J. K. Hass

Making Sense of Suffering, Soviet Politics, and the Human Condition

Let me express my sincere gratitude to everyone who participated in these author-meets-critic roundtables, for taking the time to read the book, think about it, and provide insightful and thought-provoking comments and questions. This is a personal and professional pleasure — a sense I did my academic duty. Comments, questions, and critiques tended to focus on the nature of explanation: from the logic of inquiry to specific theoretical claims. With a few exceptions, historiography was secondary, which was unsurprising, as I made a conscious decision to keep historiographical engagement at a low level. (As I noted in an endnote in the book, this is a story about Leningraders' suffering and survival, not about various cliques and clans that academics join.) I think there are historiographical issues at play, and as I have some misgivings about "historiography", I hope to articulate this issue more clearly and completely at a later date[1].

I begin with thanks to **Michael David-Fox** for taking seriously the explanatory dimension, as well as the empirics, of my work. This book could have come out a few years earlier had I not taken seriously how I was trying to explain. Simply slapping Bourdieu generically onto the Blockade would have done harm to the stories and the people who left them. Bourdieu (among others) provided important tools for making sense of what Leningraders did, how they did it, and why they did it, but this required many restless days and nights wondering if fields and *habitus* really mattered. It was my investigation of gender that convinced me that they did and that help generate my explanatory apparatus, which I hope provides some value-added.

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I am grateful that David-Fox finds the need for more on "agency" and "subjectivity" and other analytic categories. The Blockade tested not only the mettle of Soviets and institutions; it tests our ways of thinking about social and historical worlds. I think "agency" is an important but problematic concept. It has two dimensions: the capacity to imagine and the capacity to enact, and these are not always well fleshed out. (I did not flesh them out as much as I should have; Chapter 7, on theodicy, says something about reimagining, but not enough.) We tend to think of agency in tension with "structure" or "institutions", which led to claims that structure (and culture and institutions) "constrain and enable" — which makes intuitive sense but can muddy the waters. Importantly, the Blockade reveals this problematic nature of agency: agency depends on local relations (e. g. to close Others or anchors of valence) and that agency can be *compelled* as well as sought or embraced. Further, David-Fox raises, to my relief, problems of "subjectivity" and "governmentality" and Soviet history; he validates my long-held suspicion that these concepts have not been applied all that well, and much at all, to Soviet history[2]. That the Bolsheviks were trying to shape consciousness through organized routines and propaganda is well-known, but *how* this worked (or did not) requires more scrutiny. Rather than invoke "subjectivity" via techniques of control and influence ("governmentality"), I prefer to use Pierre Bourdieu's framework. "Subjectivity" is too broad and vague and not grounded in cognition. *Habitus*, in contrast, is a powerful heuristic for exploring reproduction *and* innovation, partly because it might have some grounding in cognition[3], and partly because "habit" allows for complexity and variation in cognition and decision-making (although *habitus* certainly requires more fleshing out). "Governmentality" as a particular logic of power holds some promise as pointing to a historically specific set of strategies, but operationalizing governmentality is tricky and there are too few useful templates for applying this concept. (The sequel to *Wartime Suffering and Survival*, tentatively titled *Soviet Power under Siege*, engages governmentality and power under siege.)

David-Fox points out that my use of field is underdeveloped in parts of the book. He finds more useful the different forms of fields — variation in logics and structure of fields of power and fields of intimacy/community and how they interact — but he notes that I jump between a field of power (singular) and fields of power (plural), and that discussions of tragic agency and the like do not mention fields. I admit that I jump between singular and plural, partly for rhetorical reasons, partly because there were moments when Soviet institutions and authority were not coherent and integrated enough to speak of a singular "field of power", whereas this was less the case in other contexts. As I am working through the sequel, I am convinced I should have retained the plural and developed the idea a bit more (but not too much more, as this would have swamped the book). David-Fox also asks why I left out an extended discussion of the state. One answer is that such a discussion and fleshing out of fields would have made the book unwieldy. Instead, I chose to focus on civilians' experiences of survival and how they experienced fields of power. The state as a set of fields is quite relevant, and I am developing that analysis in the sequel. David-Fox is also right when he implies that I should have linked tragic agency and similar experiences to fields, especially local fields of intimacy. The actor

and the field intertwined, and to speak of one we should speak of the other. I feel I did this in Chapter 6, on death and disposal of the dead, but I could have done more. The same is true for interactions between fields: again, this is clearest in Chapter 6 and I hint at interactions elsewhere.

This said, I do not disagree with his critique: there probably was more I could have done, although I admit that my thinking on fields continues to evolve, not only from Bourdieu's insights but also from those of John Martin, whose idea of fields is somewhat different from Bourdieu's[4]. Bourdieu's field framework operates at a *meso* level, between organizations and institutions. This seems too limiting. I posited (covertly) that fields, as organized signals and information between actors that orient their perceptions and practices, exist at *all* social levels. Fields are fractal. This raises issues of how to measure fields at different levels of social organization, and how those fields interact. I tried to do this empirically, in discussions of shadow markets and death (Chapters 2 and 6), but space and time constraints prevented further elaboration. This facet of the story and explanation needs more work; at least this will keep me busy in the future.

David-Fox points out that I do not engage "ideology", which he feels is important for making any sense of Stalinism[5]. This raises thorny issues that still have not been well resolved in this field, and in others. What really is "ideology"? Is this term too broad and covering too much that we need to unpack? Ages ago William Sewell and Theda Skocpol argued about this issue[6]. Sewell took Skocpol to task for underestimating the power of ideology as a cultural force in revolutions, while Skocpol took Sewell to task for conflating too many conceptions as "ideology". Skocpol's response was that ideology is more formal and programmatic, whereas "cultural idioms" are more practical and intertwined in discourses. I agree with Skocpol: "ideology" is too often too much of a catch-all and residual invoked to explain what structures and institutions cannot or to explain what otherwise might seem irrational behavior. So, what do we mean by "ideology" under Stalin? Do we mean the structured content of formal discourses, as in agitprop? Do we mean something more nebulous that permeates public and many private discourses? (But then why not use "norms"?) Do we really mean "belief"? (Then why not use "belief"?) Do we really believe "ideology" is a coherent set of claims with causal force?

Here I am betraying what I learned from Marx, Weber, economists, and others who focus on practices. Words and discourses matter, but they matter as translated into practices. Ideology matters (to the extent we pin down what it is) as it operates through material and institutional configurations that provide opportunities and challenges. Ideology matters to the extent formal programmatic political discourses become touchstones for judgments and actions. But note that this requires more unpacking. There is "ideology" as formal, programmatic political or policy discourse; there is "political culture" as sets of categories, symbols, and idioms with a particular affinity and oriented to particular practices and relations. Then there are various fields with their own internal logics and meanings. Rather than invoke "ideology", I preferred to break things down into the practical and granular[7]. Focusing on everyday survival and civilians' encounters with various institutions and fields, I noticed that "ideology" *per se* mattered less than survival. To the extent interests

and identities were inspired by something beyond the immediate and local, it was such notions as the city and Soviet civilization, with class and gender also important.

