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Mark Vincent

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Andrea Gullotta, *Intellectual Life and Literature at Solovki 1923–1930: The Paris of the Northern Concentration Camps*. 370 pp. Oxford: Legenda Press, 2018. ISBN-13 978-1781886915. $99.00.

Riccardo Nicolosi and Anne Hartmann, eds., *Born to Be Criminal: The Discourse on Criminality and the Practice of Punishment in Late Imperial Russia and Early Soviet Union. Interdisciplinary Approaches*. 252 pp. Bielefeld: transcript, 2018. ISBN-13 978-3837641592. $40.00.

The years that immediately followed the collapse of 300 years of Romanov autocratic rule have been widely regarded as a laboratory in which the new Soviet experiment could take place. While numerous studies have looked to judge the immense explosion in literature and art of the New Economic Policy (NEP) period, the impact of revolutionary upheaval on criminological research has remained vastly understudied other than in a handful of works.[1] Similarly, accounts detailing the development of the Secret Police Camp system of the 1920s remain largely focused on replicating memoir sources with little acknowledgment of the inner workings of the institutions involved.[2] In both of these complementary fields, specific nuances have often been overlooked in favor of a rather deterministic view that leads directly to the growth of the Gulag apparatus in the 1930s, on the one hand, and the shunning of

[1] Sharon Kowalsky, *Deviant Women: Female Crime and Criminology in Revolutionary Russia 1880–1930* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009). A brief outline is also sketched in Louise Shelley, "Soviet Criminology after the Revolution," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 70, 3 (1979): 391–96.

[2] Roy Robson, *Solovki: The Story of Russia Told through Its Most Remarkable Islands* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004). See also the chapter dedicated to Solovki in Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History* (New York: Penguin, 2004), 40–58.

criminological theory in favor of the continued ascendancy of the security services, on the other.[3] This chasm in the existing scholarship on crime and punishment across the 1917 divide is addressed by both Andrea Gullotta's study of *Intellectual Life and Literature at Solovki* and the various contributors to the edited volume *Born to Be Criminal*.

The introduction to *Born to Be Criminal*, written by its editors Riccardo Nicolosi and Anne Hartmann, notes the intention of the volume to consider conceptions of criminality inherent in various disciplines, fields of research, and penal practice (1). This, they suggest, is best achieved through their tripartite structure, which looks at the influence of Cesare Lombroso's highly controversial "Born Criminal" theory (from which the volume draws its title) in the late imperial period before considering the change in criminological discourse and judicial approaches toward crime following the 1917 revolutions and ending with a final section dedicated to how the criminal world is represented in the enormous pantheon of camp memoirs.[4] Potentially as a result of its development from a conference program, and although the editors try willfully to link these three strands together, it is clear from the beginning that the third topic feels a little more disparate than the opening two, which benefit from a similar methodological approach and source base.

Nevertheless, the volume's first section, "Inborn Criminality and the Late Russian Empire," opens with Marina Mogilner's insightful chapter on the empire-born criminal, in which the author's strong theoretical underpinnings show the intriguing possibilities of linking relevant multidimensional approaches from the field of imperial studies with wider work on Lombroso.[5] The next two chapters from Louise McReynolds and editor Nicolosi are both intertwined through the highly revered psychiatrist Pavel Kovalevskii. It is McReynolds's chapter in particular that demonstrates how

[3] See the comments in Paul Hagenloh, *Stalin's Police: Public Order and Mass Repression in the USSR, 1926–1941* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2008), 80–81. Applebaum, like a number of other researchers, suggests that Solovki was "the first camp of the Gulag," even using this quote as the title of her chapter (*Gulag*, 42).

[4] For further work on Lombroso's "Born Criminal" theory, see Cesare Lombroso, *Criminal Man*, trans. Mary Gibson and Nicole Rafter with assistance from Mark Seymour (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, [1876] 2006); and Daniel Beer, *Renovating Russia: The Human Sciences and the Fate of Liberal Modernity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

[5] In particular, Mogilner engages with the approach suggested in Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Ann Laura Stoller and Frederick Cooper (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 152–62.

