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Prosecuting Procurement in the Russian Empire

Abstract

Concern about the issue of forced prostitution reached its height in the Russian empire (as elsewhere in Europe and the Americas) at the turn of the twentieth century, as part of the wider international “white slave” panic. In 1909, new anti-procurement statutes were incorporated into the Russian empire’s Criminal Code to ensure that those who forced, coerced or encouraged young women to enter the commercial sex industry felt the full force of the law. This article uses a case study of the Russian empire’s Estonian provinces (Estliand and Lifliand) to highlight the regional nature of Russian imperial experience. Prosecuting procurement was aligned with the priorities of local government, and the authorities in Revel’ (Tallinn) and Iu’rev (Tartu) used the issue of procurement to bolster their revenue. Here, the statutes gave the authorities additional tools for targeting individuals, such as managers of unlicensed brothels, who deprived the government of the income it generated from regulating the commercial sex industry. Drawing on court cases from the early 1910s, this article also examines the interaction of lower-class people with the state, their engagement with the legal system, their knowledge of the law, and the rhetorical strategies they employed to in their attempts to secure specific outcomes.

Introduction

In 1914, Anna Bashkis stood trial in Iur’ev (now Tartu, Estonia) following accusations that she had procured young women for prostitution at her coffee house in the town. Waitresses from the coffee house testified against Bashkis, detailing how she did not pay them a full salary, and instead expected them to have sex with customers in backrooms to make up the difference.¹ Bashkis was convicted under one of the Russian empire’s anti-procurement statutes, which were incorporated into the Criminal Code in 1909. Her punishment was a fine of 100 rubles or one month’s detention.² Throughout the investigation, the Iur’ev authorities were more concerned with establishing whether Bashkis had been running an illegal brothel, rather than investigating whether she had forced or coerced the women she employed into prostitution. Under the Russian empire’s regulation of prostitution, brothels required licenses to operate legally and brothel keepers were expected to contribute financially to municipal authorities, both formally

through taxation, and informally through bribes and cash gifts. Unlicensed brothels deprived local governments of this income. This article examines criminal cases from the Estonian provinces of the Russian empire in the early 1910s to assess how local authorities used the prosecution of procurement to recover lost state revenue. The cases under consideration demonstrate the malleability of procurement discourses, and how the issue of forced prostitution became entangled with wider ideas regarding gender and consent circulating in Europe at the turn of the twentieth century.

In the early 1900s, procurement garnered significant attention from government officials, educated elites, and the public across Europe and North America. Modernization, urbanization and the development of transportation networks contributed to rising panic regarding domestic and international sex trafficking, known as “white slavery” or in Russian, the “trade in women” (*torgovliia zhenshchinami*). Russian philanthropists joined their European counterparts at international congresses in London and Paris dedicated to the issue.³ Newspapers and periodicals across the continent were filled with tales of naive girls seduced into prostitution by devious Lotharios or money-grubbing brothel madams. This international procurement panic has been the subject of innovative research in recent years.⁴ Scholars have shown how in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, anxiety regarding female migration, sexuality, depopulation, and racial contamination facilitated widespread moral panic about the transportation of young, white women and their installation in foreign brothels across Europe and North America.⁵ These discourses are still in circulation over a century later and continue to influence contemporary anti-sex trafficking campaigns.⁶ Panic regarding sex trafficking and procurement became entangled with ideas about the “nation” and its borders, and this served to bolster national and international law enforcement agencies in the early 1900s.⁷ Feminist campaigns to end forced prostitution have been placed within the

broader history of internationalism in the twentieth century, although scholars have approached the stated humanitarian aims of such campaigns with varying degrees of skepticism.⁸ This article examines the application of procurement legislation at a local level, exploring how regional authorities used the new 1909 laws to bolster government revenue.