This does not mean discursive politics are unimportant; words contribute to deeds. And Bolshevik (or Stalinist) ideology as formal programmatic political discourse was not always coherent, whether over time or at one point in time. Stalin *et al* would never back themselves into a corner by positing well-developed, coherent ideological frameworks. Ideology, like law and institutions, was as much a tool of governance and violence as a foundation for legitimacy and practice. In this sense, ideology as something important for legitimacy or a formula of rule was best left for a study of those bigger issues of institutions and authority — once again, the sequel[8].

Finally, David-Fox suggested one alternative analytic strategy would have been to focus on food and the effect of its deficit on everything else. This would have made for a neater book, I agree, and an earlier draft did something like this. However, as the book evolved, I sensed there were many balls in the air (as David-Fox puts it), and reducing the story to food did an injustice to experiences of Blockade suffering and how to explain them. Lack of food and starvation were incredibly important — but so was its main effect, mass death. The dead were a consequence of the lack of food, but then issues of death and the dead took on their own dynamic that could not be reduced to a story about food. The same was true for gender and class. The lack of food was at the center of these stories, but gender and class also took on their own lives in the Blockade story. Survival entailed not only finding food, but also navigating all these identities, interests, relations, and logics of practice. If anything, there was a web of causal relations shaping practices. This is the logic of a field approach: situating actors in all these relations.

In an extension of our many conversations (at conferences or Legends), **David Brandenberger** raises issues of history and sociology, including the nature of explanation in historical contexts. Relations of history and historical sociology have varied, and Brandenberger rightly notes shortcomings of earlier historical (or historically informed) sociology that sought to place historical events and contexts into preconceived categories. In itself this is no sin, and finding comparable causal processes in different historical contexts points to key regularities in human practices and in how structures matter[9]. However, the key is tracing causal dynamics over time: causation leaves behind new arrangements of structure, culture, institutions, and power that shape what comes next. Historical sociology that focuses on *processes* is on firmer ground. This was not always the case, but historical sociology has evolved since Hobsbawm's rant.

Brandenberger provides an extended discussion of history versus historical sociology (with Hobsbawm's critique as his narrative vehicle) to ask whether a single case can really explain anything, given the lack of overt comparisons that control for variables and causation. To respond, let me turn once again to William Sewell, an historian well versed in the social sciences who ventured into debates about structure, culture (semiotics), reproduction, and change[10]. One of his important insights is that historians and historically minded sociologists can engage in two types of historical analysis: the synchronic and the diachronic. A synchronic analysis takes a point or era and focuses on causal relations and dynamics at that moment. In this

approach, the historical moment might be a case study, or it might draw attention to how universal processes are shaped by relations and meanings of a particular moment. History matters as a matrix of meanings and relations that shape how causal forces unfold. A diachronic study explores how relations unfold over time, requiring at least two points in time[11]. My book is mostly synchronic, focusing on a moment in time and what duress did to people in this context. History here matters as a matrix of meanings, relations, and power in which duress and survival played out.

So, back to Brandenberger's point: One the one hand, I agree that comparisons are vital for fleshing out the significance of causal relations; I am in the comparative (and historical) camp of my field, and comparisons are vital in the social sciences. However, the goal of this book was not to inquire into change versus continuity in a diachronic sense. Rather, the goal was to explore what people do in such moments of duress. Did particulars of the *historical* context matter (meanings and institutions in that place and time), or were more "elemental" social forces at work? Did habit matter (which would point to reproduction and continuity), and if so, what made that possible (as I explore in chapters on gender and class)? While comparisons provide firmer ground for conclusions, the study of a single case can clarify causal relations and suggest hypotheses for comparisons or a diachronic history. This is done often: ethnographic scholarship takes a deep dive into a single case (a single point in social space and time) to work through causal relations by tracing how they emerge and operate, which can illuminate broader social forces[12]. One can also draw on existing scholarship to place the case in a broader context of space and time, to draw out causal processes and their relation to context.

Let's start with gender[13]. Brandenberger asks whether Soviet pre-war gender norms were "traditional" enough to create the breadwinner/breadseeker difference between men and women. I drew on existing scholarship to suggest that this was so. And this should not be so surprising. The Soviet Union was not divorced from Western concepts and practices of gender, even as the Bolsheviks attempted some reforms (and then counter-reforms): those very concepts of gender at the heart of Bolshevik policies and debates were part of broader Western fields of discourses, policies, and networks. Brandenberger also asks about other demographic traits: for example, whether other social relations and cultural categories, such as ethnicity, might have been important but elided. Data for Leningrad suggested that *in this particular case*, class and gender were the most important forms of social identity and position. (Ethnicity does show up in anti-Semitism, but I had too little data to pursue this.) From gender and class I suggested causal relations by which these axes of inequality shaped survival, and how the survival experience shaped these axes of inequality (as social positions, identities, and interest, i. e. field position and *habitus*). As such, I provided hypotheses about inequality and survival that can eventually be tested.

All of which is to say that I agree with Brandenberger: We desperately need comparative studies involving other sites (in the USSR and beyond), carried out in a diachronic manner (tracing change and continuity over time). A case study of one site and one event can explore causal relations, test existing explanations, and provide hypotheses. In fact, I see my book as providing hypotheses, not final explanations. The same is true for his questions about contingencies versus longer-lasting

legacies of war. I focused on responses to duress to find something universal about the human condition and how people act. In this case, the universal and particular were apparent and at work. To get at the question of real change versus contingent but reversible change requires diachronic study — but that meant a much larger book that I hope to pursue in the future.

The ideal would have been a book that was comparative and diachronic — comparative-historical sociology at its best. But this raises the issue of detail: comparative-historical studies can be quite detailed and make for huge books no longer the norm (unfortunately). Comparative-historical work also tends to use secondary sources and work at a higher level of abstraction to cover so much ground — but we then lose granular data at the heart of stories of survival. Ethnographies are more detailed but limited in space and time to accommodate so much detail. And so I made a conscious choice to do historical ethnography, more in the tradition of Charles Tilly's work on focused cases (e. g. the Vendee) than of Barrington Moore's study of dictatorships and democracies. To answer Brandenberger's important questions, we need to start with a single or few cases to scout the land and to generate questions and hypotheses that we can structure later work. And so Brandenberger provides me the opportunity to appeal to collective efforts at data collection and analysis across sites (within the USSR, across countries, even across wars) and across time (which I hope to do in a third book on post-war Leningrad).

