Sex, Pregnancy, and Power in the Late Stalinist Gulag

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In May 1947 G. I. Zhurba found herself in a situation similar to that of many other Soviet women of the postwar era: she was a single mother raising her nine-month-old child by herself. The child's father had left her six months before the child's birth. Had they been living under normal circumstances, changes to Soviet family law in 1944 would have made it incredibly difficult for Zhurba to collect any child support, because they were not married.[1] Zhurba, however, did not live in normal circumstances. Unlike most Soviet women, Zhurba was raising her child inside a prison camp in Stalin's notorious penal empire, the Gulag (Glavnoe upravlenie lagerei, or Main Camp Administration).[2] The father of her child was one Leonid Arkad'evich Kotliarevskii, a Gulag boss in the Tomsk Province Labor Colony Department in Western Siberia. Kotliarevskii was fired from his job in May 1947 for engaging in sexual relations with prisoners.[3]

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[1] Greta Bucher, *Women, the Bureaucracy and Daily Life in Postwar Moscow, 1945–1953* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2006), 14–15.

[2] The Gulag as a bureaucratic institution lasted from 1930 to 1960 and was, for most of its existence, under the jurisdiction of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) and its successor, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD). Aleksandr Solzhenytsin popularized the term "Gulag" as shorthand for the camp system and, indeed, for Soviet repression as a whole with his three-volume *Gulag Archipelago*, first published in the 1970s.

[3] Tsentr dokumentatsii noveishei istorii Tomskoi oblasti (TsDNITO) *fond* 607, *opis'* 1, *delo* 465 [perepiski s organami ministerstva vnutrennikh del SSSR po Soiuza i Tomskoi oblasti], *listy* 175–76. Henceforth, citations from Russian archives abbreviate *fond* as f., *opis'* as op., *delo* as d., and *list* as l. (singular) or ll. (plural). All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

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We do not know much more about the fates of either Zhurba or Kotliarevskii. We know, however, that both heterosexual and homosexual sex—whether consensual, coerced, or extremely violent—were common in the Gulag. This article focuses on issues of heterosexual sex in part because, as will be discussed in greater detail below, central and local Gulag officials were remarkably silent on the issue of homosexuality and in part because the issue of heterosexual sex posed problems for authorities that help reveal power relations in the late Stalinist camps. As we shall see, both male camp officials and prisoners committed acts of extreme sexual violence against female prisoners, and the women sometimes used their sexuality as a form of barter for better living and working conditions. Sex could also be a source of pleasure and a form of resistance in the camps. Why were regulatory and physical barriers designed to prevent contact between men and women not strictly policed or enforced? What insights might we glean about the sexual norms and practices of the late Stalinist period from an exploration of a history of the various forms of sex that took place within the Soviet penal system?

Authorities consistently complained about interactions between men and women in the camps and gave orders to keep them separated, yet these same authorities created the conditions that made heterosexual sexual contact possible through a spatial organization that facilitated illicit interaction. Many camps also included maternity wards and nurseries. The memoir literature reveals that, while sexual violence could reinforce the terror of the camp system, consensual and bartered sexual activity became an important part of camp subculture and an area of considerable autonomy for prisoners.

That authorities explicitly forbade heterosexual sex in theory yet acquiesced to it in practice, while prisoners themselves used sexual activity to help foster their own culture in the camps reveals that sexuality was part of the negotiated power of the Gulag. As work on sexual activity in prisons in other contexts has shown, intimate relations in prisons can be a form of resistance. Prisoners carve out both space and activity that is outside the complete control of the state, thus implicitly—and in certain cases, explicitly—undermining the state's authority. Because sexual activity in prisons allows for this independent space but can also reinforce power structures in the form of sexual violence, Mary Bosworth and Eamonn Carrabine argue that sexuality should be understood as part of what they term the "negotiated power" of the prison system.[4] This understanding of negotiated power is applicable to the Gulag, where heterosexual intimacy was technically forbidden but nevertheless occurred regularly and could even be a way to assert bodily and social autonomy.

[4] Mary Bosworth and Eamonn Carrabine, "Reassessing Resistance: Race, Gender and Sexuality in Prison," *Punishment and Society* 3 (2001): 501–15.

We might expect that the Gulag, a form of extreme punishment that operated as the heart of the penal system for one of the most notoriously repressive regimes of the twentieth century, would also have policed sexual desire and sexual intimacy. Prisoners of the Gulag had been sentenced for a wide variety of crimes, both petty and violent, from property crimes to counterrevolutionary actions, and many were the victims of trumped-up charges of espionage, terrorism, and so on. The Gulag system was designed, at least in part, to isolate unwanted elements from the rest of Soviet society and was thus very much a part of Soviet utopian state-building efforts.[5] As Eric Naiman argues, the utopian aspiration for an ideal society inevitably leads to a preoccupation with issues of crime, communicable diseases, and sex, as all three of these issues highlight the state's lack of complete control and underscore the risk of the actual or potential contamination of the utopian project.[6] Similar preoccupations were apparent in Nazi Germany, where Nazi Party members used sex and sexuality both as a tool to attract youth to their cause and as a key focal point for much repressive legislation against groups deemed harmful to Nazi state-building efforts.[7] In the Soviet Union, the Gulag was an institution where all three issues that Naiman identifies—crime, communicable diseases, and sex—intersected. As a penal institution, the camps housed convicted criminals and were also sites for further crime, while close living quarters, malnutrition, and unhygienic practices (including sexual liaisons) regularly led to the spread of communicable diseases. Despite the intersection of these issues, however, the regime was remarkably ambivalent toward sexual relations in the camp system.

This ambivalence is difficult to explain in part because Gulag scholarship has only rarely addressed issues of sexuality. Adi Kuntsman's work examines the portrayal of homosexuality in Gulag memoir literature, but this remains one of the only studies to focus directly on sexuality in the Gulag.[8] Dan Healey has begun to examine the topic in greater depth, arguing in a recent conference paper that authorities policed heterosexual sex in the camps more aggressively than homosexual intimacy in part due to the economic impact of pregnancy, which, as we shall see, required scarce resources for pre- and postnatal care.[9] Anne Applebaum's Pulitzer Prize–winning *Gulag: A History*

[5] For more on the Gulag as part of Soviet utopian state building, see Steven A. Barnes, *Death and Redemption: The Gulag and the Shaping of Soviet Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011).

[6] Eric Naiman, *Sex in Public: The Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 14–16.

[7] Dagmar Herzog, "Hubris and Hypocrisy, Incitement and Disavowal: Sexuality and German Fascism," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11, nos. 1–2 (2002): 3–21.

[8] Adi Kuntsman, "'With a Shade of Disgust': Affective Politics of Sexuality and Class in Memoirs of the Stalinist Gulag," *Slavic Review* 68, no. 2 (2009): 308–28.

[9] Dan Healey, "Forging Gulag Sexualities: Penal Homosexuality and the Reform of the Gulag after Stalin" (BASEES, Cambridge, UK, 2014). I thank Professor Healey for allowing me to cite this paper.

includes a chapter titled "Women and Children," but this chapter only briefly touches on issues related to sexuality such as pregnancy and sexual abuse.[10] In a similarly brief but insightful discussion of sexual relationships within the camps, Steven Barnes notes that "women were supposedly separated from men in the Gulag, [but] complete physical separation would never occur."[11] The document collection *Children of the Gulag* focuses on repressive legislation that affected children, children of arrested parents, and children of exiled peasants.[12] Golfo Alexopoulos's growing body of work on the Gulag includes an article that examines the regime's relative leniency toward women with regard to release and pardons, but she does not explicitly focus on issues of sexuality.[13] In her analysis of the Gulag in the northern part of Perm Province, the geographer Judith Pallot notes that "marriages" between prisoner men and local women were common, but this is one small part of a larger argument concerning the interrelationship between free and forced labor in that area.[14] Studies that focus on Gulag memoirs, as opposed to official documents, have often had much to say about women's experiences, but even in these works sex and sexuality are not major points of discussion.[15]

If Gulag scholarship does not yet offer a developed historiography on the topic of sexuality, a comparative approach might be of benefit. Healey's work on homosexuality in the Soviet Union has revealed the usefulness of a comparative approach to issues of Soviet sexuality. For instance, his recent work on homosexuality in rural Leningrad Province cited scholarship on both the United States and Sweden in order to highlight unusual violence within postwar Soviet homosexual subcultures.[16] In terms of a comparative perspective for the Gulag, literature dealing with sex and sexuality in prisons more generally, however, focuses on homosexuality, mostly due to the homosocial nature of most modern prison systems.[17] On the other

[10] See Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History* (New York: Random House, 2003), 307–33.

[11] Barnes, *Death and Redemption*, 98–106, quotation at 99.

[12] S. S. Vilenskii [Vilensky], A. I. Kokurin, G. V. Atmashkina, and I. Iu. Novichenko, eds., *Deti GULAGa 1918–1956* (Moscow: MFD, 2002); and Cathy Frierson and Semyon Vilensky, eds., *Children of the Gulag* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010).

[13] Golfo Alexopoulos, "Exiting the Gulag after War: Women, Invalids, and the Family," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 57, no. 4 (2009): 563–79.

