Born to be Criminal
The Discourse on Criminality and the Practice of Punishment in Late Imperial Russia and Early Soviet Union.
Interdisciplinary Approaches
Content

Acknowledgements | 7

Introduction
Riccardo Nicolosi/Anne Hartmann | 9

I. INBORN CRIMINALITY AND THE LATE RUSSIAN EMPIRE

The Empire-Born Criminal
Atavism, Survivals, Irrational Instincts, and the Fate of Russian Imperial Modernity
Marina Mogilner | 31

P. I. Kovalevskii
Criminal Anthropology and Great Russian Nationalism
Louise McReynolds | 63

Criminality, Deviance, and Anthropological Diversity
Narratives of Inborn Criminality and Atavism in Late Imperial Russia (1880-1900)
Riccardo Nicolosi | 85
The Empire-Born Criminal
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Marina Mogilner

Criminality and the scholarly field of criminal anthropology that studied it as well as the public discourses of illegality and deviance that bred on them are used by scholars as indicators of Russia's partaking in global modernity. Intentionally or unintentionally, the historical discussion evolves around the "essence" of scholarly and popular discourses of deviance as a marker of Russia's normality, "combined underdevelopment," or essential difference vis-à-vis some normative version of modernity (Engelstein 1992; 1993; Beer 2008). My goal in the present article is to go beyond this well-established tradition and revisit the old debate from the vantage point of new imperial history and its primary concern with unintended and unexpected consequences of seemingly self-evident approaches and ideas. Empire, as a context-setting category, ascribes meaning to situations and relationships depending on specific circumstances, subcultures, and local knowledge (in the Geertzian sense). It invalidates the very project of comparing some universal and stable Russian deviance (and, by extension, Russian modernity) to some normative and equally self-evident Western model. Whether read through the Lombrosian or Foucauldian lenses, the discourses of norm and deviance as epitomes of modernity become conditioned by a specific imperial situation – the decisive factor

1 | The article was prepared within the framework of the Basic Research Program at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE) and supported within the framework of a subsidy granted to the HSE by the Government of the Russian Federation for the implementation of the Global Competitiveness Program.
determining the configuration of power-knowledge relations (Gerasimov et al. 2009).

Empire embraces numerous, only partially congruent and mutually “translatable” sociocultural spaces and hierarchies and acts as a “switchman” between different contexts that change the meaning and mode of one’s performance, ideas, and identity. Thus, ethnicity as a main marker of difference can coexist with and even substitute for social status. As we know, in the Russian Empire the legal estate of “aliens” (inorodtsy) was reserved for ethnic minorities, and being a Pole or a Jew implied a whole complex of social, economic, and legal characteristics defined by law. On the other hand, criminal behavior according to the imperial penal code might be interpreted as a “tradition” under particular circumstances. The empire’s legal order or the “imperial rights regime” (Burbank 2006) implied a coexistence of multiple and often incongruent legal logics, institutions, and practices — beyond the scope of legal pluralism. Multidimensional imperial situations perpetuated hybridity: not necessarily in the sense famously defined by Homi Bhabha (as occurring exclusively within the colonial discourse) (Bhabha 2004), but more directly and indiscriminately producing hybrid — complex, hierarchical, relational, and situational — knowledge, identities, and discourses.

In this perspective, the main conflict regarding the take on deviance in late imperial Russia appears not to be between experts with their normative discourse of norm and the archaic state that did not embrace it. After all, there was nothing specifically Russian in these experts’ alleged readiness to radically change their “social environment” (political revolution viewed as an option), in order to impose their clear-cut vision of norm and deviance over the entire society (Engelstein 1993; Reer 2008; Morrissey 2010). The main conflict seemed to be the essentially imperial dilemma: how to reconcile the “strategic relativism” of criteria and values produced by the fundamental factor of empire’s heterogeneity and diversity with the systematizing and rationalizing impulse of modern scientific episteme and political culture (exemplified by the normative approach of experts) (Mogilner 2013). This tension inspired early reflections on the phenomenon of hybridity and relativizing critique of hegemonic discourses (Gerasimov et al. 2015). At the same time, it encouraged the strategy of “learned ignorance” about the empire as a way to make the unstable imperial situation more comprehensible.² The simultaneous proliferation of such antagonistic responses to the main conflict of Russian imperial modernity demonstrated the persistence of imperial strategic relativism as the impossibility of imposing a single “regime of truth” and interpretative strategy embracing the whole complexity of the Russian imperial condition.³

Strategic relativism at work can be vividly demonstrated in the applications of Lombrosian criminal anthropology in Russia. From the outset, Lombroso had been criticized for establishing the Eurocentric hegemonic discourse of norm and deviance as the universal and only scientific one. According to the first Russian anthropology professor and the leader of the Moscow school of liberal anthropology, Dmitrii Anuchin:

The “anthropological” school should use real anthropological data and consider all known different human types. Anthropological data prove [...] that morphologically a normal man can belong to white or black races, have woolly hair — as a Negro or Hottentots do — or straight hair — as a Mongol or an American does; he can be tall

² | “Learned ignorance” is Ann Stoler’s term. She traces it to “deliberately educated ignorance” coined by W. E. B. DuBois, “cultivated ignorance” by Foucault, and “sanctioned ignorance” by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in which Stoler emphasizes the linguistic-aphasic rather than cognitive elements of occlusion of knowledge (Stoler 2009, 247). Such learned ignorance characterized, for example, the nineteenth century Russian populism that was blind to the diversity and interconnectedness of the social space of empire because it interiorized the perception of society as a holistic social order. For a more detailed discussion see Semyonov et al. 2013.

³ | “Strategic relativism” is based on and refers to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s concept of “strategic essentialism” (Spivak 1987, 205): “The opposite case constituting the distinguishing feature of the ideal type of empire [...] may be termed strategic relativism, which should be understood as the discourse and stance that relativizes the bounded and internally homogeneous nature of the constituent elements of the sociopolitical space and governance [...] and [...] produces the situation of uncertainty, incommensurability, and indistinction” (Gerasimov et al. 2009, 20).
as a Polynesian, a Patagonian, or a Kafir, or short as a Negritos, a Japanese, or a Lopar (Anuchin 1890, 337-338). 4

Anuchin called generalizations based exclusively on European measurements arbitrary and unsubstantiated and compared this to a normative approach that assumed only “white [men] to be normal, while regarding Negroes, Mongols, and other types as abnormal, degenerative, and enfeebled representatives of the family Homo” (ibid., 338). 5

