appear to have been dramatically lower than among those socialised chiefly in the Third Reich.[38]

Manifestly, Gellately and Johnson cannot both be right about the means by which they arrived at their shared conclusion. Not least in light of Gellately's earlier (and persuasive) contention that a goodly number of voluntary denunciations were not ideologically motivated at all, using denunciations in any way as an index of support for the regime seems suspect. His insistence that the denouncers were the exception (and colourful anecdotes exemplifying their often bizarre conduct) notwithstanding, Johnson joins forces with Gellately on two further counts: first, a shared emphasis on their 'ordinariness'; second, an equally marked characterisation of their victims as socially marginal 'outsiders' and 'outcasts'. Thus, according to Johnson, those 'non-Jewish Germans' who really suffered from the Nazi terror were 'Communists and a few other small minorities'.[39] This really is to internalise middle-class views of the Communists, not to say the Gestapo's – and even more clearly the Nazi propaganda machine's – view of the German population. Communists were indeed massively over-represented among the victims of the Nazi terror. But trade unionists and Social Democrats suffered too, as did prominent activists among the Nazis' allies in and beyond the German National People's Party. And Johnson's own work had detailed the selective terrorisation of Christian communities from 1935 onward – not only of the smaller sects, but of 'mainstream' Protestants and of Roman Catholics. Though their support was dwindling by March 1933, the Communists still enjoyed mass support among working-class Germans. The Social Democrats had more. And if we add together all those communities of Germans who, albeit to varying degrees and at different times, were subjected to elements of terror, then the notion that they together constituted a mere agglomeration of 'small minorities' begins to look absurd.

The terror unleashed by the Nazis in 1933 has been almost programmatically down-played by Gellately and Johnson alike. For Gellately, 1933 witnessed not a 'sweeping onslaught on German society' but a mere 'mini-wave of terror'. He asserts that 'no more than 150,000' Communists 'were

touched directly by some form of persecution'. But on closer inspection, his tally proves to refer only to members of the KPD, so that by his own calculation fully half the membership did suffer.[40] In fact, the figure of 150,000 makes sense only in relation to Communists who were incarcerated in Concentration Camps and prisons and takes no account of those who suffered house-searches, beatings, and intimidation.[41] Johnson and Reuband are more careful, but still make the curious statement that only 'several thousand people fell victim to all kinds of violence as the Nazis consolidated power in 1933', before going on to refer to the 100,000 who were arrested and interned.[42]

Reviewing the evolution of research on denunciations in the Third Reich, Gellately could reflect with some complacency on the fact that, while Martin Broszat's, Reinhard Mann's, and his own work had stood alone before 1990, it had indeed furnished the building-blocks of what became a new orthodoxy in the course of the next decade and a half – the partly dissonant findings of Johnson and Dörner notwithstanding. In 2001, Karl-Heinz Reuband's was an isolated voice when, having identified the 'paradigm-shift', he cast doubt on a number of the salient features of the new 'paradigm' and its findings: the alleged peculiarity of denunciations to dictatorships when comparable behaviour was clearly observable in occupied Germany after the war and in the Federal Republic of Germany, for example; the 'mass' character of the phenomenon of denunciation in the Third Reich; the tendency to view the Gestapo's behaviour as generally 'reactive' to initiatives from below. He proposed two correctives. First, he accentuated exceptional violence in the repressive measures undertaken by coercive institutions. 'Particularly repressive measures', he argued, compensated for understaffing, and the 'more brutally the repressive apparatus is mobilized from the outset, and the more strongly the population was cowed, the fewer the personnel required.' Second, he recommended that the functioning of the Gestapo be considered always in relation to the other aspects of the coercive apparatus of the regime: the 2,000,000 Nazi Party 'block wardens', for instance, and the SS Security Service (SD). From the middle of the decade, critical observations began to accumulate.[43] Geoff Eley subjected the new Gestapo history to a critical review in 2005, as I did myself.[44] But it is Richard Evans's intervention, in the 2006 Raleigh Lecture on History, that has the best claim to having unsettled the seeming certainties generated by the new historiography of the Gestapo.[45] Johnson, countering 'new proponents of the original view of Nazi support based more on coercion than consent' who 'have become more popular again' since the heyday ('between the late 1980s and early 2000s') of the revisionist paradigm, has charged Evans with relapsing into the tired clichés of the 'totalitarianism thesis'. His complaint seems essentially to concern Evans's contention that the 1930s Nazi terror had been 'vented . . . upon large sectors of German society', and indeed upon 'the great majority' of Germans 'at one level or another, to one degree or

another'. Johnson objects that this statement is so broad as to be 'almost meaningless' and so just as applicable to 'democratic societies today' as to the Nazi dictatorship.[46] In fact, Evans had stressed above all the terror of 1933.[47] In his 2001 study, Johnson had done no less. Had they been willing to co-operate with Social Democrats, he had argued then, Communists 'might have created the united effort needed to stop the Nazis at the beginning of Hitler's rule, when it might still have been possible to do so. But their failure was even more a product of the Nazis' resolve to destroy them with utmost ruthlessness.' This, of course, is an argument that rests on the assumption of mass hostility to the advent of the Third Reich. Almost certainly, it actually exaggerates the potential power of the Left. If Johnson was assuredly right to have suggested that, thereafter, 'most' Germans 'went along willingly with the regime', and that Nazi terror 'would not have been imaginable' had it not been for their 'loyalty, complicity, and silence',[48] then that is because the experience of terror especially in 1933 was a fundamental precondition for the consent those millions of Germans who had not welcomed Nazi rule *ab initio* gave the regime from the mid-1930s onward. Coercion and consent should, as Geoff Eley has argued, be seen as a binary, and 'ordinary' Germans' choices were severely constrained; 'voluntarism' in the Third Reich was at least in part a chimera, and there was a large dose of coercion in consent.[49]

I suggest three conclusions. First, students of denunciatory practices in mass dictatorships should be doubly careful to emphasise that the criminal channels through which denunciations flowed were created 'from above'. Just as the Nazis had not been brought into office riding on the crest of some wave of popular enthusiasm, but had been 'jobbed in' at a point at which their electoral support was in sharp decline, so the legislation that criminalised increasingly many kinds of behaviour cannot be attributed to pressures from below. Yet it was on the basis of those laws, and of the precepts of Nazi ideology, that such denunciations as were made at all inevitably had to be made. Some Germans, 'ordinary' or not, availed themselves of the channels of communication through which an already extensive terror was expanded further still. But they had not made those channels, nor had they created the conditions under which vicious laws and morally degrading means of denunciation operated.

Second, more work needs to be done to recover evidence of some of the more unobvious surveillance activities of the Nazi regime itself. Karl-Heinz Roth's research on the Abwehr office of the Labour Front points in a potentially very fruitful direction. This highly secretive surveillance department was located within one of the most public organisations within the Third Reich. Its significance, even its existence, long went unrecognised by historians. Labour movement activists and workers who had mistakenly imagined themselves as being under constant Gestapo surveillance may have been mistaken only about precisely which Nazi agency was spying on them. It is

not as if Roth's intention were to revert to a simplistic and idealised model of class-based resistance to Nazism, but the Labour Front Abwehr documents he unearthed do afford further evidence of workers' dissent, and sometimes of resistance.[50] Many Germans lived in a fear that, as Evans has argued, 'formed the permanent backdrop to their daily lives'. However, it was 'not a fear of the Gestapo, still less of ordinary citizens, friends or relatives, but a fear of active Nazis, low-level Party officials, and committed supporters of the regime'.[51] Of course, the levels of fear grew in tandem with the number of active Nazis – and not least with the number of dedicated Hitler Youth – through the mid-1930s. Fear caused a very real and widespread kind of 'self-policing': Germans gave one another friendly private warnings against speaking out in public places, or simply learned to curb their own tongues, or at least to be very careful about what they said, and to whom. That fear of actual arrest should have been relatively uncommon is explicable principally in relation to the precautions people took to avoid drawing attention to themselves. Manifestly, their self-censorship was predicated on fear.

Third, a more careful delineation of contributions 'from below' to the terror than those offered by Mallmann and Paul, and especially by Gellately, seems to me to be appropriate. One viable way of doing so would still provide a definition resting on their own research, whose importance I do not in any way wish to diminish, and might read something like this:

> A small but significant minority of Germans were willing to volunteer information to the Gestapo and to other Nazi authorities. Their impact on the terror was variable. Only under highly specific circumstances did it enhance the efficacy of the Nazi coercive apparatus; in many cases, it served rather to diminish its effectiveness.

I would therefore decidedly prefer the nomenclature 'police state' to the term 'self-policing society', just as I would eschew describing denouncers as 'ordinary' Germans. But there were other kinds of denunciatory activity in the Third Reich which, as Michael Wildt has persuasively argued, made a chilling contribution to the terror. From early 1935, denunciations of named individual Jews, published together with their addresses in the notorious anti-Semitic Nazi paper *Der Stürmer*, were put on show in display-cases in communities up and down Germany. Mobs then gathered. They descended on local Jews who had been named. Violence erupted. The mobs did not appear spontaneously, but neither were they organised in response to any central Nazi *dictat*. Rather, they resulted from the initiatives of local Nazi Party activists. In that sense, they came 'from below'. The police sympathised with the rioters' motives, but not with their having taken the law into their own hands. The regime's promulgation of the Nuremberg Laws was in part a way out. Thus, pressures 'from below' emanated in the radicalisation of policies made by those 'above'. Only then did the Nazi regime act to quell the unruly conduct of its own rank-and-file supporters.[52]

Why, having begun as a controversial and rather embattled band, ploughing a new and difficult historiographical field, did the revisionist historians of the Gestapo – together with other students of popular collaboration in Nazi crimes – succeed in achieving near-dominance of the landscape of social histories of Nazi Germany for over a decade? Here, some of my answers are again rather speculative. However, I do feel relatively secure in suggesting that the arrival of this new body of work is not reducible to the agglomeration of anomalies researchers encountered in the course of their work on milieu-based resistance, non-conformity, or dissent. Partly because Gellately and Fitzpatrick themselves refer to Thomas Kuhn in announcing the paradigm shift their work has helped bring about, it seems appropriate, in a 'Kuhnian' spirit, to insist that there is more to all this than causes immanent to the discipline. Three factors are discernible.

First, as the reception of Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners* among younger educated Germans indicates, there is now no shortage of Germans ready to accept even the boldest versions of a 'collective guilt' thesis. Adopting a critical view of 'ordinary' Germans' behaviour in the Third Reich has certainly become easier over time. There is thus a ready market in Germany for Gellately's work, and also for Johnson's, whose monographs were quickly published in German translation.[53] Secondly, the fashion for Foucauldian concepts – in this case of 'self-policing' and 'panoptic' societies – may have inspired at least some of this work. Certainly, Foucault's language has coloured it. I suspect, thirdly, that Postmodernism has had a wider influence on this work – not, of course, displaying in the least sign of having encouraged it to be playful, nor in challenging historians' relations with their sources, but in the adoption of a generally pessimistic attitude toward the condition of modernity. It is ironic, then, that historians who have re-cast the Third Reich as a 'self-policing society' should have been so eager to pronounce their work to be 'paradigm-shifting'. Thomas Kuhn's concept of paradigm shifts has enjoyed a new vogue in recent years among Postmodernists, but he had no great faith in progress, insisting that a new paradigm is not necessarily superior to the one that had preceded it.

Notes

1. I am grateful to Alf Lüdtke for his comments on an earlier draft of this chapter, and to Alastair Kocho-Williams for various suggestions.
2. On prefigurations of Nazsism, see Peter Fritzsche, *Rehearsals for Fascism: Populism and Political Mobilization in Weimar Germany* (Oxford: OUP, 1990). There are as yet few attempts to reflect on the change in course identified above, but see *idem*, 'Where did all the Nazis Go? Reflections on Resistance and Collaboration', in *Tel Aviver Jahrbücher für deutsche Geschichte*, Vol. 23 (1994), pp. 191–214.
3. Omer Bartov, *Hitler's Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich* (New York and Oxford: OUP, 1994).
4. Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (London: Harper Collins, 1992).

5. Martin Broszat, 'Resistenz und Widerstand: Eine Zwischenbilanz des Forschungsprojeketes', in *idem* Elke Fröhlich and Anton Grossmann (eds), *Bayern in der NS-Zeit vol. IV: Herrschaft und Gesellschaft im Konglikt* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1981), pp. 691–709.
6. *Idem*, 'Politische Denunziationen in der NS-Zeit: Aus Forschungserfahrungen im Staatsarchiv Münster', *Archivalische Zeitschrift*, Vol. 73 (1977), 221–34.
7. Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler. Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: OUP 2001), p. 5.
8. Götz Aly, 'Die vielfachen Tatbeiträge zum Mord an den europäischen Juden', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 15 January 2002, 49 castigates both Eric Johnson and Gellately – alongside Daniel Goldhagen – for risking bold statements which are unsubstantiable on these authors' own evidential base, as to what Germans knew of the Holocaust.
9. Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, p. 2.
10. In addition to works by Gellately I have cited in footnotes below, see his 'The Gestapo and German Society: Political Denunciation in the Gestapo Case Files', *JMH*, Vol. 60 (1988), 654–94; 'Rethinking the Nazi Terror System: A Historiographical Analysis', *German Studies Review*, Vol. 14/1 (1991), 23–38; 'Situating the "SS State" in a socio-historical context. Recent history of the SS, the police and the courts in the Third Reich', *JMH*, Vol. 64 (1992), 338–65; 'Enforcing Racial Policy in Nazi Germany' in Thomas Childers and Jane Caplan (eds), *Re-evaluating the Third Reich* (1993) pp. 42–65; 'Denunciations in Twentieth-Century Germany: Aspects of Self-Policing in the Third Reich and the German Democratic Republic', *JMH*, Vol. 68/4 (1996), 931–67. Other seminal contributions include: Reinhard Mann, *Protest und Kontrolle im Dritten Reich: Nationalsozialistische Herrschaft im Alltag einer rheinischen Großstadt* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1987); Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Gerhard Paul, 'Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent? Gestapo, Society and Resistance' in David Crew (ed.), *Nazism and German Society 1933–1945* (1994), pp. 166–196; *idem* (eds), *Die Gestapo – Mythos und Realität* (Darmstadt: Primus 1995); *idem* (eds), *Die Gestapo im Zweiten Weltkrieg. 'Heimatfront' und besetztes Europa* (Darmstadt: Primus 2000); Gisela Diewald-Kerkmann, *Politische Denunziation im NS-Regime, oder die kleine Macht der Volksgenossen* (Bonn: Dietz, 1995); Michael Stolle, *Die Geheime Staatspolizei in Baden: Personal, Organisation, Wirkung und Nachwirken einer regionalen Verfolgungsbehörde im Dritten Reich* (Konstanz: UVK, 2001).
11. Diewald-Kerkmann, *Politische Denunziation*, p. 9 and Christoph Kleßmann's introductory remarks in *ibid.*, p. 7.
12. Herbert Werner, *Die Gestapo war nicht allein…Politische Sozialknnotrolle und Staatsterror im deutsch-niederlänischen Grenzgebiet 1929–1945* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2004), p. 102.
13. This is certainly not without precedence as a means of dramatising one's own role in contributing to a historiographical turning-point. The so-called 'Bielfeld School' of West German historians did much the same thing. See Peter Lambert, 'Social History in Germany' in *idem* and Phillipp Schofield (eds), *Making History: An Introduction to the History and Practices of a Discipline* (London and New York: Routledge 2004), pp. 93–108; p. 102.
14. Sheila Fitzpatrick and Robert Gellately, 'Introduction to the Practices of Denunciation in Modern European History' in *idem* (eds), 'Practices of Denunciation in Modern European History, 1789–1989', Special Issue, *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 68 No. 4 (1996), 747–67; 750.

15. Eric Johnson, *The Nazi Terror. The Gestapo, Jews and Ordinary Germans* (1999; UK edition London: John Murray 2000), pp. 368, 372.
16. Johnson, *The Nazi Terror*, pp. 293–95.
17. Cit. after Diewald-Kerkmann, 'Denunziantentum und Gestapo. Die freiwilligen "Helfer" aus der Bevölkerung' in Mallmann and Paul, *Die Gestapo – Mythos und Realität*, pp. 288–305; p. 303.
18. Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, pp. 197, 195.
19. Johnson, 'Criminal Justice, Coercion and Consent in "Totalitarian" Society: The Case of National Socialist Germany', *British Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 51 (2011), 599–614; here, 603–5.
20. Michael P. Hensle, *Rundfunkverbrechen. Das Hören von 'Feindsender' im Nationalsozialimus* (Berlin: Metropol, 2003), p. 196.
21. Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy 1933–1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 154.
22. Johnson, *The Nazi Terror*.
23. Bernward Dörner, *'Heimtücke': Das Gesetz als Waffe. Kontrolle, Abschreckung und Verfolgung in Deutschland 1933–1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1998), p. 109.
24. Hensle, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
25. See Wendy Z. Goldman, *Inventing the Enemy: Denunciation and Terror in Stalin's Russia* (Cambridge: CUP, 2011), p. 138 (quotation) and *passim*.
26. Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, p. 195.
27. Johnson, *The Nazi Terror*, pp. 161–250.
28. Albrecht Eckhardt and Katharina Hoffmann (eds), *Gestapo Oldenburg meldet… Berichte der Geheimen Staatspolizei und des Innenministeriums aus dem Freistaat und Land Oldenburg 1933–1936* (Hannover: Verlag Hahnsche Buchhandlung 2003), pp. 89–90 (report of 29 January 1934).
29. For further instances, see Diewald-Kerkmann, 'Denunziantentum', pp. 302ff.
30. Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, p. 189.
31. Statistics from Jeremy Noakes (ed.), *Nazism 1919–1945, Vol. 4: The German Home Front in World War II. A Documentary Reader* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press 1998) p. 136; Anthony McElligott, ' "Sentencing Towards the Führer"? The judiciary in the Third Reich' in *idem* and Tim Kirk (eds), *Working Towards the Führer: Essays in Honour of Sir Ian Kershaw* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 153–85: p. 164 for statistics, pp. 171 and 184, note 99 for public reactions.
32. Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, p. 186.
33. Gellately, 'Surveillance and Disobedience: Aspects of the Political Policing of Nazi Germany' in Francis R. Nicosia and Lawrence D. Stokes (eds), *Nonconformity, Opposition and Resistance in the Third Reich: Essays in Honour of Peter Hoffmann* (Oxford: Berg, 1990), pp. 15–36; p. 27.
34. *Idem*, *Backing Hitler*, p. 190.
35. Gellately, 'Social Outsiders and the Consolidation of Hitler's Dictatorship, 1933–1939' in Neil Gregor (ed.), *Nazism, War and Genocide: Essays in Honour of Jeremy Noakes* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2005), pp. 56–74, p. 74.
36. Johnson, *The Nazi Terror*, p. 374.
37. Eric Johnson and Karl-Heinz Reuband, *What We Knew: Terror, Mass Murder and Everyday Life in Nazi Germany* (London: John Murray, 2005), pp. 388 and 153.
38. Ibid., 335, Table 11.4.
39. Johnson, 'Criminal Justice', 611.

40. Gellately, 'Social Outsiders', p. 57; *idem*, *Backing Hitler*, pp. 256, 14–15, 269 note 36.
41. Idem, '*Social Outsiders*', p. 57 and p. 188, note 8.
42. Johnson and Reuband, *What We Knew*, p. 346.
43. Karl-Heinz Reuband, 'Denunziation im Dritten Reich. Die Bedeutung von Systemunterstützung und Gelegenheitsstrukturen', *Historical Social Research* Vol. 26/2–3 (2001), 219–34.
44. Geoff Eley, 'Hitler's Silent Majority? Conformity and Resistance under the Third Reich. PartTwo', *Michigan Quarterly Review*; Peter Lambert, ' "History from Below", Nazism and the Third Reich: Paradigm shifts and problems', paper presented to the 3rd International Conference on Mass Dictatorship, RICH, Pyeongchung-Gun, Gangwon-Do, S. Korea (June 2005). A version of the latter was published in Korean in Jie-Hyun Lim & Yong-Woo Kim (eds), *Mass Dictatorship* Vol. 3 *Between Desire and Delusion* (Seoul: Bookworld, 2007), pp. 41–70.
45. Published as Richard Evans, 'Coercion and Consent in Nazi Germany', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. 151 (2007), 53–81.
46. Jonson, '*Criminal Justice*' pp. 602–3; Evans, '*Coercion*', p. 81.
47. Evans, '*Coercion*', pp. 57–64.
48. Johsnon, *The Nazi Terror*, pp. 194, 375.
49. Eley, '*Hitler's Silent Majority*'.
50. Karl Heinz Roth, *Facetten des Terrors: Der Geheimdienst der 'Deutschen Arbeitsfront' und die Zerstörung der Arbeiterbewegung 1933–1938* (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 2000).
51. Evans, '*Coercion*', p. 71.
52. See Michael Wildt, *Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung: Gewalt gegen Juden in der deutschen Provinz 1919 bis 1939* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2007), pp. 176–218.
53. On the media reception of work on denunciation in Germany, see Carsten Dams and Michael Stolle, *Die Gestapo. Herrschaft und Terror im Dritten Reich* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2008), p. 84.

4

Self-Reassurance in Troubled Times: German Diaries During the Upheavals of 1933

Michael Wildt

The following passage was written by Willy Cohn (1888–1941), a German Jew with a doctorate in history, in his diary entry of 30 January 1933 – the day that Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany.[1]

> I fear this will mean civil war! The right-wingers will prevail at first, but in the end there will be communism! [. . .] Dark times in any case, especially for us Jews! But we are trapped. Perhaps the only small consolation is that things often turn out differently than expected.

Cohn was born into a prosperous Jewish business family in the German city of Breslau (today's Wrocław, Poland), and was named after the much-admired Kaiser Wilhelm. Cohn, who was unable to pursue a university career because he was a Jew, worked as a teacher of history, German, and geography at a secondary school in Breslau; he was also a member of the Social Democratic Party of Germany and was active in the local Jewish *Freie Volkshochschule* (an independent adult education centre for the less privileged).

This diary entry already outlines many of the ideas that would shape Cohn's perceptions and reactions in the coming weeks: the expectation of a communist uprising, the recognition of the antisemitic character of Hitler's government, the feeling of being trapped, and the hope that the course of events would not turn out as badly as it looked. It is clear that unexpected developments, especially in times of great uncertainty, can often lead people to reassure themselves that things might still change for the better.[2]

Matthias Joseph Mehs (1893–1976), a Catholic innkeeper from the town of Wittlich in the Eifel region, also expected civil war: 'I wonder how long this cabinet can last. Whether a civil war might come and shatter everything. The Red Revolution will become a palpable danger when the great deceit and disappointment are revealed.'[3] Mehs had been studying philosophy, history,

and art history at university, but the precarious situation of his parents, who had lost their wealth during the inflation of 1922–23 and could no longer fund his studies, forced him to return to Wittlich and take over his parents' inn. In 1927 he married Helene Arens, the daughter of an old winemaking family from Ürzig on the River Moselle, and in 1929 he was elected to the Wittlich town council. He also led the Catholic Centre Party faction, and was a conscientious and humanistic small-town politician striving for the common welfare of his town.

Mehs thought that the balance of power in the new Hitler/Papen cabinet was clearly tipped against the Nazis: 'Papen is back again, as Vice Chancellor and also Imperial Commissioner of Prussia. So he wants to control events – no matter how. But the most important thing is that Hugenberg is in the cabinet. He is a strong man and will soon have Hitler swindled . . . '.[4] However, where Mehs saw 'arch-reactionaries, enemies of the republic, enemies of democracy',[5] the Hamburg schoolteacher Luise Solmitz saw great hope:

> And what a cabinet!!! We hardly dared to hope for this in July. Hitler, Hugenberg, Seldte, Papen!!! Each one carries a major part of my German hopes. The verve of the National Socialist Party, the rationality of the German National People's Party, the apolitical Stahlhelm League and also Papen, who we have not forgotten. [. . .] A huge torchlight procession for Hindenburg and Hitler, put on by National Socialists and Stahlhelm members, who are finally, finally working together again. This is a memorable January 30th![6]

Having favoured liberal politics in her younger years after World War I before leaning increasingly towards the German National People's Party, Luise Solmitz (1889–1973) was the wife of a military officer who was a Christian monarchist from a Jewish family. For her, 30 January 1933 represented the long-desired victory of a united right wing. Despite the overwhelming victory of the Nazi Party in July 1932 when it became the strongest faction in the Reichstag, President Hindenburg had until then denied Hitler's claim to the Chancellorship. With the failure of the Papen/Schleicher cabinet and the conclusion of subsequent backroom negotiations, the time had come for the Nazi Party to enter government. While Luise Solmitz admired the verve, energy, and determination of the National Socialists, she also wanted to include the ostensible authoritativeness of 'Baron' von Papen, Alfred Hugenberg's leadership of the German National People's Party, and Franz Seldte heading the paramilitary Stahlhelm League. For her, 30th January was not the victory of Hitler, but of a right-wing unity government. Like Luise Solmitz, millions of Germans were yearning for an end to 'party squabbles' and political 'bickering', hoping that this new government would create peace and order, re-establish the state's authority and alleviate Germany's economic problems, especially mass unemployment.

Drawing on the diaries of Willy Cohn, Matthias Joseph Mehs, and Luise Solmitz, the following analysis will explore how contemporary eyewitnesses described the immense and breathtakingly rapid upheavals of 1933, how they commented on these events, and how they positioned themselves in relation to them.

Diaries, specifics, and potential

Diaries allow for self-exploration, self-representation, and self-reassurance – as well as self-disciplining.[7] As late as 1996, Winfried Schulze could still assert that the 'ego document' included 'all sources in which a person gives information about the self, regardless of whether this happens voluntarily – such as in a private letter, a diary, a dream transcript, or an attempt at autobiography – or happens contingently under the influence of other circumstances.'[8]

Since then, however, doubts have been cast upon the assumption that such 'ego documents' can be truthful and direct in giving voice to the authentic 'I'. Today it is clear that autobiographical texts do not represent entirely authentic, straightforward documents to be simply interpreted on the basis of factualness, nor are they direct testimonials of the ego.[9] Although diaries may be a textual genre that uses the 'I' as both subject and object – both the writer and the thing written about – they are certainly not a facsimile of the depicted inner life and outer environment; instead, such writings about personal perceptions are always emotionally filtered, intellectually processed, and even subconsciously influenced.

Diary writing not only offers ways to distance oneself from the experienced environment and perceived inner life, but can also provide material for other literary works, such as in the case of Thomas Mann. What may seem like a private act of writing might actually be done with an eye to public self-representation, as in the extensive diaries of Joseph Goebbels. On the other hand, diaries need not be publicised outside the family circle, being primarily addressed to succeeding generations. Finally, they may remain completely private, essentially under lock and key, or the balance between private and public might shift over time, as in the case of Victor Klemperer, who decided in 1942 that his diaries of the Nazi period would be edited and published under the title *Lingua Tertii Imperii*, or 'The Language of the Third Reich'.[10] Diary writing is the individualised appropriation of reality, which is experienced as both inner life and external environment. Esther Baur described it as the 'attempted documentation (*Festschreibung*) of an "I".'[11]

A diary is always the text of an author and not the authentic experience of an eyewitness. The 'difference between the narrative "I" and the direct "I" of a diary', according to Max Frisch, himself a diligent diarist, is that, 'the latter is harder to grasp, precisely because it conceals too many of its

presuppositions, thereby presenting a brazen lack of character – for every character also includes the things it hides, the things that it currently finds uninteresting, the things it doesn't know, etc.'.[12] This is why Volker Depkat, in talking about autobiography, suggests that 'textuality' – meaning the specific strategy of representing the self as text, representing reality in one way and not another, or the practice of writing itself – should also be included in the interpretation.[13]

However, diaries are not only about the written words, but also the things unspoken and unrecorded. 'What am I writing, what nonsense, what banality!' wrote the East German writer Maxie Wander in her diary in December 1976.

> That's what comes from sticking pedantically to the "truth". But things have a life of their own, they resist me and also resist being brutally pinned down, because then they would be finished and dead. We shouldn't want to talk about everything. While I write and brood over what I've written, a secret is being revealed to me, that of the taciturn, the non-writer.[14]

Diaries therefore retain a foreignness that cannot be resolved through the scholarly treatment and analysis of these texts, not only due to their individualised authorship, whose motives, drives, disclosures, and concealments are barely recognisable, but also to their bygone cultural contexts, which are enormously challenging to illuminate and bring into relationship with individual experiences. Diaries remain in a specific sense irretrievably opaque and impenetrable, but without necessarily losing their value for the historical analysis of what Alf Lüdtke calls 'appropriation strategies'.[15]

This is because diaries possess the quality of temporal proximity. In contrast to more distant memoirs – which incorporate a complex interweaving of older and newer memories, impressions of public discussions, circulating ideas, cultures of memorialisation, personal book-reading, and private discussions – diaries generally describe the events, perceptions, and thoughts of the same or previous days. This is not to reiterate the diary's putative claim to immediacy, but rather to underline a peculiar aspect of diary-writing: the succession of chronological entries allows for the analysis over time of evolving personal observations and opinions, as well as the changing of perceptions, the shaping of sensory impressions into mental constructs, and the formation of personal narratives.

Therefore, diarists are more than just chroniclers of their age. They actively organise their perceptions and write them down in idiosyncratic ways. Even when authors like Victor Klemperer explicitly set out to 'bear witness', the resulting records are still a blend of the personal, professional, and political, of reflections on and opinions about one's own relationship to the surrounding context – while ultimately also representing an attempt to interpret 'the world' and to assert one's own self as a self-defined subject.[16]

Nationalist inclusion

On 5 March 1933, the same day that the election of the German Reichstag took place, municipal elections were held in Prussia. In Mehs' hometown Wittlich, the Catholic Centre Party retained its majority with nine seats on the town council; the Mittelstand Party won three seats, the German National People's Party and the Communists got one each, while the Nazis won three, having doubled their share of votes since 1929. The very next day, a troop of SA men appeared before the town hall and demanded the hoisting of the Nazi flag. The mayor refused, citing an alleged decree by the interim Prime Minister of Prussia, Hermann Göring, that only the town flag and the black-white-red flag (of the pre-Weimar era) were to be displayed. Although the SA men initially withdrew, they returned in the evening and finally accomplished their goal: the swastika flag was fluttering above the Wittlich town hall. 'There have only been two occasions where I had a similar feeling that an iron authority had overtaken all of us', Mehs wrote in his diary, 'When the mobilisation happened at the start of the war, and when the foreign occupation arrived here. [...] The hoisting of the flag, is this not like a Gessler hat? Will we also have to salute this flag like we did the occupation flag?'[17]

The incursions of the SA were not just a tool for *Gleichschaltung* ('bringing into conformity'), they were also symbolic manifestations of a Nazi campaign to completely change public life in the coming weeks and months, drawing new borders of inclusion and exclusion.

A climax arrived on 21 March, when the newly elected Reichstag (excluding the many Social Democratic and Communist parliamentarians who had either fled or been arrested) was invited to an inaugural sitting at the Prussian Garrison Church in Potsdam. Known as the 'Day of Potsdam', it was carefully orchestrated by the Nazi leadership. This was to be a day of national unity, during which supporters of conservatism and the German National People's Party would be brought together with the National Socialists. In order to highlight the sense of occasion, all schools were closed for the day. The inauguration of the new Reichstag was celebrated with a special church service, a multiple gun salute, and a parade of the German military, the SA, and the SS. The Reich President Paul von Hindenburg appeared in his imperial field marshal uniform, while Hitler wore civilian black morning dress. The photo of their handshake, between the general and the private, old and young, with a gesture of respect from a bowing Hitler, became a propaganda icon that was widely disseminated. The entire event was broadcast on public radio across the nation.

Luise Solmitz enthusiastically listened to the broadcast with the neighbour women:

> This momentous, unforgettably beautiful German day! German awakening. How can I describe in words what we millions of Germans all

> experienced as we celebrated together on this immortal day, even though only a small number of us, just a few hundred thousand in Potsdam, were able to attend the festivities in person. [...] Mrs. Mich. and I let our tears flow freely, [...] we couldn't help ourselves. Among those who cried: the grocer's wife, the cobbler's wife, the woman running the delicatessen – in short, everyone we talked to, including Mia M., who said 'Anyone who didn't cry was heartless and not a real German.'[18]

'National celebration of the highest order', wrote Matthias Joseph Mehs:

> By noon, almost every building had already hung black-white-red flags. The people are like weather vanes. Will we have to hang flags too?' asked my father. 'No, we won't do it,' said I. [...] And what happens? My father went in secret and hung out a white-red flag. I was so annoyed that I avoided the tavern all day after that, although it was a market day.[19]

Two days later on 23 March, the Reichstag passed the Enabling Act (*Ermächtigungsgesetz*), against the opposition of the Social Democrats but with the support of the Catholic Centre Party, giving Hitler's government the ability to pass laws without any parliamentary oversight. Mehs himself was ambivalent: 'The stance of the Centre Party was certainly not heroic, but it was very shrewd in any case. Hitler now has full powers, so he has no more alibis and excuses – it's finally time to get some work done, and provide relief to the suffering German people.'[20] Matthias Joseph Mehs thought that the Nazis would now be forced to prove they could govern the nation, since they could no longer blame other parties for their own likely failures. And then the German people would recognise which parties were truly behaving responsibly.

Antisemitic exclusion

An incident from 21 March is briefly mentioned in Mehs's diary without further commentary. During an evening torchlight procession, some SA and SS men discovered that the ranks of the Wittlich Veterans Association included a Jew who had served in World War I and been wounded in action; they repeatedly tried to 'force him out of the parade', as Mehs put it. The chairman of the veterans association, Count Kageneck, immediately intervened and insisted that the Jewish member be included in the procession.[21]

It was precisely this question of whether German Jews could be a part of the German *Volksgemeinschaft* ('ethnonational community') that caused Luise Solmitz's initially fervent enthusiasm to dissipate after just a few days. Just one week after the 'Day of Potsdam', she was distressed by the announcement of an 1 April boycott of Jewish businesses:

> Terribly depressed because of this Jewish question – mixing it into the nationalist cause is idiotic, mistaken, and insane. A Nazi call to self-defense has come from Munich. The battle is to begin promptly at 10 a.m. on Saturday. What idiocy. [...] After just one week, we can only see rubble and the beginnings of decay....[22]

Two weeks later, she wrote: 'The *Volksgemeinschaft*... which Hitler welded together on March 21 in an atmosphere of power and elation that is unlikely to ever be seen again, and which he himself has so rapidly destroyed from within by pursuing the Jewish question.'[23]

For Matthias Joseph Mehs too, the announcement of a boycott was an 'unwise move', as it would drive a wedge into the populace instead of creating the peaceful conditions needed for economic recovery. On the day of 1 April, Mehs was appalled: 'I record this day as the most inhumane that I have ever seen.'[24] Starting at 10 a.m., SA men marched through the town with a dozen signs bearing slogans like, 'The lawyer Dr. Archenhold is a Jew. Shun him!' and, 'The Jews are to blame for our misfortune.' In front of the home of Emil Franks – the director of the Jewish association and, according to Mehs, 'the most decent Jew that one could think of' – the SA men raised a sign saying 'bloodsucker'. Every Jewish business in Wittlich was publicly branded with a black poster featuring a big yellow circle, pasted on a wall or window. Mehs wrote:

> Although I'm writing these impressions for myself only, and no one should read them for the time being, I just want to record what I felt upon witnessing this spectacle in Wittlich today: it's disgusting, it's inhuman, it's unchristian, it's a blot on German culture. Certainly, the Jews, especially with their corrosive Jewish spirit, had spread themselves too far, even before the war; they should be put in their place. But the things we have seen and experienced today were not necessary – this has lost any connection with decency, with the German character, with humanity. It is simply barbarism. And stupidity too! We are ruining our economy, setting the whole world against us, and disgracing our good name with a deed that could have been spawned in the cruelest, darkest Middle Ages. Such a deed is bound to come back and haunt the perpetrator. It's high time the bishops said something![25]

The bishops said nothing, even though many may have shared the outrage felt by Mehs. Like many other Germans, he also believed that the allegedly disproportionate influence of the Jews needed to be curbed. In particular, the 'corrosive Jewish spirit', which was ostensibly found not only in the universities and the press, but also in the profit-oriented capitalist economy, was a popular antisemitic theme in Germany. Therefore, when the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service (*Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des*

Berufsbeamtentums) was decreed on 7 April by the Hitler/Papen government under its new sweeping powers, leading to the dismissal of many thousands of civil servants including Jews and political opponents of the Nazis, it certainly did not elicit the same outrage in Mehs as had the boycott he had personally witnessed a week before: 'I've read in the newspaper about the new civil service law, which offers many tools for dismissing civil servants and reducing their income. They'll now be fulfilling their duties with much quivering and trepidation.'[26] In his eyes, the thing that really violated all standards of propriety and civilisation was the public, unlawful, and violent nature of the attacks launched against honourable German shop keepers solely because they were Jews.

Willy Cohn was disgusted by the public humiliations, writing 'Dark Middle Ages!' before admonishing himself to just keep his composure. The persecution of the Jews in the first weeks of the Hitler/Papen government caused him and his wife Trudi to seriously consider leaving Germany. But perhaps the antisemitic storm would calm back down in the near future? 'Stayed in bed a bit longer this morning and talked over the whole situation with Trudi again', he wrote in his diary on Easter Sunday, 2 April:

> And we agreed to avoid talking about things that lie ahead, as much as possible; we just have to wait and see, and then make plans afterwards. Trudi was very sensible, and now she knows what I'm thinking. We'll simply grit our teeth, and above all, try to get through without outside help.[27]

A common motif in the narratives of German Jews was that Germany had been a country of culture and high civilisation, far removed from barbarian lands and eras, and was now being overcome by barbarism in a most terrible and inexplicable manner. In contrast, World War I was still characterised by the assumption that one was part of a civilised nation. Back then, every combatant nation presented itself as defending civilisation against barbarian enemies. The Allies commonly spoke of German 'Huns', just as the Germans imagined themselves in a struggle against the 'Asiatic' barbarism of Russia.

But now, barbarism had broken out in one's own country. The certainty of living in a civilised nation, of belonging to a 'German civilisation', was shattered with a single blow, and self-perception was revealed to be a self-deception. What was seen as 'civilisation', after centuries of patient and painstaking development, could obviously be swept away, literally in just one day. It was with shock that Willy Cohn, among many others, realised how thin this cultural veneer really was. It was an unsettling, even devastating, rupture in one's own biography, imploding one's sense of security and the previously steadfast certainty of living in a civilised society.

Luise Solmitz was torn. In her diary entry of 1 April, she described the scene of the boycott:

> Brownshirts in front of Jewish businesses. The one owned by Miss Levy is no longer worth anything; it had existed for forty years, and is now ruined; the German employee had been there for twenty-three years already. One feels ashamed in the face of every postered business and every Jew.[28]

And then she met an acquaintance, a supporter of the German Nationalist Party, who assured her that Hitler had always proven right and that lowly subjects could not comprehend his plans; all these measures were certainly necessary.

The next day, she read a newspaper report about a lynching in the Northern German town of Kiel: during the boycott, the son of a Jewish businessman had gotten into a fight with an SA man and shot him down; he surrendered himself to the police, but was then killed in jail by SA men. 'At the breakfast table, the tears were pouring from my eyes – I had made a laughingstock of myself. The exhilaration of 21 March had been excessive – and now we must watch as "the wrong agenda" drives us into the maw of Bolshevism.'[29]

From an acquaintance who had just spent three weeks on vacation in Switzerland, and also from letters written by English friends, Luise Solmitz and her husband learned about the outraged foreign reports precipitated by the antisemitic persecution in Germany:

> Letters from Ethel and the Sloans. They are as we feared. Although they maintained such a friendly and sympathetic tone, none of it helped, as they couldn't escape the reports about the Jews. They sent us a lot of newspaper clippings, and this time we can't say it's all lies. It isn't even an exaggeration. [...] We, the German people, are also being blamed for complicity. As if all 17 million of us had elected the anti-Jewish scourge in Hitler, having no more fervent wish than to ignite this battle which is now overshadowing the Versailles Treaty and the unemployment crisis, the two sole issues that will ultimately determine our existence or extinction.[30]

It was not until 12 April that Luise Solmitz mentions the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service in a short, almost approving comment: 'That could have been done earlier, before starting all this hatemongering.'[31]

By contrast, for the Jewish diarist, who was a public employee, this law was a central concern. 'The new civil service law has come out, and now they'll certainly find some way to throw people out. It's all so disgusting,' wrote Willy Cohn.[32] Since the law did allow some exceptions, initially protecting Jewish soldiers who had done frontline service in World War I, he also maintained a glimmer of hope. Cohn read in the newspaper that over a thousand lawyers had been re-accredited in Berlin, so he thought the situation was

looking somewhat better. 'For us personally, it means wait and see. I often fall into a very volatile state, but always manage to contain myself in the end.'[33] A few days later came the news that a maximum quota had been set for Jewish students at universities. Cohn and his wife quickly decided that their son Wolfgang ('Wölfl') would go to Paris for his studies. He left Breslau on 18 April. At the end of that month, Willy Cohn received his letter of dismissal from the municipal adult education school, where he had been an instructor. Meanwhile, the Johanneum secondary school did not fire him – but rather than bringing him back in the next year as a full-time teacher for the 'Prima' or oldest class, he would only be employed as a substitute teacher for the 'Sexta' or youngest class. 'Here too, the implicit insult must also be born.'[34]

In his diary, he admonished himself again and again that he had to keep his nerve and maintain his composure. On 2 May, he wrote about a meeting of teachers at the Jewish community centre, '. . . the liberal Jews were mentally quite unprepared for this situation. They're completely stunned: one colleague said she had turned from a German teacher into a Jewish teacher overnight. That's how little these people understand their situation in Golut!'[35] And then again some reassurance and small comforts: 'My children in the Sexta class greeted me by writing: "Welcome, good Uncle Willy". One rejoices over such things, which go some way in countering the gloom now pressing in.'[36] Then on 16 June came the expected news that he was now suspended with immediate effect:

> Perhaps this suspension is also saving me from a few conflicts. But it was very hard because the news arrived just when I was feeling so miserable, so it really affected me. For now, the main thing is to pick myself up again, and then we'll see what's next. Any ruminations about the future are pointless at the moment, as I still have to wait and see how much of a pension I'll be getting.[37]

Public conformity and private defiance

At the same time, non-Jewish Germans were feeling increasing pressure to conform, at least externally. The populace was asked to display flags on a quick succession of holidays, which served not only to demonstrate public approval, but also to change the nature of public life itself. Although it had not even been 100 days since Hitler became Chancellor, his 44th birthday on 20 April was staged by the Nazi Party as a holiday all over Germany. 'Hitler's birthday!' wrote Matthias Joseph Mehs in his diary. 'Almost the whole town has hung flags. Certainly the public authorities. Evening torchlight procession. Drums, brass band. Very crowded ceremonial assembly at the Kaisersaal. Celebrations across the Reich! Just like the Kaiser's birthday in bygone times!'[38] It was the same for Willy Cohn in Breslau: 'Today is Hitler's

birthday! Flags, streetcars with pennants, always a swastika flag with a black-white-red one. The Horst Wessel Song resounded from an open window. It was reminiscent of Wilhelm II's birthday!'[39]

According to Luise Solmitz, the flag-raising in Hamburg had already begun days in advance. 'We put up flags at 12 noon', she wrote:

> The big merchant buildings mostly displayed black-white-red flags as well as Hamburg city ones, in enormous dimensions that were wonderful to behold. And the Protestant churches displayed their purple St. Andrew's cross on a white field. Who would have predicted such a thing to Hitler's parents, 44 years ago: flags all over Germany, right up into the North, even on Protestant churches.[40]

The children at her school mustered for a special ceremony, with the Hitler Youth girls also in uniform for the first time. 'In the evening, an enormous torchlight procession around the Alster to City Hall Square – which will now be renamed Adolf Hitler Square.'[41] Despite all her doubts, Luise Solmitz still held fast to Hitler: '44 years old, and what an achievement already. What a task in front of him. And how much we expect from him.'[42]

Beyond the renaming of streets and squares, another important tool of the Nazi public relations strategy was to have cities grant honourary citizenship to Hitler. In Wittlich, although the Catholic Centre Party was still by far the largest faction on town council after the election of 5 March, Mehs now had to deal with three Nazi councilors too. He did not welcome their presence, but as a good democrat, he respected the voters' choice, and so was quite prepared to work with Nazis in municipal affairs and on educational, financial, and employment policies. During the inaugural session of the new town council on 30 March – where the one elected Communist councilor was not allowed to participate – the chamber was packed 'to the gills' with SA men, wrote Mehs. The Nazi councilors were in uniform. Right at the start, they presented an emergency motion to confer honourary citizenship upon Hitler and Hindenburg. 'A real ambush! It was like we were being coerced into conferring honourary citizenship.'[43] Mehs then proposed a postponement on the decision and the creation of a study commission.

But this completely different understanding of politics is unmistakable. While Mehs saw politics as a pragmatic endeavor towards the common good, for the Nazis it was about shaping public opinion and professing group membership. With their strategy of pushing others into a decision-making situation where they had to publicly declare themselves either for or against 'Germany's awakening', the Nazis were bulldozing the expected political process. By connecting Hitler with the highly respected Hindenburg, they made it almost impossible for the Catholic conservative councilors to reject the motion – thus ensuring that the Centre Party would ultimately vote in favour of Hitler's honourary citizenship too.

There was hardly any time to absorb the latest Nazi propaganda campaign before the next unwanted decision-making situation arose. Participation in public flag displays was becoming a key practical decision: should one openly express support for the new government, or could one still believe it was possible to act with indifference? However, the regime did permit significant deviations, as it correctly understood that not all people would profess a National Socialist orientation.

On 12 March, the Reich President issued an important decree on political symbols, in which all governmental civilian buildings would remove the black-red-gold flag of the free and democratic Weimar Republic and hoist the old imperial black-white-red flag along with the swastika flag. 'These flags', according to Hindenburg's decree, 'combine the glorious past of the German Empire with the powerful rebirth of the German Nation. Together, they embody the power of the State and the inner solidarity between all national circles of the German people!'[44] According to this decree, anyone unprepared to hang the swastika flag from the balcony could instead hang the black-white-red one – but this still meant publicly rejecting the Weimar Republic.

After the 'Day of Potsdam' on 21 March and Hitler's birthday on 20 April, the next major showcase was 1 May. This day, known since the late 19th century as a 'Day of Struggle for the Working Class', a demonstration for class struggle and the emancipation of all workers, had been targeted by the Nazi leadership in 1933 to become an enduring nationwide mass manifestation of work as a service to the *Volksgemeinschaft*, transcending the confrontational model of each class struggling for its own interests, while also demonstrating the integration of all workers into the Nazi movement. This was the conceptual framework for the Hitler regime to redefine 1 May as a 'Day of National Work', making it a state holiday, and importantly, a paid one. The official slogan of 1 May 1933 was 'Venerate work and honour the workers!' (*Ehret die Arbeit und achtet den Arbeiter!*).

The entire event was carefully staged for propaganda purposes. In Berlin, the day began with a parade of some 200,000 schoolchildren, and speeches were given by Hindenburg, Hitler, and Goebbels. In the morning, the workers assembled at workplaces around Berlin – only those who appeared at morning roll call would get their timecards stamped and so be paid for 1 May – before marching in ten long columns to Tempelhof Airfield, so that over a million in total were gathered. The evening saw speeches by Goebbels and Hitler, standing on a giant rostrum designed by Albert Speer, with huge swastika flags. The events in Berlin were broadcast by radio all day long. Carefully selected workers' delegations representing all regions of the Reich were flown in to Berlin, where they were interviewed by radio reporters at Tempelhof Airfield and then driven to an official reception with Hindenburg and Hitler.[45]

Many other cities and communities imitated the Berlin festivities with parades, rallies, and flag displays on public buildings. The radio reports from the capital, especially the evening speech by Hitler, were often transmitted

through loudspeakers at local gathering spots. In Wittlich, the day began at 6 a.m. with a band marching through town. At 8 a.m. there was a church service, and at 9 a.m. on Market Square, a broadcast of the youth rally in Berlin. The main parade in Wittlich began at 2 p.m. It was led by an SA marching band, followed by the Hitler Youth, and then Nazi factory cell members. It was only then that municipal civil servants and teachers appeared, followed by Nazi Party functionaries – and then came the guilds, including bakers, millers, furriers, tailors, metalworkers, masons, etc. Finally marched the merchants, wine makers, and farmers, the German National Association of Commercial Employees, the Catholic Journeyman's Association, and Catholic Workers' Association, with the tail brought up by four SS members.[46]

Mehs stood on the sidelines: 'I wasn't in the parade. Where could I fit in, if I refused to bow before a party flag? The innkeepers' guild was not invited, and neither was the town council.' He would have been more gratified by this May 1 if it had truly been a day of communal solidarity: 'Certainly, a May 1 parade would make sense if it united a free people and expressed solidarity between all productive classes. But under the flag of the Nazis? No!'[47] The concluding rally at Market Square provoked near revulsion in Mehs:

> And then came the *Sieg Heil!* to Germany and to Hitler, and the national anthem and the Horst Wessel Song, and when I saw all the hands raised in fascist salute, I knew how it was done with so much unwillingness by many people, oh so many, and how they acted out of fear and were virtually coerced into making this gesture, and how this made me weep inside.[48]

That evening, Mehs listened to Hitler's speech on the radio: 'After eagerly awaiting it, I have never been so disappointed. There were only platitudes, with no concrete program for fixing the economic crisis and relieving unemployment.' Instead, there were vague promises and rhetorical phrases that one could hardly understand, 'because the voice of Hitler (who only bellowed, like all Nazi speakers) was like a worn-out gramophone record that could only make scratchy noises. After the speech, it was clear to me that Hitler had reached his limits. He really has nothing to offer the people.'[49]

For Luise Solmitz, it was the first time that 1 May also included the middle classes: 'The thing that the left wing had once enjoyed celebrating, and are now being forced to celebrate in an unintended way. So that the ancient and joyful May Day festival was now being given back to the German people.'[50] Here, Solmitz addresses an important aspect of the Nazi reinterpretation of 1 May as an official national holiday: 'May Day as a traditional celebration of spring. For example, among the decorations specified for this day by the Reich Interior Ministry was fresh greenery to adorn public buildings.[51] Maypoles were erected in every community, and even Hitler appropriately opened his speech with the first line of a traditional folk song: "May has arrived!"'[52]

In Hamburg too, workers gathered at various assembly points before marching to the main rally at City Hall Square, and the Berlin youth rally was broadcast at local schools. Luise Solmitz commented on Hitler's speech with scepticism: 'Six months of labour service for everyone, just like it used to be with compulsory military service. Every intellectual worker will do manual labour. So will the manual labourer also do six months of intellectual work?'[53] The reduction of interest rates, the confiscation of major fortunes – for Solmitz, these were rather socialist proclamations. In her eyes, Hitler had successfully overcome the political turmoil, and now it was time to deal with the economic one: 'We walked home, chilled not only physically, but also metaphorically.'[54]

In Breslau, Willy Cohn observed, 'flags and swastika armbands everywhere, but at least the weather isn't particularly nice.' The Berlin youth rally was broadcast at his school too: 'Today I threaded the ribbon of my Iron Cross through the buttonholes of my jacket and coat, after an inner struggle – but maybe it's a good idea to display this now, as a Jew. We also hung out a black-white-red flag, so that they don't demolish our home.'[55]

On 2 May, the SA stormed the offices of labour unions all across the Reich, arresting their functionaries and confiscating their assets. The government declared the closure of all independent labour unions, to be replaced by the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* (German Labour Front) as a compulsory organisation for both employees and employers under the leadership of Robert Ley. 'Yesterday, all the labour union offices and workers' economic institutions were put under occupation,' wrote Willy Cohn, 'in order to be "gleichgeschaltet" [brought into conformity]. That's the new word for our era.'[56]

Overwhelming the individual

All these diaries were marked by the dynamics of constant upheaval, which often left the diarists with little time to record events. In the first months after their takeover, the Nazi rulers were committed to radically reshaping Germany's political structures, using not only terror and dictatorial powers, but also enticements to bind the public through social inclusion. Meanwhile, the Weimar Republic's constitutional rule of law was being negated by concentration camps, the Gestapo, and the state of emergency that had been enabled by the Reichstag Fire Decree (*Reichstagsbrandverordnung*). Due to a fear of communist insurrections, many German citizens went along with these measures, believing that the Hitler government would make short work of the Bolshevist threat.

Luise Solmitz openly approved of the violent measures against the Communists, and even Mehs, who was committed to a socially responsible Catholicism, hardly talked about the terrorist persecution of the Social Democrats and Communists, although both political persuasions existed

in Wittlich, and he certainly did note the repression and exclusion of the left-wing members of the town council. His diary was silent on the whereabouts of these fellow counselors.

On the other hand, the Nazis were also trying to redefine what it meant to belong, making this explicit through well-orchestrated public events. After 30 January 1933, there was a quick succession of politically charged national holidays on which the Nazi leaders not only promoted integration, but also underlined exclusion. From the very start, Jews found themselves excluded from the *Volksgemeinschaft*, as seen on 21 March, 20 April, and 1 May, exemplified by the conflict surrounding a Jewish member of the Wittlich Veterans Association. The 1 April boycott of Jewish businesses made this antisemitic exclusion perfectly clear. Although the diaries of Luise Solmitz and Matthias Joseph Mehs conveyed their dismay at this 'barbarism' and 'disgrace', Solmitz still clung to Hitler as a saviour, and for Mehs, the problem was clearly the brute violence of the boycott and not the antisemitism of the following week's civil service law. As much as he knew how to describe his disgust at the boycott, he – as a Catholic town councilor and innkeeper – apparently did not know any Jewish merchants personally. In his entire diary, there is not a single sentence showing that he personally communicated his outrage or his sympathy to any of the affected Jewish business owners.

The Nazis called upon – and sometimes even coerced – the non-Jewish population to show outwards conformity, thereby implementing a public relations strategy that put sceptics, and even critics, in an unaccustomed and unforeseen dilemma. Previously, a flag had simply been the external expression of a political persuasion that one could share or not; but as can be seen in the flag displays of 1933, the Nazis were less concerned with heartfelt declarations of faith and more with external conformity – one had to show membership in the *Volksgemeinschaft*, but not necessarily profess belief in National Socialism itself. Orchestrated national holidays, such as seen on 21 March or 1 May, were not interpreted as tributes to the Hitler government, but as demonstrations of national unity, which included non-Nazi Germans too (except for the Jews). This meant that many of these people could comfortably agree to hang flags from balconies, particularly as they did not need to be swastika flags, since black-white-red flags were also acceptable.

However, it soon became clear that these public shows of conformity were fundamentally changing public life itself. After all, in a street full of flags on display, it was easy to identify any residents who failed to do the same. Such people – like Matthias Joseph Mehs – were now hard-pressed to explain themselves, although they had done nothing more than sit on their hands. For Election day on 12 November 1933 (when voters had to decide on the Nazi Party as Germany's only party, and on Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations), the Wittlich branch of the Nazi Party proclaimed that

all the town's citizens should hoist the swastika flag, as they owed it to the Führer. Wrote Mehs:

> After that, the wife of Lehmann the veterinarian came to me and said that Gothi [Mehs' sister, M.W.], in whose house they lived, absolutely had to buy a swastika flag; I said that a black-white-red would suffice entirely. 'Yes, but then we'll attract trouble!' To which I replied: there is nothing stopping them (the Lehmanns) from buying a swastika flag and sticking it out the window. But they didn't want to do that either. This shows: 1. The fear in people, especially those on government payrolls, and 2. That there are people who would demand that others hoist the symbol of their national feeling, wanting to adorn themselves with the colors of others, and in a matter of such great importance today. That's just great. I went to Gothi and we hung out the black-white-red, or more precisely, the brown-white-red, as the black had turned completely brown with age. [...] I myself displayed the black-white-red and the white-red, as always. What could happen anyway? In the future, no one will believe how much fear there was among the people.[57]

Luise Solmitz tried to keep 'her' Hitler alive, still believing in his 'genius' and thus maintaining her delusions. When Hitler announced his 'desire for peace' during his first foreign policy speech to the Reichstag on 17 May, Solmitz took it at face value: 'A major success! With such a sense of peace and dignity and reconciliation [...] that one could almost hear a sigh of relief go through the world,'[58] which made the moment of truth that much more shocking. Her daughter Gisela, like all schoolchildren, needed to satisfy her teacher with a form authenticating her 'Aryan' ancestry, signed by her parents: 'Then Gisela came home from school: "Am I an Aryan?" And she gave Fredy a certificate: "My daughter Gisela Solmitz is of Aryan ancestry. Cross out if not applicable."'[59] Luise Solmitz's husband, Friedrich Wilhelm ('Fredy') Solmitz, a highly decorated officer in the German Imperial Army, from a Jewish family but baptised as a Christian, was shocked. Luise Solmitz wrote: 'We've known each other for twenty-and-a-half years, and as strange as it might seem, we've never spoken a word about this... he withdrew to his room... I didn't know that Gisela had stormed into the room; one look: "You've crossed out the opposite!"'[60]

Even Luise Solmitz, who identified so closely with Germany and its national awakening in 1933, suddenly had to cope with the racist classification and ostracism of her daughter as a 'half-Jew' and her husband as a 'full Jew'. However, the question of belonging would still play a major role in their lives. For example, Gisela repeatedly asked if she could join the Hitler Youth: 'I don't belong to any club, but I really want to join in! Everyone's in it.'[61] And her mother had to explain to her why it was not possible. Later, Gisela succeeded in joining the Reich Colonial League, because, as Luise

Solmitz put it, 'being taken in nowhere is equivalent to civic death nowadays'.[62] Despite all this, she continued to admire Hitler. 'Concordat signed between the Reich and the Vatican', she wrote on 9 July, 'What no one else had managed to achieve. Hitler is a superhuman.'[63]

However, this did not mean the threat was over. While Gisela, along with her entire Colonial Troop, had been taken into the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (League of German Girls) in mid-October, Friedrich had recently been transferred into a Nazi-controlled war-compensation organisation, where he was confronted by awkward questions about his ancestry and was ultimately forced to withdraw. 'I constantly feel a sword hanging over us', Luise wrote on 18 October. 'Under today's policies, even our marriage is no longer a marriage, but a "race betrayal" on my part. That's what it's called: race betrayal.'[64] Her year-end diary entry was double-edged: '1933 brought us the Third Reich, and with it, a hard nut for us to crack – we will never be finished with it, the "Aryan question".'[65] This expression encapsulates the contradiction, for it was not the 'Jewish question' that distressed Luise Solmitz, but the 'Aryan question', this self-styled elevation of one group of Germans above others who also felt they were just as German, if not more.