[14] Judith Pallot, "Forced Labor for Forestry: The Twentieth Century History of Colonisation and Settlement in the North of Perm' *Oblast'*," *Europe-Asia Studies* 54, no. 7 (2002): 1055–83.

[15] See, for example, Leona Toker, *Return from the Archipelago: Narratives of Gulag Survivors* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

[16] While most of Dan Healey's work is explicitly comparative, see especially his recent "Comrades, Queers, and 'Oddballs': Sodomy, Masculinity and Gendered Violence in Leningrad Province of the 1950s," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 21, no. 3 (2012): 496–522.

[17] See, for example, Mark S. Fleisher and Jessie L. Krienert, *The Myth of Prison Rape: Sexual Culture in American Prisons* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009); Christopher Hensley, ed., *Prison Sex: Practice and Policy* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002); Regina Kunzel, *Criminal Intimacy: Prison and the Uneven History of Modern American Sexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

hand, a comparison with the Nazi system offers some possibilities for further exploration.[18] At first glance, the Nazi camp system appears to be quite different from the Gulag with regard to heterosexual intimacy and thus provides a questionable point of comparison. It is difficult to compare the Gulag's nurseries and maternity wards with the conditions in Nazi concentration camps, where guards subjected women who became pregnant to forced abortions or, in the death camps, killed them immediately. On the other hand, in many of the Nazi labor camps and ghettos, sexual relations could play an important role in camp life and in similar ways to that of the Gulag. As Dagmar Herzog writes, "Within ghettos and labor camps, sexual affairs—heterosexual or homosexual—could mean reprieve from deportation or selection. Within concentration camps, sex could be exchanged for a scrap of food or some needed object. In general, sex could mean survival."[19] As we shall see, this description, with some modification of language, could easily describe the Gulag too.[20]

Using the lens of official Gulag documents but without abandoning the memoir literature, this article examines issues surrounding heterosexual sex, or *sozhitel'stvo*, "cohabitation," as it is often termed in camp policy documents, meetings of the camp administration, and inspection reports in the prison camps of Western Siberia.[21] The region includes one of Siberia's oldest administrative centers (Tomsk), its largest city (Novosibirsk), and its most densely populated region (the heavily industrialized Kuznetsk Basin). During the late Stalin era Western Siberia was home to numerous Gulag labor camps and colonies, including Siblag, which was officially an agricultural camp while also being one of the Gulag's longest-lasting and

[18] The Nazi and Soviet systems have been the subject of considerable comparative analysis, although not usually related to their respective camp systems. Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, 1968) is, of course, the classic example of comparative analysis of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, and she includes some analysis of the concentration camp in that study (437–59). For other comparisons of Nazi Germany and the Stalinist Soviet Union, see Ian Kershaw and Moshe Lewin, eds., *Stalinism and Nazism: Dictatorships in Comparison* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick, eds., *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[19] Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe: A Twentieth-Century History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 85.

[20] Even the literature on female sexuality in the Nazi camps is underdeveloped. Elizabeth Heineman points out that both memoirists and scholars seem uncomfortable with the subject. For more, see Heineman, "Sexuality and Nazism: The Doubly Unspeakable?," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11, nos. 1–2 (2002): 22–66, esp. 55–58.

[21] The Ozhegov and Shvedova Russian dictionary defines *sozhitel'stvo* as follows: "1. Sovmestnaia zhizn', prozhivanie (ustar.). 2. Intimnye otnosheniia mezhdu muzhchinoi i zhenshchinoi" (1. Life together, living together [obsolete]. 2. Intimate relations between a man and a woman). Please note that while the Gulag documentation for the present article deals with Western Siberia, several of the memoirs are from prisoners who spent time in other camps. There is simply not a wide enough base of available memoirs from local camps to use only memoirs that deal with the region.

most economically diversified camp systems. The operational orders of the Gulag, along with Communist Party meeting minutes from the local camp administration and the local camp procurator reports, reveal the prevalence of sex in the camps and the authorities' inability to control sexual behavior.[22] The Communist Party meeting minutes are a particularly rich resource of information on sexuality in the camps, since they often included reports from the Party Control Commission, which was in charge of disciplinary measures, and thus contain information about illicit interactions between camp personnel and prisoners. Only partial sets of meeting minutes and procurator reports are available in local archives, but a more complete set of documentation is unlikely to change the overall picture substantially.

None of these agencies dwelled on the subject of homosexual intimate relations in the camps. Healey notes that "official voices fell silent on this topic after 1930, and until memoirists took it up after 1953, the issue was suppressed, leaving a thin base of sources on the 1930s and 1940s."[23] We know from the memoir literature, as well as some of the post-Stalin medical-related documentation on the Gulag, that homosexual sex—both coerced and consensual—was common in the camps.[24] Kuntsman shows that many memoirists depict homosexual intimate relations in the camps negatively, in part, she argues, to distance themselves both psychologically and physically from the hardened criminal prisoners.[25] That neither Gulag authorities in Moscow nor the local camp procurator or camp Communist Party organizations discussed homosexual sexual relations, despite regularly discussing heterosexual sexual relations, is thus peculiar. This absence might speak to the regime's discomfort with same-sex relations, but it more likely indicates a willingness to tolerate a form of intimacy that could not lead to pregnancy and thus did not have the same impact on the camp's economic productivity.[26]

Love and sex are recurring themes in women's memoirs.[27] Sexual violence was frequent, as was sexual barter, whether involving guards or other officials offering women better rations in exchange for sex, or camp "marriages," in which the "husband" protects the "wife" in exchange for sex. But several memoirists of the Gulag also point out that

[22] The camp procurator was nominally an independent inspector from the regional office of the procurator (something like a public prosecutor), whose task was to ensure that the camp authorities properly followed regulations. In practice, camp procurators often worked closely with the camp administration.

[23] Dan Healey, *Homosexual Desire in Revolutionary Russia: The Regulation of Sexual and Gender Dissent* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 230.

[24] Barnes, *Death and Redemption*, 105. See also Janusz Bardach and Kathleen Gleeson, *Man Is Wolf to Man: Surviving the Gulag* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), for numerous references to male homosexuality in the camps.

[25] Kuntsman, "'With a Shade of Disgust,'" 309.

[26] See also Healey, "Forging Gulag Sexualities."

[27] Kuntsman, "'With a Shade of Disgust,'" 318–19.

authentically romantic relationships were not uncommon in the camps. Evgeniia Ginzburg, the most famous female memoirist, met her second husband, a camp doctor, while they were both prisoners of a labor camp in Kolyma.[28] Anna Larina, widow of Nikolai Bukharin, Stalin's former ally who was executed in 1938, also met her second husband while imprisoned in a Siblag satellite camp.[29] Hava Volovich, a prisoner of a camp in the Komi Republic and later of various Siblag satellite camps, describes wanting to become pregnant in the camps as a way to feel more human and writes that the sex drive was "the only thing that these stock-breeders from hell could not exterminate."[30] In other words, sex, for Volovich, was an act of resistance. Margarete Buber-Neumann, imprisoned in the notorious Karaganda camp in Kazakhstan, mentions several heterosexual relationships, and she herself received proposals for intimate relations, which she politely (and successfully) refused.[31]

In the *Gulag Archipelago* Solzhenitsyn, too, admits that love was possible in the Gulag.[32] He, however, generally felt that the hard labor and the harsh conditions were more difficult for female prisoners than for men, although this partially reflects Solzhenitsyn's own opinion about men's and women's abilities to face various hardships.[33] According to Solzhenitsyn, work was so difficult at the Krivoshchekovsk brickyard—a Siblag satellite camp located in the city of Novosibirsk—and the conditions were so terrible that everything "that is feminine in a woman, whether it be constant or whether it be monthly, ceases to be." Yet he later partially contradicts himself, noting that the "girls of Krivoshchekovo barracks also pinned flowers in their hair" to signify a camp marriage and that illicit visits between men's and women's barracks were quite common both here and all over the Gulag. Despite this comment, Solzhenitsyn stresses the coerced nature of sexual relations, noting that "at this camp there were thieves, non-political

[28] Ginzburg describes the beginning of their relationship in detail and mentions several other long-lasting relationships that were formed in the camps. See Eugenia [Evgeniia] Ginzburg, *Within the Whirlwind*, trans. Ian Boland (New York: Harvest/HBJ, 1982), 15, 113–16.

[29] Because of Anna Larina's focus on her first husband, she says little directly in her memoir, *This I Cannot Forget*, trans. Gary Kern (New York: W. W. Norton, 1993), about her second husband. For more information, see Paul R. Gregory, *Politics, Murder, and Love in Stalin's Kremlin: The Story of Nikolai Bukharin and Anna Larina* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2010), 150–51.

[30] Hava Volovich, "My Past," in *Till My Tale Is Told: Women's Memoirs of the Gulag*, ed. Simeon Vilensky, trans. John Crowfoot et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 241–76, quotation at 260.

[31] See Margarete Buber-Neumann, *Under Two Dictators: Prisoner of Stalin and Hitler*, trans. Edward Fitzgerald, intro. Nicholas Wachsmann (London: Pimlico, 2009) esp. 57–116.

[32] Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago: An Experiment in Literary Investigation*, vols. 3–4, trans. Thomas P. Whitney (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 468.