This implicitly anticolonial intellectual critique reflected the profound transformation of the Lombrosian concept of “inborn criminal” and explained why in Russia it became easily differentiated into an assortment of ethnically distinctive collective types, as in the following assertion: “In the development and general form of the skull, Lombroso has found a predominance of prognathic brachycephalism, that is, an approximation of the type of Tatars, Kalmyks, Otaitians, Arakurants [...]” (Mintslov 1888, 219). 6 The ethnicization of anthropometric characteristics of the “criminal type” logically led to a similar differentiation of the normative type into distinctive regional, racial, or social types. This was part of a typical imperial story of negotiating criteria and degrees of human difference (Mogilner 2013, 328-346). Not unlike other languages of imperial self-modernization, criminal anthropology became a means to systematically reorganize, rationalize, and possibly control imperial diversity. As I will show below, in the Russian Empire at the turn of the century, the program of imposing a single universal norm and marginalizing and criminalizing its variations as deviance had to be explicitly politically (indeed reactionary)

4 | “Антропологическая школа должна пользоваться данными действительной антропологии и включать в свой кругозор все известные разновидности человечества. Данные же антропологии доказывают, что [...] [в морфологическом отношении нормальный человек может принадлежать к белой или к черной расе, иметь шерстистые волоса (так в оригинале – MM), как негр или готтенот, или прямые и гладкие, как монгол или американец; быть высокорослым, как польский, патагонец, кафр, или малорослым, как негритос, японец, папуа.”

5 | “[...] как считать только белого человека нормальным, а в неграх, монголах и других видеть ненормальных, выродившихся и осужденных представителей рода homo.”

6 | “Ломброзо нашел в преступниках преобладание пропагатического брахицефализма, т.е. приближение к типу татар, калмыков, отягщ, араханцев [...].”

motivated. But even in the latter cases, empire as a context-setting category relativized and mitigated the most radical attempts to impose and stabilize one universal normative discourse and the politics of deviance.

The methodological embrace of imperial diversity could lead to quite discriminatory political conclusions, including explicitly colonial ones. This was the case of professor Maksim Maksimovich Kovalevskii, sociologist and historian, a student of British political tradition and Caucasian customary law, a founder of the Party for Democratic Reforms, and a member of the Russian parliament (State Duma). A great part of Kovalevskii’s charisma derived from his being a personal acquaintance of Karl Marx, for whom Kovalevskii served as a source of knowledge about the history of communal landownership, and who could encourage Kovalevskii to perceive deviants as historically formed social groups rather than individuals (Boronenk 1996; Semyonov et al. 2013, 64-68). “Let us imagine a Caucasian mountaineer who discusses some articles of the Criminal Code while being convinced that blood should be wiped away only by blood or compensated with cows and sheep,” wrote Kovalevskii in 1905 in a leading Russian liberal newspaper. He continued, “When a circuit court sentences the murderer-Circassian to hard labor in Siberia, the closest relative of his victim follows him there to exercise the duty of revenge. Such facts are often mentioned in the courts’ minutes and administrative correspondence” (Kovalevskii 1905, 2). 7 Kovalevskii grouped peoples of the Russian Caucasus with the Siberian natives – Chukchees, Kamchadals, and Yakuts – into one category of underdeveloped and uncivilized subjects of the empire whose “criminality” was not, strictly speaking, “inborn” in that it was a derivative of their primitive stage of development, but still structurally fundamentally incompatible with a modern society. Hence Kovalevskii recommended reservations based on the U.S. American Indian model and exclusion from the common civic space as a way of “punishment” of the primitives and a means to construct

7 | “Представьте себе кавказского горца, обсуждающего те или другие статьи уголовного кодекса и проникнутого убеждениями, что кровь надо смыть кровью или взамен этого требовать коров и баранов. [...] Когда окружающий суд приговоряет убийцу-черкеса к каторжным работам в Сибири, ближайший родственник жертв увидит последовать за ссыльным, чтобы осуществить на нем долг места. Такие факты не раз упоминаются судебными протоколами и административной перепиской.”
a modern imperial society (ibid.). At the same time, “primitivism,” “traditional society,” “atavism,” and “criminality” were not just general scientific concepts for Kovalevskii, and least of all connected exclusively to criminal anthropology. Their concrete meaning and practical implications depended on specific structures of empire (Kovalevskii 1886; 1890).

The alternative to this kind of liberal imperialism was a much more egalitarian and even populist vision of the coexistence of various local norms and local versions of degeneration – arranged into distinctive and horizontally differentiated national groups. This well-elicited application of the principle of imperial relativism in criminal anthropology is most immediately associated with the best known Russian follower of Cesare Lombroso, the female physician Praskov’ia Nikolaevna Tarnovskaia, who studied Russian female murderers and prostitutes (Engelstein 1992, 138-143; Mogilner 2013, 339-340). She was literally obsessed with designating strict borders of her normative and deviant groups, constructing them as purely racially Russian. Carefully excluded from her sampling were those cases, regardless of how interesting they are, where, after close scrutiny, one parent appears to be not indigenously [ethnic] Russian by birth. Thus I had to reject all convicts who had a parent originating from Finland, the Baltic provinces, western territories (Zapadny krai), as well as from the Caucasus, or descendants of Kazan and Crimean Tatars or other incomodtsy. We also excluded all women who had among their ancestors Jews and Armenians. We strictly excluded any admixture of extraneous blood that would produce racial mixture. In other regards, I did not select subjects for my analysis. I took all female murderers available to me from the mid-Russia provinces, Russian by origin (Tarnovskaia 1902, 2).

8 | “Исклчались” как бы интересны они ни были, все те случаи, где, при ближайшем ознакомлении, один из родителей оказывался не коренным русским по рождению. Таким образом, приходилось откинуть всех осужденных, один из родителей которых был уроженцем Финляндии, Балтийских губерний, Западного Края, равно как и Кавказа, или происходил от казанских или крымских татар, или иных инородцев. Мы исключили также всех женщин, заведомо имевших в своем восходящем поколении евреев и армян, строго исключая из своих наблюдений присмея восторженной крови обусловливающие скрещения, — в остальном я не выделяя субъектов для своих наблюдений, а брала подряд всех представлявшихся мне женщин-убийц средних русских губерний, русских по происхождению.”

Tarnovskaia’s Russian female “criminal types” and “normal” peasant women were not in any way representatives of some universal anthropological norm and degeneration, and they did not simply stand for a politically deprived class and gender group upon which intellectuals projected their cultural and biological biases and utopias. Instead, they embodied the Russian ethnic/racial norm and Russian ethnic/racial atavism, and Tarnovskaia readily acknowledged the limitations of her results. She allowed that other pure racial groups in the empire exhibited their own specific forms of norm and degeneration, and thus implied the possibility of coexistence of multiple legal logics reflecting different sociobiological realities (Mogilner 2013, 339-340).

