

consensus view of the community; it is doubtful whether the communal divide in Bengal was as all-encompassing even in 1946–1947 as this book would have us believe. One may also argue that a study of riots cannot be a convenient way of understanding the communal mind, for it provides only a spasmodic view of history. These extraordinary moments of confrontation were punctuated by periods of adjustment and coexistence. Das himself concedes that the Bengali workers and peasants were not innately hostile to their Hindu or Muslim brethren, except at brief moments of violence. But at the end of the day, one has to admit that these violent outbursts of hatred also altered their perceptions and aspirations and in the process influenced their relationships. This book, which is a veritable mine of information on inter-communal relations in Bengal during a forty-year period, brings that out with admirable clarity.

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HOFFMANN, DAVID L. *Peasant Metropolis. Social Identities in Moscow, 1929-1941.* [Studies of the Harriman Institute.] Cornell University Press, Ithaca [etc.] 1994. xv, 282 pp. Ill. Maps. \$35.75.

The First Five-Year Plan in the Soviet Union was meant to transform the USSR from a rural and agrarian society into an urban and industrial paragon of the socialist system. A key element in this transformation, both in plan and reality, was the recruitment of millions of peasants into the wage labor force. David Hoffmann's book explores the dimensions of this recruitment and its implications for social and political stability by focusing on the expansion of the industrial labor force in the USSR's largest city, Moscow, between 1929 and 1941.

Dimensions of this problem of transformation of the Soviet labor force have been addressed before, particularly in works by Moshe Lewin, Robert Davies, Donald Filtzer, Sheila Fitzpatrick, Lewis Siegelbaum, Hiroaki Kuromiya and Vlad Andrie. Hoffmann, however, focuses on a specific case study: he concentrates on the city of Moscow in general, and on a few key industries (metals, machine-building, textiles and construction) in particular. He has also employed oral histories; marvelous vignettes from interviews with retired workers who first journeyed to Moscow during the first plan years introduce each chapter. Hoffmann also enjoyed access to central and local party archives, and his book illustrates the value of primary cell party records for historical research. In addition, he makes extensive use of periodicals and official documentary sources such as statistical reports.

The term "peasant" in the book's title is the key thematic element here. The purpose of the study is to address the questions: in what ways did the city transform the peasant migrant? in what ways did the peasant migrant transform the city? Hoffmann's challenge to prevailing historiography is to demonstrate the failure of Soviet officials' efforts to delineate a new social identity for these peasants, failing to transform them into proletarians, and to illustrate the modes of resistance of peasant migrants as they drew upon their rural traditions, networks and cultures.

Beginning with a social demographic portrait of Moscow, Hoffmann turns to an analysis of the sources and dynamics of peasant in-migration, arguing that village networks, like almost everywhere in the developing world, were more

significant in facilitating migration than were official state policies of labor recruitment as specified in the five-year plan. A chapter on the formation of the urban work force considers training, work culture and peasant workers' reactions to state programs of discipline and incentives: Hoffmann argues that none of these state programs ever effectively disciplined the peasant workers nor effectively harnessed their labor power for efficient production. Nor does he ignore divisions within the migrant labor force, indicating substantial conflicts between young and old, men and women, as well as urban and rural natives. The Moscow work force consisted of few non-Russians, but where these were employed, they also provoked conflict and hostility. Hoffmann implies, perhaps naively, that adult male peasants, united by a common peasant identity, did not suffer from such internal divisions and conflicts.

The development of a distinct peasant community in Moscow is explored in a chapter on the urban environment and living standards: migrants lived together in shantytowns on the outskirts of the city, and had few occasions to encounter native Muscovites in their daily lives. Living standards were so low during the first five-year plan that peasants had to rely on their networks with home in order to supplement their subsistence wages and compensate for poorly stocked state stores. A chapter on culture explores the response of peasants to the imposition of official Soviet cultural forms (literacy, hygiene and anti-religion campaigns), their own forms of popular culture (strolling and drinking), and gradual and selective adoption of urban forms of culture (singing in unison rather than in multipart harmonies [is this the cultural analog of the one-party state?], Lenin portraits in the home, urban clothing styles). Finally, Hoffmann introduces the question of politics. These peasants, he argues, largely resisted the appeals of party and political citizenship; they stayed away from the party and trade union organizations when they could, and only passively adopted the state's class-based labeling. When they resisted factory discipline, Hoffmann argues, they did so as peasants or as individuals, not as collective actors conscious of membership in a broad class of wage workers. The peasant subcultures of these migrants provided an alternative source of identity and community, and peasants never internalized the system. (One wonders, then, why so many Russians from the generation that came to the cities in this period appear to have voted for the Communists in the 1995 Duma elections.)

