

In her concluding interpretive speculations, Kriegel points out that the tactics of revolutionary syndicalism, worked out long before World War I, did not fit the reality of the post-war world. *Majoritaires* and *minoritaires* misinterpreted the current situation. Neither faction realized how powerful the counter-revolutionary forces were. The *minoritaires* confused revolutionary élan with an objective revolutionary situation. For the most part, in 1920 revolutionary syndicalist leaders were more revolutionary than union members. The failure of the strike movement, given the magnitude of the struggle and the fundamental issues involved, destroyed the pre-World War I revolutionary syndicalist movement. Its revolutionary mantle fell to the newly emerging French communists.

The only dated quality to this book is the author's claim to have advanced the study of social history beyond the boundaries of merely focusing on new subject matter, the political history of a strike. Near the end of this study, Kriegel applies a sociological analysis to this strike by investigating the age distribution of the strikers and their length of service in the union in order to show that the strikers were not "hotheads" but stable members of the railway workers' federation. True enough in its own day, this assertion of methodological innovation has become a commonplace within the historical profession. Moreover, a contemporary historian examining such a strike most likely would have extended the analysis beyond political and ideological considerations to include information on such topics as the work site experiences and family life of the railway workers and strike rituals, in short, to a more complete portrait of the rank-and-file and its universe. However, one cannot fault a book reissued twenty four years after its initial appearance from this perspective. What we have under review is a classic, a definitive political analysis of a fundamental strike set within the crossroads where the state, capitalism and the workers intersected, seen largely from the perspective of its leading participants, and of its deeper meaning for the social and political history of modern France.

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MAIER, ROBERT. Die Stachanov-Bewegung 1935–1938. Der Stachanovismus als tragendes und verschärfendes Moment der Stalinisierung der sowjetischen Gesellschaft. [Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des östlichen Europa, Band 31.] Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 1990. 441 pp. DM 80.00.

The Stakhanov movement continues to attract the attention of Western historians. Studies by Lewis H. Siegelbaum and Francesco Benvenuti appeared in 1988; Maier's book is the third monograph to appear on the subject. There have also been a few articles. (For the titles see *International Review of Social History*, XXXV (1990), p. 438, n. 13.) However, the reader who thinks that Maier's book therefore repeats much that has already been stated, and even that it is superfluous, is mistaken. While Benvenuti and Siegelbaum are especially interested in the function of the Stakhanov movement within Soviet society as a whole, Maier pays more attention to internal developments. He presents, for example, new data on the birth of the Stakhanov movement in the Donbass mining area (pp. 60–85), and on the

specific nature of Stakhanovite methods of production and their effect on the actual productivity of firms. There is no doubt that these factual supplements to our knowledge of the Stakhanov movement are valuable; even so, the gaps which remain are considerable, for the movement underwent numerous metamorphoses in the course of time and differed considerably between industrial branches.

The above is not meant to suggest that Maier has limited himself to a chronological survey of the movement. The book does have a broader, analytical focus too in which the function of the Stakhanov movement in the general framework of Soviet society is extensively discussed. Maier's interpretation can be summarized as follows.

Within the leadership of the party and the government, which had not itself initiated the Stakhanov movement, there emerged two clearly distinct attitudes towards this new type of "socialist competition" in the autumn of 1935. The "party teleologists" supposed that the Stakhanovite approach, the application of unlimited energy and technological innovation, would, if sufficiently supported by party and management, solve all existing production problems. The "realist economists" on the other hand thought that the very nature of Stakhanovite methods implied that they were incompatible with methods of scientific management. Since it was not possible to prevent the introduction of Stakhanovite policies the debate had, according to the "realist economists", now to revolve around modifying its underlying principles. The party teleologists gained support when, at a plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the CPSU held in December 1935, Stalin gave it his backing and had an amendment added to the final resolution stating that "the still existent opposition to the Stakhanov movement by conservative managers should be broken".

In the course of 1936 the room for manoeuvre left to the "realist economists" was reduced still further. In the daily production process in the factories and mines and on the construction sites there was an increasing contradiction between the Stakhanovites, who kept on dislocating the production process by their continual striving to set new records (at first individually, then in shifts, per working day, and then per week), and management, which primarily aimed for balanced production. The evermore broadly applied Stakhanovism resulted in a "progressive economic recession", which in turn led to enormous disappointments, even a socio-psychological shock, amongst the Stakhanovites. They had, after all, connected the introduction of Stakhanovism to great, even Utopian, expectations of an affluent society (pp. 377, 177ff). In this atmosphere the average Stakhanovite, supported not surprisingly by the prevailing political climate, soon came to believe that the managers were deliberately sabotaging economic progress. This culminated in a situation during the Great Purges in which the Stakhanovites acted on their own initiative as the foremost denouncers of the technical intelligentsia, as "NKVD bloodhounds" (as Roman Redlich has termed them). From the end of 1937 this specifically political function of the Stakhanov movement was clearly reduced and the realist economists started to regain lost ground. But this can hardly be described as a victory; after 1938 the significance of the movement was reduced to that of a government mascot.

