

There is another hint that AKP's politics might be designing: the protracted law suit Energekon against an allegedly extremely Kemalist terrorist group that supposedly planned attacks on the current government. The fact that most of the indicted "terrorists" are scholars, journalists but also high state officials – many of them in their retirement age – indicates that the trial might have some political motives. Special concerns about best Turkish universities, until recently never contested elite institutions that have for decades been producing highest state representatives, can point to AKP's emphasis on private universities, often financed by Islamic circles. More and more state employees graduated at one of these universities and the traditional state universities thus have a good reason to worry about their exclusive positions. These fears, although not admitted in the volume (but confirmed in a private conversation with one of the editors) are also one of the reasons why *AKP Kitabı* was published.

However disputed the objectivity of this volume might be, it is still worth reading. It brings a very substantial and well-formulated manifestation of that part of the Turkish elite and middle class that feels harmed by the current political development in the country. This book offers answers to readers of Economist and other prestigious news weeks that publish eulogies on Erdoğan's "liberal" politics, who could wonder who are these people that do not (contrary to most Western commentators) praise the current, according to many objectively set standards, successful government. The fact to be born in mind is that the proportion of people fundamentally objecting to AKP's politics is around thirty to forty per cent in the deeply fragmented Turkish society. Every scholar pursuing any sort of research on the current Turkish politics should thus pay due attention to their voice and should not be blinded by the loud chanting of "*Allāhu akbar!*", a slogan of AKP's campaigns.

*Kamil Pikal*

Melanie Ilic (ed.), *Stalin's Terror Revisited*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, 256 pp. ISBN 978-1-4039-4705-5.

More than seventy years have passed since Stalin's Great Terror erupted, but this topic has never ceased to attract extraordinary interest of historians. Foundations to the research of the Great Terror as one of the most salient phenomena of Soviet history lay British historian Robert Conquest, who also coined the term. However, his conception is in many respects outdated: during the last forty years of research some crucial moments have moved the study of this topic forward. The most important of these was the Archival Revolution in the Soviet Union towards the close of 1991. The declassification of a number of key documents of the probably

most inaccessible ministry in the world resulted in some fundamental findings that solve the long-time scholarly disputes among historians (primarily on the number of victims of the purges). However, some new questions and the main point at dispute why the purges culminated in 1937–1938 still have not been sufficiently explained. At the same time, the nature of scholarly work has changed. The opening of local archives has enabled a study of individual “cells” and this way reconstruct the picture of the entire “body” of the Stalinist system during the critical period. This trend has affected the majority of contemporary works on Stalinism. An important contribution to the topic that should not escape notice to anyone interested in this issue is a collection of papers written by prominent world scholars edited by Melanie Ilic (University of Birmingham), *Stalin’s Terror Revisited*.

Next to case studies on the impact of the purges in selected regions, institutions and industrial branches of the USSR, the volume focuses on the profile of the victims in terms of their position within the party hierarchy and on the impact the terror had on Soviet economy. These problems are dealt with in the two introductory chapters.

Robert W. Davies, a prominent Sovietologist from the “Cold Warriors” had the first word. The author of major works from the 1980s on the economy and collectivization under Stalinism seeks to answer the question of what immediate impact the economic situation in the country had on the eruption of purges. He rejects the argument of Roberta T. Manning (in her and John A. Getty’s work *Stalinist Terror: New Perspectives* from 1993, both of them counted among “revisionists”) that the origins of the purges can be found in the economic recession of 1936 that partly preceded the trial of Zinoviev and Kamenev. Davies argues that the Soviet leadership had only a few worries about the economic situation at that time. He proves the contrary by saying that purges played an important role in the economic problems of the country that had been on the increase since 1937.

The next chapter was written by Oleg Khlevnyuk, the former director of “RGASPI” archive (that among others administers the archive of the Comintern) and the current director of the State Archive of the Russian Federation. He is considered the “best informed” Sovietologist of today. In his study he systematically examines the consequences of the terror on the functioning of Soviet People’s Commissariats. He describes the double liquidation of ministerial cadres – the original and the newly appointed ones. He argues that after the end of the terror, ministries as well as the entire Soviet economy found themselves in an odd situation when the leadership comprised of two different generations of cadres, a phenomenon whose practical effects he further investigates.

Junbae Jo from the Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Birmingham, in his paper reveals the essence of the repressions in Soviet trade unions. Among other things, the author compares the situation to the purges in trade unions in 1928–1930. The fourth study by Christopher Joyce from Durham University looks at the impact of the Great Terror on the Soviet prison system. He

convincingly shows that the NKVD was unprepared for such massive repressions as well as was the system of gulags and penitentiaries. He describes the problems of both institutions and especially of its personnel. The fifth chapter by Melanie Ilic concentrates on the gender aspect of the purges. The author presents a thorough study of the initiation, circumstances and repercussions of the NKVD operational order No. 00486 from August 15, 1937, marking a beginning of mass repressions of wives of the enemies of the people and “traitors of Motherland”.

Regional studies form the bulk of the remaining sections. Valerii Vasiliev from Ukrainian Academy of Sciences focuses on the impact of the extremely brutal terror on Ukraine. Based on his archival research on the documents of NKVD from Vinnytsia and Poltava, the author confirms the assumption that confidential police lists of *kulaki* and other “anti-Soviet elements” and criminals were used during the mass repressions. Vasiliev also had a very close look at the consequences of the purges on mining and agriculture in the republic.

Melanie Ilic in her second study in this volume makes use of the lists of victims, the martyrologies from Mordovia in order to visually depict the chronology of the repressions in this region. Her socio-demographic analysis of the victims of the purges also includes a detailed account of life stories of the affected women. The last study by Christopher Joyce uses the same methodological approach. The author presents a social profile of thousands of people that suffered from the repressions in the Komi territory. Apart from that, Joyce examines the social interaction between groups of free workers and gulag prisoners in the region as the boundaries between these two worlds were hardly recognizable.

There is no salient link between the studies in the anthology *Stalin's Terror Revisited*. The authors come from different generations of scholars, institutions and countries (and united their forces – not physically – at the premises of the University of Birmingham). The chapters have very similar date of origin and some of them are case studies. The apparent heterogeneity of this volume serves as a good example of the state of current research on Stalinism: there is no ideology left, schools and groups have also disappeared and the entire research field is very diverse.

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Jarosław Dariusz, Pasztor Maria, *Stosunki polsko-francuskie 1944–1980*. Warszawa: Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2008, 480 pp. ISBN 978-83-89607-42-3.

*Stosunki polsko-francuskie 1944–1980*, a monograph written by Polish historians Dariusz Jarosław and Maria Pasztor, is the outcome of a many years long research on French-Polish relations in the twentieth century. Maria Pasztor has been especially renowned for the numerous works she has published on the topic so far, some even in French.