Of course, the list of protagonists in revising the terms of the encounter with the Jewish past can be lengthened, as future work, building on Meng, will surely attest. The author has little to say about Pope John Paul II's visit to Poland in 1979; about the international pressure on the Polish stewards of Auschwitz; on the Solidarity movement; or on the woefully neglected "Schülerwettbewerb deutsche Geschichte um den Preis des Bundespräsidenten" in West Germany, a national secondary school contest under the aegis of the German president, which in 1982–83 took as its subject "Everyday Life in National Socialism, 1933–1945." Thanks to thousands of grass-roots projects initiated by high school students and their teachers, the history of German towns will never look the same. The acclaimed film, *Nasty Girl* (1991), shows the high drama of this excavation of twentieth-century history from below, in this case in the city of Passau. Readers will appreciate Meng's sturdy conceptual framework but will miss the voices that would bring to life both the abject nature of the shared Jewish past, as well as the registers of "curiosity, nostalgia, memory, intrigue, melancholia, and critique" (9) that accompanied its reexamination.

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Portrait of a Russian Province: Economy, Society, and Civilization in Nineteenth-Century Nizhnii Novgorod. By Catherine Evtuhov. Pitt Series in Russian and East European Studies. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011. xiv, 320 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Plates. Photographs. Figures. Tables. Maps. $34.95, paper.

Over the past several decades, monographs on late imperial Russian culture, economics, politics, and society have filled the shelves of libraries. From a recent collection on spatial history (Marc Bassin, Christopher Ely, and Melissa Stockdale, eds.), to histories of empire (Jane Burbank, Robert Geraci, and William Sunderland, for example), to the turn toward provincial social and cultural histories (Mary Cavendar and John Randolph), to name but a few, the history of Russia's nineteenth century no longer suffers under Cold War assumptions. Historians of modern Russia are freed, to a large degree, from many narratives and tropes so defined by a politics now obsolete. Even as the weight of the twentieth century has been lifted from the narratives of the nineteenth, historians—generally speaking—maintain a healthy skepticism about Russia's place within western European frameworks and categories. If the Russian nineteenth century is no longer simply "backstory" to the twentieth, then what is it? Is it part of a European narrative? Scholars of Russia, naturally, have no single answer to these questions, but they have begun both to explain the Russian nineteenth century on its own terms and to use the Russian "example" to shed light on long held truisms in the context of European history. These paradigms or frameworks include areas of investigation imagined to be part of a general European story: for example, the relationship between public and private life; the birth of civil society; or assumptions about the nature of urban versus rural life.

In this monograph, Catherine Evtuhov, like many scholars of imperial Russia, makes no simple assumptions regarding Russia's place within the European story. Her deeply researched and cogently argued account of postreform Nizhnii Novgorod is an excellent example of this new day in imperial Russian history.

A fresh, innovative portrait of Nizhnii Novgorod, her account is magnificent in its detail and impressive in its engagement with larger questions about the Russian nineteenth century. Evtuhov teaches us that the Russian nineteenth century need not be judged by the straw man of the "west" or by the revolutions of the twentieth century. The book's organization reflects her deeply contextual approach to provincial life. Some of the key figures in her story include prominent members of the Nizhnii Novgorod intelligentsia, or the "purveyors of the province" (14), as she calls them. These researchers are essential for at least two reasons: they themselves understood the significance of life in the provinces and thus espoused some of the very ideas that Evtuhov embraces; they also produced much of the data that form the basis for many of her findings. Thanks, in part, to these deeply committed individuals, Evtuhov is able to collect and analyze an impressive amount of data about the geography, climate, local administration, culture, religion, sociability, as well as the industrial, agricultural, and small-scale production of those living in the Nizhnii province in the postreform decades. Each chapter covers one aspect of provincial life: ecology, topography, economy, artisanal life, social space, local administration, taxes and cadastral maps, as well as the church and religion. These data-driven chapters are bookended by two elegantly written chapters on the meaning of provincial life at the time, for those in the nineteenth century and for historians reflecting back today.

