Juliette Cadiot, Paris / Tanja Penter, Hamburg

Law and Justice in Wartime and Postwar Stalinism

World War II had a severe impact on Stalinist government and society and represented in many ways a turning point for Soviet history as well as for the history of Stalinism. In accordance with more recent research on Late Stalinism this volume wants to underline the unique nature, own dynamics and logic of the last years of Stalin's dictatorship, which undoubtedly were in many ways linked to the developments of the 1930s, but nevertheless represented a period of its own right.[1] This became especially visible in the field of law and justice, where in some spheres even a relative 'normalization' of judicial practices compared to the 1930s has been noticed. The developments in the Soviet justice system during the time of war and in its aftermath were interconnected – therefore most of the contributions of this volume look at these periods from an integrated perspective. But, as the articles gathered in this special issue show, the general picture remains contradictory: On the one hand, the war brought several new influences into the Soviet law and justice system, on the other hand some older patterns of prewar Stalinism or even times before that still remained in force. Looking at the topic 'from below' and paying special attention to the daily practices of jurisdiction, the articles show the hybrid and sometimes ambiguous character of these practices in the traumatic context of war and reconstruction, the contextual and transitional nature of measures taken to enforce law and order, and the effects on and reactions of the Soviet people with regard to these measures.

Legal prosecutions of Soviet collaborators

The War confronted the Soviet legal system with several new tasks, e.g. the legal persecution of German war criminals and Soviet collaborators. Whereas the convictions of German war criminals in the Soviet Union have been studied by several historians,[2] the trials of Soviet collaborators (*izmenniki rodiny* and *posobniki)*, which took place in wartime and postwar Soviet Union on a massive scale, have rarely constituted a field of research so far.[3]

The Soviet interpretation and definition of collaboration with the Nazis as a social pathology as well as the influence and use by the Soviet government of popular demands of retaliation and revenge in the climate of war and victory constitute a crucial argument in Oleksandr Melnyk's article on a pogrom in Kiev. In his micro study, Melnyk examines one prosecution case file of a trial before the Soviet military tribunal in Kiev which took place shortly after the liberation of Kiev by Red Army units in January 1944. The trial dealt with three local collaborators, who were involved in extreme violence and the murder of seven Jews from their neighborhood in fall 1941, in the aftermath of the Babii Yar

1 Fürst Late Stalinist Russia.

2 Prusin "Fascist Criminals to the Gallows", pp. 1–30; Hilger [et al.] Sowjetische Militärtribunale, Bd. 1; Hilger "Die Gerechtigkeit nehme ihren Lauf", pp. 180–246; Zeidler Der Minsker Kriegsverbrecherprozeß, pp. 211–245.

3 Penter Local Collaborators on Trial, pp. 341–364; Penter Collaboration on Trial pp. 780–790; Kudryashov/ Voisin The Early Stages of "Legal Purges", pp. 263–296. Voisin L'épuration de guerre en URSS.

Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas 61 (2013), H. 2, S. 161–171 © Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH, Stuttgart/Germany

massacre.[4] Analyzing the exemplary, but nonetheless extraordinary case of the violent excesses, where seven Jews were cruelly abused, robbed and finally buried alive by a crowd of Kievan citizens, the author shows the wealth of prosecution files suited as sources for historians to use in their effort to build a more precise and accurate narrative of the Holocaust in occupied Ukraine. From detailed descriptions in the accounts of witnesses and defendants it becomes clear that though the violent event involved only a small group of active perpetrators, it took place in the presence of dozens of transient observers. As Melnyk shows, while the trial is representative of the general prosecution practice of Soviet military tribunals in Ukraine against supposed local collaborators, (93,000 similar cases in Ukraine between 1943 and 1953)[5], it was rather singular in its extent of violence and pogrom character and therefore received special attention by the responsible NKVD investigators.