Hiding in Brandenberger's comments and my response is an issue I hinted at in the book but never really explored: What is the role of that historical context? Have I uncovered something universal, or something that is a mix of universal human nature and social context? Further, what is the relation between the particular and the universal? Note that for "social context" to be truly historically contingent, we are talking about *culture*, as structure is agnostic to history. The same class or network structures should have the same effects anywhere (*ceteris parabis*) because causal properties arise from structural patternings — distribution and relations of entities — which are not dependent on a moment in time[14].

So how do history and meaning matter in the historically contingent sense? We must be careful with what we mean by "history". Social science has used "path dependency" to operationalize history: Previous decisions and practices become crystalized as structures, knowledge, and practices that persist because actors do not reimagine the world or do not feel they have the capacity to remake practices. "History" matters as sedimentation of various habits, relations, and capital. "Historical context" (context across time) is different configurations of meanings, relations, practices, and power[15]. Placing the Blockade in "historical context" means accounting for existing relations and meanings and tracing causal relations of reproduction and change. This is where newer historical sociology made progress, by viewing causal relations as ongoing and instantaneous. Appreciating history does not mean plugging values into some equation to see the future (as some forms of Marxism and development theory do). Rather, this logic is closer to mathematics and causation in general relativity, where what an entity does (where it moves) depends on trajectory, velocity, and mass of that entity and other nearby entities at that moment. Appreciating history requires that we do ethnography to understand how

various actors, in their various positions vis-à-vis each other, perceive the situation and respond. Doing this through a synchronic study, of a particular point in space and time, cannot provide final answers — but it can get at how history matters by focusing on details of interpretation and response. With those insights and hypotheses, we can then move on to comparative and diachronic scholarship.

This should provide an answer to one of Brandenberger's questions: Was the Blockade too unique to provide insights on the Soviet experience of war, or any experience of war? In the book and previous articles I provided sometimes explicit (if brief) comparisons, but more often I had comparisons in the back of my head (e. g. the Holocaust, the siege of Richmond in the American Civil War, Sarajevo, etc.) to help try to control variables. This is not enough, but it is a beginning. Regarding the issue of duress and survival, the Blockade is only one case, but it can shed insights on that particular issue as one case among many. (Here my implicit comparisons were helpful.) However, regarding the Soviet experience of war and Bolshevism (as institutions and authority) under duress, the jury will have to be out until we make further comparisons. I think I can claim that one case can point to causal dynamics that deserve study. Gender and class might have had somewhat different effects in Tula or Saratov, and shadow markets might have been less developed elsewhere, where duress was relatively less. However, I documented how they worked in *a particular way* in Leningrad. This suggests that if these causal relations were at work in Leningrad, they were also at work in Tula, albeit perhaps with different significance. Other confounding variables were likely at work in Tula and Saratov: degree of duress is one variable that likely affected the significance and effect of gender and class, and by suggesting how they worked in Leningrad, I suggested how they *could* work elsewhere. These are hypotheses in search of testing, and maybe one day we will do collaborative work for that broader comparative study of the USSR at war. If my book nudges us to that project, I will have done my job.

Brandenberger's questions raise one issue that has come up in other discussions of my book (and that tortured me as I was writing it): What was "Stalinism" (or "Stalin") in Leningrad? Was this unique to Leningrad or shared in some way across the USSR? This raises the age-old question of what "Stalinism" is. The term is meaningful, at least rhetorically, as it draws attention to the importance of Stalin as a political actor and symbol at the center of Soviet structures and political practices at this time. Personally and professionally, I prefer "Bolshevism", to suggest continuity in practices and political culture from earlier eras, and to suggest that Stalin as actor and symbol was embedded in something broader and bigger that made this "dual Stalin" significant. (No Bolshevism — no Stalin or Stalinism, in part because the former shaped the latter and because the latter tried to appropriate the former.) In exploring Leningraders' theodicies (explanations of suffering) in Chapter 7[16], I noticed that Stalin and the Communist Party — two important essences of "Bolshevism" — were not readily apparent as causes of suffering or saviors from suffering. Rather, close Others, the Red Army, Leningrad the city as physical space and collective of people, and people who seemed to be suffering authentically were the insiders of the emerging political community. Causes of suffering were the Nazis/Germans/hitlerites, opportunistic others, unfeeling or corrupt officials, and

even some combination of Russian and human nature. Were Leningraders afraid to mention the Party and Stalin? To criticize them was a potentially punishable sin; to compliment them too early in the war might create false hopes or narratives later falsified. On the other hand, if Stalin and the Party mattered, most likely we would see more mention of them outside ritualistic moments (e. g. the lifting of the Blockade in January 1944). This does not mean Stalin and the Party were entirely absent: Stalin's July 1941 speech pops up in diaries, and in January 1944 some Leningraders praised Stalin (and others) for ending the Blockade. (Lenin also shows up occasionally, often in reference to Leningrad's sacred status as "Lenin's city".) Yet for the most part, Stalin is absent in accounts. This led me to propose that Leningraders were outgrowing Bolshevism as they experienced suffering and tried to make sense of it and found more significance in other perceived relations and shared experiences.

Andrew Sloin is a kindred spirit: someone who takes the history and the explanation seriously. Our differences are minor (e. g. an inclination to Marx versus Bourdieu), but on much we agree. Let me engage Sloin on three points: the nature of "class" (Marx versus Bourdieu and the Soviet case), the nature of labor control and its relation to class and capital (property and remuneration), and the nature of money in the Blockade and its position in fields of power.

Beginning with class, I still contend that a Marxian take on class remains problematic in the Soviet context and beyond. They key is property relations. I stick to my point that a Marxian class schema is wound up in the nature of "property" (its existence and ownership). Control of labor is a universal feature of human societies, for better or worse, and part of that nexus of power does run through capital (remuneration). More on this in a moment. On the one hand, in his earlier work Marx did appreciate the centrality of labor control; this relates to the *homo faber* formulation that I feel is a powerful contribution to social science, even if labor is more central that it should be, albeit still significant — we are what we do and produce, although we are also what we consume and what we think. However, labor control relates to power more generally. The organization of society via class is, for Marx, specific to relations of control over the means of production (property): this control (or lack of it) defines one's social position and shapes one's capacity to act[17]. But this is a traditional capitalist class structure (bourgeoisie, proletariat, and secondary classes awaiting absorption into the rest). While Marx strived to remain grounded in empirical reality, his framework was, perhaps, too concrete and did not provide flexibility to deal with variation (as various studies of cross-national inequality, comparing Weber's and Marx's class schemas, have borne out). In other words, Marx was too fixated on European capitalism to provide a framework that was transposable to other contexts[18].