Evtuhov's nuanced portrait of Nizhnii Novgorod pivots on several assertions about the significance of the province and provincial identity for Russian history as a whole. The province is the "subject and creation of its own identity." It is a "complex system—a set of shifting relationships and interactions that together make up a larger whole" (6). Provincial history thus occupies center stage. In her introduction, Evtuhov states that she would like to rewrite Russian history from the perspective of the province, as it was an "integral and an indispensible part of the larger historical narrative" (9). By training her eye on the provincial landscape, Evtuhov suggests the possibility of a new, more contextual and complex approach to the late imperial period as a whole. By shifting the discussion away from Moscow and St. Petersburg, Evtuhov has thus managed to dislodge some long-held assumptions about Russia, including the notion that "Great Russian Culture" did not emanate only from the capitals but also arose in the provincial centers. Moreover, we learn that Russian developments in many fields—such as scientific advances, administrative strictures, music and literary progress—proceeded in a manner very similar to those of the nations in the west.

The focus on Nizhnii also shifts our understanding of the nature of the development of capitalism and industrialization in Russia. In hopes of elucidating aspects of Russia's economy and its strides toward an industrial, capitalist base, Evtuhov insists on viewing Russia on its own terms, often at odds with western notions, as well as with official tsarist categories. She does not deny the agrarian nature of the economy vis-à-vis Europe, but she emphasizes how many old-fashioned social categories simply do not accord with life in the provinces (and likely with life in the two capitals as well). She sees not simply peasants and landlords, but "wooden spoon makers, fishnet weavers, itinerant icon sellers, and the middle men and creditors who maintain this subsistence economy." Rather than imagining Russia as an agrarian society that had a "vast, uniform, centralized state" (21) that was socially and economically at odds with itself and forever resistant to change, she urges her readers to imagine the economic, political, social, and cultural systems within Nizhnii itself as the crux of the story. Russian history, as seen from the provinces, looks quite different than it does from the vantage point of Moscow or Petersburg. Ultimately, Evtuhov asserts that Russia was, in

many ways, on a common European path, claiming that "neither was Russia following an alternative path, nor was it doomed to disaster." Rather, the Russian province presents, she tells us, "one variant, one particular combination of similar factors, in a general and diverse European pattern" (22).

Evtuhov's work does not stand all by itself. Indeed, it engages in conversation, whether directly or peripherally, with a number of trends within scholarship on nineteenth-century Russia. Although Evtuhov's monograph only briefly pauses on historiographical debates and scholarly trends, it does allude to the emergence of a miniboom in spatial historical approaches within Russian studies. She is attentive to the role played by place, whether geographically speaking or within historical collective memory. Evtuhov asserts that her study is "entirely place-specific" (6) and highlights the role played by distance and geographical imaginings in the lives of her subjects. This is reminiscent of some of the arguments in *Space, Place and Power in Modern Russia: Essays in the New Spatial History* (2010) by editors Mark Bassin, Christopher Ely, and Melissa K. Stockdale. The editors highlight the centrality of geographical space over the course of Russian history, and the collection's chapters explore environmentalist discourses, the road between Moscow and St. Petersburg, and the space of the dance floor and the meanings it generated about class, nation, and power. Cultural spaces, the road, and imaginings about the environment all become subjects of study. Likewise, Evtuhov concentrates her analysis squarely on the interactions between the environment and human agency, as a relationship that creates both opportunities and constraints. Her subjects are teachers, physicians, priests, statisticians, agronomists, lawyers, and others whose identities are intertwined with their provincial surroundings and whose livelihoods are contingent upon their environment, whether the marketplace, the fields, or the schoolrooms. By exploring the local ecology of Nizhnii Novgorod, Evtuhov effectively defies several long-held assumptions about Russian society and economy in the middle of the nineteenth century. She emphasizes how people live their lives, not in "mythical" frameworks," but rather in "natural settings" (43). By beginning with the soil, forest, and river, Evtuhov highlights how the realities of place helped to create a dynamic economy and society, rather than doom Russia's population to backwardness and agrarianism or protocapitalism, at best, à la Richard Pipes. She emphasizes how, by looking closely at the relationships between ecology and economy, the notion of Russia as above all an agrarian country "loses any precision of meaning" (43). The lively merchant and *kustar* craft trade, for example, were never auxiliary; they were always central.