The cases under consideration were investigated and tried in Revel' (now Tallinn) and Iur'ev. These cities fell within the Russian imperial provinces of Estliand and northern Lifliand, regions that now comprise independent Estonia. Like the majority of the population in this region, all the defendants, witnesses, and victims in these cases were ethnic Estonians who spoke Estonian as their native language.⁹ Following the Russification of the judiciary in the Baltic provinces in the late 1880s, the proceedings of higher courts were conducted entirely in Russian, which forced monolingual Estonian speakers to communicate through interpreters. Tovia Raun argues that this language gap had a negative impact on the administration of justice in the Estonian provinces, as bilingual officials were rare and the quality of these translators was poor.¹⁰ Although Raun's claim is accurate to a certain extent, we do not have the sources to establish levels of bilingualism in this region.¹¹ Furthermore, Estonians comprised over half of the tsarist bureaucracy in Revel' at the turn of the twentieth century, which suggests that bilingual officials were not necessary a rarity by the early 1910s.¹² In the cases drawn on in this article, a handful of individuals were bilingual, but the vast majority gave their statements in Estonian, and these were later translated into Russian by court officials. All the trials took place in either Revel' or Iur'ev, where Russian native speakers made up substantial minorities of the urban population, so we can assume that those involved were exposed to the Russian language in everyday life and likely to have had at least basic competency in the principal language of the empire's administration.¹³ However, given that their

original Estonian statements have not been preserved, we also cannot fully discount the possibility that the translation process distorted the meaning and removed the nuances of the original Estonian.¹⁴

Court cases offer historians a glimpse into lower-class life in the late imperial period. By detailing social gestures, sequences of actions, and stable social practices, they allow us to examine the “body language” of the empire’s vast lower-class population.¹⁵ Witness statements and written appeals in criminal trials were some of the only tools available for lower-class women hoping to secure justice and to make their voices heard, and their choice of words often dictated the course of events.¹⁶ That being said, these are by no means unproblematic sources. We can never know whether written statements were distorted by the agendas of the individuals in charge of collecting them, or whether they are stylized narratives penned by the victim, the accused or the witness to achieve specific ends.¹⁷ Rather than reflecting the course of events, court cases richly illustrate the interaction of lower-class people with the state, their engagement with the legal system, their knowledge of the law, and the rhetorical strategies they employed in their attempts to secure specific outcomes.¹⁸

Shifting focus away from the metropole to examine procurement in the Russian empire is essential, given the regional nature of the Russian imperial experience. The empire’s institutional structures were molded by the individuals in charge of their operation, and these men enjoyed significant latitude in the formulation and implementation of policy.¹⁹ Legal and administrative regimes varied widely across the empire, so the relationship between subject and state similarly differed significantly from place to place.²⁰ Using procurement legislation to recover lost revenue was important for the authorities in Revel’ and Iur’ev because provincial governments consistently struggled to raise the money required to fund municipal services in the late Russian

empire.²¹ Municipal governments were subject to various fiscal constraints by the central government and often faced a chronic lack of funding, especially as urban populations rapidly expanded in the wake of industrialization and urbanization in the late nineteenth century. For example, Moscow city's annual deficit averaged one million rubles per year from 1904-1913.²² The Baltic port town of Libava (now Liepāja, Latvia) had a budget deficit of 40,000 rubles in the early 1900s.²³ The central government was largely disinterested in the disastrous financial state of provincial and municipal governments, and rarely provided additional funding for urban public projects.²⁴ It is not the intention of this article to make generalizations about the wider application of procurement legislation based on the Estonian case, but instead to illustrate how the prosecution of procurement was aligned with the priorities of local government in this region.