The main problem with this application of Lombrosian methodology was its political implications. The arrangement, under which each collective subject would have its own unique “born criminal” and thus would receive an individualized legal treatment, was possible only under the archaic particularistic imperial order. It was precisely the “old” imperial state that preferred local knowledge and individualized treatments of different imperial subjects (the proverbial “Jewish question” or “Finnish question” instead of a general nationalities policy) to universal expert paradigms. When consistently applied as a means to reconfigure the existing imperial order, the adaptations of Lombrosian agenda or conceptual repertoire à la Kovalevskii and Tarnovskaia yielded only two alternatives: a consistent modern colonialism on the example of Western overseas empires or some backward-looking (toward the old imperial particularistic order), even if rhetorically very modern and “progressive,” social utopia. Neither alternative, when articulated explicitly in political terms, was able to completely satisfy the Russian intellectual public, including Kovalevskii and Tarnovskaia themselves. At the same time, in no way had this practical inadequacy diminished the significance of the very task of rationalizing and reorganizing the irregular and disorderly imperial diversity.

Rigorous intellectual work was being carried out in many academic and professional spheres outside of the proper domain of criminal anthropology. Categories such as “atavism,” “survival,” “irrational,” and “primitive” could have been borrowed from ethnography, philosophy, sociology, or psychiatry, and used to structure broader interdisciplinary debates which actively splashed out into the public domain. Since the late nineteenth century, ethnographers, lawyers, physical anthropologists,
general physicians, psychiatrists, pedagogues, officers of the Russian army, national and civic activists, and all kinds of politicians shared this rhetorical repertoire. This helped to keep the Lombrosian agenda on the radar without directly referencing the Italian criminal anthropologist or the “inborn criminal.”

For example, evoking the concept of “survival” in the postreform courtrooms opened the door for an essentially Lombrosian social imagination (in its characteristic Russian imperial rendition) under the disguise of the respectful ethnographic genealogy going back to E. B. Tylor. In his *Primitive Culture* (1871), Tylor outlined the evolutionary vision of a uniform “prehistoric” society as a necessary stage in the development of all human collectives. He formulated the concept of survivals as “proofs and examples of an older condition of culture” that had no functional meaning in modernity (Tylor 1871, 15). When used outside its proper context and evolutionary chronotope, “survival” could easily have been read as “atavism” bearing an important message for modern experts. A paradigmatic example of such a substitution was the “Votiak trial” (1892–1896), when a group of Votiak men (today known as Udmurts) from the village of Old Multan in the taiga-covered triangle between the rivers Volga and Kama, was falsely accused in the ritual murder of a Russian (Geraci 2000). The two court convictions in this case were based mainly on the expert testimony of Imperial Kazan University professor, ethnographer Ivan Smirnov, who never claimed to be an admirer of Lombroso. A true Tylorian, he believed in the universal path of human progress toward civilized cultural and social forms and in the Russian imperial civilizing mission. As an expert, he blamed not the concrete Votiaks, but rather their archaic “survivals” that needed to be purged. As long as Votiaks as a group exhibited these “survivals,” they were to occupy the niche of the “born criminal.” At the same time, for those who still retained a belief in imperial civilizing power and in nonracial imperial Russianness, their condition remained theoretically curable (Mogilner 2016a).

In the last decades of the empire, this applied discourse underwent quite a dramatic evolution, made apparent by another paradigmatic trial – the infamous “Beilis case” (1911–1913) (Weinberg 2014). When the Jew Mendel Beilis was accused in the ritual murder of the Christian boy Andrei Lushchinski, experts supporting this accusation blamed the crime not on certain atavistic “survivals,” but on the savage nature of the whole Jewish race. This time, the whole group was conceptualized as a collective survival and hence firmly established as an “inborn criminal” with no chances for cure and social integration (Mogilner 2016a). The main expert for the prosecution, professor Ivan Alekseevich Sikorskii (1842–1919) of Kiev St. Vladimir University, believed that, to explain the motives of Mendel Beilis, “one has to confine himself to considerations of an historical and anthropological character” and treat the murderer as a “criminal anthropological type.” “One must admit, with the anthropological criminologists,” continued Sikorskii, “that the psychological basis of crimes of that type is sought in racial revenge” (Weinberg 2014, 99-100). To get rid of this “collective survival” of the primitive epoch, the modern society needed to isolate or purge completely the whole dangerous group motivated by the criminal impulse for revenge. In his court testimony, Sikorskii explicitly synthesized Lombrosian criminal anthropology with Tylorian ethnography, misrepresenting his concept of “survival” as a live phenomenon, not merely an empty shell of the practice that was supposed to have lost its cultural meaning and function long before. To this mix he added James Frazer, the author of the *The Golden Bough: A Study in Comparative Religion* (1890) – a groundbreaking exploration of animist rituals in primitive cultures. Frazer was needed to support Sikorskii’s claim that the ritual killing of children of another ethnicity was a sign of living savagery (Mogilner 2016a).

As arbitrary as such syntheses might have seemed, they revealed the persisting importance of the Lombrosian agenda connecting atavistic and criminal/deviant (survival and modernity). This connection, however differently understood and expressed, remained theoretically and practically relevant for thinking about human diversity in the Russian Empire.

**The savage within**

As a semiotic system, this Lombrosian connection implied that external signs of atavism and degeneracy (signifiers) were indicators of an internal degenerate condition (signified). However the relationships between the signifier and the signified changed in the years that separated the Votiak case from the Beilis trial, with experts’ attention shifting from the observable and measurable signifiers to the hidden and therefore illusive and frightening signified. This new shift became especially apparent during the interrevolutionary period of 1905-1917. "Savage hunters" from
within the ranks of scholars and politicians sharing the modernist and nationalist perception of the society, rather unwillingly discovered the very same qualities they attributed to alien groups (primitivism, irrationality, reliance on instincts) in their own “constituency” – first of all, the Russian ethnic-cultural nation. From the Tyolian vantage point, there would have been nothing dramatic in such a discovery, but a more Lombrosian essentialized perception of human diversity (in categories of race or social class) could not rely on the idea of evolutionary transformation. If the “savage within” could not be purged without the destruction of the self, the only remaining option was to wholeheartedly embrace it as a positive kind of “savagery,” with all its criminal connotations.

It is thus not accidental that in the 1950s and 1960s, an influential group of American historians of late imperial Russia, who showed almost no interest in its imperial nature, nevertheless posited as a key predicament of that period the conflict between social organization and elemental improvisation, consciousness and spontaneity, epitomized (for these historians) in the standoff between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks.

For almost three decades, the members of the various factions of Social Democracy had been content to interpret the data of their life experience – and to define and phrase their varied and changing political stands – through the medium of the two conceptual and symbolic categories, “consciousness” and “spontaneity.” It had been their common quest for consciousness, for a reasonable and responsible world view in the face of an alien and indifferent society, that had originally brought the members of the intelligentsia together. [...] The very intensity of their efforts to find a “conscious” identity had periodically given rise in many members of the intelligentsia to an opposite striving, to an urge to break out of their isolation and to give free, “spontaneous,” expression to their feelings – by “fusing” with an outside popular force. [...] The concepts of consciousness and spontaneity reflected the conflict between these two modes of orientation. They reflected the split that many members of the intelligentsia were making between reason and feelings (Haimson 1955, 209-210).

