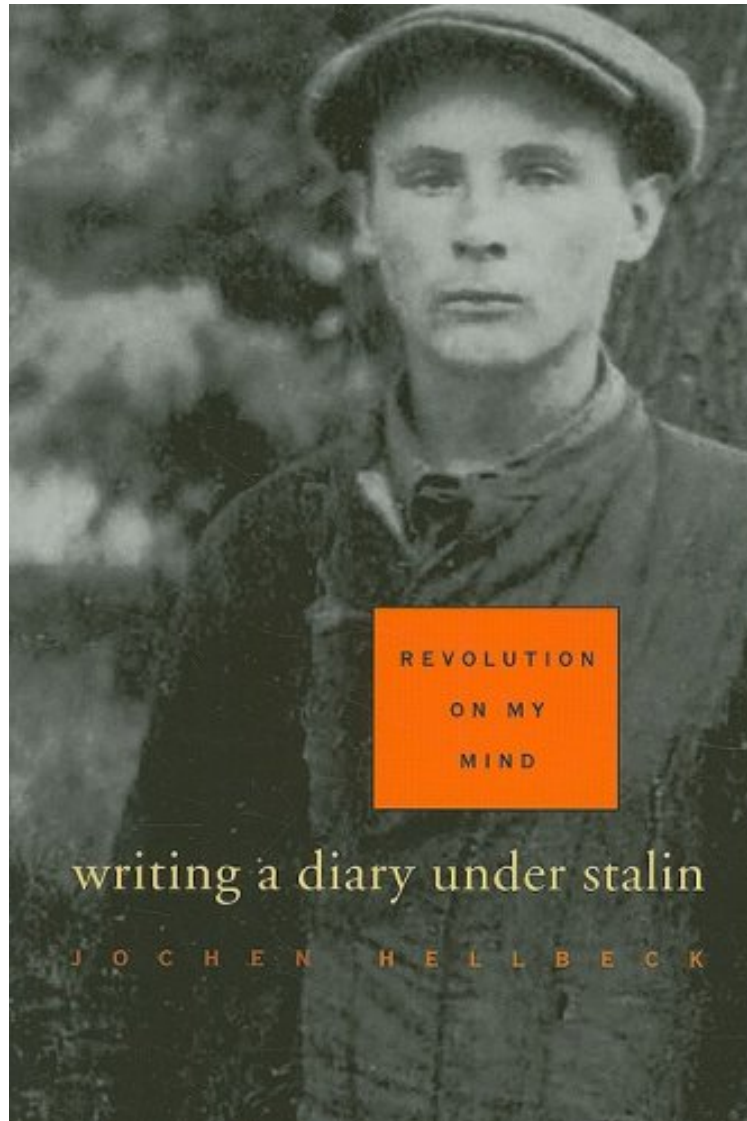


[Library ebook] Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin

Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin

Jochen Hellbeck

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Jochen Hellbeck : Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy Peter EldridgeInteresting1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. excellent book!By AnnaVMThis is a great book! It uses diaries written under Stalin to examine the formation of the "self" in the early 30s. It is truly an eye-opening work on how people living under that regime saw themselves and their role in building their new society. The "self-work" these people detail in their diaries

lets us see the active role regular citizens played in the formation of the "new Soviet man". A groundbreaking work and really fascinating read. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Stunning, Revolutionary By Dsquared10 Read this in college, and it is absolutely brilliant. A great in-depth look into the everyday life of those living under Stalin.