The social and ethnic characteristics of the Estonian provinces make them a unique setting for examining procurement in the Russian imperial context. Levels of literacy far outstripped other areas of the empire due to the region's strong ties with Lutheranism and the tradition of rural school networks stretching back to the eighteenth century.²⁵ The 1897 census indicated that 96 percent of Estonians were able to read, compared with an empire-wide average of around 21 percent.²⁶ As the number of Estonian-language newspapers and periodicals rapidly expanded following the relaxation of prepublication censorship in 1905, many would have been exposed to the discourses about prostitution, morality and procurement that permeated the popular press in the early 1900s.²⁷ The Estonian provinces also obscure the dominant cultural representations of procurement that were in circulation at the time. Estliand and northern Lifliand fell outside the Pale of Settlement, so the region also had a miniscule Jewish population and virtually no presence of Jews in the commercial sex industry.²⁸ These factors meant that Jews were less likely to be imagined as the chief perpetrators of

procurement, whereas in other parts the Russian empire and across Europe, narratives of procurement were often an outlet for wider antisemitic prejudices and emphasized the apparent racial difference between victim and perpetrator.²⁹ In the cases that follow, both those accused of procurement and their victims were lower-class, ethnically Estonian and Lutheran, all characteristics that corresponded to the dominant social, ethnic and religious identities of the wider Estonian region.

Procurement, Morality and Social Class

In 1909, comprehensive anti-procurement legislation was enacted in the Russian empire. Articles 524-529 of the Criminal Code criminalized individuals who coerced, forced, and encouraged women to enter the world of commercial sex and imposed prison sentences of varying length, depending on the specific offense.³⁰ Russia followed the international trend of legislating against “white slavery” by including a statute explicitly criminalizing the transportation of women abroad for the purposes of prostitution, but nobody was ever convicted under this legislation.³¹ The enactment of Articles 524-529 was a drawn-out process, as the statutes were originally written by jurists for the Draft Criminal Code of 1903. The 1903 draft was never actually implemented, except for the articles on procurement. The incorporation of these specific articles illustrates how the Russian empire was part of wider international conversations regarding procurement, prostitution, and female agency in the early twentieth century, and the significant impact of such debates on Russian legal culture.³²

The empire’s anti-procurement legislation fixated on the age of the victim. Article 524 criminalized the procurement of girls under the age of 21 for “lewdness” (*nepotrebstvo*), and Article 529 sought to bring those who merely accepted a woman under the age of 21 into a “den of debauchery” to legal responsibility.³³ By including a

specific age limit, Russian jurists classified procurement as a crime that was perpetrated against young women and girls.³⁴ This approach dovetailed with other legislation on prostitution, which was legally tolerated across the Russian empire from 1843 until 1917.³⁵ In 1901, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (*Ministerstvo Vnutrennikh Del*, MVD hereafter) issued a circular that raised the minimum age for women working in state-licensed brothels from 18 to 21.³⁶ Here, the Russian empire was part of an international trend, in which governments of various countries with state systems of regulation raised the age of majority for women selling sex in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³⁷

Discussions of procurement by educated Russians were saturated with ideas about morality and social class. Representations of procurement in the popular press served as a moralizing tool, as critics rebuked young lower-class women for allowing themselves to be seduced by the promise of a comfortable life. The following description of an apparently typical scene of “downfall” into prostitution, printed in Russia’s most popular newspaper, *Novoe Vremia*, in 1901, epitomized elite attitudes towards young lower-class women:

The meeting. Flashy surroundings in a manorial style. The auntie [*slang for procuress*] offers something so simple and tempting. “You, come sit, we will have fun, nice gentlemen will arrive. They sing, they treat us, they are all good people who do not wish you any evil and they will just treat you. Why don’t you have something to eat? Why will you not come?”

They go there, once, again, and then the trap is ready: cheap sweets, nuts, and cheap wine. In one sad moment, with a tipsy head, the fall is complete.³⁸

Legitimate concerns about the manipulation and exploitation of young women and girls were saturated in class prejudices, as writers chastised young girls for aspiring to upward social mobility and ridiculed their unsophisticated tastes.³⁹ The *Novoe Vremia* writer’s caricature of a typical lower-class girl was rife with contradictions. She was

simultaneously at fault for her own seduction into prostitution and also a blameless victim of her parents' neglect, as these girls were allegedly "raised by workers, without supervision." This explanation allowed educated elites to place the blame for the dominance of lower-class women in the commercial sex industry on the apparent failure of their parents to instill middle-class ideals of female chastity and humility into their dissolute and materialistic daughters.⁴⁰

