definitive account of deaf political advocacy throughout the Soviet twentieth century, Shaw has proffered a fertile platform for further scholarship.

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***Stalinist Perpetrators on Trial: Scenes from the Great Terror in Soviet Ukraine***. By Lynne Viola. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. xii, 268 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Chronology. Glossary. Index. Photographs. Maps. $29.95, hard bound.
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Lynn Viola has produced a masterful work on the "purge of the purgers" at the end of the Great Terror (1936–39) that fills a void in the literature and is a must read for anyone interested in Soviet history. Utilizing fascinating material from Ukraine's secret police records—"the result of serendipity in the archives" (180)—such as trial transcripts of mid- and lower-level NKVD operatives, notes on their interrogations, confessions, and witness and expert testimony, Viola looks "into the inner workings of the Great Terror and the largely unchartered terrain of the Stalinist perpetrator" (3).

As a western borderland, Ukraine was hit hard by the purges, second only to Russia in terms of the number of victims. Viola's book, set mostly in 1938–39 during and following an unprecedented surge of repression in the USSR, examines a "series of microhistories" mainly from Kiev oblast, the area around Ukraine's capital, and from varied locations, including a rural district (Skvira), an interdistrict operational sector (Uman′), an industrial city (Zaporozh′e), and Kiev itself (8).

The first chapter, entitled "The Incomplete Civil War and the Great Terror" and based largely on secondary sources and published documents, sets the stage for the remainder of the book. In accordance with recent scholarship, Viola emphasizes "that the largest number of victims of the Great Terror were common people, mainly peasants and a range of non-Russian suspect ethnicities, many of them also of peasant background" caught up in two mass operations begun in July 1937: one aimed at a broadly-defined group of internal enemies headed by *kulaks*, or allegedly wealthy peasants; and another one targeting national minorities (12). These operations accounted for the bulk of the arrests during the Great Terror and coincided with a purge of Communist Party elites once thought to have been the primary focus of the repression.

She notes that the fluidity of Soviet criminal law—especially in the wake of special measures taken after the December 1934 assassination of S.M. Kirov, head of the Leningrad party branch—cleared the way for confessions extracted by torture to be the main form of evidence used against alleged internal "enemies" during the Great Terror. This fluidity, moreover, allowed Soviet leader Iosif Stalin to turn the tables on NKVD officials in November 1938, possibly in response to the Munich Conference, by accusing a sizable cohort of those officials with "violations of socialist legality" (31). Stalin thereby placed

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the blame for "excesses" during the purges on recently disgraced (and soon-to-be executed) former NKVD head Nikolai Ezhov and his clientele network.

The first chapter sets up the case studies that follow nicely but overstates the connection between the Civil War (1918–21) and the Great Terror of the late 1930s, mainly because it completely omits the period of the New Economic Policy (1921–28). By linking the Great Terror directly to the Civil War, Viola implicitly links Stalin to Vladimir Lenin, the founding father of the USSR, as well as of its apparatus of terror. This is, of course, a plausible line of argument, but not accounting for the lengthy NEP period weakens her case, as does the claim that the Great Terror was both a continuation of the "incomplete Civil War" and at the same time "a cleansing of the entire nation in preparation for war" (11)—a war with Nazi Germany that seemed inevitable by the onset of the Great Terror. It may well be both, but Viola does not adequately tie these disparate threads together.

Furthermore, civil wars are "incomplete" by their very nature in the sense that the factors leading up to them remain in place at least to some degree afterward and also because the issues and legacies sparked by the civil wars themselves remain for decades to come (this certainly seems true for the US and Spanish Civil Wars, to take but two other examples). None of this invalidates Viola's overall point, but she would have been on sounder ground had she merely linked—as she does quite successfully—the Great Terror at the end of the decade to Stalin's chaotic and repressive policies of the early 1930s: collectivization, *dekulakization*, and the famine in Ukraine and elsewhere.