[33] For example, he seems to belittle women's concerns with their appearances. See ibid., 228–29.

offenders, juveniles, invalids, women and nursing mothers, all mixed up together" and that many men sexually abused the women there, leading to an epidemic of venereal diseases.[34] Venereal diseases could spread quickly through the camps and could even spread to the surrounding communities. According to Siblag prisoner Evsei L'vov, deconvoyed prisoners (that is, those prisoners permitted to move outside of the camps without supervision) "established relationships in the nearby villages," and there "were instances when this ended tragically, that is, [with] venereal [diseases]."[35] Sex in the camps also served as an informal method of barter. We know from Healey that male prisoners often exchanged various kinds of favors for sex,[36] and female memoirists have provided considerable evidence for the existence of heterosexual sexual barter. Tamara Petkevich, who was imprisoned in camps in the Komi Republic and in Central Asia, writes of one presentencing cellmate named Polina who had had a sexual relationship with her interrogator and who, once in the camps, cultivated various sexual relationships both for pleasure and to receive favors. Polina was reportedly excited to go to the camps in order to be around more men. As another cellmate put it, Polina was the "only one" in the cell "who won't waste her life in a camp." Indeed, Polina found herself a camp husband and, according to Petkevich, remained remarkably cheerful.[37] With the exception of rape, female memoirists like Petkevich and Buber-Neumann do very little moralizing and are very matter-of-fact in their discussions of heterosexual sexual relationships in the camps. This tendency might be a reflection of Soviet attitudes toward the liberated new Soviet woman, or it might be a sign of successful indoctrination through pervasive pronatalist propaganda in the late Stalinist period, which called on all women, even single women, to become mothers and thus implicitly encouraged heterosexual sex out of wedlock.[38]

The issue of sexuality as part of an exchange of favors has received some attention in the historiography of Nazi concentration camps and ghettos. In her study of the Theresienstadt ghetto, Anna Hájková argues that sex in the camp should not be understood exclusively through the lens of coercion, because doing so removes any agency from the women themselves. While

[34] Ibid., 235–36, 237–38, 233.

[35] Arkhiv Mezhdunarodnogo obshchestva "Memorial," f. 2, op. 1, d. 8, l. 46 (L'vov, Evsei Moiseevich). Quotation also in Wilson T. Bell, "Was the Gulag an Archipelago? Deconvoyed Prisoners and Porous Borders in the Camps of Western Siberia," *Russian Review* 72, no. 1 (2013): 131. See also Alan Barenberg, "Prisoners without Borders: Zazonniki and the Transformation of Vorkuta after Stalin," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 57, no. 4 (2009): 513–34.

[36] Healey, *Homosexual Desire*, 232.

[37] Tamara Petkevich, *Memoir of a Gulag Actress,* trans. Yasha Kolts and Ross Ufberg (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010), 110–12, 175–76.

[38] See Bucher, *Women, the Bureaucracy, and Daily Life*; and Healey, "Comrades, Queers, and 'Oddballs,'" 503.

rape and sexual violence occurred, Hájková contends that sexual barter was something different, a way for women to improve their situation by using their own sexuality. Heterosexual sexuality was thus a crucial component of the functional economy of the Theresienstadt ghetto. Sexual barter, Hájková insists, is different from though often related to prostitution. Because no one was in Theresienstadt voluntarily, we must understand that the choices people made took place within a society that operated under formal and informal rules different from those of a free society. "The inmates in Theresienstadt still had choices," writes Hájková, "even if they were limited; in refusing them the possibility of choice, we refuse them agency."[39] A similar analysis can be made of the Gulag, where sex in exchange for rations, clothing, or protection was a form of barter. Buber-Neumann pithily summarized the situation: "If you were pretty enough and not overburdened with moral scruples, there was no need to work."[40]

In contrast to postwar Soviet society, where military losses had produced a female majority, the prisoner population of the Gulag followed the model of most other penal systems in being predominantly male. However, like the Nazi camp system, the percentage of women in the Gulag was much higher than any other comparable prisoner population, underscoring the need to investigate experiences particular to women in any larger exploration of the camp system. For the Gulag as a whole, women only made up just under 6 percent of prisoners in 1934. However, this figure rose to 13 percent of prisoners in 1942 and to 30 percent in 1945 as thousands of male prisoners were released and sent to the front over the course of the war. By 1948 the number was down to 22 percent and by 1951, 17 percent.[41] In comparison, the notorious Parchman Farm in Mississippi, which operated over the same time period and, like Siblag, used prisoner labor in agriculture, never had a prisoner population that was more than 5 percent female; usually the figure was much lower.[42]

The relatively high number of female prisoners in the Gulag had several causes. Perhaps most importantly, as Donald Filtzer has noted, the Soviet system of criminal justice during the Stalin era increasingly criminalized "ordinary activity" such as showing up late to work in certain industries, leaving a job without authorization, speculation, or petty theft—acts much more likely to be committed by women than violent crimes.[43] Petkevich

[39] Anna Hájková, "Sexual Barter in Times of Genocide: Negotiating the Sexual Economy of the Theresienstadt Ghetto," *Signs* 38, no. 3 (2013): 503–33, esp. 504–6.

[40] Buber-Neumann, *Under Two Dictators*, 95.

[41] For this information, see Applebaum, *Gulag*, 315–16.

[42] David M. Oshinsky, *"Worse Than Slavery": Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice* (New York: Free Press, 1996), esp. 169–89.

[43] Donald Filtzer, *Soviet Workers and Late Stalinism: Labor and the Restoration of the Stalinist System after World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 27. For more on Soviet criminal justice, see Peter H. Solomon, Jr., *Soviet Criminal Justice under Stalin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

recalls how young women were affected by these laws; during the war, "machines at factories were usually operated by fifteen- or sixteen-year-olds, mainly girls. Many couldn't stand the hard work and ran away. They would be sentenced to five years and sent to the camps. They were known as 'Decree girls.' Their parents often visited them, bringing them food, which the criminals immediately stole."[44] Alexopoulos has also noted how the authorities' tendency to target "clans" or "lineages" during various repressive campaigns could affect women.[45] The family members of those sentenced for so-called counterrevolutionary crimes frequently came under suspicion and were then themselves subject to criminal proceedings, arrest, and incarceration. Finally, the Gulag's hybrid nature as both "concentration camp" and modern prison system partially explains the high percentage of female inmates, since concentration camps often have held many women due to the group nature of punishment.[46] Together these measures account for the comparatively high proportion of women in the wartime and postwar camps, while the predominance of men in the camps attests to the fact that authorities simply saw men as more threatening than women and that men committed more crimes.[47] The prison camps of Western Siberia stand out even within the Gulag due to their particularly high percentage of female inmates during the late Stalin era. For example, of the approximately thirty-two thousand prisoners in Siblag's eleven camp satellites in the spring of 1952, roughly thirteen thousand were women, or 40.6 percent.[48]

Work in the Gulag was often gendered in the sense that the authorities frequently assigned women lighter work or work that would have traditionally been in the woman's sphere, such as sewing or agricultural field work.[49] The gendered labor of the Gulag is another similarity with Nazi labor camps, where female inmates were certainly used in hard labor but where they were more "likely to be assigned to 'women's work' such as textile manufacture, mat-making, tailoring and the like."[50] Along with Karlag in Kazakhstan,

[44] Petkevich, *Memoir of a Gulag Actress*, 178.

[45] Golfo Alexopoulos, "Stalin and the Politics of Kinship: Practices of Collective Punishment, 1920s–1940s," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50, no. 1 (2008): 91–117.

[46] Barnes, *Death and Redemption*, discusses the Gulag as a hybrid concentration camp and prison system.

[47] For more on Soviet authorities' tendency to view women as less threatening than men, see Lynne Viola, "Bab'i Bunty and Peasant Women's Protest during Collectivization," *Russian Review* 45, no. 1 (1986): 23–42.

[48] These stats come from compiling information within reports on individual camp subdivisions for the spring of 1952 and are contained in Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiskoi Federatsii (GARF), f. 9414, op. 1, d. 581 [Liternoe delo po ob"ektu Siblaga za 1952 g].

[49] Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, 234. Here Solzhenitsyn states that if men and women were assigned to similar work, the men would do the heavier work. See also Barnes, *Death and Redemption*, 99.

[50] Jane Caplan, "Gender and the Concentration Camps," in *Concentration Camps in Nazi Germany: The New Histories*, ed. Jane Caplan and Nikolaus Wachsmann (New York: Routledge, 2010), 95.

