



Recensio

George Basse. Jene Zeit in Charkow 1936—1941 Erne Jugend unter Stahn Verlag Amo Spitz —GmbH. — 1997. — 248 p.

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George Bosse. *Jene Zeit in Charkow 1936—1941 Erne Jugend unter Stahn Verlag Amo Spitz —GmbH. —1997. —248 p.*

The story begins in a classroom of the 82 School in Charkiv in 1936. The young George Bosse is sitting with his classmates under the picture of L. M. Kaganovich writing on Pushkin's Evgenin's *Onegin*, denouncing him as a class enemy. He describes his classmates and friends which he likes to meet for walking together on the Liebknecht street or on the old German cemetery in the north of the city. One friend shows him his pistol another tells him how bored he was when he read parts of «Das Kapital» from Karl Marx a third tells proudly «heroic» stories of his parents from the civil war. All liked to play football and nobody stayed in open conflict with the social and political order of the time.

But they are recognizing changes in the faces of their parents and their parents life. George Bosses grandfather has been a German-Swedish industrialist from the Donets/bassin (Hughesovka-Stalino) who emigrated after 1917 to Berlin. His father is a well educated ingeneur, one of the many foreign specialists working in the twenties in the Soviet Union. His social origin brought him in a precarious situation in the thirties. Bosse shows in his memoirs how the NKWD stretches his arms in the life of the family and the life of his parents friends. This were many people with a foreign or/and capitalistic background. It is the destruction and self-destruction of the local society which follows. Firstly the young George sees people disappearing in his neighborhood then parents of classmates then his own parents. The NKWD brings his father to a prison in the west of Charkiv («cholodnye gory») followed by his mother. The father was sentenced then to ten years forced labor in Siberia and died in 1941, the mother was sent to a labor camp north of the Aral Sea where the young George and his sister could visit her twice. But George Bosse tells not only the brutal story of the stalinism years, gives just another example of an in general already known phenomenon. He rewrites the story of a distinct social milieu. He also mentions his first waltz with Tamara at a dancing evening in the school or his visit of the Charkiv historical museum. This makes the story «true» although we (especially as historians) should be well aware of the fallstricks

of memoirs. The book finishes with the Hitler-Stalin pact the beginning of the German-Soviet war and the German occupation of Charkiv.

Sorrily the book has no introduction. We don't get any information about the author besides those which we got in the book itself. What happened to the author after 1941? In a private correspondence George Bosse let me know that he came in 1941 to his grandparents to Berlin, that he studied medicine later and emigrated to the USA where he still lives now. Notwithstanding die book is interesting (not only for the Charkiv public), highly readily and awakens once again our interest in the question of the youth under Stalin.

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