
The question of the relationship between the Party and the State is crucial for understanding Soviet political system. Jonathan Harris goes to the heart of the matter by examining two principal views about the Communist Party's role in Soviet society during the late 1930s and 1940s. Drawing on a meticulous analysis of the main party publications during this period, the author reconstructs the main battle lines between Georgii Malenkov and Andrei Zhdanov, the two antagonists of the book.

Harris argues that these party leaders represented two distinct views on the role the Party should play in the Soviet system. The first view, which Harris identifies with Malenkov, maintained that the Party officials should actively engage in the management Soviet state and economy. This view emphasised the importance of practical experience and knowledge of Party members, particularly its officials, which they needed to use in areas where they were involved.

The second view, advocated by Zhdanov, emphasised the need for ideological education of party members, above all full time employees, who had to lead by example. On this view, a proper and thorough understanding of Marxist-Leninist ideology would enable party apparatchiks to provide an overall guidance of Soviet society, while abstaining from involvement in the day-to-day practical matters. A distinct advantage of this view was the ability to maintain a clear division between party full-time employees and the rest of the Soviet nomenklatura. This argument is enormously important for the study of the CPSU's history, its apparatus and its relations with other centres of power in the Soviet Union. Since its main tenets were already presented by the author in a seminal article published more than 30 years ago in *Slavic Review*, the question here is what new this book brings to the debate.

Despite its potential merits, particularly of bringing back to the scholarly attention such major issue of Soviet history as the relation between the Party and the state, the book raises many questions. First, the methodology of this monograph deserves attention. The book is based on the analysis of a number of published sources from the 1930s and 1940s. These are the main ideological journals published by the Central Committee - *Bolshevik*, *Partiinaia Zhizn* (Partiinoe Stroitel'stvo), *Kul'tura i Zhizni* plus some readings of *Pravda* and a handful of other Party journals. Reading of published sources can be a rich source of information if combined with analysis of wider issues and use of archives, but by itself this approach is a vestige of an era when Western analysts had nothing else to go on except official Soviet publications. Nearly twenty years after the collapse of the Soviet Union a wider range of archival sources is available, which makes such exclusive concentration on official publications insufficient.

A potentially fruitful and revealing source which would complement Harris's research is editorial materials of the journals discussed in the book. For example, the Russian state archive for social and political history (RGASPI, fond 599) contains materials of the journal *Kommunist* (as the *Bolshevik* was re-named in 1952), including minutes and agendas of its editorial board meetings. Use of this archival source alone, in conjunction with the work already done in the book, could profoundly transform this study. Some discussion of how journals operated in this period, their editorial policies and biographical analysis of the key personnel on their editorial boards would also enrich the analysis. For example, this could explain why and how the journals, which publications are painstakingly syphoned through by the author, were able to support different views espoused by Zhdanov and Malenkov.
The debates discussed in the book would seem more relevant to the general reader if the views on Party's role, which oscillated between Malenkov's and Zhdanov's positions, were related to wider concerns and issues. For example, the temporary triumph of Zhdanov around the XVIII Party Congress in 1938 should be analysed in the context of Stalin's changing priorities from economic development of the early 1930s, to the need to ensure an ideological orthodoxy in the wake of the Great Purges. As a result a greater importance was given to Zhdanov's view which championed the primacy of ideological education for party members. Similarly, when the ideological issues assumed a secondary importance during the run up to WWII and its early stages, Malenkov's position assumed a greater prominence because it advocated active involvement of Party officials in the running of the economy. Unfortunately, there are only fleeting references in the text to these events without attempting to build a coherent explanatory model. Instead, the majority of the book reads like a detailed chronology of official pronouncements on the chosen issue of the Party's role in the Soviet system, with the increase in the number of publications advocating Party's economic involvement as a triumph for Malenkov, while the growth in number of articles urging concentration on ideological matters as a victory for Zhdanov.

Given such great prominence of these debates in the official press, which is very convincingly conveyed by the author, it seems that some analysis is needed of practical implications for the Party. For example, it remains unclear what a temporary victory for either view meant for different party officials within the Central Committee apparatus and in the party structures down the line. Did the party officials had to change their work patterns as a result? Did propaganda officials assumed a greater weight in the party structures when Zhdanov's view was winning, and vice versa? Without mentioning such practical implications, it remains unclear what significance these debates had on the actual operation of the Soviet political system.

In the book's conclusion, which brings forward several important themes implicit but not always developed in the book, Harris mentions that Zhdanov's view had little appeal beyond those engaged in the ideological work (p. 154). This brief remark implies that the Party apparatus was split along functional lines, with different groups endorsing different views of Party's role depending on their line of work. A further exploration of this point might have explained where Malenkov's and Zhdanov's power base lay. Its potential importance is mentioned only once while discussing structural re-organisation after the XVIII Party Congress, when two new directorates for personnel and ideology were created. Harris intriguingly notes that this provided the bureaucratic foundation for the subsequent disagreements between Zhdanov, who was in charge of the ideology branch, and Malenkov, the head of the cadres directorate (p. 24). Unfortunately, this line of argument is not explored any further.

There are several themes touched upon by the author which have potential for further study, such as the apparent conflict between Soviet patriotism (endorsed by Malenkov) and the Communist ideology (advocated by Zhdanov). Another question which comes to mind after reading this book is the importance of informal networks which contemporary scholarship increasingly places at the centre of power analysis in the Soviet system. Harris mentions personal loyalty as an important factor in Soviet politics which, for example, explains support for Zhdanov's views by the Leningrad officials (p. 154), but does not elaborate this point any further.

Although some key texts of the last ten years are mentioned in the bibliography, such as Gorlizki and Khlevniuk’s *Cold Peace* and Boterbloem's biography of Zhdanov, the recent scholarship should have been used more widely in the book. For example, Gorlizki and Khlevniuk's very careful analysis of the way ageing Stalin maintained control over the top leaders, including a