Bourdieu, in contrast, provides tools and a framework to do just this. If we follow Bourdieu's own logic even beyond his own work, we see "class" as emerging from the distribution of people across fields of capital and experiences. The combination of fields, capital, and *habitus* allows for grids that place people relative to each other, and that allows us to see how clusters of people emerge. We sometimes call these clusters "class" or "occupation", while other clusters might correspond to "race" or "ethnicity". This is a good dialectic of deductive and inductive reasoning

that allows Bourdieu to deal with variation. Further, Bourdieu's framework allows us to scale up and down, to appreciate the multiplicity of "classes" — and maybe forces us to give up using current categories (class, race, etc.) for something more generic and flexible that captures variation and contradictions — especially in places such as Leningrad (socialism under duress)[19].

Regarding labor control via capital, I agree with Sloin, although I do not think Marx offers that much more than Bourdieu. If anything, Bourdieu's broader conception of "capital" provides some insights into the nature of power, control, resistance, and autonomy: workers might have too little money to buy enough food at the *rynok* (in cases where the ruble could be accepted for exchange), but they could also use social capital (networks) to obtain additional food. True, I said too little on renumeration and control; Richard Bidlack has gone over that ground, for example showing how workers moved between jobs for better rations[20]. Food and ration cards were an alternative currency or capital workers could obtain in return for labor and loyalty. There is also the issue of resistance to labor control, which was more apparent in Leningrad than elsewhere (yet something more I left for the sequel). Labor control is not what "property" is solely about, historically and institutionally — property is more about control over use of resources (capital), and labor control follows along with these politics. This said, I agree with Sloin that state domination (or attempts at such domination) did contribute to a sense of class identity, position, and solidarity, although I question how thorough such domination was at this time. Here Bourdieu and Marx are on the same page; I suppose I see Bourdieu's framework encapsulating the best of Marx and adding more.

Sloin's comments about the importance of money and wages as part of the system of power allows me to briefly discuss a third point: Blockade "media of exchange". Here something funny was going on that I could not explore satisfactorily in this book (but that gets more attention in the sequel). The ruble loses much of its practical use (value) as a direct medium of exchange, as barter becomes more important and ration cards become ubiquitous and treated as currency in their own right. Yet the ruble remains a *symbolic* anchor, a means to *measure* value to facilitate exchange in kind. For example, values of different items exchanged (e. g. a gold watch for bread) would be valued via rubles so that the amount of bread exchanged for the gold watch would be of similar value. Put differently, the ruble was a rough and common metric for accounting at the moment of exchange. Yet just as the ruble was losing practical value to become more symbolic (albeit temporarily), elites and officials in the state still took the ruble as means of exchange and store of value seriously — too seriously, perhaps. (This was reflected in currency reform after the war.) A fixation on the quantity of money in circulation and on inflation was a holdover from the Civil War and NEP, but in a moment of extreme duress, when prices were controlled (and did not matter much for rationed goods), why worry about the money supply? Money supply, in *nalichnye* and *beznalichnye* forms, would become an important and problematic issue for *late* socialism (repressed inflation and deficits) and *post*-socialism (ruble overhang), but that was far into the future and not inevitable. Why worry now, in the moment of do or die? In the Brezhnev era, price stability came with costs (deficits), but the regime seemed to worry less about money supply. This

persistence of the grip of relatively more orthodox monetary policy — in the context of a war for survival and the socialist experiment — puzzles me. I think too many scholars have taken for granted the nature of the Soviet ruble and the embodiment of value[21]. One possibility is that disciplining money was part of a game of status within the regime (e. g. Gosplan versus ministries) and a means to discipline enterprises and managers, albeit at the cost of potentially hurting production and survival.

As if picking up where Sloin left off, **Paul Christensen** (another kindred spirit) raises general issues of power, not only in Leningrad but also beyond. What can the Blockade story tell us about “power” that we have not noticed before? Paul hits important considerations I did not develop fully; my discussions of power were meant to be suggestions and hypotheses (perhaps provocations) rather than complete claims. Perhaps I can use this opportunity to clarify what I was thinking, where I was headed, and where I still might go.

Early on, Christensen notes the importance relations between food and power — intriguingly, he suggests that all three dimensions or facets of power intersect and crystalize around food — not simply food as a necessary entity for survival, but also food as a bundle of relations that provide it social and political meaning. (I wish I had thought of this idea.) That is, food mediated relations of power (and status) much as it mediated relations of sympathy and antipathy, or cooperation and opportunism. Things (entities) become enmeshed in power relations — not only as resources, but also as symbols and meanings that do… something related to power. But what is this something? Drawing (again) on the logic of Bourdieu and others who ventured into the land of “social constructivism”[22], “things” or entities can be more than resources for relations and practices of power. They can also act as signals or anchors that structure actors into relations of power. The relation of bread to “owners” and “consumers” creates a power dynamic — not only because owners have a resource consumers need, but also because there is this entity of meaning (material *and* symbolic) that brings them together. This is not a new theoretical insight on my part, but I think it brings us back to the logic of a field framework: that ultimately entities and relations are not entirely distinct, and they interpenetrate each other.

This part of the Blockade experience opens the door to further inspection of just what “power” is (as if there has not been enough inquiry over the centuries). In a conversation before the ASEEES roundtable in Chicago, Paul mentioned an important distinction in practices and outcomes of power (in relation to the topic of gender): there is power (capacity to compel), and then there is “the power to empower”. The first is our usual understanding: power is the capacity to get others to do something they otherwise would not do. This is exploitative power. However, we can also think of power involving the capacity to help *others* achieve aims: “the power to empower”. While this kind of relationship can create dependency — if you empower me to achieve me goals, then I am dependent on you for that capacity (and even if you are not exploitative, you are in the *position* to be exploitative should you choose to do so) — it also expands our understanding of power beyond the exploitative, constraining, or generally negative.

Which brings us to Paul's ultimate question: "The balance between structure and agency, in a world of fields of power that pull in different directions simultaneously". I wish I could provide clear and complete answers to this question, but so far I cannot. The easy answer is that structure and agency are two sides to the same coin; just as physicists no longer use "space" and "time" separately but refer to "space-time", maybe structure and agency are really two sides to the same "thing". (Does this mean more jargon? God forbid!) Maybe we can push further: might structure and agency be manifestations or crystallizations of fields? We think of structure as shaping and constraining agency — a power dynamic — but maybe we can reverse the equation and suggest that agency shapes structure (as it does by reproducing structure). Of course, this raises the question of what "structure" is, a topic best left for other books past and future.