Revolution on My Mind is a stunning revelation of the inner world of Stalin's Russia. We see into the minds and hearts of Soviet citizens who recorded their lives during an extraordinary period of revolutionary fervor and state terror. Writing a diary, like other creative expression, seems nearly impossible amid the fear and distrust of totalitarian rule; but as Jochen Hellbeck shows, diary-keeping was widespread, as individuals struggled to adjust to Stalin's regime. Rather than protect themselves against totalitarianism, many men and women bent their will to its demands, by striving to merge their individual identities with the collective and by battling vestiges of the old self within. We see how Stalin's subjects, from artists to intellectuals and from students to housewives, absorbed directives while endeavoring to fulfill the mandate of the Soviet revolution--re-creation of the self as a builder of the socialist society. Thanks to a newly discovered trove of diaries, we are brought face to face with individual life stories--gripping and unforgettably poignant. The diarists' efforts defy our liberal imaginations and our ideals of autonomy and private fulfillment. These Soviet citizens dreamed differently. They coveted a morally and aesthetically superior form of life, and were eager to inscribe themselves into the unfolding revolution. Revolution on My Mind is a brilliant exploration of the forging of the revolutionary self, a study without precedent that speaks to the evolution of the individual in mass movements of our own time.

From Publishers Weekly This scholarly examination of diary keeping in the Soviet Union challenges our understanding of the impact of totalitarianism on individuals in the Stalinist era. Hellbeck, an assistant professor of history at Rutgers, examines how the Soviet Union viewed and, at times, nurtured personal literature such as diaries as a way of creating the Soviet ideal of a New Man and New Woman—and how individuals used diaries as a mechanism for reinventing themselves according to these ideals. In the second half of the book, Hellbeck focuses on four diaries he has uncovered and their authors, including a member of the Soviet intellectual class who was killed by a regime she supported, and a member of the "wealthy peasantry" who distanced himself from his exiled father as part of his self-redefinition. What comes through is how individuals internalized the Soviet thinking that placed class and the collective above all else and tried to change their personalities to fit these notions. At times Hellbeck relies on academic jargon. But by focusing on how ordinary citizens struggled with totalitarianism, his work is a welcome step in creating a deeper understanding of Soviet history. 21 bw photos. (May) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Historian Hellbeck found a cache of diaries in newly opened Soviet archives that overturns easy assumptions about the inner lives of people subjected to totalitarian rule. The disciplined diarists Hellbeck profiles—including Julia Piatnitskaya, who struggled to maintain faith in the system as she lost her husband and son to Stalin's purges; Zinaida Denisevskaya, who began keeping a diary at age 13 in 1900 and continued until 1933, when severe deprivations led to her early death; the pragmatic survivalist Stepan Podlubny; and the wily playwright Alexander Afinogenov—each strove to be part of the collective, and part of history. Their eloquent, self-critical, and affecting diaries reveal how seriously they took the government's exhortations not merely to conform outwardly to Communist precepts but also to fully internalize them. Each believed that self-improvement, sacrifice, reeducation, and endurance were intrinsic to the success of the revolution. Loneliness, fear, and an ever-widening divide between ideology and reality made life increasingly harrowing for these determined, sometimes ruthless citizens, and their trust and conviction make Stalin's terror all the more heinous. Donna Seaman Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved One of the most important books ever written in the field of Soviet Studies, Revolution on My Mind is a brilliantly conceived, poignant work about the experience of trying to live as a self-conscious Soviet citizen. Beautifully written and analytically compelling, this is a book for anyone who has thought deeply or cared passionately, one way or the other, about Communism and its impact on individual lives. (Eric Naiman, University of California at Berkeley) This masterful book looks at the Russian Revolution from an entirely new perspective. It explores how individuals refashioned their personal selves to bring their lives into alignment with the revolution. Far from being oppressed by history, Soviet diarists embraced it; they became the engineers of their own souls. Hellbeck has provocatively rewritten the emotional history of twentieth-century Communism. (Peter Fritzsche, author of *Stranded in the Present: Modern Time and the Melancholy of History*) Hellbeck's work is pathbreaking in the challenges it poses to our past thinking about Soviet history. Using previously unknown diaries of the Stalin era, he explores the fascinating worlds of Soviet subjectivity. This book is hard to put down! (Mark L. von Hagen, Columbia University) Historian Hellbeck found a cache of diaries in newly opened Soviet archives that overturns easy assumptions about the inner lives of people subjected to totalitarian rule... Their eloquent, self-critical, and affecting diaries reveal how seriously they took the government's exhortations not merely to conform outwardly to communist precepts but also to fully internalize them. Each believed that self-improvement, sacrifice, reeducation, and endurance were intrinsic to the success of the revolution. Loneliness, fear, and an ever-widening divide between

