

ness is “good for the Jews” and others in this country. Having read widely in the archives of major American Jewish institutions, he is at his best in showing how Holocaust consciousness evolved over time, shifting from the margins to centrality within both Jewish culture and certain sectors of American culture. As pivotal moments in this development, he correctly identifies the 1961 Adolf Eichmann trial in Israel and the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973. But with his predominantly American focus, Novick cannot explain why Holocaust consciousness developed in other countries as well.

Intent on exposing the Holocaust as a deliberately constructed strategy for shoring up American Jewish identity and mobilizing support for Zionist causes, he largely ignores less instrumental reasons why thoughtful people might feel compelled to take an interest in the Jewish catastrophe under Hitler. Where some might point to historical, religious, moral, or ethical claims on consciousness as legitimate prods to remember the Nazi crimes, Novick tends to see only the work of “Holocaust professionals” and other “promoters of Holocaust consciousness.” That approach, far too cynical and reductive, pervades this book and detracts from its value.

Selling the Holocaust, the work of a young British scholar, is more derivative but also less tendentious. Cole’s comparative approach serves him well as he explains how the Holocaust has been represented in different ways in Europe, Israel, and America. Focusing on three figures (Anne Frank, Adolf Eichmann, and Oskar Schindler) and three places (Auschwitz, Yad Vashem, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.), he demonstrates how little consensus there is about the proper presentation and ultimate meaning of this history. While portraying Jewish victimization at the core of their Holocaust narrative, Israelis tend to stress the heroic dimensions of Jewish resistance to Nazism, for example, whereas memorial institutions in the United States highlight the role of American soldiers in liberating the Nazi camps. But Cole’s title is unfor-

tunate, as is his repeated use of the easily exploitable phrase “the myth of the Holocaust.”

Both authors evince far more interest in the shifting images of the Holocaust than in the traumatic event itself, an interpretive strategy that, while understandable to a point, in the end reduces all history to its representations. It is true that the past cannot be understood apart from the forms that mediate it, but the pain of this particular past cries out for far more attention than it receives in either of these books.

—Alvin H. Rosenfeld

WHO KILLED KIROV?

The Kremlin’s Greatest Mystery.

By Amy Knight. Hill & Wang. 331 pp. \$26

Bolshevik luminary, firebrand, Lenin-grad party boss, Stalin’s close associate—Sergei Kirov was all of these until he was killed by a disgruntled, probably deranged militant on December 1, 1934. Contending that political opponents had orchestrated the murder, Stalin launched the Great Terror, the monstrous, four-year-long purges of party members and the whole of Soviet society. Given his rush to lay blame and the orgy of repression that followed, many have suspected that Stalin—not Grigori Zinoviev, Lev Kamenev, Nikolai Bukharin, or any of the other party leaders—masterminded the most enigmatic crime of the Soviet century, and perhaps the most consequential.

Based on Soviet archival materials and newly published documents, *Who Killed*



Kirov? amasses a vast array of circumstantial evidence to indict Stalin for the murder. Knight, a respected historian of the Soviet secret police and its postcommunist incarnations, provides ample motive. Kirov, she shows, was not the mindless loyalist of earlier portraits. A former journalist for a left-liberal paper in pre-Bolshevik Russia, he was better educated and arguably more complex than the rest of Stalin's camarilla. While toeing the party line, he repeatedly voiced reservations about specific policies, including the campaigns of terror against the Kulaks. "The Boss," as underlings called Stalin, distrusted dissenters, especially those who, like Kirov, were so popular with the party rank and file as to constitute potential challengers to his rule. So Stalin, even as he pretended to love Kirov, plotted against him.

In addition to ridding himself of a potential rival, Stalin was pursuing a second goal. By blaming the murder on former intraparty factionalists, he could justify the total mobilization that he deemed essential for totalitarian socialism to survive. Mass, unpredictable terror was intrinsic to his rule, Knight shows, and his obsession with traitors and capitulators was more than personal paranoia. Kirov's murder became the rationale for completely replacing the party bureaucracy, eliminating anyone who had the vaguest recollection of party history, and promoting sycophants who owed their careers to Stalin. Knight's book is both a lucid analysis of a pivotal event in Soviet history and a bitter reminder of the dark Stalin era.

—Vladimir Tismaneanu

THE OXFORD BOOK OF WORK.

Edited by Keith Thomas. Oxford Univ. Press. 656 pp. \$35

The Oxford Book of Work is splendid but for one great flaw—it's not a book. Certainly it meets the dictionary definition: "a long written or printed work, usu. on sheets of paper fastened or bound together with covers." What's missing is narrative. This is a

volume for dipping into, not for reading straight through. I mention this because I'm a credulous shopper and often deceived.

Thomas, president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, has created an anthology—really, a grab bag—of most anything toothsome ever written about work. With the notable exception of rock 'n' roll lyrics, nary a stone has been left unturned. Economics, philosophy, poetry, fiction, drama—all have been mined, and with happy results.

Take, for instance, this, from a letter written to a friend by Alexis de Tocqueville in 1858: "It has always been because my mind was uncomfortable at home that it sallied abroad to obtain, at any sacrifice, the relief of hard intellectual work. This is the case now. I have no child to enjoy the little noise that my name may make. I do not believe that in such times as these the slightest influence can be obtained by such writings as mine, or even by any writings except by the bad novels, which try to make us still more immoral and ill-conditioned than we are. Yet I rise at five, and sit for six hours before my paper, and often leave it still white. Sometimes I find what I am looking for, but find it painfully and imperfectly; sometimes I am in despair at not finding it at all."

I choose that excerpt not only because I love it, but because it is characteristic. Thomas wields a generous knife, and so even this slightly trimmed sample has Tocqueville on writing, childlessness, the wretched state of publishing, and the absence of Prozac. Unfortunately, this letter appears not in the section on writing but under the heading "Compensations and Rewards," which brings me to my last gripe: a volume so clearly intended as a reference should be more precisely indexed.

As with any collection of maxims, there are contradictions on work and its rewards. From Noel Coward we hear that "work is much more fun than fun," while C. Wright Mills reports: "Each day men sell little



Hammering Man at No. 3302537,
by Jonathan Borofsky