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konnte sie überzeugend demonstrieren durch Zeugenaussagen von Opfern und Tätern, unter ihnen General von Paulus und einem Überlebenden des Ghettos von Wilna und nicht zuletzt durch Filmaufnahmen von Stätten des Massenmords – nachträglich zusammengefasst im Film *Sud narodov* (Das Gericht der Völker) von Roman Karmen (Valérie Pozner et al.: *Filmer la guerre 1941–1946. Les Soviétiques face à la Shoah*, Paris 2015).

Den Sieg verlor die sowjetische Seite, wie bekannt, dadurch, dass sie im Vertrauen auf sowjetische Verfahren glaubte, die Massenmorde an polnischen Offizieren in Katyn der Wehrmacht oder SS zuschieben zu können. Die westlichen Partner hatten diesen Fall nur widerwillig in die Anklage aufgenommen. Zudem desavouierten die von den Verteidigern der Anklage ins Spiel gebrachten Zusatzabkommen zum Hitler-Stalin-Pakt die Glaubwürdigkeit des Vorwurfes des „Verbrechens gegen den Frieden“ an die deutsche Adresse. Beide Verfehlungen wurden bald zu einem wichtigen Gegenstand gegenseitiger Vorwürfe zwischen Ost und West: von westlicher Seite der Massenmord in Katyn, die Zusatzabkommen des Hitler-Stalin-Pakts und die auch wirtschaftliche Kollaboration der Sowjetunion mit Hitler-Deutschland 1939 bis 1941; von sowjetischer Seite „München“ und die wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit westlicher, vor allem amerikanischer Firmen mit den industriellen Nazi-Deutschlands (Sovinformbjuro: *Fal' sifikatory istorii. Istoričeskaja spravka*. Moskva 1948 / *Falsifiers of history. Historical Survey*. Moscow 1948).

Das Verdienst der Arbeit liegt in der akribischen Rekonstruktion, wie die sowjetische Seite ihr Vorgehen im Prozess organisierte und dabei bis zu einem gewissen Grad auch lernte, sowie in der Einbettung des Prozesses in den sich anbahnenden Kalten Krieg. Das manchmal überschwängliche Lob für die sowjetischen und besonders für Trajnins Initiativen lässt ihre Herkunft aus den Erfahrungen der stalinschen Schauprozesse allerdings etwas unterbelichtet.

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Aaron T. Hale-Dorell

**Corn Crusade. Khrushchev's Farming Revolution in the Post-Stalin Soviet Union**

New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. XII, 328 S., 14 Abb.

ISBN: 978-0-19-064467-3.

When Khrushchev came to power, the Soviet countryside was in a destitute state. Collectivization and the war had taken a harsh toll on the rural population. Poor Soviet diets were even poorer in the villages, farms were ill-equipped to produce enough food for the growing urban population and kolkhoz workers had little reason to put much effort into their farm work as barely any of their produce would end up on their own dinner tables. Khrushchev made food a cornerstone of his tenure. Soon after launching the Virgin Lands Campaign to convert the steppe into grain fields, he started a program aiming to introduce corn on 30 percent of all Soviet cropland. Khrushchev wanted to use

corn as silage. By converting corn into meat and milk, he hoped to improve Soviet diets and rise to the promise of communist abundance.

The first comprehensive study of these efforts, Aaron Hale-Dorrell's *Corn Crusade* demonstrates that Khrushchev's oft-ridiculed corn campaign was part of a larger strategy to raise Soviet living standards through a combination of technology transfer, economic reform, and social mobilization. This thoroughly researched and well-argued book charts how kolkhoz workers, farm managers, and party officials implemented, ignored, or contested Khrushchev's directives, and situates the corn campaign within a transnational history of rural modernization and industrial farming. Combining local, domestic, and global perspectives, *Corn Crusade* offers refreshing conclusions about the Khrushchev years as well as about Soviet agriculture more broadly.