Siblag was the Gulag's main agricultural camp, and gendered conceptions of work meant that a higher percentage of women were sent there. At Siblag, all three camp stations that were identified as "nonconvoyed" (meaning that prisoners lived without guard) were technically for female prisoners only, illustrating the tendency to place women under a lighter regimen. The region also held several corrective labor colonies for minors, including one exclusively for girls located three kilometers from the city of Tomsk.[51] The locally run Novosibirsk Province Camp and Colony Administration, moreover, held a somewhat higher proportion of female prisoners than the overall Gulag.[52] Most large Gulag camps, including Siblag, received operational orders and policy documents directly from the central Gulag authorities in Moscow. Each region, however, also administered a smaller labor camp system that was technically under the jurisdiction of local authorities. These camps tended to hold prisoners with relatively short sentences, and since these sentences were the result of less serious crimes or infractions, the locally run camps often included a greater percentage of women than in the larger camps. In 1948, when the Gulag prisoner population as a whole was 22 percent female, women made up 27 percent of the prisoners at the Novosibirsk Province Camp and Colony Administration (4,269 of 15,761 prisoners as of 1 April 1948).[53] Camps with traditionally women-dominated industries, such as Sevkuzbasslag in northern Kemerovo Province, which housed a large garment factory, generally also had a higher proportion of women. In January 1950 Sevkuzbasslag's prisoner population of 18,168 included 4,639 women, just over 25 percent of the total.[54]

West Siberia's prisoner population thus included many women who, surprisingly, were not always strictly separated from the male prisoners. Indeed, the structure and spatial organization of Gulag camps contributed to the possibility of sexual relations. While male and female prisoners were supposed to be held in separate parts of the camp—known as stations (*punkty*) or zones (*zony*)—women's zones frequently housed at least some male prisoners, not to mention male civilian employees and camp personnel. Even some men's zones occasionally included female prisoners. As Petkevich writes about the Belovodsk Camp in Central Asia, "The camp was divided into a male and a female zone. All the facilities—the kitchen, the bathhouse, the medical

[51] TsDNITO, f. 607, op. 1, d. 465, ll. 153–57 is a letter from April 1947 discussing this colony, which at the time held twelve hundred *nesovershenno-letnikh prestupnikov-devochek* (underage girl-criminals).

[52] The Russian is Upravlenie ispravitel'no-trudovykh lagerei i kolonii upavleniia NKVD po Novosibirskoi oblasti (UITLiK UNKVD po NSO), or the Administration for Corrective Labor Camps and Colonies of the NKVD Administration of Novosibirsk Province.

[53] Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Novosibirskoi oblasti (GANO), f. R-20, op. 1, d. 404, l. 1ob (part of a report of the procurator for the UITLiK UMVD for Novosibirsk Province for 1948).

[54] GARF, f. 8360, op. 1, d. 5, l. 53 (a report from Sevkuzbasslag to Timofeev, the head of the Main Administration of Forestry Camps, dated February 1950).

unit and the administration office—were in the men's zone."[55] Volovich writes that authorities did not even separate the zones for men and women at Siblag's Suslovo satellite camp until 1949.[56] Frequent interaction between men and women was thus inevitable, calling into question the emphasis on the camps as homosocial spaces in past accounts.[57]

A brief description of the structure of three of the area's satellite camps—known as subdivisions—will illustrate just how common possibilities for illicit interaction were.[58] In April 1952 Siblag's Antibess subdivision, which local authorities considered a model camp, held 2,430 prisoners (1,517 men and 913 women), most of whom worked in agricultural production and animal husbandry. The subdivision consisted of four camp stations: a men's strict regimen station; a women's general regimen nonconvoyed station; a convoyed women's general regimen station; and a penalty camp station for women. The men's strict regimen station held men exclusively. The unguarded nonconvoyed women's station held 190 prisoners, all women, and was located only one kilometer from the large men's camp station; it relied on guards from the men's station only when necessary. The convoyed women's camp station held 641 prisoners, 45 of whom were men, while the penalty camp station consisted of women only.[59] Siblag's Arliuk subdivision held 915 men and 1,100 women working in the fields, animal husbandry, and construction in three camp stations. The men's camp station held 873 men and 76 women, while the two women's camp stations held, respectively, 724 women and 34 men and 334 women and 8 men.[60] The possibilities for interaction are even more striking in subdivision no. 1 of the local Administration of Camps and Colonies of Novosibirsk Province, located in the city of Novosibirsk, which held 636 men and 869 women in two zones as of 1 March 1952. The prisoners of this camp worked mostly in construction, garment production, and carpentry, largely under contract from the Ministry of Aviation. Although this statistical report does not indicate whether women lived in the men's zone and vice versa, subdivision

[55] Petkevich, *Memoir of a Gulag Actress*, 176.

[56] Volovich, "My Past," 268.

[57] Healey, "Forging Gulag Sexualities," places greater emphasis on the segregation of the sexes in his work.

[58] Rather than choosing those subdivisions that best suited my argument, I am relying here on the random sample of picking the first two (sorted alphabetically) listed in the 1952 *spravka-kharakteristika* (statistical report) for Siblag and the first (sorted numerically, by subdivision number) listed in the Administration of Camps and Colonies of Novosibirsk Province files.

[59] Interestingly, eighty-seven of the women at the nonconvoyed camp station had been sentenced under Article 58 for "counterrevolutionary" activity. For the Antibess *spravka-kharakteristika*, see GARF, f. 9414, op. 1, d. 581, ll. 18–27 *s ob.*

[60] For the Arliuk *spravka-kharakteristika*, see GARF, f. 9414, op. 1, d. 581, ll. 28–35 *s ob*. Note that the numbers in the report do not match, as the total of 915 men and 1,100 women becomes 915 men and 1,134 women when adding the numbers for the individual camp stations. The reason for the discrepancy is not clear.

no. 1 had a nursery (*dom mladentsa*) with two hundred spaces, a children's medical ward with thirty spaces, and a maternity ward with thirty spaces as part of the camp.[61] Thus while significant sex segregation is apparent in these examples, there was nothing about the camps' overall structure that would prevent interaction between men and women.

Intrepid and determined prisoners found ways to negotiate internal camp boundaries. One Siblag memoirist recalls that prisoners frequently bribed guards in order to move between zones of the camp.[62] The black market in camp goods also attests to the porous nature of the Gulag's boundaries.[63] Fences between zones were sometimes of poor quality, making it easy for prisoners to slip from one zone to another.[64] Some light regimen camps and colonies even lacked a fence or a wall altogether.[65] But even where fences existed, male and female prisoners often worked at the same worksite and shared camp medical and cultural facilities. Endemic shortages of guards for certain types of work (tree felling or even field work, for example) meant that continuous, direct surveillance of each prisoner was impossible.[66] Thus a 1952 report on conditions in Siblag noted that "in the majority of camp subdivisions male prisoners live at women's camp stations, and women at men's, and they work together; so for example, at Suslovo division 191 [male] prisoners live in women's camp stations and work together with women. The uncontrollability of prisoners' behavior [and] the lack of isolation of men from female prisoners engenders mass cohabitation [*sozhitel'stvo*], infractions of the camp regimen, and the squandering of goods. On the 1952 inspection day there were 377 pregnancies registered."[67] The possibilities for interaction between men and women are thus apparent in the reports that Siblag authorities sent back to their Moscow superiors.

Despite these possibilities, the Gulag was still a largely homosocial space. In contrast to Soviet society outside of the camps, homosexuality in the Gulag was relatively open and common, while access to heterosexual intimacy was officially prohibited and certainly limited in comparison to

[61] GARF, f. 9414, op. 1, d. 539, ll. 7–8 *s ob.*

[62] See Aleksandr Klein, *Kleimenye, ili, Odin' sredi odinokikh: Zapiski katorzhnika* (Syktyvkar, 1995), esp. 147, 168, 174.

[63] Bell, "Was the Gulag an Archipelago?," 132–37.

[64] A 1951 letter from Sevkuzbasslag to the director of the Main Administration of Forestry Camps complained, for example, that the wooden fence in the transit station was not sufficient enough to prevent prisoners from passing into other zones, including the women's zone, which resulted in "cases of banditry and *sozhitel'stvo*" (GARF, f. 8360, op. 1, d. 31, l. 132).

[65] See GARF, f. 9401, op. 1a, d. 50, l. 7 for an NKVD operational order complaining about the lack of discernable borders at some camps. See also Bell, "Was the Gulag an Archipelago?"; and Barenberg, "Prisoners without Borders."

[66] According to Donald Filtzer, the number of guards remained "perpetually below" the goal of 9 percent of the prisoner population (*Soviet Workers,* 26–27).

[67] GARF, f. 9414, op. 1, d. 739, ll. 3–4.

civilian life. How, then, did courtship, marriage, and "divorce" in the camps work? Preliminary research suggests that practicality—or barter—played a key role. Buber-Neumann's experiences provide instructive examples. Not long after arriving at her camp in Kazakhstan, a male prisoner who was a barber in the camp propositioned her. He buttressed his offer with the practical arguments that he had "good connections in the kitchen," earned a relatively decent salary, and even had a private room that they could live in. When Buber-Neumann hesitated, he added, "In here a woman just must have a good camp husband if she doesn't want to starve."[68] The fact that Buber-Neumann was able to refuse reveals that women could exercise some degree of sexual autonomy in the camps; they could choose to use relationships with men to negotiate power dynamics and limit the harshness and isolation of daily life.