Lombrosian influences lay behind Kovalevskii's own rise to prominence (65), while Nicolosi provides a more detailed examination into how Kovalevskii's narrative works can be used among other classical criminal-anthropological texts such as Fedor Dostoevskii's *The Brothers Karamazov* (102).[6] This in itself provides an insight into how, while Lombroso's own writing had been dismissed, the ideas of a number of his protégés, such as Enrico Ferri, still found a receptive audience even after the revolutionary events of 1917.[7]

The volume's mid-section sees attention turn toward some of the more practical approaches toward social deviancy and criminality during the period of the late 1920s and early 1930s. At the forefront of this is David Shearer's detailed examination of early Soviet policing, which particularly recalls how the shifting emphasis from asocial to anti-Soviet (131) was reflected in accompanying judicial categorization. Shearer's work is complemented by Anne Hartmann's chapter, which analyzes how Marxist sociology combined with influences from Lombroso manifested itself through the work of the numerous crime bureaus of the 1920s (177). As the author dutifully notes, the productivity attached to these cabinets would soon give way in favor of the infamous large-scale social engineering and infrastructure projects such as the flagship White Sea-Baltic Canal, which stressed the importance of *perekovka* (reforging) and even dedicated the title of its main inmate publication to the theory.[8]

The final topic of the edited volume, titled "Politicals and 'Other' Prisoners," utilizes the voluminous corpus of memoirs from former Gulag inmates. In the first of the two chapters, Renate Lachmann draws from a wide range of these texts from the 1920s onward, although the inclusion of *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* by the Yugoslav author Danilo Kiš remains a rather curious one, given the much wider resources available from those who actually spent time in the Stalinist camps.[9] Consulting important works on Russian criminal subculture from highly regarded researchers such as Federico Varese and Mark Galeotti might have helped guide Lachmann beyond the multitude

[6] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov: A Novel in Four Parts with an Epilogue*, trans. David McDuff (London: Penguin, [1880] 2003).

[7] Adaptations of Ferri's work can be seen in a chapter on "murderers," which formed part of a 1924 criminological volume by a group of social scientists known as the Moscow Bureau (S. A. Ukshe, "Ubiitsy," in *Prestupnyi mir Moskvy: Sbornik statei*, ed. A. M. Aronovich and M. N. Gernet [Moscow: Pravo i zhizn′, 1924]).

[8] Scholarship on various aspects of the White Sea Canal project includes Julie Drascozy, *Belomor: Criminality and Creativity in Stalin's Gulag* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2014); and Cynthia Ruder, *Making History for Stalin: The Story of the Belomor Canal* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998).

[9] Danilo Kiš, *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich: A Novel*, trans. Duška Mikić-Mitchell (New York: Penguin, 1980).

of problems in using texts solely from the vantage point of those incarcerated for alleged counterrevolutionary activities.[10] Leona Toker's close examination of Varlam Shalamov's writings on the criminal world in the following chapter, however, reveals how some of the particular nuances of the famous writer's work have been lost (234) and suggests the benefits that a more complete translation of his oeuvre might have in understanding the complexities of Gulag social life.[11]

In a similar sense to the final section from *Born to Be Criminal*, Andrea Gullotta's fascinatingly detailed exploration of *Intellectual Life and Literature at Solovki* also draws heavily from writings of the many prisoners incarcerated at the most notorious site of penality during the period. The sprawling Solovki prison camp was initiated in 1923 by the Bolsheviks, who looked to repurpose the archipelago from its traditional use as a place of spiritual pilgrimage to become a beacon showing the Western world the redemptive power of prisoner reeducation (*perevospitanie*) which appeared even before the more familiar branding of "reforging." As Gullotta skillfully elucidates, the contributions of Solovki inmates would ensure that Solovki would develop a reputation as the "capital of the Russian *intelligentsia*" (hence the Parisian comparison in his title) and a final bastion for the curious alchemy of prerevolutionary values infused with the chaos of the years that immediately followed 1917.