For Willy Cohn the antisemitic negation of his belonging to the German people represented a major rupture in his experience of 1933. At the same time, he turned all his energies towards maintaining his composure so that these shocking experiences, this constant stream of new sanctions and unexpected developments, would not lead to a breakdown of his very self or to the loss of his self-control. In his diary, Cohn admonished himself almost every day to maintain his composure, especially: 'These days, one must work doubly hard at maintaining composure, in order to always be prepared. Furthermore, I will not let myself be harried into making hasty decisions!'[66] He thought it could not turn out so bad – that things would, 'settle down when the first wave has gone by'.[67]

Were there any alternative courses of action? Willy Cohn shied away from emigration:

> Trudi is always pushing hard for emigration, but I don't see much opportunity for us and the things I can do. This is why I'm already a bit tired of this conversation, especially since I think we should just wait and see for now. [...] I don't want to start from scratch all over again. Here, I am something and can do something.[68]

Nonetheless, there still remained a sense of ambivalence and entrapment, and the torment when the daily news made it utterly clear that Jews would have no more future in Germany. Ultimately, one could only desensitive oneself, spinning an ever-thicker cocoon, retreating into oneself. Like Klemperer, Willy Cohn also moved to the countryside, trying to survive in

obscurity, away from the big-city persecution of Breslau. In closing the year 1933, Willy Cohn wrote:

> But for us older German Jews, this year actually took away our homeland, for which we had fought, and where we did not feel like mere guests! This year of 1933 will not be forgotten! And tonight we won't join any New Year's Eve parties either. German Jewry is in mourning, like Caesar Seligmann said. Should one get drunk like the others? No.[69]

Notes

1. Willy Cohn, *Kein Recht, nirgends. Tagebuch vom Untergang des Breslauer Judentums 1933–1941*, Norbert Conrads (ed.), Vol. 1 (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2007), p. 6.
2. On the writing of personal testimonies as a form of self-reassurance in troubled times, see Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin* (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 2006); Peter Fritzsche, *The Turbulent World of Franz Göll: An Ordinary Berliner Writes the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 2011); Frank Bajohr, Beate Meyer, Joachim Szodrzynski (eds.), *Bedrohung, Hoffnung, Skepsis. Vier Tagebdrzynski* (eds)*, er Fr* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2013).
3. Matthias Joseph Mehs, *Tagebücher. November 1929 bis September 1946*, Günter Wein and Franziska Wein (eds), Vol 1, November 1919 bis January 1936 (Trier: Kliomedia, 2011), p. 239 (entry of 1 February 1933).
4. Mehs, *Tagebücher*, p. 238 (entry of 1 February 1933).
5. *Ibid*.
6. Luise Solmitz, Tagebuch (entry of 30 January 1933), archive of the Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte in Hamburg, 11/S11, partly printed in: Frank Bajohr, Beate Meyer, Joachim Szodrzynski (eds), *Bedrohung, Hoffnung, Skepsis. Vier Tagebücher des Jahres 1933* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2013), pp. 143–270.
7. Cf. overviews by Rüdiger Görner, *Das Tagebuch. Eine Einführung* (Munich: Artemis, 1986); Ralph-Rainer Wuthenow, *Europäische Tagebücher. Eigenart, Formen, Entwicklung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990).
8. Winfried Schulze, Ego-Dokumente: 'Annäherung an den Menschen in der Geschichte? Vorüberlegungen für die Tagung "Ego-Dokumente"', *idem* (ed.), *Ego-Dokumente. Annäherungen an den Menschen in der Geschichte* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996), pp. 11–30, quote: p. 21.
9. Cf. the instructive introduction by Claudia Ulbrich, Hans Medick, Angelika Schaser, *idem.* (eds), *Selbstzeugnis und Person. Transkulturelle Perspektiven* (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2012), pp. 1–19.
10. Victor Klemperer, *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years*, Vol. 2 (New York: The Modern Library, 1999).
11. Esther Baur, '"Sich schreiben". Zur Lektüre des Tagebuchs von Anna Maria Preiswerk-Iselin (1758–1840)', Kaspar von Greyerz, Hans Medick, Patrice Veit (eds.), *Von der dargestellten Person zum erinnerten Ich. Europäische Selbstzeugnisse als historische Quellen (1500–1850)* (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2001), pp. 95–109, quote p. 100.
12. Quoted in Görner, *Tagebuch*, p. 92.
13. Volker Depkat, 'Autobiographie und die soziale Konstruktion von Wirklichkeit', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 29 (2003), 441–76; cf. also Gabriele Jancke,

Autobiographie als soziale Praxis. Beziehungskonzepte in Selbstzeugnissen des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts im deutschsprachigen Raum (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2002).

14. Quoted in Görner, *Tagebuch*, p. 77.
15. Alf Lüdtke, 'Introduction: What is the History of Everyday Life and Who are the Practitioners?', in Alf Lüdtke (ed.), *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 3–40, cit. at p. 7.
16. Cf. Gabriele Jancke, Claudia Ulbrich (eds), *Vom Individuum zur Person. Neue Konzepte im Spannungsfeld von Autobiographietheorie und Selbstzeugnisforschung* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005); Rosalia Baena (ed.), *Transculturing Auto/Biograph: Forms of Life Writings* (London/New York: Routledge, 2007).
17. Mehs, *Tagebücher*, p. 248 (entry of 7 March 1933). When Germany failed to pay reparations after WWI, France occupied the western Rhineland in January 1923 to force deliveries of coal and steel. The 'Gessler Hat' was featured in Friedrich Schiller's drama 'Wilhelm Tell', in which the bailiff Albrecht Gessler put up his hat in a public place and ordered all Swiss subjects to salute it as a mark of subservience.
18. Solmitz, *Tagebuch*, entry of 21 March 1933, loc. cit.
19. Mehs, *Tagebücher*, p. 253f. (entry of 21 March 1933).
20. Mehs, *Tagebücher*, p. 256 (entry of 24 March 1933).
21. *Ibid.*, p. 254 (entry of 22 March 1933).
22. Solmitz, *Tagebuch*, *loc. cit.* (entry of 29 March 1933).
23. *Ibid.*, (entry of 16 April 1933).
24. Mehs, *Tagebücher*, p. 259 (entry of 1 April 1933).
25. *Ibid.*, p. 260 (entry of 1 April 1933).
26. *Ibid.*, p. 263 (entry of 10 April 1933).
27. Cohn, *Kein Recht, nirgends*, Vol. 1, p. 25 (entry of 2 April 1933).
28. Solmitz, *Tagebuch*, *loc. cit.* (entry of 1 April 1933).
29. *Ibid.*, (entry of 2 April 1933).
30. *Ibid.*, (entry of 5 April 1933).
31. *Ibid.*, (entry of 12 April 1933).
32. Cohn, *Kein Recht, nirgends*, Vol. 1, p. 28 (entry of 9 April 1933).
33. *Ibid.*, p. 29 (entry of 11 April 1933).
34. *Ibid.*, p. 40 (entry of 5 May 1933).
35. *Ibid.*, p. 38f. (entry of 3 May 1933). *Golut* is the Hebrew word for exile.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 45 (entry of 16 May 1933).
37. *Ibid.*, p. 52f. (entry of 18 June 1933).
38. Mehs, *Tagebücher*, p. 265 (entry of 20 April 1933).
39. Cohn, *Kein Recht, nirgends*, Vol. 1, p. 33 (entry of 20 April 1933).
40. Solmitz, *Tagebuch*, *loc. cit.* (entry of 19 April 1933).
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*
43. Mehs, *Tagebücher*, p. 258 (entry of 30 March 1933).
44. *Decree of the Reich President Outlining Provisional Regulations on Flag-Raising,* 12 March 1933, *Reichsgesetzblatt* I, 1933, p. 103.
45. Cf. in depth Eberhard Heuel, *Der umworbene Stand. Die ideologische Integration der Arbeiter in den Nationalsozialismus 1933–1935* (Frankfurt/New York: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1988), pp. 95–187.
46. Mehs, *Tagebücher*, pp. 272–3. (entry of 1 May 1933).
47. *Ibid.*

48. *Ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*, p. 274.
50. Solmitz, *Tagebuch*, *loc. cit.* (entry of 1 May 1933).
51. Heuel, *Stand*, p. 110.
52. Max Domarus, *Hitler. Reden und Proklamationen 1932–1945. Kommentiert von einem Zeitgenossen, Teil I Triumph*. Vol. 1 1932–1933 (Leonberg: Pamminger, 1988), pp. 259–64; this speech is reprinted with critical commentary in Heuel, *Stand*, pp. 609–23.
53. Domarus, *Hitler*, p. 259
54. *Ibid.*
55. Cohn, *Kein Recht, nirgends*, Vol. 1, pp. 37–38. (entry of 1 May 1933).
56. *Ibid.*, p. 38 (entry of 3 May 1933).
57. Mehs, *Tagebücher*, p. 360 (entry of 10 November 1933).
58. Solmitz, *Tagebuch*, loc. cit. (entry of 17 May 1933).
59. *Ibid.* (entry of 20 May 1933).
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Ibid.* (entry of 10 June 1933).
62. *Ibid.* (entry of 5 September 1933).
63. *Ibid.* (entry of 9 July 1933).
64. *Ibid.* (entry of 18 October 1933).
65. *Ibid.* (entry of 31 December 1933).
66. Cohn, *Kein Recht, nirgends*, Vol. 1, p. 43 (entry of 12 May 1933).
67. *Ibid.*, p. 46 (entry of 18 May 1933).
68. *Ibid.*, p. 56 (entry of 27 June 1933).
69. *Ibid.*, p. 118 (entry of 31 December 1933).

5
Collaboration, Complicity, and Evasion Under Italian Fascism

Paul Corner

Mass participation in public events was one of the defining characteristics of Italian Fascism; it was what turned authoritarian rule into 'popular dictatorship'. Indeed, participation was one of the keywords of the regime and was very much what distinguished the fascist state from what had preceded it. Faced by a traditional popular diffidence – if not outright hatred – for the authority of the state, Italian Fascism set out to create a unified nation, welded together by the force of nationalist ideology and totally united in the Social Darwinist struggle for national survival. Popular participation was to be both the cement and the visible expression of this unity. And people did participate – frequently and in large numbers, as evidenced in newsreels and photographs of the era. Yet, what precisely was going on beneath the veneer of this apparently spontaneous popular enthusiasm for the regime's highly orchestrated events is anything but clear.[1] Indeed, the question of why people participated in fascist activities remains, to some extent, unanswered. In some ways, there are as many answers to that question as there were participants. Motives could vary enormously and could depend not only on a variety of considerations ranging from age, gender, social class, religion, type of employment, and geographical location (or a combination of these factors), but also on the particular moment in the life of the regime. That is to say that the reasons why a person participated in 1927 might be very different from what they were in 1937 or 1942.

General conditioning factors

In the same way, the question of how people related to the regime is equally difficult to answer. A person might or might not like the regime, or even be indifferent to it – but the regime required certain kinds of behaviour regardless of personal predeliction, and one had to decide exactly how to respond to these requirements. Again, circumstances could vary widely according to time and location, but some general factors remained constant – violence, control of the labour market, and allocation of social benefits – and were

undoubtedly determinants of behaviour throughout the regime. They constituted a framework of limits within which all had to live and work. Despite the revisionist reputation of Italian Fascism as a very forgiving form of totalitarianism, it was indeed repressive and violent against all forms of opposition, and equally severe in its response to any disparaging remarks against Mussolini or other fascist leaders.[2] Repression was also highly discretionary; local fascist leaders could act against individuals without any real fear of legal action. Although physical violence was used more systematically against opponents in the early years of the regime, cases of fascist violence were still reported in the late 1930s and were considered in no way exceptional.

However, if it is important to stress that violence had a role throughout the *ventennio* and not just at its beginning, as is often thought, it was probably a much less important tool for conditioning people's attitudes and behaviour than the regime's control over access to resources and opportunities. With its emphasis on statalisation and bureaucratisation, the regime permeated most sectors of national and local administration and was able to impose its values through their day-to-day operation. Decisions were frequently made on the basis of political criteria – allegiance to Fascism being the most prominent – rather than on criteria of merit or competence. Above all, it was the discretionary decision-making that rendered people so vulnerable to what was, in effect, blackmail. Permission from the fascist authorities was obligatory for those who required a license or permit for any kind of activity. In order to find a job, workers needed a *libretto di lavoro* (a kind of work permit) issued by the fascist union, which could then be withdrawn in the event of indiscipline. Grants for a pension could depend on one's standing with the local pension officer. Poorer families and the elderly often required some form of assistance – again as a gift from the fascist authorities – and what was given could just as easily be taken away. When, in 1937, the local fascist boss in Padua visited a poor area of the city, he asked an elderly woman what she thought about the food parcels distributed by the *fascio*. An observer noted that, 'She had the courage to tell the truth about the quality and the quantity, both inadequate.' The next day she had her welfare book withdrawn.[3] In many places, particularly in the large towns, local fascist organisations kept tabs on families, noting the political orientation of the parents; their children's future employment could be affected if socialist or antifascist inclinations had been recorded. In short, it was nearly impossible to live a 'normal' life without some reference to the fascist-controlled state machine, which was designed to generate a condition of dependence.

Reactions to conditioning

The intensive conditioning that resulted from the experience of tight social control must be the point of departure for any examination of how people

learned to live with the regime, how they reacted to it, and the effect of those reactions. If the threat of direct physical violence was often more implicit than explicit after the early years, the knowledge that access to so many of the necessities of life was dependent on political considerations could not but influence people's thoughts and behaviour.

Of course, reactions would vary according to one's position on the political spectrum. 'True believers' in fascism would have had no difficulties with this kind of conditioning. To them, the restrictions imposed in the name of social control were precisely those deemed necessary for the formation of the fascist 'new man'. Given the repressive nature of the regime, however, it seems unlikely that most Italians would fit into the unquestioning category; mixed reactions were much more likely. Some people – and these were from all social classes – were not particularly convinced by the objectives of the regime, but saw fascist control of access to resources as an opportunity to be exploited. Like most regimes of its kind, Italian fascism was both stick and carrot, a regime of punishments and rewards. Many people were attracted to it for what it could provide, seeing the opportunities for control over material goods, career advancement, or social promotion. Many Italians employed in the vastly-expanded network of state administration probably fit this profile, viewing collaboration with the regime as an expedient for survival on relatively favourable terms. It was an attitude that guaranteed their participation in activities when required, and with appropriate enthusiasm if necessary, but they acted in the pursuit of status, interest, and opportunity rather than an unshakeable dedication to fascist ideology. It was essentially a conditional exchange – support of the regime in exchange for favourable treatment. 'True believers' denounced such people as 'wage-packet' fascists and 'food' fascists, lamenting the fact that too many tried to 'monetarise' their fascist party affiliations at the first opportunity.

Others might attempt a slightly different strategy, conceding less to fascism. It was possible to try to take what was on offer without subscribing to the dictates of the regime more than was necessary for the realisation of benefit. A newspaper seller who had joined the party in 1933 was arrested for saying, every time there was a photo of Mussolini on the front page, 'As long as this idiot is in charge, we will never sell many papers.'[4] Here we have collaboration – the vendor had joined the party – but his kind of collaboration was less the simple and self-interested opportunism we have noted above than the pragmatic acceptance of reality – the reality that it was difficult, if not impossible, to behave otherwise. He, the vendor, would have needed a permit and party membership would certainly facilitate the concession of the permit, but he did not feel that, because of this, he should also adjust his attitudes.

The pragmatic approach was probably that most common among the great mass of 'ordinary' people and concerned not only pensions and other forms of assistance but also work relations and, in particular, the attitude to the

fascist trade union, where workers clearly had to use what was available, like it or not. Some kind of collaboration with the regime was implicit in these situations, even for those hostile to Fascism, and it was precisely collaboration of this type that generated the complicity that the regime was always trying to engineer. In myriad ways Fascism created dependency and then stressed that whatever the state did for its citizens was the consequence of Mussolini's vision and paternal benevolence. Contact with the authorities came at the price of implicit recognition of this relationship, therefore, but for many, at a time of economic hardship – which was more or less the general condition of Italy after 1927 – participation in this sense was unavoidable. The condition of subordination and the dependency on fascist-controlled decisions made any sign of hostility to the regime unwise; protest could result in the withdrawal of some or all entitlements or the loss of employment. As a leather worker from Certaldo, near Florence, put it in later years, 'The majority came to terms with the situation. They went to the fascist rallies because they said, "At least I get to work and eat." They knew how to lie.'[5]

In a way, the attitudes described above suggest a very straightforward relationship between the population and the regime, with some asking the question, 'What does the regime offer me?' and others asking, more cautiously, 'What happens if I don't collaborate?' – the first to some extent identifying with those in power, the second avoiding such identification. All would participate in fascist activities, but with a very different spirit. Even so, the relationship was less straightforward than it might seem. The two questions posed above would often and inevitably become fused in people's minds because lack of collaboration could mean withdrawal of what the regime could offer. This fusion was precisely what the regime worked to realise; it pushed people into decisions they found unpalatable but nonetheless necessary. Thus the mother who was hostile to Mussolini ('Old baldy', as she called him) and to his demographic war-mongering ('If I were a man and had a wife I'd put it in her mouth or up her arse in order not to have children') still chose to enroll her children in the fascist youth groups because not to do so might prejudice their chances of advancement.[6] Not unsurprisingly, popular variants on the meaning of PNF (*Partito Nazionale Fascista*) included the version *'Per Necessità Familiare*'.

Non-collaboration

This last example indicates that people did have a choice in many matters, even if that choice was heavily conditioned by its possible consequences. One choice was to accept and conform, to keep your head down and not attract attention – the 'living within a lie' of Vaclav Havel's greengrocer.[7] Again another strategy of survival, it might have psychological costs, but it was a choice intended to ensure the least possible confrontation with the

constrictions of the regime. Very obviously the choices offered or imposed were by no means free choices. This was true for most Italians. In the early 1930s when membership of the party became a requisite for many state jobs, people were again faced with a choice – and it is significant that some did say no. It was possible to decide not to participate, at least at the formal and public level. In an interesting case in Prato in 1930, the director of the fascist maternity clinic and four of his principal collaborators refused to take the party card, as had been requested. Since the end of the First World War they had been operating the local pre-natal clinic, transformed by law in 1925 into a fascist ONMI agency (apparently little more than a change of name above the door),[8] and had no intention of losing any further autonomy. The distinguished doctors offered their resignations with great courtesy and without rancorous justifications in a near gesture of contempt. Enforced collaboration with the regime was one thing, membership of the party another. Predictably, all were removed from office, although not immediately.[9] Hence, it was possible to exercise independence of spirit in some circumstances, but always at a price. Many Italians, of course, were in no position to pay that price.

In the Prato case, it is worth noting that the local authorities had great difficulty finding replacements for the people dismissed. Those approached refused to collaborate and positions were filled some time later only when professional competence was subordinated to political fidelity. This kind of refusal of office seems to have been widespread and did, of course, represent a choice. From the early 1930s onwards, it is common to find prefects complaining about the quality of local fascist leaders and lamenting the fact that the able people in the province had withdrawn from all political activity.[10] As the prefect of Siena wrote in 1931, 'the fact [is] that the best prepared people and those most suited to carry out any political or administrative activities . . . withdraw, abstain (as far as is decently possible) from any act of support or collaboration with the [fascist] Federal secretary.'[11]

Ambiguities and navigation

Non-participation, non-collaboration, or 'taking distance', was an option for some, therefore, although it is clear that we are talking about largely middle class behaviour here; these were people whose personal circumstances made them less dependent on fascist largesse. The poorer industrial and agricultural workers had less room for manoeuvre. These categories were more conditioned by the straitjacket of necessity and by fascist control of access to resources; their participation in the regime reflected that conditioning. That said, it is important to resist an analysis cast rigidly in terms of coercion or consent. As the regime progressed, people came to recognise and accept the limits imposed on their behaviour and learned to navigate within those limits. Accepting these limitations did not necessarily mean changes

in opinion – far from it; it only meant that those opinions should not be expressed openly. Significantly, according to the police accounts of arrests, it was usually only when inebriated that people went beyond these limits and started shouting abuse at Mussolini. Otherwise the broad limits drawn by coercion were respected; the drunks, once sober, would deny any intention to offend. Few examples are more telling than the man who declared, 'When I hit the bust of Mussolini with the chair, I had no intention of offending the head of government'.[12] Many of the arrested would point to all the ways in which they were, on a regular basis, collaborating with the party or the union. They would also regularly declare their devotion to *il duce*. In the same way, these offenders, when caught, would always affirm that they were merely recounting a joke they had heard in order to express their disgust at any disrespect towards Mussolini. The artisan who recounted to his friends that 'Franco's widow had had to go to the Pope's successor to tell him that Hitler had been killed at Mussolini's funeral' swore that he deprecated the story. Here the elements of a fairly common ambiguity are clear. Accommodation to the requirements of the regime could be realised – in public and at public functions – at the same time that private resentments could be retained and expressed in the workplace and among friends. Thus we have a picture of individuals reflecting the forces of coercion, consent, and non-conformity but at different times and in different contexts.

Even so, the distinction between public behaviour and private sentiment risks being itself too neat, because some aspects of the regime might be judged in a positive light even if other, less positive aspects, might colour the overall picture. Thus the landless agricultural worker, well aware that his wages, contracts, and conditions of work had suffered as a consequence of the advent of the regime, might still be impressed by the fact that Mussolini – like no leader before him – had stripped to the waist and cut corn just as he did. If nothing else, *il duce*'s actions could be seen as a form of implicit recognition by the state of the worker's existence, something that had rarely happened before. Mixed feelings might predominate, therefore, with emotions battling against reason. Some peasants undoubtedly felt that, despite a worsening of material conditions, they remained at the centre of government attention – that they were included – and that this should be considered a positive factor in any judgement of the regime.

Here it is necessary to insert a brief, but very important, parenthesis. As will be noted, it is the figure of Mussolini that often dominates attention. But attitudes towards *il duce* were not necessarily the same as towards the fascist regime as a whole. In fact, there was an increasing division between the two sets of attitudes in the course of the 1930s, with people continuing to see Mussolini in a positive light – virtually worshipping him at times[13] – while becoming increasingly critical of the regime and of the provincial fascist hierarchy. The popular comment on affairs – 'If only Mussolini knew [what is going on]…' – was indicative of this division of responsibility in

many people's minds; Mussolini was the benign (and blamelessly ignorant) benefactor, it was the other fascists who were making life so difficult. This was, of course, a division that complicated attitudes towards participation in the regime; you could cheer for *il duce* when he came to visit your town at the same time as you continued to complain bitterly about the conditions of day-to-day material life and mutter anathemas against the local fascist bosses. As in so many dictatorial regimes, the ambiguities and contradictions inherent in this situation were frequently not perceived – it was not necessarily a conflictual situation; it meant that you had, at one and the same time, both a favourable and an unfavourable attitude towards the regime, that you might try to evade the demands of the local party organisation while still subscribing to the cult of *il duce*.

Peasants and workers: Complicities contained

The difficulties of understanding the motives for participation in the fascist regime are many, therefore, because their motivations were rarely simple and were rarely exclusive of other sentiments. Ambiguity was perhaps more present among agricultural labourers and peasants than it was among industrial workers and artisans, where hostility to the regime seems to have been more generalised, at least during the 1930s. What is surprising, however, is that in some situations, workers in both sectors did continue to utilise the fascist unions as they had done before the advent of Fascism. Agricultural labourers in the Po Valley, for example, did see the fascist unions as organisations that could be utilised in their defence, even though they had few illusions about who was really in control. One reason may well have been that, in many instances, local union leaders had passed to the fascists and were, therefore, people well known to the labourers, perhaps even trusted by them. Thus, continuities with the past may have helped ease the wheels of collaboration between regime and labourers. Because of the personnel involved, subordination did not exclude negotiation, even though the relations of power were extremely unequal. Evidently labourers felt that some room for agency remained, even for the defeated.[14]

Industrial workers and artisans had more difficulty than these agricultural labourers in finding a voice to represent them. Industrial policy during the 1920s, at least in the large factories, aimed at destroying forms of worker solidarity through a redefinition of skills, and the ever-present threat of unemployment under the regime probably did the rest. Urban workers were those most exposed to the conditioning effects of fascist social control, even though, at times and rather paradoxically, their best defence might lie in the fact that the big employers – Fiat in Turin for example – were strong enough to keep the local fascists out of the factory. This, and the residual contractual power that workers – particularly skilled workers – possessed,

even in the worst of conditions, permitted them to maintain a certain distance from the regime. This distance was demonstrated in the defiant silence that greeted Mussolini's speech to the Fiat workers in Turin in 1932.[15] Despite instructions from the bosses, workers remained impassive in the face of Mussolini's rhetoric. As one woman worker remembered, 'they told us that when he spoke, when he arrived ... we should clap, that when he spoke we should applaud ... instead we all acted dead, nobody did any of those things'.[16]

Here there was little sense of workers' pleasure at being 'recognised' by power. Even before Fascism industrial workers had been consistently hostile to the State; with Fascism, very little changed. Workers understood well where real power lay within their industry and how Fascism had served to worsen conditions and weaken their contractual position.[17] Fascist welfare compensated only in part for higher taxes and an increased cost of living.[18] For its part, the regime seems, unlike its Nazi equivalent, to have made little effort to blandish industrial workers with discourses about the 'beauty' of labour; there is no sense in which the skilled worker's 'pride in his work' appears to have been exploited and channelled in a nationalist, and therefore a fascist direction.[19] On the contrary, production within the large factory seems almost to have assumed an aspect of defiance in relation to the regime; it was an area the regime could not do without and therefore could not touch. Silence at key (and obligatory) public demonstrations denoting defiance and the maintenance of a certain autonomy of identity was a clear statement of this situation.

Such workers might be more flexible in times of unemployment, however. Reference to the relief agencies of the regime increased sharply during times of crisis. Whereas reports from Turin in 1930 spoke of a population indifferent to the regime and disgusted by the lack of activity of the local fascist organisations in helping it to face the economic crisis, matters changed in late 1932 and 1933 when new officials within the local fascist movement produced a more active policy for alleviating hardship. The Welfare Association was funded more generously and spread its attentions more widely. As a consequence, workers suspended some of their criticisms of the regime, displaying what was even described as 'a sentiment of gratitude towards the authorities' for what they were doing.[20] Recourse to fascist welfare was clearly imposed by need – yet it does not seem to have changed opinions in the long term. By 1936, when, under the impact of the invasion of Ethiopia, the crisis was receding and welfare assistance was less necessary, the police informers reported that the great majority of the Fiat workers, members of the fascist union and beneficiaries of fascist welfare, 'have stayed where they were, that is, they are convinced socialists and communists.'[21] A reluctant acceptance of reality was here combined with continuing mental reservations about the hand that fed them; these workers were able to 'take' from the regime while giving very little in return. Certainly they continued to

produce – a fact that directly favoured the regime – but the fact of production did not engender, in turn, a positive acceptance of the regime on the part of the workers. When Mussolini returned to Turin in 1939 his speech was again met by 50,000 'crossed arms' that refused to clap.[22]

Living with Fascism

Contact with the expanding bureaucracy did not encourage people to cooperate with the regime. As one supplicant for benefits put it, 'God help you if you say a word more than is necessary. You are immediately classified as an enemy of the Fatherland by threatening eyes that assure you . . . of disastrous consequences'.[23] This was, in reality, only an aspect of a more general problem. For most ordinary people, contact with the authorities was characterised by the obligation to present themselves as supplicants for concessions, rather than as people who had rights. This served to confirm previously existing negative attitudes towards the State. Police reports suggest that the further down the chain of fascist command you went, the more arrogant and boorish the fascist officials became. By the end of the 1930s, even confirmed fascists were reduced to complaining about the 'little Mussolini's' who, strutting in their 'Napoleonic uniforms', dominated many Italian provinces.[24]

Not all contact with Fascism was so negative, however. This was especially true for the young and, in many cases, for women. Like Mussolini, Fascism was a 'young' movement, and young people responded to this. Moreover, Fascism was projected towards the future, presented in idealistic and utopian terms, and this too attracted the young. Young men might see involvement in the local *fascio* as a way of escaping the claustrophobic control of the family.[25] Participation in the many activities directed at the younger generation was therefore enthusiastic. Sport undoubtedly played its part in this respect. A relative novelty for most people in the period between the wars, sport had the virtue of being appealingly inter-class and could attract those who might otherwise have been more reticent. Whether such participation had the intended long-term effect of producing a new generation of young fascists remains open to doubt, however. Studies of the political efficacy of sport under Fascism suggest that this was not the case.[26] There would appear to have been some kind of mental division between the activity itself (which was enjoyed) and the political message that accompanied the activity (tedious and boring). In some cases, it seems, constant propaganda had become counterproductive. A 16 year-old schoolgirl in Siena, reflecting on her education, wrote in her diary in 1940, '. . . the ideals with which they have filled our heads in these years are only smoke. In school they teach fascist culture as if it were a religion and we recognise the total falsity of this identification'.[27] It is instructive to read about the high rates of absenteeism from fascist pre-military training at the end of the 1930s. Evidently the

novelty of militarisation had worn off and routinisation provoked rejection. In fact, a party survey of 1939 discovered that around half the young people in Italy had no contact with the party at all.[28]

That said, some developments were undoubtedly both liberating and empowering. The liberating effect of the fascist world was probably most deeply felt by girls and women, although not always as the direct result of party activity. Women acted within the context of a male-dominated regime that depicted women principally as the 'angels of the hearth', but the opportunities offered during the regime to operate beyond the family sphere presented new possibilities for activity and socialisation. As one woman remembering her work in the factory said, 'Oh, I loved it. To tell the truth I really loved it. When I had to stay at home I was really sad.'[29] In these types of cases, the regime might be received much more favourably – a regime experienced not as control and constriction, but as a period of at least partial liberation. This was particularly true for the large numbers of women who entered jobs in the public sector for the first time during the fascist period. Women who brought home a wage also assumed different roles within the family, to some extent challenging the dominance of the male wage-earner. Women more directly associated with the political activities of the regime such as the predominantly middle class *fasci femminili* and the socially humbler, but still highly successful, organisation of rural housewives, may have gained greater status within their families.[30] The presence of these women's groups in fascist parades was certainly a sign of a new kind of recognition and inclusion in the fascist community. More than men, women constituted one of the regime's strongest constituencies – a fact reinforced by the central position women inevitably held in the much-vaunted demographic campaign to increase Italy's declining birthrate. Another first for women under the fascist regime was their involvement in leisure activities such as gymnastics, hiking, and cycling, which brought a large number of people into contact with the regime. The prime mover in this direction was the *Dopolavoro* (*Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro*, or National Leisure-Time Organisation), which, in terms of numbers, was a great success. Frequenting the fascist *Dopolavoro* implied a kind of complicity with the regime, but it seems to have been a complicity that people wore lightly, paying very low-cost lip-service to the regime while continuing to play cards, dance, and drink wine as they had done before Fascism in the socialist clubs (*casa del popolo*). Political indoctrination does not seem to have gone very far.[31] As one disgusted fascist wrote (to Mussolini), far from being 'fascistised' at the *Dopolavoro*, people were being 'alcoholised' – perhaps an exaggerated description of what, however, were clearly everyday practices of relaxation.

But the *Dopolavoro* did at least indicate that the regime had a less oppressive face than was often in evidence. This was confirmed by other initiatives as well. Local festivals were encouraged by the regime and new celebrations

sponsored; most prominently, perhaps, the annual festival of the grape harvest. People could join in these festivals and enjoy themselves, thereby receiving the message that Fascism was not only faith, but also fun. Festivals undoubtedly helped to form a spirit of 'community under Fascism' and provide a much-needed (and much-desired) sense of common identity. Moreover, they also served to bolster another positive image that the regime attempted to disseminate, an image that went beyond the harsh imperatives of discipline and sacrifice. One of Mussolini's strongest cards was his ability to convince Italians that, with Fascism, they were on the winning side of history and that the history of the future was already written. Effectively, he sold a dream and it was a dream with which many Italians could identify. This was important. The fascist appropriation of the national cause represented a huge asset for the regime. Festivals, if successful, were moments in which this emotive aspect of the regime was most evident, celebrating not only the traditions of the past but also the dream of the fascist future. A large number of Italians seem to have retained some faith in the dream, preserving their trust in Mussolini, even when they had totally lost faith in the 'real existing Fascism' exemplified by declining living standards, officious bureaucrats, and corrupt and arrogant local leaders. The acquisition of empire in 1936 may have served to reinforce this trust; for many, empire represented an 'imagined space' they could occupy with their fantasies. There is considerable evidence, however, that, for most people, the costs weighed much more heavily than the benefits and that, by the end of the 1930s, empire had become yet another source of popular delusion.

Spaces – Public and private

Most of the above suggests a picture of everyday life dominated by political considerations and in particular by attitudes and activities related to the regime. In Italy, such a characterisation would be a distortion of reality. Despite the steady process of industrialisation, people in Italy still maintained traditional forms of solidarity and socialisation that were not class-specific and were not destroyed by the regime. 'Spaces' distinct from and resistant to the conditioning effect of fascist politics still existed – spaces, sometimes, that did not attract the attention of Fascism's repressive mechanisms.

Often people themselves generated such spaces in which they could operate, sometimes with the aid of humour and irony. Jokes – always disrespectful – about fascist leaders abounded, even though giving 'offence to *il duce*' could cost you five years of *confino*.[32] Above all, jokes represented a reminder to people that they did exist independently of the regime and represented, in effect, an assertion of identity, of the fact that the regime could not control everything. The man who called his pig Mussolini did so because it allowed him shout 'Mussolini pig' at the top of his voice in the main

street (the police were not impressed and it cost him five years).[33] Another such operational space was language itself. Fascist attempts to substitute the formal mode of address with another (the *Lei* with the *Voi*, for 'you') were met with ridicule. Students in Florence went around talking about Galileo GaliVoi instead of Galileo Galilei. An informer wrote, 'when you hear two people use the "*Voi*" in public, you can be sure that . . . they do it for a joke, with the intention of making the measure look ridiculous. It's enough to listen to the way they emphasise the "*Voi*" to understand what they are doing'. Another informer noted that public officials used the '*Voi*' in the office where it was obligatory, 'but in private circles, and in private contacts, it is not observed.' Even the way you spoke could indicate autonomy from the regime, therefore. As one spy observed very acutely, refusal to use the '*Voi*' represented a form of rebellion, 'a way of saying, "I'm not obeying" – apparently harmless, but to be watched'.[34]

The mid-morning coffee, taken by public service employees at the local bar, also provided a 'space' for the expression of opinion. When, in the second half of the 1930s, coffee was unobtainable, even the normally lethargic Roman office workers finally exploded, threatening – according to one informer – 'revolution'.

> They say that before Fascism this didn't happen, that there was coffee, that the bread was made of wheat, that the milk was genuine, that cloth was wool, that you could find everything, that pay was proportionate to the cost of living, that you didn't know what [social insurance] deductions were, that taxes were bearable . . . that people were happier, that you could express your own opinion, that the papers could express freely what was happening at home and abroad.

Such a litany of complaints is indicative of an awareness on the part of the informer of the negative effects of the regime on individuals, even on those for whom the regime had provided stable jobs. It is also a clear indication of the ways in which, for such employees, collaboration with the regime was conditional. Lack of coffee was 'a political issue', as one informer observed acutely, not least because Ethiopia was supposed to be the homeland of coffee. It injected a negative political factor into a normally non-political space, thus challenging complicity and acquiescence. Faced by a coffee-less bar, people realised that, as one man said, 'We have the Empire of misery . . . .'[35]

The family, ably defended by the Catholic Church (itself a very important 'space' for autonomous action in many places), was another of these not-overtly political spaces. It was targeted by the regime in various ways – through the demographic campaign, through the tax on unmarried men, through the careful control of political orientation of the family, in a sense through schools and through the youth organisations, but there are indications that the regime did not succeed in penetrating the family to any

great extent. At the end of the 1930s police informers in Florence were still despairing of the fact that young people were more influenced by the democratic ideas of their parents than they were by the propaganda of the regime. Local fascists would sometimes react to this by trying to intrude on family loyalties. Threats to family solidarity could be used as a kind of blackmail, as with the young man who rejected the local fascist leader's command to go a fascist rally in Florence:

> I had never taken part when they did their festivities. I told him that I wasn't going to Florence. Then the secretary of the fascio, Vichi, said to me, 'If you don't come to Florence I'll arrest your father and your mother.' I got my clothes together to go to Florence.[36]

The family had to be defended.

As telling is the response to an attempt by the Turin Fascist Organisation to increase its numbers by recruiting the mothers, wives, and sisters of the 1500 local male organisers. To a man, the organisers involved declared that this was a bad idea. They gave various reasons; for some the women already had enough to do: '[they] referred to the family, to questions of health, to a variety of circumstances'; for others the proposal raised difficulties within the family; 'the question is creating arguments in the family'. But above all was the fact that husbands – 'irritated' – did not want their positions within the family threatened by any role given to their wives that might undermine in some way their authority.[37] Some proposed that the women be enrolled nominally, but not allowed to participate in activities – an interesting compromise – but this was rejected, and the whole question eventually abandoned. Even for the fascist faithful, therefore, when a conflict arose between Fascism and the family, the second was still considered paramount. And evidently, in this case, the leading fascists did not feel they could press the matter too far.

Everyday life was certainly conditioned by the context established by the regime, with its acknowledged limits and boundaries, but within that context, it was not lived exclusively in terms of political domination and personal subordination. Networks other than the political continued to exist and were of great importance – indeed, given the characteristics of Italian society, one is tempted to say of possibly greater importance. Social links relating to locality provided one such network. Away from the large towns (and most Italians did not live in large towns in this period), these were long-established, inter-class links – sometimes centuries old – and the regime could hardly expect to replace them in a short space of time. The local orchestra, the voluntary fire service, the *Misericordia*[38] – these were traditional areas of local sociability, solidarity, and recognition; they constituted spaces that few would dare to touch. Areas of 'normal' life that were not related to formal political obligations still existed, therefore. Indeed,

they may have assumed a new importance within the generally repressive context.

The fascist attempt to dominate the private sphere with its construct of 'everything within the state, nothing outside the state' may, in fact, have forced people increasingly back into the private sphere, where they retained some autonomy of thought and action. Much of the police documentation supports this thesis. The picture that emerges from the later 1930s is an increasing division between the formal behaviour required in public by the regime and the private life of home, family, and friends. This was as true for the worker hostile to the regime as the clerk in favour of it. As was to be expected, the regime attempted as much as possible to encroach on these 'private' spaces – the 'totalitarian' phase of the regime aimed precisely at this – but succeeded only in forcing people to close around those spaces and protect them more tightly, thus causing a certain conflict to become evident. In this period, many Italians were finding the claims of the party excessive; even a veteran fascist militiaman could write in his diary that 'the Party at present is behaving like the foreign conquerors used to behave towards the Italian people.'[39] An informer reported, 'People complain about the fact that the Party exploits – too freely – the enrolled, without any respect for their work, for their rest, or for their freedom.'[40] Evidently many wanted to do other things with their time, even if it was only tending the vegetable garden. The assumption behind the second comment – that people still had a certain zone of freedom where the party was not involved but that was not being respected by the party – should not go unobserved.

But encroachment, as represented by a mass of controls, continued to grow through the 1930s. One informer wrote in January 1938 that, 'Talking to the workers one often has the impression that these people are convinced that they live under a reign of terror, and they don't open up because they are frightened.'[41] Groups of friends were becoming afraid of expressing their thoughts in public for fear of being overheard by spies; they had the impression that 'ears are listening everywhere'.[42] Certainly, popular complaints remained a safety valve for frustrations. People did speak out, in the tram, at the market, in the queue, often incautiously, and sometimes with the attitude of not caring who heard them, itself a mark of disrespect for the authorities. The defiant, bloody-minded, 'who cares if they hear me' attitude is apparent in some reports as individuals lost patience and threw caution to the wind. Publicly wishing cancer on Mussolini was a very common form of protest. Among the older generation comparisons were frequently made with the period before the Fascists came to power. As an old woman on a Rome bus put it,

> All right, you can't deny it, when the socialists were around we lived badly [because] the trains arrived when they wanted to, the strikes stopped everything, but we ate better and there was no shortage of coffee and

> the cost of living was lower. Now it's been 17 years in which, rather than living dangerously, we live in anguish, in anxiety and in fear.[43]

She might have gone on but a friend elbowed her to warn her that someone else was listening – ears that could not be trusted.

A good example of the capacity for people to distinguish between the public and the private, and of their ability to protect the private from the incursions of the regime, came with the campaign launched in autumn 1935 to collect the gold wedding rings of Italian women in order to finance the invasion of Ethiopia. On the chosen day in December, many women did hand over their rings to the authorities; in exchange they received an alloy ring, which served as a kind of receipt. Some, however, did not. Police reported that women had been buying alloy rings (which had suddenly appeared on the market in large numbers) and putting them on their fingers. Thus, they appeared to have the receipt for a donation made and this could be displayed. The real gold ring was hidden. In this way, public formalities were respected, but private interest was protected. Collaboration was manifest but real complicity resisted; the public and the private co-existed – a perfect squaring of the circle.

This kind of self-protection is evident in another incident relating to the donation of wedding rings. In December 1935 an usher in Genoa who was also a party member, was arrested for having been heard to say on a tram, 'If my wife were to give her ring to the party, I would throw her out of the house. Let *il duce* give money to the fatherland; he has millions . . . ' The usher defended himself by pointing out that he had donated a pair of gold earrings to the cause only a few days before. Evidently this he could accept, but not the loss of the symbolic wedding ring. Rather in the same way as the women mentioned above, he had attempted to reconcile two positions: obedience to the requirements of the regime and defence of private interest. His navigation would probably have been successful had he only kept his mouth shut.[44]

Strategies of survival

By the time Italy entered the Second World War, even the regime itself was forced to recognise that the collaborations and complicities it had engineered had had little effect beyond ensuring social control. It was widely acknowledged that people were distancing themselves from the regime whenever possible and that the movement had lost all dynamism. Ethiopia and intervention in the Spanish civil war had done little to rally spirits. Returning soldiers were ignored and complained about unemployment; 'They only remember us when they need cannon fodder,' said one, continuing, 'When Africa finished we interrupted misery and unemployment with the story of Spain . . . all for a stale crust of bread.' Complicity with the regime

was breaking down and propaganda was no longer believed. The redemptive 'civilising mission' of Fascism in Africa provoked cynicism: 'First redeem the Neapolitans, then the blacks,' wrote one group of unemployed soldiers to Mussolini.[45] The new European war was unpopular and few wanted to go and fight. As one young man put it, observing threateningly that a rifle could shoot in many directions and not just towards France, 'Don't go, let them go, let Ciano go to fight the war.'[46] People had long since lost faith in fascist promises and an aging Mussolini was fast shedding his popular charisma. Adherence to Fascism became formal and largely superficial, a development to some extent encouraged by what was denounced by the 'true believers' as an excessive concern for the *esteriorità* of Fascism – that is, the cultivation of outward appearances with little or no regard for the substance.

After 1940 Italians would fight on many fronts, but often their diaries make it clear that they were fighting for the King (the army had always remained more attached to the monarchy than to the regime) and for the Italian nation, which was not necessarily the fascist nation. For many, that detachment of the regime from the nation had already occurred well before the beginning of hostilities. Many police reports from the end of the 1930s speak of 'apathy' and 'passivity' among the population; they describe a population that had become 'deaf' to the invocations of the regime and that was taking tentative steps (quite dangerously for a totalitarian state) to think about alternatives to Fascism. Elaborating on some of these reports, Renzo De Felice has written of the 'disgust for politics' present among many sections of Italians in the years immediately preceding the descent into war.[47] These descriptions of fascist Italy suggest a picture not unlike that of many post-Stalinist Soviet satellite countries in the 1960s and 70s, where public formalities were observed but without any of the conviction, much less the dynamism, required by the original communist ideology. Obliged to conform and to collaborate, many Italians continued to go through the motions of participation. They behaved 'as if' they believed in order to resist the pressures of the regime to turn them into full-time converts to the cause. As in other such regimes, the same pressures may have pushed people to utilise spaces where the political imperatives of the regime were less evident and where their own personal identities could be more freely expressed. Unlike the East Germans and the Poles, who were able to use the rhetoric of 'their' regimes against the regimes themselves in order to create such spaces (one of the few advantages of a communism that purported to work in the interest of the people), Italians found it more difficult to exploit official declarations in the same way and were forced to more carefully navigate the interconnecting rivulets of the public/private division. This was a difficult task, partly because the public/private division was no longer supposed to exist, and partly because the private was itself heavily conditioned by the limits established by the regime. It was a navigation that imposed a public collaboration for most, but that also found room – increasingly, it would

appear – for the development of private strategies of survival that nonetheless operated within the limits imposed by the fascist State. The result was often an accentuated reproduction of the 'traditionally' negative attitude towards the State, which reminds us that the extent of Italians' collaboration with the fascist regime or of their evasion of its pressures must always be read in light of this long-standing diffidence towards the authority of the State. This was one of the many problems Fascism failed to resolve; even in 1940 many committed fascists still had few illusions about the degree to which Fascism had penetrated the masses.

Notes

1. On the supposed 'spontaneity' of fascist demonstrations see Paul Corner, 'Italian Fascism: Organisation, Enthusiasm, Opinion', in *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, Vol. 15 No. 3, 2010, 378–89.
2. The punishment for verbal offences, handed down by the Prefect without reference to the law courts, could be as much as five years in enforced *confino* (domestic exile).
3. ACS, Partito Nazionale Fascista (PNF), Situazione Politica Economica Province (SPEP), b. 11, *Informer's report*, 17 February 1937.
4. Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS), Ministero degli Interni (Min.Int.), Direzione Generale Pubblica Sicurezza (DGPS), Affari Generali e Riservati (AGR), Pubblica Sicurezza (PS)1935, busta 10, '*Offese al Duce*', Rome 20 May 1935.
5. Quoted in Francesco Rossi (ed.), *Certaldo negli anni del fascismo: un comune toscano fra le due guerre (1919–1940)* (Milan: La Pietra, 1986), p. 213, my emphasis.
6. ACS, cit., '*Offese al Duce*', 7 March 1933.
7. See Vaclav Havel, 'The Power of the Powerless', *Open Letters* (New York: Random House, 1992).
8. *Opera Nazionale Maternità ed Infanzia*.
9. See Patrizia Guarnieri, 'Dagli Aiuto Materni all'ONMI: l'assistenza alla maternità a all'infanzia del fascismo', in Lucia Pozzi and Marco Breschi (eds), *Salute, malattia e sopravvivenza in Italia fra '800 e '900* (Udine: Forum, 2007), pp. 59–83.
10. The question of the poor quality of fascist personnel and the non-participation of the many is dealt with in Paul Corner, *The Fascist Party and Popular Opinion in Mussolini's Italy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 88–96.
11. ACS, PNF, SPEP, b. 20, *Siena*, 12 February 1932.
12. Quoted in Corner, *Fascist Party*, p. 179.
13. At the popular level, particularly in rural areas, attitudes to Mussolini were obviously infused with religious overtones. Popular Catholicism cast him, effectively, as a saint and attributed to him powers of healing and even of virtual ubiquity. Legends of *il duce* 'appearing' (like a saint) unexpectedly in order to make sure that all was well were common. See Luisa Passerini, *Mussolini immaginario* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1991). On the cult of *il duce*, see also Michele Imbriani, *Gli italiani e il duce; il mito e l'immagine di Mussolini negli ultimi anni del fascismo (1938–1943)* (Naples: Liguori, 1992).
14. See Roberto Parisini, *Dal regime corporativo alla Repubblica Sociale. Agricoltura e Fascismo a Ferrara 1928–1945* (Ferrara: Corbo, 2005).
15. See Luisa Passerini, *Torino operaia e fascismo* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1984), p. 226.
16. Ibid., p. 230.

17. Wages fell in both agriculture and industry after the advent of the regime because of revision of contracts. Hours of work were increased without any corresponding increase in pay. Between 1923 and 1927 wages were further hit by inflation, reducing purchasing power. The policy of revaluation of the lira pursued in 1926–27 ('Quota 90') produced drastic deflation. In response, wages were twice cut across the board by decree, but more than was justified by the revaluation of the currency. The fall in real wages between 1927 and 1932 is calculated in the region of 12–15 per cent. Many had no wages: unemployment continued to be a serious problem between 1929 and 1934. Although employment increased with the Ethiopian war, wages remained stagnant or fell. In fact, between 1936 and 1940 wages chased inflation; the cost of living rose by 56 per cent, wages on average by only 40 per cent.
18. On these aspects, see Maria Sophia Quine, *Italy's Social Revolution: Charity and Welfare from Liberalism to Fascism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), Chapter 4.
19. For the concept of 'pride in work' in relation to Italy see Duccio Bigazzi, ' "Fierezza del mestiere" e organizzazione di classe; gli operai meccanici milanesi', in *Società e storia*, Vol. 1 (1978), 87–108; also the comments of Passerini, *Torino operaia*, pp. 57–62.
20. Corner, *Fascist Party*, p. 189.
21. Ibid., p. 190.
22. Passerini, *Torino operaia*, p. 234.
23. ACS, Min. Int, DGPS, *Polizia Politica*, b.109, 8 January 1937.
24. Corner, *Fascist Party*, p. 286.
25. Davide Tabor, 'Operai in camicia nera? La composizione operaia del fascio di Torino, 1921–1931', in *Storia e problemi contemporanei*, Vol. 17, No. 36, (2004).
26. Simon Martin, *Football and Fascism* (Oxford: Berg, 2004).
27. Archivio Diaristico Nazionale (ADN), diary of Bruna Talluri, *DP/Adn2*, 2 March 1940.
28. Cited in Dante Germino, *The Italian Fascist Party in Power. A Study in Totalitarian Rule* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1959), p. 73.
29. Quoted in Perry Willson, *The Clockwork Factory. Women and Work in Fascist Italy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 158.
30. See Willson, *Peasant Women*, op cit.
31. See Victoria de Grazia, *The Culture of Consent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
32. For jokes see Alberto Vacca, *Duce truce. Insulti, barzellette, caricature: l'opposizione popolare al fascismo nei rapporti dei prefetti – 1930–1945*, (Rome: Castelvecchi, 2012).
33. Quoted in Pierluigi Orsi, 'Una fonte seriale: i rapporti prefettizi sull'antifascismo non militante', in *Rivista di storia contemporanea*, Vol. 2, (1990), 280–303.
34. ACS, MI, DGPS, Polizia Politica, Materia (1927–1944), b.220, *Genoa*, 9 August 1939.
35. ACS, Ibid., *Rome*, 13 May 1939.
36. Rossi, *Certaldo*, p. 279.
37. Corner, *Fascist Party*, pp. 190–1.
38. A voluntary organisation, present particularly in Tuscany, that took responsibility for looking after the old and the sick.
39. ADN, diary of Paolino Ferrari, *DG/89*, end December 1938.
40. Corner, *Fascist Party*, p. 222.
41. ACS, PNF, SPEP, b. 25, *Torino*, 6 January 1938.

42. Corner, *Fascist Party*, pp. 232–4.
43. Ibid., p. 235.
44. Ibid., p. 199.
45. ACS, PNF, SPEP, b. 9, *Naples*, August 1941.
46. ACS, MI, DGPS, Polizia Politica, b. 219, *Milan*, 28 September 1939, my emphasis.
47. Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il duce*, Vol. 2 *Lo stato totalitario (1936–1940)* (Turin: Einaudi, 1997), p. 221.

6

Stalinism 'From Below'?: Soviet State, Society, and the Great Terror

Kevin McDermott

My aim in this chapter is twofold: first, to assess the impact of what has been termed the post-Soviet 'archival gold rush' and the resultant transformation in our understanding of state-society relations under Stalin; and second, to summarise and critique the latest western research on the Great Terror of 1937–38 in an attempt to explore the social preconditions of, and popular responses to, mass repression and its victims.[1] As a political historian, I combine 'from above' and 'from below' methodologies in order to demonstrate how recent socio-cultural and everyday life approaches to the study of Stalinism have expanded the horizons of 'traditional' political history and its practitioners.

New approaches to Stalinist state and society

Since the collapse of Soviet communism in the early 1990s scholarly perspectives on Stalinism have undergone something of a sea change, rendering largely redundant the acrimonious 'totalitarian' versus 'revisionist' debates that epitomised the 1970s and 80s. Two main processes account for this shift: first, the partial opening of hitherto inaccessible Soviet party and state archives, both central and regional; and second, the 'cultural turn' in historical studies, which has prioritised socio-cultural genres and theories over more standard political and economic frameworks. The key question for my purposes is: what do the new archival discoveries and the new historiography deriving from them tell us about the Stalinist dictatorship? Above all, they confirm conclusively that the old model of an all-powerful, exclusive monolithic state detached from and dominating a passive, atomised, and alienated society is unnecessarily restrictive and one-dimensional. To be sure, the Stalinist state was inordinately intrusive, but this coercive power is only one, albeit highly significant, aspect of the Stalinist experience. What has been termed the 'new social history' of Stalinism contends that 'social groups, rather than merely being a site of regime action, are actors in their own right', an understanding that privileges the inter-mutuality of state

and society.[2] It is argued that the grand vision of the Stalinist utopia, or at least important aspects of it such as the 'new person' project, engaged and energised the everyday activities of numerous citizens, particularly the youth, and forged inclusive practices and social bonds.[3] In this conception, 20th-century 'mass dictatorship' was the product not so much of an independent, essentially external, state, but of the interplay and negotiations between regime and society. In the controversial formulation of one expert it was a system that, in 'appropriating modern statecraft and egalitarian ideology . . . frequently secured voluntary mass participation and support [whereby] "dictatorship from above" transforms itself into "dictatorship from below".'[4] Certainly, these are open-ended and deeply contested issues and I will tackle some of them below, but a consensus has emerged based on a more nuanced and subtle theoretical grasp of the production of Stalinist power and the multifaceted inter-relationship between state and society.

This recognition of a differentiated society from below affecting a less than ubiquitous state is clearly demonstrated in the work of many leading scholars. Indeed, at one level what Lewis Siegelbaum has called a 'polyphony of voices' appears to characterise Soviet society as people from varying backgrounds and contexts struggled to conform to, accommodate, adapt, circumvent, or resist Stalinist practices and values.[5] Indeed, a recent survey of popular opinion under Stalinism reiterates the need to conceive of the Soviet subject 'not as autonomous and monolithic, but rather as multidimensional', harbouring 'multiple, overlapping and conflicting opinions at the same time.'[6] The undoubted dictatorial tendencies of Stalinism should not dull our sensitivity to the heterogeneity of the USSR in geographic, class, gender, generational, ethnic, religious, or even ideological terms. It seems clear, then, that diverse strata of Soviet society held contrasting experiences of, and attitudes towards, the 'Great Leader' and the state order. Upwardly mobile worker-promotees, 'de-kulakised' peasants, self-satisfied bureaucrats, silenced intellectuals, privileged Stakhanovites, starving Gulag internees, enthusiastic Komsomols, and repressed ethnic minorities – all endured, survived, and helped to fashion Stalinism in numerous ways, not all of them negative.

These findings do not mean, however, that the common designation 'dictatorship' is inapplicable. Few experts, if any, would under-estimate the coercive powers of the Stalinist state or its fundamentally anti-democratic and anti-pluralist essence, though even here the picture is more complicated than is normally assumed. The evidence for a dictatorship is compelling. Stalin himself by the mid-to-late 1930s was a dictator, whose word was gospel and whose propensity for state-sponsored repression was all too apparent, albeit tempered according to circumstance.[7] Furthermore, the Soviet political system was free of many of the constitutional and social checks and balances that limit the prerogatives of the executive in liberal

systems: 'parliament' was not democratically elected on a multi-party basis and was basically a rubber-stamp institution; the judiciary and courts were not independent of the political leadership and the concept of the rule of law had shaky foundations in Bolshevik theory; the press and other means of mass communication were strictly censored and alternative sources of information were formally banned; and there were no autonomous legalised non-party 'pressure groups' in Soviet society that could seek to influence government policy. In short, there was no legally enshrined pluralistic 'civil society' in the USSR in which power was negotiated between a legitimised central authority and a consenting social polity, and in which civil liberties were guaranteed in practice, not just in theory. In addition, the Communist Party itself was far from a 'normal' political organisation. It was highly secretive, disciplined, conspiratorial and hierarchical. The Leninist canon of 'democratic centralism', fiercely applied under Stalin, was designed to ensure that no 'factions' could appear in the party to contest the policies and decrees of the leadership. Bolshevik political culture was, therefore, in many ways authoritarian, and even dictatorial.

However, if we begin to delve below the surface of Stalinist governance the picture becomes more opaque and contradictory. At the administrative level, there was an in-built tension in the Stalinist system between an increasingly hyper-centralised and ultimately personalised form of decision-making and a highly complex, multi-layered, and arguably ramshackle decision-implementation process whereby decrees from the centre might or might not be carried out on the ground by over-worked and often ill-trained and ill-educated local functionaries. Stalin was perfectly aware of this dissonance. In September 1930 he coined a barely translatable phrase that typified his less-than-subtle methods of personnel management: 'inspecting and checking up by punching people in the face' (*proverochno-mordoboinaia rabota*).[8] Again, in June 1937 Stalin grumbled:

> It's thought that the centre must know and see everything. No, the centre doesn't see everything; it's not like that at all. The centre sees only a part and the rest is seen in the localities. It sends people, but doesn't know these people 100 per cent and you must check up on them.[9]

These essential ambivalences at the heart of Soviet state and society are encapsulated in recent historiographical debates. My brief summary here of the polemics does not do justice to the subtleties of the protagonists' arguments, but put simply, one 'camp' of scholars, influenced by Foucauldian theories, have concluded that many Soviet citizens internalised the values and goals of the Stalinist project, or at least learned to 'speak Bolshevik', in Stephen Kotkin's memorable aphorism. According to this striking formulation, Stalinism's strength rested not only on coercion and propaganda, but also on its productive ability to articulate and create social identities in line

with the broad socialist agenda.[10] Moving a conceptual step beyond Kotkin, Jochen Hellbeck's analysis of private diaries offers what he calls 'a glimpse into the domain of Thinking Soviet', whereby Stalinist subjects made sense of their existence by cultivating a genuine Soviet mentality based on the emancipatory and self-actualising effects of the Bolshevik Revolution. This in turn reinforced what Hellbeck terms the 'joint operation of the individual and state order in modes of participation and mobilization'.[11] Indeed, in general he implies that Soviet citizens were participants in, rather than victims of, Stalinism and tends to under-estimate those diaries that indicate a more negative assessment of life under Stalin.[12]

While not eschewing such regime-affirming evidence, a second cohort of historians associated with Lynne Viola has identified various forms of broadly defined 'resistance' among the Soviet people including infrequent intentional acts of political dissent and rebellion, everyday social and economic disobedience, and even strategies of survival such as *blat* ('pull').[13] These resistances, as Viola prefers to call them, should not be exaggerated, and the regime was rarely seriously threatened by active large-scale opposition aside from localised mass peasant revolts against collectivisation. Nevertheless, the existence of resistant behaviours, both in the sense of *Widerstand* ('active rejection') and *Resistenz* ('immunity'), ranging from bandit gangs and workers' strikes to gender dissent and the black market, or even the ubiquitous political jokes, bawdy popular rhymes (*chastushki*), and rumours demonstrates that many Soviet citizens refused to comply fully with the rules of the game and were able to 'work the system' to their 'minimum disadvantage.'[14] Some, mainly industrial workers at times of socio-economic crisis, were even prepared to challenge the Stalinists' right to interpret 'Soviet power' and the meaning of the October Revolution.[15] Viola concludes persuasively that 'resistance was only one part of a wide continuum of societal responses to Stalinism that included accommodation, adaptation, acquiescence, apathy, internal emigration, opportunism, and positive support': attitudes that could change over time often within the same individual.[16]

Similar analyses have begun to question two cornerstones of the conventional understanding of the Stalinist polity: first, the ability of the regime to crush civil society effectively; and second, the concept of a 'monolithic' state and the related idea of a clear division between 'us' – the 'good people' – and 'them' – the 'evil state'. In contrast to those overtly totalitarian voices that insist civil society was completely destroyed under the Stalinist yoke, T. H. Rigby has convincingly shown that 'vestigial elements' of civil society survived 'even in the darkest days of Stalinism'. He identifies a three-part typology: 'overt active elements', 'overt symbolic but inactive elements', and 'covert active elements'. The first type included a limited market in labour, restricted retail marketing in household consumption, family plots in the farm sector and inter-personal relations (marriage, divorce, and transfer of

property) determined by mutual agreement and civil law. The second type was based on 'a notion of the voluntary association as a social form alternative to state organisations' and in particular on a residual understanding of democracy, albeit grossly distorted under Stalin. Communists of the older generation could remember that 'democracy had originally formed a genuine element in the Bolshevik tradition' in the Leninist party, the Soviets, and in other grassroots organisations. The final surviving remnant of civil society, according to Rigby, lay in the 'complex set of informal relationships, processes and norms which supplant the formal ones': the shadow economy, clientelist groupings and networks, and the 'covert vestigial market in ideas' which embraced 'all forms of cultural expression' and 'was never totally suppressed.'[17]

As for the presumed uniform nature of the Stalinist state, Viola has provided several important qualifiers. She maintains that the 'state' was multi-layered and 'more complex than the traditional state-society binary would suggest; it was neither monolithic nor external and alien to "society" '. At times, society 'collaborated' with one part of the state against another, siding with the centre against over-zealous local officials as in the case of the peasantry after Stalin's 'Dizzy with Success' article in March 1930; or conversely forming tacit alliances with local bureaucrats against unpopular central policies such as unrealistically high grain procurements in the famine years of the early 1930s.[18] So, as Sheila Fitzpatrick asks, where does the boundary lie between 'us' and 'them' in a system where many minor officials in the rural areas were poverty-stricken, whose social background and status were not far removed from the local inhabitants, and who had to mediate the centre's directives to suit local conditions and demands?[19]

The state was also not monolithic in the sense that it was not uncommon for regional officials, enterprise managers, and professionals to engage in dysfunctional behaviour, or more accurately, 'strategies of self-protection'. James Harris, the foremost authority on these matters, reminds us that in the main these actors were loyal Stalinists and members of the establishment, and therefore only with great difficulty can their activities be described as 'resistance'. Nevertheless, in order to evade the pressures of the Five-Year Plans and the under-fulfilment of the plan, local officials sought to divert the attention of the centre and mask the low levels of production by devising practices such as the outright falsification of figures, self-protection networks, and the scapegoating of local oppositionists and other 'enemies of the people'.[20] The significance of these evasion tactics is that Stalin could never be sure that his subordinates were obediently carrying out central decrees. The sprawling party-state apparatus was thus hardly the smoothly functioning monolith depicted by the 'totalitarian' theorists of the 1950s and 60s. Indeed, in the early 1930s a series of anti-Stalinist 'oppositions' was discovered and Stalin would not forget such gross violations of democratic centralism.