Hoffmann includes as well two useful appendices, one analyzing the Moscow work force in detail, incorporating a discussion of the constructed nature of Soviet statistical categories. He also describes the construction of the 1932–1933 trade union census, which provides useful socio-economic data on the labor force, but which also reflects, he points out, the particular concerns of Soviet officials in mobilizing and subordinating this unruly peasant work force.

Moshe Lewin has argued that this influx of peasants into cities and into industry created a “quicksand society”, a society of vagrants, which rendered efforts to plan and to discipline impossible (*Making of the Soviet System*, New York, 1985, p. 221). Hoffmann shows, on the contrary, that peasant migrants brought structure and culture into the cities and provided a form of stability on their own terms. They did not migrate aimlessly, randomly, but with specific destinations and communities of fellow villagers in mind. This argument corresponds to studies of other developing nations, which also consistently find structure in migration patterns and in the behaviors of migrant communities.

In his effort to find logic and structure within this peasant community, however, Hoffmann runs the risk of treating “peasants” as too monolithic a category and of essentializing “peasant” behavior. He emphasizes the subaltern status of peasants, and is very sensitive to these subalterns’ “weapons of the weak” and “everyday resistance”. But urban wage earners were also subaltern, and it is often not clear in Hoffmann’s discussions which behaviors are attributable to peasants’ subaltern status (and thus might be shared in common with urban workers), and which due to peasant material culture, modes of life, to the “essential” peasantness that they brought with them to the cities. Occasionally, Hoffmann contradicts himself: at one point, “peasants” embrace piece rates to maximize their individual earnings (p. 109), at another, “peasants” support collective earnings and level pay scales (p. 112). Some of the behaviors that Hoffmann labels as “peasant” are just as commonly found among urban workers (and were frequently denounced by Soviet officials during the 1920s, before the presumed influx of peasants who diluted urban working-class culture): a task orientation is found among urban artisans as well as among peasants (p. 107); urban workers also drank excessively (p. 154), they preferred fiction to non-fiction (p. 167), they observed religion (p. 170), and they resisted Soviet work discipline and rules (p. 219). A love of nature and even a nostalgia for wood sprites is not the sole preserve of peasants, as the fiction of Vladimir Nabokov shows us.

Soviet officials and Soviet sources were quick to label any behaviors they disapproved of as “alien”, whether peasant, Trotskyists, or petty-bourgeois. It is important for the historian to resist taking these labels at face value. This, of course, makes the identification of specific strands of values and cultures within a larger whole very complicated. When Hoffmann shows that workers found jobs through and received training from fellow villagers, here is a concrete example of the role of peasant networks, but other attempts to find a peasant logic in migrants’ behavior seem forced. And as Hoffmann also acknowledges but does not incorporate into his analytical framework, the very instant that the peasant migrant entered the urban world or world of work, he or she began to change: the peasant ditties took on urban themes, they learned from their urban co-workers how to bend work rules to suit their own sense of work rhythm, their worlds expanded beyond the confines of their particular village as they began to stroll in large groups in the parks on the outskirts of Moscow and, presumably, as they began to marry outside their villages, their districts and their provinces.

Hoffmann has done an admirable job in incorporating ideas of social identity, of the subaltern, of everyday resistance into the discussion of industrialization, urbanization, and the formation of the Soviet labor force. But perhaps it is time to move beyond the rigid confines of a strict urban-rural dichotomy that still undergirds his approach to the development of Soviet Moscow.

Diane Koenker

Der Parteivorstand der SPD im Exil. Protokolle der Sopade 1933–1940.
Hrsg. und bearb. von Marlis Buchholz [und] Bernd Rother. Projektleitung: Herbert Obenaus [und] Hans-Dieter Schmid [Archiv für Sozialge-