If the structure of the camps allowed for considerable freedom to form relationships and engage in sexual activity, camp reports often make it difficult to discern how much coercion was involved. While authorities rarely used the terms for rape (*nasilovat'*, *iznasilovanie*) in their reports and policy documents, it seems that camp administrators sometimes used "cohabitation" (*sozhitel'stvo*) to refer to rape or some form of coerced sexual relations. For example, in 1940 the NKVD in Moscow complained about the "cohabitation of men with prisoner women" in the Gulag and then described how criminals in the camps had formed gangs that regularly raped women.[69] That same year, Communist Party members at a Siblag satellite camp used "cohabitation" to describe sexual promiscuity at the camp without giving any further details.[70] While memoirists confirm that consensual sex was a regular occurrence, they also provide vivid evidence that gang rape was a major problem at many camps. Elena Glinka's *The Kolyma Tram*, for instance, got its title from the fact that "on the tram" was a euphemism for gang rape.[71] Petkevich witnessed a gang rape of five women who also had their food stolen; Petkevich herself barely escaped.[72] In other examples, it is clear that even long-term cases of cohabitation were often forced.[73] While we might view rape as just another example of how all prisons tend to enforce "an aggressive, hegemonic masculinity," the sexual barter characteristic of the Gulag clearly also offered some women the opportunity to engage in sexual relations on their own terms and suggests that sexuality in the Gulag was part of the negotiated power and economy of

[68] Buber-Neumann, *Under Two Dictators*, 70–71.

[69] GARF, f. 9401, op. 1a, d. 56, ll. 209–10 *s ob.*

[70] TsDNITO f. 356, op. 1, d. 5, ll. 3 *ob*, 6.

[71] Literary critic Leona Toker describes a different slang term—"in chorus"—for gang rape in the camps. For her discussion, see Toker, *Return from the Archipelago*, 80. See also Elena Glinka, "The Kolyma Tram," in *Gulag Voices: An Anthology*, ed. Anne Applebaum (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 39–48.

[72] Petkevich, *Memoir of a Gulag Actress*, 174.

[73] See the discussion of Kotliarevskii below.

camp life.[74] The authorities, for their part, frequently discussed cohabitation as evidence of growing disorder and resistance in the Gulag.[75]

Cohabitation appears prominently on the authorities' lists of disciplinary infractions in the camps, which, in revealing what these local officials felt necessary to convey to central authorities, tell us what types of infractions most concerned them. For example, a 1947 report by the local procurator of the Novosibirsk Province Camp and Colony Administration, who was technically independent of the camp administration and who was in charge of inspecting the camp, noted that in the first half of the year there were 4,361 cases of regimen infractions in the camp; these included work refusal (659 cases), camp banditry (5), hooliganism (365), waste (729), cohabitation (242), drunkenness (63), playing cards (367), theft (412), hiding forbidden items (88), connections with locals (15), and 1,356 other infractions.[76] The infraction of cohabitation thus represented a significant percentage of all cases that camp officials were paying attention to. Of course, since many infractions remained hidden or underreported, the exact number of infractions is unknowable. Camp reports make it clear, however, that Novosibirsk officials were concerned that heterosexual sexual contact was being promoted by the fact that men and women worked together and that the camp's cultural facilities were in the men's zones.[77]

On the other hand, it is not clear how widespread sexual relationships actually were. At the time of the 1947 procurator report, there were approximately twelve thousand prisoners in the camp, around a quarter of whom were women. In this light, 242 cases of cohabitation over a six-month period is noteworthy but hardly astonishing, although this number likely represents only a fraction of the total, as most instances were no doubt hidden from camp authorities. Other statistics on cohabitation show similar patterns. Thus, in 1950 Sevkuzbasslag authorities uncovered 484 instances of cohabitation, with the camp population averaging around eighteen thousand prisoners, 25 percent of whom were women.[78] It is possible, of course, that certain camp authorities knew about widespread sexual activity but did little to prevent it and underreported this type of infraction. Buber-Neumann notes that while men and women were forbidden to enter each other's barracks, "certain of the criminals seemed to be exempt from this rule, and when the guards found them with the women they were not

[74] The quote is from Bosworth and Carrabine, "Reassessing Resistance," 508–9. They discuss both the enforcement of masculinity with prisons and the idea of sexuality in prison as part of the negotiated power of the prison system.

[75] For more on authorities' concerns about the postwar Gulag, see Yoram Gorlizki and Oleg Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace: Stalin and the Soviet Ruling Circle, 1945–1953* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), esp. 129–31, 166.

[76] Note that adding these together produces a total of 4,301, not 4,361. The reason for the discrepancy is unclear. GANO, f. R-20, op. 1, d. 378, ll. 4–5.

[77] GANO, f. R-20, op. 1, d. 404, l. 11.

[78] GARF, f. 8360, op. 1, d. 31, l. 57.

interfered with."[79] Lev Razgon even recalls that one Gulag boss would allow male prisoners to take female prisoners to the barracks as a reward for overfulfilling work norms.[80]

Camp officials also complained about cases of guards and other personnel having sexual relations with prisoners.[81] There were also cases of high-ranking officials who engaged in long-term sexual relationships with prisoners, often providing these prisoners with access to better food and housing in exchange for sex. Camp authorities punished this sort of behavior, though these punishments appear to have been relatively mild. Former Gulag boss Fyodor Mochulsky, who worked in Sevpechlag in the Komi Republic, recalls that civilian camp employees "entered into intimate relations with prisoners quite frequently"; if the relationship was discovered, the civilian would simply be transferred to another camp.[82]

Returning to the case of Leonid Arkad'evich Kotliarevskii, we can recall that he was fired from his position as boss of a Gulag labor colony in Tomsk Province in May 1947 for engaging in long-term sexual relationships with female prisoners. According to a letter from Brovchenko, director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) for Tomsk Province, Kotliarevskii had abused his position by forcing female prisoners (*ponuzhdal*) into cohabitation, which in these instances meant long-term sexual relationships. He allegedly forced N. E. Murav'eva into a relationship with him from 1941 until her release under the amnesty of July 1945.[83] Immediately after, or perhaps even before Murav'eva's release, he began a sexual relationship with another prisoner, G. I. Zhurba, that lasted from July 1945 to January 1946. Zhurba gave birth to their child in July 1946.[84] The official reaction to Kotliarevskii's case is puzzling. If forced cohabitation was such a problem, why did the NKVD/MVD wait until the middle of 1947 to take action, considering that Kotliarevskii had engaged in a string of sexual relationships since December 1941? While the birth of the child perhaps made the issue more visible, it took almost a year for Brovchenko to send his letter to the Tomsk Party Committee. In the months before this, Kotliarevskii had still been on good terms with his bosses, as is clear in the minutes of meetings held by the Primary Party Organization for Corrective Labor

[79] Buber-Neumann, *Under Two Dictators*, 62.

[80] Lev Razgon, "Jailers," in Applebaum, *Gulag Voices*, 166.

[81] For some examples, see GARF, f. 9401, op. 1a, d. 50, l. 7; TsDNITO, f. 607, op. 1, d. 465, ll. 155–56; GANO, f. P-260, op. 1a, d. 6, l. 58.

[82] Fyodor Mochulsky, *Gulag Boss*, trans. Deborah Kaple (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 152.

[83] The July 1945 amnesty freed roughly 40 percent of Gulag prisoners. See Golfo Alexopoulos, "Amnesty 1945: The Revolving Door of Stalin's Gulag," *Slavic Review* 64, no. 2 (2005): 274–306, esp. 274.

[84] For the letter, see TsDNITO, f. 607, op. 1, d. 465 [perepiski s organami ministerstva vnutrennikh del SSSR po Soiuza i Tomskoi oblasti], ll. 175–76. The letter is dated 17 July 1947.

Colony 8 in early 1947. At a general meeting in February 1947, for example, Kotliarevskii discussed difficulties the labor colony was having due to insufficient fuel and other issues, but there is no indication that he was facing any trouble.[85]

It is impossible to definitively say why authorities chose to punish Kotliarevskii at this time, though Brovchenko's allusion to Kotliarevskii's Jewish origins in his letter to the Party Committee might lead one to speculate that he had become another victim of the rising tides of anti-Semitism that were beginning to be felt in Siberia at the time.[86] In a report to the Party Committee dated January 1948, the Jewish origins of I. B. Monarkh, the director of Corrective-Labor Camp "A" of the Tomsk Province Colony Department, seem to have played a similar role. The director of the special inspection for the Tomsk Province MVD suggested that Monarkh—a decorated war veteran and a member of the NKVD/MVD since 1924—had stolen money from the camp in connection with the 1947 monetary reforms.[87]

Stalin's campaigns against "Jewish nationalism" had begun in 1946 and were waged primarily against Jewish cultural figures who were depicted as being insufficiently Soviet.[88] While any form of "national deviation" was persecuted, over the next couple of years the cultural campaign—or the Zhdanovshchina, named after the Central Committee's architect of the attacks, Andrei Zhdanov—would take on an increasingly anti-Semitic character. Many prominent Jews lost their jobs and/or were the subjects of criminal proceedings.[89] Many historians have speculated that the Jews would have been the next targets of mass deportation (or worse) if they had not been saved by Stalin's death in 1953.[90] Unfortunately, the available statistics on the disciplining of Gulag cadres do not take ethnic origins into

[85] For the meeting protocol, see TsDNITO, f. 1076, op. 1, d. 7 [Protokolov zakrytogo partsobraniia pervichnoi partorganizatsii ITK no. 8], ll. 6–7 [Protokol no. 7 Obshchego part.sobraniia ITK no. 8 ot 25 fevralia 1947 goda]. It is not entirely clear whether or not Kotliarevskii's case was discussed at a later date. The file does not contain a complete set of party meeting protocols for 1947.

