

From the *Slavic Review* Editorial Board:

Slavic Review publishes signed letters to the editor by individuals with educational or research merit. Where the letter concerns a publication in *Slavic Review*, the author of the publication will be offered an opportunity to respond. Space limitations dictate that comment regarding a book review should be restricted to one paragraph of no more than 250 words; comment on an article or forum should not exceed 750 to 1,000 words. When we receive many letters on a topic, some letters will be published on the *Slavic Review* web site with opportunities for further discussion. Letters may be submitted by email, but a signed copy on official letterhead or with a complete return address must follow. The editor reserves the right to refuse to print, or to publish with cuts, letters that contain personal abuse or otherwise fail to meet the standards of debate expected in a scholarly journal.

To the Editor:

I thank Charters Wynn for his summary of my book (*Slavic Review*, vol. 65, no. 4), particularly his comments on my attentiveness to fluctuating tensions among workers and his acknowledgement that this makes a “valuable contribution to our understanding of NEP and the transition to Stalinism.” Nevertheless I feel compelled to clarify two aspects of the work.

First, Wynn incorrectly states that the study starts “from 1917.” While I make no claim of producing the only archival study of early Soviet labor history as he suggests, I do regard *Revolution and Counterrevolution* as unique in its attempt to chronicle and analyze factory-floor political activism between the prerevolutionary period and the consolidation of Stalinism.

Second, Wynn alleges that “the book is marred by attacks on fellow historians” and that “throughout the book Murphy attacks unnamed historians for their Cold War scholarship.” Here the reviewer lacks a sense of proportion. All six words from the introduction listed as “attacks” actually reference the “arguments of historians” as Wynn acknowledges. In full context most take issue with identifying Stalinism with socialism, an assertion most Marxists today would also characterize as crude. Reversions to Cold War methodology are footnoted in the introduction and chapter 3 and mentioned again only in the conclusion. I argue that the “central tenets of the two state-sponsored interpretations are still invoked to explain the rise and rule of Stalinism—early Soviet repression and worker identification with Stalinism.” My aim was to provide an alternative to such unsupported interpretations and it appears Wynn agrees with my thesis.

KEVIN MURPHY
University of Massachusetts, Boston

Charters Wynn replies:

Contrary to Kevin Murphy’s first “clarification,” my review explicitly notes that the author examined labor activity “before and during 1917.” Regarding his second point, Murphy’s own language suggests a lack of proportion. Murphy characterizes the arguments of revisionist labor historians as “absurd,” “bizarre,” “indefensible,” “crude,” and as “naively” and “clumsily” constructed, while generalizing about Cold War “historiography” and “mythology” without addressing the arguments of specific authors. I stand by my review and encourage readers to draw their own conclusions.

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