may have expressed a strong sense of alienation from the political reality in which they lived, which forced them to favor a Jewish over a Polish identity, but in Kijek's view the most painful aspect of that reality for most was precisely that forced choice. He discovers in the autobiographies evidence that "during the interwar period a 'cultural Polishness' was taking shape among Jews, a growing patriotism, a sense of connection to the state in which they lived" (427). Ironically, the new reality his subjects strove to create was not the one officially endorsed by most of the youth movements they joined — one in which Jewish culture and society remained autonomous units, unassimilated to their surroundings. It was, rather, one in which "Polish politics would begin to move in a somewhat more open direction, accepting of the Jewish community, inclined toward building a true partnership (*wspólnota*) among all of the citizens of the Second Republic, no matter what their ethnic background" (427).

Kijek believes that the "civic potential" inherent in that vision might well have been realized had the Second World War not intervened. That counterfactual projection necessarily carries him beyond his evidence—a miscue in a volume that otherwise takes the maximum the evidence offers but no more. For some readers, though, that evidence—including the fact that nearly three quarters of the extant autobiographies were written in Yiddish, not Polish—might actually lead to a different conclusion: that interwar Polish Jewish youth saw their situation as untenable and found "cultural Polishness" of no value for them at all. A notable merit of his is work that Kijek's detailed exposition of his subjects' life stories allows multiple interpretations, demonstrating the complexity of the problems he considers. His thoughtful treatment of his material pushes the analytical envelope well beyond what previous scholars have done with it and demonstrates its potential to deepen understanding of Polish-Jewish history.

David Engel
New York University

***Deaf in the USSR: Marginality, Community, and Soviet Identity, 1917–1991*.** By Claire L. Shaw. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017. xvi, 292 pp. Notes. and Abbreviations. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Photographs. $49.95, hard bound.

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What was the Soviet Union like for deaf people? Claire L. Shaw's new volume offers the first comprehensive history of deaf social life and political organizing during the Soviet twentieth century. Shaw combines archival research with analysis of cultural texts to offer an account of shifting discourses about deafness from the rise of the Soviet Union until the early 1990s.

Shaw does not address deafness as a medical condition. Rather, she traces political processes of deaf culture formation in state socialism. This approach builds on the robust literature on global deaf cultures. The notion of deaf culture holds that deaf people around the world communicate via a

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multitude of signed languages, comprising regionally-distinct linguistic communities, which are often at odds with dominant (spoken) language cultures. Deaf studies scholars have demonstrated that deaf communities frequently mobilize strategies used by *ethnic* minority cultures to make political claims for deaf solidarity and self-determination (Carol Padden and Tom Humphries 2005; Karen Nakamura 2006; Michele Friedner 2015, cited in Shaw, 15). Shaw builds on this tradition to argue that a deaf culture movement took place in revolutionary Russia and the Soviet Union decades before similar movements emerged elsewhere. Shaw proposes that Soviet deaf culture followed principles of Soviet self-making, characterized by a social preference for collectivism, mutual aid, and social usefulness (225), a way of life that was "deaf in form, socialist in content" (10–11).

Deaf in the USSR centers the Moscow proceedings of the central committee of the All-Russian Association of the Deaf, or *VOG*, exploring how VOG leaders evaluated policies, strategized discursive angles, and implemented action (3). True to her archive, Shaw rarely centers comments from Soviet leaders, nor does the reader learn much about regional members or recipients of VOG services. Rather, the study examines that hinge point between structure and agency that reveals the flexibility of soviet ideological rhetoric in the service of diverse social causes. Like Maria Galmarini-Kabala's recent study of welfare policy (which considers provisions of aid to blind, deaf, single mothers, and deviant children), Shaw's book could be characterized as charting "the middle" of Soviet bureaucracy.[1] In this way, *Deaf in the USSR* is a major contribution to the history of the Soviet welfare state.

The book joins a recent groundswell of research on the region informed by disability studies, and offers the first book-length study of deafness in the Soviet Union. Following the 1989 volume *The Disabled in the Soviet Union: Past and Present, Theory and Practice* by Willam McCagg and Lewis Siegelbaum (1989), little sustained attention was paid to disability in Anglophone scholarship about the region, save for a few articles deploying the lens of disability in literary analysis. A new wave of scholarship arrived with Sarah Phillips' ethnography of disabled citizenship in postsocialist Ukraine in 2010 (out this year in Russian for the first time), and a field-defining edited volume from Michael Rasell and Elena Iarskaia-Smirnova (2013). Meanwhile, since the early 2000s, an active Russophone disability studies emerged, with Iarskaia-Smirnova and her late husband Pavel Romanov at the helm, publishing in both English and Russian. Anna Klepikova's startling new volume, an ethnography of life in an adult institution for people with intellectual and mental disabilities (2018), and Tomas Matza's first book, *Shock Therapy* (2018), join this wave.

The introduction to the volume situates the text as the story of the VOG. In Chapter 1, Shaw follows an educated class of deaf self-advocates who asserted the need for a deaf political organization in the Soviet Union, deploying revolutionary rhetoric toward their goal of deaf autonomy (in the

1. Mark Edele, book review of *The Right to Be Helped: Deviance, Entitlement, and the Soviet Moral Order*, Maria Cristina Galmarini-Kabala, *Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 45, no. 1 (2018): 126–28.

