

evidence. No newly-discovered documents prove that Stalin deliberately orchestrated mass death by starvation in the camps, leaving the claim of intentionalism a matter of interpretation. Alexopoulos does not provide a detailed breakdown of the claimed six million deaths, but much of this number is clearly tied to her argument about the late 1940s and early 1950s. Unfortunately, Alexopoulos's conclusions here seem to be based on a misreading of a key statistic. Examining an internal report of inmate data for the second quarter of 1948, she interprets the category "directed to other places of detention" as meaning release from the Gulag, and likely transfer to "special settlements." She thus sees this as a massive "unloading" of hundreds of thousands of inmates on the verge of death, and notes that similar figures show up in reports from the early 1950s (150–51). The category in question, however, simply denoted the number of inmates transferred to other camps or colonies within the Gulag. It was not a release statistic and should not be read as an indication of health.

In the final analysis, it is certainly true that "the Stalinist leadership placed little value on the health of prisoners" (178). Whether or not one accepts Alexopoulos's estimate of deaths, her chronology of suffering, or her claim of high-level intentionalism, she is correct to assert that the Stalinist Gulag was "one of the twentieth century's worst crimes against humanity" (18).

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The Gulag after Stalin: Redefining Punishment in Khrushchev's Soviet Union, 1953–1964. By Jeffrey S. Hardy. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016. viii, 269 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$45.00, hard bound.
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Did Iosif Stalin's death really change anything? Was it possible for Nikita Khrushchev to modify a system so defined by his predecessor? Jeffrey S. Hardy's *The Gulag after Stalin: Redefining Punishment in Khrushchev's Soviet Union, 1953–1964* answers these questions with regard to the institution perhaps most readily associated with Stalin himself and the brutality of his regime, one which most frequently invites hyperbole.

Hardy's even-handed assessment of Soviet penal reform under Khrushchev is built upon a series of core convictions. First, the Gulag was reformable. Second, efforts at reform were made in earnest. Third, those features of the Gulag most resistant to reform were common to other, contemporaneous penal systems, including those in the liberal west. Before we condemn the Khrushchev administration for failing to eradicate all of the Gulag's most unsavory characteristics, therefore, we should ask to what extent this was possible without undermining the Gulag's primary role as a means of incarceration.

In his introduction, Hardy elaborates these convictions and locates Khrushchev's reforms within three larger processes: de-Stalinization, changes in penal policy worldwide, and changes in penal policy specifically in the Soviet Union. The book's first chapter discusses the upended politics of the USSR following Stalin's death, including the changes instigated by Lavrentii Beria before his arrest and Khrushchev's consolidation of power, and the enormous quantitative changes made to the Gulag's population, such as the near fifty percent drop in inmate numbers over the course of ninety days in 1953. Qualitative changes, as regards the treatment of prisoners, their living conditions, and opportunities for rehabilitation and reeducation, receive more attention in the remaining chapters of the book. These were harder for the Soviet state to measure, and so they are for the contemporary historian, but Hardy delimits

and displays his material with precision and clarity. In turn he discusses the changes successfully made to the labor, discipline, and educational activities of the Gulag, the centrality of the Procuracy in overseeing these changes and holding Gulag staff to account, and then the coming counter-reform movement.

Khrushchev and his political allies prioritized rehabilitation and decreasing recidivism. Their interest in these causes appears to have been genuine. Yet they never revoked Stalin's old demand that camps and colonies should become economically self-sufficient or produce a surplus of resources. This enforced a level of fiscal restraint upon the Gulag that hampered its rehabilitative efforts, as did bureaucratic inertia and various vested interests. As conditions became less oppressive, concerns arose that the camps had become holiday resorts rather than places of punishment. By the early 1960s, the population of Soviet penal colonies again began to rise and conditions worsened, but never again would the hardship of the Stalin years be repeated, and the system became "committed to correctionalism" (166).

At multiple points, the considerable depth and breadth of Hardy's research becomes apparent, particularly in discussions of institutional oversight in the context of decentralization and the discontinuation of the Gulag as a single Union-wide organization. Use is made of central archives in Estonia, Lithuania, Russia, and Ukraine, alongside the State Archive of Magadan Province.

Such is the Stalin era's gravitational pull, there have been relatively few comprehensive assessments of penal reform under Khrushchev, and *The Gulag after Stalin* is an important contribution to this endeavor. More intensive engagement with the wider historiography of the Khrushchev era might have exposed some instructive connections and causal links between cultural and administrative changes going on both inside and outside the camps. On the other hand, Hardy's use of scholarship on other, non-Soviet penal systems of the twentieth century (and not simply in the Third Reich, but the USA, and western Europe) is surely one of his most important analytical innovations. It leads *The Gulag after Stalin* to challenge assumptions found elsewhere in the historiography about the singularity of the Gulag and its status as a microcosm of the Soviet experience. Hardy's work is part of an ongoing effort to reassess the Gulag and its role in Soviet history.

As a convincing reappraisal of the Gulag and, by extension, the character of Soviet authoritarianism, this book is valuable for deepening our understanding of the Soviet system, particularly in the Khrushchev era. Given its global context, it should also be of use to scholars interested in modern penal systems and notions of criminality and rehabilitation.

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The War Within: Diaries from the Siege of Leningrad. By Alexis Peri. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2017. xviii, 337 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Maps. \$29.95, hard bound.

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During the 900-day siege of Leningrad, 800,000 civilians died. The vast majority of them starved to death. We are indebted to Alexis Peri for finally putting a human face to numbers and events which have always astonished. *The War Within* courageously deciphers siege-era diaries to explain how hunger reignited Leningraders' critical awareness of their selves and of Soviet life in general—an awareness that remains muted within a Russia distracted by the collectivist myth of the Great Patriotic War.