Evtuhov also places herself within recent debates on the nature of empire, or maybe more precisely, regionalism. Her intervention into this body of scholarship revolves around her argument that the capitals never had, or tried to have, complete control over the periphery. Evtuhov's book also challenges the iconic category of civil society. By looking again at the reform of local government under Nicholas I (1837), Evtuhov argues that, rather than guaranteeing increased central authority through extending the arm of the tsar to each local environment vis-à-vis the creation of a governor, the new role attached to the local governor of each province meant an increased amount of potential autonomy to both the governor and the provinces. Thus, rather than a civil sphere emerging—or failing to emerge—in reaction to the central authority, the autonomy exercised by the local populations meant "an interactive, cooperative interchange between state institutions and individuals" (164). Because of this autonomy, governance was characterized "at every level" by a more or less productive interaction between central initiative and local response.

Evtuhov's monograph is a model for historians embarking on social history projects in a post–Cold War world. Her monograph not only teaches us a great deal about provincial life but also points to many new directions for future research, an endeavor that necessitates a deep understanding of the local context. If we are to continue to invent new categories and ways of understanding the nineteenth century, then this book is an excellent place to start.

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Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience. By Alexander Etkind. Cambridge, Eng.: Polity Press, 2011. ix, 289 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Figures. $69.95, hard bound. $24.95, paper.

The study of empire and its effects has been one of the key growth areas in humanities scholarship over the last few decades. The vast sprawling field of postcolonial studies has offered a critique, not just of empire, but of knowledge and modernity, that has reshaped how we understand empire. Yet, scholars of the Russian empire have had a fraught relationship with this enterprise. We had always known that Russia was an empire, a state built by conquest and inhabited by a bewildering variety of peoples, but that knowledge sat awkwardly with the profession of Russian studies, which continued to treat Russia as if it did not extend beyond the two capitals and was inhabited by Russians alone. The collapse of the Soviet Union finally brought the nationalities question to the forefront of our attention. Since then, questions of empire have reshaped the Russian field, as the recent renaming of our association indicates, but questions about the relevance of insights from postcolonial studies—the Saidian critique of colonial forms of knowledge, the search for subaltern subjects, or the notion of hybridity—to our understanding of Russia's imperial experience remain far from being answered. Attitudes have ranged from a wholesale rejection of the critical enterprise to an enthusiastic embrace of it. In all of this, it is probably fair to say that scholars of the imperial period have been the least interested in the challenges posed by postcolonial critique. They have tended to emphasize the specificity of the Russian experience and to eschew many of the critical positions staked out by postcolonial critique.

Now in this clever, wide-ranging book, Alexander Etkind sets out to argue that postcolonial critique is entirely apposite, not just to the Russian empire, but to Russia itself. The insights from postcolonial critique allow us, Etkind argues, to see many familiar issues in a new light and to untangle numerous issues of Russian history and culture. In the process, he also makes the reverse move of seeking to "illuminate [Russia's] relevance to postcolonial theory" (2). The insights of postcolonial theory derive in large part from the experience of two empires (the British and the French). Showing the relevance of Russia to postcolonial theory thus also provides a way of provincializing western Europe within postcolonial studies or, rather, of deprovincializing postcolonial critique itself.

The book sprawls in many directions; it is a collection of loosely affiliated essays (an "Eisensteinian *montage,*" 2) rather than a monograph with a focused argument. Conceived as a project in cultural studies, it has a heavy focus on texts. Only chapter 5 ("probably the most controversial in this book," 9, we are forewarned) deals primarily with events of the past rather than textual reflections of them. We are rewarded with a jaunt through the landscape of Russian literature,