Insidious urban danger ran as an undercurrent in narratives of procurement, and young lower-class women were strongly encouraged to police their behavior at all times.⁴¹ In his monograph *The Return of Fallen Girls to Honest Work* (1888), physician Dr V. P. Okorokov warned girls of the constant danger posed by "special merchants" keen to procure them for prostitution: "The traders can be found in urban areas strolling the streets, sitting on the benches of boulevards and standing close to shops, where often homeowners send their mistresses or domestic servants for shopping."⁴²

Like other antisemitic commentators on the "trade in women", Okorokov claimed that Jewish men known as the "Maccabees" (*makkaveiamii*) were largely responsible for procurement. He claimed that these men worked relentlessly to precipitate female "downfall," by scouring hospitals looking for lower-class women soon to be discharged and anxious to find work, and posting fraudulent advertisements in newspapers for housekeepers, domestic servants and governesses.⁴³ Philanthropic organizations largely agreed with this interpretation. When explaining why so many lower-class women ended up working as prostitutes, the Russian Society for the Protection of Women (*Rossiiskoe Obshchestvo Zashchity Zhenshchin*, ROZZh hereafter) cited "sexual temptation and harassment" rather than low wages, long hours, and a desire for upward social mobility.⁴⁴ By emphasizing seduction and deception, Russian feminists flatly discounted the impact of individual choice on women's entry into prostitution.⁴⁵ The idea that women were

drugged, kidnapped, and seduced into selling sex by dubious individuals also allowed the tsarist authorities and philanthropists to ignore the crucial economic and social circumstances that contributed to widespread prostitution. The privileging of cautionary tales about the trickery of procurers over discussions of the social and economic factors that might have led young girls to fall for their false promises was not unique to Russia. Indeed, this was a key feature of national and international public discourse on procurement across Europe and North America.⁴⁶

Protecting Victims, or Protecting State Revenue?

Procurement court cases were suffused with popular discourses about the vulnerability and naivete of lower-class women and girls. Police protocols detailed how victims had been tricked because they were naive, weak-willed, and seduced by the prospect of treats. Trial transcripts described how unscrupulous individuals sought out vulnerable young girls and invited them to their homes. Procurers offered their victims the false promise of “honest” paid employment or simply an alternative to the humdrum of their everyday lives. The women in the cases were under the age of 21, the age of majority for women who worked in brothels. Like many of their peers, they had already entered the labor force in their mid-teens.⁴⁷ Teenage girls worked in domestic service, a profession that involved pitiful wages, extremely long hours and typically just two days of leave per month.⁴⁸ Girls over the age of 12 could also become apprentices in the garment trade, which involved working long hours in unsanitary conditions with the looming threat of dismissal during slow seasons.⁴⁹ At the turn of the twentieth century, just under a quarter of women factory workers in Moscow and St Petersburg were girls under the age of 19 who toiled for an arduous 11.5 hours a day.⁵⁰ Given the limited and

unattractive options for female employment, the prospect of material gain was undoubtedly attractive for those who fell for procurers' false promises.⁵¹

The prominence of discourses of entrapment and seduction crystallized the idea that every procurement story involved two contrasting characters: the young victim and the villain intent on precipitating her downfall from innocence. The dominance of these tropes meant that other factors were largely ignored by the tsarist authorities, including the sexual double standard, pitifully low women's wages, and the adult men who paid for sex with young women and girls. Procurement was at the heart of each case, but other offenses peppered the narrative, including rape, sexual abuse, and financial exploitation. Despite positioning themselves as dutiful protectors of teenage girls, the tsarist authorities largely ignored these additional offenses. Instead, they focused on establishing whether they had been denied state income through the unlicensed exchange of money for sexual intercourse.