At least two comments can be made with regard to Maier's interpretation. Firstly, it is noteworthy that Maier's picture of the development of the Stakhanov movement from late summer 1935 to the end of 1937 is extremely unilinear, certainly

when compared with the approaches of Benvenuti and Siegelbaum (which run reasonably parallel to each other.) Incidentally, Maier's only reference to Benvenuti's work is to an article written in 1984. So we have on the one hand Benvenuti and Siegelbaum's fairly open, chronologically rather erratic development, and on the other Maier's unilinear accelerated movement towards 1937. Given the present state of research no interpretation can be described as authoritative, but Maier's picture of unilinear development is undermined by the fact that it is not always supported by the available sources. At the plenary meeting of December 1935 Stalin did not take up the one-sided anti-managers position ascribed to him by Maier. Although no stenographic report of this plenary meeting has ever been published we do know that at the first all-union conference of the Stakhanovites, held five weeks before the plenary meeting, Stalin had maintained his support for a more pragmatic approach to the issue. This amounted to the removal of all those managers, engineers, technicians and foremen who did *not* want to work with Stakhanovite methods, but on the other hand meant that those who *did* react positively to Stakhanovism should lead the movement (while in their turn being led by the party of course). References to this part of Stalin's November speech may be found not only in speeches given by Ordzhonikidze and Andreev at the plenary meeting of December 1935 and published in the daily papers, but also in newspaper reports dating from the first few months of 1936. All of this would not have escaped Maier's attention if, instead of depending exclusively on an obscure 1953 Soviet dissertation, he had examined the daily press on this point.

In particular, Maier's claim that the connection made between Trotskyism and sabotage from the autumn of 1935 "in den Denkbildern von Stachanovisten schon präsent war" ("was already present in the thoughts of the Stakhanovites") is in direct contradiction to what the sources suggest. Maier's claim is based on only one source: a short, unique trial report which appeared on the back page of *Pravda* on 4 November 1935. But the importance of this can hardly be compared with that of the endless stream of trial reports and commentaries in the daily press which serve to document the same link from the autumn of 1936 onwards.

Secondly, it would seem that the *pièce de résistance* of Maier's argument, the proposition that the Stakhanov movement was a supportive and strengthening element in the terror, and therefore of the Stalinization of Soviet society, is an artificial construction. It is conceivable that the Stakhanovites, frustrated by the managers, allowed themselves to be pushed into the role of accusers by the driving forces of the terror. But how is one to prove this? Maier fails to consider this methodological (heuristic) question and assumes implicitly that a considerable amount of attention being given to the Stakhanovites in the (daily) press can be taken to indicate the strength of opposition to managers. But one has to be extremely careful in how one interprets such a key instrument of propaganda. The attention paid to the Stakhanovites could be interpreted as indicating that those running the press simply wanted a particular group to appear to be in the vanguard of this campaign. Even if we accept the validity of the approach used by Maier, however, one has to conclude that there is little evidence of any particular attention having been paid to the Stakhanovites; if one examines the daily press (in this case *Pravda*) for the period October 1936 to December 1937 on the subject of assisting the NKVD, one is struck by the universalism of the appeal made. Without dis-

tion all are called upon to help the beneficial purgatory work of the NKVD (“every honest citizen”, “every patriot”, “every worker”). Even in those instances where those helping the NKVD are identified and specific social groups named, care was taken to maintain a certain balance. When Maier cites a series of five reports which, according to him, are irrefutable evidence that the Stakhanov movement was massively aiding the NKVD (p. 400, notes 160–164), he neglects to mention that these five reports appeared in special issues in which an NKVD celebration was extensively covered. The first of these reports Maier has misinterpreted. There is no doubt that the millions of eyes and ears which the NKVD is quoted as having at its disposal clearly belonged to workers in general and not the Stakhanovites in particular.¹ Furthermore, it is also questionable whether the second and fourth reports cited refer exclusively to the Stakhanovites.

One reason for this one-sided interpretation is the fact that Maier, as he himself admits in his bibliography, studied an “incomplete set” (*Pravda*) or single issues (*Za Industriializatsiyu*) of some of his sources. But does not he himself indicate here that his research is not complete?

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HACHTMANN, RÜDIGER. *Industriearbeit im “Dritten Reich”. Untersuchungen zu den Lohn- und Arbeitsbedingungen in Deutschland 1933–1945. [Kritische Studien zur Geschichtswissenschaft, Band 82.]* Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1989. 464 pp. DM 86.00.

In this study, which grew out of a dissertation supervised by Reinhard Rürup, Hachtmann initially asks the question why the industrial working class did not mount stronger resistance to the nazi regime. He locates the main cause for this phenomenon – all the more mysterious since the nazis had deprived the working class of all its rights – in the changes effected by the drive towards modernization and rationalization in industry, which transformed the working and social conditions of the working class. According to Hachtmann, the new practices were first introduced on a large scale in 1935–1936 and subsequently extended to much of manufacturing industry, also during the Second World War. (In general, it must be said that research on this worldwide revolutionary development is still very patchy.) The intriguing aspect of Hachtmann’s argument seems to me his contention that the defeat of the German working class was not a direct consequence of the nazi dictatorship and the system it imposed, but a phenomenon which transcended that system and whose development therefore should be investigated also in different countries and different periods. Recognizing this, Hachtmann shows, with refreshing clarity, certain continuities between the pre-war period and developments in the Federal Republic of Germany.

¹ *Pravda*, 18 July 1937, “U bolshevikia slovo ne raskhoditsia s delom!”. See also Gábor T. Rittersporn, *Simplifications staliennes et complications soviétiques. Tensions sociales et conflits politiques en URSS 1933–1953* (Paris, 1988), p. 174, who likewise thinks that the author of the *Pravda* article was referring to the “people” and “workers” in general.