The author of this passage, the historian Leopold Haimson, presented the Mensheviks as resenting the savage face of their class base – a substantial part of the Russian proletariat that was presumably “completely unadapted to their new factory environment, ‘driven by instincts and feelings rather than consciousness and calculation,’ who gave the mass movement ‘its disorganized, primitive, elemental character’” (Haimson 1964, 634). The Bolsheviks took over the Mensheviks because they more successfully resolved the dilemma of the “savage within.”

Indeed, a comprehensive analysis of Vladimir Lenin’s exhaustively documented writings reveals the suggestive dynamics of his usage of the notion of “class instinct” (“revolutionary instinct”), as contrasted to rational forms of organization or theoretical thinking. For more than ten years, from 1893 to 1903, he referred to the role of “instinct” only negatively. These were his political opponents, populists, who “believed in the communist instincts of the ‘communal’ peasant” and “the socialist instincts of the people” (Lenin [1990], 275; Lenin [1901], 281, 299; Lenin [1902a], 388). They were “demagogues” provoking “base instincts in the masses.” In response, Lenin demanded that “all revolutionary instincts and strivings” be subordinate to “a centralized, militant organization that consistently carries out a Social Democratic policy” (Lenin [1902a], 463, 477; Lenin [1902b], 202; Lenin [1902c], 269). Lenin believed that only “the backward worker[s] from the lower or middle strata of the masses” could be “guided by their instincts” (Lenin [1899], 291-292); that “because of the extremely low cultural level of the Caucasian workers, their struggle against the employers has naturally been of a more or less instinctive, spontaneous nature” (Lenin [1902d], 324-325). The turning point in his perception of irrational and instinctive social action as having a pedagogic and creative value (Lenin [1904], 273) came in November 1903, when Lenin suddenly admitted that the workers’ “proletarian instinct may teach us ‘leaders’ something too” (Lenin [1903], 116). After January 1905, references to the newly understood “instinct” literally flooded his writings, appearing in dozens of articles over the year. There was no longer anything savage in “sober proletarian instinct” (Lenin [1905a], 37), so “comrades [...] will have to be guided [...] by their revolutionary instinct” (Lenin [1905b], 69; Lenin [1905c], 300). By April 1905 Lenin had already begun directly juxtaposing the “revolutionary instinct of the working class” to “fallacious theories” (Lenin [1905d], 207, 208), and by May had completely reversed the hierarchy of values, declaring the priority of instinct over rational thinking and organization.9

9 | “Workers have the class instinct, and, given some political experience, they pretty soon become staunch Social-Democrats. I should be strongly in favor of
Somewhat lagging behind the Bolsheviks, Russian liberals and nationalists also sought reconciliation with the formerly estranged and repressed “savage” within their target audiences. In March 1909, Peter Struve published a programmatic article, *Intelligentsia and the National Face (Intelligentsia i natsional’noe lito)*, in which he demanded that the Russian intelligentsia become self-consciously “nationally Russian.” The period 1908-1909 was one of the radical political reorientation of Struve, who had been perceived as one of the leading liberal ideologists and politicians in Russia (just as in the 1890s he was a recognized leader of the Social Democrats). What was striking about this article was not so much its ideological message (the turn from liberalism toward statism and nationalism) as its very different mental mapping of social reality:

Once they thought that nationality meant race, that is, the skin color, the width of nose (“nasal index”), and so on. But nationality is something much more apparent and at the same time delicate. It is spiritual attractions and repulsions. To become aware of them, one does not have to use anthropological instruments or genealogical studies. They live and tremble in our soul (Struve 1909, 3).  

A renowned intellectual and rationalist, Struve rejected any objective and institutionalized (rational) forms of social differentiation. Declaring that the future of the state depends on the success of national cohesion and mobilization, he entrusted these important tasks to “spiritual attractions” that “tremble in our soul” – that is, the most irrational instincts lying at the very core of the trope of primitivism.

The same instincts appeared to be located in the Self and the Other, to be healthy and degenerate, criminal and perfectly legal, progressive and retrograde or atavistic. Their meaning was far from stable and universal; it was defined by a particular configuration of the imperial situation, a certain political agenda, a vision of the imperial or post-imperial future.  

10 | "Когда-то думали, что национальность есть раса, т.е. цвет кожи, ширина носа ("носовой указатель") и т.п. Но национальность есть нечто гораздо более несомненное и в то же время тонкое. Это духовные притяжения и отталкивания, и для того, чтобы осознать их, не нужно прибегать ни к антропологическим приборам, ни к генеалогическим изысканиям. Они живут и трепещут в душе."  

Evidently, the shift from the signifier to the signified did not produce any stability regarding the notions of norm and deviance. Likewise, it did not result in a less groupist and more individualized treatment of “inborn criminality,” of organic deviance and difference. It nevertheless cleared the way for psychiatrists as the main experts on irrational instincts, attractions, and repulsions. They now became the most vocal and authoritative diagnosticians of different social conditions, the most qualified users of the established conceptual repertoire of deviance, from “criminal type” to “survival,” “savage,” and so on. No wonder the story of Russian psychiatry as a profession and, most important, as a powerful social and political discourse chronologically coincides with the timing of the semiotic shift, which, in turn, coincides with the epoch of rising mass politics and its nationalization in the empire (Brown 1988; 1987; Etkind 1993; Menzhulin 2003; Beer 2008). This story is yet to be written as an imperial history from the perspective of the discovery of internal savagery in the dynamic late imperial situation. Russian psychiatrists inherited the tradition of ethnicization of deviance and faced the new challenge of reordering and rationalizing hidden internal irrational instincts alongside “external” imperial diversity.

**Imperial comparison of deviance**

Professor Ivan Sikorski, a Kiev psychiatrist and neurologist, the infamous expert on Jewish racial savagery at the Beilis trial, was a typical representative of those Russian psychiatrists who most consciously embraced the ideology of modern – in fact post-imperial in terms of its political makeup and horizon – Russian nationalism (Mogilner 2013, 185-2004). Professor Pavel Ivanovich Kovalevskii, another prominent Russian psychiatrist and a leading Russian nationalist, represented the same cohort. In 1883, only three years after Cesare Lombroso founded a special journal for the Italian school of criminal anthropology, *Archivio di psichiatria, antropologia criminale e scienze penali*, Kovalevskii began editing the Russian *Archive of Psychiatry, Neurology, and Forensic Psychopathology* (Arkhiv psikhiiatrii, nerosiologii i sudennoi psikhopatologii). The Archive, just as

11 | I attempt to suggest such a history in Mogilner 2016b.
12 | On P. I. Kovalevskii see also Louise McReynolds’ and Riccardo Nicolosi’s contributions to this volume.
individual academic and popular publications by Sikorskii, Kovalevskii, or another highly positioned member of the group, professor Vladimir Fiodorovich Chizh, exhibited a trademark blend of Lombrosian rigidity of “types,” their groupist and ethnicized interpretation and a strong fixation on irrational instincts. Kovalevskii claimed approvingly that Russians felt “instinctual, biological nationalism” (Kovalevskii 1910, 76), which for him was a healthy instinct, for he understood nationalism as a synthesis of the rational “act of thinking” with “national feeling,” an “animal, gregarious, organic and inborn phenomenon” (Kovalevskii 1915, 3). However, in the cases of Tatars or especially Jews the same “animal, gregarious, organic” signaled dangerous, criminal, and “predatory” (Kovalevskii 1900, 103).

