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***Vast Open-air Prison: Katorga in Siberia*.**

*Katorga* was a specific penal regime in Russian Empire that ceased to exist in 1917 and was re-introduced in the Soviet Union in 1943. Even now, this word in the Russian language metonymically signifies hard labour; however, the practices of *katorga* have never been explored in a long chronological perspective. Focusing on one specific region, Western Siberia, I propose a close-up analysis of this penal regime starting from 1879. In the first place, I will elucidate the ideas of Imperial administrators behind the introduction of the forced labour of convicts, and trace the repercussions that these ideas had in local practices. Then, I will discuss how the practices characteristic of this regime have changed over time, notably by looking at the Soviet reinterpretation of the *katorga* and the connections between war conditions and its re-introduction. Finally, I will show how a study of this regime helps to better understand the Russian economy of punishment.