The United States served as a role model for Khrushchev's attempted farming revolution. Despite their anti-capitalist rhetoric, the General Secretary and Soviet experts endorsed the high-yield farming system that they observed during visits to the US. Introduced in their own country, they believed corn farming based on hybrid seeds, artificial fertilizers, and machinery would raise the output of the livestock sector without the social ills associated with industrial farming in the West. Khrushchev heavily emphasized the production of double-cross hybrid seeds (a blow to the teachings of Lysenko), the fabrication of agricultural machinery, and the propagation of corn in the media and through educational campaigns. During his tenure, corn planting increased from 3.5 million to 37 million hectares. It remained a significant feature of Soviet farming even after the corn campaign was abandoned after Khrushchev's fall from power.

Underpinning Khrushchev's corn crusade, the book argues, was the desire to establish a new social contract between the Soviet regime and the people in the countryside. In a bid to replace Stalin's coercive methods, Khrushchev sought to encourage local participation through a combination of material and moral incentives. Often mobilized by the Komsomol, Soviet citizens earned medals, awards, or career opportunities for getting involved in the campaign. Moreover, the farming sector became a recipient of substantial resources and an object of economic reform. Social scientists, party officials, and managers thought that wages might be better motivation for farm workers than abstract labor days. Attempts to introduce cost accounting in collective farms and a planning reform aimed to give farms more autonomy in the way they organized their production. Unrecognized by many, Khrushchev's agricultural policies initiated a gradual departure from Stalin's exploitative approach to the countryside.

Much of what the Soviet leader aspired to did not materialize, however. In many regions, corn harvests were unstable or failed; mechanization of farm work progressed slowly and unevenly; local authorities and farm managers proved unwilling or unable to implement corn farming directives; laboriously produced and distributed hybrid seeds were spoiled or fed to animals; local authorities continued to constrain farms in their decision-making. Moreover, while Khrushchev's policies reimagined farmers as consumers, the material conditions in the countryside only improved very slowly. Where they were introduced, wages were unreliable or low, while dairy and meat products remained a rare sight in rural shops. In the 1960s, life and work on a collective farm still paled in comparison to the conveniences and opportunities of living in cities or pursuing non-agricultural careers.

The fact that the corn campaign left many disappointed, the book argues, resulted from Khrushchev's limited ability to mobilize local leaders in support of a farming system that achieved high,

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though environmentally costly, yields in other parts of the world. That said, although Khrushchev's policies failed to fulfil the promise of abundance, they did enable gradual change in the social status of the rural population, change that would later translate into passports, pensions, and more reliable wage schemes. From this perspective, the corn campaign can be seen not as an experiment of a somewhat eccentric leader, but as a conscious effort to change the development trajectories of the Soviet countryside with recipes borrowed from the other side of the Iron Curtain.

Given the degree to which this campaign permeated Soviet politics, culture, and citizens' lives, it is astonishing that the topic has remained in the shadow of historical scholarship up until now. Addressing this striking gap, Aaron Hale-Dorrell delivers a new interpretation of Khrushchev's agricultural reforms and argues convincingly that the Soviet Union needs to be situated within a global history of industrial farming. Indeed, even though the country followed some specific trajectories of rural development, many farming ideas and practices transcended the political and ideological boundaries of the twentieth century.

*Corn Crusade* largely attributes the political failure of the campaign to the obstacles to its implementation, not to the idea itself. Numerous examples show how lower-ranking bureaucrats and farm managers responded only half-heartedly to the campaign or even resisted it entirely. Yet, while the author concedes that Khrushchev had inflated expectations of the good that corn would do, the book avoids the question of whether there was more than just stubbornness or ignorance behind the reluctance the corn campaign faced at regional and local levels. Particularly where corn had little chance of growing, didn't local leaders have good reasons for inflating their corn statistics, while trying to retain established crop rotations? Do official reports about insufficient or failed local efforts perhaps tell us that the limitations of Khrushchev's "one-size-fits-all" approach to farming were, in fact, obvious to administrators who knew the land and the climate of their region? Focusing on the political economy of corn, the book also says very little about the environmental legacy of the substantial changes in land use brought about by the campaign. How did corn and related farming practices impact on Soviet soils, rivers and lakes, and the living environment? Did corn monocultures evoke any environmentally motivated criticism, if not during Khrushchev's tenure perhaps in later decades? An impressive kaleidoscope of Soviet politics and the rural economy following Stalin's death, *Corn Crusade* is an important book which puts researchers in an excellent position to explore these issues further.

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