Sikorskii went even further, exposing the dangerous and overtly criminal nature of irrational instincts of the Russian religious sectarians who contaminated the Russian national body from within. In other contexts, however, he presented these same instincts as revealing sectarians’ true religiosity and existential Russianness (Mogilner 2013, 167-200). To differentiate between the two interpretations, Sikorskii needed a third element, which he found in collective Jews whose irrational nature lacked any ambiguity and as such presented an absolute threat to the emerging post-imperial Russian national modernity. The resulting construct of the “savage within” was a hybrid product of superimposition of atavistic Jewish and primitive Russian: social environment and determinism of race; uplifting religious emotions and primitive ecstasy; complex (Russian sectarian) hallucinations and ugly (Jewish) hiccup and vomiting; individual etymologies of male degenerate psychoses (individual medical cases in Sikorskii’s analysis of sectarian movements were exclusively restricted to male sectarians), and generic sexualized descriptions of female hysteria (exemplified by a hiccupping and vomiting young Jewess from one of his medical reports — on the one hand, and female leaders of the common worships of one of the Russian sects that he studied — on the other). Regardless of how scientific Sikorskii’s mode of discussing the atavistic and criminal was, his “savage” remained hybrid, elusive, unstable, and hence even more frightening (Mogilner 2016b).

It became the task of the younger generation of psychiatrists, more extreme in terms of their readiness to part ways with the old imperial

13 | “...национальное чувство” — “явление животное, стадное, органическое и прирожденное.”

complexity, to eliminate ambiguity from the unstable constructs of their mentors. A graduate student of Vladimir Fiodorovich Chizh, E. M. Budul (later known in his native Latvia as Hermanis Buduls, 1882-1954), attempted to do this in his dissertation, On Comparative Racial Psychiatry (K sravnitel’noi rasovoi psikhiatrii, 1914). He racialized psychiatric statistics collected at Iur’ev (Tartu) University Clinic for nervous disorders and elaborated a comparative method of measuring degrees of inborn versus socially acquired psychological and mental deviance. One of his main focuses was hysteria — the same hysteria that Sikorskii famously diagnosed among the racially degenerate Jews and Russian sectarians alike. The disciplinary mainstream of the time understood hysteria as a culturally determined disorder receding with the advancement of societal progress. In modern history it was believed to affect predominantly subalterns: women, peasants, and Jews (Gilman 1991) — all three main elements of Sikorskii’s elusive concept of internal savagery. Budul attempted to disengage the elements of this triad (especially Jews from the Russian peasants) by composing a complex hierarchy of racial versus cultural forms of primitivism observable within the imperial borders. He diagnosed hysteria — a malady of the savage and feminine groups — among the animist Yakuts, Ostiaks, Tunguks, and Kalmuks, whose culture he associated with “hysterical” rituals and self-mutilations, and who otherwise could hardly be linked to Jews as a people of culture, monotheist religion, and “capitalist” economic behavior. In Budul’s dissertation, inborn — that is, racial — predisposition toward hysteria and self-mutilation became the two basic features of primitivism that made cultural differences between Yakuts and Jews irrelevant.

To them Budul opposed the Russian nation. He admitted its relative cultural backwardness, which, however, was expected to disappear with time (“psychic epidemics of this type are comparatively frequent in Russia because it still lags behind Western Europe” [Budul 1914, 182]). Simultaneously, Budul dismissed any organic foundations of sectarian hysteria. In Budul’s interpretation, sectarians, not unlike Votiaks of the

14 | He is regarded as “the founding father of Latvian psychiatry” (Kuznecovs 2013, 149).

15 | “В России психические эпидемии названного рода наблюдаются сравнительно часто только потому, что культура в России еще не пошла так далеко вперед, как в Западной Европе.”
Mogilner case, exhibited “survivals” that were theoretically curable. As in Sikorski’s works, in Budul’s dissertation, Russian hysteria revealed itself in “the most beautiful hallucinations with religious and terrible fantasies,” while Jewish hysteria was exemplified by the hiccupping and vomiting peasant Jewish girl. Budul stabilized these two extreme poles on the scale of relative imperial savagery, which enabled him to evaluate the biological and social danger represented by each particular non-Russian group between Russians/Slavs and the Jews. For example, he described Bashkirs as suffering simultaneously from cultural and biological causes of degeneration and hence as destined to remain half-modern/half-savage. Unlike them, sectarians, together with other backward groups of Slavs, were on their way toward the top position on the comparative imperial scale – the position designated for the Russian race-nation in its ideal state. If the fate of the Jews had been “scientifically” predetermined, the fate of other primitives (such as Yakuts or Ostiaks) described in the dissertation as being quite close to the degenerate Jews, remained unspecified and seemed to depend on political rather than scholarly judgment.

Medical practice as social-political technique

Since the late nineteenth century, Russian physicians and especially military physicians who partook in the postreform vanguard military discourse of population politics, tended to connect ethnicity, atavism, and deviance. While zemstvo and private doctors still exhibited more diverse professional attitudes, annual reports of the physicians of Russian military hospitals routinely classified patients by nationality (a category officially absent from state statistics). Physicians of neurological and psychiatric divisions of these hospitals especially readily combined the ethnicity of their patients with race and almost always provided descriptions of “signs of anthropological degeneration” that ranged from anomalies in skull and facial features à la Lombroso to hysteria or other “organic” psychiatric disorders.

16 | “[…] самыми красивыми галлюцинациями с религиозными и страшными фантазиями”.
17 | See a more detailed analysis in Mogilner 2016b.
18 | As a typical example, see Kiselev (1889). In a special section, Kiselev treats “signs of anthropological degeneration” among eleven melancholic patients of his hospital psychiatric division. He found these signs in the form of their skulls and in the form and size of their ears: “[…] one patient’s right ear was bigger than the left one, along with the better developed right side of the skull; another patient’s right ear was smaller than the left ear, and the skull exhibited asymmetry.” “[…] у одного больного правое ухо было больше левого вовсе не потому, что у него был развитием правой стороны черепа; у другого правое ухо было меньше левого при асимметрии черепа” (Kiselev 1889, 129).
19 | “[…] не имеют ли значение в этнологии убийств и разбоев на Кавказе врожденные особенности психики отдельных племен, и рас, населяющих край, и не играют ли в этом рода преступлениях также некоторой роли, а если играют, то в какой степени – психические и нервные болезни людей?”

