much of what they said about the West and the capitalist threat. The theme of empire-building is present in the essays by Sanford R. Lieberman and Norman M. Naimark. Lieberman discusses the Soviet effort to retake its western border areas during the Second World War and points out that the NKVD used terror tactics to reintegrate Soviet territory taken by the Nazis. Naimark's article relies on a wide range of original sources and makes a major contribution to our understanding of Soviet policy towards East Germany in the early postwar period. The author demonstrates how initial Soviet attempts to consolidate power in East Germany backfired when the NKVD began to kidnap and arrest German nationals for arbitrary security reasons. By early 1946 the former concentration camps were again "bursting with inmates." (p. 78) Only in 1948 were many of the prisoners released, but as late as October, Buchenwald, Bautzen and Sashenhausen remained open with a total of 28,492 prisoners. The broader context for Naimark's article is contained in a more general article by Angela E. Stent on German-Soviet relations in the twentieth century. Abbott Gleason's article, ironically the opening piece of the book, is not really about the Soviet Union or Russia. He presents a succinct but traditional summary of American perceptions of the Soviet Union as a totalitarian state in the early Truman era.

The last three articles of the book survey contemporary security issues. Mikhail Tsypkin examines Russian national security policy, Carol Saivetz discusses the idea of national interest in Russian foreign policy, and Sarah Meiklejohn Terry explores developments in Poland, Hungary and the former Czechoslovakia. The Festschrift concludes on a somber and pessimistic note. Saivetz and Tsypkin note the resurgence of Russian chauvinist nationalism and an alarming determination by some Russian political and military leaders to retain Russia's status as a great power. Saivetz concludes that Russia "seems to be moving toward the creation of a new Russian imperium." (p. 225) If true, the prospects for the immediate future appear bleak, and historians may one day speak of the post-1989 period in terms of Soviet continuity. Let us hope not. As other essays in the book demonstrate, the social and human costs of the Soviet past have been very high.

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Mikhail Bakhtin, doubtlessly without malice aforethought, left a legacy in literary criticism that has taken on some hues of the Bolshevik authoritarianism which the critic personally meant to decry. Nowadays no one in any discipline can afford to write on popular culture without the customary nod to Bakhtin's thoughts on carnivals as spectacles of social and political inversion. Laurence Senelick, voicing either heresy or common sense, depending upon where one stands, questioned the notion that most of us needed Bakhtin to tell us that when peasants put on the masks of royalty and parade drunkenly around town squares they are performing parodies of the status quo. In his new book on the festivals produced by Bolsheviks in the early years of revolution, James von Geldern takes the reader into the world of mass-oriented staged spectacles that the young Bakhtin himself first witnessed before turning his pen to medieval France. Giving the obligatory citation to the master early on, von Geldern then refreshingly draws more
conclusions from Victor Turner and other anthropologists than from Bakhtin. The result is a stimulating interdisciplinary study with something to offer a variety of cultural palates.

The festivals themselves originated in several different theatrical genres, from medieval mystery plays to organized sporting events. Their significance for the Bolsheviks lay in their power of communication to a populace that, even when it supported them, was not always sure what it was backing. The spectacles under review were those performed during the Civil War, when the Bolsheviks needed both to impart information about and to inspire enthusiasm for their vision of Russia's future. The genre selected for the individual festivals predicated in large measure the message: for example, a reenactment of a Petrushka puppet play would emphasize physical abuse of the class enemy, while the more elaborately staged "Overthrow of the Autocracy" served to legitimize the long political struggle by historicizing the Bolsheviks' version. I was particularly intrigued by such juicy snippets as schoolchildren singing "Death to the Speculators" before a discomfited Isadora Duncan, and the great clown Vladimir Durov charging the Winter Palace with his legions of trained rabbits. I wanted more, but the sources themselves so often tantalize rather than satisfy.

During the war years, though, when the political present was as severely contested terrain as the cultural future, initiative and agenda eluded complete control from Party headquarters. This resulted in bursts of creativity, performed by a combination of enthusiasts and those less spontaneous, including conscripted soldiers. One of the legacies of this era, the subbotnik, or Saturday spent giving unpaid labor over to state-building, then, as now, could only have been met with mixed emotions. (A participant myself in several subbotniki, my enjoyment of the experience did not transform into a desire to repeat the "festival" at home.) The reception of the messages and their influence on audiences elude the specifics of quantification, but I wish that von Geldern had made a greater attempt to analyze the impact of the message, not just its medium. In his epilogue, he shows how once the war ended and the Bolsheviks consolidated their power, everything from the structures to the participants changed as festivals "moved from the cultural center to the periphery" (p. 214). Festivals returned to the center after the Stalin revolution, now as manifestations of the party line.

The most engrossing parts of this book lie in the author's discussions of the theoretical parameters of festival in general, especially as they represent the multiple dynamics of revolution. The Bolsheviks needed to construct a legendary past, and in doing so they had to borrow from the available stock: the French Revolution, the Paris Commune, Russia's great peasant revolutions, and the Biblical ideal of a Promised Land. Manipulating these symbols, the Bolsheviks could script a vivid and tenable past. Debates about how to celebrate May Day put to the fore a number of the complexities of how to turn a formerly popular holiday into an affair of state, since the workers had assumed control of the latter. At least theoretically. And I had to wonder, did not all those celebrant workers throwing off their chains become tedious for a multi-class crowd?

Contents aside, the staging itself generated problems, even contradictions. Von Geldern draws very concisely the distinctions between drama and ritual, and how "blurring the boundaries [between the two] . . . obscured the contours of the historical events depicted and negated political distinctions essential to Bolshevik ideology" (p. 141). A drama, for example, is far more open to interpretation than a ritual, whose meaning derives from the collective community that already shares the discourse. When the Bolsheviks, therefore, tried to stage the October Revolution as a ritual transition in history, the audience could in fact experience the