[86] TsDNITO, f. 607, op. 1, d. 465, l. 175.

[87] TsDNITO, f. 607, op. 1, d. 729 [O perepiske s organami MVD SSSR i oblasti], l. 49.

[88] Benjamin Pinkus, *The Jews of the Soviet Union: The History of a National Minority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 147.

[89] Amir Weiner argues that the "legitimizing myth" of the war left little room for the Jews, whose own suffering during the war could not supersede that of the Soviet people. This was compounded by the formation of the state of Israel (despite the USSR's almost immediate diplomatic recognition of Israel), for now the Jews had a "homeland," and their loyalty was therefore, in the eyes of authorities, suspect. See Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), especially chapter 4, "Memory of Excision, Excisionary Memory," 191–235. For more discussion of the anti-Jewish campaigns of the late 1940s and early 1950s, see Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 308–15.

[90] Jonathan Brent and Vladimir P. Naumov, *Stalin's Last Crime: The Plot against the Jewish Doctors, 1948–1953* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003).

account, so we cannot know the degree to which West Siberian camp personnel were affected by the anti-Semitic campaigns. The above examples, however, indicate that they were probably not immune to these broader currents in the Soviet Union, and the Kotliarevskii case underscores the authorities' ambivalence toward sexual relations between camp officials and prisoners. While the official justification for firing Kotliarevskii was his sexual activity, it is likely that the MVD had been searching for a reason to fire him because he was Jewish.

While there is little doubt that most sexual encounters between personnel and prisoners were coerced—indeed, Mochulsky writes that young women, in particular, were almost inevitably forced into prostitution while at the camps—there were certainly also cases where women approached camp officials directly in order to improve their circumstances. Mochulsky recalls that one woman brigade leader attempted to seduce him (he refused) in order to obtain advantages for herself, her brigade, and even for her camp husband.[91] Again, this evidence of exchange echoes Hájková's description of sexual barter in the Theresienstadt ghetto. Given the coercive nature of the Gulag, we must contextualize available choices. The brigade leader who approached Mochulsky clearly had only a narrow range of possible actions to try to improve the situation for herself and her brigade. Had Mochulsky accepted her proposal, on a fundamental level the sex would have been coerced, because there was an enormous power imbalance between Mochulsky as the camp boss and the prisoner, and the prisoner's choices were severely limited. Yet, as Hájková argues, to discuss these types of sexual encounters in the camps only in terms of coercion denies any agency to the women themselves, many of whom sought to use any available tool to further their own chances at survival.

Prisoners not only engaged in sexual relations with other prisoners or with personnel but also took advantage of the Gulag's porous borders to seek sexual activity outside of the camps, though men were more likely to do so than women. At the February 1951 Eighth Party Conference of the Novosibirsk Province Camp and Colony Administration, the Party Control Commission complained that deconvoyed prisoners were going about town in a drunken state and that a camp official had rented out a room for sexual relations with prisoners.[92] In early 1953 the procurator for the Soviet Union complained that in forestry camps, including Sevkuzbasslag and Iuzhkuzbasslag in West Siberia, deconvoyed prisoners were taking mistresses and engaging in other forbidden activities in local towns.[93] In one particularly disturbing instance, a deconvoyed prisoner allegedly raped and strangled an underage girl in a town near a camp in southern Kemerovo

[91] Mochulsky, *Gulag Boss*, 148, 149–50.
[92] GANO, f. P-260, op. 1, d. 95, l. 102.
[93] Bell, "Was the Gulag an Archipelago?," 130. See also GARF, f. 8360, op. 1, d. 63, l. 8.

Province.[94] Sometimes locals even ventured inside the camps, as a spring 1952 inspection of Sevkuzbasslag and Iuzhkuzbasslag revealed: "Prisoners systematically interact with the civilian contingent, which, particularly due to the lack of bathhouses in the villages [*v poselkakh*], uses the bathhouses located in the camp zones with [their] families."[95]

Naturally, all of this illicit interaction and sexual activity led to many pregnancies and births in the camps. In January 1947, for example, pregnant and nursing mothers made up 2.6 percent (432 persons) of the entire prisoner population under the jurisdiction of the Novosibirsk Province Camp and Colony Administration.[96] Despite admonishment from Moscow, pregnancy rates at the area's forestry camps remained high. In early 1953 women comprised 53,889 of the 322,792 prisoners in the Main Administration of Forestry Camps (GULLP), or 16.7 percent, and the camps were administering thirteen children's homes with a total of 3,569 children under two years of age.[97] Health and welfare services for mothers and their children thus represented a significant drain on camp resources.

According to camp regulations, women in the final two months of pregnancy and nursing mothers (for nine months after the birth of the child) were to receive increased rations.[98] In most cases, women in these categories received about the same or better rations (except for rye bread) than prisoners who were being rewarded for overfulfilling their work quotas—Stakhanovites. Pregnant women received much higher rations of animal fats, for instance, and they were the only prisoners to receive daily rations of milk (400 g). Pregnant women and nursing mothers were also technically freed from night work, underground work, tree felling, and several other types of heavy manual labor.[99] These advantages were not, however, a route to a more comfortable life within the camps. First, due to general supply problems, corruption, and favoritism, Gulag prisoners rarely

[94] Bell, "Was the Gulag an Archipelago?," 131. The issue of deconvoyed prisoners raping local women or taking local mistresses was evidently long-standing. A 1940 report on guarding in the Gulag also noted these very issues. See Document no. 66, "Iz doklada zamestitelia nachal'nika GULAG G.P.Dobrynina o rabote Upravleniia okhrany GULAG za 1939 g.," in *Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga Tom 4: Naselenie Gulaga*, ed. A. B. Bezborodov, I. v. Bezborodova, and V. M. Khrustalev (Moscow: Rosspen, 2004), 170–77, esp. 174. See also Document no. 70, "Prikaz NKVD SSSR no. 0104 'O rezul'tatakh obsledovaniia Vladivostokskogo ispravitel'no-trydovogo lageria NKVD'" from February 1941 in ibid., 181–82.

[95] GARF, f. 8360, op. 1, d. 44, l. 37.

[96] GANO, f. R-20, op. 1, d. 378, l. 2.

[97] GARF, f. 8360, op. 1, d. 63 [So spravkami po voprosami rezhima soderzhaniia, komplektovaniia i trudogogo ispol'zovaniia zakliuchennykh, ianv-apr 1953], ll. 39–40.

[98] See A. I. Kokurin and N. V. Petrov, eds., *GULAG (Glavnoe upravlenie lagerei) 1918–1960* (Moscow: Materik, 2002), 476–89, esp. 482.

[99] See Document no. 142 in Bezborodov, Bezborodova, and Khrustalev, *Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga Tom 4*, 285–86, a 1949 document on the labor use of pregnant women and nursing mothers.

Author: Should the highlighted "v." in note 94 be capitalized?

received the rations accorded to them by regulations.[100] Second, pregnancy and childbirth, despite official measures to help the women and children, could lead to further hardships.

One account of pregnancy in the camps comes from Hava Volovich, whose daughter was born in a camp barrack in a Komi Republic camp. Volovich was able to stay with her daughter for a year but was then transferred to the "mothers'" camp, where her "pudgy little angel with the golden curls soon turned into a pale ghost with blue shadows under her eyes and sores all over her lips." In her original camp, despite the lice-infested barrack, Volovich was able to care for her child personally. In the mothers' camp, the authorities placed her daughter in a home for camp children, and Volovich could only see her during visiting hours or by bribing the nurses. Volovich remembers that the nurses treated the babies horribly, not feeding them properly, beating them regularly, and so on. Death rates rose accordingly, resulting in "plenty of empty beds . . . even though the birthrate in the camps was relatively high." Volovich's story ended tragically. Her daughter died, and she described the experience of motherhood in the camps as its own form of punishment: "That is the whole story of how, in giving birth to my only child, I committed the worst crime there is."[101]

Other evidence of how children were treated in the camps supports Volovich's impressions. In 1952 eighty-four children died in Siblag, many from TB and pneumonia.[102] A. I. Kaufman, a prisoner put to work as a doctor at a camp in Kazakhstan, described the NKVD children's homes inside the camps, where camp children were supposed to be housed until the age of two:

> In the children's home there were around 200 children under the age of two. . . . The illness rate among the children was incredibly high. I was exhausted from work and did not have one night of normal sleep: 3–4 times per night [I would] awaken to sick children. The bosses interfered all day: then one comes, then another to walk, to look—all for show, of course. They were afraid of liability because the children were [technically] "free." . . . Why the illnesses? Why did the child die? [They would ask.] And when I told them about the lack of care—not enough orderlies, nannies, nurses; the disgusting food—the boss would wave his hand and hurry off.[103]

[100] The issue of rations is an underdeveloped topic in Gulag historiography. For a more in-depth discussion, see Wilson T. Bell, "The Gulag and Soviet Society in Western Siberia, 1929–1953" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2011), 141–48.

[101] Volovich, "My Past," 261, 262, 264.

[102] GARF, f. 9414, op. 1, d. 739 [Sibirskii ITL: Akty proverok, dokladnye zapiski i perepiska o sostoianii i raboty ITL], l. 136.