The Terror: 'From Above' or 'From Below'?

This brings me to the Great Terror. We know far more now about this gruesome episode than we did just a couple of decades ago, although major lacunae still exist. In broad terms, there can be no doubt that political and secret police leaders, primarily Stalin himself, initiated and oversaw the entire process of mass arrests and executions that rocked Soviet state and society from the summer of 1937 to November 1938. Plentiful archival evidence attests to this and even most former 'revisionists' accept that Stalin was the chief motivator. An oft-quoted remarkable private speech given by Stalin in November 1937 on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution is ample testimony to his incitement to terror. The 'Great Leader' said: 'Anyone who attacks the unity of the socialist state, either in deed or in thought, yes, even in thought, will be mercilessly crushed'. And he concluded with this chilling toast: 'To the final destruction of all enemies . . . !'[21] In this sense, the label 'terror from below' is something of a misnomer. Mass repression was in many ways carefully orchestrated 'from above'. But as J. Arch Getty and Roberta Manning noted in the early 1990s: 'although Stalin lit the match, the cataclysm also required dry tinder and favorable winds to become what it did'.[22]

The main innovation in recent research is that rather than being a unitary phenomenon possessing a single overriding aim, the Terror is now seen as a multifaceted process composed of separate but closely related political, social, and 'national' (or ethnic) dimensions. The origins and goals of these three dimensions were differentiated, but coalesced in the horrific mass arrests and executions of 1937–38. The political aspects of the Terror, such as Stalin's precise role in planning the repressions and the three Moscow Show Trials, and the impact of key events like Kirov's assassination and the purges in the Red Army continue to raise fervent debate, but are well-trodden themes.[23] Hence, I'll discuss here the social and 'national' components of the Terror, about which little was known until relatively recently.

As far as the social dimension is concerned, Paul Hagenloh and David Shearer have documented the relationship between social disorder and the evolving secret police strategies to contain it in the early-to-mid 1930s, on the one hand, and the onset of mass arrests in the summer of 1937 on the other. Hagenloh regards the Great Terror as 'the culmination of a decade-long radicalization of policing practice against "recidivist" criminals, social marginals, and all manner of lower-class individuals who did not or could not fit into the emerging Stalinist system.'[24] Shearer maintains that the threat of social instability posed by these criminals, hooligans, other 'socially harmful elements', and even armed bandit gangs in areas like western Siberia, was taken extremely seriously by secret police chiefs. By 1937 the lethal triumvirate of social disorder, political opposition, and national contamination had raised fears among the increasingly xenophobic party and

police elites about a broadly based anti-Soviet 'fifth column', linked to ever-present foreign agents and spies. According to Shearer, in response Stalinist leaders launched the massive purge of Soviet society in order to destroy what they perceived to be an existential threat: a social base of support for the armed overthrow of the Soviet government. He concludes that mass repression under Stalin was not solely a means of combating the state's enemies; it became a 'constitutive part of Soviet state policy'.[25]

The now infamous NKVD Operational Order No. 00447 ratified by the Politburo on 30 July 1937 and dubbed 'one of the most chilling documents in modern history'[26] launched the mass operations against 'former kulaks, criminals, and other anti-Soviet elements'.[27] It has been calculated that under the terms of this order, which remained in force until November 1938, between 767,000 and 800,000 people were convicted.[28] The directive cold-bloodedly listed by region of the USSR the number of executions (category no. 1–75,950) and eight to ten year sentences in the Gulag (category no. 2–193,000) that were to be carried out.[29] In reality, these figures were massively over-fulfilled, the Politburo regularly acceding to the requests of local NKVD leaders to extend the arrest quotas, itself an intriguing, though ambiguous, component of 'terror from below'. Thus, one of the most interesting conclusions of the new research is that, contrary to received wisdom about the elite nature of the victims of the Great Terror, the bulk of those repressed were, in strictly numerical terms, 'ordinary' non-communist citizens – former 'kulaks', blue-collar workers, and various 'social marginals' including recidivist criminals, ex-convicts, exiles, fugitives, sectarians, the homeless, and the unemployed – all those who deviated from the social norms of the emerging Stalinist 'utopia'.[30] In this connection, Amir Weiner has detected the prevalence of 'biological-hygienic' terminology – 'vermin', 'pollution', and 'filth' – in Stalinist discourse of the 1930s and 40s in its emphasis on purifying Soviet society by removing 'unfit human weeds'.[31] To this extent, the Terror has been seen in part as an exercise in 'social cleansing' undertaken on a truly mass scale with the aim of forging the 'new Soviet person'.

Another characteristic of Stalinist terror that has only recently been explored in any detail is the 'national', or ethnic, component. Beginning in the summer of 1937 the secret police launched 'national sweeps' of specific categories of foreigners and Soviet citizens of foreign extraction. Central and East Europeans were particularly badly hit, but many non-Europeans were also targeted: Chinese, Afghans, and Iranians. Notably, in the autumn of 1937 ethnic Koreans were deported en masse from their homelands in the Far East to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, where they suffered terrible hardships.[32] The most deadly national sweep was the 'Polish Operation' ratified by the Politburo on 7 August 1937, which resulted in the arrest of around 140,000 people, a staggering 111,000 of whom were shot.[33] In an atmosphere of looming war threats, similar campaigns were directed against Germans,

Finns, Balts, and many others who were perceived to be real or potential 'spies' of hostile states and agents of foreign anti-Soviet intelligence services.[34] Hence, the regime's fear of a potential 'fifth column' in the event of war goes a long way in helping to comprehend the seeming arbitrariness of these mass repressions. Likewise, a substantial number of victims were members of foreign communist parties affiliated with the Comintern in Moscow, the central apparatus of which was virtually decimated by the purges.[35] Such was the scale of the 'national operations' that, from about February 1938, they became the prime function of NKVD activity, more pervasive than the campaigns associated with Order 00447.

I would now like to return to the contentious notion of 'terror from below'. What does it mean? Some historians have interpreted this methodology in terms of a 'microcosm', examining in detail the impact of mass repression on local communities or at the regional level.[36] A related and influential recent trend in this direction is the attempt to unravel the fates and life stories of individual victims of the Terror. Above all, these 'victim studies' bring home the tragic personal sufferings, ruination of family life, and trampling on human dignity that ultimately came to define for many millions of Soviet citizens those two dreaded words: 'Stalinist terror'.[37] Likewise concentrating on the 'microscopic' aspect of the Terror, Cynthia Hooper has explored the fascinating topic of repression at the intimate level of the family, depicting the Terror as a not altogether successful attempt to eliminate 'bourgeois' values and kinship ties that were perceived as undermining socialist loyalties.[38]

Other scholars have delved into the complexities and confusions of everyday terror and denunciation in the factories and trade unions, arriving at controversial conclusions about the populist 'democracy' that epitomised the party's efforts to mobilise the workers and overturn bureaucratic ossification. This approach is exemplified by Wendy Z. Goldman, who has argued that the 'Terror was not simply a targeted surgical strike "from above" aimed at the excision of oppositionists and perceived enemies, but a mass, political panic that profoundly reshaped relationships in every institution and workplace.'[39] Citing numerous examples of rank-and-file party member and worker attacks on 'wrecker' enterprise directors and 'double-dealing' party organisers, Goldman elucidates the daily mechanics of terror and the sometimes unwitting collaboration of victims and victimisers in the headlong rush to destruction and self-destruction. One example will suffice to show the input 'from below' in the unremitting terror process. In 1937 at the national congress of the Union of Nonferrous Metal Miners, a tongue-tied worker, Shadabudinov, got up to speak. He told of 'a lot of wrecking' in his pit in 1936, 16 miners had died, and many more had been blinded and crippled, but the enterprise director and secretary of the party committee, with his 'fine fur coat', were totally corrupt and unresponsive to Shadabudinov's many written complaints. So, he collated all his letters and sent them off

to Ezhov. 'Five days ago, the Party Control Commission demanded to see the director and the secretary of the party committee' and an investigation of the two men ensued. Goldman maintains that by 1938 this 'democratization of repression' engendered 'a war of each against all . . . [l]ike a snake swallowing its tail'. She concludes:

> . . . [A]rguably, every citizen was part of a pattern of interlocking circles that overlaid the entire country. Forged from the cataclysmic events of the past two decades, the circles linked managers to working-class relatives, workers to former 'oppositionists,' oppositionists to peasant relatives, peasants to 'kulaks,' and 'kulak' fathers back to manager sons.[40]

In this context, I would like to concentrate on the social preconditions that underlay, and were conducive to, mass repression and persecution. If we look at the Terror from a longer perspective, we can see the devastating and recurring impact of war and revolution on the fabric of Russian and Soviet society. In the space of a mere 15 years – from 1905 to 1920 – that spanned the revolutionary divide, the country experienced three wars of catastrophic proportions: the Russo-Japanese War, the Great War, and the vicious Civil War. In addition, these wars were accompanied by three searing revolutionary upheavals: the 1905–07 revolutions, the February and October Revolutions of 1917 and Stalin's 'revolution from above', which massively uprooted Soviet society, culture, and the economy. Indeed, the links between the 'revolution from above' and the Terror are becoming increasingly evident. The 'gigantomania' of the colossal industrialisation campaigns and forced collectivisation of Soviet agriculture from 1928–29 onwards fostered not only genuine enthusiasm among young lower-class urbanites in particular, but also intense social flux and dislocation, rising crime levels, overt peasant resistance, gross shortages of essential goods, and resultant urban tensions. Furthermore, due to the limited success of initiatives on the 'nationality question' and the contradictory pressures on the bureaucracies and other elites, which engendered insubordination, deceit, and as noted above, local and regional self-defence cliques and networks, all these outcomes of the Stalinist 'revolution from above' created conditions that were propitious for the hunt for 'enemies' and scapegoats, and for coercive policing methods against 'socially harmful elements' such as the 'passportisation' drive from early 1933.[41] In such times of accelerated turmoil, pre-existing resentments against stigmatised groups formed the backdrop to the violent exclusionary policies of the Stalinist state.[42] In sum, I would argue that the 'war-revolution model' is a more convincing elucidation of the socio-cultural background to the Terror than the notion of 'mass hysteria' or 'mass psychosis' used by many commentators.[43]

The situation in which internal and external 'enemies' could be seen almost everywhere arose in no small measure from a particularly toxic

combination: on the one hand, deep-seated social cleavages and class conflicts, ethnic animosities, religious schisms, and the utopian hopes and mortal fears generated and exacerbated by these wars and revolutionary crises; and on the other, an embedded Bolshevik ethos that emphasised intense intolerance to opposition, strict party unity, and a ready willingness to resort to state coercion.[44] A suggestive rubric put forward most recently by two experts is: 'State violence – violent societies'.[45] The state may well have identified the 'enemies', but they were also perfectly recognisable to many Soviet citizens. Mass propaganda and media campaigns no doubt played their part in deluding people into thinking 'wreckers' were omnipresent, but this propaganda often chimed with public perceptions and beliefs.

The evidence for this conclusion is as yet fragmentary, but I think compelling. For instance, popular attitudes to those designated as 'former people' (*byvshie*) – aristocrats, the clergy, ex-White Guard and Tsarist officials, entrepreneurs, traders, and kulaks – remained hostile and potentially explosive. One citizen wrote in the mid-1930s that 'I can't accept that priests should be electors or elected . . . in my opinion a priest is not a toiler but a parasite.'[46] Many workers resented the idea outlined in the 'Stalin Constitution' of 1936 that 'class aliens' should be granted voting and other rights and one bitterly noted that the child of a noble cannot be re-educated: 'Noble blood will flow in these people's veins for several more generations.'[47] Others continued to harbour pronounced anti-kulak sentiments, fearing that if kulaks were provided with statutory rights they would seek revenge against party activists involved in the de-kulakisation campaigns of the early 1930s.[48] Such anxieties, it appears, were widely shared by local and regional officials, who were not slow in alerting the Stalinist leadership to the dangers to Soviet power posed by millions of ex-kulaks, White Guardists, and other multifarious 'anti-Soviet elements' now enfranchised by the Constitution.[49] It seems, then, that social stigmatisation of the former elites continued to be a constant feature of everyday life.

Similarly, at the opposite end of the social spectrum it can be speculated that the state-sponsored attacks on recidivist criminals, prostitutes, beggars, itinerants, and all manner of 'socially harmful elements' generated more than a measure of popular support, as occurred in Nazi Germany. Earlier, during forced collectivisation and de-kulakisation 'social marginals', outsiders, and the economically frail were often targeted for repression in the villages as a resurgence of traditional victimisation took hold that pitted the strong against the weak and the mainstream against the marginal.[50] These suppositions challenge what one suspects was an unthinking assumption of many western 'orthodox' scholars about the 'liberal' nature of Soviet citizens; that is, if left to their own devices they would naturally espouse stereotypical 'western' values of universal human rights and social, religious, and ethnic tolerance. No doubt such laudable attitudes existed, but they co-mingled with populist and 'anti-liberal' sentiments, which continued to resonate into

the post-Stalinist era. For example, the partial emptying of the labour camps after 1953 apparently met with a very mixed response from many Soviet citizens who didn't necessarily rejoice that a historical injustice had been undone, but instead complained to the central authorities that crime levels had rocketed since the release of prisoners, criminals, and 'bandit-enemies' from the Gulag.[51]

Likewise, it appears that the Stalinist obsession with conspiracies, war scares, and foreign 'spies' and 'agents' fell on fertile soil and became entwined with pre-existing popular ethnic hostilities. According to Terry Martin, arguably the leading expert on Soviet nationalities policy, ethnic cleansing and mass deportations were facilitated by disputes between local Russians and minority diaspora nationalities over land, the status of immigrants, and other grievances. For example, already in 1925 conflicts over land possession between ethnic Russians and Korean immigrants in the Far East had led the former to demand 'the resettlement of Koreans into a different region'.[52] It is tempting to see a close relationship between the arrest of many Soviet Jews and relatively widespread anti-semitism as Jews were often associated in the public mind with power and corruption.[53] That said, they were also well represented at the top levels of various organisations and therefore may have been disproportionately targeted. In general, as Sarah Davies has suggested, national minorities were 'soft targets' in 1937–38 and it is possible that the regime consciously exploited ethnic conflicts as a means of scapegoating 'aliens' and gaining legitimacy.[54]

Another example of the 'mass' nature of the Terror concerns the arrest and execution of large numbers of party-state officials. Certainly, the spectacle of communists arresting and shooting other communists must have been attractive to many long-suffering Soviet citizens and, as we have seen, not a few workers were prepared, either enthusiastically or through inertia, to expose their bosses as 'wreckers' and 'double-dealers' at the often stormy factory meetings that characterised the assault on the bureaucratic and managerial elites. It would appear that these campaigns were, in part at least, 'a populist strategy designed to mobilise subordinate groups against those in positions of responsibility, thereby deflecting discontent away from the regime itself.' To this extent, 'the terror against the elites was clearly popular'.[55] However, it was a risky strategy. Official attacks on the luxurious, 'bourgeois', and often corrupt, or even degenerate, lifestyles of individual communist bureaucrats were construed as stereotypical of a whole cohort of communist cadres. There is evidence that some people came to distrust all those in power, not just the officially designated 'enemies'.[56] An important corollary to the mass arrests of officials was that levels of upward social mobility were very high in the late 1930s as many thousands of people literally stepped into dead men's shoes. Promotion, gratification, and heightened status could be very temporary, however, as the axe of state repression fell on wave after wave of the upwardly mobile.

We may also conjecture that a 'popular' response to the Terror was 'silent collusion', or even apathy. This attitude is emphasised by two famous Soviet authors, Konstantin Simonov and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. The former, looking back on the madness, wrote on his deathbed in 1979:

> The events that took place in 1937–8 now appear extraordinary, diabolical, but to you, then a young man of 22 or 24, they became a kind of norm, almost ordinary. You lived in the midst of these events, blind and deaf to everything, you saw and heard nothing when people all around you were shot and killed, when people all around you disappeared.[57]

Solzhenitsyn reminisced in similar vein:

> How could we know anything about those arrests and why should we think about them? . . . Two or three professors had been arrested, but . . . it might even be easier to pass our exams as a result. Twenty-year-olds, we marched in the ranks of those born the year the Revolution took place, and because we were the same age as the Revolution, the brightest of futures lay ahead.[58]

This seems to me to be a powerful tool in understanding how many Soviet citizens, particularly the young, must have reacted to what we call 'mass repression' and 'terror', but the regime called the 'cleansing of enemies', 'spies', and 'wreckers'. Maybe for those not directly affected by the arrests, the 'Great Terror' was a largely peripheral and mundane event, that did not seriously disturb the flow of everyday life, the battle for survival, and the hopes of the radiant future. Thus, the very 'ordinariness' of the Terror is a fruitful, though highly contentious, subject for new research.

By citing examples of popular input into the Great Purges I do not wish to suggest that they were driven or initiated 'from below'. As I made clear earlier, the Terror was unleashed and orchestrated from above by the top political and secret police elites. Nor can it be said that all Soviet people supported the mass repression. Not everyone believed the propaganda about the ubiquitous presence of 'enemies'. Many critical voices can be heard, such as the young coal miner, who in 1940 wrote to Stalin: 'In the future, we will see these horrific trials carried out, and anyone, any random person, will be prosecuted . . . . What will happen, Iosif Vissarionovich, if we prosecute 100 million people? Where will this end?'[59] Others deplored the killing of Zinoviev, Kamenev, Piatakov, Bukharin, and Rykov in the three great Show Trials, or expressed sympathy for persecuted 'former people'. One anonymous letter writer, interestingly adapting the socialist rhetoric of the regime, declared: 'Comrades! Protest against the unheard-of terror. Demand real democracy [and] freedom of speech . . . . Down with the bloody dictatorship! Long live a free USSR!' Nevertheless, on the whole, I tend to agree

with Sarah Davies's conclusion that 'much of the available material points to popular indifference to, and even approval of, the terror'.[60]

Finally, I'd like to offer a few thoughts on what is, arguably, the most controversial approach to Stalinist terror. It is associated with the broader 'cultural turn' in Soviet studies, which consciously shifts the focus away from 'high politics' and party-state hierarchies to the diverse means by which individual Soviet citizens internalised and rationalised the values, mentalities, and goals of the dominant Stalinist ideology, including mass repression. Scholars such as Oleg Kharkhordin, Igal Halfin, and Hellbeck have inferred that the sources of the Terror should be located as much in the psyche of ordinary people as in the conscious aims of the Stalinist elites.[61] In his book on the purges of communists, Halfin has proposed that by identifying with the official party discourse, many individuals 'engaged in Communist "self-fashioning", turning the messianic aspirations of the state into their own intimate affair'. Standing much existing historiography on its head, Halfin boldly claims that the Great Purge of communists had unintended consequences and did not represent 'an unprecedented breakdown of all moral behavior', but rather 'rested on an ethical system . . . within which grand-scale violence could make moral sense' as a quest 'to bring humanity to moral perfection'. The disconcerting conclusion is that 'less a state policy than a state of mind . . . [p]arty terror was the result of a never-ending interrogation of the self',[62] tantamount to 'self-policing' and virtual 'self-purging'. What is more, the implication is that these practices and mentalities, although certainly not occurring in isolation, remained essentially 'outside the heights of command, resonating with, but only in rather mediated ways "connected to", party-state policies and politics'.[63]

This view goes a long way in exonerating Stalin and his henchmen for the homicide of 1937–38 by arguing that all communists, from the highest to the lowest, participated to varying degrees in the violent purging of their own ranks. Their complicity came in the form of internalising the all-pervasive party discourse and moral logic on the existence of ever-present 'enemies of the people'. This represented what has been called the 'self-destruction of the Bolsheviks'.[64] This disturbing notion undoubtedly helps us comprehend the mindset of millions of communists and is a salient reminder that the Terror had multiple causes, affected individuals in different ways, and was perpetuated by various means; and hence, it cannot be reduced to the evil machinations of one man alone. However, as Cynthia Hooper has suggested, although much evidence does indeed point to the mass participatory aspect of the Terror and 'individual acceptance' of the need to 'cleanse' the private and public spheres, 'the effects of this acceptance were hardly as uniform' as the 'Halfin-Hellbeck model' (if we may call it that) depicts. In reality, 'many communists' experienced 'tensions and doubts that they had never vocalized before'. There was, according to Hooper, 'tremendous variety' in popular responses and deep 'fragmentation

inside the Soviet state and its control apparatus',[65] which, to my mind, tends to undercut the assumption of ubiquitous 'willing self-mobilisation' behind state initiatives. In addition, can we be sure that all Central Committee members meekly consented to the mass arrests? The case of Osip Piatnitskii appears to cast doubt on this hypothesis,[66] as does the reported recalcitrance of such eminent Stalinists as 'Sergo' Ordzhonikidze, who almost certainly committed suicide after a blazing row with Stalin in February 1937 over the purging of subordinates in the Ministry of Heavy Industry.[67]

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, I will briefly summarise my main points. First, archival findings, the new 'cultural turn', and recent work on 'the everyday' have highlighted the diversity, complexity, and ambivalence of Soviet society and its mutual inter-dependent relationship with the Stalinist state. Second, what I have called the 'war-revolution model' contributes to our understanding of the social preconditions of mass repression and helps to explain the longer-term antagonisms that spanned the revolutionary divide of 1917. Finally, although the Great Terror was undoubtedly directed from the centre, notably by Stalin himself, many of the targets and victims were recognisable to Soviet citizens, not a few of whom harboured broadly 'anti-liberal' sentiments. This, in turn, may have helped to legitimise the main thrust of the Terror, focused as it was on unpopular communist elites, despised 'social marginals', and 'alien' ethnic minorities.

Notes

1. This is an up-dated and expanded version of my article, 'Stalinism "From Below"?: Social Preconditions of and Popular Responses to the Great Terror', *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* Vol. 8/3–4 (September–December 2007), 609–22, available online at http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14690760701571239.
2. M. Geyer with assistance from S. Fitzpatrick, 'Introduction: After Totalitarianism – Stalinism and Nazism Compared', in M. Geyer and S. Fitzpatrick (eds), *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 34–5.
3. S. Fitzpatrick and A. Lüdtke, 'Energizing the Everyday: On the Breaking and Making of Social Bonds in Nazism and Stalinism', in Geyer and Fitzpatrick (eds), *Beyond Totalitarianism*, pp. 266–301.
4. J-H. Lim, 'Mapping Mass Dictatorship: Towards a Transnational History of Twentieth-Century Dictatorship', in J-H. Lim and K. Petrone (eds), *Gender Politics and Mass Dictatorship: Global Perspectives* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010), p. 3.
5. L. Siegelbaum and A. Sokolov, *Stalinism as a Way of Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 6.
6. J. Plamper, 'Beyond Binaries: Popular Opinion in Stalinism', P. Corner (ed.), *Popular Opinion in Totalitarian Regimes: Fascism, Nazism, Communism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 64–80, quotes at pp. 64 and 75.

7. The foremost Russian expert, Oleg Khlevniuk, is closely associated with this view.
8. L. T. Lih, O. V. Naumov, and O. V. Khlevniuk (eds), *Stalin's Letters to Molotov, 1925–1936* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 210.
9. Cited in 'Nevol'niki v rukakh germanskogo reikhsvera: Rech' I. V. Stalina v Narkomate oborony', *Istochnik*, No. 3 (1994), 79.
10. S. Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 198–237. This 'camp' is sometimes referred to as the 'Columbia School' of Foucauldian-influenced scholars around Kotkin to which is counterposed the 'Chicago School' around Sheila Fitzpatrick. For details, see Plamper, 'Beyond Binaries', pp. 68–9.
11. J. Hellbeck, 'Speaking Out: Languages of Affirmation and Dissent in Stalinist Russia', *Kritika*, Vol. 1/1 (Winter 2000), 71–96, quotes at 85 and 92. For a more detailed account, see J. Hellbeck, *Revolution on my Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin* (Cambridge, MA:, 2006). Also B. Studer, B. Unfried, and I. Herrmann (eds), *Parler de soi sous Staline: La construction identitaire dans le communisme des années trente* (Paris: Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2002). For a contrary interpretation, see D. M. Vyleta, 'City of the Devil: Bulgakovian Moscow and the Search for the Stalinist Subject', *Rethinking History*, Vol. 4/1 (January 2000), 37–53.
12. See, for example, N. Lugovskaya, *The Diary of a Soviet Schoolgirl, 1932–1937* (Moscow: Glas Publishers, 2003).
13. L. Viola, 'Popular Resistance in the Stalinist 1930s', in L. Viola (ed.), *Contending with Stalinism: Soviet Power and Popular Resistance in the 1930s* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp. 18–26.
14. The final phrase in the sentence is from Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*, p. 237, who in turn has adapted it from Eric Hobsbawm, 'Peasants and Politics', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 1/1 (January 1973), 13.
15. See J. J. Rossman, *Worker Resistance under Stalin: Class and Revolution on the Shop Floor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 6–17 and 231–6.
16. L. Viola, 'Introduction', in Viola (ed.), *Contending with Stalinism*, p. 1.
17. T. H. Rigby, 'Mono-organisational Socialism and the Civil Society', in C. Kukathas, D. W. Lovell, and W. Maley (eds), *The Transition from Socialism: State and Civil Society in Gorbachev's USSR* (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1991), pp. 107–22, quotes at pp. 112–14. For a crass rendition of the totalitarian view – 'By the mid-1930s, Stalin's regime had gained control over individual thought' – see V. Shlapentokh, 'The Destruction of Civil Society in Russia (1917–1953)' in the same volume, pp. 82–106, quote at p. 99.
18. Viola, 'Introduction', in Viola (ed.), *Contending with Stalinism*, pp. 9–11, quote at p. 9.
19. S. Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 191.
20. J. Harris, 'Resisting the Plan in the Urals, 1928–1956. Or, Why Regional Officials Needed "Wreckers" and "Saboteurs"', in Viola (ed.), *Contending with Stalinism*, p. 202, fn. 3.
21. A. G. Latyshev, 'Riadom so Stalinym', *Sovershenno sekretno*, No. 12 (1990), 19.
22. J. A. Getty and R. T. Manning (eds), *Stalinist Terror: New Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 15.
23. Stalin's central role in the policy of mass repression is clearly demonstrated in two important documentary collections: V. N. Khaustov, N. P. Naumov, and N. S. Plotnikova (eds), *Lubianka. Stalin i VChK-GPU-OGPU-NKVD, ianvar' 1922-dekabr'*

1936 (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond 'Demokratiia', 2003) and V. N. Khaustov, V. P. Naumov, and N. S. Plotnikova (eds), *Lubianka. Stalin i glavnoe upravlenie gosbezopasnosti NKVD 1937–1938* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond 'Demokratiia', 2004). The most compelling and well documented volume on Kirov's assassination is M. E. Lenoe, *The Kirov Murder and Soviet History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

24. P. M. Hagenloh, '"Socially Harmful Elements" and the Great Terror', in S. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Stalinism: New Directions* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 286–7.
25. D. Shearer, 'Social Disorder, Mass Repression, and the NKVD during the 1930s', in B. McLoughlin and K. McDermott (eds), *Stalin's Terror: High Politics and Mass Repression in the Soviet Union* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003), pp. 85–117. See also D. R. Shearer, *Policing Stalin's Socialism: Repression and Social Order in the Soviet Union, 1924–1953* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).
26. J. A. Getty and O. V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932–1939* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 471. A slightly abbreviated English translation of the Order can be found here on pp. 473–80.
27. A massively detailed work is M. Iunge (Junge), G. Bordiugov and R. Binner, *Vertikal' bol'shogo terrora. Istoriia operatsii po prikazu NKVD No. 00447* (Moscow: Novyi khronograf, 2008).
28. M. Iunge (Junge) and R. Binner, *Kak terror stal 'bol'shim'. Sekretnyi prikaz no. 00447 i tekhnologiia ego ispolneniia* (Moscow: AIRO-XX, 2003), p. 136.
29. These figures are taken from Iunge and Binner, *Kak terror stal 'bol'shim'*, p. 136. J. Arch Getty gives a total of 194,000 Gulag sentences. See his '"Excesses are not permitted": Mass Terror and Stalinist Governance in the late 1930s', *Russian Review*, Vol. 61/1 (January 2002), 117.
30. See B. McLoughlin, 'Mass Operations of the NKVD, 1937–8', in McLoughlin and McDermott (eds), *Stalin's Terror*, pp. 118–152.
31. A. Weiner, 'Nature and Nurture in a Socialist Utopia: Delineating the Soviet Socio-Ethnic Body in the Age of Socialism', in D. L. Hoffmann (ed.), *Stalinism: The Essential Readings* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 243–74.
32. For details, see M. Gelb, 'An Early Soviet Ethnic Deportation: The Far-Eastern Koreans', *Russian Review*, Vol. 54/3 (July 1995), 389–412.
33. N. Petrov and A. Roginskii, 'The "Polish Operation" of the NKVD, 1937–8', in McLoughlin and McDermott (eds), *Stalin's Terror*, pp. 153–72.
34. On the important issue of Stalin's 'spymania', see J. Harris, 'Encircled by Enemies: Stalin's Perception of the Capitalist World, 1918–1941', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 30/3 (June 2007), 513–45.
35. For details on the purges in the Comintern, see A. Iu. Vatlin, *Komintern: idei, resheniia, sud'by* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2009), pp. 333–72; M. Panteleev, *Agenty Kominterna: Soldaty mirovoi revoliutsii* (Moscow: Iauza, 2005), pp. 275–93; W. J. Chase, *Enemies within the Gates?: The Comintern and the Stalinist Repression, 1934–1939* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); and K. McDermott and J. Agnew, *The Comintern: A History of International Communism from Lenin to Stalin* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 142–57.
36. See A. Iu. Vatlin, *Terror raionnogo masshtaba: 'Massovye operatsii' NKVD v Kuntsevskom raione moskovskoi oblasti 1937–1938 gg* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2004); Oleg Hlevnjuk, 'Les mécanismes de la "Grande Terreur" des années 1937–1938 au Turkménistan', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, Vol. 39/1–2 (January–June 1998), 197–207; M. Ilič, 'The Great Terror in Leningrad: A Quantitative Analysis', in *Europe-Asia*

Studies, Vol. 52/8 (December 2000), 1515–34; M. Ilič and C. Joyce, 'Remembering the Victims of Political Repression: The Purges in Mordoviya', and C. Joyce, 'Recycled Victims: The Great Terror in the Komi ASSR', both in M. Ilič (ed.), *Stalin's Terror Revisited* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006), pp. 163–90 and pp. 191–220 respectively. See also the unpublished manuscript by Rolf Binner and Marc Junge, 'The Great Terror at the Local Level: The Role of the Soviet Agricultural Councils (*sel'sovety*) in the Mass Repression of 1937–1938' [cited with permission of the authors].

37. German and Austrian scholars led the way in this approach. For details, see B. McLoughlin and K. McDermott, 'Rethinking Stalinist Terror', in McLoughlin and McDermott (eds), *Stalin's Terror*, pp. 3–4. For recent Anglo-American work in this vein, see W. Z. Goldman, *Inventing the Enemy: Denunciation and Terror in Stalin's Russia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); H. Kuromiya, *The Voices of the Dead: Stalin's Great Terror in the 1930s* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); and O. Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia* (London: Penguin, 2007).
38. C. Hooper, 'Terror of Intimacy: Family Politics in the 1930s Soviet Union', in C. Kiaer and E. Naiman (eds), *Everyday Life in Early Soviet Russia: Taking the Revolution Inside* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), pp. 61–91.
39. W. Z. Goldman, *Terror and Democracy in the Age of Stalin: The Social Dynamics of Repression* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 8.
40. Goldman, *Terror and Democracy*, pp. 11–12, 221, 230–9, 240.
41. See D. Shearer, 'Elements Near and Alien: Passportization, Policing, and Identity in the Stalinist State, 1932–1952', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 76/4 (December 2004), 835–81; and P. Hagenloh, *Stalin's Police: Public Order and Mass Repression in the USSR, 1926–1941* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), pp. 89–146.
42. See Fitzpatrick and Lüdtke, 'Energizing the Everyday', in Geyer and Fitzpatrick (eds), *Beyond Totalitarianism*, pp. 275–6.
43. The 'war-revolution model' is discussed in greater detail in my volume *Stalin: Revolutionary in an Era of War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006).
44. On the coercive propensities of the Bolsheviks evident since the October Revolution, see P. Holquist, 'State Violence as Technique: The Logic of Violence in Soviet Totalitarianism', in A. Weiner (ed.), *Landscaping the Human Garden: Twentieth-Century Population Management in a Comparative Framework* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), pp. 19–45.
45. C. Gerlach and N. Werth, 'State Violence – Violent Societies', in Geyer and Fitzpatrick (eds), *Beyond Totalitarianism*, pp. 133–79.
46. Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, p. 131.
47. S. Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda and Dissent, 1934–1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 70.
48. Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, p. 179.
49. For this interpretation, see Getty and Naumov, *The Road to Terror*, pp. 468–9.
50. L. Viola, 'The Second Coming: Class Enemies in the Soviet Countryside, 1927–1935', in Getty and Manning (eds), *Stalinist Terror*, pp. 65–98.
51. M. Dobson, ' "Show the Bandit-Enemies No Mercy!": Amnesty, Criminality and Public Response in 1953', in P. Jones (ed.), *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 21–40, esp. pp. 23 and 29–32. Also M. Dobson, *Khrushchev's Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform After Stalin* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009).

52. T. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 311–43, quote at p. 317.
53. Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia*, pp. 85–8; Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, pp. 186–7.
54. Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia*, p. 83.
55. Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia*, pp. 113 and 131. There is recent archival evidence that such 'anti-Soviet' sentiment continued to exist well into the post-Stalinist era. See V. A. Kozlov, S. Fitzpatrick and S. V. Mironenko (eds), *Sedition: Everyday Resistance in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev and Brezhnev* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).
56. Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia*, p. 126. On sexual 'degeneration' among local bureaucrats, see L. E. Holmes, 'A Symbiosis of Errors: The Personal, Professional, and Political in the Kirov Region, 1931–1941', in L. H. Siegelbaum (ed.), *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia* (New York: Palgrave, 2006), pp. 217–25.
57. Simonov, cited in Figes, *The Whisperers*, pp. 266–7 (my emphasis).
58. Solzhenitsyn, cited in Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, p. 212.
59. Goldman, *Terror and Democracy*, p. 261. Stalin did not reply, but ominously the young miner's district party committee began to collect evidence against him.
60. Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia*, pp. 120–3.
61. O. Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); I. Halfin, *Terror in my Soul: Communist Autobiographies on Trial* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); I. Halfin, *Stalinist Confessions: Messianism and Terror at the Leningrad Communist University* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009).
62. Halfin, *Terror in my Soul*, pp. 1–6.
63. Private communication from Alf Lüdtke, 25 May 2011.
64. To the best of my knowledge, this term was first coined by Getty and Naumov in *The Road to Terror*.
65. Hooper, 'Terror of Intimacy', pp. 76 and 78.
66. Piatnitskii was a former top-ranking Comintern official, who, it is reported, obstinately refused to countenance the arrest of communists at the June 1937 Central Committee plenum. He was detained almost immediately thereafter, subsequently tried *in camera* and shot in late July 1938. For details, see his son's (controversial) account, V. I. Piatnitskii, *Zagovor protiv Stalina* (Moscow: Sovremennik, 1998) and B. A. Starkov, 'The Trial That Was Not Held', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 46/8 (December 1994), 1297–1315.
67. See O. V. Khlevniuk, *In Stalin's Shadow: The Career of 'Sergo' Ordzhonikidze* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1995).

7

The Politics of National Language and Wartime Mobilisation of Everyday Life in Late Colonial Korea, 1937–1945

Kyu Hyun Kim

This chapter explores the imposition of the Japanese language as 'national language' (*kokugo*) on colonised Koreans following the implementation of a total mobilisation program by the Japanese empire in 1937. The extensive enforcement of the use of the Japanese as the national language in Korea is often seen in mainstream Korean historiography as one of the characteristics of 'ethnocidal policies' (*minjok malsal chŏngch'aek*) denoting the radical assimilation of Koreans into Japanese culture, and a coerced erasure of Korean ethnic identity. However, such a clear-cut narrative of Japanese oppression and Korean resistance (or capitulation) excludes a large array of 'grey area' conditions, circumstances and practices that do not neatly fall into such moralistically constructed categories.[1]

In my larger project exploring the wartime total mobilisation policies (also known as *kōminka* or 'imperial subjectification' policies) implemented in late 1930s and early 1940s colonial Korea, I have noted that these policies attempted to radically break down the distinction between public and private spheres and allow the state to engulf the spaces where civil society and family could maintain their independence. There is still no real consensus among scholars who have investigated the 'colonial public sphere' and 'colonial publicness (*singminji konggongsŏng*[*gwŏn*], or *shokuminchi kokyōsei*[*ken*])' regarding whether they existed at all, or if they did, what kind of form and substance they assumed. Jun Uchida and Namiki Masahito, among others, have persuasively shown that there were indeed mediating spaces, or in other words, '[a] colonial public sphere, between the colonial state – the Government-General and its bureaucratic governing structure – and the constituents of "civil society," in which they could meet in criticisms, contestations and compromises.'[2] Uchida demonstrates the formation and

growth of the colonial public sphere that cut through ethnic and class divisions by means of an analysis of the movement (1931–32) to reduce electricity bills by turning over Seoul's electricity supply to a public company and dismantling Keijo Electric's monopoly. This movement was led by the local bourgeoisie, which included both Koreans and Japanese, many of whom were also elected members of the city and county councils.[3] While it wasn't nearly as widespread and politically potent as the democratic movement in either the Japanese metropole or postwar independent Korea, this movement and other similar activities in the name of 'public interest' allowed a measure of critical discourse to emerge in the public sphere.

As Yun Hae-dong points out, it is important to remember that the hegemonic power of the colonial state was undergirded by the corollary development of numerous private spheres including the modern (nuclear) family unit as well as domains of individual subjectivity.[4] These private domains, while not exactly serving as autonomous spaces in which democratic or liberal impulses could be generated and nurtured, nonetheless allowed many Koreans (and Japanese) to use them as resources for constructing their own notions of publicness.

As Namiki Masahito suggests, the colonial state increasingly dominated the space set aside for 'publicness' as the Japanese empire moved on to the drastic campaign of wartime total mobilisation after 1937. Paradoxically, this situation opened up new venues for many Koreans, who had hitherto been placed outside the comparatively privileged space of the bourgeois public sphere, to directly participate in colonial governance. Of course, this 'participation' was only allowed under the terms dictated by the state for the Koreans as 'willing' subjects of mobilisation.[5] Still, I am rather skeptical about Namiki's argument, which endows the colonial state with too much, and too extensive, power. Is it really possible that the colonial state could so easily do away with civic activism and expressions of autonomy, not to mention various and multiple forms of non-cooperation, distancing, and circumvention among the Korean population?

In order to answer this question, I have drawn upon Alf Lüdtke's conception of 'everyday history (*Alltagsgeschichte*)' which rehabilitates the agency of the 'ordinary' or 'subaltern' members of society usually excluded in the grand narratives of political, intellectual, and cultural history, but that also pays close attention to the ways in which individual subjects interact with collective goals, social rules, and matrices of meaning in a social setting. More often than not, these interactions trouble the conventional binary distinctions of oppression versus resistance, or subservience versus independence. Such a perspective requires a double bind of caution, however: not only against a blanket generalisation and essentialisation of the subjects under study (such as 'the working class' or 'the Japanese,' for example), but also against a negation of the peculiarities and 'distances' among the lives of the subjects.[6] As we shall see below, the anxieties expressed by the

colonial authorities and theorists of the national language were not so much products of their realistic assessment of colonial conditions, but of the unresolved antinomies of ascribed imperial identities: between the prerogatives of a nation-state and a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic empire; between the state and civil society; and between the public and private domains of life.

It is important to remember that the number of Koreans who were fluent in Japanese even at the last stage of colonial domination was very small. The Governor-General's policies in favor of imposing a 'national language' (Japanese) as well as the state-sponsored 'movement' to encourage the use of Japanese were largely unsuccessful, or at least not as successful as the Japanese authorities had hoped. A December 1941 statistic shows that only 16.61 per cent, or 3,972,094 persons, of the Korean population understood Japanese. Among them 8.73 per cent and 7.88 per cent were respectively categorised as 'those who could carry out ordinary conversations' and 'those who understood a little Japanese.' This is not a large proportion of Koreans, however one looks at it. Moreover, the details indicate a significant gap based on gender and urban/rural distinctions. Only 7.69 per cent of Korean women were capable of understanding Japanese, while 63.14 per cent of Korean adult males living in urban areas could understand the language. The official statistics report by the colonial authorities in 1940 designated the percentage of those who could conduct basic conversation in Japanese without running into frequent problems at approximately 14 per cent.[7] By comparison, in Taiwan, the second largest colonised area of the Japanese empire, approximately 70 per cent of the population could understand Japanese in the 1940s. Of course, this does not necessarily prove that the Taiwanese had internalised the Japanese language to the extent that they had become loyal subjects of the Japanese empire.[8]

The very concept of national language, like many conceptual apparatuses involving the administration and management of the new Japanese empire, was initially developed in the Meiji period (1868–1911). In early Meiji, and specifically, prior to the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–95) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05), the Japanese term *kokugo* (国語), today synonymous with Japanese language, was not fully differentiated from words such as *kunikotoba* (国言葉, 国詞), indicating 'language proper' or a generic 'language' for any group of people residing in a 'country.' The idea that all Japanese must use one single language, and that there is a naturalised 'fit' between one particular ethnic, cultural, or historical group of people and a language really only gained prominence after the consolidation of the Japanese nation-state following its resounding victory in the First Sino-Japanese War.[9]

Ueda Kazutoshi, Professor of Linguistics at Tokyo Imperial University, helped establish the exclusivist linkage between 'national language' and the Japanese tongue. Regarding language as one of the pillars of the unity of a nation-state, along with a shared history and commonality of race, Ueda strongly argued that the Japanese language 'constituted the spiritual blood of the Japanese people'.[10] He stridently claimed that Japan was free of negative

examples of multilingualism and multi-ethnicity that plagued, for instance, the Austro-Habsburg Empire.[11] Yet, this exclusivist conception of national language was emerging just as Japan was acquiring its first formal colony, Taiwan, as one of the spoils of the Sino-Japanese War. In fact, 'national language' was instituted in the school curriculum in colonial Taiwan ahead of even that in mainland Japan. As the Japanese national language was being standardised according to the spoken tongue of the 'educated residents of Tokyo,' the empire's capital, it was thought that the best way to assimilate the native populations of the colonised areas was by teaching them this standardised language, before such language was taught to the residents of different regions of Japan who spoke their own dialects.[12]

One of the consequences of this accelerated effort to standardise the Japanese language as national language – an administratively, pedagogically, and socially coherent tongue – was that colonial linguistic policy came to be guided by the primacy of colloquialism as well as the *a priori* assumption that a shared race, culture, or history of a nation must correspond to a shared language among its population. However, these assumptions continued to generate their own internal contradictions. Ueda's disciples and successors, including Hoshina Kōichi, Tokieda Motoki (Assistant and Full Professor of National Language Studies at Keijō Imperial University in Seoul, 1927–43) and Andō Masatsugu (Professor of National Language Studies at Taipei University, 1928–32 and President of the same university, 1941–45) had to grapple with these contradictions in their own ways.

In most cases, the above-mentioned assumptions hampered these scholars from extending the scope of national language studies to effectively acknowledge and deal with the plainly observable reality of Koreans or Taiwanese living in multilingual, or at the very least, bilingual social situations. Hoshina Kōichi, for instance, compared the bilingual social situation of Korea to Bismarckian Germanisation (*Germanisierung*) of Prussia-occupied Poland and endorsed the same policy for Korea. At the same time, Hoshina was acutely aware that such a policy of forced assimilation might give rise to strong nationalism among the colonised Poles or, for that matter, Koreans. He cautioned:

> It is almost impossible to assimilate the colonised overnight by *kokugo* [national language] education . . . It would take a century, or even centuries in some cases . . . If we mistakenly push towards assimilation in haste, it will end in failure, which would turn our future into a lasting disaster.[13]

This curious mixture of a sense of urgency concerning assimilation and the pessimistic prognosis regarding the actual pace of assimilation on Hoshina's part suggests that he was aware of the perception gap between the ideological justification for linguistic assimilation on the one hand, and the practical difficulties such efforts would surely engender on the other. Moreover, he

was aware that the logic that justified standardising the Japanese language for the Japanese in the name of national language could just as easily be applied to Koreans for their own language. As Lee Yeonsuk points out, to argue that it was possible to assimilate Koreans under the system of Japanese national language 'proved that the nation and the people did not naturally exist but was artificially constructed', and that language stimulated claims of identity, not vice versa.[14]

As the colonial authorities assumed a more conciliatory attitude toward Koreans following the March First Movement (1919), a nationwide mass protest claiming for Korean independence, many Koreans came to accept the presence of Korean as a 'local language' co-habiting with Japanese as the 'official language.' Even though the fundamental primacy of Japanese as the national language was never questioned during the period of so-called Cultural Rule (1919–31), the Japanese state tended to see the issue of national language less through the prism of identity than of governmentality. In Prime Minister Hara Kei's view, the need for colonial officials to communicate effectively with Koreans in the latter's language was as important as the colonised Koreans mastering the national language. The position of the Japanese language in both the public sphere and the realm of everyday life in the colonial space was definitely hegemonic, but not above contestations and compromises.[15]

Indeed, a perusal of the Governor-General's newspaper, the *Maeil Sinbo*, suggests that the rhetoric of promoting literacy, education and modernity had not been exclusively contained within the dominion of national language at least until 1938. Korean (and sometimes English) still played a substantial role in assessing the degree of literacy and modernisation among Korean subject-citizens. For instance, Yi Yun-ju, President of Hwimun Normal School, was interviewed in 1928 regarding the newly announced educational policies by the *Maeil Sinbo*. In his discussion of the educational opportunities facing Korean schoolchildren, Yi complains that the implementation of Korean educational policy lagged behind that implemented in mainland Japan, and expressed his frustration that compulsory education in Korea was limited to only four years. He explicitly blames 'the program centered on national language education (*kugŏ chungsimjuŭi kyoyuk*)' for the deteriorating quality of the colonial education. In another example, a 1931 report on the agricultural conditions of a village near Taejŏn emphasises activities toward economic rehabilitation: saving money, practicing frugality, employment, and the elimination of illiteracy. One method of beating illiteracy cited was a night school, apparently privately funded, that teaches mathematics, national language (Japanese) and *hangŭl* (vernacular Korean). In these examples, Koreans are seen to be responding positively to what may be broadly characterised as programmes and initiatives for modernisation, including promotion of literacy, yet their notion of becoming 'modern' was not exclusively tied to the mastery of the language of the colonisers.[16]

Functionally speaking, this situation denoted bilingualism of the kind that theorists such as Hoshina Kōichi disparaged. Yet this was the 'everyday reality' of colonial Korea.

The implementation of total mobilisation policies in 1937 brought changes to this situation. Under the new Governor-General Minami Jirō renewed efforts were made to make Koreans proficient in the national language in conjunction with other policies of wartime mobilisation. The extremely low success rate of Japanese language education had been noted by the colonial authorities and became one of the paramount concerns for the Minami regime. Renewed efforts were made to address this issue. In 1938, the Governor-General decided to supplement their Japanese school curriculum by setting up funds for the free distribution of 100,000 copies of the Japanese language text for public elementary schools and extension schools, as well as for abridged language tutorials outside the official curriculum. The initiative reflected the view of the Government-General that the current rate of expansion of compulsory education could not catch up to the rate of population increase in Korea. The language tutorials were specifically aimed at 'all Koreans between the ages of eleven and thirty who do not comprehend Japanese as of late March, 1938', and 'at least one such person in each household' would be trained so that they could serve as conduits for further diffusion of the national language. These tutorials were to be conducted for at least a decade, presumably taking place during vacations and off-class hours.[17] However, even at this stage, language acquisition was thought to be a long-term project, probably one that could only be completed after more than one generational cycle had passed. This view is revealed in Education Bureau Chief Shiohara Tokizaburō's remarks during an internal conference in 1937, after the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War:

> In addition to three hundred thousand Koreans [who would have learned Japanese in school], we have another three hundred thousand [who would have learned Japanese through tutorial programs], totaling six hundred thousand who would be newly proficient in Japanese. Moreover, while this large portion of the population become Japanese speakers afresh, the old elements are gradually dying off, expunging themselves from the society . . . by 1955 or so about 70 per cent of Koreans will be Japanese speakers. Once Korean society reaches this level of proficiency, there will be further acceleration of the process, so that we can predict that all Koreans will be proficient in the Japanese language by 1960, more or less.[18]

This long-term assessment of the linguistic capacity and mental readiness of Koreans to learn Japanese 'as native speakers,' however, ultimately did not become the conventional wisdom. One of the reasons for rejecting such a 'pessimistic' analysis was that the Minami Jirō had pursued the application

of universal conscription to eligible Korean men as the paramount form of assimilating Koreans into the empire, and was finally able to initiate recruitment of a voluntary corps in April 1938 as a prefatory step toward conscription. After one year had passed, Governor-General Minami expressed his pleasure at the impressive number of Korean recruits, indicating not only that this would 'naturally' develop into a system of universal conscription, but that it would also 'simultaneously give rise to a debate about the political enfranchisement' of Koreans.[19] This development, in turn, meant that Minami's government had to ensure that the future soldiers of the Imperial Army, drafted from the Korean population, would have a functional command of Japanese.

Yet, following the implementation of the national language program, Minami found that the outcome had fallen short of his expectations. His instructions at a meeting of administrators in 1942 expressed some alarm: 'It is indeed a source of profound regret that only 15 per cent or fewer Koreans today understand our national language . . . without national language there is no Japanese culture . . . ' Minami apparently realised by this point that promoting Japanese language through public schools was an inadequate measure. He argued for 'a strong push for Japanese language education on the part of the ordinary masses by means of the national total mobilisation movement.'[20] Thus, the National Total Mobilisation Alliance's 'Essentials of the Movement to Disseminate National Language', published in May 1942, set forth the objectives of 'comprehension of Japanese by all Koreans (*zenkai*)' and 'everyday use of Japanese (*jōyō*)'.[21]

By 1942, county prefects and mayors were told to formulate concrete policies to promote total comprehension and everyday use of the Japanese language. The policies reported by county prefects and mayors from diverse regions of Korea, urban and rural, north and south, illustrate the extent and scale of these policies designed to disseminate and inculcate Japanese as the national language. Most local bureaucrats followed the dictates of the Total Mobilisation Alliance and planned for activities like mobilisation of youth groups, free distribution of thousands of copies of 'national language manuals', extra tutorial sessions led by schoolteachers or other public officials, encouraging families to practice Japanese vocabulary lessons in their homes (the so-called 'one day, one [Japanese] word' campaign, for example), and designating Korean families with fluent Japanese speakers as 'national language model households'.[22] Rewards and prizes were promised to households that could demonstrate their accomplishments in the everyday use or promotion of the national language, and candidates who had a good command of the Japanese language earned extra points when applying for positions as state officials or other similar jobs.[23]

In addition to these remunerative approaches, the Government-General also adopted more punitive policies such as restricting the use of Korean when requesting rationed goods including vegetables and sugar.[24] At the

county prefect conference for Southern P'yŏngyang Province, it was further suggested that Japanese-speaking Koreans be encouraged to answer not only direct personal inquiries, but also telephone calls in Japanese, and that Japanese-Korean interpreters at schools and other public institutions be phased out as soon as possible.[25]

The policies adopted by local governments to enforce Japanese language learning were impressive in their scope and variety, even though we must wonder about the efficacy of some of the methods proposed. We can certainly sense an atmosphere of bureaucratic competition in pursuit of a superficially high rate of 'successful acquisition' of fluency in Japanese. Even though the national language campaign was meant to inculcate patriotism and a commitment to imperial objectives in Korean subjects, the actual policies mixed pragmatic incentives with threats of material disadvantages to compel Koreans to learn the national language. This suggests that the colonial regime's assumption of a correspondence between one's ascribed identity as an imperial subject and competency in the Japanese language was not necessarily internalised by all Koreans. Governor-General Minami Jirō more or less conceded this when he 'reassured' Koreans that the 'everyday use of national language' program in no way meant the eradication of the Korean language, since

> in today's [1942] Korea, when the majority of Koreans do not understand the national language, it is of a practical concern that such a drastic and unreasonable measure, which might misconstrue the encouragement to use the national language as an attempt to eliminate the Korean language, will not be implemented. [26]

This does not mean, of course, that there were no Koreans who embraced the national language program and voluntarily made efforts to learn Japanese. I have already argued elsewhere that war mobilisation allowed some Korean women to move outside their domestic 'private sphere' and engage with public activities, despite the colonial state's efforts to 'domesticate' them as 'wise mothers and good wives.'[27] We see similar dynamics among comparably underprivileged Koreans such as women, shopkeepers, and farmers who participated in acquiring the national language outside the school. *Keijō nippō* reports, for instance, that a guild of Seoul innkeepers and motel staff, led by one Matsuyama Shigeru (judging from the report, most likely a Korean with a Japanese-style converted name), volunteered for a one-month special cram session of basic Japanese, to be generously taught by Ch'ŏnggye Elementary School President Yamaguchi Hideo. On another occasion, a 20 year-old housewife with a high school education, again a Korean with Japanese-style name (Fujiyama Matsuko) volunteered to teach a group of 30 *omoni* (a Japanese rendition of the Korean word *ŏmŏni*, meaning

'mother') and *kijibe* (a Japanese rendition of the Korean word *kijibae*, meaning '[unmarried] girl') using the prayer hall of a local Buddhist temple as a meeting place. These instances clearly demonstrate the desire for upward social mobility and self-betterment of these groups of Koreans who would normally be shut out of the formal educational system.[28]

On the other hand, a diary kept by a Korean student enrolled at Taegu Public Normal School for Women circa 1937 (called 'Miss K' by Ōta Osamu, who analysed its content in detail) captures the tension felt by young Koreans pressured to internalise Japanese language as a component of education. The diary was officially 'inspected' by her teachers (their seals of approval are visible in all entries), and cannot therefore be relied upon as unfiltered expressions of private feelings and thoughts. Miss K sometimes evinces a natural sense of delight about her participation in state-sponsored public events (such as the Military Flag Festival, in which students were mobilised to perform music for the sake of soldiers), yet many are plaintive entries about the stress of having to learn and speak Japanese 'like a native speaker'. In one telling entry dated 13 March 1937, Miss K confesses that

> My Japanese should show some improvement day by day now that I am using Japanese every day. I am working hard as much as I can (*tsutomeru no wa tsutomemasu*). [But] I end up being [sic] the way that is easy to speak when things become inconvenient, so there is not much improvement.[29]

In other entries, too, she expresses her irritation and dissatisfaction at her inability to meet the school's standard for excellence: her diary entries, as seen in the excerpt above, are riddled with awkward grammar, mistaken tenses, and other syntactical errors. Enforcement of Japanese-language learning beyond a student's naturally attained level of interest or motivation inevitably resulted in experiences of stress, irritation, and probably alienation. This was no doubt one of the negative effects of the national language program.

