

Tatiana Linkhoeva, *Revolution Goes East: Imperial Japan and Soviet Communism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020), 281 pp.

This excellent first monograph by Tatiana Linkhoeva is mainly a history of Japan, but in documenting Japan's many-sided reactions to the Russian Revolution and the early years of Bolshevik power, Linkhoeva has also made a substantial contribution to the history of Russian/Soviet-Japanese relations, to the history of international Communism in East Asia and to the global history of political ideologies. Although the first chapter goes back to the bakufu and the most far-reaching conclusion is about the 1930s, the focus of this book is on the period 1918–1924. During these years, Osugi Sakae, Sakai Toshihiko, Takabatake Motoyuki and Yamakawa Hitoshi, briefly settled together under the big tent of the Socialist League, while charting shifting and divergent ideological reactions to the Russian revolution as it also evolved into Soviet power.

Quintessentially Taisho, the arrival of party cabinets with Hara Takashi, a commoner, at the helm, the brash self-confidence and financial capacity of new-found wealth, the raw violence of the 1918 Rice Riots and the many-sided challenge of the Russian Revolution produced a rich reconsideration of political options in an atmosphere of "extreme fluidity among groups with different political and ideological leanings" (p. 197). For a brief moment, Army officers were willing to hear what was good about Leninism, while some on the Left parted ways with the Soviet Union and the Comintern, but not necessarily with Marx and Bakunin. Intellectual intercourse cross-fertilized Japanese anarchism, socialism, fascism and pan-Asianism. But the Great Kanto Earthquake, accompanied by racial and political violence, the promulgation of the Peace Preservation Law and the coming to power of military men signaled an end to Taisho democracy and Taisho intellectual ferment.

The first half of the book presents the Russia/Soviet views of Japanese political, military and diplomatic leaders, along with liberal opinion makers, Pan-Asianists and geopoliticians, but the second half, Chapters 5 to 8 are the core of the book, telling the story of anarchist, socialist and national socialist reactions to the developing image and actions of the Soviet state and its Doppelgänger, the Comintern. Several important portraits of key Japanese political thinkers and leaders for each current make this almost a group biography. Linkhoeva argues that the divided Left was unable to stop the rise of the repressive state and that the divergent analyses of Red Russia carved deep divisions. This is an important thesis, logically reasonable, but the material in this book only touches on the late 1920s and hardly addresses the 1930s, so this longer term argument remains to be fully demonstrated, maybe in a next volume. What is clearly proven is that the iron fist of the state shattered the Left in successive shock actions (1911, 1923, 1928), leaving the survivors to limp off in various ideological directions.

Wada Haruki's volumes of documents on Japan and the Comintern are central to Chapter 6, showing both the shifting priorities in Moscow, and the importance of various branch offices in Irkutsk, Vladivostok, and Shanghai in communicating with Japan. The destruction of the Left in the late 1920s meant that little documentation remained in Japan, but now it has been supplemented with materials long hidden in the Comintern section of RGASPI, the former Institute of Marxism-Leninism. The seventeen documents that Linkhoeva's study draws from Wada's collection are historically important, such as the first manifesto and program from the Japanese Communist Party's founding as an illegal branch of the Comintern in 1922.

As Soviet documents (mainly), they also give us an inside view into the shifts in Soviet and Comintern policy, as every titan among the Russian revolutionaries met with Japanese representatives and considered the Japanese case. Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev, Stalin and Kollontai all pondered how to classify this Asian nation whose economy had leapfrogged Russia's making it more like Germany than China, when studied with Marxist categories. Unlike every other country in Asia, Japan was neither colony, nor semi-colony, but an imperial aggressor. In 1918 seventy thousand Japanese troops entered Siberia. All three Northeast Asian CPs were founded to pressure their withdrawal in 1922. But by 1923, Moscow's attention had switched to the revolutionary potential of Japan's gigantic neighbor, China. From this moment on, for Soviet leaders, "revolution going east" became more about China than Japan, The Japanese Left, however, was loathe to play second-fiddle to semi-colonial China or backward Russia and therefore refused the role that Moscow had allotted.

Linkhoeva details this and more in a fascinating book that is valuable not only for Japanologists, but those studying Slavic Eurasia as well. At its strongest in its analysis of the Left, the early chapters left this reader with some reservations regarding portrayals of the ruling classes. For example, how widespread was the "indifference" (p. 44) to the execution of the Russian monarch in military, diplomatic and court circles? After all, Foreign Minister Motono Ichiro identified with the fate of St. Petersburg high society and pushed for an intervention (p. 50), while General Nakajima Masatake who had served with the Russian military in World War I was sent by the General Staff to Harbin in spring 1918 to pick a Japanese client to support in Siberia and only considered monarchists. As for different generational currents in the military, the recent work of Tomita Takeshi comparing the views and backgrounds of Tanaka Giichi and Araki Sadao would add complexity and nuance, making military thinking less of a monolith. Additionally, the book leaves an impression that "Japan" supported Kolchak, although the Army didn't. Kolchak's inability to "mobilize grassroots support" (p. 60) was important, but so was the non-participation of tens of thousands of Japanese troops, already in Siberia, but not available for Kolchak's fight. This was the only fighting force nearby that could have made a difference, but it didn't.

None of these reservations is meant to take away from this exciting book to be recommended not only to specialists, but to general readers and undergraduates as well.

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