And so, Paul hits a nerve (in a friendly way); there are still many questions to formulate clearly, let alone explore and answer, and I have only scratched the surface. In a sense, this is one theme that logically followed "tragic agency" and or "compelled agency" (i. e. when anchors of valence — significant Others, whether living beings or something else material or virtual — compel us to act in ways we otherwise would not). To quote myself (p. 30), "When my son's survival compels me to break a taboo against stealing, is my starving son exerting power over me? I *want* to save him, so that is not classical power. I don't want to break laws or risk jail, which sounds like power. Dire straits compel me to steal food, but do *circumstances* act? Stealing food to save my son is a choice, but so is obeying a soldier with a gun to my head, i. e. not much of a choice". This is not quite "structural power" or power moving through structure without actors' motives or intent[23]. Indirect structural power is *positional*, i. e. the consequences of having a disadvantageous position in a domestic market, but is not immediately relational. The relation of compulsion between actors and anchors is a direct relation, but it is not based on active motives. My son's well-being compels me to act, not my son himself (unless he is being manipulative).

Now we enter troubling territory: power as real but without clear and conscious actors and actions, whether taken to compel others (an act of power) or as an indirect consequence (structural power). Is power *only* a resource that actors consciously use (an agentic understanding), e. g. due to one's position in class or organization relations? Or is power something more, the true basis or fabric of fields of human relations? "Power" in this field logic is akin to gravity: the capacity of some entity to affect the trajectory (practices and goals) of some actor because social relations are warped, like spacetime. (In this case, power is an effect of something else — do anchors hold the key to figuring out what this "something else" is?) Is "power" really the nature of field relations coalescing into relations or feelings of compulsion, much as the field of space-time coalesces into "mass" that then warps spacetime to create an effect that we feel and call "gravity"? That significant Others, anchors of valence, compel us to act sounds like power and feels like power — power measured as the sense that I am compelled to do something that otherwise I might not do. Is there any other way to measure "power" than this sense of compulsion? (The same is true for gravity: we do not measure "gravity", but we measure its effect on an object's movement vis-à-vis other objects, such as stars.) Perhaps we are approaching that

moment when a field logic compels us to rethink what power is and make it less a function of resources and motives, and more a function of fields of meanings and relations[24]. This certainly raises many questions not only about "power" generally and in the abstract, but also for concrete historical moments and topics. Take Stalin's despotism: The continuing question is how he managed to run the Soviet Union with such mastery and might and unleash so much violence without suffering a response. This is more than a question of "ideology" or of problems of coordinating collective action. Something was in the air, and that was "power". The Blockade, once again, as Christensen notes and as I began to argue (but am far from finishing), poses thorny but important questions that demand closer scrutiny and answers.

We in the United States and West Europe can study the Blockade, but we cannot entirely "feel" it or appreciate as much as those who are more embedded in the symbols and even personal relations of the Blockade itself. Position shapes perception, and so with gratitude I turn to my Russian colleagues. Their perspectives are a useful corrective to Western historiographical and other analytic lenses that might stress, say, economic rationality too much over other kinds of rationalities. I learned much from Russian colleagues, even if I did not always agree.

Aleksei Pavlovskii and **Anastasiia Pavlokskaia** provide positive comments, which I appreciate, and they fruitfully raise the issue of "ego documents". I framed my method as "historical ethnography": while I was not present in the Blockade to observe and record, Leningraders were and did, acting as lay ethnographers or anthropologists. They observed and commented, on themselves and on others. This raises a set of questions that I addressed but might not have answered entirely. One question is to what extent we should trust diaries as sources of data. Were Leningraders self-censoring? When were they too skeptical or too trusting of what they observed and heard? There was a rumor mill[25] that was both a means to obtain deficit information *and* a site and practice of autonomy (resisting the hegemonic narrative, whatever that might have been). I have no great answer here except triangulating. If we want to use diaries to get at the internal states of Leningraders, then we are on firmer ground — although even here we should wonder how much Leningraders were letting on. Yet this is the best we can do, and we should extend some initial trust that Leningraders were trying to be honest to themselves and readers; this was not agitprop (except in rare cases).

One issue that sometimes comes up regarding ego documents (and Blockade diaries in particular) is whether such diaries constitute a "genre". Following the logic of Pierre Bourdieu's framework and scholarship, I am skeptical: a "genre" presupposes a set of rules about writing style involved and about the position of such work vis-à-vis other styles (status, difference, inspiration or negation, etc.). Bourdieu was keen to point out that the rise, reproduction, rules, and status of genres were inherently political in their own way, and as such open to competition over setting the status rules of the genre[26]. That is, genres are embedded in fields of artistic production and consumption, and as such, actors are aware (to varying degrees) that they are producing within a field. To talk about Leningrad diaries as a "genre", I think, creates a particular artistic field where one did not exist, because Leningraders were not aware they were writing for a particular community. To call diaries a genre stretches

the concept too far. *We* can think of Blockade diaries as a "genre" of sorts, but this risks defining into existence field pressures shaping how Leningraders constructed those works. (Pavlovskii and Pavlovskaia do not claim that there was a "Blockade diary genre", but I use their comments as a springboard for this minor point.) To be fair, shared experience produced similarities across diaries, and shared suffering provided similar incentives or compulsions to keep diaries. We can use those similarities and differences, map them on to different social (and other) positions, and get a sense of fields of experience, compulsion, opportunities, and action — the kind of project Bourdieu spent decades championing. Perhaps rather than focus on a "genre", we should use content analysis to explore social positions further, along with effects on *habitus* and practice.

Finally, engaging **Nikita Lomagin** on the Blockade is a privilege. First, Nikita brought me into studying the Blockade when, in summer 1999, he suggested we join forces to explore organizational politics under duress. Second, I have benefited from Nikita's knowledge of the Blockade, as well as his friendship and support. We do not always agree on how to explain facets of the Blockade experience, but if we agreed on everything, we would not learn from each other. I am also honored that he, like Pavlovskii and Pavlovskaia, endorses a translation.

I raised many questions in the book, as Lomagin notes. I did not answer all of them perfectly or completely; I am not sure we will ever have enough data to answer all questions of opportunism inside families, for example, or what drove people to cannibalism. Inequality is one issue that deserved far more systematic research. The role of gender and class struck me with much force after two summers of working in the archives, and I remain astounded that much more had not yet been written about them — not just empirical accounts, but real analyses that take explanation seriously. As Lomagin notes, this is probably because historians have studied the Blockade closely and have provided great insights, but sociologists (and social scientists) have not given the Blockade the same degree of scrutiny but with a different prism and a different set of tools. Inequality and explanation are central in our tool kit, even part of our calling as social scientists — they are the first things we often look for in any story. Additionally, my focus on the shadow economy and institutions stems not only from attention to inequality and power, but also from personal and professional interests in economic sociology; such topics as the *rynok* are close to my heart, because they get to issues of power, resistance, agency, and economic practices. Shadow exchange was important not only to (unequal) survival, but also to the efficacy of authority and institutions, an important topic that deserves (and is receiving) more scrutiny. In general, gender, class, and shadow practices have received attention and deserve more — not only empirically, but also theoretically. Area scholars, overwhelmingly in the humanities, have provided much useful empirical material; social scientists need to bring their tools of the trade (methods and theory) to the table. Unfortunately, area expertise has always been on thin ice (less so in anthropology); being a generalist and comparativist does not mean *not* taking a deep dive into cases (again, as anthropologists do).

