

This criticism does not diminish the relevance of this book, however, as scholars of welfare and family policy will benefit enormously from it in their work to understand the past of family policy in central and eastern Europe and to shape an inclusive future for families. Hopefully, the book's ultimate lesson—in this region, the past is never just the past, even for policymakers—will be understood in its scope.

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Outlaw Music in Russia: The Rise of an Unlikely Genre. By Anastasia Gordienko. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2023. xiii, 319 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Illustrations. \$89.95. hard bound. doi: 10.1017/slr.2024.22

Until today, one of the most popular music genres in post-Soviet Russia, the *shanson*, had never received a dedicated study in English. Anastasia Gordienko has addressed this gap through this wonderful and thoroughly engaging book, which investigates the history, characteristics and values of the *shanson* and its main component, the *blatnaia pesnia*. As she defines it, the *blatnaia pesnia* is “folklore produced by criminals, outcasts, social misfits, or those living ‘outside the law’ and associated with . . . underworld culture,” as well as “the music—some folklorized, some not—embraced by these populations as their own, and also identified by the general, law-abiding public as *blatnye pieces*” (7). The *shanson*, instead, “ranges beyond the *blatnaia pesnia*” (5) to incorporate songs with no visible connection to the criminal underworld (such as romantic *shanson*). Gordienko claims that what binds all these songs together, rather than subject, is uniformity of style: use of colloquial speech, unpretentious melodies and a sound “rooted in urban romance, street songs, estrada and restaurant song tradition” (7). Having worked in radio for fifteen years prior to the start of her academic career, the author is in an enviable insider’s position, which enables her to access statistics and musicians, and makes her research informed and insightful.

One of the strengths of the monograph is undoubtedly the examination of the linkage between outlaw music and the political, social, and cultural milieus. Equally robust is the analysis of how this relationship has changed over time. By tracing the trajectory of outlaw music vis-à-vis socio-political factors, Gordienko successfully unearths that, rather than a monolithic musical output, outlaw music has radically varied through time. This change is reflected not so much in how the music is written, but mainly in the ways in which it is disseminated, mediatized, received, and perceived.

Such a dynamic conceptualization gives Gordienko the opportunity, in Chap. 1, to persuasively connect theories of musical habitus and individual / collective identity as “becoming” (rather than being) with outlaw music as “a process” (rather than a state). Shifting habits correspond to shifting

perceptions of popular music (including outlaw music) as an inventory and inflection of shared values and beliefs. As Gordienko claims, from carrying an aura of protest, subversion, and rebellion against the system in the Soviet period, outlaw music has experienced a steady commodification in the post-Soviet era, which has brought the genre to the forefront of the mainstream music market and has gained it solid support across the political elite.

In Chap. 2, Gordienko historically contextualizes the main component of outlaw music—the *blatnaia pesnia*. She convincingly demonstrates the interactions, contaminations, and continuities between eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russian rural folklore, late imperial low-brow urban songs, high literature (particularly Aleksandr Pushkin, Fedor Dostoevskii, and Sergei Esenin), and the *blatnaia pesnia*. These productive interrelations, rooted in the widespread and long-standing distrust of the Russian people for state institutions, speak of a strong tie between the figure of the outlaw in Russian imperial folklore—a rebel who seeks freedom and justice for his people against an oppressive authority—and the lyrical hero of the *blatnaia pesnia*. Both are romantic and romanticized outcasts who challenge the system (and lose). Because of the system's authoritarianism, unaccountability, and unfairness towards its subjects (all tendencies that continued in the Soviet and then post-Soviet periods), it is not surprising to see a consistent anti-systemic cultural production. This production, as Gordienko explains, has not always been confined to the underground: between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, outlaw urban songs reached the zenith of popularity and became a mass phenomenon, before being censored and suppressed by Soviet authorities at the end of the 1920s.

In Chap. 3, the author examines the evolution of the *blatnaia pesnia* in the early Soviet period and under Stalin. Rich in examples, the chapter shows how elements of the *blatnaia pesnia* mutated upon contact with a new reality of the Soviet system: the gulag. Due to the varied composition of the labor camp, criminals lived and worked side by side with political opponents and members of the Soviet intelligentsia, who were “exposed to criminal folklore, with the *blatnaia pesnia* at its core” (72). The *blatnaia pesnia* thus continued its process of integration in the intellectual layers of Soviet society, even if in marginal settings.

Chap. 4 outlines the changes that *blatnaia pesnia* underwent in the late Soviet period until its mainstream booming in the post-Soviet era. The author shows the influence that the *blatnaia pesnia* had on guitar poetry (*avtorskaia pesnia*), particularly on bards such as Vladimir Vysotskii. Like other musical forms censored by the Soviet authorities (for example, rock), the *blatnaia pesnia* found alternative channels of dissemination through *magnitizdat* in the Brezhnev era, acquired momentum during perestroika, and boomed once the ban was completely lifted. But it did so already under another name: as Gordienko explains, *blatnaia pesnia* rebranded itself as *shanson* in order to be accepted across music media. The name was chosen by an influential outlaw music producer based on some of Vysotskii's recordings that were released in France in 1977 and 1981, and which carried the appellation “chansonnier” and “chanson,” respectively. In reality, Gordienko persuasively argues, the

name is the only connection that the post-Soviet genre has with the French chanson: “the social—and sometimes political—connotations found in the Russian ‘shanson’ are absent from the French ‘chanson’” (106).