Among Korean intellectuals, Hyŏn Yŏng-sŏp is usually labelled as a 'model collaborator' for his extremist argument that the Korean language must be eliminated in favour of the Japanese national language. However, this claim was a 'logical' outcome of his view that East Asia under Japanese leadership would constitute the major 'bloc' against similar blocs centered around the Soviet Union and the Anglo-American races in the future world. In the coming world, he believed, Japanese would replace European languages such as English and French as the conduit of modernity. Korean language, a minor dialect on the global scale, was fated to fade away. To Hyŏn, Koreans who 'missed' their native tongue were akin to 'Eskimoes living in Paris' waxing nostalgic about the vicious cold of the polar region. He tellingly stated, '[using] the Korean language, I feel like I have regressed one hundred years

in time', explicitly associating the language with the 'pre-modern' and 'communal past' that must be transcended through the modernity brought by the Japanese colonisers. Having so virulently denounced the Korean language, however, Hyŏn goes on to suggest that the current Japanese language should also be reformed, with its 'archaic' Chinese characters to be phased out and romanised spellings to be gradually adopted, revealing that his reverence for the Japanese language stemmed from an instrumental view of language as a tool for acquiring the modern condition.[30]

More than one Korean scholar has contrasted Hyŏn's 'lack of subjectivity' as a Korean to the admittedly collaborationist reclamation of the Korean subject in the *naisen ittai* ideology taken up by 'converted' former socialists such as In Chŏng-sik.[31] I am of the opinion, however, that this interpretation is open to question. In shot at Hyŏn vitriolic barbs like 'infantile', 'meaningless [mental] masturbation of a Romantic'[32] and argued that wider usage of vernacular Korean among the masses should be encouraged, not suppressed. Yet, in the following passage, he too seems to subscribe to the 'instrumental' view of Korean language, while arguing for inculcation of a 'national spirit' among Koreans for the Japanese Empire, in essence calling for patriotic allegiance to Japan:

> What it means to discard one's national character is frequently misunderstood. . . . Let us take a look at the problem of Korean language, for example. To limit or ban the use of Korean language is strictly the question of form, not content . . . Language is in the end a medium through which thought is expressed. There is still room for the widespread use of vernacular Korean, along with extensive learning of the national language [Japanese], to make serious contributions to the glorious enterprise of training and cultivating the vast masses of Koreans into loyal imperial subjects in terms of spirit, consciousness and emotion.[33]

From a different perspective, In Chŏng-sik may in fact be regarded as a critic of essentialist ethnocentrism because he acknowledges the multiple nature of Korean and Japanese identities. As Kwŏn Myŏng-a suggests, some intellectuals like In envisioned new roles for themselves in this 'mongrel' linguistic sphere, where vernacular Korean, far from being eradicated or suppressed in favor of Japanese, assumed an even greater role due to the practical need of the Governor-General to mobilise the colonised population.[34]

Yet, the lived reality of the bilingual (and diglossic) condition that In alludes to in the above passage was a source of frustration, anxiety, and righteous indignation among the officers of the Minami regime and its mobilisation ideologues. They constantly inveighed against the educated Korean elite for assuming a 'pragmatic' orientation toward the Japanese language when having to interact with the inlanders (Japanese), or having to conduct their affairs in public, for example, then insisting that 'without

using the Korean language, Koreans cannot really express emotions of love and friendship among themselves', or that 'it is natural for Koreans to use Korean language as the language of everyday life (*seikatsu yōgo*)'.[35]

Certainly, some Japanese settlers in Korea felt that (the alleged) Korean insistence on the bilingual division between private (Korean as a language of 'home,' everyday life and emotion) and public (Japanese as a language of 'workplace,' official use and ideas) spheres proved that Koreans were not willing to aspire to be Japanese in 'both form and spirit.' This skepticism rears its head in the debate on the fluency of the 'national language' among Koreans in the pages of the Korea edition of the *Ōsaka asahi shinbun* in the summer of 1940.[36] One Japanese settler criticised Koreans for treating the Japanese language 'as an instrument for their livelihood,' and urged them to 'work toward the true union of Japan and Korea, ridding themselves of the discriminatory practice of regarding the national language as a language of livelihood and Korean as that of household'. Against this criticism, a Korean identified as An X (syllable deleted)-yong posited a strong counterargument. An, while agreeing that any behaviour that 'goes against the essential spirit of our national foundation and is hindered by the infantile nationalist consciousness, must be strictly suppressed,' nonetheless insisted that it was an expression of extreme narrow-mindedness to 'consider that [a Korean] is devoid of the consciousness of an imperial subject simply because he failed to use the national language'. He claimed that Korean language 'has its own reason for existence,' and that he hoped it would still play an essential role in 'further developing Korean culture.' An also pointed to the problems created by Russia's enforcement of their language on Poland as a negative example Japan must not follow.[37]

The profound anxiety over bilingualism and fissures in the national identity it could potentially generate among the subject-citizens of the Japanese empire was already evident in the theories of Ueda, Hoshina and other architects of national language. Against the actual lived reality in which 'Korean' and 'Japanese' identities, cultures and languages overlapped and mixed with one another, the ideology of national language insisted that the colonised Koreans had to choose one language (Japanese) over another (Korean). The ultimate failure of the national language movement to achieve its stated objective of 'converting' Koreans to everyday and comprehensive use of the Japanese language, in my view, illustrates not only the clear limits of the coercive and persuasive power of the colonial state, but also its inability to engulf civil society and eradicate the boundaries between Korean's public and private lives.

Moreover, the Governor-General's drive to make as many Koreans as possible use Japanese language in everyday life already contained within it problematic conceptions of Korean and Japanese identities that were potentially incommensurate to the reality of hybridity that colonised Koreans faced in their everyday lives.[38] After the Japanese empire was dismantled

in 1945, the ideology and institutional practice of national language was inherited by postwar Koreans to rebuild ethno-national identities in both North and South Korea by purging the memory of hybrid or bilingual lives from their 'official' histories, if not from their actual lives. To trace the genealogy of the national language from its Japanese to Korean incarnations would require a different project altogether, however. I will end here with the suggestion that the assumption about the correspondence between ethnicity/nation and language, shared by Japanese imperialism and Korean nationalism, likely played an important role in engendering such continuities.

Notes

1. Yun Hae-dong, *Singminji ŭi hoesaeg chidae* (Seoul: Yŏksa Pip'yŏngsa, 2003).
2. Jun Uchida, 'The Public Sphere in Colonial Life: Resident's Movements in Korea under Japanese Rule', *Past and Present*, No. 220, August 2013; Namiki Masahito, 'Chōsen ni okeru shokuminchi kindaisei, shokuminchi kōkyōsei, tainichi kyōryoku', *Ferris jogakuin daigaku kokusai kōryū kenkyū*, Vol. 5 (2003); 'Shokuminchi chōsen ni okeru "kōkyōsei no kentō" ', in Mitani Hiroshi (ed.), *Higashi ajia no kōron keisei* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 2004).
3. Jun Uchida, 'The Public Sphere in Colonial Life'.
4. Yun Hae-dong, 'Singminji kŭndae wa konggongsŏng: pyŏnyong hanŭn konggongsŏng ŭi chip'yŏng', in Yun Hae-dong and Hwang Pyŏng-ju (eds), *Singminji konggongsŏng: silch'e wa ŭnyu ŭi kŏri* (Seoul: Ch'aek Kwa Hamkke, 2011), pp. 35–43.
5. Namiki Masahito, 'Singminji-ki chosŏn esŏ-ŭi 'konggongsŏng' kŏmt'o', in *Singminji konggongsŏng* (2011), pp. 144–153.
6. See Alf Lüdtke (ed.), *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (Translated by William Templer, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995. Originally published in 1989). For examples showing application of the perspective of everyday history to Korean history, consult Yi Sang-nok, Yi Yu-jae (eds), *Ilsangsa ro ponŭn hanguk kŭndaesa* (Seoul: Ch'aeggwa Hamkke, 2006).
7. Ueda Tatsuo [Yi Yŏng-gŭn], *Sumera Chōsen* (Tokyo: Nihon Seinen Bunka Kyōkai, 1943), pp. 208–12: Chōsen Sōtokufu (ed.), *Chōsen sōtokufu shisei nenpō*, Vol. 4 (1940).
8. As Ozawa Yūsaku rightly points out, fluency in Japanese did not automatically indicate the acceptance of the language as the core ingredient of Taiwanese identity. Ozawa Yūsaku, 'Nihon shokuminchi kyōiku seisakuron- Nihongo kyōiku seisaku wo chūshin ni', *Tokyo toritsu daigaku jinbun gakuhō*, No. 82 (1971), 14.
9. Yeonsuk Lee, *The Ideology of Kokugo: Nationalising Language in Modern Japan* (Translated by Maki Hirano Hubbard, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010, Originally published in 1996), pp. 54–64.
10. Ueda Kazutoshi, Kokugo to kokka to, 1895, cited in Yasuda Toshiaki, *'Kokugo' no kindaishi: teikoku Nihon to kokugo gakusha tachi* (Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2006), p. 52.
11. Yeonsuk Lee, *The Ideology of Kokugo*, pp. 87–91.
12. Yasuda Toshiaki, *'Kokugo' no kindaishi*, pp. 90–2.
13. Hoshina Kōichi, Doitsu sokuryō jidai no pōrando ni okeru kokugo seisaku (1921), cited in Lee Yeonsuk, *The Ideology of Kokugo*, p. 168.
14. Lee Yeonsuk, *The Ideology of Kokugo*, p. 180. For the efforts by other national language scholars, including Tokieda Motoki, Ogura Shinpei and Andō Masatsugu,

to deal with the assimilation policy and multilingual reality of the colonies, see Yasuda Toshiaki, *'Kokugo' no kindaishi*, pp. 104–32.

15. Mitsui Takashi, *Chōsen shokuminchi shihai to gengo* (Akashi Shoten, 2010), pp. 58–64. Hasegawa Yoshimichi, the Governor-General prior to appointment of Saitō in 1919, had expressed his anxiety about how the inefficiency of Japanese public school system was producing a surplus of Korean students who would be absorbed into private schools run by Koreans or 'Westerners'. See Hasegawa Yoshimichi, 'Sōjō sengosaku shiken' (1919), in *Saitō Makoto kankei monjo*, No. 68–6, cited in Mitsui Takashi, Chōsen shokuminchi shihai to gengo, 63.
16. 'Singyoyuk pangch'im: kugŏ chungsimjuŭi rŭl ttŏna siryongjuŭi rŭl ch'aeyong', *Maeil sinbo*, 18 April 1928, 'Ilch'i tangyŏl kich'iha e kŭngŏm chŏch'ug-gwa munmaeng t'oech'i', *Maeil sinbo*, 18 November 1931. See Hŏ Chae-yŏng (ed.), *Ilbonŏ pogŭp mit chosŏnŏ chŏngch'aek charyo* (Kwangmyŏng City, Kyŏnggi Province: Kyŏngjin Munhwasa, 2011), pp. 9–37.
17. *Kokumin seishin sōdōin undō renmei yōran* (Kokumin Seishin Sōdōin Undō Chūsei Nandō Renmei, 1939), quoted in Ch'oe Yu-ri, *Ilche malgi hwangminhwa*, pp. 240–1.
18. Chōsen Sōtokufu, *Chōsen sōtokufu jikyoku chōsakai kaigiroku*, September 1939, pp. 83–4.
19. 'Chingbyŏngje silsi nŭn p'ilji: naesŏn ilch'e e honsin noryŏk', *Maeil sinbo* (7 May 1939).
20. 'Kōmin no michi wa kokugo kara: Kyokuchō kaigi sekijō Minami sōtoku sando kunji', *Keijō nippō* (15 April 1942).
21. Kawasaki Akira, 'Singminji malgi ilbonŏ pokŭp chŏngch'aek', in Hangukhak Ŭi Segyehwa Saŏptan, Yŏnse Daehakkyo Kukhak Yŏnguwŏn (eds), *Ilche singminji sigi saero ilgi* (Seoul: Hyean, 2007), pp. 296–7.
22. These documents are collected in the National Archives of Korea, and reproduced in Kumatani Akiyasu (ed.), *Chōsen sōtokufu no 'kokugo' seisaku shiryō* (Osaka: Kansai Daigaku Shuppanbu, 2004), hereafter CSKSS. See, for example, Keikidō [Kyŏnggido] Keijō-fu tōshinsho (1942), *CSKSS*, 7–9.
23. Kokumin Seishin Sōdōin Renmei, 'Kokugo fukyū undo yōkō', cited in *Maeil sinbo* (7 May 1942).
24. Keikidō Fusen-gun [Puch'ŏn] tōshinsho (1942), *CSKSS*, pp. 22–3.
25. Shōwa jūnana-nen go-gatsu fuin gunshu kaigi kyōgi jikō, Heian hokudō [P'yŏngan Pukto] (1942), *CSKSS*, pp. 34–5.
26. 'Kōdō no michi wa kokugo kara', *Keijō nippō* (15 April 1942).
27. Kyu Hyun Kim, 'The State, Family and "Womanhood" in Colonial Korea: "Public" Women and the Contradictions of the Total Mobilisation Program', in Jie-hyun Lim, Karen Petrone (eds), *Gender Politics and Mass Dictatorship: Global Perspectives* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011).
28. 'Zen-fu ni [wataru] kokugo-netsu', *Keijō nippō* (1 August 1942), *Keijō nippō* (27 September 1942).
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30. Hyŏn Yŏng-sŏp, 'Makoto no Nihon wo shiru made: kojin yori kokka e', *Ryokki*, Vol. 2, No. 8, August 1937, 44–5.

31. See Pang Ki-jung, *Ilche chisiggin ŭi p'asijŭm ch'eje insik kwa taeŭng* (Seoul: Hyean, 2005): also Chang Yong-gyŏng, 'Ilche singminji-ki In Chŏng-sik ŭi chŏnhynagnon', *Hanguk saron*, No. 49 (2003).
32. In Chŏng-sik, 'Naesŏn ilch'e ŭi munhwajŏk yinyŏm', *Inmun p'yŏngnon*, Vol. 2, No. 1, January 1940, 6.
33. In Chŏng-sik, ' "Naesŏn ilch'e" wa ŏnŏ', *Samch'ŏlli* (March 1940), 48.
34. Kwŏn Myŏng-a, 'Naesŏn ilch'e inyŏm ŭi kyunyŏl rosŏ ŭi 'ŏnŏ:' chŏnsi tongwŏn ch'eje-ha kukch'aek ŭi 'inyŏm' kwa hyŏnsil ŏnŏ konggan ŭi kwangye rŭl chungsim ŭro', *Taedong munhwa yŏngu*, No. 59 (2007).
35. Kondō Hideo, 'Kokugo fukyū undo ni suite', *Kokumin sōryoku* (September 1942), 645.
36. Kawasaki Akira, '*Singminji malgi*', pp. 290–5.
37. Naichi saisekisha, 'Kokugo no futettei', in *Ōsaka asahi shinbun Chōsen-han*, 18 June 1940: An X-yong, 'Kokugo mondai ni tsuite', *Ōsaka asahi shinbun Chōsen-han*, 25 June 1940. See Kawasaki Akira, '*Singminji malgi*', pp. 292–4.
38. Similar manners of contradiction were also evident in other 'imperial subjectification' or *kōminka* policies implemented in Korea, for instance, in the imposition of Japanese-style surnames on Korean households and families, and in the enforced worship at Shinto shrines.

8

Industrial Warriors: Labour Heroes and Everyday Life in Wartime Colonial Korea, 1937–1945

Michael Kim

By the spring of 1943, the once mighty Japanese war machine struggled to keep pace with the industrial production necessary to wage a protracted war on multiple fronts throughout East Asia and the Pacific Islands. Within the reality of increasing resource scarcity and the Allied bombings of Japan, colonial Korea rose to greater prominence as an alternative site for resource extraction and industrial production. The rapidly changing tides of war formed the somber backdrop of a ceremony held by the central Government General of Korea (GGK) for the first five recipients of the Meritorious Medal of Labour or *kŭllohyŏn'gongjang* (勤勞顯功章), which bestowed workers with honours equivalent to the highest military awards. Several prominent colonial officials were present at the first ceremony, including Governor General Kuniaki Koiso (1942–44), who remarked:

> Your workplace is the same as the battle front and the sound of your pickaxes and hammers will not only impact the tide of war, for it will have an immense connection to the rise and fall of the war situation. It will not be an exaggeration to say that the achievement or failure of total victory in the war lies squarely on your two shoulders.[1]

The central colonial state was not alone in honouring workers, for local administrations throughout Korea also presented medals for labour service. The labour medals awarded by the regional bureaus in February 1943 included 36 factory and 74 mine workers (46 Korean, 64 Japanese).[2] By the end of the war, thousands had received labour medals from various levels of the colonial state, and lavish praise for 'industrial warriors' or *sanŏpchŏnsa* (産業戰士) saturated the colonial media. In many respects, the elevation of industrial heroes to the status of military honours may have been simply colonial propaganda. However, there is also a need to consider why the Japanese found it necessary to valourise the contribution of Korean workers,

for behind this phenomenon was a complex attempt to restructure and rationalise everyday life to increase wartime production.

A closer look at the GGK's labour discussions reveals that colonial bureaucrats made frequent references to 'industrial warriors' and announced numerous special material provisions beyond the awarding of medals during the war. The Japanese hoped to solve the empire-wide labour shortage through the mobilisation of the Korean population, and the media attention to labour heroes was clearly a part of this broader campaign. At the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, the Japanese created various recruitment schemes to dispatch Koreans to industrial and mining zones scattered throughout the Japanese Empire and ultimately implemented labour and military conscription for all Korean males in 1944.[3] While the compulsory system for all Korean males did not begin until 1944, some Korean workers entered the wartime mobilisation system as early as October 1939. Korean historians often describe the entire period between 1939–45 as *kangje nodong* or 'forced labour' to highlight its coercive aspects. Without question, colonial officials employed questionable means to fill their labour recruitment quotas, and Koreans unwittingly became entwined in unfavourable wartime labour contracts with highly restrictive obligations. However, the Japanese did not mobilise Koreans only through coercion and deception. At times, ideological persuasion and material incentives also encouraged voluntary compliance. A careful focus on the media propaganda of the wartime period like the theme of 'industrial warriors' can be useful therefore in highlighting the complexities of the labour mobilisation system. Most importantly, behind the rhetoric of the 'industrial warriors' was an elaborate programme that restructured everyday life and introduced a more totalistic conception of industrial labour management that extended beyond the factory floor. Thus, understanding the broader mechanism of this mass mobilisation process can contextualise the late colonial period, not only within the wartime needs of the Japanese Empire, but also with the basic transformations that Korean workers encountered through the advent of a 'rationalised' modernity.

Uncovering the history of everyday life and labour

Attempts to distill a history of everyday life from the labour mobilisation of Koreans during the height of World War II face a number of conceptual problems. The issues reside both in the rigidity of existing nationalist historiography of the colonial period as well as a previous dearth of historical source materials for reconstructing daily worker experiences. The Korean workers who stoically toiled in the factories and mines scattered throughout the Japanese Empire primarily exist in today's collective memory of the Korean public as passive victims of 'forced mobilisation'. However, the aspects of domination and compliance found within the workplace cannot

be subsumed simply under the rubric of victimisers and victims. Instead, we need to consider the more long-term transformation of the colonial labour market and how the 'rationalised' production goals of a capitalist modernity affected everyday life. Korean workers in turn did not just passively accept the strict controls imposed on their lives, but instead developed practices of appropriation and devised their own accommodation strategies. A multilayered system of domination, reward, and punishment propelled Korean labourers into the wartime economy, and the forces that restructured the daily lives of workers were far broader than what can be contained under reductionist labels like 'wartime coercion'.

Fortunately, more recent studies have expanded our knowledge of the Japanese wartime economy, and the growing body of research now enables diverse academic approaches. The Korean government has provided fresh empirical information by funding a comprehensive collection of oral interviews with the survivors of labour mobilisation through the 'Truth Commission for the Victims of Forced Mobilisation During Japanese Imperial Rule' that was launched in 2004. While coercion was pervasive and integral to the wartime production system, we also need to keep in mind the administrative limitations that the Japanese faced with the massive task of mobilising millions of Koreans. As Chŏng Hye-gyŏng points out, the colonial bureaucracy was woefully unprepared when the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937 primarily because of a lack of accurate information about population registration.[4] The colonial officials could not track all the individuals who were eligible for labour duty because of the decades of neglect towards the collection of census and residency information.[5] Therefore, mobilising Koreans for labour duty required a fundamental reconfiguration of their subject relationship to the Japanese Empire. Koreans had to be considered worthy imperial subjects, even if their basic political rights were still absent under the colonial order. Furthermore, the initial recruitment efforts were tied to the broader history of Korean labour migration to Japan. Korean workers initially signed up for labour duty in the hope of gaining employment in Japan. Yet when the numbers of voluntary recruits could not keep up with the wartime demand, the colonial state took additional administrative actions to dispatch workers.

Some of the most controversial elements of the recruitment programmes emerged when the labour shortage could not be solved through the initial voluntary recruitment methods. The Japanese colonial government became more directly involved in the recruitment process at the local administration level in 1942 and implemented compulsory military service in 1944. While significant numbers of Koreans did enter the Japanese army after 1944, the vast majority was conscripted for labour duty. The introduction of welfare programmes and special provisions for workers during this period greatly complicated the mobilisation process. Chŏng Hye-gyŏng's comprehensive study on labour mobilisation expresses extreme reluctance to discuss this facet, because the existence of worker welfare programmes can too easily

be misunderstood to suggest that Korean workers had been compensated for their role in the wartime system. Despite the reservations, however, she makes the following observation:

> It is now time for academic studies to move beyond the exhausting debates over whether or not there was force involved. Instead, there is a need to take diverse approaches and expand the depth and level of our understanding of the wartime system. If we examine world history, the operation of a total mobilisation system was not made possible through force alone. Furthermore, even in colonial situations, one needs a high level of strategy and persuasive logic to mobilise another people for war.[6]

Chŏng Hye-gyŏng's point is that Korean scholars are now secure enough in the incontrovertible evidence of coercion that they are able to expand the range of inquiry. The Japanese colonial officials introduced many programmes to incentivise work, and this is where insights from the history of everyday life can greatly aid our further understanding. The official colonial sources that previous studies had relied upon can provide us with a general overview of the labour policies, but they fail to reveal the rhythms of the work day or how individuals navigated their way through the wartime system. The countless multitudes that toiled in the Japanese Empire's mines and factories under harsh wartime conditions left few historical details. Fortunately, though, the existing colonial sources can be read against the grain with a different emphasis to unearth the fragments of everyday interactions, and newly available oral testimonies can help further reconstruct the traces of this neglected history.

The colonial discourse of labour heroes

The starting point for grasping the mechanisms behind the labour mobilisation of wartime Korea begins at the top of the colonial order, where officials actively encouraged Koreans to identify themselves as 'industrial warriors'. The colonial media representations of 'labour heroes' mirror a similar discourse in Japan, but with some important variations due to the colonial circumstances. The expression 'industrial warrior' began to appear in the colonial media in the late 1930s after the implementation of the National Mobilisation Act in 1938. One of the first articles to mention 'industrial warriors' called upon Koreans to register themselves and list their special skills to become eligible to join in the war effort.[7] The initial articles reported on large numbers of Korean 'industrial warriors' who responded to the call of duty, such as a February 1940 report that 50,000 had been mobilised for construction and natural resource development like mining.[8] Many of these early articles can be placed in the category of *midam* (美談), or stories of valour and self-sacrifice. A July 1940 article describe workers who were rewarded with prize money for continuing their duties even after being told to rest,[9] while

a May 1941 article features a Korean worker who did not return home after arriving in a northern Korean worksite even though his parent had passed away.[10] The validity of the newspaper articles cannot be ascertained, but the theme that emerges is lavish praise for Korean workers who gladly sacrificed themselves to achieve industrial production for the war effort.

The media reports on 'industrial warriors' did not just describe their valiant self-sacrifice, for they also detail concrete benefits and special material considerations for labourers. A June 1941 article states that 'industrial warriors' in Kyŏnggi Province would be given special requisitions of rice in August.[11] Food was supposed to be distributed equally to each family, but the article explains that factory and construction workers were given additional amounts because of their need for higher caloric intake. Other reports of special food requisitions are not difficult to find in the colonial media, such as an April 1943 report of 'industrial warriors' given extra eggs in the Hŭngnam area of northern Korea.[12] Even alcohol was set aside for 'industrial warriors', who were given priority in the distribution system when production amounts declined during the war.[13] Food and drink were not the only areas where special provisions were announced through the colonial media. Articles announcing traveling entertainment shows for workers appear frequently in the *Maeilsinbo*. The first entertainment tour was organised through the Korean Entertainer's Association or the *Chosŏnyŏnyehyŏphoe*, which dispatched a group of 14 radio and stage stars to travel through various parts of northern Korea to visit farms, mines and factories.[14] The phrase 'comfort' or '*wian*' (慰安) appears frequently in these reports, the same term used to refer to the leisure and entertainment provided to the military.[15] It is telling that the special provisions and entertainment for workers were described in the same way as the special programmes for soldiers. The colonial state supported numerous official entertainment events for labourers, and they included some of the most famous Korean entertainers of the period. Special movie showings were also arranged for workers, and radio broadcasts solicited special requests for music from Korean labourers toiling away on behalf of the Japanese Empire.[16]

The diverse range of special programmes and provisions intended to raise morale and boost the labour productivity of industrial and mine workers provide a broader context for understanding the labour award ceremonies in wartime colonial Korea. The Japanese first implemented a system of labour medals in Japan that were the equivalent to the highest military honours on 18 September 1942, and subsequently the GGK announced that it too would implement the system.[17] The system was intended to recognise labour service as equivalent to military duty. Yet a particularly important aspect of the awards in Korea is that the official announcement provided an opportunity to criticise what was considered to be a major deficiency among Korean workers. When GGK Ordinance no. 292 promulgated on 24 December 1942

expanded the labour awards to Korea, the official explanation for the award measure notes:

> Originally, in Korea there was a strong evil practice of viewing labour with contempt. Now, for every member of society, it is extremely important to eliminate this fallacy, form a new concept of respect and gratitude for industrial warriors, and create a social atmosphere which encourages labourers. Furthermore, we ourselves in various positions should volunteer to achieve a further step in creating a labour defense country.[18]

As in Japan, labourers in colonial Korea were encouraged to boost industrial production and dedicate themselves to their workplace. However, the official explanations for implementing the labour medals also emphasise that Koreans generally lacked the proper work ethic, which suggests the presence of a more complex rationale behind the 'industrial warriors' campaign. The labour heroes were presented as those who could overcome the 'inherent character deficiencies' of Koreans, who had purportedly held a traditional custom of belittling physical labour. The medals were ultimately intended to induce Koreans to overcome their cultural shortcoming by raising their consciousness to serve the wartime economy.

The effort to valourise work among Korean workers emerged out of a labour discourse with a long history in colonial Korea. A major issue that Japanese bureaucrats and capitalists struggled with throughout the colonial period was the problem of Korean worker retention. The absence of a reliable and stable pool of industrial workers in Korea led wartime colonial authorities to face the problem of creating such a workforce. The criteria for the labour awards are particularly revealing:

1) Someone whose daily passion for the job inspires others to become model workers.
2) Someone who researches ways to increase production efficiency.
3) Someone who has worked diligently for over 20 years to receive the central award and over 15 years to be eligible for the regional awards.[19]

The award recipients received praise for their dedication to the workplace and their spirit of self-sacrifice. At the same time, the criticism of the lack of a 'Korean work ethic' and the requirement that labourers stay at the same worksite for an extended period reveals deep anxieties about the Korean workforce. Five Koreans did receive the highest awards when the number of recipients was expanded to 29 in April 1945, but they were from the police and railroad sectors that had long employed Koreans for decades, not the industrial sector.[20] Therefore, despite the fact that the colonial media had widely praised the contributions of Korean industrial warriors and announced many special provisions for them, the number of Koreans

given the highest labour honours was rather modest, and none of those awarded in 1945 worked in factories. The absence of Koreans receiving the highest labour awards needs to be understood within a broader colonial discourse that diagnosed the Korean population as lacking the proper work consciousness necessary for the wartime production effort.

The colonial state's emphasis on the right attitudes towards work and long-term employment highlight the critical importance of worker retention in the wartime economy. The sudden need to introduce large numbers of Korean labourers into the mining and industrial sector brought to the fore a persistent problem with the Korean labour market. Koreans, in general, performed menial work rather than skilled positions that required technical knowledge and were often hired on a temporary basis. The GGK statistics show that the ratio of skilled to unskilled workers among factory and mine workers to be 1:4, and roughly half of the Korean workers were new recruits with less than one or two years of experience by 1943.[21] The shortage of skilled labourers among the Korean population was connected to the long history of neglecting both education and industrial training in Korea, which lagged far behind Japan. Some light manufacturing did develop in Korea along with agricultural production, but it was not until the 1930s that large scale industrial production emerged, mostly in the northern part of the country.[22] Korean workers in search of a livelihood had to travel considerable distances to industrial centers like Hamhŭng in northern Korea, Manchuria, or Japan. Most Koreans went directly to Japan, where hundreds of thousands of Koreans became seasonal migrants every year, filling the unskilled day labourer market.[23] Thus, when the wartime economy needed to increase industrial production, there was a severe shortage of skilled Korean workers available for labour conscription because the GGK policies throughout the colonial period predominately viewed Korea as a source of agricultural and textile production, which did not require highly skilled industrial labourers.

Therefore, when the outbreak of the war necessitated the mobilisation of the Korean workforce, colonial officials began to seek out new policy solutions and created a labour management department within the central administration to mobilise Koreans.[24] A primary concern among these wartime discussions about industrial management was the problem of movement prevention and how to improve the labour situation to increase attendance rates in the workplace.[25] An article published in the journal of the labour department of the GGK explains, 'When we discuss the problem of Korean workers, what emerges is their "floating nature" (*puyangsŏng*, 浮揚性), and there is a complete consensus in this regard among the business managers in Korea.'[26] The same article highlights such statistics as the monthly movement rate of 7 per cent in factories and 10 per cent in mines (as high as 15–20 per cent in the coal mines). Another article published in the official GGK official journal *Chōsen* notes that the high turnover rate is attributed to the 'floating nature' of Koreans and low wages, but further

adds that the wartime food shortage was exacerbating the problem.[27] The high turnover rate among Korean workers was in many ways a natural consequence of the fact that most of the industrial and mining sites located in northern Korea and Japan proper were considerable distances away from the population centres in southern Korea. The Korean population had increased from roughly 15 million in the 1910s to approximately 25 million by the end of the colonial era, yet southern Korea remained a primarily agricultural region. Therefore, the colonial state faced the fundamental problem of how to manage migrant workers in low-skilled and low-paying jobs who did not want to work for a protracted period far from home. The poor working conditions and low wages in the various worksites triggered numerous labour disputes throughout the colonial period. The fact that wages for Koreans were approximately half of that of a similarly skilled Japanese worker led to high dissatisfaction rates and frequent abandonment of jobs. Therefore, the high movement rate presented a major problem for a wartime economy that struggled to keep pace with the industrial production necessary to wage a protracted war.

In response to the retention problem, colonial officials openly discussed the problem of *idongpangchi* (移動防止) 'movement prevention' or *idongŏkche* (移動抑制) 'movement suppression' and tried to create policies designed to retain Korean workers in the wartime economy. Many of these movement restrictions involved forced savings schemes and withholding pay until the end of the labour contract period. The Japanese colonial officials also discussed a number of factors that contributed to Koreans leaving the workplace, but the essence of the problem was identified as low wages and a shortage of consumer goods. The expansion of the war greatly contracted foreign trade and triggered inflation, which made it difficult for workers to procure daily items.[28] When worker consumption became a critical issue, those at industrial sites were given priority within the system and colonial authorities implemented programmes to provide them with daily goods and regulate industrial wages.[29] The colonial state began to ration a limited number of daily goods such as grains, towels, socks, shirts, flour, and rubber shoes in late 1940, and then expanded the list in March 1941 to include a broader range of goods like rice, fish, meat, wheat, potatoes, vegetables, and medicines.[30] The wartime rationing system gradually encompassed major sectors of the colonial economy in an attempt to control the spiraling prices that hindered worker consumption. On 10 October 1943, the GGK implemented controls on seven items deemed especially important for industrial production: work clothes, work shoes, gloves, towels, leggings, laundry detergent, and industrial soap.[31] Workers were given special consideration in having access to these items, but the supplies could not keep up with the demand as the war dragged on. The GGK also implemented special food provisions for workers in 1943 in limited parts of Korea, and then expanded the system to the entire colony in 1944.[32] These measures were

intended to prioritise industrial and mining production and provide workers with enough daily necessities to maintain their productivity. The rationing system could not function effectively, however, due to local corruption and dwindling wartime supplies, but it should be understood as one part of a far more comprehensive effort to manage the lives of 'industrial warriors'.

The inability of the wartime rationing system to keep up with consumer demand highlights the difficulties the GGK had with maintaining optimal work conditions. The limitations to providing the necessary material provisions to satisfy worker needs then gave way to moral suasion and other attempts to transform the 'flawed' consciousness of Korean workers. One of the central problematics that emerges from the colonial discussions of labour management is the importance of restructuring the everyday, and the need to transform the minds and daily habits of workers. Colonial wartime discourse often utilised the term obstacles or *'aero'* (隘路) to express the myriad areas that individuals had to improve upon in their daily life to help fight the war.[33] The expression also appears frequently in the discussions about improving labour efficiency. One such article explained that awarding labour medals was part of a broader campaign to overcome the '*aero*' towards industrial production by instilling a sense of workplace responsibility among the Koreans.[34] An official declaration on labour conscription promulgated on 8 February 1944 implored managers and those who taught technical skills to overcome the workplace '*aero*' by devising creative solutions and increasing worker lifestyle improvements.[35] The term '*aero*' appears frequently precisely because the colonial state became aware of its limitations in controlling the everyday lives of the workers through material provisions alone. Therefore, the colonial state needed to discover more ways of eliciting the voluntary participation of the Korean labour force to solve the complex challenges of wartime labour mobilisation.

Boredom, gambling and cigarette smoking: The transformation of free time

The colonial state implemented numerous provisions for controlling the workplace environment, which have been chronicled in previous studies on wartime labour. The transformation of daily lives was not limited to the factory floor, however, for the entire day came under more direct supervision. This impulse to control every facet of a worker's everyday life appears in the wartime discourse on the free time of Korean workers, because of the realisation that what took place outside the factories and mines also impacted productivity. The absence of family and acquaintances in the distant areas where Korean workers were dispatched meant that unstructured free time could contribute to unruly behaviour that potentially reduced industrial output and led to work stoppages. The most direct forms of everyday resistance included strikes, work slowdowns, and violent incidents. Between January 1943 and November 1944, there were 234 work disputes involving 7858

Korean workers in Japan, and they included 60 strikes, 72 work slowdowns, and 402 individuals engaging in collective violence.[36] While both Japanese and Korean workers engaged in labour resistance, Koreans posed particularly difficult challenges for Japanese labour managers and became an important topic of discussion in the colonial sources.

The debilitating consequences of improperly managing the migrant Korean workforce were clear. Therefore, Japanese colonial authorities focused their concerns on workers' free time, where efforts were made to dominate from the top as well as to appropriate the situation from the bottom. The connection between work and leisure became a prominent topic of discussion among colonial officials, who sometimes invoked the study of labour psychology to explain that there was a link between the amount and quality of rest with increased industrial production. Art and entertainment became important tools for shaping the Korean labour force. Colonial officials expressed particular admiration for the *Kraft durch Freude* (KdF) or 'Strength Through Joy' movement in Germany and explained that the colonial state organised entertainment for workers by following the German example.[37] German labour relations occasionally appear in the colonial labour sources as examples of how workers, given the proper leisure time, would become more productive. Bureaucrats in colonial Korea and their German counterparts were very interested in workers' free time, aware that the labourers' leisure, entertainment, and consumption patterns were integral to the effort to mobilise national populations through 'distractions' and the satisfaction of elemental human desire for sociability.[38] More recent studies on Nazi Germany have highlighted the importance of the social and cultural aspects of labour, and particularly on sport, leisure, travel, tourism, and even smoking in constructing a degree of consensus and stability.[39] Colonial Korea was clearly a different situation than Nazi Germany, yet this convergence on the importance of everyday 'pleasures' in creating a more effective workforce emerged from similar concerns about the need to stabilise the workforce.

The Japanese authorities identified Korean workers' free time as an important area of attention because they had to deal with the intractable problems that arose from managing a large population of Koreans scattered throughout the Japanese Empire. Japanese labour sources exhibit a strong awareness that unstructured free time led to incidents like gambling and violence. The issue of gambling was particularly troublesome in the factories and mines. Police reports from this period in Japan frequently mention gambling as the cause of problems involving Korean labourers. For example, a 1943–44 compilation of Japanese police reports involving Koreans for that year contains several major gambling incidents:

1) On 28 June 1943, 160 Koreans protested an increase in forced savings to prevent gambling in a Hokkaido mine;
2) On 16 July 1943, 650 Koreans were involved in a violent incident when a fight broke out while a Japanese supervisor was lecturing a

group of Koreans who were caught gambling in an Akita prefecture mine;
3) On 16 October 1943, there was an instance of five Korean workers in Fukushima who beat a Japanese supervisor, causing bodily injuries when they were discovered gambling in their room.[40]

Reports on Korean workers in Japan warn that labour supervisors must pay special attention to the problem of gambling within the residences.[41] Strict rules against gambling were enforced in most dormitory situations, but workers inevitably found ways to evade supervision and indulge themselves in their games.

Oral testimonies by Korean workers frequently mention the problem of gambling. Yun Pyŏng-yŏl (1925–), a Korean worker dispatched to a Hokkaido mine in 1942 relates that he was only allowed to rest three days a month and spent most of those days smoking cigarettes, drinking his alcohol allotment, and gambling.[42] His friend kept borrowing money from him, but was unable to repay him because of his gambling habit. Yun himself soon started gambling, and he witnessed others wager and lose clothes, shoes, watches, and nearly every other personal possession. A common theme among the conscripted labourers is the recollection that there was nothing to do with their free time other than smoke, drink, and gamble. Of course, not every Korean worker gambled away all of their possessions. Kim Kap-dŭk (1926–), who was conscripted in 1943 to a mine in Yamaguchi Prefecture, explains that those who resided in his mine dormitory would gamble every night and keep asking him for money.[43] However, he decided to give his wages to a Japanese acquaintance who held the money for him so that his friends would not ask him for loans. The Japanese acquaintance was drafted to the military and he feared that his money was gone. Fortunately for him, the money had been transferred to another Japanese acquaintance, and Kim was able to return to Korea with his savings. Many stories of gambling like the one told by Kim Tong-yŏl (1927–), who was assigned to an electricity plant in Nigata Prefecture in December 1944, simply mention that workers got bored and didn't know any better.[44]

The problems with gambling were an example of the potentially uncontrollable aspects of leisure time, which Japanese authorities attempted to manage by making sufficient supplies of alcohol and cigarettes available. An interview with the Vice-Governor General of Korea published in September 1943 specifically mentions the need to provide alcohol and cigarettes as a part of the official measures to prevent workers from abandoning worksites.[45] However, several accounts note that supplies of alcohol were more restricted, because drunkenness would lead to dangerous behaviour in the workplace or because they sometimes triggered violent incidents.[46] Smoking, on the other hand, did not pose as many unintended consequences, perhaps with the exception of dangerous worksites like mines where Korean

workers were searched for lighters and cigarettes before they entered the inflammable mine shafts.[47] Cigarettes, therefore, were provided on a more frequent basis, and cigarette breaks were a part of the daily routine at the work sites.[48]

The ready availability of cigarettes offered numerous situations ripe for everyday appropriations. Cigarettes were not only smoked for basic pleasures, but they also provided an important resource that could be traded or sold for other purposes. Cigarettes became a scarce commodity in the wartime economy, yet workers had relatively easy access to them. Some Korean workers in Japan discovered that they could purchase cigarettes at a lower cost in the countryside and sell them in the cities for a profit.[49] In wartime Japan, they became an underground currency that could be bartered for valuable services if one could resist the urge to smoke one's allotment. One Korean worker reports that he received a pack of cigarettes a day, which he used as bribes to purchase scarce train tickets out of his work site when his labour contract ended.[50] Cigarettes could also be used to obtain companionship. One Korean worker discovered that a local village with about 30 Korean households who had migrated freely to Japan. He used the cigarettes that he received as a way of gaining their friendship and obtaining a home-cooked Korean meal.[51] Towards the end of the war, cigarettes were even used to trade and fraternise with the American prisoners who numbered around 300 in the Kyūshū area where one Korean worker was based. Koreans risked severe censure if they were caught speaking with Americans, but they used cigarettes to trade for lighters and fountain pens.[52] Other Korean workers report that they made friends with American prisoners by making a cross with their fingers to indicate that they were Christians and provided cigarettes.[53] Cigarettes became even more valuable when the war ended. Stories from the liberation period are filled with examples of profiting from cigarettes and the furtive sale of goods like blankets that had been stockpiled for workers.[54] The testimonials by Korean workers suggest that many were able to purchase return tickets back to Korea amidst the chaos of liberation by saving up and selling their cigarette and alcohol allotments.[55]

These anecdotes from the wartime period suggest that workers appropriated whatever resources became available as part of their daily survival tactics. The increasingly desperate situation in the residences where Korean workers lived triggered extreme forms of violent appropriations because of the deteriorating wartime conditions. The problems that emerged in the institutional residences pervade the oral recollections of the labourers who survived the war. Yi Su-ch'ŏl (1923–), who was sent to the Kawasaki shipyard in Kobe, recalls that when he first arrived at the factory the living conditions were not too difficult because the workers had acceptable housing. However, once American bombings destroyed the major residence facility that housed hundreds of workers, Koreans were forced to live in tight quarters where, 'thieves emerged among the Koreans, violence erupted, knifings took place,

and food was stolen because we were all so destitute'.[56] He went on to say that after the work day, 'you had free time, and if you meet a good supervisor then they never look into what you are doing, but the bad ones walk around with knives and threaten to kill you.'[57] The harsh conditions at many factories and mines led to numerous escape attempts, and the survivors of labour conscription frequently discuss their thoughts about abandoning their workplaces. Most of the Korean workers during the war, however, continued to toil away until liberation came in August 1945. Violence and discipline were certainly major features of the system that kept workers on the job, but strict enforcement of regulations was not the only means available to root Koreans to the workplace.

The need to restrain Korean workers and keep them working despite the difficult wartime situation led colonial bureaucrats within the GGK to discuss ways of shaping their behaviour through moral suasion. A key concept that appears in the labour policy discourse of this period is *yŏnsŏng* (鍊成), meaning 'to train one's mind and body', but that also means 'to forge a metal object'. The term often describes the indoctrination process by which Koreans could be transformed from unruly colonial subjects into productive imperial subjects. Korean workers could not become 'industrial warriors' without undergoing a proper transformation of their consciousness, which entailed both physical as well as mental readiness. The GGK established numerous training centres called *yŏnsŏngso* (鍊成所) during the wartime period to teach workers basic skills, personal discipline and the Japanese language. The concept of *yŏnsŏng* extended beyond formal educational instruction, for it also included the establishment of regulations and measures that exceeded the bounds of the workplace, such as the emphasis on going to bed and rising early, regulations on daily consumption, and other restrictions on everyday life.[58] The training programmes aimed to produce effective and dedicated 'industrial warriors' who would fight for the Japanese state on the industrial battlefront.

The goal of producing Koreans capable of performing heroic deeds through a comprehensive training regime, however, was hindered by the fact that the vast majority of Korean colonial subjects lived in intense poverty and were illiterate tenant farmers who had been uprooted from their traditional communities. Impoverished Korean workers could be induced to migrate great distances to earn wages, but they usually returned to their villages at the first opportunity. The Japanese often viewed the challenge of transforming Koreans into 'industrial warriors' as a struggle against their basic wandering or 'floating nature'. An article that discusses how to train Koreans for industrial production describes this Korean characteristic that must be rectified:

> In this way, [drifting Koreans] have lost their indigenous attachments and flow from the mountains to the towns. If you go from job to job, then

> your life will meander as well. There is no land that ties them, no wives and children to stick to them like glue. A life that turns on whatever thought enters one's head will inevitably lead to evil and ruined lives. There will be alcohol, women, gambling, bilking food bills, and fights. They will drift along in the most extreme ways of living. However, they will miss their hometowns. Ultimately, they will yearn for the rural village and get the urge to go back to their wives, children, and parents. Drifters will always feel this psychological need to return to their origins. As they move about they will occasionally feel this need to abandon everything and return to their hometowns. As a result, the migration rate will get higher. This is where there is a need for us to educate them.[59]

The assumption behind the various labour training programmes was that special precautions were needed to fight the 'drifting' aspect of the Koreans. Yet, while the goal was to teach skills and prepare Koreans for the workplace, the hasty wartime mobilisation process did not allow for the implementation of comprehensive training programmes. Critical labour shortages meant that the GGK training programmes could only teach basic Japanese language and skills for a few weeks before dispatching workers to the labour front. Some of the companies that received the workers continued to offer training programmes, but rather than teach important skills, many factories and mines focused more on moral suasion and attempted to change the consciousness of the workers by offering moral education sessions that encouraged them to identify with the need to achieve wartime production.[60]

The limitations of what could be achieved through training and education led the GGK to discuss other ways of influencing Korean workers, which is where worker entertainment and leisure became significant issues. Workers could be induced with the promise of eventually receiving the salaries that were withheld while they served their contract terms, but financial incentives were not enough:

> In addition, the cigarettes and Japanese alcohol that were occasionally provided served as carrots. Another method was to permit excursions to view the splendid streets and products of Japan. The workers boasted of having viewed the latest films in a theater. Most of the workers forced into labour were young men. They were at an age [at which they were] filled with curiosity, craved praise, and desired challenges. For these individuals, carrots could be more effective than force.[61]

Fond recollections of the films that workers could view on rest days fill numerous accounts of workers in Japan.[62] Those labouring in more remote regions could not avail themselves of such pleasures, and since workers rarely received holidays from work they had to rely on whatever entertainment was provided at the worksites. Colonial officials utilised entertainment as

an important way of impacting worker lives and transforming their daily habits. The emphasis was on the proper kind of entertainment and leisure activities that could achieve the state's production goals and provide them with the correct understanding of the importance of the wartime situation.[63] The GGK used advanced media technologies such as print, cinema, and radio broadcasts to deliver programmes intended for 'industrial warriors'.[64] Other methods included the organisation of travelling performance theatre or *idongkŭkdan* (移動劇團) to visit worksites in both Korea and in Japan to provide workers with programmes that contained the appropriate wartime messages and exhortations for proper behaviour.

While mobile cinema units called *yŏnghwaban* (映畵班) was a widely used tool, the GGK also organised Korean performance groups because live performances had more of a sense of immediacy and because not every remote location had the proper film facilities nor could many Koreans understand Japanese language films and radio broadcasts.[65] The GGK had merged all theatrical groups in July 1942 into the *Chosŏnyŏn'gukmunhwahyŏphoe* (the Korean Theatrical Culture Association), which was dispatched and performed 159 times in front of 429,786 people by January 1943.[66] The official theatre groups generally performed various combinations of stage plays, traditional storytelling, music performances, and comedy routines. Performing stage plays under diverse conditions and getting audiences to listen to complex dialogue proved to be difficult. Therefore, the dispatched performances became more music oriented, visual, and less sophisticated.[67] Towards the end of the war the GGK tended to dispatch smaller irregular performance groups called 'comfort units' or *wimundan* (慰問團) rather than send large professional troupes.[68] The performers travelled to nearly every corner of Korea to perform in factories, mines, and in rural villages. Travelling performance groups even went to Manchuria and Japan to entertain Korean workers wherever they might be located. Colonial sources evaluate the success of the travelling entertainment highly,[69] but the performances did not always have the intended effect of encouraging Korean workers to work harder on the job. One Korean mine worker in Japan recalled:

> There was a time when they held a 'comfort' performance. There were so many who cried thinking about their hometowns. And that night 15 ran away. Those who were caught while escaping were beaten with a pick. They called out everyone working in the mine and were beaten to set an example.[70]

Being reminded of Korea, therefore, actually encouraged some Korean labourers far away from home to abandon their jobs. Another miner mobilised to Gifu Prefecture relates that when a Korean traditional entertainment troop visited his mine for a week and admonished him to work hard, he could only think about the fact that the entertainers would soon

return to Korea, but that he could not.[71] Still another Korean labourer recalls that after enjoying a travelling performance in Japan in the summer of 1945, it was announced that the conscription period had been extended by one year, making everyone miserable after the show.[72] As with many attempts to manipulate aspects of everyday life, the intended effect and the actual implementation varied greatly. Attempts by colonial authorities to provide proper entertainment to instill loyalty sometimes had an opposite effect as can be seen by the Korean labourers' accounts of their reactions to these live performances. We may question the effectiveness of the idealised images of the loyal Korean worker serving the Japanese Empire. However, the image of the 'industrial warrior' serves as an important conduit for examining the relationship between labour and the colonial state. The increasingly desperate wartime conditions brought greater efforts to integrate the everyday lives of 'industrial warriors' into the wartime industrial economy, which necessitates a closer examination of this struggle between the need to rationalise daily routines and the strategies of appropriation that emerge among Korean workers to reclaim their compromised agency.

Managed assimilation of the everyday

The extension of controls to greater proportions of a worker's life during the wartime period reminds us that mass dictatorships yearn to assume total dominance over the everyday. The process of mobilising the Korean population for labour duty involved the active intervention of the colonial state to restructure different aspects of an individual's life and to remove the obstacles that hinder industrial production. In a sense, the late colonial period was an important moment in the history of everyday life when the colonial state began to recognise Korean labourers as subjects who could be moulded to assume the proper identity of a loyal 'industrial warrior'. Another way to view this period may be to consider the everyday life history of boredom and how free time can become the target of totalitarian regimes that aim to reshape individuals through the management of their leisure life. However, despite the desire for control from the top of the colonial order, the oral testimonies of Korean labourers suggest that everyday interactions sometimes generated contrary effects. Some workers remained entrapped in the chaos of the wartime production system, while others ignored the directives from above and searched for ways to evade their plight.

The ultimate impact of the wartime mobilisation system cannot be determined fully without further research, yet a macro-level perspective on the discourse of 'industrial warriors' may suggest the presence of an assimilation strategy for incorporating Koreans into the Japanese Empire. The transformative process of converting Koreans into labour heroes represents an assimilationist logic that aimed to transform a colonial subject into a universal modern subject. The Report on the Conditions of Korean

Workers published in 1943[73] presents the history of Japanese colonial rule in terms of:

1) the initial period of strict military rule from 1910–22;
2) the period of coexistence between 1923–33 when Japanese and Koreans would try to merge their different characteristics;
3) the period of the assimilation policy between 1934–39, when the colonial state attempted to assimilate Koreans by making them 'become' Japanese;
4) the period from 1940 onward of 'managed assimilation' that was triggered by the entrance of a large number of Koreans to the workforce in Japan, a development that required the management of Korean labourers' production, labour relations, and welfare.

The assumption behind this last phase of colonial history after 1940 was that Korean workers required active state intervention when they joined the Japanese workforce, and they had to assimilate quickly and perform the roles that the majority of Japanese had supposedly already adopted.

The period of 'managed assimilation', then, ultimately denotes the temporal moment when Koreans entered the world of the Japanese industrial workers, because the strict controls placed upon them were identical to the general wartime restrictions on the Japanese population. However, even though Koreans were placed under a similar system of labour controls, they were assumed to be inferior in their attitudes towards work. The persistent doubt in the minds of Japanese authorities was the suspicion that 'floating' Korean workers lacked the self-restraint and discipline that were deemed the essential characteristics of a modern individual. In a sense, Japanese workers already engaged in a constant struggle to evade the impact of an imperfect system of governmentality had already been imposed on their lives from above. The Korean workers, therefore, were merely the most recent initiates into an expansive wartime system that attempted to transform individuals into efficient units within a vast production system scattered throughout the Japanese Empire.

This moment in world history when a worker's total waking hours become the concern of state authorities may signal an important divide between a passive view of everyday life and an active interventionist perspective that imagines modern individuals as suitable targets for optimisation. The struggle then begins between domination from above and appropriation from below over the working day. In that sense, 'managed assimilation' built itself on top of existing forms of colonial domination by categorising the Korean population into different segments and differentially incorporating them into the wartime control economy. The existing colonial controls were not abandoned, for most Koreans outside the wartime labor mobilisation system remained under more rudimentary methods of governance, but the 'industrial warriors' were plucked out of their colonial plight and presented

with a highly restricted path towards becoming modern individuals. The repetitive patterns found in the everyday lives of factory and mine workers during wartime colonial Korea may not serve to bolster existing nationalist paradigms in either Japan or Korea. Rather, they reveal the myriad forces that shaped an individual's ambiguous encounter with a modernity that promised freedom from want at the price of compliance to the regime of rational labour management.

Notes

This work was supported by the Academy of Korean Studies Grant funded by the Korean Government (MEST) (AKS-2012-DZZ-3103).

1. *Maeil Sinbo* (30 April 1943).
2. *Maeil Sinbo* (29 April 1943).
3. The scale of labour mobilisation of Koreans is generally estimated to be between 6–7 million with approximately 1.5 million dispatched outside Korea and approximately 4.5 million in Korea. Kim Ho-gyŏng, et al., *Ilche kangjedongwŏn, kŭ allyŏjiji anhŭn yŏksa* (Kyŏnggi-do P'aju-si: Tolbegye, 2011), pp. 28–9. This number includes those mobilised for short labour campaigns as well as extended work periods.
4. Chŏng Hye-kyŏng, *Ilbon chegukkwa chosŏnin nomuja kongch'ul: Chosŏnin kangje yŏnhaeng, kangje nodong yŏn'gu, II* (Seoul: Sŏnin, 2011), p. 23.
5. For more on census registries during the colonial period see Michael Kim, 'Subnationality in the Japanese Empire: A Social History of the Koeski in Colonial Korea 1910–1945,' in David Chapman and Karl Jakob Krogness (eds), *Citizenship and Japan's Household Registry System: The State and Social Control* (Routledge, 2013), pp. 111–26.
6. Chŏng Hye-kyŏng, *Ilbon'cheguk'kwa chosŏnin nomuja kongch'ul* (Seoul: Sŏnin, 2011), p. 49.
7. *Maeil Sinbo* (15 August 1939).
8. *Maeil Sinbo* (3 February 1940).
9. *Maeil Sinbo* (19 July 1940).
10. (Fifteen 1943), p.kob Krogness,d received an average wage increase of 35 per cent between November 1956 and June 1957 alonessib *Maeil Sinbo* (29 May 1941).
11. *Maeil Sinbo* (10 June 1941).
12. *Maeil Sinbo* (26 April 1943).
13. *Maeil Sinbo* (28 May 1944).
14. *Maeil Sinbo* (16 May 1941).
15. The word for prostitutes in the military was *wianbu* or 'comfort woman' and this is the terms that is today used to refer to Korean women who were forcibly mobilised for military brothels during World War II.
16. *Maeil Sinbo* (24 July1941); *Maeil Sinbo* (19 February 1943).
17. *Maeil Sinbo* (22 October 1942).
18. 'Kinrōkenkōshōsekō', *Tsuhō*, 130 (15 December 1942), 20.
19. *Maeil Sinbo* (10 February 1943).
20. 'Kinrōkenkōshōjuyo', *Chōsensōtokufukanpō*, Vol. 5469 (1 May 1945). The official colonial gazette announcement for 1945 indicates which recipients were Japanese and Korean, but the 1943 and 1944 versions do not provide the information. The previous recipients all appear to be Japanese because of the names and their

backgrounds as described in media reports, but ethnicity could not be easily be determined during this period due to the widespread adoption of Japanese names after the implementation of the name-change regulations of 1939.

21. Soon-Won Park, *Colonial Industrialisation and Labour in Korea: The Onoda Cement Factory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 31.
22. For more on colonial economic development see Carter Eckert, *Offspring of Empire: The Koch'ang Kims and the Colonial Origins of Korean Capitalism, 1876–1945* (University of Washington Press, 1991).
23. See Ken Kawashima, *The Proletarian Gamble: Korean Workers in Interwar Japan* (Duke University Press, 2009).
24. Yi Sang-ŭi, 'Ilchejibae malgiŭi "nomugwalli" wa nodongt'ongje', *Yŏksawahyŏnsil*, Vol. 50 (2003), 460.
25. Yi Sang-ŭi, 'Ilcheha chosŏnin "chung-gyŏnnomuja" wa nodonggyuyul', 128.
26. 'Chōsenjin rōdōsya kanribōdan', *Chōsenrōmu* (February 1944), 5. The GGK kept close track of the movement rate among Koreans and periodically published these statistics. Chōsensōtokufu rōmukachōsagakari, 'Chōsen no rōmusyaidōjōkyō', *Chōsenrōmu* (October 1942), 37–55.
27. Miya Kōichi, 'Chōsen no rōdōjōkyō to kanri no mondai', *Chōsen* (July 1943), 17.
28. Yi Song-sun, 'Ilcheha chŏnsi ch'ejegi singyang baegŭp chŏngch'aegŭi silsiwa gŭ silt'ae', *Sarim*, Vol. 16, (2001), 31–2.
29. Miya Kōichi, 'Chōsen no rōdōjōkyō to kanri no mondai', 17.
30. Kwak Kŏn-hong, *Ilche ŭi nodong jŏngch'aek kwa chosŏn' nomuja 1938–1945* (Seoul: Sinsŏwŏn 2001), p. 304.
31. *Ibid*., p. 311.
32. *Ibid*., pp. 316–17.
33. Kusuda Toshiro, 'Senkyokujūdainarunisaishite', *Chogwang* (August 1944), 17.
34. Makiyama Masahiko, 'Chōsengunjuseisansekininseido to gunjukaishahō', *Chōsen* (September 1944), 17.
35. *Chōsenrōmu* (April 1944), p. i.
36. Yi Chong-gu, 'Ch'ongnyŏkchŏn ch'ejewa kiŏpkongdongch'eŭi chaep'yŏn', *Ilbonbip'yŏng*, Vol. 2 (2010), 124.
37. Yanabe Eizaburou, 'Rōmu to bunka', *Chōsenrōumu* (October 1941), 14; Hoshide Toshio, 'Rōmu to goraku', *Chōsenrōumu* (April 1942), 84.
38. Pamela E. Swett, Corey Ross, and Fabrice d'Almeida, 'Introduction', in Pamela E. Swett, et al., *Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 2.
39. For more on the 'Strength through Joy' movement, see Shelley Baranowski, *Strength through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Alf Lüdtke, 'The "Honour of Labour": Industrial Workers and the Power of Symbols under National Socialism', in David Crew (ed.), *Nazism and German Society, 1933–1945* (2nd ed.) (London, New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 67–109.
40. Akashi Hirotaka, MatsūraToshizō, *Shōwatokkōdanatsushi*, Vol. 8 (Koryŏsŏrim, 1990), pp. 116, 307–8.
41. Rōdōkagakukenkyusho, *Hantōrōmushakinrōjōkyō* (1943), p. 133.
42. Ilche gangjŏmha kangje dongwŏn p'ihae jinsang gyumyŏng wiwŏnhoe, *Ahommŏrinŏmŏpukhaedoro* (2009), p. 86.
43. Ilche gangjŏmha kangje dongwŏn p'ihae jinsang gyumyŏng wiwŏnhoe, *Kagin ŏtilga? hŏnbyŏngich'ongtŭlgochik'inŭnde* (2006), pp. 31–2.
44. *Ibid*., p. 220.