Vanessa Voisin's paper deals with two forms of Soviet wartime and postwar trials and cleansing which especially affected women: firstly the convictions of so called "horizontal collaboration", which means sexual intercourse with the Nazis occupiers, and secondly the repression by exile of family members of Soviet collaborators, who were sentenced to death for treason. As Voisin argues, the legal measures against these two groups were linked by the fact that they both followed the norms and practices of the elimination of "socially harmful elements" – a practice of the 1930s which was continued in wartime and postwar years. The phenomenon of postwar persecutions and/or public humiliation of women who maintained relationships with German occupiers, which are well known for Western countries like France,[6] are hardly researched for the Soviet case and still seem to constitute a taboo in the post-Soviet memory culture on World War II. Her article focuses on newly available material from Russian central state archives and from case files of collaborators from Kalinin (Tver) regional archives.

The identification and prosecution of war criminals and collaborators was in several ways crucial for the Stalinst leadership, and it became an important part of its postwar policies, not only in the formerly occupied Western territories but in the whole Soviet Union, including its Central Asian Republics[7]. The Soviet government did not only follow its own policies but also intended to fulfill a leading international role in the field of war crimes prosecutions. As a fact, one of the first war crime trials of World War II had already taken place in the liberated territories of the Soviet Union, in Krasnodar, in July 1943, indicating that trials were seen as a tool of national and international political influence.[8] The defendants were not German culprits but eleven local Soviet collaborators, who were members of the SS Special Detachment 10a, responsible for the deaths of thousands of people. The Soviet authorities used the trial for a massive propaganda campaign, aimed at deterring further collaboration. The intention of the Soviet regime to set an example

4 Babii Yar is a ravine in Kiev, where a series of massacres was carried out by the Nazis during their rule in the city. On September 29–30, German SS Sonderkommando 4a, supported by other German units and local collaborators, killed there 33,771 Kievan Jews in a single operation. See among others BERKHOFF Dina Pronicheva's story, pp. 291–317.

5 NIKOL'S'KYJ Represyvna dijal'nist' orhaniv deržavnoï bezpeky SRSR v Ukraïni, pp. 206–224.

6 See e.g. VIRGILI Shorn Women.

7 For trials in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan see an article by Claire P. Kaiser, forthcoming in The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review.

with this trial for all following international convictions of war criminals was disappointed, as the international press reported rather marginally about it if at all.[9]

During and after the war the Stalinist regime acknowledged the immense symbolic meaning of law and justice for its own legitimation towards the Soviet population and for its intended role in the international postwar order.[10] The regime's efforts to appear as a state which follows international standards of law and justice, became noticeable in different fields, most visible probably in the formation of the Extraordinary State Commission for the examination of Nazi crimes.[11]

The Extraordinary State Commission

The Extraordinary State Commission, which counted among its members several internationally well-respected personalities as the writer Aleksej N. Tolstoj, the legal scientist Aron N. Trajnin and the Kievan metropolit Nikolaj, was intentionally formed as a kind of public organ to make the appearance that it fulfilled Western standards of an independent and neutral institution. The founding of this Commission in 1942 followed different aims: Firstly, it showed the high priority of the prosecution of war criminals for the Soviet leadership for reasons of deterrence and consolidation of loyalties among its own population. Secondly, the Stalinist regime at an early stage formulated and followed its own policies in this field because it did not want the conviction of war criminals on Soviet territory to become a topic of international negotiations. The Soviets rather wanted the absolute monopoly of interpretation for every war crime which took place on their territory. Thirdly, Stalin with the help of the Commission, intended to establish an official narrative of the history of World War II which focused exclusively on Nazi crimes and erased any memory of Soviet violent actions in the territories which were annexed in the aftermath of the Hitler-Stalin-Pakt.[12]

The findings of the Extraordinary Commission finally played an important role as evidence presented by the Soviet delegation at the Nuremberg trials. In Nuremberg the Soviet delegation tried as well as the other victors of World War II to use the tribunal for its own

8 For a detailed analysis of this trial see: Bourtman "Blood for Blood, Death for Death", pp. 246–265; Penter „Das Urteil des Volkes", pp. 117–131.