The analysis of the synergies between shanson and power in Vladimir Putin’s Russia, which the author undertakes in the remaining chapters, is the most exciting part of the book. Through the discussion, it becomes evident that *blatnaia pesnia* and the shanson are another example of a subversive yet conservative and patriotic tool that has been appropriated by the Kremlin and integrated in the tissue of the status quo. This seemingly unlikely transaction has attracted supporters for the regime and yielded benefits for the performers. The public endorsement that many shansoniers (such as Stas Mikhailov, Grigory Leps, Sergei Trofimov, Denis Maidanov, Stas Baretskii, Vladimir Slepak, and Masha Rasputina) have declared for Putin often goes hand in hand with the rewards that the regime has bestowed upon the shansoniers: public concerts, private gigs (the lucrative *korporativy*), business opportunities, awards, and money. In theory, such alliance is paradoxical, as state institutions should be the shanson’s arch-enemy. However, if one looks closely, embracing the discourse of power does not represent an insincere leap for these performers. As Gordienko skillfully argues, state discourse and shanson’s values overlap in many aspects: the shanson, too, promotes masculinity. The rites of passages of the *vory-v-zakone* (thieves in law) are steeped in religion, women are often seen as accessories or worse (except for the figure of the mother, who resembles the Mother of God), the disrespect for the rule of law is an essential prerequisite, and the thieves, like the state, create a parallel system in which they make their own rules. Therefore, what at first sight seemed to stand on opposite poles is actually a perfect match.

A question thus arises: does the label “outlaw music” still mean anything, if this music is now completely accepted and endorsed by the authorities? Well, it does: if we think of Russia as an outlaw state (domestically and on the global stage), “outlaw” for this music does not become a marker of subversion against the state, but a certificate of marriage with it. On the one hand, as the corrupt state replicates the structures and dynamics of the criminal world, it co-opts the shanson as its soundtrack; on the other hand, shansoniers see in Putin a strong leader who resembles a gangster (159). In short, the legal and the illegal, whose lines have often been blurred in Russian history, have merged, and shansoniers and the authorities are “singing the same tune” (170).

The book would have perhaps benefited from more investigation into the audiences and places of the shanson. Gordienko claims that Russians listen to the shanson because of their fascination with criminality and their antagonism towards the arrogant authoritarian system, but it would have been interesting to read some interviews with consumers of the genre to back up the argument (taxi-drivers, for instance, are always shanson’s avid listeners). Equally interesting would have been an investigation into the listeners’ political orientation: Russians in the book are often portrayed as victims of an abusive state, but why do so many of them listen to a pro-state genre? Lastly, is shanson completely subservient to power now (as the book seems to suggest) or are pockets of resistance still visible?

Notwithstanding these observations, Gordienko's monograph is a solid study, which breaks new grounds in the research area of Russian popular music and its interactions with society and politics. The book is written in a lively and accessible style, and it will be a compelling and productive read not only for scholars of Russian/Soviet popular music, but also for those interested in culture-state relations under Putin, and the broader public. The book resonates strongly with the cultural climate of today's Russia, when a significant portion of popular music has become the object of state censorship once again. Authorities have cancelled concerts of those performers with a critical view of the regime and launched investigations into their musical activities, while the Kremlin has labelled several musicians who spoke out against the war Russia is waging against Ukraine as "foreign agents." Some of these artists—Zemfira, Monetcchka, Face, Oxxxymiron, Noize MC, to name a few—have migrated abroad. Can they be the real "out-law" musicians now?

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A Race for the Future: Scientific Visions of Modern Russian Jewishness. By Marina Mogilner. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2022. viii, 334 pp. Notes. Index. \$49.95, hard bound.
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Marina Mogilner's *A Race for the Future: Scientific Visions of Modern Russian Jewishness* tells the story of Jewish race science as it emerged in the late-Russian empire and early Soviet Union. At the turn of the twentieth century, national distinctiveness was increasingly important in the Russian empire. Jews, however, were by and large not considered to be a "nationality," which was taken by the figures treated in the book as a liability to be overcome. The concept of race and innovative forms of biopolitics were intended as solutions to the problem: Jewish difference was biosocial and therefore scientifically demonstrable. "Jewish self-racialization" was intended as a bulwark against invisibility or erasure in a nationalizing empire, and a tool for achieving collective development and progress in the "postimperial" (6) Soviet Union. Self-racialization was taken to be an urgently needed project for the purpose of bringing about progress for Jews in Russia and the Soviet Union, hence the double meaning of "race" in the title of the book.

The book is organized into two main parts framed as intellectual history (part one, "The Science of Race") and social history (part two, "The Biopolitics of History"), respectively. The methodological shift between these two halves entails consideration of an impressive range of sources and highlights Mogilner's attunement to the relationship between methodological approaches and the questions they allow us to answer. The problems the book addresses, in other words, justify the integration of the two approaches—racial discourses formulated by the Jewish intelligentsia intersected with social histories of biopolitical practices and institutions that affected the