45. 'Seisanzokyōromukyōkataisaku',*Chōsenrōmu* (September 1943), 4.
46. Ilche gangjŏmha kangje dongwŏn p'ihae jinsang gyumyŏng wiwŏnhoe, *Ttokttaksŏnt'akoodagapatakwisintoelppŏnhaessne* (2006), p. 157.
47. Ilche gangjŏmha kangje dongwŏn p'ihae jinsan ggyumyŏng wiwŏnhoe, *Kagin ŏtilga?hŏnbyŏngich'ongtŭlgochik'inŭnde*, p. 335.
48. Ilche gangjŏmha kangje dongwŏn p'ihae jinsang gyumyŏng wiwŏnhoe, *Ilhajianhnŭnchanŭnhwangkuksinminianita!* (2008), p. 319.
49. Ilche gangjŏmha kangje dongwŏn p'ihae jinsang gyumyŏng wiwŏnhoe, *Chidok'anibyŏl* (2007), p. 120.
50. Ilche gangjŏmha kangje dongwŏn p'ihae jinsang gyumyŏng wiwŏnhoe, *Naemomesaegyŏjin 8wŏl* (2008), 106.
51. Ilche gangjŏmha kangje dongwŏn p'ihae jinsang gyumyŏng wiwŏnhoe, *Tangkkoragoyo*, p. 294.
52. Ilche gangjŏmha kangje dongwŏn p'ihae jinsang gyumyŏng wiwŏnhoe, *Kagin ŏtilga? hŏnbyŏngich'ongtŭlgochik'inŭnde*, p. 108.
53. Ilche gangjŏmha kangje dongwŏn p'ihae jinsang gyumyŏng wiwŏnhoe, *Ttokttaksŏnt'akoodagapatakwisintoelppŏnhaessne*, p. 203.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 260.
55. Ilche gangjŏmha kangje dongwŏn p'ihae jinsang gyumyŏng wiwŏnhoe, *Tangkkoragoyo*, p. 18.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 161.
58. Yi Sang-ŭi, 'Ilchejibae malgiŭi "nomu gwalli"wa nodong t'ongje', 78.
59. Ueda Tatsuo, 'Chōsenrōmusharensei no hōkō', *Chōsenrōmu* (December 1943), 35.
60. Yi Sang-ŭi, 'Ilchejibae malgiŭi "nomugwalli" wa nodong t'ongje', 479.
61. Ilche gangjŏmha kangje dongwŏn p'ihae jinsang gyumyŏng wiwŏnhoe, *Chidok'anibyŏl*, 23–4.
62. Ilche gangjŏmha kangje dongwŏn p'ihae jinsang gyumyŏng wiwŏnhoe, *Kagin ŏtilga? Hŏnbyŏngi ch'ongtŭlgo chik'inŭnde*, p. 152.
63. Hoshide Toshio, 'Rōmu to goraku', *Chōsenrōmu* (April 1942), 82–3.
64. Films were also used as recruitment tools, as some Korean workers recall that they were mesmerised by images of immense steel mills and mines when Japanese authorities encouraged them to enlist for labour service terms. Ilche gangjŏmha kangje dongwŏn p'ihae jinsang gyumyŏng wiwŏnhoe, *Ahommŏrinŏmŏpukhaedoro*, p. 352.
65. Yi Hwa-jin, 'Ilche malgi idongkŭkdan hwaltongŭi chŏn'gae yangsanggwa kŭhan'gye', *Han'gukhak yŏn'gu* (June 2013), 168.
66. Yi Dŏk-ki, Ilcheha chŏnsich'ejegi idongyŏn'gŭk yŏn'gu idongyŏn'gŭk cheiltaewa kŭktan hyŏndaegŭkchangŭl chungsimŭro', *Han'guk kŭgyesuryŏn'gu*, Vol. 30 (2009), 195. The Japanese began to send entertainment companies to the warfront as early as the outbreak of the Manchurian Incident in September 1931, and as a result the authorities tried to make use of these companies to promote what was believed to be wholesome leisure activities. The effort to tie national policy to entertainment greatly expanded after 1937. Barak Kushner, 'Laughter as Matériel: The Mobilisation of Comedy in Japan's Fifteen-Year War', *The International History Review* (December 2010), 301.
67. Yi Hwa-jin, 'Ilche malgi idongkŭkdan hwaltongŭi chŏn'gae yangsanggwa kŭhan'gye', 179.
68. Kim Ho-yŏn points out that the movement towards smaller and less professional performers ultimately did not provide the right conditions to further

artistic development during the wartime period. Kim Ho-yŏn, 'Ilche kangjŏmhugi yŏn'gŭk chedoŭi pyŏnhwa yangsanggwa kŭ ŭimi', *Inmun'gwahakyŏn'gu* (September 2011), 55.

69. Hirosaki Shinpachirō, 'Sangyō hōkoku undō to sono jissen', *Chōsenrōmu* (1943–46), 30.
70. Ilche gangjŏmha kangje dongwŏn p'ihae jinsang gyumyŏng wiwŏnhoe, *Sajineroponŭnkangjetongwŏn iyagi* (2009), p. 93.
71. Ilche gangjŏmha kangje dongwŏn p'ihae jinsang gyumyŏng wiwŏnhoe, *Tangkkoragoyo*, p. 300.
72. Ilche gangjŏmha kangje dongwŏn p'ihae jinsang gyumyŏng wiwŏnhoe, *Naemomesaegyŏjin 8wŏl*, p. 423.
73. Rōdōkagakukenkyusho, *Hantōrōmushakinrōjōkyō*, p. 2.

9

Consumption and Consumerism in the German Democratic Republic

Harald Dehne

When the German Democratic Republic (GDR) was founded in October 1949, it was supposed to embody a desire to create a new, a better, a more socially just Germany. At the beginning of its adventure in social policy, however, the portents were unfavourable, and it never did succeed in attaining the goal it had set for itself. The political and economic ruins of the Third Reich constituted the point of departure. Established by Stalin's hand, the state remained permanently restricted in its national self-determination, and the economically relatively weak GDR found itself continually exposed to direct comparisons with the social model of the West and the consumerist lifestyle enjoyed there. In the struggle for primacy between the two systems after 1949, West German consumer culture rapidly showed itself to be the more attractive, and became the hegemonic model of individual consumption.

The GDR experiment began as a perceptible dictatorship. It suffered both from the scarcity of material resources and from hesitant, halting popular participation. The regime's exceedingly repressive character was its hallmark until the mid-1950s. For the East Germans, what followed after those years were alternating hopes and disappointments. Improvements in the provision of food were partly wiped out as a consequence of forced collectivisation.

The promise to create the conditions of a land of milk and honey remained unfilled. Grotesquely enough, it had evidently been seriously intended when made in 1958. Instead of witnessing its delivery, people fled from the GDR to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in the hundreds of thousands. It is true, however, that the erection of the Wall in 1961 was followed by four years that showed some indication of a new springtime. Eventually, in the 1970s, GDR society came to bear the pronounced imprint of socialism.

This development, occurring in the wake of the Eighth Congress of the *Sozialistische Einheitspartie Deutschlands* (Socialist Unity Party of Germany, SED) in 1971, was accompanied by an emphatic demarcation of the GDR in relation to the other German state and to the history they shared, but also by

certain successes in its socio-political programme. At the end of the decade, however, the final crisis of the GDR experiment set in. That its social dynamics were giving way to stagnation was ever more apparent. Yet, this was a crisis that had crept up on the GDR. It was recognised even less clearly from within than from without. And of course a quarter of a century ago it was perceived with far less clarity than it is now, with the benefit of hindsight. Today, so much can appear to have been obvious from the start.

In this chapter I would like to focus on those East Germans who, in contrast to the 10–15 per cent of their fellow-citizens, did not prefer to go to the West, becoming instead the actors in the everyday life of the GDR. Even before the Wall went up in 1961, there were plenty of pressing motives for staying in the country, whether political (grounded in a social vision), or private (one's family, home, occupation, or simply the hope that everything would be different one day). For most East Germans, life in the GDR may be described in terms of 'everyday pragmatism'. In other words, the majority of the East German population came to an arrangement with prevailing conditions, and observed 'moments of consensus'[1] as much as they did 'elements of potential conflict'. This holds also in relation to the difficulties facing private consumption.

For the four decades of the GDR's existence, no continuous strategy in the politics of consumption is discernible. There was nothing to compare with the social market economy that led to the economic miracle of the FRG. Through all the phases of its 40-year rule, the leadership of the Party and the State in the GDR invariably found itself confronted with a number of simultaneous dilemmas in its attempts to deal with consumer needs. These dilemmas were rooted at once in a permanent want of material resources and a lack of political understanding of the cultural meaning of private consumption. In the post-war period with all its privations, when reparations sapped the economy and when the restoration of production and rebuilding of infrastructures was needed to return to pre-war levels, what mattered above all was providing the population with the necessities of life. All further needs were essentially treated as luxuries.

True, it was practically impossible to talk people out of their yearnings for amenities and conveniences beyond what was essential for mere existence. However, the regime did try – in ways analogous to Christian promises of paradise – to offer compensation in the shape of the future bliss of communism. This portentous underestimation of individual consumer needs by the GDR's leadership is not explicable solely in terms of the persistent shortages of goods: rather, it is also integral to the ideology of the German labour movement. In the latter, private consumption was understood primarily as a bourgeois phenomenon, economically necessary to keep the capitalist system going.

According to Marx's theory, it was not wealth in material things that would count in a post-bourgeois society, but riches counted in freely disposable time which could be used for individuals' personal development

and for the wealth of their creativity. Intellectual needs therefore always took precedence over material ones in political propaganda. 'Knowledge is Power', as the familiar slogan of the social-democratic labour movement had it. Given their miserable living conditions under the conditions of capitalism, it was a matter of course that the wellbeing of working people would improve in the coming 'state of the future'. Thus, socialist ideology had originally contained no concept of consumer culture. Similarly, culturally orientated academic disciplines had long blocked off any notion that not only intellectual claims, but also an array of material needs might be part and parcel of the 'fully developed personality', the cultural ideal of socialist society.

It was only in the course of the 1970s that, with reference to Marx, GDR cultural theory responded to people's silent strivings and vocal claims for a better living beyond their workplace.[2] Increasingly academics and theorists noted that the universal man of communism was unimaginable without universal consumption, and that the massive expansion and development of consumer needs did indeed constitute an immanent goal of socialist social policy.[3]

The fact that the East German population always had before them the consumer behaviour of the West Germans, forever forging far ahead, presented the GDR's politics of consumption with a third dilemma. It was always western consumption that set the standard. It set the pace, and all the GDR, often lagging far behind, could do was to react to the West's pattern of consumption.

Promises and delays: How the weak GDR sought to fulfill consumer needs

As we have already noted, basic provisions for the population were almost the sole concern of the GDR in its first years. But the uprising of 17 June 1953 led to a new course in consumer politics. The GDR now seemed prepared to accept people's material needs too, and promised quantitative improvement in meeting them. Nevertheless, the old problems of shortages continued to militate against the steady adequate across-the-board provision of foodstuffs, and above all of quality in manufactured goods.

'All shall have better lives' was the watchword designed to bring the social market economy of the FRG into full swing at the beginning of the 1950s. It was a slogan that might just as readily have been dreamt up by the politburo of the SED. But in the FRG the economic miracle had become a reality: an 'eating frenzy', private motorisation, construction of private homes, foreign tourism, portable radio sets, then television sets – all these assuredly conspired to put the GDR's leadership under pressure during the 1950s. From East Berlin and its neighbouring regions of Brandenburg in the so-called 'Zone', thousands travelled every day to work in West Berlin, and many more purchased foodstuffs and other consumer goods there at

advantageous prices – in spite of the 'exchange-rate swindle' of five East German Marks for one West German 'D-Mark'.

There was much that could only be obtained in the western zones. Not only did the West have all the 'good coffee', which really did taste better than any of the coffee brands available in the GDR: it also had patently cheap bananas. It seems highly probable that the duty-free import of this exotic fruit, cleverly secured by the Federal Republic's Chancellor Konrad Adenauer even after the foundation of the EEC in 1957,[4] was also intended as a political signal to the 'brothers and sisters in the Eastern Zone' – just to make them a little envious.[5] The grotesque circumstance of bananas being available cheaply and all year round in the Federal Republic while they could rarely be bought at all in the GDR (except at Christmas, when availability was more reliable) led the banana to become absurdly loaded with symbolic political meaning. It became a 'characteristic symbol of the small and wild cravings of GDR citizens [...] for whom going without was a long-term collective fate.'[6]

The SED was right to recognise that its hand was being forced in view of the West's glowing world of consumption, which could hardly have failed to have an effect on the relatively dull hues of the GDR through its presentation, directed in part toward the East, of temptations and enticements. As a result, a new offensive was begun in 1958, at least insofar as the promise of satisfying the basic needs of a socialist mode of consumption. No sooner had the last remnants of the food-rationing enforced since 1939 been removed in May (fully eight years after they had been scrapped in the FRG), than communist society was to be reached in 'seven-league strides'. From the vantage of 1958, this was to be attained within a period of between 25–40 years – in other words, within a clear period that not only the young might expect to experience. The chemicals programme was to be the magic ingredient.[7] It was agreed on in November 1958 and was, as the Party slogan had it, to provide 'bread, prosperity, and beauty'. In accordance with the motto 'catch up and overtake', the intention was to demonstrate the economic superiority of the socialist GDR over the capitalist FRG. The regime proposed to increase per capita consumption of all important foods and consumer goods to such an extent that, within a few years, it would not only reach levels of private consumption in the FRG, but actually surpass them.

This extravagantly ambitious project was, however, largely lacking in a material basis, and some good industrial growth rates could obscure neither the fact that the economy was still essentially characterised by shortages, nor that the enduring problem of providing the population with basic foodstuffs (meat, butter, sugar etc.) and even with the 'thousand little things' that no private household can do without, were still as good as unobtainable. The propaganda stories and pictures of the communist future the GDR was supposedly approaching at breakneck speeds were thus all the more enthusiastic and colourful.

According to these promises, everything would be available in the classless society of communism, but each would take only what he or she genuinely needed. Money would in any case have been abolished. Arrival in paradise would now permit people's complete self-development since, as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels had already imagined in 1845 in their work 'The German Ideology':

> Society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic.[8]

This dream of a better life referred to a future that would hold itself ready to compensate for the hard work and everyday deprivations of the present. It was a consumer utopia that inevitably took on a grotesque appearance in view of all the effort and frustration involved in ordinary shopping that remained undiminished by the time of the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the GDR:

> At no other point in the 40-year history of the GDR was the communist utopia as present and immediate as at the end of the 1950s. Unrestrained, frequently naïve, always graphic and vivid, the narrative of the communist utopia, of course used technicised and arcadian topoi. Elements of social utopianism were scarcely represented in the storyline at all.[9]

I myself was beginning my school days at the time, and was certainly hugely impressed by the pictures in my children's magazine: gigantic shops with a complete range of models in their stock (like IKEA today), with endless travelators (moving walkways – like those in major modern airports), and even landing pads for airborne taxis (like modern helipads).[10] This was a GDR-equivalent of what the mass magazine 'Popular Science' did for the consumer and/or technophilic imagination in the same period in the USA. So what could possibly be wrong with communism, which was indeed due to arrive a little later, but was fast approaching like a rocket? Communism was already almost standing at the door: now a window onto it seemed to have suddenly opened. For some three years, socialist propaganda spread that utopian vision of society. It promised the immediate fulfilment of all the consumerist desires of all the people of the GDR. Then the still-present and unmistakeable difficulties confronting the GDR economy revealed this high-flown ambition to be nothing more than pure wishful thinking that was quietly to be revised.

In the major cities of the GDR, and above all in the regional capitals and industrial regions that enjoyed privileged provisions of consumer goods,

the supply of produce was neither quantitatively adequate to demand nor qualitatively capable of meeting citizens' increasing expectations. But supply in rural areas evinced still more of a lag than it did in urban ones. Ever since the foundation of the GDR, the leadership had sought to overcome this relict of the (capitalist) past, trying to bring about visible improvements in the provisioning, especially of the village populations of the workers' and peasants' state. The Consumer Co-operative was assigned the task of developing rural trade. In a further move, the introduction of a mail order business for the rural population in 1956 was intended to secure against the danger of missing an opportunity to match West German levels of consumption, and probably also to limit the practices of hoarding[11] that persistently exacerbated the problems of the shortage-ridden economy. For over 20 years, the project caused more problems than it solved in its attempt to satisfy the demands of mass consumption. The disaster was therefore brought to a quiet end through the simple expedient of closing down the mail order business. Another idea cooked up in 1959 of finding complex ways to satisfy the consumer interests of village populations by establishing a number of supra-regional salesrooms, proved just as airy.[12] The experiment failed equally because of inadequate building capacities and because of what proved to be the hopelessly inadequate stock in the stores.[13]

By contrast, another consumption project was able to tell a genuinely significant success-story by making a virtue of necessity. In consequence of the abolition of food rationing cards and of the collectivisation of the whole of agriculture that had been achieved through massive political pressure at the end of the 1950s, a new supply crisis emerged. With some fluctuations, it continued until 1966–67. In response, industrialised poultry production was conjured up out of a hat within a short period of time. Its introduction by a few engaged economics functionaries was a *coup de main* in view of the obstacles presented by the Party and governmental bureaucracies. At last, from the end of 1967 onward, there was such a thing as a roast chicken of East German provenance. It could be purchased deep-frozen under the name 'Goldbroiler', and could also be enjoyed in one of the three Berlin special fast food restaurants (one could almost use the expression) furnished in the style of a rural inn.

At the end of the 1960s, at any rate, one culinary goal was scored in the permanently under-resourced GDR with the introduction of this seemingly rather banal prime poultry product. For a while at least, it eased not only the nutritional situation, but also the mood of the population at large. Seen in one light, this invention might be classed as a supply commission exemplary of the transition from brute force to an 'accommodation' between the government and the governed.[14] But one could also say that, comparable as it was with the roast chicken of the Wienerwald chain in the West, this GDR creation furnished a contribution toward the easing of

the everyday of consumption in the GDR. Beginning as a linguistic peculiarity of the GDR, 'Goldbroiler' has since entered into common usage in the German language, reflecting the difference and success of an 'Eastern' taste.

The illusion of politically centralised provision: 'Consumer socialism' after 1971

The divorce from reality exhibited by the arrogant assumption that a scheme of total planning and patronising care dreamt up behind desks for the 'individual consumption' of 17 million people could be translated into practice was characteristic of the 1970s and 80s. In retrospect, 'consumer socialism' seems also to have been a coup the regime tried to pull off,[15] and a voluntaristic *modus operandi* preferred by Erich Honecker, General Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) since 1971 and Chairman of the State Council (*Staatsrat*) of the GDR. He almost single-handedly determined the new course of the 'Unity of Economic and Social Policy'.

Several years ago it was suggested that we employ the concept 'welfare dictatorship' to characterise the GDR.[16] For the period beginning in 1971, it is certainly an apt description of the ambitions of SED policy. The Eighth Congress of the SED, at which Honecker made his entry onto the stage of world history as the GDR's mightiest man, indicated a change. The interests of the people were now to be addressed, and a spectacular social policy programme was introduced. It not only accepted that there were indeed such things as consumer demands and that these had to be satisfied, but also acknowledged the backlog there. The Party leadership made a fulsome promise to raise the 'material and cultural standard of living of the people'. With that, it excited great expectations. And indeed improvements in social policies for families, increased wages and salaries, and a buildings programme did rapidly ensue.

However, the 'gift' social policy had presented was not even remotely secured in terms of resources. Its full financing was left pending, and made dependent on anticipated economic successes. But these were uncertain, and very largely failed to materialise as well:

> In contrast to Ulbricht who, through a massive effort, had wanted first to increase output and then to raise the standard of living, Honecker took out a mortgage on the future. The rise in living standards and the broad range of social policy measures were actually intended to offer an incentive for an increased and improved economic performance. Improvements in social conditions, inflated by propaganda, were thus intended to produce two outcomes. They would get the population more interested in the system and at the same time immobilise it.[17]

What's more, the concrete realisation of this social policy programme had to build not only on very little practical experience, but also on next to no economic foundations. Social policy research had come to standstill by the 1960s at the latest.[18] Desperate attempts at establishing research on the subject of 'consumption and living standards' were made in order to meet the illusory pretension of comprehensive planning for needs. An 'indexed register of the socialist standard of living'[19] was developed, and a system for the classification of factors influencing the socialist way of life was instituted. This was to be the GDR's last conceptualised attempt at developing a 'consumer society under socialist' auspices or a consumer 'cultural society'.[20] Within a few short years, however, this programme collapsed. It had become clear that dwindling economic resources were upsetting the plans, and that promises to consumers and consumer demand were growing farther and farther apart in the face of the everyday shortages. But that altered nothing in the SED's claim to power. On the contrary, respective plans were asserted with increasing doggedness – even though halting the growth of dissatisfaction was no longer even remotely achievable.

The instrumentalised shortage: A society on the brink of mass criminality

Whether in the mass media or in scholarly literature, the characterisation of the GDR simply as a 'shortage society' (*Mangelgesellschaft*) has become commonplace.[21] Of course, this concept reduces the everyday life of GDR citizens to just one dimension: bottlenecks and gaps in supply, and the absence of goods and services. The frequent unavailability of consumer goods regularly meant both annoyance and 'procurement work' (*Beschaffungsarbeit*) – a problem by no means limited to the good things in life. Of course, this concept of shortage plays with the unfulfilled consumer desires of the Easterners. For, as everyone knows, just a few kilometres on from this land of decades-long privations, there arose the glittering world of goods of the West. That was where the true consumer society lay. Thus far, the label 'shortage society' is completely one-sided in its emphasis on the everyday frustration of shopping and 'procuring'. As a result, in the majority of cases it is used in a denunciatory spirit. But if, even in respect to the difficulties of individual consumption, everyday life in the GDR did amount to more than the permanent Sisyphean struggle to somehow overcome the shortages, then it is nevertheless also true that the notion of a shortage society suggests stimulating questions. These can be posed from two angles. First, might it perhaps be the case that a not inconsiderable measure of shortage was actually intended by the SED leadership as part of a strategy for shoring up its power? Second, what kinds of material and social success altered social stratification, and who benefited from these shortages?

At first sight, of course, there are several things to be said in favour of the thesis that the maintenance of shortages was an instrument of rule. So long as shortage did not flip over into an acute crisis of supply economics and therefore also of politics, it manifestly did serve to sustain the system, for the costly search for ersatz solutions and improvisations ate up a great deal of people's time and energy. The permanently necessary activities involved in overcoming shortages could thus constrain creativity and simultaneously channel it. This may have diminished personal power potentials in relation to any trial of strength with authority. But was this in fact a calculated outcome? There is much more to be said in favour of there really having been an intentionally contrived consumer dependency on the rulers' good deeds. Its effect was to keep the people in the role of supplicants in order to demonstrate the power of the state, whose occasional generosity was an instrument of domination. The people were thrown back on the good will of the authorities, and thereby forced into good behaviour. But may a consciously willed shortage of buildings, or telephones, or cars be inferred from this? Would not the negative side effects have represented too great a danger? That danger might be exemplified by the roaring trade in vehicle registration, or by the black market in used cars, which, in a mutual understanding between buyers and sellers, were not infrequently sold off at double the price of new ones. In the 1970s and 80s, the state was obliged to look on completely helplessly as this criminal behaviour was practiced by all social groups.[22]

At the same time, shortages in the GDR produced an enormous variety of beneficiaries within the population. These were people in the happy position of being able to offer such services or material objects of exchange as were very much in demand. Shortages bestowed an undeserved increase in power on workmen, sales people, doctors, waiters, taxi drivers, and many others. Furthermore, anyone with access to West-Marks (D-Mark) was able to occupy a privileged position. Such people could use D-Marks to purchase goods imported from the West in the so-called Intershops or through the 'Genex' gift stores[23] and were themselves able to overcome gaps in the supply of consumer goods and services in the GDR.

When confronted with these examples, however, one ought not to overlook instances of honourable everyday behaviour. A moral stance according to which the work that one did should be well done was not as rare as it often appears to have been in retrospect. The 'honour of workers' as the 'honour of work' (also 'quality work' or *Wertabeit*), often pompously conjured up in GDR media, was also to be found in the real world,[24] as was the work ethic of engineers, who were very far from being invariably well-disposed toward this state. Still, they turned their hands to practical problem-solving because they wanted to create things of enduring worth. Their commitment was to the work for its own sake, to meeting a technical challenge with a practical solution, often through ingenious improvisation.[25] There are numerous examples of courageous 'black developments' –

i.e. the unauthorised construction of machines, installations, and consumer goods by inventive engineers and craftsmen – undertaken against the ruling bureaucracy.[26]

A game of mastering social conflict: Letting off steam and gesturing toward authority

The petty everyday swindle for private gain – lifting one's 'due' portion of state-owned 'people's property' (*Volkseigentum*) or just 'taking it back' – was a matter of course in the daily routine of the GDR. 'People joked together about socialism and collectively stole from the state.'[27] Many gained a sort of compensation from the resources of state-owned concerns by 'organising' usable goods and materials from the workplace and 'transferring' them to one's home, putting business transport facilities to private use, or by abusing a considerable proportion of their work-time in running private errands: going to the doctor's or the barber's, but most frequently going shopping.

These were instances of gaining personal advantages at the expense of GDR society without any sense of wrongdoing. But they were not acts of refusal. Still less were they examples of resistance, whose exaggeration in memory[28] increases with the passing of time since the downfall of the GDR. The majority of GDR citizens quite consciously applied the rules of the game and made the most of their room for manoeuvre. This behaviour was also cultivated by celebrated theatre folk whose calculated acts of artistic provocation constituted a kind of moderate insubordination designed to please their intellectual audience in much the same way that workers increasingly availed themselves of their position of growing power within this 'worker-orientated society' (*arbeiterlichen Gesellschaft*).[29]

From the foundation of the GDR onward, the writing of petitions was one of the extensively performed rituals in the population's dealings with the power of the State and the Party. Statistically speaking, almost every GDR household drew up one petition between 1949–89.[30] With this explicitly permitted possibility of articulating suggestions and wishes for the improvement of the social system, the rulers were able to bring their critics closer to hand. Petitioning was a bridging exercise fraught with contradictions. If it was at first exclusively a matter of drawing up individual petitions addressing an almost unapproachable authority, this social practice then turned into an ambivalent one, somewhere between social engagement and striving for personal advantage, created and increasingly successfully used by the petitioners. Thus, it remained increasingly unclear whether it did add up to participation in regulating the social affairs of engaged citizens, as the apparat constantly and verbosely demanded under its motto of 'socialist democracy'. Or were these statements just embellishments of self-interested aspirations? The desire for definitive solutions to the individually articulated problem-cases was principally connected with the expectation of personal

advantages (a home, a place in a *crèche*, a car or some other high-grade consumer durable, and so on), but also with the sincere hope of being able to improve 'actually existing Socialism' in the GDR by pointing to the shortcomings of the system – from ill-fitting sweaters for children, to a constantly malfunctioning new electric shaver, to unbearable housing. In this respect, the practice of petitioning also constituted a popular attempt at the creation of a public sphere addressing problems in supply. Petitions were directed not least to the press, radio, and television.[31] In a way, the population thus enjoyed a vested right to reply. While it was indeed a right strictly limited to response, the population was certainly able to exercise it exorbitantly. What ensued was a game that could be played by both sides. With their innumerable petitions, the citizens were able to give themselves some 'breathing space' and feel that they were being recognised. They were able to take up a considerable portion of the bureaucracy's working capacity. But the answers from the administrative organisations came out just as unflappably, monotonously telling everyone to wait for better times ahead. Even the threat of refusing to 'participate' any longer – of not going out to vote, for example, or submitting an application for permission to emigrate – gradually exhausted its potency from the authorities' perspective. Individual cases did sometimes result in better accommodation or in a new car. More often, however, they ended in an appeal for understanding that the problem in question was unfortunately 'not yet' soluble at the moment, or perhaps that, regrettably, the appeal was unjustified. Writing petitions was used as a safety valve for a huge variety of discontents. But of course by not one jot did this activity change the system or the supply problems.

Retail trade constantly had to play the thankless role of a buffer zone. It was caught between a 'supply mission' dictated from above, that is by the apparat, but which in practice was far too often unsupported by the adequate provision of goods, and the offer, vehemently demanded from below, of a better range of consumer goods and services. On the one hand, the population was constantly told that the leadership was doing everything possible to close the gaps in supply. But counterposed to this was the routine experience of seeing that many goods were not available in the shops, and that the quality of those products that were available was unsatisfactory. Consumers in the GDR had good prospects of enhancing their position by laying widespread claims to the so-called 'customer rights' charter. This text, promulgated as a law, was certainly couched in customer-friendly terms, and strengthened customers' claims in relation to commerce. It was easy to portray the shortages of goods simply because there were so many shortages. As a result, consumers acquired a powerful potential for action. On the one hand, they were invariably dependent on the goodwill of sales staff able to grant or deny them things. On the other, the right to a simple exchange of goods, and even to the shop's buying them back, costly and often practically hopeless as it was, gave them repeated opportunities to exact revenge on

vendors, or at least of stemming the overflow of their power. True, frustrated consumers could do little more than enter into a shadowboxing contest with retail trade, which, as a quasi-opposing force, was obliged to stand in for the state and become a scapegoat for the state. But in this act at least, the customer was often king.

Active disengagement: Moments of alternative culture

In the media and in academic literature alike, the GDR is often described as a *Nischengesellschaft* – a 'niche-society' or a 'society of nooks and crannies'. The concept refers to the practices of refusal and of individual withdrawal, whether from the world of work or of private life. Exit-points in one's spare time might lead just as readily to private weekend homes as to church discussion circles. Moreover, the West German television journalist Peter Merseburger advanced the proposition that every day, with the beginning of the evening programme of West German television, many GDR citizens left the country – in their minds at least. In the context of the evident orientation of GDR youth toward western fashions, musical directions, and consumer styles, a 'flight of the mind from the Republic' is often construed.[32] Set against this is the fact that it was precisely many youths who, since the 1970s, had put into practice a regular breakout from the everyday as a conscious living out of their imaginings of an alternative culture within the GDR. On weekdays, they were well behaved and inconspicuous as they carried out the duties of their jobs. But at the weekends they fell out of line with social expectations, and planned and acted out their very own weekend excesses. The 'Jeans-and-Parka-Brigade' (*Jeans-und-Parka Fraktion*)[33] is an instance of self-determined social disengagement and movement into the free spaces which GDR society left open.

Other possibilities for expanding the narrow everyday of the GDR are unmistakeably ambivalent in their relationship with active consent and passive acceptance. From the 1950s onward, the semi-annual Leipzig Trade Fair opened up a brief temporal window on the world for business people and functionaries, from 1970 onward the Berlin 'Festival of the Political Song' developed into an international event of youth culture. Running for a week in February every year, it constituted a 'political carnival' (as the song-writer Hans-Eckardt Wenzel put it) that was also attractive to youth critical of the GDR. With its army of official organisers, some of whom had careerist intentions while others were motivated by sincere conviction, and others again simply by their desire for adventure and international glamour, it opened up an eight-day 'window on the world'. This was 'also used by cultural functionaries in order to let some fresh air into the country'.[34] The *polit-fair* became a weekend occasion for the whole family. Undoubtedly, these events were subject to extensive political control. As a rule, however, participants put up with this fact because the festival offered one of the few

possibilities of feeling oneself to be part of the worldwide Left and – before there was such a thing as a 'Carnival of Cultures' (*Karneval der Kulturen*) in West Berlin – of participating in international cultural life.

Conclusion

By way of a summary, I would like to throw three ideas into sharp relief. First, in the various phases of the GDR's 40 years of existence there were diverse motives at least for partially and temporarily believing the State's promises on consumption and social policy. On occasion, the latter were perfectly seriously meant. Second, impossible as they were for the population to redeem, these promises regarding consumption made by the rulers in the GDR – and made not least against the background of ostentatious consumption in the West, which the East Germans were continuously able to follow – had a significant share in causing the collapse of that state. At least in the 1980s, the gap between promises of improvement and actual deliveries widened conspicuously. Thus, the prospect of a better future in one's own lifetime dwindled. Third, there were nevertheless manifold grounds for people to make their accommodations with the system and to go along with some exacting demands, even to be actually loyal, often to be torn at heart, sometimes indeed to the point of schizophrenia. Critical collaboration and partial refusal were frequently extremely close neighbours. Within this 'societal game' there were nevertheless opportunities to avail oneself of gaps and niches, and of wriggling through. The latter entailed the knowledge and employment of the omnipresent rules of state and party, while taking due note of the boundaries that were not to be transgressed if one wished to avoid punishment. It was possible to satisfy many consumer needs, but by no means all of them. Always accompanied by a consciousness of the obvious risks, everyone's restless hunt for coveted objects to brighten everyday life did, it is true, demand great circumspection. It was therefore also strenuous. Thus, shopping in the GDR remained time-consuming, heavy work even while shopping in the West had long since become a pleasurable activity.

Translated by Peter Lambert

Notes

1. See Ina Merkel (ed.), *'Wir sind doch nicht die Mecker-Ecke der Nation': Briefe an das DDR-Fernsehen* (Köln: Böhlau, 1998), p. 9.
2. Cf. Lutz Niethammer, Alexander von Plato, Dorothee Wierling, *Volkseigene Erfahrung* (Berlin: Rowohlt-Berlin-Verl., 1991).
3. Cf. Dietrich Mühlberg, *Woher wir wissen, was Kultur ist. Gedanken zur geschichtlichen Ausbildung der aktuellen Kulturauffassung* (East Berlin: Verl. d. Wiss., 1983).

4. Cf. Adenauer's supplementary protocol to the Treaties of Rome of 23. 5. 1957: With reference to 'particular requirements respecting the import of bananas into the Federal Republic'. See Bernd Jürgen Warneken, 'Banane', in Hermann Bausinger et al. (eds), *Wörter, Sachen, Sinne. Eine kleine volkskundliche Enzyklopädie* (Tübingen: Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde, 1992), p. 24.
5. Cf. Georg Seeßlen, 'Die Banane: Ein mythopolitischer Bericht', in Rainer Bohn, Knut Hicketier and Eggo Müller (eds), *Mauer-Show: Das Ende der DDR, die deutsche Einheit und die Medien* (Berlin: Ed. Sigma, 1992), p. 56.
6. Gottfried Korff, 'Rote Fahnen und Bananen: Notizen zur Symbolik im Prozess der Vereinigung von DDR und BRD', *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde*, Vol. 86 (1990), 147.
7. Eli Rubin, *Synthetic Socialism. Plastics and Dictatorship in the German Democratic Republic*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), Ch. 1, pp. 17–42, esp. pp. 33–42.
8. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, 'The German Ideology', in *Idea*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5 (London, 1976), pp. 19–539; p. 47.
9. Rainer Gries, *Produkte als Medien. Kulturgeschichte der Produktionskommunikation in der Bundesrepublik und in der DDR* (Leipzig: Leipziger Univ.-Verlag, 2003), pp. 229–30.
10. Cf. the most popular cartoon-series on the 'Digedags', in 'Mosaik', a Comic-Magazine since the mid-1950s, cf. Thomas Kramer, *Micky, Marx und Manitu. Zeit- und Kulturgeschchte im Spiegel des DDR-Comics 1955–1990* (Berlin: Weidler, 2002).
11. Dirk Schindelbeck, *Marken, Moden und Kampagnen* (Darmstadt: Primus, 2003), p. 121.
12. Annette Kaminsky, *Wohlstand, Schönheit, Glück: Kleine Konsumgeschichte der DDR* (München: Beck, 2001), p. 56.
13. *Eadem*, *Kaufrausch: Die Geschichte der ostdeutschen Versandhäuser* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1998), p. 17.
14. Patrice G. Poutrus, *Die Erfindung des Goldbroilers: Über den Zusammenhang zwischen Herrschaftssicherung und Konsumentwicklung in der DDR* (Köln: Böhlau, 2002), p. 225.
15. Cf. Peter Skyba, 'Sozialpolitik als Herrschaftssicherung: Entscheidungsprozesse und Folgen in der DDR', in Clemens Vollnhals and Jürgen Weber (eds), *Der Schein der Normalität. Alltag und Herrschaft in der SED-Diktatur* (München: Olzog, 2002), p. 44.
16. Konrad H. Jarausch, 'Realer Sozialismus als Fürsorgediktatur: Zur begrifflichen Einordnung der DDR', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, Vol. 20 (1998), 33–46.
17. André Steiner, 'Zwischen Frustration und Verschwendung: Zu den wirtschaftlichen Determinanten der DDR-Konsumkultur', in Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst (ed.), *Wunderwirtschaft: DDR-Konsumkultur in den 60er Jahren* (Köln: Böhlau, 1996), p. 35.
18. Günter Manz, Ekkehard Sachse, and Gunnar Winkler (eds), *Sozialpolitik in der DDR: Ziele und Wirklichkeit* (Berlin: Trafo, 2001). On this, see also my review, 'Insider-Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in der DDR', *Online-Journal für Kultur, Wissenschaft und Politik*, (January 2003), available online at http://www.kulturation.de/ki_1_rezi.php?id=14
19. Günter Manz (ed.), *Das materielle und kulturelle Lebensniveau des Volkes und seine volkswirtschaftliche Planung* (East Berlin: Dietz, 1975), p. 41.

20. Ina Merkel, *Utopie und Bedürfnis: Die Geschichte der Konsumkultur in der DDR* (Köln: Böhlau, 1999), p. 12.
21. See *ibid.*, p. 11 ff. for a discussion of the background to this now widely used concept.
22. Cf. Gries, *Produkte als Medien*, p. 272; Stefan Wolle, *Die heile Welt der Diktatur: Alltag und Herrschaft in der DDR 1971–1989* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1997), pp. 218–9. On the political-economic policies of the GDR cf. also Jonathan Zatlin, *The Currency of Socialism. Money and Political Culture in East Germany* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007); for the craving for automobiles, and in particular used ones, cf. Zatlin, *Currency*, 'The Vehicle of Desire', pp. 203–42, and Eli Rubin, 'The Trabant: Consumption, Eigen-Sinn and Movement', *History Workshop Journal*, No. 68 (2009), 27–44.
23. For this, cf. Katrin Böske, 'Abwesend anwesend. Eine kleine Geschichte des Intershops' in Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst (ed.), *Wunderwirtschaft*, pp. 214–22; Franka Schneider, '*"Jedem nach dem Wohnsitz seiner Tante": Die GENEX Geschenksdienst GmbH*' Ibid., pp. 223–232.
24. For concrete examples see Niethammer and others, *Volkseigene Erfahrung (as note 2)*; cf. Annegret Schüle, *'Die Spinne". Erfahrungsgeschichte weiblicher Industriearbeit im VEB Leipziger Baunwollspinnerei* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2001); Alf Lüdtke, 'The World of Men's Work, East and West', in Katherine Pence and Paul Betts (eds), *Socialist Modern. East German Everyday Culture and Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), pp. 234–49.
25. For one case from a rural center of agricultural machinery (*MTS*) see Alf Lüdtke, 'Meister der Landtechnik oder Grenzen der Feldforschung? Annäherungen an einen "Qualitätsarbeiter" auf dem Lande im Bezirk Erfurt', in Daniela Münkel, Jutta Schwarzkopf (eds), *Geschichte als Experiment. Studien zu Politik, Kultur und Alltag im 19.und 20. Jahrhundert. Festschr. f. Adelheid von Saldern* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus, 2004), pp. 243–57; as to the pre-1945 (and 'capitalist') background cf. Alf Lüdtke, 'The "Honor of Labor": Industrial Workers and the Power of Symbols under National Socialism', in David Crew (ed.), *Nazism and German Society, 1933–1945* (2nd ed.) (London, New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 67–109.
26. Cf. Friedrich Thießen (ed.), *Zwischen Plan und Pleite: Erlebnisberichte aus der Arbeitswelt der DDR* (Köln: Böhlau, 2001).
27. Stefan Wolle, 'Sehnsucht nach der Diktatur? Die heile Welle des Sozialismus als Erinnerung und Wirklichkeit', *Der Schein der Normalität*, 37.
28. In this connection, the conscious renunciation of plastic products, regardless of how it was justified, can scarcely be interpreted as a form of rejection of the state. Cf. Eli Rubin 'The Order of Substitutes: Plastic Consumer Goods in the *Volkswirtschaft* and Everyday Domestic Life in the GDR', in David F. Crew (ed.), *Consuming Germany in the Cold War* (Oxford: Berg, 2003), pp. 87–120.
29. Wolfgang Engler, *Die Ostdeutschen: Kunde von einem verlorenen Land* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1999), p. 200. On the reception of this concept, cf. *idem*, *Die Ostdeutschen als Avantgarde* (Berlin: Aufbau, 2004), pp. 73ff.
30. Cf. Felix Mühlberg, 'Eingaben als Instrument informeller Konfliktbewältigung', in Evemarie Badstübner (ed.), *Befremdlich anders: Leben in der DDR* (Berlin: K. Dietz, 2000), p. 233.
31. Cf. Gries, *Produkte als Medien*, p. 264.
32. Dorothee Wierling, *Geboren im Jahr Eins: Der Jahrgang 1949 in der DDR – Versuch einer Kollektivbiographie* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2002), p. 215.

33. Cf. Michael Rauhut and Thomas Kochan, *Bye bye, Lübben City: Bluesfreak, Tramps und Hippies in der DDR* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2004).
34. Andreas Herbst, Winfried Ranke and Jürgen Winkler, *So funktionierte die DDR: Lexikon der Organisaqtionen und Institutionen* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1994), p. 279.

Part III

Postcolonial Settings 1950–1990: Dimensions of Subjectivity

10

North Korea and the Education of Desire: Totalitarianism, Everyday Life, and the Making of Post-Colonial Subjectivity

Charles K. Armstrong

The construction of the social

North Korea's revolutionary project, begun in the late 1940s, involved to no small degree the construction of new social categories and group identities. This entailed both horizontal and vertical divisions: the categorisation and organisation of individuals into groups according to gender, age, and occupation (farmers, workers, youth, women, and white-collar workers or intellectuals), on the horizontal plane; and delineation according to class background on the vertical plane. According to Hannah Arendt's classic account of totalitarianism, the totalitarian state creates a mobilised mass out of a society of atomised individuals, among whom prior class categories have broken down.[1] Korea, however, was no such 'mass society'.[2] To be sure, the Japanese colonial occupation attempted to subordinate class to nation and empire in a quasi-totalitarian fashion, especially in its latter war-mobilisation phase, as discussed by Michael Kim in this volume. But the post-war North Korean regime attempted to make social categories more explicit, rather than less, by carefully recording the social stratum (*sŏngbun*) of each individual. Once this categorisation was carried out, however, the state attempted to reverse the previous hierarchy and to put those of 'good *sŏngbun*', or the formerly 'persecuted classes', on top. That is, the result of the North Korean revolution was not the elimination of social hierarchy as such, as became clear after the Korean War, but a radical change in the content of hierarchy. We may see this in part as reflecting pre-modern Korean society, which was far more rigidly stratified than, for example, China.[3] The hereditary three-tiered structure of 'core class', 'wavering class', and 'hostile class' that became explicit in North Korea from the 1960s onward was based on one's own actions or one's ancestors actions during the colonial period and the Korean

War; such stratification was made possible by the careful categorisation of all North Korean citizens by social strata beginning in 1946, which resonated with the three-class structure of *yangban* (aristocrat), commoner, and outcast/slave that dominated Chosŏn society.[4] The content of hierarchy was vastly different between Chosŏn and the DPRK, but for both, the fluid nature of liberal society was anathema.

These changes in social strata were brought about by what the North Korean regime called 'democratic reforms' in the spring and summer of 1946 – including land reform, labour reform, and new legal and institutional structures – which together turned North Korean society upside-down virtually overnight. As sudden as these changes were, however, they were not merely imposed from the top, but – and especially in the case of land reform – combined central dictates with local participation, implementation, and input. Even strongly critical sources, such as the US military government in the South, could see that 'sweeping changes have been wrought in the accepted social pattern of North Korea',[5] changes that constituted a 'far-reaching social revolution'.[6]

Extensive social mobility would have occurred in Korea after colonialism ended regardless of the form of the new state with the loss of the stratum of colonial rulers, the removal of Korean collaborators, and the seizure of land belonging to the former two groups by poor peasants, which occurred even before the communists came to power. The North Korean state partly initiated this social mobility, but also attempted to channel and direct it.[7] The state's goal was social equality through land redistribution, social welfare measures, and legal abolition of discrimination against previously underprivileged elements of society. Toward this end, such groups were drawn into the political process and organised into large associations or 'social organisations' – in particular, farmers, workers, and women's and youth leagues.

In this regard, the North Korean state in its formative phase (from the end of Japanese rule in 1945 to the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950) reflected the general development of the modern state in a highly compressed time frame, aided by the presence of Soviet occupiers and advisors. Scalapino and Lee have rightly said of the North Korean Worker's Party that 'no modern party, communist or otherwise, had ever placed so much emphasis on the politics of mass mobilisation.'[8] By the time the DPRK was founded in 1948, most adult residents of North Korea likely belonged to one or more state-sponsored organisations. However, Scalapino and Lee give the impression that all of these groups were created out of nothing by fiat of the ruling party; in fact, the regime seems largely to have given unity, structure, and leadership to organisations that already existed in one form or another. Moreover, the peasants, workers, women, and youth who were the main targets of mass mobilisation were not only organised, but defined and given new social roles and identities.

The Korean War deepened the North Korean state's reliance on social mobilisation. Only metaphorically a war economy when the DPRK was founded, with the outbreak of war in June 1950 North Korea became a genuine wartime state, and remained one ever after. In the post-war period, the migration of thousands of North Korean citizens to the South was detrimental economically but beneficial politically to the North Korean regime, effectively eliminating much potential dissent. Post-war purges and the strengthening of social surveillance, justified by the ever-present fear of South Korean agents, furthered the penetration of state into society and the denial of any legitimate forms of criticism against the government. The war also created a new class of suspicious persons, those whose relatives had fled to or supported South Korea and the US; they and their descendants lay permanently outside the 'core' class of reliable regime supporters. By the 1960s, the DPRK had largely solidified the vertical division of North Korean society that had begun two decades earlier.

The education of desire

From its beginnings and until very recently, the political economy of North Korea has been based on mass mobilisation and collectivism – that is to say, the sublimation of individual consumer desires into large-scale collective projects. For more than 20 years, a program of heavy industry, limited consumer goods, withdrawal from the capitalist world-economy, and planned production seemed to work well, giving North Korea an impressive rate of economic growth far beyond that of the South.[9] By the 1970s, however, such a developmental path was showing limited returns, and by the 1990s the North Korean economy was in a seemingly intractable state of crisis. Like the erstwhile centralised economies of Eastern Europe, North Korea showed great gains in the early stages of industrialisation, but was unable to compete with a capitalism that had developed beyond the stage of mass-production to one that has variously been described as 'post-Fordist', 'post-modern', or 'disorganised'.[10] In particular, such economies have markedly failed to satisfy popular demand for consumer goods, in sharp contrast to what their populations perceive is the case for their advanced capitalist neighbors. 15 years before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Rudolf Bahro predicted that 'the apparatus in Moscow will find itself sitting on a volcano of unsatisfied material needs … [t]he propaganda machine is completely powerless against the mere appearance of the "affluent society".'[11]

Nation and economy

The task of North Korea was both to increase the living standards of the people and to instill in them a productivist ideology. An early DPRK pamphlet stated that 'the living conditions of the broad working masses of

workers, peasants, and *samuwŏn* [white-collar workers] have been fundamentally transformed, and the workers of the new system have changed, work becoming a glorious task.'[12] The first part of society to be mobilised for increased productivity was the peasantry. Immediately after the 1946 land reform, Kim Il Sung exhorted peasants to increase their productivity and transform North Korea 'from a region of food shortage to a region of abundance'.[13]

Implicit in Kim's call for greater agricultural productivity was the problem of food production. Agricultural output was severely hampered by North Korea's separation from the grain-producing areas in the South, a shortage of fertiliser, lack of farm tools, and the confiscation and slaughter of oxen by the Soviet occupation forces in the fall of 1945.[14] The first 18 months after liberation were characterised by a serious food shortage, as both internal documents and intelligence reports repeatedly stress. A local People's Court document attests that right after liberation, production was in a 'state of anarchy' and food was in short supply.[15] Shortly after attaining power, the Provisional People's Committee enforced strict food rationing, including the prohibition of meat and rice in restaurants.[16] Throughout the pre-Korean War years and beyond, food was rationed according to type of work, with particular favouritism shown toward the military.[17] North Korea, like other socialist systems, has always been a 'shortage economy', if more literally than most.[18]

North Korea's leaders never doubted that industry, and heavy industry in particular, would be central to the economic development of their country. The Japanese industrialisation of northern Korea in the 1930s and early 1940s had helped to put North Korea in a unique position among Asian socialist states to follow a Stalinist model of development.[19] The North Korean people were exhorted to construct a democratic 'enlightened industry' essential for 'developing the state economy and improving the people's material and cultural level'.[20] In August 1946, the NKPPC passed a law on the nationalisation of major industries, the last in the series of major social reforms. Overwhelming Japanese control of colonial industry made the transition to state ownership relatively easy: with the Japanese gone, there were few private owners from whom to expropriate. But state ownership marked the end of local People's Committee control of factories and of a brief period of workers' autonomy.[21]

The first of two one-year plans for 'National Economic Rehabilitation and Development' was adopted in February 1947. Kim Il Sung announced that only under a single state plan 'can the economy be restored and developed really quickly, and the people's standard of living be raised'. The plan called for a 92 per cent growth in industrial production over the previous year, concentrating on construction, steel, coal, chemicals, power, and transportation, especially railroads.[22] As US intelligence reports noted, North Korea's state economic planning followed the Soviet model, but also had its precursor in the state capitalism of the Japanese Government General.[23] The main

architects of the 1947 plan were Kim Kwan-jin, a lecturer at Keijo Imperial University who came north in September 1945 and became advisor to the Planning Department, and Yi Mun-han, who had studied economics in Japan and headed the Department of Industry.[24] Several hundred Japanese technical experts were also retained as advisors in state-run industries.[25]

As in the early years of the Soviet Union and the Peoples' Republic of China, economic development was pursued with the tactics and terminology of war, including 'campaigns', 'mobilisation', and 'assault movements'. Socialist states, particularly North Korea, have had a great deal of difficulty abandoning this method of promoting production and moving into a normalised, 'post-mobilisation' stage of development.[26] 'Whatever the capacities of revolutionary regimes to cope with tasks of economic development,' Theda Skocpol once observed, 'they seem to excel at motivating their populations to make supreme sacrifices for the nation in war.'[27] What Skocpol neglected to mention is that economic development itself is approached with the methods and language of military struggle and sacrifice. It is perhaps in economic development more than any other area that the socialist state links together the primary 'disciplinary institutions' of the barracks, the factory, and even the school.[28]

Mass mobilisation

By the time war broke out in June 1950, North Korea was already a society of mass mobilisation. The Korean War caused utter devastation throughout the peninsula, but especially in the North, which lost nearly half its industrial output, one-quarter of its agricultural output, and millions of its citizens to death and migration.[29] The post-war reconstruction effort was carried out with much the same militaristic methods as the war itself, and the pre-war economic program before that. Indeed, the line between the army and the civilian reconstruction workforce was often a blurry one: Korean People's Army (KPA) draftees were sometimes retained in factory work rather than sent into the army, and active KPA troops were utilised in civilian reconstruction projects.[30] Local peasants were involved in clearing rubble from factories and repairing streets. Hundreds of office workers laboured after hours to repair the main thoroughfare of Stalin Street in Pyongyang (renamed Victory Street in 1956).[31] The Democratic Youth League (DYL), which had played a central role in political organisation before the war, mobilised children and young people to rebuild schools and cultural facilities.[32]

The reconstruction effort rehabilitated North Korea's industrial sector in a remarkably short time, but the effect on the standard of living of ordinary North Koreans was mixed. In December 1953, the DPRK government canceled all pre-Korean War debts owed by the peasantry, a decree that was understandably well received by the hard-pressed Korean farmers.[33] But the Party leadership debated fiercely about the priorities to be given

to overall industrialisation versus focusing on increasing the production of consumer goods and improving the livelihood of the masses. At the Sixth Plenum of the KWP Central Committee, for example, some representatives advocated eliminating the ration system and increasing wages, while others wished to increase quantities of rations instead. Ultimately the Central Committee decided to keep the rationing system in place but to reduce the price of certain consumer items and increase wages. In April, the regime increased workers' wages an average of 25 per cent, although there were still complaints of excessively high prices.[34]

North Korea had embarked on a Stalinist program of rapid industrialisation as early as its first economic plan of 1947, with particular emphasis on heavy industry, including chemicals, steel, and hydroelectric power.[35] The DPRK after the Korean War would again put first priority on rebuilding heavy industry. Kim Il Sung's report to Soviet ambassador Suzdalev at the end of July 1953 emphasised the need for rapidly rebuilding North Korea's heavy industrial base, particularly machine-tools.[36] In the first two years of post-war reconstruction some 80 per cent of industrial investment, or nearly 40 per cent of total investment, went into heavy industry, a proportion quite similar to China at the time or East European countries a few years earlier.[37] North Korea's emphasis on heavy industry was partly due to the existence of a pre-war industrial infrastructure built in the latter part of the Japanese colonial period. Although much of this infrastructure had been heavily damaged or destroyed in the Korean War, re-building was a simpler task than building from scratch – the plans and technical knowledge already existed, and experts from more advanced fraternal countries were there to help. But, as Kim had expressed earlier, the North Korean leadership was keen on redirecting industry from the distortions of colonial development. For example, Kim pointed out, the Japanese had built major factories on the coasts, convenient for shipping to Japan but far from the sources of raw materials and poorly suited for Korea's domestic needs. Therefore existing plants should not merely be reconstructed, but new factories and the infrastructure serving them should be built to better serve the needs of North Korea.[38] The new economic plans laid out a careful sequence of rehabilitation and development leading toward industrial self-sufficiency, beginning with sources of power and raw materials (especially electricity generation and mining), and moving on to the production of basic industrial goods such as iron, steel, machine tools, ships, automobile parts, and chemicals, including chemical fertiliser.[39]

The Soviet Union supplied much of the technical advice and material assistance, but the North Koreans' ambitions did not always follow Soviet guidelines. Until the war, North Korea had largely been a source of primary goods for the USSR, but North Korean planners after the war wanted to focus on manufactured goods, including goods for export outside the Soviet bloc, something the Soviet advisors did not think practical. The 1954–56 plan paid a great deal of attention to textile production, an area

that had overwhelmingly been concentrated in the South before division, in order to make the DPRK more self-sufficient in clothing and textiles, another policy that the Soviets advised against.[40] The thrust of the post-war rehabilitation plan was toward autarky rather than incorporation into a Soviet-centered international division of labour. The establishment of a 'socialist division of labour' was not something that had been of much interest to Stalin, who preferred to extract what the USSR needed from occupied territories after World War II and otherwise let the 'satellite' countries fend for themselves. Khrushchev attempted much more forcefully to rationalise economic relations among socialist states, an attempt that North Korea resisted to the end. North Korea never joined the Soviet-directed Council on Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), for instance, and even scheduled its economic plans so as not to coincide with those of the other socialist countries.

It is useful to contrast North Korea's post-war industrialisation program to contemporary projects in Eastern Europe, about which the North Koreans were reasonably well-informed – the DPRK only had diplomatic relations with other socialist countries until 1958, when it established diplomatic ties to Algeria and Guinea.[41] In 1953, there were major workers' protests in East Germany and Czechoslovakia, and partly as a response to this the Soviet Union reduced its demand for reparations from the GDR, and the Czech and East German governments redirected resources toward improving living standards of ordinary citizens to some extent.[42] North Korean planners, meeting with Soviet advisors in the spring of 1954, said that they had paid careful attention to the experiences and mistakes of the 'people's democracies' in economic planning, particularly the need to pay attention to the livelihoods of ordinary citizens.[43] In fact, however, DPRK economic planning was heavily skewed toward developing North Korea's independent industrial base, and in particular its military complex.

Reconstruction was, in a sense, war by other means. Kim Il Sung and his group of former Manchurian partisans at the center of power in the DPRK were, after all, people who had never known anything but guerrilla war, conventional war, and a brief period of Stalinist economic construction between (which could also be seen as a species of war mobilisation). The production of consumer goods and the improvement of everyday life among the masses was a secondary concern to the creation of a powerful industrial state. In post-war North Korea, unlike in Eastern Europe, there were no messy workers' protests with which to contend. The population itself was a resource to be channeled into industrialisation for the sake of state power, including military power.

Despite North Korea's attempts to move toward self-sufficiency – or at least the production of its own industrial necessities – as quickly as possible, post-war rehabilitation in the DPRK was overwhelmingly dependent on aid from abroad, and from the Soviet Union in particular. In 1955 Moscow agreed

to transfer technology to North Korea virtually for free. Between 1956 and 1958 alone the USSR gave North Korea grants and credits in the range of 300 million rubles, and by 1959 the total amount of Soviet aid may have been as high as 2.8 billion rubles, or $690 million (USD) at then-current exchange rates.[44] According to contemporary Soviet sources, by the end of the Five-Year Plan in 1960, Soviet aid accounted for 40 per cent of North Korea's electricity generation, 53 per cent of coke production, 51 per cent of cast iron, 22 per cent of steel, 45 per cent of reinforced concrete blocks and 65 per cent of cotton fabric.[45] Thousands of North Koreans received technical training in the USSR and Eastern Europe, and over 10,000 North Korean students were enrolled in universities and colleges in Soviet-bloc countries during the reconstruction period.

And yet despite – or perhaps because of – this dependence, the DPRK leadership was bitterly divided over North Korea's economic relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the late 1950s. Between 1956 and 1958, Kim Il Sung and his group opposed integration into an international division of labor led by the USSR, in which North Korea would exchange its primary products for manufactured goods from the European socialist countries. Kim's opponents argued against excessive self-reliance, and called for less emphasis on heavy industry and more on light industry and consumer goods. These arguments over economic policy became embroiled in turn with power struggles among pro-Soviet, pro-Chinese, and Manchurian guerrilla factions within the DPRK ruling group, as well as the debate over collective leadership inspired by Khrushchev's 'de-Stalinisation' in the USSR. In the end, Kim's line of collectivisation, nationalism, self-reliance and heavy-industry-first development won the day, and those who opposed him paid, in many cases, with their lives.

Although foreign aid was drastically reduced in the early 1960s, North Korea remained dependent on long-term loans from the USSR and other socialist countries until the Soviet Union collapsed. By 1989, half of DPRK foreign trade was with the USSR, and North Korea's debts to the Soviet Union amounted to nearly a year's worth of exports.[46] It seems that DPRK planners did not seriously take into account the loss of foreign assistance when they formulated the first seven-year economic plan (1961–67). As a result, the plan could not be fulfilled and had to be extended by three years, making it a de facto ten-year plan (1961–70). Thereafter, North Korea would never fulfill its economic plans on time, and after the mid-1960s would not even publish concrete statistics on economic output (as opposed to percentage increases). We can see this as the beginning of North Korea's long, protracted economic decline. North Korea was, in a sense, a victim of its own early economic success, entering a cul-de-sac of development from which it would not recover for decades.

This grim fate could hardly have been foreseen by anyone in or outside of North Korea in the mid-1950s. As late as 1974, a pair of Western economists

could declare the DPRK an economic success story offering 'an alternative development theory which turns upside down all the accepted premises of Western economic thinking'.[47] North Korea announced its Three-Year Plan completed after a breathtaking (and back-breaking) two years and eight months. Official production statistics were dazzling and, for the most part, probably even true. Industry was, of course, the centerpiece of the plan, and industrial production in 1956 was 2.9 times that of 1953 and double the last full pre-war year of 1949. Agricultural production had increased 124 per cent compared to 1953 and 108 per cent compared to 1949, helped by massive increases in irrigation, supplies of chemical fertiliser, tractors, and farm equipment. More than 80 new large and medium-sized industrial establishments had been built, along with hundreds of schools, hospitals, theatres, and cinemas. Entirely new industrial towns had been established in Hŭich'on and Kusŏng, and new centers of light industry in East Pyongyang and of machine building in the Nagwŏn-Pukchung region had sprung up.[48]

All of this was in the name of 'socialist transformation', meaning that the state directed the economy and the people were moved into collective forms of association. State-run and cooperative industry, which had accounted for 90.7 per cent of North Korea's industry before the war, was now up to 98 per cent. By the end of 1956, 80.9 per cent of peasant households were in agricultural cooperatives. Shiny new farmhouses on efficient cooperative farms had replaced the ramshackle huts of traditional villages, and the state was able to claim that 'Korea's countryside has now been freed forever from poverty.' In the cities, North Korea's factory and office workers had received an average wage increase of 35 per cent between November 1956 and June 1957 alone.[49] The propaganda about a 'heroic new age' for the North Korean people was not entirely unjustified.