Lomagin notes I engage some scholars overtly and others covertly, and he noticed something running underneath my monograph: a confrontation not only with

the Soviet past (as well as with broader issues of survival and social order), but also with *my* past. As I noted in a podcast with Sean Guillory[27], one personal dynamic in writing this book was confronting my own tragedy (the untimely death of my first son). Another was confronting those who trained me in graduate school — not a confrontation out of malice and spite, but out of the need to stand face-to-face with those whom I looked up to. My first project on Russian post-socialism was in part facing economic sociology; this book is me facing history, especially Stephen Kotkin, one of my PhD advisors. I was and remain inspired by *Magnetic Mountain*; that I am critical of some facets of his narrative is only because it inspired me to ask hard questions and dig deeper into data. There is a confrontation, of sorts, with his biography of Stalin: an encyclopedic work with problematic explanations. A respectable response to Kotkin requires a separate work; this book was some first steps in moving out of Kotkin's shadow (and out of Stalin's shadow). His Foucauldian claims (even if *Magnetic Mountain* really is more Bourdieusian than Foucauldian) is problematic, as is his reduction of the 1930s to Stalin's will, a return to "great men history". *How* Stalin had so much power, and how much power he really had, remain questions worth pursuing. I believe I began to show in *Wartime Suffering and Survival* that we have placed too much emphasis on Stalin. And perhaps (again, in response to Kotkin) we have placed too much emphasis on this slippery concept of "ideology". As I noted earlier, "ideology" — something Kotkin relies on in *Magnetic Mountain* and his two volumes on Stalin — is far too vague and *post facto* an explanation for anything. How ideology matters, what facets of any ideology matter, and what makes up an ideology in the first place remain open questions, and I wonder if we should not temporarily suspend using that term until we know what we are talking about. Much the same is true for Kotkin's claims about Soviet identities and interests. Soviets (and Leningraders) did have identities, but looking into daily lives under siege, I am convinced that identities and interests were more proximal and local than has been admitted.

After all these comments, questions, and critiques, and after my long-winded response, what lessons can the Blockade provides us — about Russian and Soviet history, about Bolshevism, about war, about survival, about the human condition, about the art of explanation, and so on?

How do we explain the seemingly inexplicable? One risk of studying the Holocaust and other genocides is that explaining might also seem to be condoning. I categorically reject equating explanation with condoning, but this does not mean outsiders will also reject this equivalence. I do not think we scholars are at risk here, but sometimes I worry that other actors might have few or no compunctions. Further, making sense of the senseless — to understand the human condition and improve it — requires staring reality in the face, no matter how dark and depressing that it might be. This means asking hard questions of ourselves, as well as of data.

So how do we explain suffering, horror, and evil? Any rigorous and robust explanation is going to be multidimensional and multilevel. In this book, I focused on civilian experiences and addressed the level of individuals and small groups. Institutions, structures, and fields of power were not absent, but I did not open them to investigation as much as I could. This was partly for reasons of expediency: I needed

to finish this book, and there was a limit to how much I could write (such are the realities of publishing and, more importantly, of how much people are willing to read in one book). That is, I focused on the most fundamental level of social organization, individuals. But individuals interact in structured, constant ways — even under extreme duress, as it turns out. I explained how interactions could persist, but I said little about higher orders and levels of social organization: how authority and institutions as concatenations of interactions survive. This is the next phase in my grand project of making sense of the Blockade, and of the human condition more generally.

Power, culture, practice, structures and relations, capital, habits — all of these factors are important in such an explanation. This seems to violate principles of parsimony, but this might be the cost for gaining greater understanding into human action. Rational choice theory is parsimonious and does offer some insights into Blockade survival — but only some. Parsimony in this case limits how we explain. However, we cannot invoke every possible variable and then just tell stories of how they are at work: this is theoretical cacophony, not value added. Ultimately, explaining the Blockade is a first step towards explaining the human condition and how it experiences and survives duress. Further comparative work is absolutely necessary to figure out which causal relations are important, and how they operate. God willing, I will have the opportunity to conduct such scholarship, or at least to help inspire and organize it for others.

Change and continuity. One defining trait of my scholarship has been to use moments of instability and uncertainty to explore how change and continuity operate. Too often scholars take structures, culture, and institutions for granted — but these are human practices aggregated and that concatenate into something bigger with emergent properties. We need to pay closer attention to individual human practices and to bigger structures with their own properties. I focused on the first and temporarily left aside the second (a core issue for the sequel). Further, any complete discussion of change and continuity has to look beyond the Blockade, to ascertain which new practices persisted, which reverted to a pre-war norm (whether on their own or through compulsion by authorities), and why. And so an account of change and continuity in the Blockade remains incomplete (leaving some of Brandenberger's questions not entirely answered for now).

Yet I think we can see some movement in the Blockade itself. First, the parameters and content of identities and interests seems to have started to shift. I remarked that Leningraders were "outgrowing" Bolshevism; this seemed the case from their theodicies, in which they posited communities of authentic suffering and drew attention to what seemed actors and groups with symbolic significance (e. g. the Red Army and "Soviet civilization" as a set of norms, practices, and loyalties). Another change seemed to be growing acceptance of some kind of market-like relations of autonomous exchange and action. Not all Leningraders appreciated shadow exchange via the *rynok*, but many accepted such practices as facilitating survival. If anything, survival required autonomous innovation from below, even if undesired and compelled — yet this seemed to have left a template of autonomous action in the future. (Note that I use "seems to" — I need to study the post-war era more closely to see whether such Blockade practices gained some acceptance and

legitimacy.) Certainly change was possible, and initial work on the sequel confirms this: not only could civilians innovate, but state officials and elites could also begin to rethink "Bolshevik" institutions and authority. This did not mean liberal democracy and capitalist markets were around the corner; but Bolshevism could have reverted to a more pragmatic form of authoritarianism, a "NEP reboot" (without the formal "NEP" nomenclature) as Nikita Lomagin put it in our conversations. This should speak to historiography: whether Bolshevism could adapt fundamentally remains an unanswered question that Stephen Cohen once raised but that was lost in the various polemics inspired by the Cold War, generational differences among Western scholars, and a general absence of cold-blooded analysis.