9 Penter „Das Urteil des Volkes".

10 Hirsch The Soviets at Nuremberg, pp. 701–730.

11 Moine La commission d'enquête soviétique sur les crimes de guerre nazis, pp. 81–109; Sorokina People and Procedures, pp. 797–831; Fefermann Soviet Investigation of Nazi Crimes in USSR, pp. 587–602.

12 This last aspect became quite evident in the way the regime dealt with the Soviet massacre of Polish officers in Katyn and in the (unsuccessful) attempts of the Soviet delegation in Nuremberg to charge the Nazis with the responsibility for this crime. The Katyn example also shows the ambivalence of the Extraordinary Commission, which on the one hand collected large quantities of valuable materials about German war crimes, destruction of state property and private property losses, and on the other hand also fulfilled political and propaganda aims and therefore (under the pressure of the NKVD) even provided falsified results of investigation. See Weber Wider besseres Wissen, pp. 227–247.

domestic and foreign political interests and present itself as an important international player.[13]

Perhaps even more important for the Soviet population than the investigation of war crimes was another working area of the Soviet Extraordinary Commission, studied in this volume by Nathalie Moine: During War and German occupation millions of Soviet citizens suffered from the destruction of their housing and private property. Based on a thorough analysis of the archival documentation of the Soviet Extraordinary Commission, Moine explores how the war's mass destructions and the Extraordinary Commission's activities affected the notion of property in the Soviet Union.

It should be mentioned that consequences and demographic effects of the War functioned as a catalyst for a reform to inheritance law: Due to the fact that parents of millions of young men who died in the war petitioned to inherit their property, a new inheritance law was codified in 1945, which broadened the circle of heirs. Before, only spouses, children or dependents could inherit property. As the example of the inheritance law shows, Soviet authorities reacted to numerous petitions from parents of deceased soldiers as well as to the demographic catastrophe, revising norms and law in accordance with dramatic circumstances.[14]

As Moine convincingly argues, the archives of the Extraordinary Commission, on the one hand, show the magnitude of war losses among the Soviet population and, on the other hand, reveal the significant size of personal property, especially housing, among Soviet national wealth. Under German occupation various redistributions of property had taken place. In some cases, formerly dekulakized peasants had got their houses back from the occupational authorities, and several Soviet citizens profited from the appropriation of Jewish property.[15] As a result of the various reallocations, after the War Soviet courts had to deal with thousands of conflicts about housing rights.[16] While the legitimization of material well-being of the Soviet population was even expanded after the War, due to the political requirements of Soviet reparation claims, the compensation of personal property losses of Soviet people in fact was never on the agenda of the Soviet state. Nathalie Moine's article sheds light on the shift in late Stalinist policy with regard to personal property, corresponding with Soviet foreign policies regarding the question of maximum reparations not only for losses of socialist property, but also for the damage of individual property. Moreover, she embedded the practices of the Extraordinary Commission into older traditions and experiences resulting from World War I and the Russian Civil War, when e.g. war damages caused by military invention of the Entente were assessed.

Law, justice and changes in Soviet values

The articles of Nathalie Moine and Vanessa Voisin also show the endorsement by the Soviet leadership of new norms, notably values of sacrifice, marriage, personal belonging, interfamilial solidarity, patriotic loyalty, which also gained an echo among the population. While Nathalie Moine shows, how a new notion of personal property rose to the aware-

13 GINSBURG Moscow's Road to Nuremberg; HIRSCH The Soviets at Nuremberg, pp. 701–730.
14 COWLEY The Theory and Practice of Soviet Inheritance Law, 1941–1953.
15 DEAN Robbing the Jews, pp.173–221.
16 MANLEY "Where should we resettle the comrades next?", pp. 360–382.