Dr. Ernest Vilgel’movich Erikson was such a typical military physician. He received his medical doctorate in 1900 for dissertation, On the Influence of the Cerebral Cortex and Subcortical Node on the Reduction of the Spleen, defended at St. Petersburg Military-Medical Academy under the supervision of Professor Bekhterev (Erikson 1900). However as a clinical psychiatrist and neurologist he made the Lombrosian connection between atavism and criminality his major field of scholarly interest. The results of his medical and anthropological observations appeared in professional journals, including Bulletin of Psychology, Criminal Anthropology and Hypnotism (Vestnik psikhologii, kriminal’noi antropologii i gipnotizma), edited by Vladimir Bekhterev, Natural Science and Geography (Estestvoznanie i Geografija), Neurology Bulletin (Neurologitcheskii Vestnik), and others (Erikson 1899; 1901; 1902; 1903). Erikson’s most productive period was in the early twentieth century, just before the first Russian Revolution, when he served as a military physician in the Caucasus. There he developed a research agenda for each “psychiatrist and psychologist” interested in the connection between atavistic (inborn, racially determined) and criminal: “do inborn features of the psyche of some tribes and races of this region play any role in the etiology of murders and brigandage in the Caucasus, do psychiatric and nervous diseases also play a role in these crimes (and if so – to what degree)” (Erikson 1906, 48).19 Registering signs of physical degeneration and collecting anthropometric statistics were seen by Dr. Erikson as absolutely necessary elements of medical practice in the Caucasus (Erikson 1909a, 1).

Surely, the colonial distances were more apparent there than anywhere else in the empire, and “criminality” of the local population was a well-
established trope in academic, professional, and political debates. For Erikson, however, the Caucasus and the medical treatment of deviance there represented nothing specifically colonial or particularly unique. In all other places where he worked in the military hospitals, from Siberia and the Far East to the Warsaw district military hospital (Varshavskii uiazdovskii voennyi gospital’), he developed the same approach, the same research agenda and the same understanding of the connection between atavism, deviance, and criminality. An acute feeling of professional and social responsibility as an expert on irrational instincts, who possessed the real power of interpretation of the hidden signified, penetrated his routine medical reports and scholarly writings regardless of the geographical location in the empire where he observed his patients. When cultural and racial differences between the patients he treated seemed to be less apparent than in the Caucasus, Erikson resorted to the method of imperial comparison. He arrived at this method independently, out of practical considerations and well before Budul had elaborated it in his dissertation.

As a psychiatrist at the Warsaw district military hospital, Erikson evaluated and treated a highly diverse soldier population reflecting not only the demography of the Privislenskii krai, but the demography of the Russian Empire in general (including a small minority of conscripts from the Caucasus). Under these circumstances, Erikson calibrated his scale of normalcy in such a way that his Jewish patients came to embody the benchmark of the lowest and hopeless organic deviance (racial degeneracy, atavisms, organic psychosis, criminal inclinations, social danger). His Russian patients represented the opposite pole of culturally determined and curable deviance. All other national cases could be safely located between the two extremes.

It makes sense to compare the impact of an unpleasant letter from home on a Russian and a Jew: a healthy and strong Russian man, at least as he is perceived in his unit, often faints away or experiences a wild hysterical or neurotic attack, or can sometimes go and hang or shoot himself. Under the same circumstances, a Jew most often exhibits an unusually strong anger and a desire for revenge. He wants to escape home and take the law into his own hands, however he is not likely to attempt suicide and in any case is not going to take to drinking "in pain", which is so customary among the Russian soldiers (Erikson 1907a, 12).20

From the onset, Erikson’s typical Russian was a “healthy and strong” man whose neurotic reaction was caused by the difficult circumstances of military service in the western borderlands of the empire, which were alien to him, far away from home and family. At the same time, in his assessment of the Jewish psychopathological reaction, Erikson had anticipated Sikorski’s infamous claim during the Beilis trial that Mendel Beilis acted out of “racial revenge.” Erikson characterized his very real individual Russian patient-soldiers as “dreamers and mystics” (ibid.), just as seven years later Budul would insist that the aggregated Russian hysteria revealed itself in “the most beautiful hallucinations with religious and terrible fantasies.”

In a routine medical-statistical report compiled for the psychiatric division of the Warsaw hospital in 1906, Erikson introduced its Jewish patients as representatives of a “tribe producing the greatest numbers of hysterics, neurasthenics, and different kinds of degenerates.”21 In the context of the report, such an introduction justified Erikson’s and his fellow physicians’ diagnoses and choices of treatment, including harsh measures of isolation, painful medical procedures applied for experimental purposes, and complete disregard for information supplied by the patients themselves (Erikson 1907b, 138; Erikson 1908). Patients’ aggressive criminal instincts and the tribal “desire for revenge” released physicians of any moral and professional constraints.

20 | "Стоит сравнить действие неприятного письма, полученного из дома, на русского и на еврея: русский подчас совершенно здоровый и крепкий мужчина, по крайней мере считавшийся таковым на службе, сплошь и рядом падает в обморок или обнаруживает бурный приступ истерического возбуждения, а еврея — пойдет и повесится или застрелится; у еврея в тех же условиях вспыхивает революция только гнев необъяснимой силы, появляется жажда мести, стремление убить со службы домой и расправиться самочинно, но он вряд ли сделает покушение на свою жизнь и во всяком случае не запьет "с горя", что так обычно у русских солдат.”
21 | "[...] нет другого племени, среди которого было бы столько истериков, неврастеников и разного рода дегенератов [...]"
In 1910, if not earlier, Erikson suggested that military-medical examiners had to consider the nature of racially specific neuroses and psychosis when making decisions about the military fitness of conscripts (Erikson 1909b; Erikson 1910b, 159). The semiotic shift from the signifier to the signified manifested itself in this suggestion, especially when Erikson criticized the traditional Lombrosian approach based on the analysis of external signs of atavism. As a practical physician working with patients whom he perceived as individual representatives of their race, Erikson knew that anthropometric indicators were good for constructing a generic "criminal type" but not sufficient for differentiating between ethnically and racially marked specific "criminal types." In addition, external signifiers did not allow for a convincing presentation of Jewish conscripts as an absolute degenerate type. In most cases, the average length and width of skulls of Erikson's Jewish patients were normal. Erikson's expectations of finding mostly dolichocephalic skulls among his Jewish patients also failed miserably. As he reasoned, the Jewish race evolved from ancient dolichocephaly to modern brachicephaly, and if "one sees mental illness as a phenomenon of degeneration and atavism, then our material has to yield many dolichocephals" (Erikson 1909a, 5). He was disappointed to discover that this was not the case, and that in general no meaningful correlation existed between the "height of skull and forms of mental disorder." (ibid., 6). Nor did he find Lombrosian hyperdeveloped jaws of "born criminals" among his Jewish patients. The only "degenerative" anatomic sign presumably signaling atavism was, in his view, the Jewish ear: "Very often Jews have ears protruding on both sides, with more or less outspread helix and comparatively prominent Darwin's tubercle. This feature is so characteristic of the Jewish people that often ears alone are enough to disclose who you are dealing with" (Erikson 1909a, 17). Left with nothing but ears, Erikson concluded that instincts and neuroses and psychoses were more effective indicators of the "savage within" and that the task of practical psychiatrists and neurologists was not only to collect anthropometric statistics and diagnose and cure illnesses but also to explain the meaning, nature, and danger, when applicable, of impulses, instincts, and abnormal behavior. In his formulation of the task of practical psychiatry, the distinction between medical practice and social policing was disappearing. The signified as the main object of diagnostics provided much broader opportunities for almost unrestricted ideological creativity (as long as formal conventions of scientific narrative were observed).