ideology and reality made life increasingly harrowing for these determined, sometimes ruthless citizens, and their trust and conviction make Stalin's terror all the more heinous. (Donna Seaman Booklist 2006-05-01) Hellbeck draws on a cache of Stalin-era diaries found through friends in Russia to paint a dark portrait of how ordinary people bent their individual wills to what they believed was a greater good. (A. Craig Copetas Bloomberg News 2006-05-22) How do tyrants succeed? Their monstrous ability to secure absolute power over a nation can't be based solely on fear. Ambition and some sort of twisted idealism or romanticism must also be involved. Historian Jochen Hellbeck found striking explanations for this mystery in an astonishing cache of Soviet diaries that radically challenge our notions about totalitarian rule... The humanity expressed in these diaries makes the crimes of Stalin and his followers all the more heinous... [Hellbeck's] thinking is cogent, his command of Russian history fluent, his deductions galvanizing, and his fascination with and empathy for the people he portrays compelling and thought-provoking. (Donna Seaman Speakeasy 2006-06-01) [A] fascinating book... Hellbeck's analysis of his diarists is first-rate, and his enthusiasm for his subject is infectious... This book helps us to understand a particular Soviet mindset of the 1930s... It suggests an intriguing way of understanding the over-the-top enthusiasm that the Soviet regime inspired among some of its citizens in the 1930s. (Sheila Fitzpatrick The Nation 2006-08-28) The principal service of Jochen Hellbeck's *Revolution on My Mind* is that it transports us back to that earlier, impassioned revolutionary Soviet Union, a time of epic hope and energy, when the transformation of man and history seemed imminent... Insightful and intelligent... He delivers much that is fresh and useful... This book takes the reader back to those nearly unimaginable times. (Richard Lourie Moscow Times 2006-08-25) Hellbeck's attempt to situate the Bolshevik project of self-transformation within this wider cultural and historical perspective (a dimension too often lacking in Western studies of the Soviet era) is one of the outstanding virtues of his impressive book. Never overburdening his narrative with theorizing, his sensitive and sympathetic approach allows his subjects to speak for themselves, expressing sometimes a repulsive indifference to the fate of Stalin's victims, sometimes a tragic struggle to rationalize the destruction of friends or family accused of ludicrous crimes... His study adds an important dimension to the work done by other scholars to throw light on the psychological reasons behind the collusion of moral idealists in the extreme violence of the Stalin years... One can hope that Hellbeck will follow the present fine study with a sequel. (Aileen Kelly New York of Books 2007-04-26) The study consists of texts and analysis of diaries written during Stalin's rule in the time of collectivization, purges, and labor camps. The diaries show, if taken at face value, a disturbing compulsion to conform; they show that the Cheka's coercive methods had worked on large numbers of Soviet citizens. (A. Ezergailis Choice 2007-06-01) Jochen Hellbeck has opened up a new way into the private inner world of the Stalin years, a world to which former schools of Soviet history didn't pay much attention... There can't now be a cultural history of the 20th century that ignores the experience of forging the self under the conditions of Communist--and especially Stalinist--rule. (Karl Schlögel London of Books 2007-08-16) Hellbeck's work is important because it elucidates the joyful, exuberant, often irrational and self-destructing desires to lose oneself in the Soviet project. (Kate Brown Times Literary Supplement 2008-02-08) Hellbeck's book makes an important contribution to methodological reflection concerning the historiographical use of autobiography as a source... *Revolution on My Mind* will figure, rapidly and incontestably, among the standard references in the historiography of the Russian world. (Brigitte Studer Journal of Modern History)