Socialist spaces

Pyongyang, the capital of the DPRK, is the place where one may best observe the utopic dreams of the North Korean regime played out in the spaces of everyday life. The city, especially the capital city, had long played a central role in state socialist projects, beginning with 'Red Moscow' in the 1920s.[50] For Marxist-Leninists, modern industrial cities both exemplified the evils of capitalist exploitation, and held the potential for planning and re-ordering urban life according to rational, 'scientific' socialist ideals.[51] The idea of a city as a laboratory for building utopia had deep roots in the European Enlightenment, going back as far as Tommaso Campanella's *City of the Sun* from the early 17th century, a book viewed favourably by Soviet planners in the 1930s – just as the Soviet Union's most radical urban experiment, the entirely planned industrial city of Magnitogorsk in the Ural Mountains, was taking shape.[52] Pyongyang would also be a 'City of the Sun', in this case of the Great Leader Kim Il Sung, 'Sun of the Nation'. The utter destruction of Pyongyang

gave North Korean urban planners a virtual blank slate on which to create an ideal city. The only comparable urban experiment in the post-war socialist world was East Berlin, which had faced similar devastation but was only half a city; in Pyongyang, North Koreans had an entire capital to reconstruct. As Pyongyang evolved in succeeding decades, it would be a unique showcase of Korean-style socialism, full of monuments, straight streets, clean parks, and pastel-colored high-rise buildings. Pyongyang rebuilt from the ashes looked like no other city in Asia, with the possible exception of Singapore, another carefully planned and policed city under authoritarian rule. And unlike other socialist third-world countries such as China and Cuba, the DPRK did not have an anti-urban bias in its ideology or economic policies; on the contrary, Pyongyang was consistently stressed as the center of national life, the heart of the social organism in which only the privileged and politically well-behaved could reside. At times, such as during the famine of the 1990s, the appendages of the country – the outer provinces – could even be sacrificed so that the heart would live.

Pyongyang was the center and showcase of North Korea's post-war rehabilitation effort. According to later DPRK sources, during the Korean War the US Air Force dropped 428,748 bombs on Pyongyang, or approximately one for every resident of the city.[53] The greatest devastation came in the spring of 1951, when much of the city was reduced to ashes. Rehabilitation of the capital began within a few days of the Armistice under DPRK Internal Decision Number 125, 'On the Reconstruction of Pyongyang', announced 30 July 1953.[54] This decision was supposed to fulfill 'the spirit of the Sixth Plenum' of the Korean Workers' Party Central Committee, which outlined the priorities for post-war reconstruction in all of North Korea in early August. In particular, the rebuilding of Pyongyang was intended to correct the 'unenlightened, exploitative, and oppressive character' of Japanese colonial development, and bring order, reason, and an improvement to the quality of life of the citizens of the capital.[55] For example, under the Japanese, 67 per cent of factories were built in residential areas inside the city, while Pyongyang's workers lived in poverty on the city's outskirts. There was a sharp divide between the Korean and Japanese residents of Pyongyang, as there was in other Korean colonial cities, with the Japanese living in privileged neighborhoods and occupying most of the top positions in industry, commerce and government administration. Even though the Japanese constituted no more than 2–3 per cent of the population of colonial Korea, nearly one-quarter of the residents of Pyongyang were Japanese by 1925. In Seoul, the proportion was even higher.[56] The new plans for Pyongyang would separate residential from industrial districts, and create tens of thousands of new 'workers' apartments' for city-dwellers. The numerous historical sites of Pyongyang would be preserved, new architecture would harmonise with the old, and Pyongyang's 'special character' would be preserved as both Korea's oldest city and a 'heroic and modern' new capital.[57]

The chairman of the Pyongyang City Rehabilitation Committee (PCRC), established to oversee this urban reconstruction project, was none other than Premier Kim Il Sung himself, a native of the city. But reconstruction was carried out with the assistance, advice, and close supervision of Soviet technicians and Soviet ambassador Suzdalev.[58] The GDR also sent a team of urban planners to help with the project.[59] The first task was the creation of a 3600 square meter Kim Il Sung Square to commemorate 'victory' in the Fatherland Liberation War (Korean War) and establish a new central space for the city. Work on Kim Il Sung Square began the day after the Armistice was signed, 28 July – two days before the official plans for urban reconstruction were announced. Kim Il Sung Square would be bisected by the city's main North-South axis, Stalin Street, which terminated in the north at the reconstructed Liberation Tower, originally built in 1946 to commemorate Korea's liberation by the Soviet army.[60] The first phase of urban reconstruction ended with the construction of the Pyongyang Grand Theatre at the southern terminus of Stalin Street in 1960. Like its namesake in East Berlin, Stalinallee, Pyongyang's Stalin Street was to be lined with multi-story showcase residential buildings.[61]

The PCRC claimed that some 13,000 new residences had been built by the end of 1953, but the priority of the initial reconstruction period was on public spaces and structures rather than private dwelling-places.[62] These included, in addition to Kim Il Sung Square, a Mao Zedong Square, a People's Army Square, a National Theatre, two new department stores, a sports stadium on Moranbong Hill, a movie studio, an international hotel, and the reconstruction and expansion of Kim Il Sung University and Moranbong Theatre. All of these projects were completed within a year, an astonishing tempo that later came to be called 'Pyongyang Speed'.[63] Under the slogans 'Let us rapidly rehabilitate and reconstruct the heroic city of Pyongyang!' and 'All for the post-war rehabilitation and development of the national economy!' the citizenry of Pyongyang attacked reconstruction as if it were a military campaign. This campaign began in earnest in June 1954, when the PCRC launched a competition to achieve the major goals of reconstruction by the ninth anniversary of Korea's liberation from colonial rule, 15 August 1954.[64] The PCRC even published a newspaper, *Kŏnsŏlja* (The Constructionist) to report news of the rehabilitation effort. The 1954 competition culminated with the opening of the Memorial Hall for the Fatherland Liberation War on 13 August, just two days before the 15 August anniversary.[65] And yet, still there was no time to rest. The Fourth Decision of the PCRC on 10 February 1955 called for even more accomplishments by the tenth anniversary of liberation on 15 August 1955. These goals focused more on citizens' amenities, including homes, schools, parks, libraries, hospitals, bathhouses, beauty parlors, and social and cultural centers. The 144-day campaign of 1955 mobilised some 4,210,000 soldiers, technicians, students and workers; Kim Il Sung himself allegedly visited all the construction sites

in June 1955.[66] All of these tasks too were fulfilled on time, marking the completion of Pyongyang's basic rehabilitation by mid-August 1955, which coincided with the completion of the Three-Year Plan for the national economy.[67]

Economic reconstruction as war could be effective but had its limits. Although few complaints about the rehabilitation effort appeared in the North Korean media, and the patriotic fervour of much of the population was probably genuine, the strain on the citizens of Pyongyang must have been tremendous. Throughout its history, the DPRK never successfully moved from an economy of war mobilisation to a more relaxed form of economic development, and was still approaching economic problems with the language and tactics of warfare half a century later. In this respect, we can again see North Korea as a victim of some of its early success. In 1957, when the Five-Year Plan was launched, yet more government directives called for dramatic achievements in urban development by the twelfth anniversary of liberation on 15 August, and called on all 'patriotic workers, students, and citizens' to contribute to the struggle. Every office was supposed to devote 15 per cent of its workforce to reconstruction every workday, and all citizens were supposed to volunteer their efforts on Sundays as well. Students from Kim Il Sung University, the Korean Workers' Party Central Party School, the People's Economic University, and Kimch'aek Technical College held competitions for reconstruction work, and students from the provinces also participated 'with loving hearts'.[68] Every year more Pyongyang residents participated in the reconstruction effort: 505,624 in 1954, 584,624 in 1955, 625,431 in 1956, and some 670,000 in 1957.[69] If these numbers are to be believed, of Pyongyang's population of about 1 million in the late 1950s, all but the very young and the very old were active in the project of urban rehabilitation.

The effect of the breakneck pace of urban reconstruction on the lives of ordinary Pyongyangers, and the degree of real enthusiasm about these efforts, is not easy to assess given that no dissenting views appeared in the public record, or for that matter in the reports of the planners that are currently extant. Nevertheless, from the records that do exist we can get some sense of the nature and impact of development on everyday urban life. As elsewhere in the postwar sphere of Soviet domination, housing construction in Pyongyang was for the most part centrally planned, publicly owned, relatively homogeneous, affordable, and functional, tending to emphasise quantity over quality.[70] What is distinctive about the Pyongyang experience, however, is the speed at which public housing was built. The bulk of housing construction in the central area of Pyongyang was completed in the period of the Three- and Five-Year Plans (1954–61); later projects in the 1970s and 80s were concentrated outside the city center. In this early phase, Pyongyang's residential architecture was very much modeled on Berlin, Warsaw, and Moscow, and there were even a few graduates of the German architectural

school of Bauhaus advising North Koreans on urban planning and architecture.[71] Of the entire budget for post-war reconstruction, housing constituted 10.9 per cent in 1955, 14.6 per cent in 1956, and 14.9 per cent in 1957, dropping to 12.8 per cent in 1958.[72] The total area of urban housing construction in all of North Korea amounted to 4,720,000 square meters in 1954–56, and in the 1957–60 period constituted 6,220,000 square meters, of which 1.87 million square meters was for Pyongyang alone.[73] Housing for 17,000 families was constructed in a single 12-day period in February 1958.[74] With ready-made parts and an assembly line of workers, one apartment could be constructed in 14 minutes. Hence, 'Pyongyang Speed' became the slogan for rapid housing construction.[75]

Obviously, at that speed there was little room for variety or quality control. Apartments were thrown together on a standardised model, and as in the *kommunalka* (communal apartments) of the USSR, several families shared a single bathroom and kitchen – as many as 12 families in Pyongyang.[76] Walls were thin, roofs leaked, and electricity was erratic at best. Shoddy, hastily built, and dangerously unmonitored construction was not unique to North Korea, of course, and South Korea would later become notorious for poor oversight of construction as well, the most famous incident being the collapse of an entire department store in Seoul in 1995. But whatever the drawbacks of reconstruction at 'Pyongyang Speed', in a few short years the city had emerged from rubble to become a well-ordered, visibly modern metropolis. Except for the carefully preserved historical monuments, including two of the traditional city gates, hardly anything of colonial or pre-colonial Pyongyang remained. The narrow, crooked streets and chaotic marketplaces that characterised other Asian cities, including parts of Seoul even to this day, had been eliminated, replaced by heroic boulevards, monumental buildings, spacious parks and state-run department stores. Pyongyang was and would remain the nerve center and showpiece of socialist Korea and the model for other DPRK cities.

If socialism meant state ownership of the means of production, the DPRK had indeed accomplished the socialist revolution by the end of the 1950s, as the Party media claimed. North Korea's socialist revolution had been almost too easy. Already when the regime was founded in 1948, more than 90 per cent of industrial concerns were state-owned, most of the factories simply having been expropriated from their absent Japanese owners. By the end of 1958, most of the agricultural sector was also collectivised and state-owned. Nationalisation was more thorough in the DPRK than in any of the People's Democracies of Eastern Europe; almost nothing of the private economy remained by the beginning of the 1960s. North Korea developed what Marx might have called 'barracks socialism', society as a kind of militarised factory under the leadership of a single Supreme Leader.

By the middle of the 1950s, North Korea had an impressive industrial economy by Third World standards, and a consumer economy able to supply

its people with basic necessities on a generally stable basis. The country could have at that point focused its resources on improving the livelihood of its people, and shifted from a militaristic to a more diversified form of economic development. But, because of the instability in the communist bloc, the sense of growing threat from the US and South Korea, and perhaps the difficulty the guerillas who now ran the DPRK had in seeing economic development as anything but war, the regime made a conscious choice to put its resources into military build-up. The economy began to stagnate, and after a few years living conditions began gradually to decline. Perhaps if North Korea had faced a sudden shock like China's Great Leap Forward famine, the pendulum might have shifted toward economic reform and opening a few years down the road. Instead, the North Korean economy suffered a protracted hollowing-out that lasted decades, the country propped up partially by Soviet bloc and Chinese assistance, its people held captive by a relentless and ubiquitous war mobilisation. Fear and hope were turned outward: fear of an imminent threat from the imperialists, against which the people of North Korea were told constantly to stand guard; and hope for unification with the South, which would reward all the suffering of the present. After a relative relaxation in the 1970s and 80s, the acute food shortages that began in the early 1990s shifted the regime toward greater reliance on popular mobilisation once again.[77]

Dominance and hegemony

The North Korean state, like its Stalinist and Japanese militarist predecessors, was no stranger to the instruments of coercion and fear. But on the whole, North Korea's post-colonial nationalism, war mobilisation, isolation, and education have produced a population that appears to be generally and spontaneously loyal to the regime. This is one clear point of difference between North Korea and the late socialist societies of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, as well as contemporary proto-capitalist China. Whereas in daily life under erstwhile 'actually existing socialism' inner belief in the official ideology was less important than 'following the external rituals and practices in which this ideology acquired material existence',[78] in North Korea belief does matter. Indeed, ideology becomes even more important as economic conditions deteriorate and the state relies increasingly on non-material incentives to rally the population. In this sense, unlike in colonial conditions wherein the imperial state practices 'dominance without hegemony' to use Ranaji Guha's phrase,[79] the DPRK until the present has exerted both dominance and hegemony, the latter being the creation of values and meanings to which the mass of the population subscribes. The Japanese colonial state was unable to accomplish this, nor were the successive authoritarian regimes in South Korea.

The post-colonial subjectivity embodied in the concept of *juchesŏng* (*juche*-ness, or literally 'subjectivity'), formed in North Korea during the twenty

years after liberation, has been under severe strain since the late 1980s. For a brief period in the 1960s and 70s, there was a shift in emphasis from war mobilisation to material improvement in daily life.[80] In the years since, daily life has become much more grim for most North Koreans. Everyday life was reduced to a struggle for survival in the famine years of the late 1990s, and although conditions improved with the introduction of foreign aid, much of the population remains near the edge of subsistence. This has had dramatic physical effects, as North Koreans appear shorter and thinner than a generation ago, and physically exhausted. According to the testimony of defectors, some North Koreans would prefer to go to war rather than continue to suffer as they do.[81] There are signs of 'fissures within the conscious myth-making' of North Korean ideology, even in officially-sanctioned literature.[82] At the level of the general economy, the state has given official recognition to private markets and, in 2002, initiated a series of wage and price reforms that marked a major departure from earlier economic practices. The public distribution system for delivering basic foodstuffs has collapsed in much of the country, and with that collapse, socialist consumerism has given way to the gradual, piecemeal emergence of private consumerism. There is, of course, great danger in this shift, as the regime is well aware. Market-oriented economic reforms require the encouragement of consumerist desires, precisely what the DPRK leadership points to (with good reason) as the source of the downfall of communism in Europe and the rise of revisionism in China. The dominance of the regime is not yet seriously in question. Its hegemony, however, is already weakening at the level of everyday life.

Notes

1. Hannah Arendt, *Totalitarianism* (Part Three of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*) (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1951), pp. 3–38.
2. Bruce Cumings, 'Is Korea a Mass Society?', *Occasional Papers on Korea*, No. 1 (1972).
3. James Palais has called the ruling elite in Chosŏn an 'aristocratic/bureaucratic hybrid', in which merit-based entry into the upper strata supplemented, but never replaced, hereditary elite status. James Palais, 'Confucianism and the Aristocratic/Bureaucratic Balance in Korea', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* Vol. 44, No. 2 (December 1984).
4. North Korea's tripartite class structure is not, of course, an explicit policy of the DPRK, but North Korean defectors have consistently referred to it. See *Minnesota Lawyers' Human Rights League, Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea* (Minneapolis: AsiaWatch, 1988).
5. United States Army Forces in Korea, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2. Record Group 332, Box 57. 'North Korea Today', 17.
6. Robert Scalapino and Chong-Sik Lee, *Communism in Korea*, Vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 350.
7. Similarly, Sheila Fitzpatrick argues that Stalinism in the USSR was in part an attempt to control, rather than simply create, a destabilising large-scale upward

social mobility. See 'Cultural Revolution as Class War', in Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928–1931* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), p. 11.

8. Scalapino and Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 375.
9. See United States Central Intelligence Agency, *Korea: The Economic Race Between the North and the South* (Washington, D.C., 1978).
10. See for example Scott Lash and John Urry, *The End of Organized Capitalism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987).
11. Rudolf Bahro, *The Alternative in Eastern Europe*, translated by David Fernbach (London: Verso, 1981), pp. 237–8.
12. RG 242, SA 2006 15/37. Cultural Development Section, Ministry of National Defense, 'Social and State Organs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea', (February 1949), p. 53.
13. Cited in Chong-Sik Lee, 'Land Reform, Collectivization and the Peasants in North Korea', *China Quarterly*, No. 14 (1963), 71.
14. National Archives and Records Administration, United States Army, Far East Command. *G-2 Weekly Summary*, No. 31, (17 April 1946), 6.
15. National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group (RG) 242, shipping advice (SA) 2005, item 8/59. Haeju People's Court, 'Local Situation and Activities' (10 April 1946).
16. *Saegil Sinmun*, 21 March 1946.
17. RG 242, SA 2005 7/57, Supply Section, Pyongyang City People's Committee, *Distribution of Rations* (January 1949).
18. For socialist systems as shortage economies, see Janos Kornai, *The Socialist System: The Political Economy of Communism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 228–301.
19. Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War* Vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 337.
20. RG 242, SA 2007 9/61, Kim Ch'an, *Sangsa taech'a taejop'yo soron [Outline of Industrial Balance Sheets]* (Pyongyang: Munmyŏng sanŏpsa, 1947), p. 5.
21. United States Army, Far East Command, Record Group 319. *Intelligence Summary North Korea* No. 37, (15 June 1947), 9.
22. Kim Il Sung, 'On the 1947 Plan for the Development of the National Economy', in *Works* Vol. 3 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1980), pp. 79, 82.
23. United States Armed Forces in Korea, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Record Group 332, box 57. 'North Korea Today', p. 20.
24. *Intelligence Summary North Korea*, No. 41, 11.
25. United States Army, Far East Command, Allied Translator and Interpreter Section (ATIS), box 4, item 25. Planning Bureau, North Korean Provisional People's Committee, 'Plan of Economic Development to be Achieved by the North Korea People' (1947) ('top secret'), 5.
26. Walder, *Neo-Traditionalism*, p. 8.
27. Theda Skocpol, 'Social Revolutions and Mass Military Mobilization', *World Politics* (January 1988), 150.
28. A children's poem entitled, 'The Factory, My School' read, 'Our, our factory is really good/It is a fun, fun school where we work and learn, learn and work/The elder brothers and sisters of our factory/Systematically transmit to us their skills/In our hearts, each a model worker/Burning with increased output,' *Sonyŏndan* (May 1950), 7.

29. *Postwar Reconstruction and Development of the National Economy of DPRK* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1957), p. 8.
30. Soviet Embassy in DPRK Report (30 June 1954), *Foreign Policy Archives of the Russian Federation (AVPRF)*, Fond 0102, Opis 10, Papka 52, Delo 8.
31. Soviet Embassy in DPRK Report, 15 October 1953, AVPRF, Fond 0102, Opis 9, Papka 44, Delo 9. As it happened, the mobilisation of local workers to construct East Berlin's 'Stalinallee' triggered the first popular uprising in the Soviet bloc, the Berlin uprising of 17 June 1953. No such problems affected reconstruction work in Pyongyang.
32. Soviet Embassy in DPRK Report (7 October 1953), AVPRF, Fond 0102, Opis 9, Papka 44, Delo 9.
33. Soviet Embassy in DPRK Report (13 January 1954), AVPRF, Fond 0102, Opis 9, Papka 44, Delo 9.
34. Soviet Embassy in DPRK Report (28 May 1954), AVPRF, Fond 0102, Opis 9, Papka 44, Delo 9.
35. Charles K. Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945–1950* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), Chapter 5.
36. Kim Il Sung to Suzdalev (31 July 1953), *Enclosure*, pp. 1–3.
37. Masai Okonogi, 'North Korean Communism: In Search of Its Prototype', in Dae-Sook Suh (ed.), *Korean Studies: New Pacific Currents* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), pp. 185–6.
38. Kim, *Postwar Rehabilitation*, p. 11.
39. Kim, *Postwar Rehabilitation*, pp. 11–14; Kim to Suzdalev, enclosure.
40. Soviet Embassy in DPRK Report (30 March 1956), AVPRF, Fond 0102, Opis 12, Papka 68, Delo 5.
41. George Ginsburgs and Roy U.T. Kim, *Calendar of Diplomatic Affairs, Democratic People's Republic of Korea* (Moorestown, NJ: Symposia Press, 1977), pp. 51–2.
42. See for example Martin McCauley, *The German Democratic Republic Since 1945* (London: Macmillan, 1983), p. 69.
43. Soviet Embassy in DPRK Report (19 April 1954), AVPRF, Fond 0102, Opis 10, Papka 52, Delo 8.
44. Erik Van Ree, 'The Limits of Juche: North Korea's Dependence on Soviet Industrial Aid, 1953–76', *Journal of Communist Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (March 1989), 68.
45. Karoly Fendler, 'Economic Assistance and Loans from Socialist Countries to North Korea in the Postwar Years 1953–1963', *Asien*, No. 42 (January 1992), 42.
46. Fendler, 'Economic Assistance', 43.
47. Ellen Brun and Jacques Hersh, *Socialist Korea: A Case Study in the Strategy of Economic Development* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), p. 21.
48. Kim Il Chan, 'Economic Reconstruction in North Korea', *New Korea*, No. 6 (June 1957), 11–13.
49. Kim, 'Economic Reconstruction', p. 13.
50. Timothy J. Colton, *Moscow: Governing the Socialist Metropolis* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995).
51. David M. Smith, 'The Socialist City', in Gregory Andrusz, Michael Harloe, and Ivan Szelenyi (eds), *Cities after Socialism: Urban and Regional Change and Conflict in Post-Socialist Societies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 70–99.
52. Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Socialism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 364–5.
53. *Pyongyang Review* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1985), 25.

54. P'yŏngyang Hyangt'osa P'yŏnjip Wiwŏnhoe, *P'yŏngyangji [Pyongyang Gazetteer]* (Pyongyang: Kungnip ch'ulp'ansa, 1957), 501.
55. *Pyongyang Gazetteer*, 502.
56. Eckart Dege, 'P'yŏngyang – Ancient and Modern – the Capital of North Korea', *GeoJournal*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (September 1990), 26.
57. Pyongyang Gazetteer, 502; *P'yŏngyangŭi ŏje wa onŭl [Pyongyang, Yesterday and Today]* (Pyongyang: Sahoe kwahak ch'ulp'ansa, 1986), 106.
58. Soviet Embassy in DPRK, *Interview with Pyongyang City Committee Vice-Chairman Comrade Kim Sŏng-yong*, (25 February 1955), AVPRF, Fond 0102, Opis 11, Papka 60, Delo 8.
59. Dege, '*P'yŏngyang*', 26.
60. Pyongyang Gazetteer, 502; Pyongyang, Yesterday and Today, 106. A 'Friendship Tower' to the Chinese People's Volunteers was erected in 1959. Stalin Street was renamed 'Victory Street' (*Sŭngni toro*), and the Soviet role in the liberation and reconstruction of Pyongyang was rarely mentioned after this point.
61. Pyongyang's Stalin Street apartment blocks were four or five stories tall, more modest than Berlin's. Stalinallee in Berlin also changed its name after Stalin's death, to Karl- Marx-Allee.
62. *Pyongyang Gazetteer*, 504.
63. This 'Pyongyang Speed' included the alleged construction of 20,000 apartments with materials for 7000 in 1958, and the assembly of a single flat in 14 minutes. The quality of these apartments received little comment. *Pyongyang Review* (1985), 25.
64. *Pyongyang Gazetteer*, 508.
65. *Pyongyang Gazetteer*, 510.
66. Pyongyang, *Yesterday and Today*, 107; *Pyongyang Gazetteer*, 511.
67. Soviet Embassy in DPRK, 'Interview with Kim Sŏng-yong', 1–2. In fact, the 1954 plan had been 'overfulfilled by 123 per cent', according the Soviet embassy's North Korean informants.
68. *Pyongyang Gazetteer*, 514.
69. *Pyongyang Gazetteer*, 515.
70. See for example Peter Marcuse and Wolfgang Schumann, 'Housing in the Colours of the GDR', in Bengt Turner, József Hegedüs, and Iván Tosics (eds), *The Reform of Housing in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 74–144.
71. Frank, *DDR und Nordkorea*, p. 49.
72. 'The Struggle in the Area of Basic Construction', *Kŏnsŏlja* (April 1958), 4.
73. *Chosŏn chungang nyŏngan* (Pyongyang: Chosŏn chungang t'ongsinsa, 1959), pp. 202, 333.
74. *Pyongyang* (10 May 1958).
75. *Pyongyang Sinmun* (7 June 1958).
76. 'On the Results and Progress of Reconstruction in Pyongyang in 1958', *Chosŏn chungang nyŏngam* (1959), 77.
77. James Brooke, 'North Korea, Facing Food Shortages, Mobilises Millions From the Cities to Help Rice Farmers', *The New York Times* (1 June 2005), available online at http://www.nytimes.com/2005/06/01/ international/ asia/ 01korea.html
78. Slavoj Zisek, *Did Somebody Totalitarianism? Five Interventions in the (Mis)use of a Notion* (London: Verso, 2001), p. 90.
79. Ranajit Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

80. For example, in 1974 the DPRK eliminated all taxes and declared itself the first 'tax-free state' in the world, yet another sign (so the regime declared) of having a materially satisfied citizenry.
81. Bradley Martin, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader: North Korea and the Kim Dynasty* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2004), pp. 514, 526, 534.
82. Stephen Epstein, 'On Reading North Korean Short Stories on the Cusp of the New Millennium', *Acta Koreana*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (January 2002), 40.

11

Comrade Min, Women's Paid Labour, and the Centralising Party-State: Postwar Reconstruction in North Korea

Andre Schmid

This is the story of state centralisation in North Korea[1] and a personal account by one of its participants, Comrade Sŏnbi Min. Published in 1954, Comrade Min's short account offers us a means to contextualise the grand historical processes of state formation and consolidation within the everyday experiences of the people who made them possible – in this case through the policy of increasing the participation of women in the social means of production, or paid labour.[2] The chapter seeks to contrast a macro perspective on the process of state centralisation with one moment that enabled and was deeply entangled with this process.

That the issue of state centralisation and the limits of state power are even a concern in a chapter on Korea is perhaps surprising. As a country that has seen its leadership – particularly the Kim family – become virtually the exclusive focus of historical work, Korea has seen its history for the post-Korean War period reduced largely to the rise of Kim Il Sung to a position of unchallenged power. Such a focus on the politics within the upper echelons of the Korean Worker's Party (KWP), with its deep roots in a Cold War historiography, glosses over arguably deeper historical processes that reveal how the assemblage of institutions and practices that constituted the party-state struggled to reassert its power after the devastation of three years of fighting (1950–1953), processes that deeply engaged with the population. In this sense, histories of Korea, as in the historiography of many socialist states, benefit from examining not just the central ambition to power but also the actual limits of that power – limits that were very real in the 1950s.[3]

Raising the issue of limits to state power immediately opens the possibility of examining more complicated questions of popular participation in these centralising processes. This chapter selects one specific moment, as reflected in Comrade Min's personal account dealing with the challenge of

labour productivity in her work unit, to show how our macro accounts, with their relentless drive of the top asserting itself over the bottom or the centre establishing itself over the local – whichever spatial metaphor is invoked – foreshorten our history of Korea. Discrete moments such as that recounted by Comrade Min are not just reducible to a personal experience; rather, they remind us that macro approaches consist of countless numbers of personal interactions that, in fact, are abstracted to constitute what we generalise as state centralisation. As much as such moments enable state centralisation, they also allow us to open up the process to other idiosyncrasies of everyday life that arguably are equally important to take into account in order to understand the actual sources and function of state power at local levels. As I will argue, the very complexity of party-state policies and self-representation in the realm of labour enabled individuals to live simultaneously within and around these initiatives, which in turn shaped changes in the direction of the centre's policies towards increasing the participation of women in paid labour.[4]

Recruitment and the centralising state

Comrade Min's essay, 'My Work in Our Collective's Women's Federation Team' opens with the story of her recruitment. Written in a simple prose that has the effect of underlining her humble, rural status, Min's first person narrative follows the pattern of many model worker stories: a non-heroic figure that, through her committed struggle, succeeds in overcoming a variety of hurdles to accomplish her goals – in Min's case effectively organising and leading the women in her unit. Min explains that she became the head of her local Women's Federation team shortly after their farm was collectivised. 'I had no experience working with the Women's Federation', she explains, so when the local party leader urged her to take on the job, she was flabbergasted: 'But I could not refuse it. How so? Because at the time my will for what I wanted to accomplish, together with my sense of responsibility for what I must do was stronger than my surprise, overcoming me.' She took the position, leading the 50 women on her team in their common responsibility of hauling the fertiliser made at their collective on their backs and spreading it out over the fields that they had also reclaimed.

Min's account is also important for its materiality as a text that was published and circulated. Indeed, the story was one of countless forms of self-representation offered by various party-state organisations – in speeches or cartoons, in photographs or in movies – that sought to establish behavioural norms that would buttress state centralisation in the 1950s. The text had been selected as an exhortatory story, published in a journal organised by the Chosen Democratic Women's Federation, reproduced in 80,000 copies, and mailed to individual or institutional subscribers, where it might be read at home, scrutinised in a political study session, or used as the basis of a

self-criticism meeting.[5] The process of selecting, producing, circulating, and reading the text was in effect one small moment in a much broader recovery led by the Korean Workers Party to reassert central rule after the devastation of the war.

By the end of 1953, the various institutions and practices that constituted the Korean state were anything but strong. Emerging from three years of war, neither state institutions nor the KWP was easily or completely able to assert its control over the destroyed country and war weary population. Quite simply – and contrary to cold war notions of DPRK totalitarianism – the Korean state was weak. It faced substantial limits to its abilities to settle and mobilise the population in the directions the leadership desired, let alone intercede effectively in local societies across the geographical expanse of the country.

This was not just a result of the war. The party-state was a young one, having only emerged formally independent from the Soviet occupation administration two years prior to the war, an occupation that itself had been created only at the defeat of the Japanese Empire in 1945. In the five years between the end of colonial rule and the start of the formal civil war in 1950, the Soviet occupation authorities and the emergent Korean state had gone a long way in building institutions, articulating ideologies, advancing biopolitical strategies, and expanding administrative capacity, yet very real limits on this power remained.[6] In this tumultuous era, there still existed many rural communities where, as Pak Myŏnglim has noted, engagements with central state power were intermittent and incomplete.[7]

For these reasons, the postwar 1950s must be seen as a period during which a multi-levelled process of reassertion of central power was launched. At the heart of this effort was the KWP, as it manoeuvred to establish its authority over a wide range of state and non-state actors. Institutionally, this included ensuring its control over the military, local and national state bureaucracies, and economic enterprises. Across space, this entailed asserting control over localities, extending to the most remote mountain villages, into newly liberated ones, and across farming communities. And organisationally, this meant disciplining its own party membership, whether longstanding or recently minted, to ensure the leadership of the party's centre.[8] Finally, this included insinuating its power over, into, and through an exhausted population by means of a number of biopolitical projects: housing, hygiene, and censuses, to name just a few.

The question of the extension of central rule was accompanied by a related problem for the institutions needing personnel to expand: who would become the state? At its core, this was a problem of party membership but also included state personnel and members of other organisations affiliated with the state and/or party. Comrade Min was not a party member. Rather, her story recounts a parallel development: her recruitment for a lower level position of authority as leader of her work unit's Korean Democratic Federation of Women, one of the major mass organisations built in

the postwar period.[9] Designed to assist in creating the conditions for the successful implementation of policies decided by the party, such mass organisations exhibited explosive growth over the course of the 1950s as virtually the entire population came to be enlisted in at least one, and sometimes several mass organisations. Tellingly, the Federation of Women was the only such gender specific organisation.[10] These organisations, entwined with the party but nevertheless institutionally outside its formal structure, provided a medium for engagement between KWP policies and the everyday activities of the population, which was often a dynamic realm of interaction that served to blur any distinct line between state and society, as evident in Min's inclusion as a local leader.

Min offered little detail about the specifics of her recruitment into the Women's Federation other than her testament to her surprise. Yet, given that the article was published in 1954, the first year of rural collectivisation, Min was no doubt a member of one of the earliest collectives to be formed. By the end of this year, as Kim Seungbo has shown, only 21.5 per cent of farming households belonged to collectives – a stark contrast to the roughly 90 per cent of all industry that was nationally owned.[11] This disparity focused KWP efforts on the agricultural sector as the key remaining foundation for the desired transition to socialism,[12] and virtually all agricultural land came to be collectivised by 1958. Against this backdrop, Comrade Min's article might be read as one of the many model stories published to make collectivisation more effective: again, a strategy of self-representation by the party-state seeking to establish norms to further its centralising goals. The story also showed how collectives emerged as powerful institutional forces in rural localities to carry out diverse central initiatives. Comrade Min, it appears, was identified as a potential leader through these initiatives.

In these ways, the party created the conditions for its own renewal and expansion. Specific policies designed to transform the economy in the transition to socialism at once fashioned and identified new potential recruits, who, in arising out of these policies, had personal stakes in the direction of the party. For many, this was an unprecedented opportunity for personal advancement. Never before in Korean history had their been such a radical transformation of the social order, a surge in upward mobility for a broad swath – though certainly not all – of the population. Integration of these new members into the party as officials in the ever-proliferating party, in state administration organs, or as enthusiasts leading the mass organisations, in turn, enabled the expansion, centralisation, and further articulation of the power of the state. It is in this sense that the KWP in this postwar period was neither a static elite, nor a set of institutions that hovered abstractly over the population it ruled. Party and state institutions, economic policy and changes, as well as large portions of the population were deeply entangled in this enterprise that was officially called 'reconstruction'. The recruitment of Comrade Min, then, reflected this process of state expansion and regime consolidation.

Labour shortage and women's paid labour

Arguably, no macroeconomic feature of the 1950s impacted the day to day lives of the population as thoroughly as the growing labour shortage – a problem that Min would also soon address. After her recruitment, Min had devoted herself to the administration of the labour of the women on her team, an enterprise that earned her the praise by of the leadership. Yet, as described in the translated portion of her article, this was not good enough. The director of her cell committee urged her to pay more attention to the participation rates of women in the collective – an issue that Comrade Min only came to appreciate after due consideration of his explanation. In these types of stories of personal experience, the trope of raised consciousness – whether sudden through the guidance of a senior, or gradual through the toil of labour – constituted a common technique in representing the top-down dynamic of political education. Here the gentle nudge of the local director stood as the metaphorical paternalist voice of the party. Min, the inexperienced yet enthusiastic women's union leader, stood in for the thousands of new recruits in the 1950s who were being recruited into mass organisations while simultaneously being educated to understand and implement central state goals. In this case, the question was work force participation and productivity, which was to become the focus of Min's efforts among the women of her collective.

The equal right to work had long been an ideological priority in Korea. As early as 1946, the one year-old regime had sought fit to proclaim the juridical equality of gender through a number of pieces of legislation, most notably the Gender Equality Law of 31 July.[13] Like in other socialist states, such legislation was trumpeted as symbolic of the superiority of socialism. In a dynamic not dissimilar to the way gender was invoked by the East German state vis à vis West Germany, in Pyongyang these pronouncements were articulated as a contrast to Seoul as part of the inter-regime competition for legitimacy on the peninsula.[14] Much research has tested the claims of such pronouncements against the still real, however reconfigured, patriarchy existing in Korea both before and after the war, and has revealed all sorts of gaps between rhetoric and reality.[15]

After the war, gender equality came to be equated almost exclusively with participation in paid labour. This rush to equality shunted aside many of the issues for which Korean women had struggled over the first half of the 20th century, particularly the goals of women on the progressive left.[16] Despite recognising the equal right to divorce, the postwar media virtually ignored the issue, as commemorative articles on the 1946 gender legislation simply did not consider marital issues significant enough to warrant mention.[17] As in other socialist countries, household work was rarely acknowledged as labour as defined by the term *rodong*, which came to be reserved for participation in the social means of production. Natal policies – including abortion

or birth control, among others – were not publicly discussed.[18] Other activities were seen only in terms of their ability to free up women's labour power such as childcare that would enable new mothers to return quickly to the work force, or the education of women to prepare them to contribute more fully to reconstruction. The tendency at the central level was to benchmark the degree of equality through specific statistical achievements: the number of women winning labour awards, the number of women with high-level administrative positions, or the percentage of women achieving literacy.[19] In all these ways, the various issues that in the 1950s came to be articulated in terms of women's equality centred largely on enabling the realisation of the potential labour power of women – again, a phenomenon not unlike other contemporary socialist countries.[20]

The stress placed on equal opportunity to work was not merely ideological, it was also economic. In the conditions of a postwar economy seeking to rebuild, women offered a critical source of capital through their labour power potential. In the immediate aftermath of the war, Korea, like its southern counterpart, was deeply dependent on external sources of capital to restart its economy. 'Fraternal Socialist' countries, especially the USSR and the PRC, were the largest sources of this capital, but requests for assistance were extended – and answered – from across the socialist bloc.[21] Even Albania sent military units to help out with construction two years after the end of the war.[22] As successful as the efforts to maximise these international resources may have been, however, socialist internationalism had its financial limits. As memories of the Korean War faded in the socialist world and donor fatigue began to set in, assistance began to decline. Assistance also shrank as a proportion of the growing economy over the course of the 1950s, just as continued economic growth required further capital input.

In a capital-poor situation, economic planners could only turn to labour, the single largest domestic source of potential capital. The labouring classes, the very people in whose name the revolution had been fought, now became the target of mass mobilisation. Just as the external sources of capital were to be maximised, so too was labour power, with the resultant capital to be reinvested, as the party determined after much debate, in heavy industry. Yet labour was anything but plentiful in the postwar 1950s.

Some of the reasons for this shortage were historically specific to this moment in Korea. The net migration out of the north of hundreds of thousands of individuals between 1945–50 as well as the mass death during the war greatly reduced the number of bodies ready to be mobilised.[23] Other situational impediments existed as well. With the war having been terminated by an armistice rather than a peace treaty, and with the continued presence of American troops just south of the DMZ, the north was reluctant to shrink its military in significant numbers. Soldiers were demobilised, often those with skills in particular demand, but the labour available for reconstruction was deeply curtailed by the continued demands of military deployment.[24]

As the economy grew, the labour shortage was exacerbated – a trend observed in other socialist economies as well, and usually blamed on the inefficiencies of central planning.[25] In the immediate aftermath of war, most labour was assigned to reconstruction projects, whether for steel, hydroelectric, or beer making facilities. Yet already by 1956, as more of this infrastructure was rebuilt and as factories and other facilities came online, more workers were needed for production, and this was occurring as the economic plans continued setting ambitious goals for the expansion of infrastructure and factories, meaning that workers could not simply be transferred out of construction to production.

The labour power of the countryside was especially hard hit. Though the urban population had largely evacuated the cities during the war, they quickly returned after 1953, and then some. As quickly as Pyongyang grew, mid-sized industrial cities such as Hamhŭng, Chŏngjin, Sinŭiju, grew at an even faster rate, as they became the loci of a policy of diffusing industrial development.[26] The cumulative effect of this movement of the population deprived rural areas of many of its most productive younger farm workers. Soon restrictions were placed on this movement and factory managers were forbidden from hiring workers away from agricultural work, a reflection of a concern that this drainage threatened agricultural production at a time when localised famines still occurred. Yet demand for labour was acute enough that these restrictions were often ignored, much to the consternation and alarm of the central authority. In 1958, 30 per cent of the 380,000 new entrants to the national labour pool came from the countryside, complained one report, resulting in criticism of local leadership – an indication again of the inability of the centre to control local enterprises and administrative units, let alone the internal migrations of the population.[27] Reports in the same year indicated that the problem had become 'more severe than in any other period' and was expected to get worse following the continued growth of the economy.[28] And no solution was forthcoming. It was against this backdrop that already in 1954, Comrade Min was nudged to consider how to maximise the labour potential of those under her supervision.

One conspicuous manifestation of this overarching impact was the near obsession, whether in high-level economic journals or daily newspapers, with productivity – a field that could be measured at the individual, team, enterprise, or sectoral levels. Soviet-style competitions and mass labour campaigns were arranged to increase productivity. 'Production Culture' became a key phrase, featured in posters at the workplace, and used to enjoin workers to ensure that their home life was geared toward spurring more production. So, too, did wastage campaigns come to be configured in terms of labour production; one household manual described the 28 metals that went into various household goods so that readers would appreciate that the misuse of such goods was ultimately not just a waste of resources, but also a waste of the precious labour invested in them by the workers who created them.[29]

It was within this broader context of the labour challenges to greater productivity, measured nationally or for any specific worker, that the issue of the labour potential of women emerged so strikingly.

This wider context of labour shortage and a national policy of heightening the participation rate of women were completely elided from Min's article. Every reader would have been familiar with these conditions, yet glossing over these structural factors also strengthened the emphasis on individual dynamism and creativity in the articles – what in the 1950s was called *chabalsŏng*, widely hailed as a requirement for the good socialist subject.[30] Indeed, the primary point of the story is not Min's recruitment, nor her upper-level inspired moment of clarity about the political task at hand. Nor is it primarily about labour force production. Ultimately, it is a story about Min's determination and ability to overcome obstacles to central goals – an exhortatory example for others, whatever their immediate situation might be.

Min's narrative captures this sensibility through her description of her own efforts. Two days after the epiphany she experienced while speaking to her director about labour participation rates, Min called a meeting of her production team. She informs us that her tactic was to engage her colleagues by means of explanation and persuasion, urging them that 'Everyone should do their best to become a model for the collective, working with utmost effort as if the work is their own. The farm work of the collective is nothing other than your own farm work.' By this point in the story, the historical process at work is clear: an inexperienced individual recruited into a mass organisation, her inexperience belied by an enthusiasm for the enterprise and harnessed by the party, which with a few instructional words, turned her energies toward one of the central state's prominent goals, the greater mobilisation of women's labour for reconstruction. Even though the narrative strategy foregrounds Min's individual struggles, the top-down organisational direction is clear, as is the ideological impulse from the centre.

So, too, does this story capture the liminal position of a figure like Min, of whom so many were being recruited at this historical moment. For, from the perspective of the leader of the collective (if not the party itself), Min was of the people. Yet in identifying and recruiting her into this position of leadership, she also stepped out of that position. To her colleagues listening to her in her meeting, Min in fact was the personalised face of the state. She was the state. Yet as much as this emphasis on the individual was a deliberate representational strategy – indeed, tantamount to a genre of its own – it reminds those using the same account as a historical record of the period of the deep personal engagements that otherwise get lost in our macro accounts of state centralisation.

The meeting called by Min, then, was her first step in what turned out to be a successful effort to raise women's participation rates. By the end of the article Min celebrated the accomplishment that the rate had been pushed

up, she announces, to 90 or 95 per cent. These statistics were the benchmark of success, the completion of the narrative first set off by the Director's query for 'more' and only achieved by Min's individual efforts. These same statistics enable the moment of Min's work at a local level to be combined into the style of aggregate statistics, usually posed in national terms, with which every reader of the press was familiar. Here the idiosyncracies of the local moment were folded back into the centralising narrative of party leadership and reincorporated to the national level – all achieved by the determination of a single individual with but a little prodding from the centre. In this regard, the story reflected the centre's ambition to represent the assertion of its power as being the smooth implementation of initiatives launched and carried out locally – Min's success story, in short.

Success by statistics?

As much as Min's story closed the narrative with this statistic, the lead-up to this conclusion indirectly revealed the precariousness of such a simple assertion. As a genre of model worker story that emphasised the effort and struggle required of local leaders – *chabalsŏng* – the narrative necessarily provided Min with a number of obstacles against which to prove her commitment, if only for her to overcome them. However crucial as a testament to Min's character and as a form of dramatic tension for the narrative, these obstacles disclosed the very real social and economic dilemmas facing the party-state at the local level in the summer of 1954. In this sense, if the story foregrounded Min's model behaviour, it also contained a back story that hinted at simultaneous issues that did not rest so easily with the desired self-representations of the party-state.

This uneasiness becomes apparent as Min confronted her first obstacle, which occurred at the preliminary meeting that she called for her co-workers. Her problem was quite simple: her attempts at rational explanation of party policies and party ideology did not convince the other women to change their work habits. In that very first meeting, 'however sincerely' she had delivered her encouragement about work, she realised that no one was listening: 'Yet, it was strange. Although I spoke such good words and did so most sincerely, the team members closed their ears and did not listen. Many of them even nodded off to sleep.' Min may have been quick to accept the logic of her senior's call to increase participation rates despite her original ignorance; others, equally unaware, were not so easily swayed. Min's inexperience was turned in this narrative into a type of naivety, a faith that her own enthusiasm and newfound wisdom would be sufficient to quickly bring everyone in line with her desires, here conflated with those of the party. Not so. This was another lesson for Min and other potential organisers for whom the article was designed to forewarn. It also simultaneously revealed a significant frustration: complete indifference on the part of

her cohort to the centre's ambition. How to surmount this lethargy became Min's task.

'I pondered the reasons for this', she wrote, reflecting on her peers' puzzling indifference. She reckoned that they simply had not developed an understanding that collective work was their own work – that this had yet, as she put it, to seep deeply into their hearts. For this, Min resorted to a historical explanation based on the fact that the 1946 land reforms had redistributed land to all farmers for their own ownership prior to the recent collectivisation. 'With their still remaining small landowner sensibilities, they look down at the collective land in comparison to their self-cultivated fields.' This disdain for collective labour, she suggested, meant their 'level of preparation' was insufficient for grasping the current needs. In deploying this trope of a holdover from the past – here marked as reflecting their previous experience as landowners, and at other times blamed on Confucian, colonial, bourgeois, or simply 'outmoded' (*nalgŭn*) thought by the media – Min turned to one of the key ideological assumptions of the party, one shared with virtually every 20th century reform movement. Namely, that the popular forces they sought to inspire, assist, and harness needed ideological work. Anyone who, unlike Min, did not immediately espy the dilemma in the same way was deemed in need of proper education.

Yet somewhat unusual for this genre of model worker story, Min's ultimate solution did not involve her plunging into educational work, however difficult and time consuming. Instead, she turned elsewhere. While working one day beside an elderly woman who Min described as having 'the most backward participation rate', she asked, 'If you don't come out to work for the day, do you know how much that reduces your portion come harvest time?' The elderly women demurred, indicating it could not be much. To which Min responded, 'Listen closely. Missing a day of work means you are hurt by a reduction of one *mal* of rice, two *toe* of other grains, and 50 *wŏn* of cash.'[31] As she came to grasp the principles of remuneration, the woman was astonished.

If the elderly woman was astonished at these possibilities, Min came to be shocked by the consequences of her explanation for this 'simple explanation' had immediate results. We are told that after listening to Min, the elderly woman passed word on to others, who conveyed it to others, so that word spread around the collective. Within days, the participation rate of women began to rise, reaching the level marked as a success, 90–95 per cent. In a final self-reflection, Min presented the lesson of her story; one offered for other team leaders in similar situations: 'I came to feel more keenly that the task of cultivation must start from the masses' level of preparedness and that their immediate self-interest must be joined with the prospects for the distant future.' What had served as a type of *deus ex machina* for her problem, material inducement, was temporised as little more than a necessary, short-term strategy. If Min's concluding statement does not quite qualify as

an admission of expediency, it nevertheless wraps, within one individual's success story, an indirect acknowledgement that one of the party-state's fundamental missions in the postwar order – proper ideological education – fell short. The 'success' of the statistic glossed over this basic dilemma. The ambition of a centralising state, realised at the level of statistical benchmarks, had only been enabled by a very different dynamic. It was not achieved by the whole rostrum of activities – political meetings, self-criticism sessions, theories of collective property, or study of party policies – designed to heighten revolutionary consciousness, but by the simple inducement of material gain.

Domesticity and the limits of state power

With the end of her narrative, Comrade Min disappears from the historical record, a transience that at once underscores the fleeting nature of such moments while underplaying their role in the process of centralisation. Yet the obstacles that, in Min's case, were quite handily overcome proved far more enduring at the national level. For in 1959, it was announced that the national figure for women's participation as a proportion of the overall workforce stood at 34.9 per cent, a figure that the following year actually dipped to 32.7 per cent – hardly the success rate that Min's experience had suggested only five years before.[32] Perhaps more telling was not the trumpeted statistic, but the situation of the women who came across, however momentarily, in Min's story as indifferent; in other words, those not captured in the statistic, those who found ways to live their lives without being rendered into the official statistic of labour force participation. In 1959, this group represented roughly one third of all working age women. Women who, in fact, were not participating in wage labour.

There were, of course, many official reasons offered to explain this phenomenon, though it is always important to remember that while work done in the household was never deemed labour, non-participation in wage labour was never acknowledged as a legitimate choice for an individual. Official explanations tended to come together with policy nostrums, designed to eliminate the socioeconomic and ideological shortcomings that were seen as the source of the problem. Some explanations turned to structural reasons. The continued deficiency of daycare spots was often lamented, despite a 27 fold increase of available spots by 1957, as measured against 1949.[33] So, too, was the shortage of public eating facilities and inflexible working hours.[34] Other explanations highlighted remaining ideological biases. The still conservative nature of some husbands, who continued to hold their spouses back, was often blamed.[35] Many women simply could not find suitable employment, a situation that was alternatively blamed on women for being too picky or on workplaces for their unwillingness to allocate prime positions for women.[36]

Other reasons were not necessarily officially announced, as can be indirectly surmised from other moments. Material incentives like those used by Comrade Min proved much more complicated over time. Min's tactic, however short term in her own conception, arose with greater frequency over the course of the 1950s. This did not indicate any official policy shift or formal exhortation from top levels of the party. Rather, as more emphasis came to be placed on women's unfulfilled labour potential, more commentators sought to bring to the attention of households the economic advantages of having dual income earners. A wide swath of articles included in their discussion of female labour potential the advantages to be reaped for a family's quality of life by adding an additional salary.[37] Usually this was but one brief mention among a much stronger emphasis on ideological gains to be reaped from labour: contribution to the realisation of socialism, or the heightening of working class thought.[38] However downplayed at the time, and still tinged with a certain uneasiness, Min's move to use material incentives to persuade her co-workers became a more widely deployed inducement.

Ironically, such a strategy was gaining wider currency at precisely the same time as incomes rose over the course of the 1950s. Higher wages meant it became less economically pressing for families to pursue a second income. This gradual shift was compounded by the continued weakness of light industries, which, by the late 1950s, were still producing insufficient quantities of consumer goods. Add to that a poor circulation system that often could not get what was produced into the hands of workers across the country.[39] There simply was not enough for workers to buy with their increased incomes by the late 1950s.[40] It is perhaps not surprising, then, to find a particular version of the figure of a housewife/mother emerging as a target of criticism: one choosing not to take on the dual burden of workplace and household duties because she could not find the work she wanted and was satisfied depending on her husband for income.[41] Whether this was by choice or not, the unintended consequence of greater prosperity meant that households could afford not to have each of its members participate in the labour market – especially since there was not much to buy with their disposable income anyway.

Other possible reasons for women's non-participation in the labour market were rooted in the contemporaneous growth of ideologies of domesticity. For at the same time as labour participation became a goal touted by the highest redoubts of the KWP,[42] virtually all high level writing on the role of women in socialist reconstruction at least mentioned the function of motherhood in social and ideological reproduction. The notion of the managerial mother – succoring the next generation of a nation that, through her successful efforts, had a brighter future – had by this time a long history in the peninsula, only now in the north this understanding was given a socialist twist insofar as mothers were to prepare their children with a revolutionary outlook on life, thus furthering the transition to socialism.[43] This opening,

provided in speeches by Kim Il Sung or in the KWP's theoretical journal, *Kŭlloja*, was widely expanded upon by lower level institutions, in particular by the Korean Democratic Federation of Women's journal, *Chosŏn nyŏsŏng*, and through its support for the widespread development of motherhood schools (*ŏmŏni hakkyo*).[44] In the pages of this journal, for example, representations of what was called the *Chosŏnŏmŏni*, or Korean mother, by the mid-1950s already rivalled the quantity of representations of the woman worker, whether in images or in stories, cartoons, or poems. Thus, at the same time that women were being encouraged to leave the home to contribute to the construction of socialism through their labour, there arose a concomitant discourse focusing on a form of socialist domesticity. These strands of discourse were neither contradictory nor exclusive, since many women did in fact seek to combine these two ideals in their actual lives, however demanding it may have been. Yet these two strands – one about the happiness of paid labour, the other about the bliss of the new home life – nevertheless rested somewhat uneasily with one another.

As can be seen in the pages of the *Chosŏn nyŏsŏng*, the opening provided by the upper echelons of the party enabled the development of a diverse and rich discourse on domestic life. To be sure, this always remained in the context of the development of a production culture – one that connected life on the shop floor to the day-to-day activities of the household. Sewing, for example, was revived as a proper activity in the still feminised space of the household, but it could also be seen as linked to the national goal of production, and especially to the need to increase the quantity of day-to-day necessities, as well as emphasising the importance of self-sufficiency.[45] Flower arrangement could again be privileged as an aesthetic priority in a proper socialist home, only now it was linked to the proper 'cultural life' (*munhwa saenghwal*) that sought to nudge the population beyond a materialist definition of the good life and prepare the ideological foundations for the creation of socialism.[46] If stories abounded of women working in coal mines, they were matched by stories of women juggling the duties of workplace and home, and these were in turn accompanied by stories of women immersed in domestic activities as part of socialist construction. These latter stories could be written with nary a mention of time spent in a factory, office, or mine.

The simultaneous existence and celebration of model worker stories, model working mother stories, and model mother/housewife stories implicitly recognised the continuum of possible social lives pursued by women, whatever the priorities of a central state determined to maximise labour potential. Modes of living that were deemed a problem at a central level were, if not quite promoted, certainly captured in the pages of the *Chosŏn nyŏsŏng* without any connection to this particular central priority, but they were nevertheless rendered indispensable to other state goals, and even privileged for their own sake. That the labour shortage and injunction to

maximise labour productivity did not preclude such alternatives – as can be seen in both national statistics and these model mother stories – they ironically reflected the complexities of state centralisation at local levels in these years. The late 1950s was precisely the era when the party-state had regained, and was strengthening, its governing capacity. Yet the unintended consequences of the party-state's own policies, the divergent though compatible visions between different levels of institutions, and tensions within discursive formations – all of these provided local institutions as well as individual women the manoeuvrability to create local social worlds that did not necessarily match the economic ambitions of the central party-state.

Conclusion

These types of moments – Comrade Min trying in vain to persuade her colleagues, a photograph of a mother sewing together with her daughter,[47] a mother and father playing with their two children on the floor of their new apartment[48] – can somewhat unexpectedly reveal the dynamics of state centralisation in1950s Korea. Such moments were constitutive of state centralisation, to be sure, but they also reveal the very real limits of a party-state that is usually discussed almost completely in terms of its totalising power. Indeed, that we are able to access these moments that open up the history of Korea is in part the very product of these limits insofar as the representational strategies of the party-state, as captured in party sanctioned newspapers and magazines, were in themselves fragmented and hardly monolithic. Just as the incompleteness of the enormous body of state self-representations have enabled historians to examine the fluidity of social lives in this period, this same incompleteness provided the resources for women of that era to live with, but also between and around, the various and far-from-seamless norms created by a party-state eager to exert its power through the ideals of production culture.

Perhaps the best testament to the fluidity of these circumstances rests with a shift in policy in the late 1950s. In response to the numbers of women still remaining outside the paid labour force, a new policy emerged to promote what came to be called 'household labour' (*kanae nodong*).[49] As the difficulties of maximising labour production moved well beyond what could be handled by the likes of Comrade Min, the promotion of household labour received greater attention as a possible response to the bedevilling statistic that many women remained outside the labour force. If you cannot bring the labourer to the factory, the logic of this initiative went, bring the factory to the labourer. In one 1960 example of a textile factory in Kaesŏng, factory authorities organised more than 1000 families in the vicinity of the factory into household production units, teaching the women of these homes how to make children's underwear, socks, and hats from cloth remnants without ever setting foot inside a factory.[50] Such efforts at redefining labour and its

location was one more stage in the central party-state's effort to maximise production by mobilising women, but in this particular case the initiative was an adaptation on the part of the central party-state, one that became necessary precisely because of the ability of the population to live around the centre's ambitions and frustrate its policy goals.[51] This was but one more shift in a dynamic that never came to be settled.

Notes

1. Hereafter all references to "Korea" in this article indicate the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea, more commonly known as North Korea.
2. As much as a number of efforts were launched to rethink domestic relations, there was no attempt to rethink domestic work as labour on par with participation in the social means of production. For the sake of convenience, my paper follows this usage.
3. There is, of course, a long history of challenging and rethinking the use of totalitarianism as a conceptual category for analysing historical socialism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. For one recent addition to this literature, see Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick (eds), *Beyond Totalitarianism: Nazism and Stalinism Compared* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
4. I am indebted to Alf Lüdtke for urging me to consider over dim sum the possibilities of thinking through these types of simultaneity. See his *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).
5. For an example of a reader writing in to the *Chosŏn nyŏsŏng* requesting that more such inspirational articles on political work be published, see (September 1954), 69.
6. For an English account of these efforts, see Charles Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945–1950* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).
7. Pak Myŏngnim, *Han'guk chŏnjaeng ŭi palbal kwa kiwŏn*, Vol. II (Seoul: Nanam ch'ulp'ansa, 1996), pp. 191–2.
8. The most comprehensive treatment of these issues can be found in Sŏ Tongman, *Puk Chosŏn sahoejuŭi ch'eje sŏngnipsa, 1945–1961* [*The history of the establishment of the North Korean socialist system, 1945–1961*] (Seoul: Sŏnin, 2005).
9. Sejŏng Yŏn'guso Pukhan Yŏn'gu Sent'ŏ yŏkkŭm (ed.), *Chosŏn Nodongdang ŭi oegwak tanch'e* [*Affiliated Organisations of the Korea Worker's Party*] (P'aju-si: Hanŭl Ak'ademi, 2004, introduction.
10. Chŏng Sŏngim, 'Chosŏn Minju Nyŏsŏng tongmaeng', Sejŏng Yŏnguso Pukhan Yŏn'gu Sent'ŏ yŏkkŭm (ed.), *Chosŏn Nodongdang ŭi oegwak tanch'e* [*Affiliated Organisations of the Korea Worker's Party*] (P'aju-si: Hanŭl Ak'ademi, 2004) pp. 192–243.
11. Kim Seungbo, *Nam-Pukhan kyŏngje kujo ŭi kiwŏn kwa chŏn'gae: Pukhan nongŏp ch'eje ŭi hyŏngsŏng ŭl chungsim-ŭro* [*The Origins and Development of South and North Korean Economic Structures: Focusing on The Evolution of the North Korean Agricultural System*] (Seoul: Yŏksa Pip'yŏngsa, 2000).
12. Yi Chuch'ŏl, *Chosŏn Nodongdang tangwŏn chojik yŏn'gu, 1945–1960*, p. 410.
13. For the most recent and detailed account of these early efforts, see Suzy Kim *Everyday Life in the North Korean Revolution, 1945–1950* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012).

