In spite of the somber conclusion on the progressive three-stage destruction of "Jewish communal settings" in the Soviet Union—"the first . . . on a religious level in the 1920s and 1930s, the second on a physical level in the early 1940s, and the third on a cultural one in the late 1940s" (174)—the book ends with a positive assertion about the emergence of a new Jewish identity as a result of the Soviet experience. This new identity bears a pronouncedly syncretic character and yet is "fully equipped with markers of thick identity, complete with its language (Russian), foods (Russian and Jewish, but not kosher), rituals (which combine Judaism, Christianity, and the Soviet legacy), and notions of a shared past and values" (193).

However paradoxical this assertion may seem, one should recognize that Anna Shternshis' new book, like her previous monograph, *Soviet and Kosher*, is an important effort at "disambiguating" the Soviet Jewish experience for a western audience. It will be a particular useful teaching tool for courses that focus on the anthropology of Jews, on Soviet/post-Soviet studies, and on the methods of oral history.

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The Soviet Gulag: Evidence, Interpretation, and Comparison. Ed. Michael David-Fox. Pitt Series in Russian and East European Studies. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016. xi, 434 pp. Notes. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Figures. Tables. $49.95, hard bound.
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This book emphasizes that it offers something new in the crowded field of Gulag research. At its heart lies the thorny issue of Soviet specificity in regard to the practice of state repression and its evolution over time. To what extent was the Gulag one disciplinary variant among many in modern state efforts to manage populations, or to what extent—given that the Bolsheviks advertised their penal policies as absolutely unique from those of the bourgeois world—was it something different? And if so, were such differences those that Soviet authorities intended? In seeking to answer such questions, this volume promises an originality of approach, moving from thick description into analysis and placing the ideology, structure, and experience of the Gulag into comparative perspective.

One of the great strengths of the book is that it strives to break down traditional binaries in exploring Gulag practices and purpose. "Free" and "unfree" is the biggest of these oppositions, with many contributors, starting with Oleg Khlevniuk, arguing that not only were the bounds between "labor camp" and "outside world" porous and overlapping, but also that the very realms of "convict" and "citizen" existence were less than distinct. Even the average amount of food consumed among the "free" population "converged in both volume and makeup with that of prisoners" from 1939 onwards (30).

Similarly, authors agree that the experience of work in the Soviet Union cannot be neatly divided between "forced" labor and "free." Authors such as Asif Siddiqi, writing about special camps for scientists, and Wilson Bell, describing the role of the Gulag in the Second World War, show that camp work often involved interactions, even collaborations, between convicts and citizens. Siddiqi, furthermore, showcases a type of *sharashki* where many inmates experienced recognition and reward in confinement and even came to adopt principles of police-supervised scientific research—"extreme secrecy, strict hierarchies, coercive practices, rigid reporting protocols"—in later careers outside the camps (110).

The first half of the book, titled "Evidence and Interpretation," focuses on questions of Gulag "modernity" and economic rationality. In other words, were the camps designed to fulfill some kind of pragmatic, economically-advantageous function, or were they spaces of inefficiency and waste? Was brutality practiced in the interest of productivity, or was it an end unto itself? Did ideological principles play a role?

To its credit, the volume features a variety of opinion on this topic. Golfo Alexopoulos and Dan Healey, for example, both explore the biopolitics of the Gulag and come to differing conclusions. Alexopoulos argues that the camps were primarily destructive by design, intended to work people to death (and yet, oddly, also to conceal the extent of such exploitation). Healey, looking at the role of doctors and the nuts-and-bolts practice of camp medicine, exposes what he sees as a ruthless camp pragmatism oriented towards maximizing production, where certain bodies were deemed worth healing and others were not. Siddiqi, meanwhile, takes this discussion of Gulag productivity into the realm of perception, suggesting that the NKVD saw its captive scientists as important assets in the Commissariat's growing Gulag-based economic sphere, a superior resource unavailable to rival bureaucracies—and thus perhaps calculated their contributions to be significantly more valuable than they actually were.

The second half of the book is particularly fascinating for the emphasis that is placed on comparisons both among regimes and over time. This comparison extends into liberal societies, with Aidan Forth looking at Imperial Britain's use of camps to manage the "problem populations" of the Empire (199). While Forth points out that Britain's "open public sphere" did crucially limit the scale of the camps and the degree of brutality within them, he argues for an "archaeology of violence shared by states across the political spectrum" (200).

