

BOOK REVIEWS

ADLER, NANJI. *Victims of Soviet Terror. The Story of the Memorial Movement.* Foreword by Jonathan Saunders. Praeger, Westport [etc.] 1993. xviii, 155 pp. Ill. £45.00.

In the former Soviet Union there were no large informal and non-communist organizations created like those in Poland, Hungary or Czechoslovakia. As a result, no substantial civil society developed. Dissident movements were divided and scattered throughout the country; they rarely, if ever, presented a comprehensive and considered platform. It was only with the policy of glasnost in the final years of communist rule that the birth of a series of independent political movements was triggered. Of these new groupings the Memorial movement developed as the most typical heir to the anti-Stalinist dissident movement of the 1960s. In origin and name dedicated to a monument for the victims of Stalin, the movement succeeded in October 1990 in unveiling a memorial just a stone's throw away from one of isles of the Gulag archipelago, just opposite the Lubyanka, which housed the prison of Moscow's Secret Police.

Starting in August 1987, the initiative group collected more than 10,000 signatures for a petition to the Supreme Soviet. This illustrates the political attitude of the participants: to operate within the system, to respect its laws and to defend themselves by appealing to the Constitution. However, the regime continuously resisted Memorial's activities and tried to intimidate its activists. The movement applied for official recognition and registration (eventually granted in the autumn of 1991), but before that, in January 1989, an All-Union Founding Conference was held at which a Charter was accepted. Adler has included a copy of the Charter as an appendix to her book.

The offspring of victims were active in the movement, but so too were young historians like Dmitry Yurasov. Important intellectuals and artists, all proponents of political reform, joined Memorial's advisory board: Sakharov, Yevtushenko, Afanasyev, Medvedev, Shatrov and so on. Memorial's activities spread throughout the country, and branches were set up in major towns.

The activities of Memorial expanded with the number of sympathizers. A large archive with files on victims was provisionally instituted, an independent Scientific Information and Research Center was registered. A great number of letters were received, mass grave sites were traced, research expeditions to camps were organized. Historical investigations into repressors and repressed were carried out. Meetings and conferences were organized. Help was offered to victims of repression or their relatives, a necessity that had been completely neglected in the past.

Of course, the goal of coming to terms with the past has considerable implications for Memorial's actions, and the movement tried to act as a political party. Voters were encouraged to support Democratic Russia. Not all activists regarded Memorial as a political organization, however, and lack of registration made participation in the 1990 elections impossible.

Memorial's main function had become the *Bewältigung der Vergangenheit*, coming to terms with the past, which had also been Solzhenitsyn's artistic aim

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with his *Gulag Archipelago*. In my view, in order to restore Russian society to health and create the preconditions for real reform it is absolutely necessary to research the terror of the communist regime and to disclose in their entirety all the files relating to the horror and the fears of everyday life. That makes Memorial an important organization and Adler's work is a must for all those involved in analysing developments in Russia.

Adler's book on the Memorial movement is also a witness to her personal involvement in the movement. Numerous interviews and personal examples are used to illustrate how Memorial developed; these serve to make the book vivid and quite readable. The chronological arrangement of the chapters seems to be the only way to present the results of such research at this stage. This is a great disadvantage, however, because it leads to a continuous change of scene, topic and theme. Furthermore, her account of the Memorial movement leaves many questions unanswered, questions relating to the background to official attitudes towards the movement, and the formal and legal regulations concerning rehabilitated victims. These matters demand another study, and I hope Adler will oblige us by producing one in due course. Another qualm I have relates to Part 1 of the present book – beautifully titled “Memorial: History as Moral Imperative”. This looks at the general formation of the Soviet system, the inheritance and legacy of Stalinism, and the rediscovery of Soviet history. Only a rather limited range of opinions are represented here, and few academic works are cited (and none at all on de-Stalinization); the result is rather unbalanced. Nevertheless, readers are reminded of the enormous importance of terror in the communist period and they will appreciate the value of Memorial.

Ab van Goudoever

BORIS, EILEEN. Home to work. Motherhood and the politics of industrial homework in the United States. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge [etc.] 1994. xviii, 383 pp. Ill. £12.95; \$17.95.

Thanks to the vivid social photography of Lewis Hine, Jacob Riis, and Women's Bureau social workers, generations of US history students have been presented with graphic portraits of the female tenement homemaker. Laboring in dark surroundings with inadequate ventilation, she fights an uphill battle to finish sewing yet another pile of infants' dresses while her own children languish or perhaps labor themselves on clothing they and their parents cannot possibly afford. The image provides stark proof of the price women, children and their families pay when the time-honored separation between work and home is breached.

Eileen Boris is part of a growing cadre of scholars who are seeking to challenge both the historic image of homemaker as victim as well as to argue that the separation between home and work is a (gendered) ideological construct that crumbles when historians pay closer attention to the lives, *mentalités* and struggles of homeworkers. While earlier scholars, even some women's historians, uncritically incorporated Hine *et al.*, into their texts, Boris reminds her readers that Lewis Hine was no disinterested photojournalist. Indeed, he was a special agent for the New York Consumers' League (NYCL), an organization devoted to the abolition of homework.