

ness. By 1922 the basic spheres of Cheka activity—secret informer networks, concentration camps, praetorian internal troops, and frontier guards—had been firmly established. Moreover (although here he adds little to Herbert S. Dinerstein's Rand Research Memorandum, over a quarter-century old), Gerson shows how the Cheka was set apart in ethnic and social recruitment from the East Slavic masses at this early date.

My principal regret is that Gerson did not pursue this and related themes by intensive biographical research. Most of the top police officials down to 1938 (and quite a few party *apparatchiki*) got their start in Dzerzhinskii's Cheka. Some even outlasted the Great Purge. Gerson discusses few of these early careers, but it appears that the material for such treatment, though very scattered, is available. We might learn a good deal by not merely locating the origins of such political police activity, but by specifying the rather varied types of activity which constituted intensive socialization experiences for future police and party officials. I should think it might be possible even to work out quantitative patterns of career evolution. Gerson is at one with his colleagues who have studied the first decade of Soviet history in omitting such career pattern analysis. It would be unfair, therefore, to fault this solid monograph for adhering to the conventions of its particular branch of historiography.

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THE VLADIMIROV DIARIES. YENAN, CHINA: 1942–1945. By *Peter Vladimirov*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1975. x, 538 pp. Photographs. \$10.95.

When Peter Vladimirov's diaries were published in late 1975 they immediately became the focus of debate in the West. Few doubted that the memoirs—in whatever form—were genuine. Rather, the controversy revolved around the extent to which they had been altered by Soviet authorities for current political purposes. Certainly, it is quite apparent that Vladimirov's diaries, based on his service as a Comintern liaison officer in Yen-an during 1942–45, suit Moscow's present purposes almost too neatly. For example, Mao Tse-tung is consistently depicted as an aloof, scheming Machiavellian, a master of ruthless opportunism deeply hostile to the Soviet Union.

Yet, given the dearth of such "inside" material on the Chinese Communist leadership during the key Yen-an period, one is hesitant to dismiss the diaries as simple Soviet fabrications. Indeed, Vladimirov's account of the inner-party debate over the CCP's official "history" of 1945 helps explain why this document is much less decisive in praising Mao than is true of Stalin in his own "history" of 1938 (p. 395). On the other hand, Vladimirov seems to be in error in describing the bookish Ch'en Po-ta, one of Mao's political advisers, as "sociable," and having many friends (p. 52). Is Vladimirov (or possibly the Soviet editors) mistaken here, or did Ch'en's fluency in Russian tend to make him a more attractive figure to Russians like Vladimirov than to Western observers in Yen-an who were not fully at home in either Chinese or Russian?

In sum, it is very difficult to appraise the absolute validity of Vladimirov's memoirs, and the American publishers do caution the reader to regard the account as both "a historical and a contemporary document." Nonetheless, the diaries are highly absorbing, and they add further detail to our scanty knowledge of the CCP during one of its most formative periods. As such, they command the close attention of anyone with a keen interest in the history of the Chinese Communist movement.

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