14. On the East German example, see Donna Harsch, *The Revenge of the Domestic: Women, Family, and Communism in the German Democratic Republic* (Princeton University Press, 2007).
15. The classic piece in Korean is Yun Miryang, *Pukhan ŭi yŏsŏng chŏngch'aek* [*North Korean Policies on Women*] (Seoul: Hanul, 1991). In English, see Sonia Ryang, 'Gender in Oblivion: Women in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)', in *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (2000), 323–49; Suzy Kim, 'Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the North Korean Revolution, 1945–1950', in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 52.4 (October 2010), 742–67; Kyong Ae Park, 'Women and Revolution in North Korea', in *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 64.5 (Winter 1992–3), 527–45.
16. Chang Inmo, '1920-nyŏndae Kunuhoe ponbu sahoejuŭijadŭrŭi yŏsŏng undongnon', in *Han'guksa yŏn'gu*, Vol. 142 (2008), 367–417; Chŏn Sangsuk, 'Chosŏn yŏsŏng tonguhoe'rŭl t'onghaesŏ pon singminji ch'ogi sahoejuŭi yŏsŏng chisiginŭi yŏsŏng haebangnon' [Early Socialist Women's Theory on Women's Liberation: An Examination of the Korean Women's Friendship Association], in *Han'guk chŏngch'i oegyosa nonch'ong*, Vol. 22.2 (2001), 33–57. In English, see Theodore Jun Yoo, *The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea: Education, Labour, and Health, 1910–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), Chapter 2.
17. For one piece that did discuss divorce only to discourage it, see Kim Kyŏngsuk, '*Wae rihonharyŏ haentŏnga?*' [*Why do you Intend to Divorce?*], *Chosŏn nyŏsŏng* (October 1956), 24–5.
18. These issues were likely the province of the motherhood schools that were established in increasing numbers in the late 1950s.
19. For an early, extensive treatment of these issues, see Kim Yŏngsu, 'Nyŏsŏngdŭrŭn uri choguk kŏnsŏl ŭi kŏdaehan nyŏngnyang ida' [Women are the Great Strength of the Construction of Our Nation], in *Kŭlloja* (25 September 1954), 58–72.
20. For the example of East Germany, see Donna Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic: Women, the Family and Communism in the German Democratic Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).
21. For Soviet assistance see Andrei Lankov, *From Stalin to Kim Il Sung: The Formation of North Korea, 1945–1960* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002). More generally see Charles Armstrong, '"Fraternal Socialism": The International Reconstruction of North Korea, 1953–62', in *Cold War History*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (May 2005), 161–87, and B. Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev era: Soviet-DPRK Relations and the Roots of North Korean Despotism, 1953–1964* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).
22. See the photograph published in the newspaper *Minju Chosŏn* (10 November 1955).
23. On migration issues see Kim Tongchoon (ed.), *Chŏnjaeng kwa sahoe* [*War and Society*] (Seoul: Tol Pegae, 2000). In English, see Janice Kim, 'Living in Flight: Civilian Displacement, Suffering, and Relief during the Korean War, 1945–1953', in *Sahaksa Yŏngu*, Vol. 100 (December 2010), 285–329.
24. Kim Wŏnbong, 'Noryŏk munje ŭi ollŭn haegyŏrŭn kŭmhu kyŏngje kŏnsŏl eso kajang chungyohan munje ŭi hanaida', in *Kyŏngje kŏnsŏl* (March 1956), 39–40.
25. Most famously by Janos Kornai in *Economics of Shortage* (Amsterdam and New York: New York: North-Holland publishing Co., 1980).
26. On the development of provincial industrial centers, see Ch'oe Wan-gyu, *Pukhan tosi chŏngch'i ŭi palchŏn kwa ch'eje pyŏnhwa: 2000-yŏndae Ch'ŏngjin, Sinŭiju, Hyesan*

[*The Development of Urban Politics and System Change: Ch'ŏngjin, Sinŭiju, Hyesan in the 2000s North Korea*] (P'aju: Hanul Academy, 2007).

27. Kim Unjong, 'Hyŏn sigi noryŏk munje ŭi ollŭn haegyŏlrŭl uihayŏ', in *Kyŏngje kŏnsŏl* (November 1959), p. 29.
28. Kim Ŭnggi, 'Noryŏk munje haegyŏlrŭl ŭihan kinjŏlhan che kwaŏp', in *Kyŏngje kŏnsŏl* (March 1958), 30.
29. Anonymous, *Kajŏng kwahak sangsik* [*Common Scientific Knowledge for the Household*] (Pyongyang: Chosŏn nyŏsŏngsa, 1953), pp. 100–28.
30. Significantly, this was *not* a term monopolised by Kim Il Sung, though it does eventually get absorbed into his idea of *juch'e* thought.
31. One *mal* was equivalent to 18 litres and one *dui* was equivalent to one tenth of a *mal*, or 1.8 litres.
32. While the proportion dipped, the absolute numbers of women workers increased. *Chosŏn chungang nyŏngam* [*The Korean Central Yearbook*] (Pyongyang, 1961), p. 341.
33. The figure of a seven-fold increase comes from Chungang t'onggyeguk (ed.), *Chosŏn minjuju inmin konghwaguk inmin kyŏngje mit munhwa palchŏn, t'onggyejip, 1946–57* [*The DPRK Statistical Report on Economic and Cultural Development*] (Pyongyang: Kungnip ch'ulp'ansa, 1958), graph #28. For an account of some women in Pyongyang who take the initiative to build their own daycare facilities see, 'Ŏmŏnidŭri chojik'an yuch'iwŏn' [Mother-Organised Daycares], in *Chosŏn nyŏsŏng* (January 1956), 13.
34. *Nodong sinmun* (19 July 1958).
35. For examples of such husbands, see *Nodong sinmun*, 13 December 1955, or *Chosŏn nyŏsŏng* (June 1959), 29. For the opposite, where a women refuses to listen to the many voices around her urging her to stay at home, see 'Chikchang kwa kajŏng sallim' [Work and Home Life], in *Nodong sinmun* (23 January 1956).
36. Many of these reasons arise in the *Nodong sinmun*, see for example the issue on 19 July 1958. See also, Kim Ryak, 'Nyŏsŏng noryŏkin ip-esŏ illyŏn ŭi p'yŏnhyangdŭl sigppi sijŏnghaja' [Let's Speedily Correct Biases Against the Employment of Women's Labour], in *Kyŏngje kŏnsŏl* (November 1958), 64–5.
37. For one account of two families with double incomes, see 'Tu kajŏng' [Two families], in *Nodongja sinmun* (13 February 1959).
38. For a list of reasons where material incentives play only a small role, see 'Kŭllojadŭlŭi puyangkajogŭl chikchang-e kwangbŏmhi iniphaja' [Let's Bring Worker's Family Members into the Workplace], in *Nodong sinmun*, 7 January 1956. See also, Kim Oksun 'Kajŏng puindŭrŭn kanae chagŏp-e chŏkkŭk ch'amgahaja' [Let's Have Housewives Fully Participate in Household Labour], in *Chosŏn nyŏsŏng* (April 1960), 12–13.
39. On problems in the circulation system, see the journal *Sangŏp* [*Commerce*]. For one example on the problems in Hwanghae province, O Sŏn, 'Chinanhae saŏp wae nak'u toeyŏnnŭnga?' [Why did Last Year's Commerce Lag?], in *Sangŏp* (March 1956), 42–7.
40. This can also be seen in official explanations for the prevalence of alcoholism and gambling; in short, workers did not have anything else to do with their money. For one worker's explanation of this relationship, see *Nodongja sinmun* (21 August 1957).
41. 'Ŏnjekkaji chikchangŭl korŭlgŏnninga?' [When will you choose to work?], in *Chosŏn nyŏsŏng* (October 1958), 8; for an example of how the state felt its investment in the education of women was lost when women 'hid out' in the home,

see 'Kajŏng-e p'amuthinŭn nyŏsŏng' [Women Buried at Home], in *Nodong sinmun* (6 April 1955).

42. Kim Il Sung gave very few speeches solely on the issue of women in the 1950s but he did deal occasionally with mothers in a speech on child-rearing. In English, see Kim Il Sung, 'The Duty of Mothers in the Education of Children', *Kim Il Sung Works*, Vol. 15 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1983), pp. 277–300.
43. For one article, see 'Mothers! Let's Educate Children in Communist Thought!', in *Chosŏn nyŏsŏng* (June 1959), p. 1; The *Chosŏn nyŏsŏngsa* published a series entitled *Kajŏng kyoyang kyŏnghŏmjip*. See for example, volume three: *Kajŏng-esŏ Ŭi chanyŏdŭr-e taehan kongsanjuŭi kyoyang* [*Communist Education of Children at Home*] (Pyongyang, 1959).
44. For one article on motherhood schools see 'Ŏmŏni hakkyorŭl nyŏnghamyŏnsŏ' [While Managing A Motherhood School], in *Chosŏn nyŏsŏng* (September 1959), 16.
45. How-to articles on sewing, replete with patterns and templates, were published in virtually every issue of *Chosŏn nyŏsŏng*. For an announcement/advertisement for a popular brand of sewing machine see *Sangŏp* (May 1958), inside cover.
46. For one of the more detailed treatments of 'cultural life' as promoted for and by women, see the Central Committee of the Korean Democratic Federation of Women, *Nyŏsŏngdŭrŭn munhwa sujunŭl nop'hija* [*Women, Let us Raise Our Cultural Level*] (Pyongyang: Central Committee of the Federation of Korean Women, 1956).
47. See the photo on the inside back cover of the June edition of *Chosŏn nyŏsŏng* (1958).
48. See the front cover of the June 1958 edition of *Nodongja*.
49. For one treatment of household labour, see Kim Oksun, 'Kajŏng puindŭrŭn kanae chagŏp-e chŏkkŭk ch'amgahaja' [Let Housewives Enthusiastically Participate in Household Labour], in *Chosŏn nyŏsŏng* (April 1960), 12–13.
50. 'Puyang kajoktŭri kongjang kanae kongŏbanesŏ' [Inside a Household Production Unit], in *Nodongja sinmun* (23 March 1960).
51. It is also unclear how this form of household labour, often one for only a few hours of the day according to reports, was calculated into national labour participation rates, but this was likely one factor in the rise of participation rates through the late 1960s.

12

Between Autonomy and Productivity: The Everyday Lives of Korean Women Workers During the Park Chung-hee Era

Won Kim

Introduction

One of the key points of contention about the Park Chung-hee era, which began with the military coup in 1961 and ended with his assassination in 1979, is the Korean public's attitude towards the regime: to what extent did Koreans approve or disapprove of the regime, and how much did they support or oppose it? A central feature of the era was the regime's state-led industrialisation strategy. The view that this strategy was necessary for South Korea's modernisation has been gaining support in recent years[1] and adds urgency to the question of popular consent implicit to a characterisation of the Park regime as a 'mass dictatorship'.[2] While the process of persuasion depends on social regulation by the state and the situation of the economy, the analysis of 'mass' behaviour, at the concrete level of the everyday, can reveal the mechanisms through which individuals become active consenting subjects of a dictatorial regime.[3] This chapter explores the situation of the women workers whose mobilisation was key to the success of Park's industrialisation strategy in the 1960s and 1970s. Asking whether they consented to the harsh labour conditions to which they were subjected clearly oversimplifies the issue. At the same time, attention to the everyday reality of those conditions and the ways these workers came to terms with them can provide invaluable insight into the ways that mass dictatorship worked in practice.

Women joined the workforce in large numbers during this period, making up a substantial proportion of the industrial workforce. The percentage of women participating in economic activities jumped from 26.8 per cent in 1960 to 45.7 per cent in 1975. In 1979, 904,582 women worked in factories across the country, comprising 44.3per cent of all manufacturing workers (2.03 million). In fields like textiles and apparel, women accounted for a

particularly high share: 69.5 per cent.[4] This paper deals with the everyday reality of those women in the workplace. During the Park Chung-hee era, workplaces were organised and regulated in military style in an atmosphere of market despotism. In this context, women were seen as 'docile workers', inasmuch as most of them cooperated with the industrialisation strategy of the state seemingly without complaint. But by the 1970s women factory workers, particularly young unmarried women, were also extremely active in the grass-roots labour movement (democratic labour unions) through which Korean workers fought for their rights against the dictatorship and extreme Taylorism of Park's Yushin Constitution.

This paper accordingly explores the question of how women, only recently removed from a family context to the public arena of the factory, formed through their everyday activities as workers an identity that enabled (or inhibited) active responses to the regime. From an 'everyday' perspective, of course, it is difficult to separate what constitutes passive acceptance of the demands of the system from active resistance in the lives of individual women workers. As Detlev Peukert puts it, the real question is rather, 'What basic desire and behavior . . . their active consent or passive participation was rooted in'.[5] Neither women workers who stood up for their rights nor non-political women workers were free from the experience that was common to them all, an experience with multiple dimensions encompassing family, nation, gender, and production. Everyday life, moreover, was not lived in a non-political world that was independent of the system, but was necessarily in continuity with the system. To base an analysis of women workers' situation on the dichotomy of consent vs. refusal would thus be an over-simplification of the issue. We need to pay attention to the tendencies and aspirations lying beyond the stage of organised political struggle.[6]

Escape from the family: The dream of the woman factory worker

Countless Korean novels and short stories set in the industrialisation period depict a young female factory worker who sacrifices herself to support her family or fund her male siblings' educations. In many works on this subject, poverty and limited access to education are the two main reasons why these girls leave home to work in cities.[7] A magazine article of 1977 reported: 'Today's rural communities seem to be possessed by the demon of money. Kids aged sixteen years or so want to leave home to go earn money in the city – to be a housemaid or work in a factory, in other words'.[8] But the life that awaited these young women in the city was far from the affluent existence they had imagined. Between 1 and 3 million people (approximately one-fifth to one-third of the city's total residents) in Seoul in the 1970s lived in shantytowns, and most inhabitants of these impoverished were transplants from the countryside. Young women's readiness to sacrifice

their own dreams and work for a pittance under harsh conditions for the sake of their families is often taken for granted.[9] Were their families happy to see their daughters getting factory jobs in the city? Might there have been some disagreement between a young woman and her family about her employment?

A survey of the families of Korean women workers conducted by the anthropologist Robert Spencer during the 1970s found the following: first, women who left their rural villages to go and work in the city did so in order to support their parents and siblings. Second, the parents of women workers disapproved of their daughters' having a social life outside the family, and did not always see it as desirable to give them an education. Third, women workers had suffered from gender inequality within their families before migrating to the city.[10] For many reasons, then, parents were not happy about sending their daughters to the city to work in a factory. At the same time, they had no problem with the fact that their daughters made sacrifices for the family. Memoirs written by former women factory workers abound in recollections about the shock, sadness, and the anger they felt about their fathers' patriarchal attitudes. One wrote: 'As father vehemently opposed my plan to continue my studies, our relationship grew more hostile every day . . . Father would lament, "This is the world upside down. What does a girl want with an education? . . . ".'[11]

Young women, though, were eager for a social life outside the home, whether in school, in the workplace, or in the city. Many left their hometowns for the opportunity to get an education, as their parents refused to send them to school beyond the primary level on the grounds that they were girls. The longing for the city and the factory can be felt in *The Girl Who Wrote Loneliness* (*Oettanbang*), an autobiographical novel by Kyungsook Shin, a woman who once worked in the Guro Industrial Complex. Kim Ji-sŏn, who worked for Samwŏn Textile in Incheon, and Choi Sun-yŏng, who worked for the YH Corporation in Seoul, also explained their decisions to get factory work through their desires to achieve independence and the pride and self-confidence having a job gave them, even if they also needed the job in order to survive.[12]

Finding a job on their own in order to become economically independent and support their family gave these teenage girls a newfound confidence in their own abilities. But it was not always easy for a woman to find work in a factory during the period of Korean industrialisation. Although they could rely to some extent on regional ties, most often it was a family member or relative who served as the go-between or provided tips. Sometimes a personal introduction to an employer through an acquaintance was the best route to a job.[13]

Questions asked during a job interview were about where the girls were from, who told them about the post, why they had left school, and where they currently lived. There were usually two rounds of recruitment a year.

Aside from physical requirements including height or weight, companies preferred to hire as trainees women who were submissive and were unlikely to join labour protests, especially if the company had a powerful union. The Bupyŏng plant of Bando Sangsa, an Incheon-based textile and clothes manufacturer, used an open hiring process. In view of the chronic over-supply of labour at that time, Bando Sangsa, like other employers, was able to demand that candidates satisfy a complicated set of conditions. Competition was fierce for jobs in other large factories as well, with many candidates screened during a short period of time.[14] To get hired by Dongil Bangjik, Jŏn Bo-hi had to work as a maid at the factory manager's house for a whole year for no pay; she worked with some other girls who were near-sighted and had to secretly learn the eye chart by heart in order to pass the vision test for factory employment.[15]

Why, then, did these women strive to become factory workers? The main reason is that conditions were better in the factories than in the garment sweatshops in Seoul's Pyŏnghwa Market or in domestic service. The pay in large factories was generally decent: 9,000 won for an eight-hour day. This compared well with the 14–15 hours per day worked by women at the Pyŏngwha Market, and to a women's average hourly earnings of about 100 won in the 1970s.[16] They also had well-equipped basic facilities like dormitories and bathrooms. Most women factory workers remember how favourably impressed they were on their first day at the factory dormitory. For these girls who had lived in precarious housing in shantytowns, the clean white modern building and the warm, centrally heated room seemed like a paradise. Women workers who visited the Dongil Bangjik textile factory thought at first that it was a 'beautiful university campus', and not a factory. Sŏk Jŏngnam's first impression of the place was similar; she was astonished by the great size of the factory, its well-manicured lawn and sleek offices, and especially the dormitory.[17] After she was offered the job, Sŏk had a month before she actually started work. Excited about her new job, a month seemed just too long. She says:

> I recall saying to myself, 'My first day at the factory! I've been waiting for this day for so long!' I felt hopeful about the future, and all sorts of plans popped into my head, making me literally dance inwardly. I'll work here for three years, just three years. I'll save every penny I earn so that I can use my savings to set up a new home when I get married. I'll buy beautiful things. I don't care if people call me cheap or stingy. As my brother used to say, the best thing a woman can do is just stay put and marry a nice man. They say twenty-three is the best age for a woman.[18]

Did the relationship between women workers and their families change after they started to work? For women, joining the industrial workforce and the economic independence it provides can improve their status within the

family and also give them means to improve their quality of life. But this was not the case for women workers during the Park Chung-hee era; even though they had jobs, they were still unable to be free from their families. A considerable number of women workers sent all their earnings to their families to support parents and siblings, or to put their brothers through school.[19]

In most cases the family's economic situation hardly improved even after the daughter got a job in a factory. Most women workers continued to be poorly paid and had to contend with employment insecurity, forcing them to change jobs frequently. Many of them were de facto heads of household, with parents who were without economic means or disabled. A common situation was that an older sister who used to provide for the family got married and stopped doing so, forcing the next oldest daughter to become the breadwinner by going to work in a city factory. The vast majority of them sent the bulk of the money they earned to their families back home, setting aside only a small portion of it for their own living expenses. The fact that these women were the main providers for their families, however, hardly changed their status within it.[20]

An important question to ask is to what extent this was their choice. Certainly, working in a factory meant the possibility of escaping the private patriarchal system of the family. But factories were not free of patriarchal order by any means. Factories of the industrialisation period were themselves universes resting on a foundation of gender hierarchy. The only difference was that women were now placed within a public patriarchal system; the relationship between a woman and the male head of household was reproduced in the relationship between women workers and the male foreman. Equally important, the women themselves considered factory labour as an extension of household labour. For girls who had helped with household work from a tender age and had later basically run their households in their parents' stead as adolescents, working in a factory was in line with their 'natural' responsibilities: ensuring the family could make ends meet, paying for male siblings' educations, and saving up for their own future marriage. They did not see it in terms of wage labour as such.[21]

Everyday life and order in the factory

The rapid industrialisation that took place in Korea during the 1960s and 70s brought changes to the traditional gender-based division of labour. Women suddenly entered the labour market in large numbers. The term 'woman worker' entered the language for the first time. But working outside home was still considered something inappropriate, going against traditional ideals for a woman. In fact, the Korean government allowed women's employment only in specific sectors. No doubt through a combination of public policy and personal choice, women were concentrated in types of work that

were perceived as 'feminine'. They mostly worked as housemaids, as drivers' assistants on city buses, or in garment, textile or electronics factories.

In order to mobilise women labourers in ways that suited their aims, both government and employers tried to enforce a docile and submissive image for women. Women workers formally enjoyed the same rights as men to just compensation and the same freedom to negotiate with employers, however, the state and employers did not perceive the issue of raising wages to the level demanded by labour unions or improving harsh work conditions as a matter of rights.[22] Rather, activities such as labour union activism that took women beyond the bounds of traditional women's behaviour were branded 'unpatriotic'.

Workplace violence and sexual control

During the decades of industrialisation, abuse of women factory workers by male foremen took place routinely in the form of physical and verbal violence and sexual abuse. Violence against women workers was perceived as normal, as it was bound up with the gender-based division of labour and the underlying gender ideology. In attic sweatshops in the Pyŏnghwa Market in Seoul's Chŏnggyechŏn district, primitive labour relations prevailed, and the violence of male cloth-cutters who were the source of all power in this small universe was almost unimaginable.[23] In addition to physical violence, men in these places used language to express their masculinity. This was part of the process begun in early childhood to become a man and a future patriarch, and through it they re-affirmed their masculine identities along with the gender-based workplace hierarchy.

Employers and male co-workers also cooperated to keep female workers in check through sexual control. Sexual control is a technique used by capitalists to weaken women workers' ability to negotiate with capital or organise themselves against it by deploying and playing on expectations and anxieties around sexuality. Although on the surface sexual control seems exceptional or irrational, it was actually a highly 'rational' method, producing a maximum effect at minimum cost.[24] During the 1960s and 70s when women were barred from knowledge and information about sexuality, they felt embarrassed and ashamed about any thing related to it, including language. In the socialisation process women were encouraged from an early age to be passive and coy, and it was considered unwomanly and even immoral for a woman to know or talk about sex. Under these circumstances, when women were exposed in the workplace to the sexual violence, sexual jokes, and male-centered language that were all a matter of course for male workers but taboo for them, the shock produced by this sexual culture had the effect of weakening them as a group. This was deliberately deployed to weaken women workers' organisational capacity through repetition.[25]

When the Urban and Industrial Mission, a missionary society interested in women workers' human rights issues, attempted to form a democratic labour

union, male workers used violence along with sexual humiliation against their female co-workers. At one level, workplace violence appears to have been actively instigated by employers and the pro-government labour union. But the violence of male workers was more than a facet of their involvement in the gendered division of labour in the workplace. Demanding submission from the opposite sex and conformity to the female role of obeying the male patriarch and national community was an integral part of masculine self-identity.[26]

Sexual control also took advantage of the social importance of an unmarried woman's virginity, which was an essential requirement as well as an absolute value during the 1960s and 70s. For a Korean woman, virginity meant nothing less than her 'femininity' or 'purity as a woman'. Also, the fact that virginity was only expected of women, and not men, made it an ideology that affected women in particularly intense ways. A cousin of the novelist Kyung-sook Shin who also worked at the Guro Industrial Complex and was a young, attractive woman, was repeatedly asked by the foreman for dates and was even groped by him. In the social environment of that time, women who were subject to sexual pestering often developed a phobia about losing their virginity. In a society where women's virginity was of utmost importance, women who were sexually solicited by men were seen as tainted whether or not there were actual sexual relations. Similarly, when a woman was seduced by a man, she was generally seen as having willingly sacrificed her virginity, and even when the man's initiative was acknowledged, the woman remained an unworthy woman with little dignity.[27] In short, any woman who elicited sexual interest in men was perceived as a 'dangerous woman' more likely to break the rule of chastity before marriage. Women workers were generally unable to fight this abusive situation effectively; they either responded defensively or felt helpless.

In sum, workplace violence against women workers was a way of maintaining the gender divide and a clear difference between men and women.[28] The routine violence of male workers against female workers instilled fear in the women and made them avoid, even if unconsciously, behaviours that might elicit the disapproval of their male co-workers. The ultimate consequence of this was to diminish women workers' capacity for collective action. Workplace violence was an ideological instrument used to weaken the grassroots labour movement and force so-called womanly behaviour on women workers.

Recognising and seeing through structuralised competition

Since women factory workers worked extended hours (often over 10 hours a day), they spent most of their waking hours in the workplace. What did women workers fear most about life on the shop floor? They often reminisce about being scolded by their superiors for doing a poor job and ending up in tears.[29]

From the mid-1960s onwards, women accounted for an increasing share of the factory workforce, but many of them were not eligible for protection under the Labour Standards Act. Where they were, the rights guaranteed and standards to be respected under the law, such as the right to form a labour union, the right to paid vacation time, maximum hours worked, and a minimum wage, were ignored both by the employers and by the government whenever convenient.[30] Where labour issues could not be resolved collectively through the unions, competition emerged among workers. This competition was mainly over hierarchy in the workplace, including the enforcement of work discipline and the improvement of productivity. By the 1970s, democratic labour unions were formed in textile companies including Dongil Bangjik, Wŏnpung Mobang, and Bando Sangsa, which were led mainly by women workers. Although collective actions were launched to negotiate wage increases and improve inhumane working conditions, the democratic labour union accounted for only a small portion of all labour union activities, and a considerable number of workers continued to respond to their situation individually, either by quitting the job or taking part in the competition. What is important to understand here is who sets work-discipline and with what authority.

At Wŏnpung Mobang factory, for example, which had one of the best-known democratic labour unions in the 1970s, hierarchy and order in the workplace were symbolised by armbands. Armbands indicated the seniority and job status of an employee. A 'foreman' was superior to other employees, occupying the highest position to which a woman factory worker could aspire. A foreman, as the manager of the authority embodied by the employer and enforcer of the workplace rules, reached this position by outdoing her competitors. The authority conferred upon her created an atmosphere of competition in the workplace as employees tried to outshine each other in through loyalty to their superiors and employer.

There were also various programs and mechanisms within the workplace to encourage internal competition. In the 1970s, democratic labour unions were formed in the face of a workplace atmosphere that was characterised not by horizontal solidarity, but by 'order' and 'authority', driving workers into competition for internal promotion and recognition of promotion points. At the beginning, employees with supervisory responsibilities such as foremen or team leaders did not use as draconian an approach as they did later. Initially, they hoped to bring other employees under their charge to accept inhumane conditions such as low wages and extended work hours without complaint by forming family-like ties with them. Sŏk Jeong-nam, who was assigned to the weaving department when she was first hired at Dongil Bangjik, remembers the foreman's speech to newly hired workers:

> It's going to be tough during the first two to three months. But, after that, you'll see that you're getting the hang of it and it's not as difficult to

> work as it used to be at the outset. You'll be getting better wages as well, by then. And if you stick with us, and work diligently, you could one day become a foreman in your turn. Don't think of me or other foremen as managers, but as your own older sisters or brothers, or even your own father. If you have any issues, just talk to us about them. That way, we can work together just like a happy family.[31]

Meanwhile, when the Factory *Saemaŭl* ('New Village') Movement – which aimed to increase productivity by combining brigade-style organisation and workplace welfare provision – was answered with grass-roots collective action on the part of democratic labour unions in the early 1970s, control and surveillance of workplaces were stepped up. One consequence was increased competition among workers to display loyalty to employers and the workplace hierarchy.[32] Women factory workers had to do unspeakable things in order to survive this competition. In one plant they were pressed so hard to beat other workers to proficiency with a new automatic machine that some of them found themselves shouting, 'Stop, stop!' in English in their sleep.[33] There were other mechanisms aimed at intensifying competition. At Dongil Bangjik, for instance, there was a 'skills contest'. One of the prizes was for the woman who could spin the largest number of machine wheels at the same time without interruption. They also checked individual output on a daily basis to reward the worker with the highest productivity, thereby pressuring workers to produce more.[34] At Wŏnpung Mobang, they administered a foreman qualification test. The competition was fierce, with a ratio of 10:1. Those who succeeded in this test recall that they felt as though they had passed a college entrance exam.[35]

There was a very simple reason why these women factory workers competed so fiercely against each other. Even in large factories, the pay was very poor. Most apprentices worked night and weekend shifts, but still received pay that was below the minimum cost of living. They therefore tried to become team leaders or foremen, and for that the 'promotion points' were essential. There were also issues related to skills. Unlike male workers who were evaluated based on their physical strength, education, or professional certificates, women workers were largely perceived as unskilled workers, performing tasks that did not involve the kind of techniques men were supposed to use in their work. As a result, job training was extremely rare for female workers. In such a situation, job grades and promotions were often decided on the subjective judgment of a manager, and at his sole discretion. This explains why these women competed so fiercely to win the favour of their team leaders or foremen.

When a manager encourages competition among workers through incentives, rewards, and sanctions, this can result in internal division among workers. But in the case where rewards and sanctions are solely based on subjective criteria like the level of loyalty and obedience shown toward a

manager, it becomes a routine source of discontent. Like the 'make out' that Michael Burawoy discusses in his account of productivity competition, there were also cases in which workers adjusted their rates of production on their own in order to reduce competition.[36] German workers tried to keep their distance from regulations, practising 'obstinacy' (*eigensinn*). This attitude toward regulations is said to have been prompted by a sense of justice that consisted in defending one's own area even if one has to accept regulation or control in areas related to everyday routine. Though not resistance as such, this constitutes a practical strategy to evade the control of the employer or manager.[37] Korean men resisted productivity competition in various ways, including completing their work ahead of time, slackening the speed of work, changing work processes, isolating workers who were close to the supervisor, causing equipment malfunctions, and protesting to the manager.[38] The situation was quite different in the textile and garment factories where most women workers worked. In these factories, there was a daily production target, and a manager toured the site to watch over the female workers. Also, since most of these companies were producing for export, workers had to scramble to meet tight delivery deadlines and at times could not even afford to take a break to use the restroom.[39] Nevertheless, women workers also made efforts to keep regulatory oversight at bay in their own ways, such as finishing their daily share of work ahead of time, reading books during work hours when the supervisor was not looking, and finding other ways to break the rules.[40]

The role of a foreman in a factory was, in sum, one of maintaining order in the workplace and defending hierarchy among workers. Order in the workplace was often compared to a family relationship, but the foreman was universally hated by women workers. Women who had initially yearned to become factory workers became disillusioned when they were physically worn down and subjected to moral and verbal violence by the foreman. The manager and foreman were the two main targets of their anger and discontent. But they still hoped to climb the hierarchical ladder all the way to the top in their turn. In other words, women workers were complicit in maintaining the hierarchy and order of the workplace. The control of women's labour by women workers had the dual effect of intensifying competition between them and solidifying the existing gender ideology, including the gendered division of labour.

The history of women's labour in the 1960s and 70s was marked by a noticeable enhancement in labour conditions and the emergence of 'collective choice' in the form of democratic labour unions. At the same time, the everyday reality of the workplace reveals that many women workers still chose to seek to improve their economic and social status individually, at a micro-level, rather than through solidarity with others, by adhering to family ideology, the gendered division of labour, and nationalism/patriotism.[41]

Becoming industrial warriors

During these decades, the state invented discourses and institutions to mobilise working-class members of society for national modernisation projects. A fine example of this is the term 'industrial warriors', used in South Korea in the 1970s. In his Labour Day speech delivered on 10 March 1966, President Park spoke about working-class Koreans in these flattering terms: 'Each and every one of the Korean workers who are right now working busily in factories, in mines, or on a railroad or harbor, or in other workplaces across Korea, is the true pillar and warrior in our effort for the modernisation of our homeland.'[42] During the 1950s and 60s, the military was modernised and rationalised, thus becoming a model for other forms of social organisation. Militarism became an organisational principle that shaped the public identity of workers. In this vein, applying the collective identity 'industrial warriors' to women workers as well was a way of assigning them a gender-neutral place as members of the national community. The industrial warrior ideology was thus a concrete and tangible promise of success, a declaration that if people abided by the principles of industriousness, thrift, and cooperation, they would be rewarded with a just wage and be fed.[43] The language of war adopted in the 1970s created to project a positive image of women workers, was, in fact, nothing more or less than an ideological discourse to justify demanding sacrifices from these women for the future of the national community. Women remained excluded, however, from the category of 'citizens'.

How, then, did women workers feel about the term 'industrial warriors' as it applied to them? Largely despised by society at large during the industrialisation era by the demeaning moniker '*gongsuni*' ('little miss factory'),[44] many women found it difficult to have a positive image of themselves as workers and ended up relegating the poverty and discrimination they suffered in the factory and at large to the realm of 'personal problems'. At the same time, though, many of these women factory workers sometimes called themselves 'industrial warriors', 'pillars of industry', 'pillars of export', or 'Miss Saemaŭl'. Once into the 1970s, several periodicals appeared whose goal was to promote a cooperative turn in labour-management relations; these included *Sanŏp-kwa Nodong* (Industry and Labour), which was later renamed *Nodong* (Labour), *Nodong-gongnon* (Labour Debates), and the best practice essay series on the Factory *Saemaŭl* Movement, published by the Office of the Labour Commissioner. The periodicals published essays by 'model workers', and those essays had a recognisable pattern distinct from those written by labour activists. They recounted the stories of 'industrial warriors' who were children of poor families and had taken up factory work to support their parents, brothers, and sisters. Through hard work and thrift, they improved the economic situation of their families, enhanced the factory environment, and finally received commendation as a model workers

through their participation in the *Saemaŭl* Movement; in sum, they became industrial heroes, now bound for a new, hope-filled destiny.[45]

In these essays we also hear the voices of women workers who actively embraced the positive image of themselves offered by the government, resisting the negative figure of the *gongsuni*. Kim Hye-suk, a factory worker who was also the superintendent of the factory dormitory and a senior official of the *Saemaŭl* association at the factory, called herself 'Miss Saemaŭl'. Identifying the *Saemaŭl* Movement as her own personal quest, she wrote:

> In order not to disappoint the executives who trusted me enough to appoint me to the position of the dormitory superintendent, I strove to be industrious and dedicated and to give my all to my duties. Every morning, I woke up by six o'clock and girls would join their voices to call me 'diligent Miss Saemaŭl'.[46]

Even among the women workers of Dongil Bangjik, famous for labour activism during the 1970s, some called themselves 'pillars of industry'. Lee Jae-sŏn, a woman into her second year of working in this factory, wrote:

> I've worked for Dongil Bangjik for two years now. Still a young girl when I first entered this place, now I am a grown woman and I became a pillar of industry who pours all my care into cloth-weaving. . . . Some of my colleagues tease me sometimes, calling me the stingy one. But I couldn't care less about what they say. I just know too well the contempt that awaits me if I do not have money, and the fool I will be treated as. So, no matter what others said around me, I saved and saved, at all costs.[47]

These testimonials are evidence of the fact that even women workers in workplaces known to be labour-friendly were not free from the influence of the economic development slogans of the Park regime. On the other hand, they also attest to these women's strong desire to escape poverty by saving, through hard work, and even by denying themselves basic comforts. Reverend Cho Hwa-sun of the Incheon Urban Industrial Mission has said of the claim that the UIM was an anti-productive organisation that would lead to the bankruptcy of companies: 'The opposite is true. They [unionised workers] are more productive than others. Each time when I get arrested [by police], I insist on this point.' Neither labour-friendly religious organisations nor women workers were able to develop a radical critique of the government's emphasis on economic development.[48]

During the process of Korean industrialisation, there was a large undercurrent of desire beneath the powerful absorption of various social groups into the 'modernisation project'.[49] The importance of the *Saemaŭl* Movement and being a model worker that one notes in model workers' essays cannot be simply dismissed as self-delusion or faking. Being selected as a

model worker in a program and receiving awards from local administrations or the government labour agency or promotion by the company must have been huge moral, if not material, rewards for these women. Women selected as model workers felt personally vindicated for their thrift and striving to be models of productivity. This kind of recognition is likely to have helped boost the ego of women who were despised as factory girls, making them feel like valuable and productive members of society and contributors to the national economy.[50] In sum, the nationalist discourse used by the Park regime to mobilise the Korean population – escape from poverty, a sense of belonging to a national community, having a normal job, etc. – was a historical reality that had a real and material force. But it is also true that the same workers set themselves at some distance from the values imposed upon them by the companies by meeting individual quotas before the end of working hours or reading books away from the eyes of their supervisors. Such practices on the shop floor can be taken as evidence that, to some extent, they adopted and at least at a superficial level were prepared to act on the values imposed by the ruling political regime and industrial order. But that acceptance did not mean that they fully identified with the regime's values. They practiced 'passive resistance' in their own ways. In other words, the regime failed to exercise complete control over the bodies and minds of the female workers.[51]

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is not to argue that there was an unmitigated active consent to the regime on the part of ordinary Koreans. Rather, it points out how women workers, in their everyday lives, were unable to free themselves entirely from the fetters of patriarchy, gender-based division of labour, developmentalism, and nationalism. While women workers' struggle for their rights, which continued throughout the 1970s, did have disruptive effects on the ruling system and on labour-management relations, only a minority of individuals opted for collective resistance, and even for those who chose this course of action, their objective was not to challenge the dominant social order or the system of state-led economic development. The public statements of the Korean Democratic Union, in which activist women played a significant role in the 1970s, focused on demands for wage raises and better working conditions, and did not criticise the government's developmentalist policy as such. One of the main things women workers hoped to secure in their everyday environment in the workplace was 'normalcy' – meaning the livelihood of their families, stable employment, normal family life, and acceptance as members of the national community.[52] Women workers were thus anything but passive beings, silently submitting to the economic productivism of the developmental order of the day. They saw through the schemes in place for structuralised competition and tried to

keep a distance from workplace rules. But these were coupled at the same time with choices like frugality, stoicism, and self-discipline.

The 'big events' that are deemed important in the labour history of this period do not quite reflect what personally mattered the most for these women workers in their daily lives. What they hoped for most was to escape poverty (or to ensure a livelihood for their families), get an education, be treated as independent human beings, and be able to prepare for the future marriage they considered as the ultimate fulfillment of their destiny as women. They welcomed opportunities to practice the everyday virtues of frugality and industriousness, and in this their hopes and expectations coincided with the interests of their employers and managers in the workplace. While women's industrial work continued to be premised on a gender relationship in which men were considered superior to women, the incentivising practices and productivist rhetoric that aimed at turning them into productive subjects eventually shaped the self-perception of these women as fully-fledged members of a national community. In this sense, the relationship of women workers to the Park Chung-hee regime and their active consent to it was shaped by their own practical needs and desires.

Notes

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3. Jang Mun-Sŏk and Lee Sang-Rok (eds), *Kŭntaeŭi kyŏngkyeesŏ tokchaelŭl ilkta: taechungtokchaewa pakchŏnghŭi ch'eche* (Seoul: Greenbee, 2006), pp. 199–200, 411.
4. Kim Gwi-Ok, '1960, 1970nyŏndae ŭilyupongcheŏp nodongja hyŏngsŏngkwachŏng: pandosangsa (pup'yŏngkongjang) ŭi saryerŭl chungsimŭro', in Lee Chong-Ku (ed.), *1960–1970 nyŏndae hankukŭi sanŏphwawa nodongja chŏngch'esŏng* (Seoul: Hanul, 2004), p. 25.
5. Detlev Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 95.
6. Alf Lüdtke, 'Interview with Alf Lüdtke', in Alf Lüdtke (ed.), *The History of Everyday Life* (Seoul: Chŏngnyŏnsa, 2002), pp. 313–14.
7. Jŏng Hyŏn-baek, 'Ilban yŏsŏngnodongja ŭi ŭisikkucho', *Nodongundongkwa nodongja munhwa*, (Seoul: Hankilsa, 1992), p. 411.
8. Kang Jun-man, *Hankukhyŏntaesa sanch'aek-1970nyŏntae* (Inmulkwa sasang, 2002).
9. Dorothee Wierling, 'The History of Everyday Life and History of Gender Relationships', in Alf Lüdtke (ed.), *The History of Everyday Life* (Seoul: Cheongnyeonsa, 2002), pp. 243–5.
10. Robert Spencer, *Yŏgong: Factory Girl* (Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch, 1988), pp. 44–5.
11. Cho Eun-Ja, 'Ilchŏngbok-e ŭi kiku', *Nodongkongron* (July 1972), 228–30.
12. Kim Ji-Sŏn, Park T'ae-Yŏn, Chung Bae, Ok-byŏng, 'Chwadam: Nodongundongkwa na', in *1970nyŏndae sanŏphwa ch'oki hankuknodongsa yŏngu – nodongundongsarŭl*

chungsimŭro (Seoul: Sŏnggonghoe taehakkyo sahoemunhwayŏnkuso, 2003) and Choe Sun-Yeong, 'Yusintokchaerŭl munŏttŭrls yŏsŏng nodongjaŭi him – YH nocho t'uchaeng kwa ch'oesunyŏng putaep'yo', *Ironkwa silch'ŏn ch'angganchunpi* Vol. 2, (Seoul: Minjunodongdang chungch'aekuiwŏnhoe, 2001).
13. Chŏn Kyŏng-ok, Kim Ŭn-sil, and Chŏng Ki-ŭn (eds), *Hankukyŏsŏnginmulsa* Hanguk yŏsŏng inmulsa Vol. 2 (Seoul: Asiayŏsŏngyŏnkuso, 2005), p. 278.
14. Sŏk Jŏng-Nam, *Kongjangŭi pulpich* (Seoul: IlwolSeogak, 1984), pp. 12–13.
15. Chŏn Bo-Hŭi, 'Nammollae ultŏn nali usŭm kkoch'p'inŭn nallo', *Nodong*, (June 1977), 88.
16. *Nodongt'ongkyeyŏnkam* (Nodongch'ŏng, 1970).
17. Sŏk Jŏng-Nam, *Kongjangŭi pulpich*, p. 12.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
19. Kim Kyŏng-hŭi, 'Yŏsŏngnodongjaŭi chakŏpjang saenghwalkwa sŏngpyŏl punŏp: 1970-nyŏndae chechoŏpŭl chungsimŭro', in Yi Chong-ku (ed.) *1960–70nyŏndae nodongjaŭi chakŏpjang munhwawa chŏngch'esŏng* (Seoul: Hanul, 2006), p. 41.
20. Kim Won, *Yŏgong 1970, kŭnyŏtŭlŭi panyŏksa*, (Seoul: Imajin, 2006), pp. 210–211; 283–284.
21. Kim Kyŏng-hŭi, 'Yŏsŏngnodongjaŭi chkŏpjang saenghwalkwa sŏngpyŏl punŏp', p. 44.
22. See Kim Won, *Yŏgong 1970*, pp. 293–4.
23. Cho Yŏng-rae, *Chŏn t'ae-il p'yŏngchŏn* (Seoul: Dolbegae, 1983), Chun Tae-il, 'Inkan ch'oesohanŭi yokuipnida', *Sindonga* (January 1971); Chun Tae-il, *Nae Chukŭmŭl hŏttoei hajimalla*, (Seoul: Dolbegae, 1988); Lee, So-Sŏn, *Ŏmŏniŭi kil – Yi So-sŏn ŏmŏniŭi hoesang* (Seoul: Dolbegae, 1990); Min Jong-Sŏk, 'Inkansijang: P'yŏnghwasijangesŏ ilhanŭn misingsaŭi 1-il ch'ehŏmsuki', *Tae-Hwa (Conversation)* (April 1977).
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25. Cho, Yŏ, and Lee (eds), pp. 175–6.
26. Lee Jong-Yŏng, *Sŏngchŏkchipaewa kŭ yangsiktŭl: chŏngch'esŏngesŏ kamsusŏngŭro* (Seoul: Saemulkyŏl, 2001), p. 229.
27. Cho, Yŏ, and Lee (eds), p. 172.
28. Ko Gaphee, 'Gender-Sexuality Apparatus and Feminist Cultural Theory,' *Feminist Theory*, Vol. 2,(Seoul: Yeoiyeon, 1999), p. 19.
29. Ham Su-I, 'Mŏkkurŭmi chinakako', *Nodong*, (August 1979), 102.
30. Hagen Koo, Sin Kwang-yŏng, translated by Hankuk Nodongkyekŭpŭi hyŏngsŏng (eng.) (ed.), *Korean Workers: The Culture and Politics of Class Formation*, (Seoul: Changbi Publishers, 2002), p. 99.
31. Seok Jeong-Nam, *Kongjangŭi pulpich'*, p. 14.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 27–8.
33. Song Hyo-sun, *Sŏullo kanŭn kil* (Seoul: Hyŏngsŏngsa, 1982), pp. 41–4.
34. Chu Song-Rye, 'Ŏkumŏpsi pomŭn onŭn ka', *Silŏpilki* (Seoul: Chagŭnchaek, 2001), 38.
35. Kwak In-sun, Park Kŭm-nyŏ (eds), 'Chikŭmŭn sijipdo chalkayo', *Nodongkongron*, (March 1972), 213.
36. Michael Burawoy and Chŏng Pŏm-chin, translated by *Saengsanŭi chŏngch'i – chaponchuŭiwa sahoechuŭiŭi kongchangch'eche* (eng.) (ed.), *The Politics of Production* (Seoul: Park Jong-Cheol Publisher, 1999), p. 172.
37. Lüdtke (ed.), *The History of Everyday Life* (Seoul: Cheongnyeonsa, 2002), p. 368.

38. Jung Sŭng-guk, '1970-nyŏndae chatongch'akuŏp nodongjaŭi yŏkasaenghwal-e kwanhan yŏngu', in Yi Chong-ku (ed.), *1960–70-nyŏndae hankuk nodongjaŭi kyekŭpmunhwawa chŏngch'esŏng* (Seoul: Hanul, 2006), pp. 147–54.
39. *Kim Kyŏng-hŭi*, p. 30.
40. Chŏng, Kim, and Chŏng (eds), *Hankukyŏsŏnginmulsa* Vol. 2, p. 261.
41. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany*, p. 168.
42. Park Chung-hee, speech on 'The 8th Labour Day,' *Presidential Archive in the National Archive of Korea* (10 March 1966), available online at http://dams.pa.go.kr:8888/dams/ezpdf/ezPdfFileDownload.jsp?itemID=%2FDOCUMENT%2F2009%2F11%2F26%2FDOC%2FSRC%2F010420091126416840004168401365 1.PD
43. Lüdtke (ed.), *The History of Everyday Life*, p. 324.
44. '*Gongsuni*' (工--) is a somewhat demeaning term for young female factory workers. The application of the gendered diminutive suffix '*-suni*' to the root '*gong*' (工, 'work', 'worker') is differentiated here from the more neutral term '*yŏgong*' (女工, 'factory girl').
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46. Kim Hye-Suk, 'Onŭl ŭi isski kkaji', *Nodong* (March 1979), 131.
47. Lee Jae-Sŏn, 'ŏcheŭi sŭlp'ŭmi onŭlŭi haengpokŭl', *Sanŏpkwa nodong* (August 1976), 91.
48. See Korean documentary below: Hong Sang-Wun, 'Manyŏsanyang, tosisanŏpsŏn-kyohoe', *Ichenŭn malhalsu issta* ['*Witch-hunt, Urban Industrial Mission*', *Now I Can Say*], (3 August 2001).
49. *Shin Byŏng-hyŏn* (2003).
50. Kim, '1970-nyŏndae yŏsŏng nodongjaŭi ilsangsaenghwalkwa ŭisik', 98–9.
51. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany*, pp. 108–9.
52. *Ibid*., pp. 104–5.

13

Conscription, Collaboration, and Self-Cutting in Rural Senegal During and After World War II

Dennis C. Galvan

Introduction

During and after World War II, rural Senegalese conscripts experienced coercion, collaboration, and moments of unauthorised control as they were recruited to, survived, and took creative advantage of European military service. Massive mobilisation of Senegalese recruits not only helped to liberate France, it also afforded new opportunities for willful action in the spaces between collusion and evasion, collaboration and resistance.

Two illustrations of willful action, drawn from interviews with veterans and their descendants in the village of Toucar, Senegal,[1] form the empirical core of this chapter: First, on recruitment, soldiers were stripped of their amulets and charms. Most of these young men were sure that, without this supernatural protection, they would die in transit or on the battlefields of Europe. To avoid this fate, some swallowed amulets whole, while others sewed amulets into slits they cut into their own flesh which, by their accounts, enabled them to survive the war. Thus, the very bodies of the conscripts became sites for the expression of willful, unauthorised disruptions of the order and behaviours promoted by the colonial regime.

Military mobilisation gave many rural African conscripts access to new forms of educational, social, and political capital. In the second example I discuss how veterans were able to leverage their new skills to disrupt existing village hierarchies and take control of new rural institutions after the war. In doing so, they rewrote the authoritarian script for colonial and postcolonial rural politics, scrappily turning available opportunities into means for personal advancement and wealth.

In this chapter, I first outline the experience of Senegalese World War II recruits in the prior context of coercive labour regimes, and then turn to the social upheaval of World War II recruitment and discuss the unusual survival strategies in the face of what many recruits considered certain death.

Through these examples from Senegal, we find illustration, in micro, of the core themes of this volume: the interplay between authoritarian ambitions for mobilsation and *Eigensinn*-style willful engagement with a vigorous new order. These engagements at once comply with, co-opt, and through tactical poaching, transform a seemingly rigid structural order.

Background

World War II-era forced military conscription took place against a long and complex backdrop of forced labour regimes in francophone West Africa. Three points about this context are especially important in setting up our discussion of creative responses to conscription in World War II.[2]

First, colonial military recruitment built on and intensified pre-colonial regimes of coercive labour mobilisation. Most pre-colonial kingdoms rested on a caste-like hierarchy, with nobles and free farmers enjoying much greater degrees of autonomy than low-status artisans, story-tellers, slave-warriors, and domestic slaves.[3] Low caste people and slaves were subordinate to and dependent on elites (nobles and free farmers), but could expect a modicum of economic and social support to ensure their livelihoods. They also benefitted from restrictions on arbitrariness and brutality, and could make claims for fair treatment against their superiors.[4]

Second, the slave trade (mid-15th to mid-19th centuries) and the expansion of the colonial presence (late 18th to early 20th centuries) built on and distorted prior systems of unfree labour. Early slave trading extracted mainly domestic slaves and those of low caste. Eventually, increased demand for slaves precipitated new African political economies based on raiding neighbors for captives to export.[5] As the slave trade waned, France solidified its coastal presence, gradually expanding self-governance and citizenship rights for inhabitants of four urban enclaves on the coast of Senegal (1789–1915). By contrast, inhabitants of interior Senegal, rapidly brought under French control in the period 1885–1905, were governed as colonial subjects under the brutally imposed *code de l'indigenat*, a central element of which was forced or *corvée* labour for the colonial state.[6] *Corvée* work was back-breaking, and failure to provide young men to the labour pools resulted in harsh punishments. Twentieth century Senegal thus included two contradictory labour regimes – coastal *citoyens* enjoyed European style rights, while interior *sujets* experienced forced labour arrangements reminiscent of pre-colonial low caste status, but backed by slave trade-style coercive practices.

Third, when the French finally made the decision, under General Mangin in 1915, to establish *La Force Noire* to serve in Europe, the result was a predictable fear in rural places like Toucar. Conscripts and their family were familiar with the brutality of *corvée* labour, now combined with the reality of removal to Europe, an evocation of not so distant memories of the slave

trade. The oppressive context was also not without possibilities: by World War I, some locals had already been conscripted as *Tirailleurs Sénégalais* for the colonial military, and a few had ended up as officers across West Africa, gaining significant opportunities for social mobility.[7] Of course, a great many *tirailleurs* of the Great War, used as front line cannon fodder in the trenches, never saw their home villages again.[8] *Corvée* and regional colonial military service had never been this deadly.

Surviving certain death

By the time conscription began for World War II, fear in rural communities like Toucar was high. Informant Babou Thioro Faye, son of a World War II veteran, recounts:

> When that [military recruitment] happened again in '39–'40, once they made the announcement, all the women and the relatives of those who had been chosen started to cry and cry. The new recruits would die like flies, like in the first war.[9]

Families rushed young men out to the bush to oversee cattle on long searches for pasture and shuffled children among distant relatives – anything to avoid what many assumed would be a death sentence.

Nevertheless, the colonial regime used the necessary means to recruit some 200,000 troops from French West Africa.[10] Humiliation was integral to the recruitment process: not only were recruits ripped from their families, they were also subjected to nude medical examinations en-masse,[11] and were divested of any markers of wealth and success like shoes.[12] Strip-searching also entailed removing amulets worn to ward off bad fortune, evil spirits, and harmful spells, or to protect against penetration by knives and bullets.[13] To this day, discrete, mostly hidden wearable objects containing supernatural elements (commonly called *gris-gris*) are considered absolutely essential to personal well-being and the management of risk in this part of Africa. From meeting one's boss to taking a qualifying exam, warding off rival suitors to preventing infant mortality, a rational person in this society, when faced with uncertainty, takes supernatural steps to be prepared and protected.[14] And people in Toucar knew that recruitment entailed the removal and confiscation of amulets. Cheikh Sene, son of a World War II veteran, offers a commonly repeated formula: 'When they took our fathers and grandfathers, they stole all their *gris-gris* and they were never returned.'[15] Ibou Sene, son of a World War I veteran, highlights the connection in popular imagination between supernatural protection and wartime risk: 'Without protection, you can see why so few of them returned from that war.'[16]

Thus, many were ready to take creative measures to ensure their survival. Gorgui Ndiaye, who saw action in North Africa, attributed his survival to a specific precautionary measure:

> An older relative, from Poudaye village, told me that he would cut out a piece of his belt[17] and swallow it. I asked him, 'Will this work?' He said 'A *saltigué* [rain priest/shaman] near Diohine told people to take the *pangool* [ancestral spirits] with them any way you can. So I think they will be with me if I swallow this but don't chew.' So I did this too.[18]

Of the six World War II veterans I interviewed, one other reported taking the same measure, and all six reported that they knew of others who had swallowed amulets. Of the 18 descendants of veterans interviewed, 13 had heard of swallowing *gris-gris* as a way to retain supernatural protection. These are high positive response rates, especially given the private nature of supernatural protection strategies. One veteran, Al-Hussein Seck, chose an even more invasive procedure:

> I heard of boys in Sob [a nearby, smaller village] who took a knife right here, on the inside of their arms and they made a cut, about this long [10–15 cm] and put their *gris-gris* right in there, and then they sewed up their arms. I followed their example. You can see the scar right here.[19]

Three of the six veterans interviewed either recounted this procedure, or strongly alluded to it. As Massane Cheikh Mboup put it, 'I had to do things, painful things, to get the protection inside of me.'[20]

All but four of the 18 descendants of veterans had heard of inserting amulets into one's flesh. Jean-François Diouf, whose father served in the war, noted:

> I heard that the father of Waly Dokor Ndiome [a local spiritual healer] could make a small pouch, only about this big [gestures about 3cm by 3cm square] which could do a lot. A very strong mixture inside could protect from bullets and knives. And so I know my father got one of these in his arm.

Toucar veterans are adamant that these scrappy, willful, emergency steps to take *gris-gris* with them to war by any means necessary were vital to their survival. And at least in the view of the Toucar respondents, these measures were not uncommon. For example, Nancy Ellen Lawler's interviews with conscripts from Côte d'Ivoire who fought at the Battle of the Somme include this intriguing comment:

> It was a bullet that broke off my tooth not a peanut you know. Yes, we were with the French all the time. We were stronger than the whites. . . . That bullet which hit my tooth would have killed a white.[21]

Although there is no mention of supernatural protection, when I shared this story with my informants in Toucar, all agreed with Jean-François

Diouf: 'That Ivoirian had a very powerful charm inside his body . . . that's the only way he lived. '[22]

Seizing postwar opportunities

Despite the many challenges of demobilisation (long delays in returning home, unpaid salaries, even some infamous instances of brutal repression when veterans demanded their pay),[23] the World War II experience nevertheless exposed soldiers to a set of useful skills that they could later use to their advantage. This was not without precedent. Especially for low caste artisans (blacksmiths, leatherworkers, woodworkers, potters, and storytellers), even *corvée* labour could provide exposure to new trades in the expanding urban economy, enabling some to take up wage work as shop assistants, repairmen, and for the storyteller (*griot*) caste, musicians.[24] *Tirailleurs* sent all over West Africa were sometimes elevated to officer and other high ranking positions.[25] In the space between collusion and evasion, people willfully made do, and sometimes made out well.

Military recruitment for the World Wars produced similar disruptions and opportunistic action. Building on fieldwork in a nearby, but ethnically distinct setting, James Searing notes how the anti-Islamic, matrilineal[26] social order of the village of Bandia was disrupted when matrilineal uncles collaborated with French colonial recruiters to send their nephews off to war. Nephews felt betrayed, and those who returned broke rank with their uncles, accepted Islam and its principles of patrilineage, formed Muslim savings and labour-pooling associations, and eventually broke the power of their uncles, emerging within a generation as the dominant elite of a newly Muslim and patrilineal village order.[27]

In Toucar, we see similar opportunistic movements in the aftermath of World War II. Many veterans acquired significant French language skills. In my own research in the village beginning in the late 1980s, it was clear that the World War II veterans spoke a more sophisticated French with a wider vocabulary, especially with regard to administrative matters, than their sons and many younger people. For some veterans, experience in a complex administrative hierarchy governed by intricate regulations and mediated through formal, documented requisitions, orders, reports, and appeals, left them versed in what is known locally as '*affaires du keit*'. Using a local variation of the Arabic term for paper (*keitun*), Toucar's World War II veterans were far more comfortable with bureaucracy and its discourse and style than most people in this largely non-literate community. This familiarity with French and administrative discourses and practices proved crucial when 1970s reforms established elected Rural Councils to govern land tenure and natural resource management. World War II veterans unexpectedly took control of these institutions even though noble lineages had long managed land tenure and resource allocation.[28] To this day, key figures in the

village's noble founding lineages lament the fact that the new institutions show 'too little respect for the place of the *laman* and the *saltigué* [traditional land custodian and rain priest/shaman, both from the founding noble lineage], disregard our traditions, and put people of no quality into powerful offices.'[29] As in Bandia, coercive conscription exposed veterans to new ideas and new skills. They found creative ways to put these to good use, upending traditional socio-political orders and seizing commanding positions in the process as new cultural, economic, and political possibilities emerged.

Conclusion: Creative action between collusion and evasion

In Michel de Certeau's terms, the lived experience of Senegalese conscripts and indeed, their bodies themselves, represent sites for strategic regularisation and tactical transformation in the form of *tears and ruptures*.[30] Conscription and military service are instances par excellence of strategic ordering, regularisation of the physical form, and the sequential movement of bodies. Local responses from Toucar conscripts also illustrate the everyday adaptive use and transformation of mass-dictatorial strategic orders.

