

Mark Harrison, *One Day We Will Live Without Fear: Everyday Lives Under the Soviet Police State*, Hoover Institution Press Publication, Stanford, California, 2016. xxii+280 pp.

In this riveting book, Mark Harrison, Professor of Economics at the University of Warwick and Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, explores a rather recent manner of looking at historical development, namely that of looking at the ordinary people, whose identities were obscured by events considered much more significant than the ones that framed their lives. In the author's own words, "famous people step in and out of my stories, but the central characters are people whose names will have been remembered only within their families" [Preface]. Based on historical records uncovered in the Library & Archives of the Hoover Institution, Harrison's stories range from tragic to amusing and reflect the most ludicrous aspects of Soviet life from the 1930s to the 1970s, while also highlighting the changes that the Soviet state and its secret police underwent during this period of time.

Each of the book's seven chapters chronicles a gripping human story, told through interrogation summaries, witness statements, and reported or intercepted private conversations. Harrison provides seven principles on which the Soviet police state operated: *your enemy is hiding* (first principle), *start from the usual suspect* (second principle), *study the young* (third principle), *stop the laughing* (fourth principle), *rebellion spreads like wildfire* (fifth principle), *stamp out every spark* (sixth principle), *order is created by appearance* (seventh principle). We find them at work in every story as they are the ones that never change; if the Soviet police state transformed from one decade to the next, its preventive mission remained the same. While, at first sight, the stories do not appear to be connected, by the end of the book, the reader will realize that they are, in fact, as such. Not only did each of the individuals captured in the stories become the target of the secret police, due to more or less bizarre circumstances, but their entire existence was encompassed within the limits of the aforementioned principles. They had, thus, to learn how to function in a brutal system, by using the very same rules that it imposed on them.

The first chapter of the book, entitled "The Mill", tells the story of Stanislav Bronikovsky, a building engineer, who was tried and sentenced to death on April 24, 1943. Victim and object of a deadly game played by bored officers, Bronikovsky never learnt the truth about the events that led to his death and he

died without knowing what he was guilty of. Stanislav's fate only came to light in 1956, but his exoneration remained in the shadows for the whole duration of the Soviet state. The last chapter, "One Day We Will Live Without Fear," captures the story of Leila, an Israeli citizen who returns to Soviet Lithuania for a family reunion in 1966. The KGB is mobilized and determined to find a conspiracy. Files are opened, telephones tapped, informers called up, and mail intercepted; Leila's brother became the target of the police due to an allegedly tainted past. The KGB soon realized that it was targeting ordinary people, who had nothing to hide. Enormous resources were wasted, in order to cover the harmless visit of a woman to her relatives, but the reader learns something about the purposes of surveillance. After all, the enemy is hiding (first principle), and even the smallest spark that is overlooked can spread like wildfire (sixth principle).

Five other stories are packed in between the ones of Stanislav Bronikovskiy and Leila. Chapter two ("Truth Hurts") tells the story of a woman censor who hastily approves the publication of a "dubious political cartoon," a decision that would have catastrophic consequences for her and others involved. The year was 1937. The third chapter ("Heretics") deals with the relationship between academics and the state, highlighting the changing policies of the Soviet state, but not its underlying principles. Not mentioning Stalin's name amongst the leading scholars in agricultural science could lead to a death sentence or the Gulag in the 1930s, but it concluded with a warning in the late 1940s. However, the preventive mission of the state was still at work—what if the enemy was hiding in the form of an academic? The fourth chapter ("The Mafia") tells the story of Nikolaenko, a persistent old man from Uzbekistan, who writes numerous letters to the authorities in Moscow, in order to complain about the abuses committed at the local collective farm. Framed by the farm and party chairs, and even by the local KGB, the old man is sent to a psychiatric hospital and loses everything. When his letters are uncovered by an investigator from Moscow, however, he becomes a threat for those who did him harm. The fifth chapter ("You Have Been Warned") discusses the "preventive" warning and its efficiency, dwelling on the Kaunas riots of 1972, a moment that marked the failure of the secret police. The young people had to be warned (third principle), because if only one of them had the courage to do or say something unusual, be it even a joke (fourth principle), it could cause a spark (sixth principle), and others could realise that they were not alone. *Profilaktika* thus created the appearance of order in society (seventh principle)—and who could have the courage to speak against the system, when everything seemed to be in order? The sixth chapter ("The Grand Tour") chronicles a group of Soviet tourists who travel to North America in 1970, and Harrison is careful to point out that, for a Soviet citizen, "to travel abroad was a privilege, not a right" [page 163]. Describing the dangers and restrictions of a trip abroad, the chapter also highlights the extended net of the KGB, which far exceeded the boundaries of USSR.

One of the main strengths of the book is that Harrison manages to reveal important aspects of everyday life in Soviet Union by putting every story into its historical context. By focusing on ordinary people, Harrison's book resembles Sheila Fitzpatrick's "Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times. Soviet Russia in the 1930s." Similarly to Fitzpatrick, Harrison also talks about the extraordinary character of the everydayness, about the survival strategies of those for whom living a normal life was a luxury they could not afford. As Mark Harrison states in the preface to the book, one of the targets of his stories is "the human tendency to see the past as more comfortable than the present." His book becomes an argument against nostalgia, against forgetting, resembling, in this regard, Igor Cașu's book "Class Enemy. Political Repressions, Violence and Resistance in Moldavian (A)SSR, 1924–1956." Both Harrison and Cașu follow the fate of various characters, in an attempt to prevent the forgetting of a not too distant past, when one had "to beware of friends and even loved ones; to live in fear of the betrayal of innermost thoughts; to dread the knock on the door, the car that pulls up beside us, or the polite invitation to visit with the security police" [page 226].

Harrison concludes with a short afterword, in which he talks about the facts and fantasies in Soviet records. While he questions the reliability of a KGB document, and introduces the concept of "truthiness," defined as the "quality of something that is felt to be true" [page 229], Harrison only briefly touches upon the issue of secret police archives and their fictions, including those of the documents he worked with. While for academics the fact that the secret police fabricated information and that its archives are unreliable without being placed in the proper context is a well-known aspect, for general readers, whom the book also addresses, this might not be too obvious and represents information that the author could have insisted on in his conclusions.

"One Day We Will Leave Without Fear: Everyday Lives Under the Soviet Police State" is a riveting book, deeply researched and intelligently written. Harrison's book brings to light the changing and sometimes conflicting ways in which the Soviet state and its secret police functioned. Focusing on the ordinary, "little" people, as opposed to the "great" ones, Mark Harrison tells their sometimes amusing, other times tragic stories, as a reminder that their lives were quite miserable. In an effort to correct the human tendency of glamorising the past, he draws attention to the fact that there was a time when normality was a luxury, and what can nowadays be considered a right was once a privilege. For this reason, the book appeals to readers across a wide spectrum, as every story, as well as Harrison's thoughtful manner of exposition, can be appreciated by anyone.

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