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Tsarist period, deaf people were considered legally unfit, and denied self-determination). The chapter also tracks the development of *defektologiia*, Lev Vygotskii's science of abnormal development (16; 31–34). Shaw shows that the Marxist ideological influence of the time led Vygotskii to theorize deafness as a complex social condition, in which the barrier to communication, rather than the defect in hearing, created a disability. This is quite different from western medical perspectives of the era on deafness, which viewed deafness as a biological condition linked to Victorian notions of social degeneracy.

In Chapter 2, Shaw attends to how the cultural shift in the 1930s toward Stalinist mass politics reverberated through deaf experience and how Soviet deaf people participated in the making of the new Soviet world. As workers and Stakhanovites, deaf Soviet citizens distinguished themselves, and forged possibilities to be at once deaf and Soviet. Chapter 3 follows deaf Soviets into the Great Patriotic War and reconstruction era. After the war, Shaw demonstrates, the VOG was challenged to extend services to war-deafened veterans, who were hesitant to join the VOG, as disability identity and special services carried a stigma.

In Chapter 4, Shaw dubs the 1950s as the "golden age" of Soviet deaf culture. While the Stalinist era had privileged oral speech and assimilation into hearing culture, in the 1950s, a flourishing sign language culture emerged, including "industrial, educational, and cultural institutions" (19). In this chapter, Shaw focuses on the Moscow sign language theater, *Teatr Mimiki i Zhesta*, or *TMZh*. Like the theatrical scene in Mikhail Bogin's film *Dvoe* (1965), deaf actors performed TMZh's plays in sign language, with oral interpretation read aloud for a hearing audience.[2] Shaw argues that deaf theater was at once an assimilationist exercise, brokering belonging through displays of a high level of *kulturnost'* (culturedness) that was legible to hearing audiences, and a strategy by which deaf people demonstrated their capacity for self-determination (152–56). Shaw's interpretation differs from Anastasia Kayiatos' treatment of late Soviet deaf theater as a subversive space of alterity, instead showing how the TMZh fit into broader trends in the mainstream deaf politics of the Khrushev era VOG.[3]

In the 1960s, Shaw relates in Chapter 5, concerns about deaf criminality appeared in mainstream newspaper stories. Fears about deaf deviance—begging in train stations, drunkenness, prostitution, and violence between members of the deaf community—troubled the broader public, but especially the VOG. Throughout the Soviet period, prejudice about the deaf in the broader culture was shaped by concerns about muteness, and a suspicion that marginalization from the dominant language might lead to social degeneracy (174). The VOG, Shaw shows, struggled to reclaim the narrative: the publication of such articles in the mainstream press led to heated internal debates about the responsibility of upstanding Soviet deaf citizens to include those

2. *Dvoe* (*Two in Love*), Dir. Mikhail Bogin, Moscow, 1965, cited in Claire Shaw 1–3; 18; 165–69.

3. Anastasia Kayiatos, "Silence and Alterity in Russia after Stalin, 1955–1975," (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2012), as cited by Shaw, 154.

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who were down on their luck. Shaw shows that these discussions followed dueling tendencies in broader Soviet discourse: whether to excommunicate the deviant, or to remake those whose material circumstances had led them to such "uncultured" behaviors. Partly in response to these debates, Shaw argues, the VOG took on a new role, administering new social welfare provisions for the deaf, and, in doing so, ceded some of its drive for deaf political autonomy as bureaucratic functions took on new importance.

Chapter 6 deals with a new era of Deaf-Soviet Identity in the late 1960s and 70s, when medicalized notions of rehabilitation gained new ground in debates about overcoming deafness. A generation of educators of the deaf, and in turn deaf people themselves, were trained in techniques that privileged spoken language (198–99), curbing the development of sign-language-driven deaf culture.

Finally, in an epilogue, Shaw follows the VOG into the post-Soviet era, describing the shifting capacities and responsibilities of the organization during glasnost and the new legal frameworks for disabled peoples' organizations in the 1990s (230–31). Shaw concludes that throughout the course of Soviet history, "a historically and culturally distinct deaf community that still endures" (237) was created.

Deaf in the Soviet Union is a welcome contribution to the field. The book insists Slavic and Eurasian studies take seriously the political advocacy strategies of minority communities *other* than ethnic nationalities. The book will be useful as a teaching volume, to be read in tandem with other monographs charting the scope of Soviet history, other monographs on deaf history and culture, or other studies of medicalization in the region.

The book's few shortcomings arise from the divergent concerns of its many (inter)disciplinary audiences—Slavic and Euarsian studies, disability studies, deaf studies, and welfare studies. Some might be surprised that almost no attention at all is paid to the specificities of Russian Sign Language, or to how its properties—aside from a discussion of visuality which applies to all signed languages—produced a uniquely Soviet Deaf Culture. Others will note that while recent scholarship in global disability studies argues for a departure from the vocabulary of multiculturalism, which assumes a liberal democratic context, Shaw's approach is to use these terms without reservation, a decision that may actually contribute to her argument that disability and deafness are constructed differently in the Soviet Union as compared to western Europe and the United States.

Ultimately, Shaw's approach is, first and foremost, historically rigorous. This begets an adherence to what can be known from the central archive, which leaves readers wondering about deaf experience in the regions, and amongst non-Russian Soviet ethic groups. A sustained discussion of how disability is constructed with and through racialization is curiously absent from the volume. Current disability studies scholarship increasingly focuses on how ableism and racism function as mutually constitutive systems (Jasbir K. Puar, 2017; Kateřina Kolářová, 2015; Kayiatos 2014); perhaps a future project lies in an analysis of how precisely the organizing strategies of the Soviet deaf community and Soviet ethnic minorities are interrelated. With this, the first

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

Cassandra Hartblay
Yale University

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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