

*Dictatorship and Daily Life in 20th Century Europe*. Edited by Lisa Pine. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023. Pp. xv + 261.

*Dictatorship and Daily Life* provides short introductions to living under European dictators of both right and left, before and after World War II. The editor, Lisa Pine, is an author and social historian of Nazi Germany. The book was inspired, she writes, by hearing of a first-year history student who, when asked to compare fascism, national socialism, and communism, did not know what to read.

Eight chapters cover Fascist Italy (by Kate Ferris), National Socialist Germany (Lisa Pine), Falangist Spain (Antonio Cazorla-Sánchez), Portugal under Salazar's New State (António Costa Pinto and Duncan Simpson), prewar Latvia under Ulmanis (Jordan T. Kuck), Stalin's Soviet Union (Kees Boterbloem), and postwar communist Romania (Dennis Deletant) and East Germany (Stefan Wolle). As editor, Lisa Pine introduces and concludes the collection.

Each chapter combines elements of narrative history and anthropological description. The proportions vary, so the chapters on Italy, National Socialist Germany, and postwar East Germany have more anthropology while other chapters have more history. An outlier is the chapter on Latvia which, having introduced the reader to the concept of "transnational totalitarianism," describes the integration of Latvian society through state-sponsored folk festivals.

Some themes emerge. The dictators created outgroups and ingroups based on a variable mix of ethnicity, class, and confession. While their regimes sought to incorporate ingroups by co-option, instruction, censorship, and surveillance, outgroups suffered exclusion and arbitrary violence. Ingroup membership carried no guarantee of privileges: anyone who was in for lunch could find themselves out in the cold by dinnertime.

A common ambition of the dictators was to penetrate the private corners of the individual's existence, whether at the workbench or in the bar, and especially in the home. Children were a particular target. The regime could most easily influence young minds at school, but it was in the family that children learned their parents' habits and absorbed their values, so again making inroads into home life became a priority. Neighbourhood surveillance by busybodies and snitches offered the regime a chance to learn about its subjects' true loyalties, but the awareness of surveillance

also caused an equal and opposite reaction: the wary citizens learned to hide their inner thoughts outside the family circle and taught their children to do the same. The authoritarian state's successes and failures in trying to invade the private sphere are, to me, the most interesting aspect of the book.

With few exceptions, those that clung to dissenting beliefs retreated from the public sphere. The chapters differ widely in the terms used to capture this aspect of life under authoritarian rule. In Italy, the relationship between the state and private choices is described as one of "mediation" rather than consent versus dissent: the same person often complied pragmatically with regime policies in one dimension while resisting the pressure in another (pp. 38-39). In Germany, consent to Nazi rule arose from incorporation mixed with fear: for most, opposition took the form of "grumbling and grouching" and passive resistance (pp. 52-57). Portugal's urban society was characterized by widespread "depoliticization": many people "normalized" their lives under dictatorship, even normalizing the repressive functions of the political police (pp. 111-12). Soviet people "learned to calibrate their behaviour to the demands of the dictatorship. The limits of the uniformity imposed from above were continually probed from below" (p. 160). In Romania, the Securitate could "count upon passivity from the population" (p. 185). East Germans "were provided with everything as long as they were obedient. The rest was achieved by removal of their freedom" (p. 235). Despite this, every dictatorship somehow came to an end.

These are issues that the first-year student will find interesting and thought-provoking. Perhaps the chapter on Latvia will prove less usable, given its narrow scope.

Sometimes I hoped for more discussion of evidence. If the book aims to help history students, then it is not only a matter of what we think we know. There is also how we know it and how reliably, given how hard the dictators worked to shape the public records left to us. These questions apply to qualitative and quantitative evidence alike. The book pays little attention to quantitative evidence: in contrast to many photographs, there is just one statistical table buried in an endnote. Lack of attention to evidence is notable in the chapter on Spain, where many claims, some specific and others sweeping, are supported by blanket reference to entire books and articles.

*Dictatorship and Daily Life* makes a substantial contribution to the study of life under twentieth century authoritarianism. Students will find it an interesting and enjoyable read. Its wide scope compensates for its limitations, which can easily be made up in class discussion or further reading.

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