Chapters 2–7 form the book's backbone, each telling a very interesting story. Viola introduces us to a sinister and nefarious cast of characters, former NKVD officials now claiming their innocence—despite admitting often very sadistic practices of torture—and pleading for their own lives after arresting and beating false confessions out of thousands of innocent victims. The crux of the cases against them is their violation of "socialist legality" in the treatment of purge victims.

The NKVD defendants on trial attribute their admitted wrongdoings of varying degrees to a militaristic NKVD "culture" of always carrying out the orders of superiors; believing that failing to extract a confession was a sign of weakness on the interrogator's part; fearing the charge of "liberalism" or of being too soft on alleged enemies, which could lead to one's own arrest (57, 67 and 121); and believing that the use of torture and false confessions was condoned and even encouraged from the top. In each case, the NKVD defendant's pleas for mercy fell on deaf ears as they were all found guilty and sentenced to lengthy prison terms or death.

Antisemitism is a recurring theme in the book as Ezhov purged Jews from the ranks of the NKVD. The percentage of Jews in the NKVD throughout the USSR fell sharply, from 38.54 percent in 1934 to a mere 3.92 percent in early 1939 (21, 33). The decline was not as sharp in Ukraine, perhaps because I.M. Leplevskii, who was Jewish, led the Ukrainian NKVD from June 1937 until his fall in January 1938. When Ezhov's "man," A.I. Uspenskii, replaced Leplevskii, "his first step was to purge the NKVD" mainly of Leplevskii's "'people,' who included large numbers of Jewish NKVD operatives" (27). Ezhov and Uspenskii (among others) appear to have been very anti-Semitic (32–33, 175).

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Viola offers a revealing look into the interrogation rooms and execution chambers of the Great Terror, and it is not a pretty picture. Each of the numerous NKVD defendants admits to using "physical measures of influence," the common euphemism for torture (35), to extract confessions. Higher-ups in the NKVD like Uspenskii and V.R. Grabar′, a Republic-level NKVD official and key figure in Chapter 6 ("An Excursion to Zaporozh′e"), as well as the main defendant in Chapter 7 ("Uspenskii's stooge"), travelled throughout Ukraine to show local NKVD officials various forms of torture to use.

These specific forms of torture often had euphemisms of their own in a truly sadistic NKVD vocabulary: "going to Hitler," for example, meant being forced to crawl around on all fours; "swinging the kerosene" meant being forced to squat for prolonged periods of time; and the "parachute method" described placing a victim on their knees at the top of a bench held vertically in the air so that when the interrogator pulled the bench out from under the victim he or she fell to the floor face first (104–5).

Viola uses the term "(im)moral economy" to describe common practices among the executioners like extracting gold teeth from the victims or the nightly *zapal*, "shorthand for the distribution of goods that occurred at the end of the executions" (100–101). Although all goods belonging to victims were supposed to be burned "in the interests of secrecy" (133), in Uman′ and Zaporozh′e (and no doubt elsewhere) the clothes of executed victims wound up at the local market being sold by the wives of some of the executioners (99, 115, 129).

Finally, Viola's study sheds some interesting light on Stalin's role in the "Great Terror." While there is no doubt, she states, that Stalin and his top lieutenants in the NKVD created the preconditions for the purges from the top, "Stalin was not the sole perpetrator of the Great Terror" as "a small army of people" carried out the purges (18). The ending of the terror with the purge of the purgers, however, "demonstrated Stalin's power over the NKVD" and, by implication, the entire process (166). The trials of NKVD perpetrators at the end of the Great Terror scapegoated Ezhov and his clientele network, namely Uspenskii, who faked his own suicide before being caught and executed, showing thereby that Stalin himself was not to blame for the "excesses" in the purges. The trials likewise reigned in the power of the NKVD, which had run roughshod over the country and the Communist Party, whose members were now cast as the main victims of the terror rather than the commoners who actually made up the bulk of those arrested. "The trials," Viola concludes, "were Stalin's gift to the Party, serving to relegitimize its authority and its power following two years of terror" (168).

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