

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.

Based on 125 unpublished and twenty-five published diaries written from across the social spectrum, the book is divided into two sections. These respectively cover Leningraders' conceptualizations of self and society after both were cut off from the Soviet "mainland" by Nazi blitzkrieg. Though the city's communists asked their population in fall 1941 to document this unprecedented situation, Peri finds no ideological line guiding these diarists as the Soviet Union's wartime propaganda remained in flux.

Most of the material here focuses on the siege's worst six months: the winter of 1941–42. During this time, the diarists were forced to see the world in new ways. First studying her subjects' physical bodies, the author finds them developing a "new sixth sense" (66); Leningraders lived by instinct, with most receiving only 4.4 ounces of filler-imbued bread per day. In such a situation "mazes of the self" (88) appeared, for it was impossible to reassemble an "I" shattered by constant near-starvation. Experiencing this with close family members in tow, for example, only made matters worse. Peri's text recounts one diarist's chilling tale from a time when parents failed to balance their families' rations with children: "Uncle Arkadii, my mom died," a seven-year old girl exclaimed "in a fit of joyful excitement" upon realizing her mother's rations had now become her own (106).

As hunger "distorted or exposed true human character," (125) the author asks whether Leningraders recovered impulses toward altruism or sacrifice—the dominant themes of Soviet and post-Soviet siege history. Her answer is a definitive "no," as different varieties of prewar Soviet rhetoric again reared their ugly faces while Leningraders tried to make sense of the unimaginable. While the siege's rationing fit nicely with Vladimir Lenin's "doctrine of necessary inequality," (133) the diarists analyzed here also adapted the rhetoric of class struggle against new enemies of the people such as inevitably venal food-service workers and "blockade wives" (145) who traded sex for food. More interesting, though, is Peri's explication of how Leningraders adopted official wartime rhetoric where those starving to death supposedly suffered from a disease known as "nutritional dystrophy" (*alimentarnaia distrofiia*) (180). The diarists' widespread mobilization of such absurdity illustrated a sense that their own leaders were also responsible for the city's suffering. With the Bolsheviks' more optimistic, future-looking rhetoric now forgotten, ordinary people seeking to advance their interests probably leveraged the authorities' wartime language for some time to come.

Intriguingly, the population's own imagined condition of "hunger psychosis" (*golodnyi psikhoz*) (194) also became widely recognized as a pathological outcome of the times. Peri illustrates this with a diarist's description of her father's death from starvation: "All day he lies around . . . indifferent to everything. Or he begins to cry or scream from hunger and says that he will eat kindling, that he is prepared to eat himself. His voice rings in my ears, 'Give me something to chew on! Give me something to chew on!'. . . Sometimes he starts saying all sorts of absurd things: 'Where is my body? I don't know what happened to me.'" (196) Although the father's statements were completely logical as he experienced starvation's final cannibalization of the body, Peri argues that witnessing such situations resulted in Leningraders developing new ways of seeing the world, however erroneous.

Such outcomes inevitably meant that contemporaneous efforts by officialdom to compare the siege with Russia's past—whether the Napoleonic invasions or the Civil War—were doomed. In some diaries, Leningraders were just another version of the *Grande Armée* in retreat. While this reader hungered for these sources' ideas to be placed within a blow-by-blow account of the Nazis' tightening of the "ring" and the Soviet authorities' subsequent responses, the material used simply does not allow it. These diarists were temporally- and spatially-challenged writers who somehow

survived the early 1940s while sharpening their critical eye on the world. That outcome makes this book an essential text for readers who seek to understand Russia today.

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Moscow 1956: The Silenced Spring. By Kathleen E. Smith. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2017. 434 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Maps. \$29.95, hard bound.
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In her cleverly titled new book, Kathleen E. Smith traces the trajectory and impact of reform in Russia over the course of a particularly eventful year: 1956. She argues that Nikita Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" criticizing Iosif Stalin, delivered in February of that year, sparked a variety of responses that went far beyond what he had imagined. The resulting tumult of questions and demands threatened Party hegemony, so that by December officials moved to curtail public discussion. Leaders could not re-impose Stalinist control, however, and their attempts to muzzle critics lead to more radical critiques. This swing between thaw and freeze, liberalization and crackdown, set a pattern for the rest of the Soviet epoch and continues to influence Russia's government today.

This is a thoroughly-researched work drawing on a wide range of sources, including formerly classified party documents, memoirs, and interviews. Smith's characterization of the thaw as fluctuating between "openness and discipline" (341) is in line with the recent historiography that she cites, including works by Stephen Bittner, Miriam Dobson, Denis Kozlov, William Taubman, and others. What distinguishes this book, however, is its structure, scope, and nuanced depictions of individual lives.

Smith has organized the book chronologically, with a chapter for each month of the year. She begins with a summary of the Stalinist system and Khrushchev's ascent within it. She then describes the composition, delivery, and reception of Khrushchev's Secret Speech, including an absorbing account of debates within the presidium about whether and how to condemn Stalinist terror. The next few chapters examine the problems facing former inmates as they were released from the gulag and struggled to achieve official rehabilitation and reintegration into society. Smith then describes various kinds of people—writers, filmmakers, tourists, scientists, students—taking advantage of new freedoms and sometimes pushing against the limits of reform. She ends by analyzing the Central Committee's decision to suppress what it deemed the proliferation of dangerously anti-Soviet views.

Smith explains in her introduction that she chose to focus mainly on urban Russians, especially members of the intelligentsia, and she acknowledges some of the important topics she omitted, such as nationality policy, rural life, and relations with China. Nonetheless, she covers a lot of ground. Like a good realist novel, this book teems with intriguing personalities. Smith has woven the stories of more than twenty different people into the narrative, ranging from Elena Stasova, an Old Bolshevik, to the aptly named Revol't Pimenov, whose demands for free speech and public opposition to the Soviet invasion of Hungary led to his arrest for anti-Soviet propaganda. Smith's portraits of party stalwarts, restless young writers, idealistic students, and traumatized gulag survivors are written with flair, empathy, and psychological nuance. She also provides vivid descriptions of a variety of settings, including farms in Kazakhstan that were created as part of Khrushchev's "Virgin