Conflicting political views and nuanced societal tremors were all played out both on the stage of the Solovki Theater and in the pages of its inmate newspaper publications, from which the author draws heavily throughout his four chapters. The study pays respectful and impressive homage to the groundbreaking work of Russian scholars such as Irina Flige and Iurii Brodskii to bring together an incredibly detailed analysis of the camp's historiography, which stretches far beyond any previous English-language tome.[12] Combining this with his own meticulous research, Gullotta challenges much

[10] Federico Varese, *The Russian Mafia: Private Protection in a New Market Economy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Mark Galeotti, *The Vory: Russia's Super Mafia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

[11] Donald Rayfield's translation of Shalamov's *Sketches of the Criminal World*, which contains descriptions of the period of prisoner-on-prisoner violence known as the "Bitches' War" will hopefully begin to address this: Varlam Shalamov, *Sketches of the Criminal World: Further Kolyma Stories*, trans. Donald Rayfield (New York: NYRB Classics, [1942] 2020).

[12] The most prominent of these is Iurii Brodskii, *Solovki: Dvadtsat´ let osobogo naznacheniia* (Moscow: Mir Iskusstv II, 2008).

of the popular mythology about the camp. Most prominently, this includes the potential reliability of some memoir recollections (172) and the various controversies surrounding the infamous visit of Maksim Gor´kii (140). This topic overlaps with Anne Hartmann's *Born to Be Criminal* chapter and shows the further use of penal institutions as a propaganda tool promoting the Soviet worldview.

Gullotta's powerful vignettes of the Solovki prisoners (continued in his incredibly helpful appendices) bring the "cultural force" on the archipelago to life. This is seen in the author's focus on inmates such as Boris Glubokovskii, a former Muscovite actor who became an integral part of both the camp theater and newspaper, yet about whom virtually nothing has been written in English. While his close camp compadre Dmitrii Likhachev has been the subject of an impressive recent biography, Likhachev's role in the Solovki criminological department, Krimkab (171), remains similarly unexplored.[13] In a similar sense to Renate Lachmann's chapter from *Born to Be Criminal*, it is possible that Gullotta might have been able to widen the lens of his analysis to reconstruct the experience of the many "49ers" (*sorokadeviatniki*), who represented the camp's recidivist element. A brief but powerful example of this can be seen in the way in which the writings of Sof´ia Okerman (213) are integrated into a candid exploration of how many female criminals found themselves forced into prostitution even during transportation to the camp site.

As Gullotta shows, the creation of the camp theater led to an "uncontrollable dynamic" within prisoner society that was also exemplified through its newspaper outputs. Although overarching censorship still existed, the author highlights how the security services reportedly allowed more freedom "than in Moscow or Leningrad" (282). It is in the final chapters of the book, however, where Gullotta's background as a literature scholar really comes to the forefront, highlighting tropes and influences among the prisoners stretching all the way back to the revered poet Aleksandr Pushkin (244). Gullotta is also at pains to reveal not only the links and influence of Futurism but also some of the more marginal and irreverent movements of the NEP era such as the Biocosmists (252). The author's discussion here fully reflects how the immediate aftermath of revolution and civil war was a time of much greater artistic and cultural freedoms than would be found over the ensuing decades and the development of bland socialist-realist tropes.

[13] Vladislav Zubok, *The Idea of Russia: The Life and Work of Dmitry Likhachev* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2017).

What is abundantly clear from both *Born to Be Criminal* and *Intellectual Life and Literature at Solovki* is that the discussion of criminality during the 1920s and activities inside the punitive apparatus were not two mutually exclusive topics. In the same sense that discussion of external events in the prisoner press showed a strong connection to the Soviet "mainland" (Gullota, 133), the existence of the criminological cabinet Krimkab and publication of their various findings reflected themes similar to those discussed in the chapter by Anne Hartmann. The relative freedom for criminological discourse either outside the camps or within the "cultural citadel" of Solovki would eventually disappear with the formation of the Gulag (Main Administration of the Camps) as an institution reporting directly to the security services at the beginning of the 1930s and its dramatic growth thereafter.[14] Ultimately, both works under review provide a remarkably nuanced insight into the fascinating atmosphere surrounding the transition from old world to new. For any scholars interested in understanding the internal workings of crime and punishment across the 1917 divide, these twin publications provide a staggering compendium of evidence, which will no doubt aid the development of future research.

School of History
University of East Anglia
Norwich Research Park
Norwich, Norfolk NR4 7TJ, UK
mark.vincent@uea.ac.uk

[14] Wilson Bell, *Stalin's Gulag at War: Forced Labour, Mass Death, and Soviet Victory in the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019), 9.