ness of Soviet citizens and the Stalinist regime, Vanessa Voisin's article deals with different perceptions of morality, as echoed by the press, by ordinary Soviet citizens and by the NKVD during its investigation of crimes of collaboration. She shows to what extent revisions of legal norms (with regard to sexual intercourse with the occupiers) were influenced by public opinion: the Soviet political police and leadership was not so concerned at the beginning of the war and German occupation with the "crime" of sexual intercourse with the enemy. Only after the liberation of the occupied territories, women suspected of intimacy with the enemy were put under surveillance. Quite often this happened under the pressure of the local communities. The depositions by witnesses, neighbors, as well as the narratives of press reporters of war show the importance of this public pressure. At the beginning, for the Soviet leadership the main argument for punishing affective ties with occupiers or collaborators was fear of ideological and political corruption. The State's measures of punishment were connected to a longer Soviet tradition, going back to the 1920s with administrative exile of interior enemies and to the 1930s with the deportation of families of dangerous kulaks and later of nationalities, suspected to be linked to enemy countries.[17]

War crimes trials and memory in local settings

As historians have noted, there is an interconnection between war crimes trials and memory policies in post-war Europe.[18] For the Soviet war crimes trials of collaborators it has been argued, that the trials provided, however limited, locus for an alternative memory discourse, different from the official Soviet policy of memorization.[19] Studying the accounts of witnesses and defendants in the Kievan prosecution case Oleksandr Melnyk sheds light on wartime and postwar everyday mnemonic practices of Soviet citizens in a local setting. His main argument emphasizes the important meaning of urban neighborly communities as milieux of memory, in which crimes against Jews were widely discussed and commemorated. These everyday mnemonic practices stood in contrast to official Soviet memory policies with regard to World War II, which suppressed the memory of the Holocaust. The neighbors witness accounts of the crime, which often constituted the only resources for NKVD investigators, at the same time also bore specific problems and exerted a profound influence on both, the choice of suspects and the general outcome of the investigation, as Melnyk argues.

In his article Melnyk develops the complex web of social relationships inside the neighborhoods and shows, how interpersonal conflicts as well as political divisions influenced the testimonies and thereby the outcome of the investigation. Melnyk's study confirms the argument of various interactions and negotiation processes between state agencies and local communities in the choice of whom to punish among local collaborators and whom not. As we see from similar trials, the accusations were often based on denunciations, and in some cases local populations even took the initiative in arresting potential collaborators and handing them over to the NKVD organs.[20]

17 Alexoupolos Stalin and the Politics of Kinship, pp. 91–117.
18 See e.g. Frei Transnationale Vergangenheitspolitik; Douglas The Memory of Judgment.
19 Penter Local Collaborators.
20 Penter Local Collaborators, pp. 341–364.

The criminal code as tool of state control and the local dimensions of justice

In the postwar period most of the prisoners were sent to the GULAG through sentences given by regular courts, and not by extraordinary organs like NKVD *troiki* (commissions of three Soviet officials, who issued sentences on people in summary proceedings without trial) or by the Special Conference *(osoboe soveščanie)* of the NKVD. The nature of policing and repression changed after the War, from administrative repressions based on "social", "national" categories to judicial convictions for breach of law, as David Shearer has argued.[21] So, criminal law became one of Stalin's main tools of control in post-war times.[22] This could be interpreted as a considerable break with older repressive practices of the 1930s, when hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens were condemned in secret by summary trials, without seeing any prosecutor or judge. Juliette Cadiot's paper studies the punishment of economic crimes and the endorsement of the 1947 law against theft of State property in the USSR. This law was enforced in the period of reconstruction after World War II, while parts of the Soviet population suffered from a serious hunger crisis, which caused up to 1.5 million death casualties.[23] A large amount of people (more than 1 million) was sent to the GULAG by ordinary tribunals under the accusation of theft of socialist property. Among the convicted people a considerable number were members of the Communist party, though the Party acted at various levels to protect its members from criminal charges. In her article Juliette Cadiot analyzes this conflict between legal norms endorsed by the justice apparatus and social norms defended by the Party, in a series of local cases where the Party regional leadership felt rightful to protect party members from repression against economic crimes. Drawing on the extensive correspondence between the General Prosecutor's office in Moscow and its local representatives and focusing on examples from various regions, Cadiot shows, that there existed double standards of legal practice for Party members and non-Party members, based on a rivalry between Party disciplinary procedures and the legal system enforced by the Procuracy. This was due to the fact, that the Party was seen as an essential tool in monitoring the society and that the legitimacy of the traditional justice system and rule of law, broadly criticized in the prewar period, was still low. As Cadiot argues, the protection of communists from criminal punishment was an organized phenomenon, which could not be reduced to informal practices or criminal networks. It was based on the strong belief that the Party had the right to punish its members according to its own procedures.

