

From the *Slavic Review* Editorial Board:

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To the Editor:

Abby Schrader's recent article, "Unruly Felons and Civilizing Wives: Cultivating Marriage in the Siberian Exile System, 1822–1860" (*Slavic Review*, vol. 66, no. 2) presents some valuable information concerning tsarist officials' efforts to match male exiles with wives through compulsion and other means. Most of her material comes from Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv, St. Petersburg, and has not been discussed in other publications.

Yet her article fails to cite much of the secondary literature on the topic of pre-Soviet Siberian exile, and this results in an argument that is decontextualized and fails to account for contrary evidence. Moreover, her article contains several errors of fact.

Schrader argues that officials used women in an instrumental manner for the purpose described above. I have no disagreement with this formulation, especially since it is the same one I have used in two previous articles on the topic (see my "'Licentious Girls' and Frontier Domesticators: Women and Siberian Exile from the Late Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century," *Sibirica* 3, no. 1 [2003]: 3–20; and "Sakhalin's Women: The Convergence of Sexuality and Penology in Late Imperial Russia," *Ab Imperio*, no. 2 [2003]: 115–38).

But her assertions that the government passed "gender-specific legislation," relied upon women to fulfill a domesticating role, and, when they failed in this task, used this to absolve itself of responsibility for trying to correct the exile system, are misleading and inaccurate. Misleading insofar as gender-specific legislation existed for both sexes: for example, after Catherine the Great's reign, only male convicts were subject to corporal punishment; and women were almost never assigned to the same labor regimes men were. Nonetheless, both sexes were equally expected to serve the state as a result of a service ethos that conditioned the regime's instrumental attitude toward all subjects (see my *Exile to Siberia, 1590–1822: Corporeal Commodification and Administrative Systematization in Russia*, forthcoming).

Schrader's assertions are inaccurate insofar as the patriarchy she identifies, while certainly imposing a domesticating role upon women, really did *not* use their failure as an excuse to avoid dealing with the exile system's problems. On the contrary, beginning no later than Catherine's reign and continuing until the end of tsarism, the government repeatedly debated abolishing or improving the exile system both for its cruelty and for its cost. For example, in 1868 Alexander II appointed a committee to redress what top officials labeled "the collapse of *katorga*" (see my "The Institution of Russia's Sakhalin Policy, from 1868 to 1875," *Journal of Asian History* 36, no. 1 [2002]: 20).

Catherine was actually the only autocrat to abolish exile to Siberia, albeit for a very

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brief time and due to circumstances resulting from the *Pugachevshina*. Indeed, prior to Schrader's chosen date of 1860 there were several investigations of exilic matters, though the most significant during this period were those culminating in Mikhail Speranskii's 1822 Siberian Reforms, which included two regulations that restructured Siberia's penal apparatus and the convoy system. Observing the sudden increase in the annual numbers of exiles sent to Siberia, Schrader assumes that Speranskii's reforms "depended upon" and "astronomically expanded the number of convicts and vagrants banished to Siberia" (236–37). But this was not the case. As both his personal correspondence and these regulations' precisely stated figures make clear, Speranskii had actually convinced himself that annual numbers would remain steady, which largely explains why his system soon malfunctioned. As for explaining the rise in numbers, Schrader fails to account for the 1823 Vagabond Regulation (*Ustav o brodiagakh*), distinguishable among other (unmentioned) factors by having excluded vagabonds (*brodiagi*) from military service and designating them instead for exile (see my "Vagabondage and Exile to Tsarist Siberia: Disciplinary Modernism in Tsarist Russia," in Paul Ocobock and Lee Beier, eds., *Cast Out: A History of Vagrancy in Global Perspective* [Athens, 2007], 165–87).

These and other developments are described in studies by the Justice Ministry, S. V. Maksimov, G. S. Fel'dstein, N. M. Iadrntsev, and I. Ia. Foinitskii (*Ssylka v Sibir': Ocherk eia istorii i sovremennago polozeniia*, 1900; S. Maksimov, *Sibir' i katonga*, 3 vols., 1871); G. S. Fel'dstein, *Ssylka: Eia genezisa, znacheniiia, istorii i sovremennogo sostoiianiia*, 1893; N. M. Iadrntsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia: K iubileiu trekhsotletiiia. Sovremennoe polozenie Sibiri. Eia nu-zhdy i potrebnosti. Eia proshloe i budushchee*, 1882; I. Ia. Foinitskii, *Uchenie o nakazanii v sviazi s tiur' movedeniem*, 1889). Despite discussion of these and other indispensable sources in Alan Wood's numerous articles as well as my dissertation, none are cited in Schrader's article. Familiarity with this secondary literature might have forestalled several mistakes, including her belief that "Russian rulers began treating Siberia as a repository for convicts and undesirables" in 1753 (230), when in fact the first exiles were sent no later than 1593, and in any case an exponential increase in Siberia's use as an open-air asylum came on the heels of the 1649 *Ulozhenie*. Schrader is similarly incorrect in claiming "we lack precise figures for the number of wives and daughters who accompanied men into exile" (248). Such figures may be found in Maksimov's work. Finally, Maksimov also presents evidence that the Senate relieved infirm women and similar others of having to march into exile in 1827, that is, thirty years before Schrader's date of 1857.

In conclusion, Schrader's research promises to add much to our knowledge of a topic made all the more important because of its link to the twentieth-century gulag. But contributions are most serviceable when the considerable contributions of other scholars, both living and dead, are acknowledged and accounted for.

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Professor Schrader responds:

As Andrew Gentes has indicated, it is indisputable that nineteenth-century Russian authorities sought to increase the number of women available to marry male exiles banished to Siberia and facilitate their conjugal unions. I have concluded that it is most fruitful to contextualize officials' obsession with exile marriage and Siberia's shortage of women within the framework of contemporary Russian views of gender. Rather than offer an alternative interpretation, Gentes lodges ill-founded accusations casting doubt on my scholarship. Many of his claims result from less than careful analysis of my article. I will take these on in the first three paragraphs and engage his letter's more substantive comments in the next four.

Gentes's claim that I lack familiarity with secondary literature on Siberian exile is misplaced. I refer to S. V. Maksimov's and N. M. Iadrntsev's writings in notes 19, 31, and 33. These works, along with those by E. N. Anuchin, S. Chudnovskii, N. Vasin, Alan Wood, Marc Raeff, George Lantzeff, and others provide the backdrop for my primary research. I have consulted I. Ia. Foinitskii's 1889 monograph on punishment for other projects but am unaware how it would enhance this particular article.