[103] Dr. A. I. Kaufman, *Lagernyi vrach: 16 let v Sovetskom Soiuze-vospominaniia sionista* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1973), 232.

At around the age of two, children born in the camps were usually transferred to orphanages outside camp walls.[104] In mid-1947, for instance, forty children who had just reached the age of two were removed from the jurisdiction of the Novosibirsk Province Camp and Colony Administration and transferred to provincial orphanages or relatives.[105] This practice became official policy following a decision of the Council of Ministers of the USSR in 1949.[106]

Another way of reducing the number of children in the camps was the granting of occasional amnesties to some of their mothers and to pregnant women, a phenomenon that was common in the late Stalinist period.[107] Barnes argues that both the large number of deaths and the large number of releases from the Gulag made the camps places of death and redemption: authorities sought to weed out those persons who might contaminate Soviet society but reintegrate those who could still be productive Soviet citizens. The case of the released mothers complicates this dichotomy.[108] Unlike other released prisoners, mothers freed from the Gulag under these amnesties were not released for good behavior or because they were considered reeducated but only because they and their children were a burden on the system and could contribute little to production. The release of mothers would thus seem to underscore arguments about the primarily economic function of the Gulag. And yet certain categories of pregnant women and mothers were not allowed to leave at all, even during these amnesties, which suggests that the Gulag, despite the frequent fluidity of its borders and the "revolving door" of incarceration/release, also functioned as a penal institution designed to remove undesirables from Soviet society.[109] Thus in the 1949 amnesty for "pregnant women and women with young children," authorities ordered all prisoners in this category freed except those serving sentences for "counterrevolutionary crimes, banditry, premeditated murder, robbery [*razboi*], and the theft of socialist property [and members] of organized gangs or groups of large sizes."[110] Clearly, however, the frequent release of

[104] See Document no. 280 in Vilenskii et al., *Deti GULAGa*, 477.

[105] GANO, f. R-20, op. 1, d. 378, l. 2.

[106] See Document no. 281, "Postanovlenie Soveta ministrov SSSR no. 2213 'O sokrashchenii sroka soderzhaniia pri osuzhdennykh materiakh detei i peredache detei starshe dvukh let na soderzhanie blizkikh rodstvennikov ili v detskie uchrezhdeniia,'" in Vilenskii et al., *Deti GULAGa*, 478.

[107] Alexopoulos, "Exiting the Gulag after War," 568.

[108] Barnes, *Death and Redemption*.

[109] For more on the Gulag as a "revolving door," see Alexopoulos, "Amnesty 1945."

[110] See Document no. 279, "Ukaz Prezidiuma verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR "Ob osvobozhdenii ot nakazaniia osuzhdennykh beremennykh zhenshchin i zhenshchin, imeiushchikh maloletnykh detei," in Vilenskii et al., *Deti GULAGa*, 477. In this case, by "young children," they meant children under seven years old. This was not the first such instance. Pregnant women and women with young children (except "counterrevolutionaries") were released in large numbers in 1940 and at various other times too. See Document no. 13 in Bezborodov, Bezborodova, and Khrustalev, *Istoriia Stalinskogo*

pregnant women and mothers with small children reveals that authorities saw these prisoners as less dangerous than men, gender stereotyping that worked in the favor of camp women.[111] The amnesties for pregnant women and mothers of young children, even if not all of these women were eligible, show that not all releases were about redemption.

Pregnant women and nursing mothers who remained in the camps posed dilemmas for camp bosses. Corrective-Labor Colony no. 9 of the Tomsk Province Colony Department, for example, held dozens of pregnant and nursing women. In a 1952 report to the Tomsk Provincial Party Committee, Didorenko, the director of the Tomsk Province Colony Department, noted that "using the labor of this contingent of female prisoners entails great difficulties and inconveniences," as nursing mothers were supposed to feed their children every two to four hours, depending on the child's age. Corrective-Labor Colony no. 9 was an agricultural colony, and field work was conducted at least half a kilometer and often several kilometers from the camp itself. Didorenko described the problems this created: "If [we] create work brigades only from the contingent of female prisoners who are breast-feeding, it would be necessary to take a break every two hours and convoy the prisoners [back] to the living zone, where the children are located. This would mean work would occupy only 50 percent of the time." But it was actually impossible to organize work brigades of only of breast-feeding mothers, meaning that interruptions would be necessary for regular brigades, and there would not be enough guards to convoy the prisoners. Didorenko concluded by arguing that nursing mothers should only be used for work within the zone, never for work in the fields.[112]

This proposal evidently did not go over well. In early 1953 a Tomsk Province Party Committee commission investigated complaints against Didorenko for "incorrect actions." The commission found many problems with Didorenko's work, including the failure to use nursing mothers at Corrective-Labor Colony no. 9 properly: "ITK-9 holds eighty women-mothers [*zhenshchin-materei*] whose children are located in a nursery at the ITK. Thirty-three personnel (doctors, nannies, nurses, and others) serve these children. Despite this, of the eighty women only fifteen are sent to work. In this manner it happens that women who have been sentenced for grave [*tiazhkie*] crimes and held at the state's expense don't do anything; meanwhile, thirty-three persons are devoted to [the care of] their children at the state's expense, [and] the children are also held at the state's expense."[113]

Gulaga Tom 4, 82–83, which discusses releasing prisoners not deemed dangerous to "state security."

[111] See also Viola, "Bab'i Bunty."

[112] For Didorenko's letter, see "Pis'mo nachal'nika OITK UMVD po Tomskoi oblasti v Tomskii obkom KPSS Maksimovu ot 19.12.1952 g.," TsDNITO, f. 607, op. 1, d. 948, ll. 443–44.

[113] See "Spravka o proverke zhaloby o nepravil'nykh deistviiakh nachal'nika OITK UMVD tov. Didorenko," TsDNITO, f. 607, op. 1, d. 1923, l. 138.

The Party Committee commission recommended a strict administrative reprimand for both Didorenko and the director of Labor Colony no. 9.

Like the case against Kotliarevskii, who had regular sexual relations with female prisoners under his jurisdiction, the case against Didorenko highlights the regime's ambivalent attitude and uneven policy toward sexual activity in the camps. While cohabitation was technically banned, the regime nevertheless provided structural support for its consequences, however limited in scope and cruel in practice. That "support" came in the form of better rations (at least in theory), an infrastructure to care for newborn babies (although again, in practice, conditions were often unimaginably awful), and even the possibility of early release.

This structural support clearly sets the Gulag apart from the Nazi concentration camps and death camps. Babies of inmates were considered irredeemable enemies of the state in the Nazi case. In Ravensbrück, for example, women who became pregnant in the camp were forced to have abortions or to hide their pregnancies and abandon their children after birth. In the death camps, the situation was worse, as pregnancy was itself "a capital crime."[114] The stark contrast between the murder of pregnant women and their babies in Nazi concentration camps and the support provided to pregnant prisoners of the Gulag highlights both the very different attitudes toward population policy in the two regimes and the very different motivations for incarcerating the women.[115] In contrast to the possibility of release for pregnant Gulag inmates, who had been incarcerated for their actions, women in Nazi concentration camps were being persecuted as supposed racial threats; pregnancy simply hastened an already issued death sentence, particularly for Jews. And yet if we look at Nazi camps that were less exclusively aimed at the persecution and murder of Jews, more similarities in the way that the two camp systems treated women and their sexuality are apparent. For instance, in Nazi forced labor camps in Poland, male and female prisoners—even some Jews—interacted quite regularly, and there were many cases of camp personnel engaging in both consensual and violent sexual relations with female prisoners. Felicja Karay writes that in Polish forced labor camps many "inmates were young, single, and in search of a soulmate or the possibility of commingling; others sought material assistance; but most believed that life would be easier with a

[114] David M. Patterson, "The Moral Dilemma of Motherhood in the Nazi Death Camps," in *Problems Unique to the Holocaust*, ed. Harry James Cargas (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 7–24, esp. 7–8. Buber-Neumann also discusses forced abortion on pregnant women in Ravensbrück (*Under Two Dictators*, 251–52). See also Caplan, "Gender and the Concentration Camp," 94.

[115] For a comparison of Nazi and Soviet population policy, see David L. Hoffmann and Annette F. Timm, "Utopian Biopolitics: Reproductive Policies, Gender Roles, and Sexuality in Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union," in Geyer and Fitzpatrick, *Beyond Totalitarianism*, 87–129, especially the section on eugenics (99–104).

partner."[116] But even in these cases, and quite unlike the Gulag, authorities murdered the babies that resulted from these liaisons, demonstrating the fundamental difference between the murderously racist goals of the Third Reich and the political and economic motivations for the Gulag.

The extreme racism of the Nazi regime is one reason why Nazi policy toward mothers and babies was less flexible than policy in Stalin's Gulag. The relative flexibility of policies toward sex and pregnancy in the Gulag also, however, reflects Soviet ideology toward women and the family in the late Stalinist era and the state's general inability to control sexuality.