Conscripts were to appear in uniform, clothed by rank and function, without adornment. For them, lack of 'adornment' meant a prohibition on supernatural amulets, which, under the circumstances, was tantamount to extreme risk of death. They therefore took creative measures to modify their bodies to safeguard themselves, swallowing or inserting amulets into their flesh. Then later, they made unauthorised use of their newfound linguistic and political-administrative skills to stage an unexpected coup, out-manoeuvering local lineage elites for control of newly established Rural Councils. These responses to conscription fit well within de Certeau's model of *la perruque*, opening 'ellipses, drifts, and leaks of meaning' to produce 'a sieve-order'.[31] For some, de Certeau's distinction is too stark, obscuring the subjectivity of making do within an oppressive field of action. Two adjustments improve on de Certeau's framework while also specifying the place of the African colonial and postcolonial experience within the mass dictatorship framework. First, the subjective experience of the conscripts clearly entails what John Eidson calls, 'Putting up with political power to the degree that one must, while pursuing one's own ends to the degree that one can', which is in turn a formulaic rendition of Alf Lüdtke's concept of *Eigensinn*.[32] The difference may appear subtle, but seen through the lens of willful action to make do within the constraints of existing fields of power, we focus less on the abstraction of a 'strategic' order, and reduce the risk of idealising creative action as volitional, unfettered innovation. This is a helpful improvement on de Certeau's torn grid and sieve order. It points us down a pragmatist road consistent with John Dewey's accounts of habit and deliberation, and Hans Joas's reformulation of both.[33]

This new approach thus suggests an orientation toward creative action that is not volitional freedom, but a situated disassembly of available institutional and cultural repertoires available for rearrangement into surprising new patterns of behaviour and new institutional and cultural forms.[34] Ingesting and inserting amulets into one's own flesh and mobilising veterans'nexperiences and skills for personal and political gain, then, emerge from such processes of creative recombinatory willfulness.

It is this ordinary creativity within a field of considerable coercive power (and even more considerable claims for totalising mobilisation) that rightly positions these rural African colonial and postcolonial experiences in a discussion of mass dictatorship and everyday life. In comparison to other political regimes, colonial and postcolonial Africa are of course not Park's South Korea, Stalin's Soviet Union, or Mao's China. These historical contexts do however exhibit a common ambition to use coercive means and a grand justificatory ideological vision to establish a complete and orderly political field that reworks and mobilises populations considered otherwise inert or remote. In this kind of field, we find responses in rural Senegal that resemble those described elsewhere in this volume, responses that exercise intentional, recombinatory creativity in the spaces available between collusion and evasion.

Notes

1. Toucar is a village of about 3000 people in West-Central Senegal, 95 per cent of whose inhabitants belong to the Serer-Sinig ethno-linguistic group. Interviews conducted by the author for this study took place on five occasions between 1988 and 2005. For further background on the history, culture, and politics of Toucar and the environs, see Dennis C. Galvan, *The State Must Be Our Master of Fire: How Peasants Craft Culturally Sustainable Development in Senegal* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004).
2. For a full review of the prior evolution of coercive and non-coercive labour practices, see Babacar Fall, *Le travail au Sénégal au XXe siècle* (Paris: Karthala, 2011).
3. Martin Klein, *Islam & Imperialism in Senegal* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968).
4. Tal Tamari, *Les Castes de L'Afrique Occidentale: Artisans et Musiciens Endogames* (Nanterre, France: Societé d'Ethnologie, 1991).
5. Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
6. Michael Crowder, *A Study of French Assimilation Policy* (London: Methuen & Co., 1967).
7. Jacqueline Woodfork, ' "Is It a Crime to be a Tirailleur in the Army?": The Impact of Senegalese Civilian Status in the French Colonial Army during the Second World War', in *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 77 (January 2013), 115–39.
8. Joe Lunn, *Memories of the Maelstrom: A Senegalese Oral History of the First World War* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinnemann, 1999).

9. Babou Thioro Faye, interview by author in village of Toucar, Senegal (17 August 2002). For interviews by author, names of informants have been changed to ensure their anonymity.
10. Myron Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts: The Tirailleurs Sénégalais in French West Africa, 1857–1960* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinneman, 1991), p. 191.
11. Echenberg, p. 84.
12. Woodfork, p. 129.
13. Babou Thioro Faye, interview; Al-Hussein Seck, interview by author in village of Toucar, Senegal (22 May 1988); Jean-François Diouf, interview by author in village of Toucar, Senegal (4 February 1992); Cheikh Sene, interview by author in village of Toucar (15 July 1993); Ibou Sene, interview by author in village of Toucar (8 December 1992).
14. See Galvan (2004), pp. 33–71; and Leopoldo Sarli, Marta Scotti, Ketty Bulgarelli, Giuliana Masera, Emile Enongene, and Annavittoria Sarli, 'Concepts of Health, Disease and Treatment in a Rural Village of Sénégal', in *Journal of Medicine and the Person*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (August 2012), 68–76.
15. Cheikh Sene, Interview.
16. Ibou Sene, Interview.
17. Many *gris-gris* that ensure impenetrability take the form of a leather waistband, worn under clothing, with pouches sewn in containing supernatural elements.
18. Gorgui Faye, Interview by author in village of Toucar (24 March 2005).
19. Al-Hussain Seck, Interview.
20. Massane Cheikh Mboup, Interview by author in village of Toucar (19 November 1993).
21. Nancy Ellen Lawler, *Soldiers of Misfortune: Ivoirien Tirailleurs of World War II* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992), p. 80, as cited in Laura Rice, 'African Conscripts/European Conflicts: Race, Memory and the Lessons of War', in *Cultural Critique*, No. 45 (Spring 2000), 138.
22. Jean-François Diouf, Interview.
23. The most famous was the 1 December 1944 slaughter of 35 demobilised African troops at Senegal's Camp de Thiaroye during a protest over back pay by nearly 1300 veterans. Echenberg reports 15 similar incidents across West Africa. Echenberg (1991), p. 101.
24. Dennis Galvan, 'The Market Meets Sacred Fire: Land Pawning as Institutional Syncretism in Inter-War Senegal', in *African Economic History*, Vol. 25 (1997), 9–41.
25. As an exemplar, consider the case of Mademby Sy, a colonial military officer from Saint-Louis, Senegal, who was eventually installed as Faama (King) of Sansanding, a small state in the French Soudan (Mali). Richard Roberts, 'The Case of Faama Mademba Sy and the Ambiguities of Legal Jurisdiction in Early Colonial French Soudan', in Kristin Mann and Richard Roberts (eds), *Law in Colonial Africa* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinneman, 1991), pp. 85–205.
26. The core principle in this version of matrilinealism is that inheritance, tutelage, and social control flow from a woman's brother to her sons. The biological father-son bond of patrilinealism is thus far less important than the bond between a young man and his mother's brother.
27. James F. Searing, 'Conversion to Islam: Military Recruitment and Generational Conflict in a Sereer-Safèn Village (Bandia)', in *Journal of African History*, Vol. 44, No. 1, (2003), 73–94.
28. Galvan (2004), pp. 164–208.

29. Sengane Diouf, interview by author in the village of Toucar, Senegal (20 November 1992).
30. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
31. *de Certeau*, (1988), pp. 25–6, 107.
32. John R. Eidson, 'Compulsion, Compliance or *Eigensinn*? Examining Theories of Power in an East German Field Site', in *Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Working Papers*, No. 61, (2003); Alf Lüdtke, *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).
33. John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books: 2002 [1922]); Hans Joas, *The Creativity of Action* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
34. See for a complete exploration of these processes of situated, everyday rummaging, disassembly and recombination, Gerald Berk and Dennis Galvan, 'Processes of Creative Syncretism: Experiential Origins of Institutional Order and Change', in Berk, Galvan, and Victoria Hattam (eds), *Political Creativity: Reconfiguring Institutional Order and Change* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

14

The Convention People's Party (CPP) in Ghana, Late 1950s to the 1970s: Mobilisation for Transformation

Richard Rathbone

Some historical background

In February 1951, voters in the British colony of the Gold Coast[1] went to the polls in the country's first general election and a majority of them voted for the Convention People's Party.[2] This political party was to rule Ghana without interruption for 15 years, until its removal by a military coup d'état in February 1966. Although colonial rule ended in March 1957, a sequence of constitutional reforms from 1951 until independence ensured that the country's elected governments were to enjoy greater and greater powers.[3] Following their success at the next scheduled general election of 1954, the Convention People's Party (CPP) evolved to become the government of a virtually self-governing state, and at independence,[4] took over the reins of a sovereign state.[5] The Party renewed its mandate in what most observers regarded as a less than fairly conducted plebiscite in 1960 that inaugurated the country's first republic and consequently conferred the presidency upon the Prime Minister and the Party's most significant political figure, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah.

This history is amongst the best-known narratives in the modern history of Africa, and this is not the place to repeat the detail.[6] So far as contemporary Ghanaian understandings of this immediate past are concerned, the point is that there is no agreed narrative. The divisions – those of region, of ethnicity, of social class, and of gender, which inflect different readings of the past, intriguingly continue to be those which inform Ghanaian politics in the 21st century. Consequently there are a variety of views of what these 15 years meant and, as importantly, what those years might have meant in terms of personal experience. There is however no doubt that one story is dominant, and it is a version that has stood the test of time. It is the victors' rather than any of the losers' (or victims') account that is most frequently encountered in encyclopedia articles, synoptic works dealing with recent

world history, and in the self-presentations of those who are, or claim to be, the actual or ideational descendants of the winners.[7] The most familiar of the losers' accounts of those years are those of the country's traditional rulers: the chiefs who did indeed lose, and did so on a massive scale.[8] But they were not the only Ghanaians whose experience of the endgame of colonial rule and the first years of independence was notably unhappy.

The People's Party?

The Convention People's Party (CPP) was, from its beginnings in 1949, an exciting, brashly populist organisation whose crusading self-image, and hence its rhetoric, borrowed extensively from the almost incantatory language of European communist and socialist parties of the mid-20th century.[9] 'The strength of the organised masses is invincible', trumpeted the Party's daily newspaper, the Accra Evening News.[10] Their manifesto insisted that they were committed to the 'advancement of the common people'.[11] Members of the Party routinely addressed one another as 'Comrade' and some adopted the clenched fist salute; there was extensive use of such formulaic language and self-presentation throughout the life of the Party.[12] Appearances can be deceptive and the question of whether the Party, and especially its policies whilst in office, could be regarded as genuinely socialist even though its founding constitution was committed to 'the establishment of a democratic socialist society' became the subject of much contemporary debate.[13]

In the course of his intriguing political apprenticeship in Africa, the United States and Britain, the Party's founder, Kwame Nkrumah, was undoubtedly influenced by close contact with anti-imperialist and Marxian if not universally or consistently Marxist activists such as George Padmore, C.L.R. James, Peter Abrahams, Nnamdi Azikiwe, and Jomo Kenyatta. Whether he had or had not been a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain during his period in London is unclear, although a party membership card was found among his belongings when colonial police ransacked them upon his arrest in 1949 for encouraging an illegal strike.[14] Although his political convictions might have shifted kaleidoscopically, after his return to Ghana in early 1948, Nkrumah's radicalism and, more arguably, his opportunism swiftly prompted his divorce in 1949 from the nationalist organisation which he briefly served as General Secretary, the United Gold Coast Convention, a grouping he was to denounce as being 'backed almost entirely by reactionaries, middle class lawyers and merchants'.[15] It remains impossible to be certain about exactly who the CPP represented from its foundation in June 1949 to its abolition in February 1966; we lack membership data and the generally low voting figures in the elections of 1951, 1954, 1956, and 1960 defy serious psephology. Like most political parties, the CPP claimed many more members than it could possibly have

enjoyed and also pretended to a highly unlikely degree of inclusiveness. Scholars have accordingly relied upon inferences drawn from its policies when trying to describe the shape of its constituency. Our capacity to specify those beneficiaries is spectacularly muddied by the fact that the CPP created confusing, even contradictory economic policies that outlasted its 15 years in office[16] for two further decades Ghanaians were to suffer from the consequences of the fact that 'the securing of political incumbency, not economic development, . . . [was] . . . the operative goal of this mode of statist economic strategy'.[17] What we can be certain about, however, is that the Party sought to be seen as the redressive, somewhat romantic champion of Ghana's numerically preponderant and, as they argued, relatively impoverished farmers, fishermen, market women, and trades unionists.[18]

Ghana's catastrophic economic and hence social decline began to be widely noted in the last quarter of the 20th century. A famous World Bank study in 1983 noted that Ghana, which in 1957 had enjoyed the highest per capita income in tropical Africa – the same as South Korea – now endured one of the lowest growth rates in the world.[19] These data were not abstract lines on graphs, but were experienced as demeaning, real declines in the living standards of already poor people. Whilst some sought to invoke victimhood as proof of local innocence and to mitigate the gravity of all of this by the evocation of malign exogenous factors, modern scholarly analysis is virtually unanimous in concluding that Ghanaian policies drawn up and executed by Ghanaian politicians were in large measure responsible for this tragedy.

Doomed relationships I: The government and the farmers

The focus of this chapter is upon the fate of two groups of Ghanaians, both of which the CPP had claimed to be especially close to its hard-handed authentic core, namely the farming community and trades unionists. Let us look at the fate of farmers first. The comparative wealth of the Gold Coast in the colonial era had rested on a remarkable agricultural revolution brought about by pioneering, mostly small-scale, and undoubtedly capitalist farmers who disseminated the growing of the valuable cash-crop cocoa. Cocoa is native to South America, but growing European enjoyment of chocolate and hence dramatic market growth led to its establishment as a significant export crop in tropical areas on the other side of the Atlantic. The history of Ghanaian cocoa cultivation is a much celebrated and even romantic story,[20] but the most important aspect of it was that cocoa was grown on small farms by peasant farmers and their immediate families and often, but not inevitably, employing a few labourers; cocoa was not produced on plantations owned by expatriate capital.[21] Ghana is not, and never was, a social space in which significant landlordism appeared; even if these pioneer farmers were to break with custom by buying – and hence owning – land that

would previously have been regarded as communal in terms of title, they did not amass large acreages.[22]

In common with many cash-crop producers, cocoa farmers enjoyed and endured unpredictable times of feast and times of famine. The world price for cocoa had an uncomfortable tendency to oscillate wildly, derived as it was from a futures market dominated by manufacturers' fears of being, on the one hand, under-stocked when consumer demand was high, and on the other hand, of having over-bought when demand slackened. Prices were led upwards by high demand until the early 1920s[23] when they began a steep decline that characterised most of the inter-war years; world prices were only to recover to the levels enjoyed in the first decades of the 20th century in the course of the Second World War. In common with the experience of most Third World producers, the farm-gate prices never came close to the prices paid by chocolate manufacturers. Cocoa is a capital as well as a labour intensive crop that takes more than a decade before it can be profitably harvested after the initial planting of seedlings. Ghanaian farmers were dependent upon credit,[24] and that credit was usually extended by the cocoa-brokers – most of whom were themselves Ghanaian – who bought crops in advance of their being harvested. Farmers were accordingly battered by the vagaries of world demand and by those who handled their produce – cocoa brokers, futures markets speculators, and buyers – in the attenuated journey between farm, factory and street-corner store. Additionally the hot, humid climate in which cocoa thrived meant that Ghanaian farmers were also subject to a variety of robust, virulent crop-specific diseases, and pests that could, and often did destroy years of hard work and investment in a very short time.

Accordingly, Ghanaian cocoa farmers could become relatively wealthy men and women; but equally easily they could find themselves reduced to working for others as direct labour and as sharecroppers, or even to destitution. In terms of wider esteem, these farmers were, however, very much more than the wretched of the earth; they deservedly enjoyed a reputation for heroic defiance. On several occasions between the wars they had rallied and organised resistance against what they correctly regarded as cartelised price-fixing by the dominant figures on the world markets, the chocolate manufacturers. Their strategy was the withholding of produce both to punish those who they believed to be market manipulators and to promote a price rise by the consequent creation of an upswing in cocoa future prices by forward buyers predicting a cocoa shortage. Farmers never acted in 'hold-ups' as a united force not least because those most exposed to mounting bills for interest upon loans simply could not afford to gamble on the possibility of higher prices by foregoing the fruits of immediate crop sales. These crop-retentions were, however, not only impressive, but were also politically important.

The last and biggest of such actions, the great 'cocoa hold-up' of 1937–38, provoked the intervention of the colonial regime, which set up a significant

Commission of Enquiry into the marketing of cocoa.[25] Accordingly, the national reputation of cocoa farmers was not as fat cats, but as admirable organisers with seriously radical bona fides. The descendants of the pioneer capitalist cocoa farmers of the late 19th century were now regarded in nationalist rhetoric as pioneer political activists involved in their own particular way in the broader anti-colonial movement. In the early days of radical nationalism there was no suggestion whatever that such men and women were kulaks, tricky 'middle peasants', class enemies, or reactionaries. This was not merely a matter of reputation. Some of the scholarship[26] regards the politicisation of at least some of the cocoa farmers as an important element in the Convention People's Party's penetration of Ghana's rural hinterland, a shift that transformed it from being an urban, elite-led movement into a countrywide party.[27] Its Central Committee included the founder of the Ghana Farmers' Congress, an umbrella organisation of older farmers' groups.

This was not a small occupational category. By the time of the 1960 census, it was claimed that over half a million people were involved in cocoa growing, of whom the majority were proprietor farmers whose wider households were frequently involved in the cyclical work of cocoa cultivation.[28] In political terms it was always a potentially significant constituency being both numerous and active in many areas of the south of the country. As the CPP swept into office in 1951 it courted the farmers by suspending the colonial policy of combating the spread of a virulent cocoa disease by compulsorily cutting down all cocoa trees in infected areas. By 1952, compulsory cutting-out was resumed as the disease expanded but this was met with surprisingly little resistance from farmers.

There were several reasons for this apparent docility. The CPP government undoubtedly enjoyed huge popularity in its first few years in office, and it did so in rural areas as well as in its natural habitat, the urban constituencies. Its successes in these areas owed much to an imaginative populism that manipulated the ambiguous combination of respect and resentment that typified rural social relations.[29] The CPP's rural campaigns had frequently exploited the recruitment potential in long-running conflicts between Chiefs and commoners, usually called 'youngmen'.[30] While each conflict had its own particularity, the mis-match inherent in the survival of an ancient form of un-elected leadership that had been stripped of many of its older coercive powers by colonial rule and an increasingly better informed,[31] and in some cases, better educated commoner constituency was evident in many areas. Too many chiefs used their office to accumulate personal wealth and clung to power by abusing their residual powers, and these included a wide variety of forms of expropriation that were justified, often speciously, by *parti pris* readings of 'tradition'. The local judicial system continued to rely upon chiefs' courts whose probity was frequently questionable. Chiefs, for example, would often sit as judges in cases in which they were parties, and

could fine and even imprison unrepresented defendants.[32] Although rural Ghana remained conservative in many respects, the CPP attracted support not least because of its apparent willingness to support the menu people in their personal struggles with local authority.

But there were sound economic reasons for farmers to feel less than hostile towards the new government. The world cocoa price was soaring in the early 1950s, and as revenue derived from cocoa was the national income's cornerstone,[33] some of the subsequent benefits were felt in the countryside: the road system was expanding, which gave more rural producers access to local markets. More and more of their children were now attending primary schools. Moreover, the CPP's commitment to what was now called 'development'[34] seemed to promise the arrival of amenities like pipe-borne water supplies obviating long journeys to and from distant wells, the construction of medical clinics, and eventual electrification. So far as immediate cash returns were concerned, farmers received only a percentage of the world price, but even that low percentage constituted a tangible and annually increasing reward, whilst the world price was high and becoming higher.

Beyond the extraction of profits at every stage of the journey from farm to lunch-box, Ghanaian cocoa was subject to the particular regime of a Statutory Board whose name would change several times during its 50 or so years of life. This system grew out of the analysis of the cocoa hold-ups of the 1930s. Basically the Board was charged with purchasing and then selling on the country's cocoa production; now a government-appointed board and its subsidiaries would act as a national cocoa broker and would set the purchase price, the price paid to farmers, for the following year's crops. At its inception it was not opposed by farmers as it promised price stability because the Board was also charged with creating a well-capitalised fund to serve as a defence against negative price swings. The Board would pay out the promised price even if the world price fell below the stated price for the following year. Set against the grinding experiential history of the Great Depression,[35] farmers initially regarded this development as a positive step.[36]

The state's appropriation of rural income

The government pricing scheme became unpopular and did so because over time the price set by the Board proved to be very considerably lower than that of the futures market and it did so year after year. As a result farmers, who were very well aware of the world price, came to regard this state organisation as a body that was regularly confiscating a considerable proportion of their hard-won production. Government in turn argued that this was part of the deal; after all, the gains of one or two years fed into a stabilisation fund that could be called upon to pay out farmers even if the world price fell below the set price. That was a reasonably convincing argument when set against the background of the 1930s, especially as the price paid

to farmers by the Board had initially increased on an annual basis. But it became an increasingly threadbare and unconvincing argument over time. For the decade and a half following 1941, the world cocoa price rose annually in line with the prices of a large number of other raw materials and the Board's prices did not.[37]

Cocoa was, however, Ghana's most significant export in many respects.[38] Largely because of African resistance to many attempts to levy a variety of forms of direct impost, Ghanaians as individuals were personally lightly taxed; there was, for example, no income tax levied until the Second World War.[39] Government revenue accordingly rested very heavily upon export and import duties, and export duty upon cocoa was its most significant source. What government could and could not undertake in terms of social, medical, infrastructural and other kinds of development – including the maintenance of governance itself – depended very heavily upon the success of the cocoa industry. As cocoa was such a major element of the Ghanaian economy, the steady growth in its world price was obviously a blessing. It created an unusual degree of rural wealth in cocoa-growing areas and also, through the stabilisation fund, increased the creditworthiness of the state as it laid down larger and larger sterling balances. For a radical new government with very ambitious plans[40] that included the creation of a free national health service, compulsory universal education to the age of 16, and a five-year economic plan that emphasised industrialisation with a stress upon import-substitution, healthy revenues and a substantial war chest constituted a nearly ideal situation. The inflow of hard currency was, however, inflationary. Beyond everyday consumption items, Ghana produced very little and was forced to import not only capital goods, but also more mundane items like bicycles, candles, and tins of sardines. Many of these imports were in short supply, their prices increased, and inflation threatened to get out of control.

Government responded immediately after the 1954 election by declaring that the farm-gate price for cocoa would be fixed at the same level as that paid in the previous season and would be fixed at that rate for the following four years irrespective of the world price. As the world cocoa price had risen to new heights, the discrepancy between farm-gate price and world price had become immense and was immediately visible.[41] While the control of inflation was almost certainly a justifiable policy, its timing was unfortunate. In a very short period of time large numbers of farmers were up in arms demanding a higher cocoa price. The movement that resulted from these early campaigns began to cohere as the Council for Higher Cocoa Prices, which in turn became one of the significant building blocks upon which the virulently anti-CPP National Liberation Movement, and the later United Party, were built.[42]

The policy of state control of cocoa purchasing and marketing had exposed a fundamental, if uncongenial, truth about the political economy of

the Ghanaian state. Its dependence upon cocoa production and hence revenue cast cocoa farmers in a role poles apart from their earlier heroic status in the nationalist narrative. Although it was never stated with such crudity, cocoa farming was the state's milch cow. During the first decade of CPP government, farmers received only a fraction above half of the total proceeds obtained by the state's Cocoa Marketing Board. State revenues depended upon the taxation of cocoa; the freezing of the price paid to farmers exposed the fact that the state, in effect, directly taxed farmers in ways it did not tax other citizens, and it did so on a scale that was demonstrably confiscatory.[43]

Things were not to rest there. Farmers continued to be the victims of government policy. Initially there was nothing vindictive about that. The early years of the CPP in office were remarkable; a radical government in possession of a sizable war chest achieved a great deal.[44] By 1956 the government's expenditure was three times greater than it had been six years previously. By the mid 1950s it became clear to the state's economic planners that the cocoa-based boom would not last. In 1954 Komla Gbedemah, the Finance Minister, predicted to the Ghanaian Cabinet that market intelligence showed that the price of cocoa would fall after 1956. With the probability of falling revenues accompanying the early years of independence, the government faced the unwelcome prospect of the need for retrenchment in the popular but 'soft' developmental areas of education and welfare. In mid-1956 the colonial Governor, a supporter in many respects of the Ghanaian government, wrote:

> ... the Gold Coast Government has overreached itself during the recent boom years in launching more services than it can afford to maintain, and it will shortly be difficult for the Government to find funds for its essential requirements. Not only [is] there likely to be little or no money for further development, much less new education or welfare services, but it seems inevitable that there will soon have to be retrenchment ... this bleak prospect results partly from the fall of the price of cocoa .... [45]

This is the background to the government's going beyond the earlier freezing of the cocoa price and its reduction of the farm-gate price by 10 per cent in May 1957. The 'stabilization fund' was clearly NOT being used as had been intended, as a cushion for farmers when the world price fell. A month later the Cabinet added to the farmers' woes by imposing a drastic reduction in the compensation paid to farmers who had lost cocoa trees to Swollen Shoot disease.[46] These reductions occurred at a time of high inflation so that compensation values had already been severely depressed. The Prime Minister told the House that he was sure that 'these farmers will be willing to accept these new rates in the interests of Ghana's economy', but provided no evidence for the brusque confidence of that assertion. In fact, the government appears to have expected to encounter opposition from the farmers; an

expectation of non-compliance, even resistance, partially explains why the government moved to curtail the independence of farmers' organisations. In November 1957 the Ghanaian Cabinet decided to recognise only one farmers' organisation, namely the CPP-sponsored United Ghana Farmers' Council. '... [C]onsiderable difficulty has been experienced in attempting to deal with farmers. It would be convenient [sic] to ... to deal with one organisation'.[47] This undoubtedly helped the government in 1961 to persuade its client, the Ghana Farmers' Council, to agree on behalf of its un-consulted membership to 'contribute' 16 per cent of the money owed to them to government funds and to accept government bonds due to mature in 1971 in lieu of 10 per cent of the total sum due to each farmer. By 1961 farmers were receiving, in real terms, the lowest farm-gate price for their cocoa since the 1945–46 season.

The short-term implications of this plan for farming families are immediately imaginable. Initially, they appear to have tried to meet the fall in prices paid by increasing their production. In 1964 Ghanaian cocoa farmers produced 557,000 tons of cocoa, more than double the tonnage produced a decade earlier, but for much lower prices. It is hard to exaggerate the magnitude of that. The brute facts are that between 1958 and 1962 producer prices had in real terms declined by nearly half. Little of the literature has looked at the transformation of the lives of ordinary people in the two decades following the end of World War II in terms of patterns of consumption. These changes meant that farmers were undergoing a violent reduction in buying power in what had become a highly monetised and inflationary economy. Although the evidence tends to generalise without the modifications that regional and class variation would require, it is abundantly clear that by 1960 rural areas were now a long way away from being self-sufficient, and because many farmers were regularly indebted and required to pay interest at punitive rates, any fall in income had huge social consequences.[48] As specialist producers they had, for example, become habituated to a range of retail purchasing including foodstuffs; an increasing proportion of these food items were imported and between 1955 and 1961, as an important contemporary study noted: 'The end use category of imports defined as non-durable producer goods for food drink and tobacco registers an almost continual growth.'[49]

In this respect many rural producers remember this period as one in which the standards of living were falling fast. This can be seen in a number of ways. Firstly, although most Ghanaians, like most Europeans at this time, did not have bank accounts, nearly a million of them had savings accounts with the Post Office; the data from these show a significant reduction in the scale of deposits from the high rates recorded in the early 1950s. As often happens in an inflationary environment, the alternative of saving notes and coin 'under the bed' brought a rapid diminution in the value of savings and the data suggest that farmers now had few or no savings. There is no

doubt that rural children's education suffered;as a higher proportion of the young were drawn into primary school education in the post-war years – the numbers had considerably more than doubled over the decade 1950–60 – the costs not only of school fees, but also of compulsory uniforms and school books also rose dramatically.

This partly accounts for the growing number of what we would today call 'drop outs' from the educational system after only a few years of enrollment.[50] Many of these young scholars were not dropouts, but were, rather, 'pull outs'. A young job-seeker I interviewed in Accra in the mid-1960s, for example, painfully, if unconsciously, rehearsed the terrifying passage in Taviani's 1977 film, *Padro Padrone*, in which a child is physically pulled out of his Sardinian classroom by his father so that he can begin his career as an isolated, brutalised goatherd.

> I liked my school too much, too much and I cried when my Dad said I could not return there; he had no more money at all and said I must work. I ran from the village to this place. I wanted to be a doctor but now I have no cert[-ificates] and I must beg to eat.[51]

Education, as in any relatively deprived area where employment opportunities are limited, was almost the only escape route for the young, and access to education was undoubtedly being pinched during this time. Young people from the countryside seeking to escape rural poverty and to make their way to urban areas all too frequently did so without qualifications and in many cases without literacy, and were accordingly destined to live in demeaning circumstances.

Although there is no hard data to support this, there is anecdotal evidence that suggests that farmers in these newly reduced circumstances were unable to employ paid labourers, many of whom travelled south in order to earn enough to supplement the poor returns from the rain-poor, agricultural world of northern Ghana. Scattered reports from the north in the 1960s suggest that the everyday experience of scarcity was in some cases developing into the threat of famine. But, as we have noted, the initial reaction of farmers to falling prices was to intensify production, and extra hands were vital in that initiative. Cocoa farmers were, accordingly, more inclined to substitute young members of their families in the agricultural schedule; and this in large measure accounts for the foreshortened school careers of many young people.

In terms of the health of Ghanaian economy, in the longer term it was even more worrying that the low prices proved to be a disincentive for replanting and further planting. Neither capital nor labour investment in cocoa seemed to be logical for such poor rewards. By 1983 it was estimated that at least 25 per cent of the surviving stock of Ghanaian cocoa trees was over 30 years old, a matter of concern as most farmers expect trees of that

age to be yielding fewer and fewer cocoa pods.[52] While the very low production figures of the 1983 season can partly be explained by climatic and other natural factors, there is no doubt that low prices had led to the neglect of farms, to failure to replant, and to the actual abandonment of farms; and in many cases, the abandonment of entire villages. While there is no direct proof of causality, it is striking that while in 1960 23 per cent of Ghanaians were deemed to be urban dwellers, by 1984 that percentage had risen to 32 per cent.

Doomed relationships II: The government and the industrial workforce

We now turn to Ghana's towns and their poorer inhabitants. The Convention People's Party's relationship with Ghana's workers, and especially with unionised workers, was never simple.[53] It promised to be a marriage made in heaven when the newly established *soi-disant* socialist CPP included as one of its six manifesto points in 1949 a commitment to 'work in the interest of the trade union movement in the country for better conditions of employment'. Given that Ghana was a predominantly agricultural country, the identity of 'the workers' is immediately problematic. Using, *faut de mieux*, the creaky taxonomy of the census sequences,[54] workers unsurprisingly were to be found in Ghana's towns and mining centres; as already suggested, farm labour was and remains an imprecise category. Similarly, many labourers and workers are lost from enumerative sight by the use of broad labels such as 'commercial' or 'services, domestics, etc.'. Using very rough criteria, it seems likely that there were nearly 270,000 'workers' in Ghana by 1956.[55] Although originally unofficially recognised, trades unionism had been apparent for decades most especially on the docks, railways, and in government services such as the Public Works Department, yet trades unions were only made legal in 1941. Trades unions paid-up membership by 1956 amounted to about 68,000 workers. This figure was nearly doubled in 1958 when the new Industrial Relations Act made it compulsory for employees in most parts of the industrial, service and commercial sectors to become members of trades unions affiliated to the Ghana Trades Union Congress.[56]

The issue of whether the unionised segment of the Ghanaian work force during the 15 years of Convention People's Party rule constituted a 'labour aristocracy' has provoked interesting scholarly debate.[57] While those in reasonably regular waged employment were clearly privileged relative to the terribly hard lives of the urban unemployed,[58] their low wages and abysmal living conditions should continually modify the usual senses of 'privilege'. The ability of workers, whether unionised or not, to address low or declining wages and poor standards of health and safety in the workplace from strong negotiating positions or ultimately by industrial action was

constantly undermined by the usually prevailing labour surplus.[59] During intermittent and – before the Second World War sadly rare – periods of boom, workers knowingly and successfully responded to labour shortages by seeking to drive up their wages and to improve their conditions by labour actions. Not all workers were however equal in this respect. The mining industry had adopted the South African pattern of employing workers on annual contracts. The consequent vulnerability of mineworkers was reinforced by the prevalence of another southern African management device, namely the employment of a workforce partly drawn from outside the immediate colonial territory whose members could readily be dismissed and then deported when deemed disruptive or work-shy.[60] Some mining concerns deployed their own police in the handful of mining towns in central Ghana despite the strong opposition of government which, for obvious reasons, disliked the existence of virtual 'states within the state'.

The vast majority of the workforce however was employed in one way or another by government. The railways were state-owned and state-maintained, as was most of the rest of the national infrastructure; dockworkers, railwaymen, and employees of the Posts and Telegraphs, and Public Works departments formed the bulk of the enumerated national labour force. While never even remotely generous, it would be fair to regard the colonial government as essentially paternalistic. It was, nevertheless, a paternalism that was dependent upon state revenue and before the 1940s, such revenues were meagre[61] and hence not much in evidence in terms of job security, take-home pay or working conditions. Railway workers' wages in 1939 were, for example, at the same levels as they had been in 1921, having recovered from the depths created by the dramatic pay-cuts foisted upon workers at the height of the Depression.

Union recognition – and encouragement – by government in 1941[62] was, *inter alia*, intended to keep trade union activity apart from the anticipated rise of nationalist agitation. A British pamphlet widely circulated amongst trade unionists in this period stated rather hopefully that, 'a trade union is not an organisation with political aims . . . its main objective [is] the regulation of relations between workers and their employers.' This was a colonial aspiration rather than an accurate prediction. The Second World War and its immediate aftermath were years of mounting politicisation in Ghana, and trades unions could not be isolated from this significant development. While nationalism in Ghana was, as elsewhere, multi-causal, the constant and universal experience of rapidly rising inflation was of particular significance. Between 1939 and 1950 the cost of living index nearly trebled and the food-price index nearly quadrupled whilst the money-wage index only doubled. These were hard times for everybody, and especially for low-paid workers; for nationalists, such palpable immiseration was grist to their rhetorical mill: the evils of colonialism were all too obvious in the high costs of overcrowded and frequently squalid housing, and especially in the weekly pay packet and

the thin pickings it afforded. The trades unions were accordingly likely to back the party that claimed that it supported them.

The relationship between the Convention People's Party and the trades unions was consequently close, but it was also profoundly troubled. It was troubled because despite the CPP's claims to be radical. Some trades union leaders were more radical than the Party's leaders; a limited number of senior figures, especially in the Railways Workers' Union were convinced and convincing Marxists. The leadership claimed with some justification that it had emerged from the shop-floor, that it was hard-handed and authentically working class. This posed problems for the CPP; although some of the Party almost certainly shared revolutionary aspirations, its leadership was inescapably in class terms, if not always ostensibly bourgeois, then petty bourgeois. While the CPP routinely suggested that the old 'modern elite' of lawyers, journalists, and teachers whose political parties it had outflanked were basically a bunch of the self-interested middle-class, most of the CPP leadership's experience of life had not included sweat-inducing manual work or living in the grim, cramped, and unsanitary housing of the urban poor. In popular discourse in the 1960s Nkrumah was singled out as a rare politician who would sit down in the dust to chat with poor people without condescension or apparent discomfort. His personal rejection of the prevailing culture's snobbery, which was based upon local as well as British attitudes to class and gender, helped construct a new, attractive atmosphere of inclusion. A woman friend, a market trader, despite her later hostility toward Nkrumah remembered that, 'the others drove past in their big, big cars and covered us with dust; he got out and talked to us like friends.'[63]

In addition to the CPP's Central Committee's lack of hard-handed bona fides, there was no escaping the fact that the party was pragmatically keen to distance itself from the suggestion of any connection with the Soviet Union and with communism more generally. The end of the 1940s and the following decade were in many respects the height of virulent Western anti-communist sensitivity.[64] Such antipathy was not solely a colonial attitude but was also apparent amongst Ghana's traditional and modern elites. Being openly sympathetic to communism, receiving material from, or traveling to communist states risked visits from the police. Of even greater concern to them was keeping the British to their promise of self-government, a promise that was partly conditional upon the African government's public and legislative antipathy to the Soviet Union.[65]

For these and other reasons, the party began distancing itself from radical trades unionism even before its victory at the country's first general election in February 1951. There is strong evidence to suggest that 'Positive Action' – the attempted general strike in January 1950 in order to convince the colonial regime that their gradualist policy of step by step devolution did not enjoy popular support – had begun as a CPP policy but was only brought about because some of the trades union leaders forced the issue against the

wishes of the CPP's Central Committee. The evidence points to a political leadership that lost its nerve at the 11th hour and wished to call off the threatened action, and a trades union leadership that insisted that the strike take place and forced the issue by calling its membership out.[66] The CPP had emerged as the dominant nationalist party by outflanking its opponents on the left; CPP politicians feared that the trades unionist left could similarly try to outflank them.

Accordingly, the relationship between radical trade unionists and the CPP leadership deteriorated further. There is no doubt that after coming to diarchic power in early 1951 the Party wished to ensure that British politicians who retained the keys to the door of independence understood that the CPP was not merely unaligned with Moscow, but was also not even remotely communist. At the same time the new government of Kwame Nkrumah was as apprehensive as any government would be to the possibility of industrial action. It was especially sensitive because the huge increase in government revenues occasioned by the high world prices for cocoa meant that the extensive development plans of the CPP looked feasible. The CPP began to use its power as government and its ability formally to recognise or de-recognise the institutions of civil society; it used that authority and personal harassment to ensure that pro-CPP yet moderate trades unionists gradually supplanted many of the militants as trades union officials. A tamer Trades Union Congress nailed new colours to the mast and, amongst other shifts towards the centre, affiliated to the pro-Western International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. By 1952, CPP supporters effectively controlled the Railway Workers Union and the Mineworkers' Union. Some of the radicals sought to fight their way back into union authority, and in 1952 even founded an alternative Trade Union Congress affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Unions. This split the union movement, and for a brief period, outspoken left-wing trade unionists appeared to have regained the initiative.

State erosion of labour power

The radical resurgence was, however, short-lived and towards the end of 1953 the tide turned against them. Nkrumah's CPP government specifically accused a number of significant labour leaders – and some parliamentarians – of being communists and excluded them from party membership and public office.[67] The now unified Trades Union Congress was more and more dominated by the CPP and hence led by pro-government figures. Symbolic of this was its re-affirmation of its affiliation with the ICFTU in 1954. Even more importantly the TUC now relocated its headquarters to Accra, the seat of government as well as being the site of CPP headquarters. The TUC and its headquarters had developed in the western port and railway town of Sekondi, a self-consciously and proudly working-class town whose existence, along with its sister town, Takoradi, owed everything to modern industry

and had a long tradition of combination and radical action. As in Hamburg, New York or Liverpool there was a strong relationship between neighbourhood and union activism; community leadership and union leadership were frequently synonymous, and to some extent union membership represented a new kind of identity that supplanted older bonds of kinship. Sekondi and Takoradi were inescapably 'modern' towns. The forcible ending of the historical connection between the town and the TUC was a violent rupture that demonstrated the power of government, and especially that of the Party.

Attempts to resist this clear trend towards centralisation were made by some of the traditionally more radical trades unions but they were thwarted by smart use of the fine print in rule books, a good deal of gerrymandering, as well as outright bullying; the CPP had resources, the trades unions did not. By 1959, Kojo Botsio, secretary of the CPP's Central Committee and a government minister, claimed that '... the CPP and the TUC are one'. By 1961 this was manifest in the theatrical substitution of party membership cards for the old union membership cards. Those union members who were state employees, the vast majority, lost far more than their union cards; under the 1958 Industrial Relations Act they were also to lose the right to strike.[68] The immediate answer to the reasonable question, *cui bono* is obvious.

Organised labour, unorganised labour, and perhaps we should add disorganised labour now faced a dreadful new challenge. Just as we have seen in the case of the demands made of the cocoa farmers, Ghana's national budget in 1961 spelled out a grim future for urban workers. Following the remarkably successful First Development Plan,[69] whose fruits undoubtedly helped the CPP to win the right to lead the country into independence, the Second Plan was predicated upon the maintenance of tax revenue from cocoa production and loans from the Statutory Board, which controlled cocoa purchasing and sales. The new five-year plan begun in 1959 was an ambitious one designed to reduce the nation's reliance upon cocoa by a complex programme of industrialisation, farm concentration, and crop diversification; ironically it was the steadily falling cocoa price and hence falling revenues that put the plan in jeopardy.

We have already seen the sacrifices imposed upon the farmers. Urban workers were now faced with the implications of increased taxes on all imports, a serious burden considering Ghana's lack of a manufacturing base. A very high proportion of urban consumption was of imported goods. Worse still was the introduction of a compulsory savings scheme that forced workers earning at or above the absolute minimum wage for those deemed to be skilled workers to accept 5 per cent of their wages in government bonds that were supposed to earn 4 per cent interest per annum and would mature in 1971. Neither these bonds nor those issued to farmers were ever paid. In addition, the imposition of a new tax on property consisting of more than two rooms and a hall had the immediate effect of increasing rents as landlords passed on the tax – and probably more – on to their tenants.[70]

By the beginning of September 1961 a strike, spear-headed by the railwaymen ensued. It was not just about the harsh measures of the 'austerity budget' of 1961, but, rather, a manifestation of anger over the loss of labour power, the centralisation of authority, and the loss of what had seemed in 1950 to be the beginning of an era in which workers might enjoy some rewards for their support for the party that was now, as government, squeezing them hard. For their part, the government claimed that the strike was the result of a conspiracy carried out by its political opponents – a claim for which there is no significant evidence whatever. It was constitutionally an illegal strike, and without wages, the strikers were unable to hold out for long. Nkrumah, however, had the political wisdom to recognise that some positive response was necessary and following a dramatic 'Dawn Broadcast' to the nation in which he condemned corruption in government, he duly sacked six of his ministers, and others were asked to return property whose value had exceeded some informal ministerial sumptuary code.

Sacrificing a handful of indubitably corrupt ministers might have constituted some form of reward for the strikers, but the results that really mattered to them are best seen in the calculations of real wage levels. For those in the government sector, real wages are estimated to have fallen by 40 per cent between 1960–65. Given the hand-to-mouth quality of life experienced by low wage earners in Ghana, that estimation should paint a picture of poor nutrition, unsanitary accommodations, under-educated children and defenceless indigence in ill-health and old age; it is a very terrible picture. Although this is scarcely scientific, an indication of its worst horrors came out of a series of informal interviews with a group of very old women beggars near Accra's smart Cantonments Road in 1990. The idea of unsupported grandmothers seemed to be profoundly at odds with Ghana's familial cultures, and apart from feeling intensely sorry for them, I was also interested in what had happened to them. All of them appeared to have been effectively disaffiliated and expelled from family compounds when kinsfolk of working age had, presumably painfully, elected to feed children rather than other dependents. For most of them, their personal trails of tears appeared to have begun in the early 1970s.

The introduction of a statutory minimum wage in some sectors of the economy in July 1960 should, on the face of it, have led to an improvement in living conditions. It was however to result fairly quickly in an increase in the registered numbers of unemployed workers, and the crude estimates we have suggest that 19 per cent of the male labour force and 50 per cent of the female force were without work. Similarly, whilst the wage levels of those in work increased, they did not come close to keeping abreast with the cost of living indices. One of the more startling pieces of evidence suggests that the real wage index for Accra was lower by 1963 than it had been in 1939.

The very brief comment above about what this might have meant to ordinary Ghanaians does little justice to the grimness of this conjuncture, a

conjuncture that was to last for a further three decades. As is often the case, the human condition is best understood through creative fiction rather than scholarship. Ayi Kwei Armah's novel *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born*[71] deals with life in the western town of Sekondi and takes place in a brief period of 1965–66. Although some have been offended by the author's preoccupation with sanitation or, rather, its lack, that apparent fixation speaks volumes about the insalubrious quality of life in many poor areas of Ghana's southern towns, most of which were crisscrossed by open drains and which, in an equatorial climate could become unspeakably noisome. In the rainy season these areas became seas of mud, and smartly dressed people navigated the morass in rolled-up trousers, holding their shoes in their hands on their way to and from work. Armah's scatological emphasis is, of course, metaphor; he follows a long, disgusted description of one of his characters, 'the Shitman' who is responsible for cleaning the railways workers' latrines with the ironic aside, '. . . the last shall be first. Indeed it is even so'.[72] Few people had access to electricity and *faut de mieux* continued to cook on charcoal stoves that gave off poisonous fumes in restricted spaces. Large numbers of people shared the very few standpipes that provided water and as many shared the nightmarish latrines. People lived, reproduced and gave birth in tiny sub-divided rented rooms that were frequently shared by several families. Ill-health was obviously a risk in such conditions but declining wages made access to western allopathic medicine increasingly expensive to be called upon only in extremis, which was often too late. A medical doctor at Accra's Korle Bu teaching hospital remembered the 1960s as period in which there was, at best, no improvement in the figures for child mortality. In these circumstances people daily battled to maintain their own standards of personal hygiene and dress, which are matters of pride.

Few Ghanaians in the 1960s owned their own living quarters. Rents did not decline in line with wages and if anything, they increased. The high cost of living appears to have contributed to a longer-term trend of delayed age at marriage. Both men and women appear to have been delaying marriage, and while other factors such as shifting understandings of the nature of childhood played their part, the difficulty of starting out on one's own, tied as that is to a degree of economic independence, seems to have contributed to this tendency. The traditional cushion for those for whom urban life had become impossible, namely a return to the countryside, was made less possible by the generally depressed nature of the countryside, which constituted the 'push factor' in rapid urban growth in this period. It must have felt as though all the escape routes were barred. The objective reality of these hard times needs to be set against the rising expectations that had entirely reasonably been generated as the world emerged from the nightmare of World War II with a huge appetite for the kinds of things a country like Ghana produced. Those expectations were memories by the 1960s and

the cheerful optimism that had characterised most of this young nation in the 1950s soured into cynical pessimism.

Some conclusions

There is no doubt that these processes were experienced as individual and family tragedies by those who suffered, and there were a great many of them. The gap between stated aspiration and effect is undeniable; there is no need to speculate about whether the narrative is best seen as a story about cynical opportunism or a sad tale about naivety and inexperience, for clearly it is about both. The CPP and its Life President, Nkrumah, had genuine ambitions to create a socialist state, and this was set out in 1962 in the government's Programme for Work and Happiness. While this included a commitment to ending material want, the extension of social benefits and the enjoyment of leisure and culture, it is strikingly inhumane. The Programme, as Paul Nugent comments, placed an overwhelming emphasis upon economics. '. . . The document', he writes, 'said remarkably little about the participation of Ghanaians in the building of a socialist society'.[73] In this Programme and then the succeeding Seven Year Plan outlined in 1964, trades unionists were hectored and farmers were told that whilst they should increase production, the state would now support newly created, mechanised state farms. Beyond promises to be redeemed in the distant future, ordinary Ghanaians were given tasks, often impossible to fulfill, rather than any sense of participation.

There is every reason to celebrate the CPP government's achievements: for example, a total school enrollment of 272,000 in 1950 had climbed to 665,000 by 1960,[74] and the number of practicing doctors had multiplied by almost 500 per cent. Ghana was well on the way to opening a fine deep-water port in Tema near Accra, and boasted a strikingly beautiful and high-achieving university. As a student hitchhiking through West Africa in 1963 I learnt that her neighbours regarded Ghana as a model of modernisation. Within Ghana there was patriotic pride and genuine pleasure in being Ghanaian rather than colonial subjects.

Not all of the material achievements were soundly planned or, in some cases, even necessary. All governments in all states make mistakes. But Ghana's very rapid material progress was achieved, as we have seen, at considerable human cost.[75] By the early 1960s it was hard to remember that the Party had once attracted members because it exhibited that sympathy and, unlike many other elements in the Ghanaian western educated elite, had enough of a common touch to reach out to ordinary men and women. In the course of ten years it coarsened, became obsessed with control and forgot that persuasion tends to be more productive than coercion. Some of this story might go some way towards an explanation of why the coup d'état

that toppled Nkrumah and his government in February 1966 was not widely opposed by those on whose behalf they claimed to speak.

Notes

1. Henceforth Ghana, the name adopted by the country at independence in March 1957.
2. In this first election under colonial rule the franchise was limited and direct election was combined with indirect collegiate voting.
3. For detail on the constitutional evolution of the late colonial state see both volumes of *Ghana*, Richard Rathbone (ed.), in the *British Documents on the End of Empire* series (London: HSMO, 1992).
4. Following a further unscheduled election in 1956.
5. Ghana remained within the Commonwealth but adopted its own currency in 1960 and left the Sterling Area in 1972.
6. As both a narrative and as an extended, acute political analysis Dennis Austin's *Politics in Ghana: 1946–1960* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964); remains unsurpassed. More recent works using subsequently opened archival material and concentrating on particular aspects of that history include Jean Allman's *The Quills of the Porcupine: Asante Nationalism in an Emergent Ghana* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993) and Richard Rathbone's *Nkrumah and the Chiefs: The Politics of Chieftaincy in Ghana, 1951–60* (Oxford: James Currey Publishers, 2000).
7. This argument is more fully spelled-out in my chapter 'Casting "the Kingdome into Another Mold": Ghana's Troubled Transition to Independence,' in *The Iconography of Independence: Freedoms at Midnight*, Robert Holland, Susan Williams and Terry Barringer (eds) (London: Routledge, 2010).
8. This is the focus of my *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*.
9. Nkrumah suggested that the eclectic sources of his ideas included 'Hegel, Karl Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mazzini . . . [and] Marcus Garvey . . . '. *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1957), p. 45.
10. On 14 January 1949.
11. Convention People's Party's (1954) *Manifesto*.
12. The mimesis is unmistakable. For example, the Party established an Ideological Institute at Winneba whose journal was called *The Spark*, and the Party's youth organisation was called *The Young Pioneers*.
13. See, for example, Bob Fitch and Mary Oppenheimer's flawed polemic *Ghana: End of an Illusion* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1966); Robin Murray, 'The Ghanaian Road' and 'Second Thoughts on Ghana', in *New Left Review*, Vol. 1, No. 32, (July/August 1965) and Vol. 1, No. 42, (March/April 1967); from an entirely different ideological standpoint, see T. Peter Omari, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Anatomy of an African Dictatorship* (New York: Africana Pub. Corp., 1970), and Henry Bretton's especially vituperative *The Rise and Fall of Kwame Nkrumah* (New York: Praeger, 1967).
14. See the discussion in Marika Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Years Abroad* (Legon, Ghana: Freedom Publications, 1996), pp. 185–7.
15. *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 63.

16. See my 'Businessmen in Politics: Party Struggle in Ghana, 1949–57', in *The Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (April 1973).
17. Robert M. Price 'Neo-colonialism and Ghana's Economic Decline: A Critical Assessment', *The Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (1984), p. 188.
18. All of these socio-economic categories were internally stratified; there were wealthy farmers and market women as well as farmers and marginal retailers who went to sleep hungry every night.
19. *World Development Report, 1983* (Washington, 1983), p. 62.
20. The outstanding account of this process is to be found in Polly Hill's celebrated *The Migrant Cocoa Farmers of Southern Ghana: a Study in Rural Capitalism*, first published by Cambridge University Press in 1963 and republished with an excellent introduction by Gareth Austin (Oxford: James Currey, 1997). See also Gareth Austin's remarkably good *Labour, Land, and Capital in Ghana: From Slavery to Free Labouring Asante, 1807–1956* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2005).
21. The idea of plantation cultivation was, however, canvassed by chocolate producers at various times in the 20th century. In Southeast Asia, cocoa is predominantly a plantation-grown crop.
22. The expansion of cocoa took place most notably in areas dominated by the Akan culture. Here land normatively belonged to the totality of citizens – subjects in specific polities expressed as belonging to the 'stool' or throne of the local ruler. Individuals enjoyed usufructuary rights to specific areas and these were frequently customarily heritable. For a very detailed analysis of the complexity of all of this see Austin's *Labour, Land, and Capital*.
23. The inclusion of chocolate in military rations and in parcels sent to servicemen of all nationalities in the Great War clearly played a part in this growth in demand as it was to do during World War II and its aftermath, when the ubiquitous Hershey Bar rivaled packs of cigarettes and stockings as an international currency.
24. This was usually at high rates of interest.
25. The (Nowell) Commission on the Marketing of West African Cocoa, 1938, *Cmd 5845*. The Report of the Commission was to denounce the manipulation of the market price by the chocolate manufacturers and their immediate suppliers.
26. See especially Dennis Austin *Politics in Ghana*, pp. 59–66.
27. The proximate cause for that radicalisation was the farmers' anger at the colonial government policy of compulsory cutting out of infected trees in the face of the then incurable crop disease, Swollen Shoot, and the mean compensation payments to affected farmers; the CPP played its part in inflaming these feelings. On taking office, the Party ended the cutting-out of infected trees only to resume one year later.
28. There is dissonance in the data about the relative sizes of the groups categorised in the Census as 'family workers' and as 'labourers'. Near contemporary micro-studies suggest that farm owners might well have been out-numbered by labourers and sharecroppers.
29. Respect for old age and seniority implied – and still implies – a degree of respect for authority, for chiefs, and elders. Insofar as chiefs were concerned, that respect had been tested to destruction by some chiefs' misuse of office in the 20th century.
30. This is spelled out in detail in Richard Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*.
31. During and after the Second World War, more and more Ghanaians had access to news through the public dissemination of the BBC World Service, as well through the expanding Ghanaian press, which was often read communally.

32. The social anthropologist M.J. Field politely referred to this as an 'intensely personal system of jurisdiction', *Memorandum to the Secretary of Native Affairs* (15 April 1939), Ashanti Social Survey Mss.
33. This included indirect taxation imposed as customs duty upon each consignment shipped from Ghanaian ports.
34. *Progress* was the preferred term before the 1950s.
35. For Ghanaian farmers, that Depression began in 1922 when produce prices began to tumble, and was not to end until the boost in demand for cocoa during the Second World War.
36. Much of the best study of the evolution of such a system, albeit of Nigeria, is Jan-Georg Deutsch's *Educating the Middlemen: A Political and Economic History of Statutory Cocoa Marketing in Nigeria, 1936–1947* (Berlin: Verlag das Arabische Buch, 1995).
37. Wartime demand, the loss of supply following the Japanese occupation of most of Southeast Asia, shipping shortages, and then the rapid growth of European economies after the end of 1944 are amongst the explanations of what turns out to have been the longest upswing in the recorded history of commodity prices.
38. Between 1955 and 1961 cocoa contributed no less than 13.7 per cent of the country's GDP. Between one-half and two-thirds of the country's export earnings in the same period were derived from cocoa.
39. This is discussed in Richard Rathbone 'West Africa, 1874–1948; Employment Legislation in a Non-settler Peasant Economy', in *Masters, Servants, and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562–1955*, Douglas Hay and Paul Craven (eds), (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), pp. 481–98.
40. For a full sense of these see the Party's 1951 election *Manifesto* in Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 130.
41. Cocoa was bought and sold in 60 lb. bags and this amount is called a 'load'. In 1954 the world price per load was roughly £12.50; farmers were paid £3.60 per load.
42. See Jean Allman's *The Quills of the Porcupine* for a fine account of the origins of the NLM and Bjorn Beckman's excellent examination of the relationship between the government and the farmers, *Organising the Farmers: Cocoa Politics and National Development in Ghana* (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1976) is invaluable.
43. For a finely argued economic exploration of this see Robert H. Bates, *Markets and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Policies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).
44. Much of that development in infrastructure and social development was more visible in the south of the country than in other areas, not least because this was an area of dense population. But the south was the CPP heartland, and these disharmonies stirred up resentments that continue to resonate in Ghana even today.
45. Arden-Clark to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. NA Kew, DO 35/6178, No 17a. (14 July 1956).
46. Larger trees that had once been rated for compensation of 20p. were now rated at 2.5p. Smaller trees once valued at 5p were now rated at 0.25p.
47. Cabinet, 1 November 1957, National Archives of Ghana, Accra. ADM 13/02/42.
48. Although Gareth Austin's *Labour, Land, and Capital* does not deal with the post-independence period, his account of the many forms of rural indebtedness are invaluable.

49. W. Birmingham, I. Neustadt, and E. Omaboe, *A Study of Contemporary Ghana*, Vol. 1 (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966–1967). In fact, the value of all imported consumer goods had more than doubled in the decade 1950–60.
50. Oral evidence suggests that girls were disproportionately disadvantaged in this respect.
51. Kofi Danquah (15 July 1966). Tragically he was never able to fulfill his ambitions and never returned to school. When last I met him (in 1990), he was a prematurely aged, poor, and very bitter man.
52. Production in the season 1983–4 dropped to 159,000 tons. Part of the explanation lay with the unusually long dry season and the consequent bush-fires that destroyed many cocoa farms.
53. How many Ghanaians could be regarded as 'workers' as opposed to farmers and fishermen is a tricky question and the census categorisations are distinctly unhelpful in this regard.
54. For the purposes of this chapter, those of 1931, 1948, and 1960.
55. In a population of about 6 million, just under half of whom were under 15 years of age.
56. This meant that between 17 and 18 per cent of the total male labour force was technically a member of a trade union by the end of 1961.
57. The best discussion of the issue is to be found in Richard Jeffries, *Class Power and Ideology in Ghana: the Railwaymen of Sekondi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 169–85.
58. The official figures on unemployment are notoriously unreliable, not least because of the unquantifiable population of those who got work but did so only episodically or seasonally. Most authorities seem to suggest an unemployment figure of at least 20 per cent of the adult male population.
59. Although Masters and Servants legislation anachronistically criminalised the withdrawal of labour until the 1940s, the law was seldom applied. See Hay and Craven, *Op.Cit.*
60. For obvious reasons, organising the mineworkers was consequently a daunting task. See Jeff Crisp, *The Story of an African Working Class: Ghanaian Miners' Struggles, 1870–1980* (London: Zed Books, 1984).
61. This was especially so during the long drawn-out depression years, which began as early as 1923 in West Africa.
62. This was a set of decisions heavily influenced by the political and labour activism in the West Indies in the 1930s and the conclusions of the consequent and very significant West Indies Royal Commission.
63. Charity Agbodeka, *Accra* (February 1990).
64. Such attitudes were not confined to the colonial world as Tony Judt makes clear in his magisterial book *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005).
65. This became even more difficult after the British Labour Party lost power to the Conservatives in 1951.
66. See the discussion of this in Jeffries, *Class, Power, and Ideology*, pp. 54–56.
67. And in some cases withdrew their passports.
68. This, it was argued by government, was intended to guarantee stability at a time when the development programmes were the priority.
69. Whose stated goals were mostly achieved and, remarkably, within the five year planning schedule.
70. Few workers owned their own houses.

71. London 1968. The misspelled title was taken from an inscription on one of Accra's lorries.
72. Ayi Kwei Armah, *The Beautyful Ones*, p. 104.
73. Paul Nugent, *Africa Since Independence: A Comparative History* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 171.
74. And as importantly, the percentage of girls in education had increased from about one-third to about one-half.
75. The drift towards a One Party State and the increasing denial of anything approaching what a reasonable man in any political culture would deem to be democratic was a very significant dimension of this.

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