

groups who occupied vacant buildings and transformed them into community centres, doctors and nurses who refused to stop providing health care services, neighbourhood assemblies that created popular kitchens, and members of community organisations who established barter networks and other collective activities. The collective actions that are the focus of the book transgressed the state's delineated space in the name of social justice thus, as the accounts clearly indicate, experiencing persecution and harassment from the authorities.

*Horizontalism: Voices of Popular Power in Argentina* is a powerful and inspirational book as it gives voices to the voiceless. The testimonies included uncover the strategies implemented by the participants to survive, challenge, and resist thus contributing an important element to our understanding of Argentina's recent past. Firsthand accounts from below, they reveal the day-to-day struggles involved in the construction of new social spaces and the creation of alternative forms of participation in an attempt to achieve a more loving, egalitarian and inclusive society. In a much broader sense, by bringing to the forefront the words and actions of the movements' protagonists this book not only uncovers the devastating effects of neo-liberal policies in Latin America but also provides strong evidence that an alternative world is not only possible but being constructed day by day.

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Steve J. Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds: Memory Struggles in Pinochet's Chile, 1973-1988* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006).

Thirty years ago, Henry Rousso, then a young historian with a budding interest in France's Vichy regime, was contemplating how recently-opened World War II archives might throw light on economic policy during that period. But fascinated by the burgeoning public interest at the time in the Occupation years, he made his subject not the history of Vichy itself but rather how it was remembered in subsequent decades. His magisterial *Vichy Syndrome* (1987; English trans. 1991) and other publications have shown how a society's remembered past can shape its present and helped establish the flourishing field of social memory.

This wonderful book by Steve Stern is a major contribution to this field and a convincing demonstration of how social memory can illuminate fundamental aspects of a whole historical period. Like Rousso, Stern was impressed by how the conflictive recent past was expressed in irruptions of divided memories, in his case during a year of research in Chile in 1996-97, a time when the country's long 'transition' to democracy seemed stalled. He was also struck, like Rousso, by the moral dimension of these memories, which related to truth and justice and to both

personal and national conscience. It was, he writes, a moment in which Chile's culture seemed to oscillate, "as if caught in moral schizophrenia...between prudence and convulsion" (xxix).

In this setting, Stern defined four 'emblematic memories' that seemed to encompass the large divisions of remembered experience since the 1973 military coup against Salvador Allende and the Popular Unity: memories as Rupture, as Salvation, as a Closed Box, and as Persecution and Awakening. In this book he demonstrates how these memories (captured in an 'ethnographic present') emerged historically during the Pinochet dictatorship, through the watershed 1988 plebiscite that marked the beginning of Chile's transition. Memory as Rupture captures the before-and-after framing of supporters of the Popular Unity and of those identifying with Chile's historical republican traditions, against the dictatorship's authoritarian ambitions. It was also the narrative that dominated international opinion initially and, indeed, long after.

The coup was remembered as Salvation—from godless Communism, social polarization and economic chaos—not only by the political Right but, as Stern suggests from contemporary evidence, very likely by a majority of the population until the economic crisis of the early 1980s. By then it had already been undermined by undeniable evidence of the dictatorship's brutal violations of human rights, documented and publicized by a courageous multi-faceted movement in civil society. This gave rise to a new social memory among those favouring the new authoritarian order, constructed around keeping the dark past in a Closed Box of purposeful forgetfulness.

Stern gives rich texture to all these emblematic memories in his unfolding analysis, particularly that of Persecution and Awakening, which framed the experience of those who dared to oppose the dictatorship and found their lives changed within the new social solidarities they helped forge. As Pinochet's regime was unprecedented in Chilean history (even recognizing its oft-forgotten earlier episodes of repression), so too was the moral resistance that arose to combat it, based in the defence of human rights and in the broad political opposition that coalesced during the 1980s. Stern brilliantly evokes this social memory as he moves from individual lives at the grassroots through a wide array of specific organizational experiences to public collective action, in the provinces as well as Santiago.

This book is political as well as social history of a high order, but 'memory' is a particularly suggestive and apt framing for Chile's experience. In the face of the dictatorship's systematic lies about its brutal practices, abetted by complicit media and a supine judiciary, 'memory' already arose in the late 1970s as a conscious, defiant challenge to the official 'reality' depicted in government propaganda. Stern also shows how different memories were constructed and 'performed', by the regime as well as the opposition, and buttressed by carefully-analyzed contemporary polls and other sources, how the moods they reflected persuasively structure periodization of these years. In all he makes a strong case for the real sig-

nificance of the more ineffable resources of power—values, beliefs, perceptions, information, communications—that were wielded by both sides and eventually shaped the outcome of the 1988 plebiscite.

Perhaps Stern's most important achievement in this book is to have interpreted this whole period as history. With scholarly rigor and an impressive array of contemporary sources, he has stepped back from earlier accounts and produced an analytical narrative driven by actors and events that is notably fresh, even when most readers know how the story turns out. His consideration of Pinochet's social support and "battle to win Chilean hearts and minds"—a battle his regime "waged and won, and then waged and lost" (1)—modifies many existing interpretations (and offers new insight into continuities since 1988). Stern historicizes the human rights movement, asking why its exposés "seemed to fall on apathetic ears" for so long (138, cf. 196, 218), and shows why its moral appeals only gained traction later. He not only uses contemporary press sources to great effect but also provides a persuasive history of the media's changing role through the period, as alternative publications gradually reached a greater public. He goes a long way toward integrating the varied international influences—often considered partially and for limited periods—that shaped national developments throughout these years.

In all, this is an impressive synthesis based on prodigious research. Stern has provided an exemplary twenty-page essay on sources, and more than 90 pages of endnotes are studded with insightful brief commentaries (e.g. on death-and-disappearance and torture figures, 392-95). Some of the 'Afterwords' that follow each chapter succeed better than others, and Stern's stylistic insistence on a memory vocabulary ("memory knots," "memory voices," "memory clock," etc.) can sometimes be distracting, but these are cavils. His focus on social memory, which allows him to consider the moral and subjective elements of human experience, together with his historian's sensitivity to indeterminacy and human agency make this a compelling interpretation of how Chileans lived the Pinochet years.

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Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *Comintern and the Destiny of Communism in India, 1919-1943: Dialectics of Real and a Possible History* (Kolkata: Seribann, 2006).

This is a work of remarkable clarity that manages to steer between the rock of anti-communism and the hard place of Stalinism while contributing a fresh approach to a complex problem and understanding that the history of the Communist International (Comintern) in India is a many-sided difficulty. Sobhanlal Datta Gupta is not someone who attempts to hide his independent Marxist approach from the reader. The author notes "this book is an attempt to explore the gray