The jewels of this collection are essays about China and Korea that illustrate the variance of repression across communist regimes. Klaus Mülhahn's essay on the Maoist camp system of the 1950s details how Chinese officials, equipped with Soviet camp blueprints, an enthusiasm for Soviet practice of popular control, and an ideology that similarly linked forced labor to the possibility of rehabilitation, nevertheless ended up creating a system very different from that which had inspired them. Above all, the Chinese *Laogai* came to accommodate a far greater population far more quickly, expanding "from five million in 1951 to 40 to 50 million by the eve of the Cultural Revolution" some fifteen years later (265). By way of comparison, a total of approximately eighteen million prisoners passed through the Soviet Gulag from 1930–52 (325). In addition, the Chinese labor camp incorporated a greater amount of administrative autonomy, with authorities preferring local rather than centralized camp control. Prisoners arguably had even fewer rights and were even more permanently bound to their specific camps, as those who completed their sentences were rarely allowed to return home.

Sungmin Cho's essay on North Korea, meanwhile, illustrates the evolution of a system that began with "conscious efforts to replicate the Soviet system" (276), but evolved in a direction of increasing ideological rigor. Cho outlines a system that has come to be shaped by a government convinced that political dissidence is incurable and can infect families for up to three generations, leaving them "not worthy of reintegration into society" (271) or even "of living as human beings" (283). Ultimately, Cho describes a prison system "more like Nazi concentration camps than the Gulag" (283). How the North Korean leadership has been able to elicit widespread participation in a penal system that brands some 30% of citizens as "hostile" (283), and how, as Cho argues, North Korean authorities have managed to train prison guards to view inmates as less than fully human are questions left for future research.

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All told, *The Soviet Gulag* introduces many provocative themes for further exploration—first among them, the role, purpose and practice of secrecy not only inside the Gulag administration, but also between the NKVD bureaucracy and other organs of government, and on the ground, between those overlapping realms of "camp" and "outside" world. Perhaps the book's greatest contribution is that it encourages scholars to take more risks in the topics they choose to explore by standing as an example of broad and innovative historical inquiry.

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Gunny v Parizhe: K metageografii russkoi kuʹltury. By Dmitrii Zamiatin. St. Petersburg: Izdatelʹstvo Aleteiia, 2016. 306 pp. Appendix. ₽769, paper.
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A rapidly growing body of scholarship on the centrality of space to social, artistic, and philosophical discourses has been recently enriched by Dmitrii Zamiatin's book on Russia's cultural geography. His collection of essays, *Gunny v Parizhe: K metageografii russkoi kulʹtury*, takes as its structuring frame the concept of *genius loci*, the "genius of place," in order to delve into Russia's spatial thought and imagination across a broad historical span, primarily the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. If the potential meanings of this originally ancient concept stretch from the designation of a spirit protecting a particular place to the atmosphere of a specific environment, for Zamiatin it also includes those figures who have created poetic spatialities. Artists, philosophers, writers, and filmmakers take central stage in this book, which maps—often with assiduous detail—their production of dense, fragmentary, and at times contradictory places and environments. The result is a richly-resonant study of Russia's cultural metageography that probes the depth and multitude of spatial imagining within the country's cultural traditions.

Gunny v Parizhe discusses an impressive array of well-known figures: Piotr Chaadaev and Aleksandr Blok, Boris Pasternak and Andrei Platonov, Venedikt Erofeev and Kuzʹma Petrov-Vodkin, and Andrei Tarkovskii and Aleksandr Sokurov, among others. Some of the most successful chapters are on Chaadaev and Pasternak, representing two different strands of the author's approach to his subject. Considering Chaadaev's numerous treatises on the specificity of Russia's national identity, Zamiatin zeroes in on the philosopher's preoccupation with "geographical fact"—the physical and material primacy of Russia's expansive space that, in Zamiatin's analysis, comes across as nearly tyrannical: it generates a mentality of political powerfulness, while simultaneously arresting the population's capacity for transforming this material geography into a culturally, spiritually, or ethically meaningful set of ideas. The geographic expanse disperses minds, preventing the formation of "intellectual centers," which, further west in Europe, act as necessary incubators of ideas. Nevertheless, Chaadaev, Zamiatin contends, identifies this assessment not as a source of despair but as a potentially hopeful point of difference. He argues that Chaadaev's attempt to grant the inassimilable physical geography the status of an equal participant in the formation of civilizational identity (rather than understanding it as always already a product of history and culture, as had been the case in the west) shifts the European parameters by which space—and with it, history and culture—are apprehended.

If the guiding terms of Zamiatin's Chaadaev chapter are rather monumental (east and west, matter and thought, geography and national distinctiveness), the Pasternak chapter addresses the more intimate matter of geography's relatedness to