We have to consider as well, that the local Party interferences represented only one specific form of resistance against the draconian new criminal law. As Peter Solomon has argued, the implementation of the 1947 criminal law was quite often constricted by the "unwillingness of relevant actors to report wrongdoers, initiate prosecutions, or impose the designated sanctions".[24] Local judges found creative ways of avoiding the harsh penalties set by the law, at least for lesser offenders, who often acted out of pure desperation.

21 SHEARER Policing Stalin's Socialism, p. 405.

22 SOLOMON Soviet Criminal Justice under Stalin, p. 405; SHEARER Policing Stalin's Socialism, p. 405.

23 See among others: GANSON The Soviet Famine of 1946–47; ZIMA Golod v SSSR 1946–1947 gg.; Holod 1946–1947 rokiv v Ukraïni.

24 SOLOMON Soviet Criminal Justice under Stalin, p. 429.

Local networks of industry managers who did not want their best workers to be imprisoned for minor offenses and of local politicians who were not willing to remove key managers from their positions to some extend likewise provided some kind of shelter from the harsh legal policies of the central authorities.[25] As Cadiot shows the numerous conflicts might as well be seen as a power struggle between the center and the peripheries, in which the center intentionally used the rivalry of competing local institutions for its own interest in concentrating all penal power in Moscow.

Post-war trends of professionalization and bureaucratization of the justice system

The older traditions and practices inside the Communist Party functioned as an obstacle for the state's professionalization efforts of the justice apparatus. During the postwar years the Stalinist government continued with its efforts to professionalize and bureaucratize the justice system. Therefore, for example cases of abuse of office or corruption by members of the justice apparatus were investigated by the responsible military prosecutor and strictly punished. Depending on the gravity of the offense, the accused could be sentenced to 5–10 years in a forced labor camp. Some of the trials against officials accused of abuse of office were even staged in the manner of public show-trials.[26]

The efforts to professionalize the Soviet justice system reached back into the mid 1930s, when a number of legal training measures for the young Communist justice personnel were organized. These developments were temporarily interrupted by the Great Terror of 1937/38 and the outbreak of World War II. But after the war Stalin started a new campaign to send employees of the justice system into training programs, which actually proved to be not without success — at least according to the Soviet standards.[27] In 1946, a decree of the Council of Ministers was widely publicized with obligation for lawyers to receive law training in universities, and very well known prosecutors, as Lev Šejnin, were photographed on the benches of law schools. The lack of juridical culture of the Soviet justice apparatus was viewed as a fault and law and procedures were publicly rehabilitated. Effects of professionalization become also apparent in a progressive, but considerable increase in trial records, which was often due to a more accurate preliminary investigation and the application of more professional investigation methods. Judges were elected since 1947 in order to better tie the justice apparatus to the population.[28] As Cadiot shows in her article, local, provincial networks remained very influential even if periodically denounced by a State eager to centralize and control punishment, not only via political police, but also via Procuracy and Judges. Throughout war-time and post-war years the fundamental difficulty continued for the Soviet center to apply not only the same criminal code but also the same legal practices on its whole territory.

25 For the shelter function of local networks with regard to convictions of so called „work-deserters" see Filtzer Soviet Workers and Late Stalinism, pp. 176–198.

26 Heinzen A Campaign Spasm, pp. 123–141; Heinzen Pick the Flowers While They're in Bloom; Penter Local Collaborators, pp. 341–364.