Physicians of the Warsaw hospital could discuss specific instincts and irrational impulses from a formally psychiatric point of view, as during their meeting on February 26, 1910, when Dr. E. Nilson presented on "soldiers' morbid impulses toward escape." However the medical-social discourse of deviance that these psychiatrists shared necessitated generalizations about racial impulses and the application of imperial comparison for differentiating between the degrees of social danger presented by these impulses to society. During the discussion of Dr. Nilson's presentation, his colleagues predictably assumed that the predisposition toward vagrancy was an atavistic and a racially determined quality. They could have heard about "drapetomania" - the psychiatric diagnosis attributed by the American nineteenth century psychiatrists to blacks and described as an uncontrollable urge to run away from their 'master' and change places (Cartwright 1851; Beynton 2001), or they just reasoned about "lower" races in a similar logic. They immediately ran into the problem of how to differentiate between the atavisms of nomadic peoples of the empire, of Roma and Jews, on the one hand, and the "Vagrant Rus" (Russian colonizers, pilgrims or seasonal workers), on the other. This diversion from the psychiatric aspect of the problem, summarized by Erikson as "where are the borders of the inherited instinct and the expressions of psychopathology?" (Erikson 1910, 153-154), to a social-political formulation of the same problem was inevitable and in fact quite conscious. The same blurred border between medical and social-political aspects characterized the psychiatric construction of the phenomenon of self-
mutilation (chlenovreditel'stvo) as a problem of practical relevance for the medical community and for the modernizing imperial society in general. Since the late nineteenth century, hundreds of unpublished reports and published articles penned by physicians serving in different military hospitals in the Russian empire detailed characteristically Jewish self-mutilations, which, as one medical doctor from the Warsaw military hospital noted, were "well-known to any old military physician" (Nic'son 1909, 98). The proliferation of this literature was obviously connected with the attempts to limit Jewish presence in the Russian army by stressing their cunning schemes to avoid conscription and their physical (and moral) unfitness (Holquist 2001; Petrovsky-Shtern 2008; Mogilner 2013, 269-296). However by the 1910s, this practical and obviously anti-Semitic discourse was being more and more contaminated by the racialized understanding of Jewish self-mutilation as an expression of Jewish racial atavism. While Budul in his dissertation creatively presented self-mutilation as a key atavistic indicator of a primitive condition connecting Jews and peoples of shamanistic cults, clinicians such as Erikson generalized a few cases from their practice using the already established multidisciplinary (ethnographic, psychiatric, historical, sociological) framework of savagery to their advantage. Not only did they systematize individual and very diverse medical cases as variations of one typical criminal case of conscious self-mutilation with the aim of avoiding military conscription, but they conceptualized these cases as atavisms by randomly connecting them to specific "savage" Jewish rituals and cults. Erikson was ready to see in any Jewish medical complaint an instance of self-mutilation connected to some live atavistic Jewish ritual. Thus he diagnosed a specific Jewish paralysis of the upper left hand produced by the tradition of wearing tefillin (Erikson 1911). Jewish religion, Jewish rituals, Jewish instincts, Jewish neuroses and psychoses, and Jewish physicality formed one powerful image of the ultimate and dangerous (aggressive, violent, perverted) savage persisting in modern times.

Of course, there were politicians and professionals who rejected this interpretation of Jewish savagery and this application of imperial comparison, and who understood the real danger of their ideological and, most important, practical implications for the Jews and the imperial society. Thus, Solomon Vermel', psychiatrist of the Kazan circuit mental hospital (Kazanskaia Okruzhnaia lechebnitsa dlia dushevno-bol'nykh), felt compelled to devote quite a few pages in his own study of Jewish mental patients of Kazan hospital to exposing Erikson's medical inaccuracy, ideological bias, and poor knowledge of Jewish culture: "I dedicated so much time to this issue because at present, when all and everyone everywhere find simulation and self-mutilation, Dr. Erikson's 'discovery' may affect not just [the legal] condition of many people, but, quite possibly, their very lives" (Vermel' 1917, 36).

However even in this case of open professional confrontation with Erikson, the collective nature of the "patient" (as representing race, nationality, or class, or even an ideological community), and the perception of each individual deviance as an expression of a group defect or atavism (even if culturally constructed), as well as the promise to offer the only true and scientifically informed interpretation of irrational instincts remained embedded in the discourse. Yes, Vermel' was a Jew and a Jewish activist, whereas Erikson, regardless of the Swedish origin of his family name, perceived himself as a Russian and was a Russian nationalist and defender of radical colonialism (just as Sikorskii, with his obviously Polish-sounding family name, or Budul who was a Latvian and imperial Russian nationalist). Yes, the opponents of Vermel' used their psychiatric expertise to scientifically homogenize Jews and Russians/Slavs in order to stabilize the fluid and unordered imperial situation according to their ideological preferences. But Vermel' equally tended to homogenize at least the Jews according to his own sociopolitical idea. His Jewish deviance was constructed as less "inborn" and more "common," that is, socially and culturally determined, yet it remained a collective stigma and a collective promise, as well as the indicator of a civilizational status of the whole group. Vermel' normalized Jews by applying to them Lamarckian and sociologically sensitive interpretations of heredity, and at the same time accepted that the more developed a national culture was, the more "complex and intricate," "beautiful and bright" was the pattern of mental illness that it produced. Vermel' also needed an imperial comparative

27 "Всему старому военному врачу хорошо известны обычно практикуемые способы членовредительства."
scale to rehabilitate the Jewish deviance as a phenomenon of developed modernity and sophisticated national culture.