Many historians have described the conservative shift in Soviet family policy over the course of the 1930s, a shift that continued into the postwar years.[117] The regime became anxious about the falling birthrate and about low population numbers recorded in the suppressed 1937 census. Starting in the mid-1930s, a host of pronatalist policies were devised, including the introduction of restrictions on abortion. In 1944 the state even began to reward "hero mothers" and to give other rewards to women who had had many children. Support for pregnant mothers and their babies in the camps can thus be interpreted as part of the larger imperative to increase the size of the population. The Soviets, unlike the Nazis, generally did not believe that negative traits were heritable, and even the deportations of ethnic groups focused on cultural rather than "racial" characteristics.[118] The Soviets were thus less likely than the Nazis to regard the children of criminals and other prisoners as a threat.

Recent scholarship by Lauren Kaminsky, Anna Krylova, and others has downplayed the emphasis on a conservative shift in Stalinist policy regarding the role of women in society and focused instead upon points of continuity between the 1920s and the Stalin era. They argue that Soviet policy and practice in the postwar period remained comparatively radical and can be viewed more as a consolidation of revolutionary gains rather than as a break from revolutionary values. Kaminsky argues that the revolutionary changes of the 1920s carried over into the Stalin era and into the postwar period. Even under Stalin, she argues, many family policies "were explicit in their promotion of equality" between men and women, and she questions whether it makes sense to treat Stalinism as having retreated from the

[116] For a discussion of these Polish camps, see Felicja Karay, "Women in the Forced-Labor Camps," in *Women in the Holocaust*, ed. Dalia Ofer and Lenore J. Weitzman (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 285–309, quotation at 297.

[117] As Ronald Grigor Suny writes in his overview of the Soviet system, "Nowhere is the sense of a great retreat (or great reversal [in revolutionary values]) clearer in the Soviet experience than in the shift in policies toward women and the family" (*The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], 278).

[118] Terry Martin, "The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing," *Journal of Modern History* 70, no. 4 (1998): 813–61.

revolutionary goals of transforming gender, sex, and the family.[119] Krylova's research on women soldiers during World War II also emphasizes continuities from the 1920s. Revolutionary values, she insists, had successfully created a new Soviet woman who saw herself as equal and equally capable of actively participating in the Soviet project, including in active military duty.[120] In other words, signals regarding women's sexuality, their role in reproduction, and their place within Soviet society were decidedly mixed.

The Soviet case provides a contrast with what Dagmar Herzog has described as a concerted effort to "re-establish traditional family structures" in the postwar period.[121] Unlike many European and North American women, Soviet women generally remained in the workforce after the war.[122] The demographic devastation of World War II created a demand for women workers while also motivating the regime to encourage higher birthrates. The new family law of 1944 introduced a tax on all childless men between the ages of twenty and fifty and women between the ages of twenty and forty-five.[123] As Greta Bucher has argued, this shift toward pronatalism was not aimed exclusively at the conjugal family, and even single Soviet women were encouraged to be mothers while continuing to work outside the home.[124] According to Healey, family law, in conjunction with the violence of the war, contributed to sexual promiscuity and disorder in the postwar period.[125] Rudimentary support for pregnancy in the camps can thus be explained as part of a shift toward pronatalism in the larger goals of Soviet family policy in the late Stalinist period, but not in the conservative sense of promoting women as homemakers. The Gulag's nurseries were similarly equivalent to the daycare facilities that the state required industry to build in postwar Soviet cities.[126] Despite harsh conditions, tolerance of pregnancy in camps thus reflected the larger push for higher birthrates in Soviet society. Even in the camps, in other words, women's sexuality could be useful for the state if it produced future Soviet citizens.

Even in areas where the regime demonstrated a clear desire to police sexuality, it generally failed. Male homosexual sex was recriminalized in 1933, yet homosexual subcultures continued. Dan Healey's work on the subject, using trial records, reveals that despite the 1933 law, Moscow's

[119] Lauren Kaminsky, "Utopian Visions of Family Life in the Stalin-Era Soviet Union," *Central European History* 44, no. 1 (2011): 63–91, quotation at 64.

[120] Anna Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat: A History of Violence on the Eastern Front* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[121] Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe*, 100.

[122] The role of women in the workforce after World War II is a key theme of Bucher's *Women, the Bureaucracy, and Daily Life*.

[123] Susan Groag Bell and Karen M. Offen, eds., *Women, the Family, and Freedom: The Debate in Documents: Volume Two, 1880–1950* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1983), 411.

[124] Bucher, *Women, the Bureaucracy, and Daily Life*, 12–16, quotation at 16.

[125] Healey, "Comrades, Queers, and 'Oddballs,'" 503, 519–20.

[126] Bucher, *Women, the Bureaucracy, and Daily Life*, 58.

homosexual subculture continued in the form of "sociability, street cruising, and public sex, especially in the vicinity of Moscow's Boulevard Ring, a focal point since the late tsarist decades."[127] His more recent work on the postwar period points out that there was an increase in sexual violence in the late Stalinist Soviet Union, but even here he notes that homosexual subcultures persisted, and known homosexuals were often tolerated and not reported to the authorities. He links the limited tolerance for homosexuality to a broader postwar negotiation between state and society concerning the boundaries between public and private in the Soviet Union.[128] There are thus some interesting parallels between homosexual intimacy in broader Soviet society and heterosexual intimacy in the Gulag. Both were technically forbidden, and in both cases there were considerable risks involved in engaging in illicit sexual behavior. The penalty for sodomy after 1933 was at least a three-year sentence. Evgeniia Ginzburg writes that "in the Kolyma camps love meant hasty, perilous meetings in some sketchy shelter at your place of work in the taiga or behind a soiled curtain in some 'free' hut. There was always the fear of being caught, exposed to public shame, and assigned to a penal labor brigade, i.e., posted to some lethal spot; you might end up paying for your date with nothing less than your life."[129] Yet in both cases sexual relations became part of a subculture that resisted the laws and regulations of the state and continued to exist despite these laws and regulations.[130]

In the end, the issue of Soviet policy on sexual behavior in the camps provides instructive examples for the larger ambivalence of the regime toward all issues of sexuality and reproduction. The fact that sexual activity in the camps continued despite supposedly clear prohibitions reveals the regime's inability to effectively police the behavior of prisoners. At the same time, official reactions to heterosexual sex in the Gulag underscore how increased interest in raising the birthrate created conditions for extramarital reproduction even in the camps: camps were structured in a way that allowed for considerable interaction between male and female prisoners; and maternity wards, nurseries, and increased rations for pregnant and nursing women provided support for women who had engaged in these liaisons, whether or not it was against their will. Sexual activity in the camps, like black-market activity or unauthorized correspondence, was one way in which prisoners transgressed official camp boundaries and helped to create a society with its own informal set of rules and practices. In other words, unlike the system of terror in the Nazi concentration camps, Soviet power

[127] Dan Healey, "Sexual and Gender Dissent: Homosexuality as Resistance in Stalin's Russia," in *Contending with Stalinism: Soviet Power and Resistance in the 1930s*, ed. Lynne Viola (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 139–69, quotation at 158.

[128] Healey, "Comrades, Queers, and 'Oddballs,'" 518–20.

[129] Ginzburg, *Within the Whirlwind*, 11–12.

[130] Dan Healey, "Homosexual Existence and Existing Socialism," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 8, no. 3 (2002): 349–78; and Healey, "Sexual and Gender Dissent."

failed to function as absolute power even in the camps.[131] As in the greater Soviet society, where homosexual men found ways around Stalin-era laws prohibiting sodomy and succeeded in forming their own subcultures, prisoners in Stalin's camps had sex with one another and undermined regulations against heterosexual relations.[132]

As in the Nazi concentration camps, but with a far higher degree of flexibility and likelihood for survival, women in the Gulag could use their sexuality as a form of barter or even as a form of resistance. Within a limited scope of possibility, sexuality provided women with possibilities for improving their situation; it provided a space for agency, in other words, within the context of a system that was meant to strip prisoners of all agency. As in the other systems of terror in the twentieth century, sexual violence was common in the Gulag. Unlike the Nazi camps, however, heterosexual sex in the Gulag received quasi-official "support" in the form of regulations and institutions that were meant to help pregnant women and nursing mothers in the camps.

In the final analysis, heterosexual sex in the Gulag was part of the negotiated power of the camp system. Memoirs make clear that sexual activity was part of a prisoner subculture that consistently subverted official camp rules and regulations. Camp authorities formally prohibited heterosexual intimacy yet simultaneously acquiesced to sexual activity in the camps, and they did little, structurally, to make sure that sexual liaisons between male and female prisoners could not occur. In other words, they knew, just as the prisoners did, that their rules and regulations were impossible to enforce.

About the Author

WILSON T. BELL received his PhD from the University of Toronto in 2011. He is assistant professor of history and politics at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, Canada. His research explores the Gulag prison camps in the Soviet Union under Stalin, with a particular focus on the mobilization of forced labor during World War II, black-market activity in the camps, illicit sexual activity in the camps, and the interaction between the Gulag and Soviet society more generally. His work on the Gulag has appeared most recently in the *Russian Review* and *Gulag Studies.*

[131] On the Nazi concentration camp as the highest form of terror, see Wolfgang Sofsky, *The Order of Terror: The Concentration Camp* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

[132] For more on homosexual subcultures as resistance, see Healey, "Homosexual Existence," esp. 365–66.