27 Solomon Soviet Criminal Justice under Stalin, pp. 366–403.

28 Michael Kogan Shaping Soviet Justice.

Conclusion

The overall picture of the late Stalinist Soviet justice system remains rather ambivalent: On the one hand a new effort of the Stalinist leadership becomes visible to use the rule of law as an instrument for its own domestic and external legitimation and to deploy prosecutions of war criminals as a performative and pedagogical moment. The war crimes trials fulfilled political functions and served certain demands of the local communities for revenge and recovery from the war trauma at the same time. It seems likely that the trials, especially in the formerly occupied territories, where the Stalinist regime in postwar times faced special loyalty problems, contributed to the re-Stalinization of local societies, because they responded to local demands and justice conceptions. However, unlike the trials of the Stalinist 1930s, in which mostly innocent people were sentenced for pure political reasons, postwar trials often concluded with the convictions of real war criminals. Most curiously, this fact in the eyes of the Soviet population might even have led to an ex-post legitimation of Stalin's political cleansings of the 1930s.

On the other hand the Soviet justice system in its daily practice still remained to a great extent influenced by the experiences of the 1930s and operated through penal categories, visions of the enemy, and local traditions inherited from the past. The mode of investigation, the creation of special ad hoc institutions, the role of NKVD and MGB in prosecutions, even the political profile of the justice apparatus and the concrete prosecution practices by military tribunals still show many continuities with the modes of Stalinist repressions of the 1930s. Moreover, a study of the justice personnel of the 1950s will certainly endorse the vision of a continuity in the practices of jurisdiction and repression.[29]

In postwar times the Stalinist justice system continued to be a mixed system, where regular courts coexisted with extraordinary bodies of investigation and jurisdiction and where the rule and automaticity of law was limited by the discretionary practices of the police and the role of local networks. It seems difficult to label the postwar period as a period of normalization: Even if an effort to deal with international norms of justice and with regulation of procedures was undertaken at the central level, local practices were still very far from these norms and regulations. Reflexions on the importance of law and justice for the Soviet state, which were discussed inside a network of lawyers already during the war and its aftermath, could finally develop only during the period of De-Stalinization.[30]

Most of the papers in this volume grew out of the international workshop "The Practice of Law and Justice in Russia (from the 18th century to the present)" that took place in Moscow in May 2011. The workshop, supported jointly by French and German institutions,[31] put together researchers from Russia, the United States, France and Germany. The

29 See the actual research project of Juliette Cadiot on thefts, thieves and repression in USSR (1945–1961).

30 Kaminskaja's memoirs tell very few on Second Stalinism. She described it as a rather dark moment, where nothing was possible for persecuted lawyers. KAMINSKAYA Avocate en URSS; SOLOMON Soviet Criminal Justice under Stalin.

31 The workshop was organized as a French-German cooperation by Juliette Cadiot, Sandra Dahlke, Tanja Penter and Michel Tissier. It was sponsored by Deutsches Historisches Institut Moskau (DHI); Centre franco-russe en sciences humaines et sociales de Moscou (CEFR); Fritz Thyssen Stiftung für Wissenschaftsförderung; Centre d'études des mondes russe, caucausien et

current thematic volume presents only part of the studies which were presented at the workshop.[32] The articles of this volume are all based on so far rarely used materials from the former Soviet archives. The articles show the wealth of sources available, such as the archives of the Extraordinary State Commission, regional archives and case files of the MGB archives, internal correspondence of the Procuracy. The focus on more local and regional episodes sheds a new light on practices of law and justice, as seen 'from below', complementing a narrative based on the State effort to normalize justice and showing to what extent the Stalinist state was unable to build a regular justice apparatus and law system, based on a common understanding of norms and values.

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32 Another set of articles from that workshop has just been coedited and published by Sandra Dahlke and Michel Tissier as a special volume of Cahiers du Monde Russe: Pratiques du droit et de la justice en Russie (XVIII–XXe siècles), Vol. 53 (2012), 1.

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