Not surprisingly, both clinicians, Vermel' and Erikson, referred in their medical publications to Lombroso, who continued to influence their professional language and ideological outlooks. Whereas Erikson encouraged a semiotic shift toward the signified within what had been considered the classic version of criminal anthropology, Vermel' appealed to the authority of Lombroso as a critic of scientific foundations of anti-Semitism, which the Italian criminal anthropologist tellingly called “atavism.” The Russian translation of Lombroso’s Anti-Semitism and Modern Science (1894) came out in 1906 with an introduction by the well-known lawyer and member of the Russian parliament, Osip Jakovlevich Pergament (Lombroso 1906). This, however, turned out to be a double-edged weapon in the hands of Jewish activists, because Lombroso’s discussion of anti-Semitism as an essentially atavistic manifestation of human intolerance included a radical denunciation of “barbaric” Jewish rituals quite in line with Erikson or Budul. As the most outrageous example, Lombroso mentioned the “barbaric tradition of circumcision, which, as Spenser has proved, is only a symbolic survival of human sacrifice.” Lombroso presented it as a ritual case of self-mutilation. The most orthodox Jews, claimed Lombroso, “used their teeth or sharpened stones for this cruel ritual, the same way this had been done by our ancestors who lived in caves” (Lombroso 1906, 14, 15).^29

The Soviet reinvention of savagery: Epilogue

Whatever the ideological position or the vision of the post-imperial society, the Lombroso-inspired conversation about atavism and criminality, savagery, and modernity structured hegemonic idioms of the politics of exclusion. All candidates for the exclusion – the born criminal, the savage, the hidden enemy, the degenerate race, or most often some combination of the above – were collective actors. Their normalization and integration was hardly possible as an individual choice. These idioms are easily distinguishable in the early Soviet context of ideological and professional debates. Without doubt, they persisted after 1917, but they changed their meanings in the structurally new situation. First, in the Soviet society, the entire old-regime modernized elite, regardless of political loyalty, came to embody archaism. Second, constructivism and developmental utopianism dominated nationalities policies, posing a powerful alternative to organicist concepts of race. Third, the Jew ceased to personify a savage within – now the Lombrosian reading of anti-Semitism as an atavism defined the official ideology. Interviewed by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in January 1931, Stalin remarkably branded anti-Semitism as a survival, articulating it in perfectly Lombrosian terms:

National and racial chauvinism is a relic of man-hating customs, characteristic of the era of cannibalism. Antisemitism is an extreme expression of racial chauvinism, and as such is the most dangerous survival of cannibalism. Antisemitism is useful to the exploiter, for it serves as a lightning conductor enabling capitalism to evade the blows of the toiling masses. Antisemitism is a danger to the working people, inasmuch as it is a false path leading them into the jungle away from the right road. Communists, therefore, as consistent internationalists cannot but be irreconcilable and avowed enemies of antisemitism (Antisemitism 1931, 1; emphasis added).

The operationalization of these idioms by the Soviet regime that had built them into its aggressive social engineering and legal system (consider the social category of the “formers” – byshkie) changed the wording and, eventually, the symbolism of the language of exclusion. Adapting to the cultural background and education level of the new political elite, the old metaphor that had originated in the most advanced human sciences was replaced by a literally more down-to-earth (but still scholarly) notion of “vermin.” In her study of the evolution of the political etymology of the term “vermin” (vreditel’) in the early Soviet public discourse, Galina Orlova shows that what had begun as a purely agricultural term became incorporated into a critical social discourse about local village landowners in 1924, and two-three years later evolved into the discourse about enemies-savages within the Soviet project (Orlova 2003). These vermin were “born criminals” because they belonged to particular social classes, and even the most loyal of them could yield to the temptation of unleashing their inherent survivals at any moment. However their anthropological traits

29 ["...варварский обычай обрезания, являющийся, как это доказал Спенсер, лишь символическим пережитком человеческих жертваоприщений [...]"; "Они доходят до того, что пользуются для жестокого обряда обрезания зубами или заостренными камнями, как наши предки, жившие в пещерах."
did not matter, and their internal instincts were not seen as irrational and illusive. The Lombrosian connection between atavism and criminality became purely sociological. Social origin distinguished "vermin" from "common criminals" born into "progressive classes": even though the latter had committed a crime, they did this under the influence of cultural "survivals" that were not organic, and hence could be corrected. "Vermin" of the late 1920s was the opposite of the common criminal who was not structurally predetermined to sin against the Soviet society.

The Soviet state institutionalized the principle of group subjecthood on the basis of class political philosophy and national evolutionism, not biological races and their civilizational hierarchy, thus preferring one specific interpretation of savagery and exclusion. It could do this because the Soviet regime was an ideological regime. The old empire had not had time or opportunity to reach this stage – it had collapsed at the moment when a number of different notions of subjecthood and versions of the politics of exclusion were debated in the political and professional fields. As I have attempted to show, even the most uncompromising proponents of the method of imperial comparison in order to construct their ultimate "savage within" – a method that remained relevant and meaningful only as long as the imperial situation of underrationalized and unstable diversity persisted.

The Soviet regime modified the language of exclusion, the connection between atavism/inborn nature and criminality/danger for a particular project of modernity, and the relevance of the semiotics of the external anthropological signifiers and the internal signified. But most important, it redefined the old imperial situation that had informed the meaning of this language of exclusion and the archetypal Lombrosian semiotic construct behind it.

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P. I. Kovalevskii

Criminal Anthropology and Great Russian Nationalism

Louise McReynolds

Pavel Ivanovich Kovalevskii would be surprised to find himself a desaparecido in postrevolutionary histories of prerevolutionary Russia. He appears in an occasional cameo role in studies that address criminality, specifically noted for his connections to Cesare Lombroso and the late-nineteenth-century fascination with degeneration, in particular at that point where criminal anthropology intersected with forensic psychiatry. Despite the subsequent repudiation of his theory that criminals are born atavistic creatures identifiable by their physiognomy, Lombroso remains a familiar historical figure. Kovalevskii, on the other hand, finds his name mentioned only sporadically and primarily in relation to the medicalization of reactionary politics at the fin-de-siècle (McReynolds 2013; Goering 2003; Brown 1987; Beer 2005; Miller 1998).

The son of a priest from rural Ukraine, or “Little Russia” as he understood his rodina,1 Kovalevskii was in fact a highly respected and pioneering psychiatrist. He enjoyed an international reputation; a number of his books were translated into French and German, just as he and his wife translated contemporary western psychiatric works into Russian. Although it is not clear what original analyses he contributed to psychiatric research in general, his work on epilepsy was translated, as were some of his psychiatric analyses of historical figures. He always cited Western scholars in his work because he considered himself an equal in the profession. Kovalevskii was Russia’s Philippe Pinel, removing the chains from the inmates of Kharkov’s infamous asylum, the Saburov Dacha; he was its Jean-Martin Charcot, with his emphasis...