Power, governance, and resilience. One consistent theme in my colleagues' comments is the nature of power and governance. In periods of duress and uncertainty, we have the opportunity to explore just how power can work because relations of power are challenged. How does social order persist in such moments as the Blockade? This tragic event did not lead to collapse; here was have an important historical case to help us make sense of resilience. Doing so will require unpacking just what "institutions" are, for example — and this would be beneficial to historians and social scientists alike[28]. Assuming institutions in a moment when they were most at risk should inspire us to explore *how and why* they persisted. And such explorations would compel us to employ, and to scrutinize, the ideas and contributions of Foucault (e. g. subjectivity and governmentality), Bourdieu (e. g. *habitus* and capital and fields), new institutional economics (e. g. institutions shaping monitoring and incentives), and similar frameworks. My bet is that Bourdieu will provide much utility, but also that his framework will require and receive revisions. Further, such efforts would compel us to import theories of power to the Soviet case[29]; a dialectic between theory and empirical reality to improve our understanding of both. Power and governance have long been central issues in studies of the Soviet experience, and for good reasons: the Bolsheviks were acutely aware of and focused on governance, not only to secure their own capacity to rule, but also to create a new kind of civilization.

Arguably, any study of Blockade governance leads us to issues of *resilience*, an important issue not only then, but especially now — when democracy is under assault, when climate change threatens our way of life, and when COVID augers yet more duress from inevitable future pandemics in a globalized world[30]. In this book, I make a few suggestions about the nature of resilience. First, the Blockade reveals that "collapse" is relative. While institutions and authority might decay, there are lower-level forces — local fields and relations to anchors of valence — that provide a foundation for order and some stability. Governments might fall, but local communities can persist, and I believe I have shed some light on how this works. The sequel to *Wartime Suffering and Survival* further explores resilience; I am hesitant to make any grand claims just yet, but one insight is that resilience is facilitated when elites and officials — those actors practicing governance — allow greater devolution and autonomy in *material* fields but hold the line in *symbolic* fields. Put differently, greater autonomy vis-à-vis material exchange and provision creates *stakeholding* among subjects of governance, whereas some limits on symbols of legitimacy and the right to rule provide a sense of order. Further, paradoxically, theft from the

state — supplying shadow exchange in food in the Blockade — helped institutions survive, because shadow actors stealing food *needed the state* as the source of that food and their profits (and as a source of food for redistribution and survival). Parasites need a host, and so shadow entrepreneurs helped maintain the symbolic integrity of the state by using it rather than challenging it[31]. This is only scratching the surface, however: the Blockade as a story of survival against the odds is also a story of resilience against the odds, from which we still have much to learn for our own benefit — and perhaps for our own survival.

Historical context, culture, and causation. I suggested earlier that historical context matters as a contingent matrix of relations and meanings. Moments of uncertainty and duress, such as the Blockade, compel us to question, rather than to assume, the staying power and significance of these matrices. Jack Goldstone once suggested that revolutions are moments when structures and culture (i. e. sedimentation of past practices that we call "history") suddenly matter less, because the unmooring of power that is the hallmark of revolutions allows and even compels greater freedom to innovate and impose[32]; I suggested something similar in my concept of "tragic agency". What historical legacies (relations and meanings) mattered in Leningrad, and elsewhere in the Soviet Union at war, is a question crying out for further study. Related to this is how relations and meanings were reconstructed after the war: How did war really shape Soviet habits, relations, meanings, and power? What legacies of the Blockade and the war had staying power, and which legacies were overcome? Further scholarship — attuned to the empirical world at hand (including its unique qualities) *and* to explanations derived from other cases — will only enhance our understanding of how history matters, here and elsewhere. It might be the case that the Soviet Union was not so unique; it might be the case that the Blockade reveals something fundamental about logics of social practice covered up elsewhere, where institutions and authority are more secure.

The Blockade of Leningrad was a significant historical event, not only in its own right, and not only in the context of Soviet/Russia history. The Blockade is a story of *human* suffering and survival, innovation and resistance. It is *our* story and has lessons for *us*, across space and time. Area scholars in whatever discipline are obliged to learn from scholars of other places and topics so as to gain tools to make sense of what happened in the Blockade; but those other others are obliged to learn about the Blockade to learn not only more empirical data, but also new explanations that will enrich their accounts of human practices and the human condition.

[1] Partly this regards the nature of "explanation", where I find myself more in the camp of qualitatively informed social science (especially comparative, historical, and institutional sociology and political science). Traditions in the social sciences demand transparency regarding what constitutes "causation". I am not convinced enough of "historiography" does this. This does not mean social scientists are sinless: the intellectual history of economics, sociology, and political science is littered with explanations that range from the ludicrous (e.g. structural-functionalism) to the odious (e.g. hard-core rational choice theory).

[2] Many of Foucault's concepts are slippery, in his work and as used by others (e.g. Jochen Hellbeck's work, in my opinion). Especially ironic is that Stephen Kotkin *seemed* to employ a Foucauldian framework in *Magnetic Mountain*, but on closer inspection, his framework is closer to Bourdieu's. "Speaking Bolshevik" is distant from "subjectivity" or "governmentality" or anything Fou-

cauldian: it is really a story of *fields*, how Soviets navigated them, and whether Soviets felt invested in them (related to Bourdieu's concept of *illusio* or having a stake in the game).

[3] *Habitus* might be grounded in mirror neurons. This is one area where sociologists and political scientists (and historians) need to engage cognitive psychologists, and vice versa.

[4] Martin J. *The Explanation of Social Action* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[5] Or making sense of Bolshevism? I return to this issue when engaging Brandenberger's commentary.

[6] For one example of a dispute over "ideology", see: Sewell W. H. Jr. 'Ideologies and Social Revolutions: Reflections on the French Case', *Journal of Modern History*, no. 57, 1985, pp. 57–85; and Skocpol T. 'Cultural Idioms and Political Ideologies in the Revolutionary Reconstruction of State Power: A Rejoinder to Sewell', *Ibid*, pp. 86–96.

[7] As Paul DiMaggio told me when I was a graduate student, at the level of practice, "institutions" melt away, leaving us with "legitimacy". This purposefully cryptic remark stuck with me: to be careful with reifications and to figure out how they work in practice.

[8] Ideology — as programmatic political discourse — figures more prominently in the sequel, as Leningrad's leaders had to adapt for survival. The result was greater pragmatism in practices focused on material practices (e. g. distribution of food) and on purity in constructing collective identities (e. g. agitprop).

[9] For example: Skocpol T. *States and Social Revolutions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Lachmann R. *Capitalists in Spite of Themselves* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). Not all historical sociologists are purely deductive; not all historians are purely inductive.

[10] Sewell W. H. Jr. *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

[11] Charles Tilly's study of the Vendee is synchronic, whereas his study of changes in political contention in Great Britain is diachronic, see: Tilly C.: 1) *The Vendee* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976); 2) *Popular Contention in Great Britain 1758–1834* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

[12] For examples of how this is done via "grounded theory" and the "extended case method", see: Burawoy M. et al. *Ethnography Unbound: Power and Resistance in the Modern Metropolis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). This was why I called my method "historical ethnography".

[13] I hope that my chapter on gender also adds some complexity and multidimensionality to one oft-repeated claim about gender in the Blockade: that emaciation and clothing meant that men and women at times could not tell who was who, implying that a symbolic boundary between "men" and "women" was fading. This is true but only scratched the surface: underneath emaciated bodies, a gendered *habitus* was quite operative.

[14] Structure refers to a *relation* — who or what is connected with whom or what — whereas a *relationship* refers to the meanings and qualities of the relation. "Relation" is a formal structure; "relationship" is the meaning involved. Relations thus are outside history, except in the sense that historical processes create those relations. Relationships are embedded in meaning, and thus are cultural. One might argue that meanings are everywhere and that I am positing an artificial difference, but I think the difference is strong enough and valid enough that we need to use it to explain how structures and meanings matter.

[15] In this sense, interpreting the past — for example, to aid propaganda — is a low-grade form of historical analysis, usually bereft of rigorous theory and method, that suggests an inevitability to the present by suggesting invariant and inexorable causal relations leading to the here and now. "Legitimacy" is really the causal inevitability of the present — or, alternatively, how a society took a wrong turn and needs to get back to the "true" path of "proper" evolution.

[16] The analysis of theodicies, crudely put, goes as follows. One facet of theodicies was assigning blame, and another was locating boundaries, meanings, and members of communities of suffering. Together these contributed to a crude "cosmology" of important entities (institutional, symbolic) that anchored not only one's individual world, but also senses of a broader community. Close Others, the city, and the Red Army were part of the broader "community of authentic suffering" that had some status as real survivors and who had some right to some sort of claims-making and judgment.

Further, what were Leningraders suffering and sacrificing *for*? For close Others, for the city, and for Soviet "civilization".

[17] Contrast this to Max Weber, who claimed that "class" was shared position in the marketplace, i. e. control over different kinds of resources, and over their distribution as well as production. Weber's conception of class influenced Bourdieu's.

[18] One could use a neo-Marxian class analysis, as Barrington Moore did — but Moore's class analysis is ultimately more Weberian than Marxian. See: Moore B. Jr. *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston: Beacon, 1966).

[19] To be honest, I now wonder if we should not abandon "class" (and other categories of inequality) when using Bourdieu — *if* we take seriously the logic that actors' positions cluster around holdings of different kinds of capital. This is, Bourdieu allows us to conceptualize "class" as something arising inductively from data about the distribution of capital. Do we need a new vocabulary? I suspect a study of Soviet inequality, in comparison with other countries (capitalist but also "modern"), could lead us in this direction.

[20] Bidlack R. 'Survival Strategies in Leningrad during the First Year of the Soviet-German War' in *The People's War: Responses to World War II in the Soviet Union*, eds Robert Thurston and Bernd Bonwetsch (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), pp. 84–107.

[21] I drew some attention to this in: Hass J. K. *Rethinking the Post-Soviet Experience. Markets, Moral Economies, and Cultural Contradictions of Post-Socialist Russia* (New York — Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

[22] Especially: Berger P., Luckmann T. *The Social Construction of Reality* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966).

[23] This is the situation where I am compelled to do something because of decisions taken elsewhere by others, which might have nothing to do with power. The classic example is American school textbooks. Textbook companies publish what California or Texas want, because these are big states with many students. School boards and teachers in West Virginia have to use whatever publishers produce for Texas or California, because the latter are big consumers, and producing primarily for them is profitable and cost-effective. Producing something separate for West Virginia is not. West Virginian teachers are compelled to use California's textbooks against their will.

[24] Some might argue that Foucault was taking us in this direction, but I disagree. His concept of "power" seems too much like the debunked notion of an "ether" that transmitted light and gravity and other effects in the cosmos. Foucault's discussion of power is also consistently (perhaps purposefully) vague.

[25] *Пянкевич В. Л.* «Люди жили слухами». Неформальное коммуникативное пространство блокадного Ленинграда (СПб.: Владимир Даль, 2014).

[26] For example: Bourdieu P. *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

[27] Available at: https://srbpodcast.org/2022/05/10/suffering-and-survival-in-leningrad/?fbclid=IwAR3fbZtVvxG-IaYdXUSUkCLHZ6A2CPXOg1N1zqyw-KNwJmz9gFeDKu3t3Bg (accessed: 10.01.2023).

[28] For example, studies of the Soviet economy at war (and afterwards) presume institutions persisted because things did not fall apart. But this leaves *how* institutions and authority survive in an explanatory black box. For two examples among many, see: Barber J., Harrison M. *The Soviet Home Front, 1941–1945: A Social and Economic History of the USSR in World War II* (London: Longman, 1991); Harrison M. *Accounting for War: Soviet Production, Employment, and the Defence Burden, 1940–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Harrison's empirical work is excellent, and I have relied on it to supply some of the background for my work.

[29] I am thinking specifically of Lukes' three-dimensional framework, which oddly has gone missing in studies of Soviet power: Lukes S. *Power: A Radical View* (London: Palgrave, 2005); Gaventa J. *Power and Powerlessness* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982).

[30] For a current overview of issues of resilience, see: *How Worlds Collapse: What History, Systems, and Complexity Can Teach Us About Our Modern World and Fragile Future*, eds Miguel Centeno, Peter W. Callahan, Paul Larcey, and Thayer Patterson (New York: Routledge, 2023).

[31] In the late 1980s, Mikhail Gorbachev responded to shadow markets by allowing more autonomy without regulation and accountability. This led shadow exchange to expand and explode, ultimately bringing down formal economic structures and authority.

[32] Goldstone J. A. *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

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Abstract: Providing the answers to the remarks of the roundtable, author also discusses the nature of power and governance in times of crisis, using the Blockade as an example of resilience in the face of extreme duress. The author suggests that studying how institutions function in moments of crisis can help us better understand how and why they persist. The article calls for the use of frameworks from theorists such as Foucault and Bourdieu to explore these issues. The author also discusses the concept of resilience, suggesting that it is facilitated when elites allow for greater autonomy in material fields while maintaining symbolic limits. The author argues that studying the Blockade can provide important lessons for dealing with crises such as climate change and pandemics. The Blockade of Leningrad was a significant historical event, not only in its own right, and not only in the context of Soviet/Russia history. The Blockade is a story of human suffering and survival, innovation and resistance. It is our story and has lessons for us, across space and time. Area scholars in whatever discipline are obliged to learn from scholars of other places and topics so as to gain tools to make sense of what happened in the Blockade; but those other others are obliged to learn about the Blockade to learn not only more empirical data, but also new explanations that will enrich their accounts of human practices and the human condition.

Keywords: Blockade, World War II, USSR, Leningrad, Stalin.

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