Those who facilitated commercial sex illegally, that is without applying for a brothel license, deprived local authorities of the money generated from the taxation of brothel keepers and from informal financial exchanges between madams and the police. Brothel madams often paid monthly dues to their local police based on how many women they had working at their establishment.⁵² This loss of income was particularly significant, as municipal governments were required to raise the funds for the supervision of urban prostitution themselves, and largely received no financial support from central government. Additionally, the 1892 municipal statute made local governments responsible for funding public health initiatives, but also heavily restricted the possibility of raising revenue through taxation.⁵³ Lack of funds meant that the Revel' authorities struggled to fulfill the obligations expected of them under the state regulation of prostitution, such as providing women registered as prostitutes with free medical

treatment to prevent the spread of venereal diseases.⁵⁴ Therefore, in procurement cases the authorities often focused on the financial losses caused by unregulated prostitution, rather than securing justice for the victims they purported to protect.

Financial concerns took precedence in a case brought against Anna Negfeldt, a peasant migrant in her mid-thirties. Negfeldt appeared in Revel' District Court for the first time on May, 12 1912 charged under Article 524. The victim of Negfeldt's crime was 13-year-old Klavdiia Fillipova, who was an apprentice at a dressmaker in the city. The indictment stated that Fillipova met Negfeldt at the Old Market after being sent there on an errand. Negfeldt gave Fillipova 35 kopecks and invited her to her apartment, where she claimed she could be free of the drudgery of work and play cards with other girls.⁵⁵ During one visit, Negfeldt and a middle-aged merchant named Beliagin encouraged Fillipova to drink sweet vodka until she passed out, and when she awoke, she believed that Beliagin had raped her.⁵⁶ Too scared to tell her family what had happened, Fillipova spent the next few nights sleeping in the courtyard of a church, before her mother eventually found her with the help of the police. After a few days at home, Fillipova ran into Negfeldt on the street, who bought her raspberries and invited her to her apartment again. After a few hours there, Negfeldt ordered Fillipova to go and lie down on the bed with a 49-year-old man, later named in the trial as Fridrikh Truberg. "Realizing that resistance was futile", Fillipova complied, received payment, and then Truberg attempted to rape her.⁵⁷ Negfeldt was convicted under Article 524 and sentenced to four months' imprisonment, which was later commuted to two months.⁵⁸ Truberg received no punishment.

The indictment revealed that all the men frequenting Negfeldt's apartment were middle-aged and wealthy, either merchants, engineers or elected government officials. From their surnames, it is clear that most were ethnic Russians. Even though Negfeldt

gave her statement in Estonian, we can assume that she spoke good enough Russian to communicate with these men, including Truberg, who gave his statement in Russian. One client offered to pay Negfeldt the substantial sum of 50 rubles for sex with Phillipova, so we can assume that Negfeldt yielded a sizeable profit from her business.⁵⁹ This is further confirmed by the fact that she was able to immediately raise the 50 rubles required for her bail, an amount far higher than the average monthly wage for a woman at the turn of the twentieth century.⁶⁰ Under other circumstances, Negfeldt's significant income would have allowed her to pay the authorities to secure a favorable hearing in court. Madams of state-licensed brothels were legally permitted to take up to three quarters of their employees' wages.⁶¹ From this profit, madams paid their obligatory taxes to the authorities and still had money left over to fund various bribes and cash gifts for poorly-paid police agents.⁶² Bribes allowed madams to bend the rules of regulation, including employing women before they had reached the legal age of 21 and selling alcohol at their establishments.⁶³ Through their close ties to law enforcement, madams enjoyed an elevated status within urban communities and complaints made against by them urban residents fell on deaf ears. The evidence suggests that Negfeldt was running a brothel of sorts, but that she had not applied for a license from the local police. The fact that the Revel' authorities derived no financial benefit from Negfeldt's establishment likely explains why she was convicted for procurement based solely on the statements of Phillipova and her mother.

Despite moral condemnation of procurement in official and popular discourse, adult men who paid for sex with young girls did not feel the full force of the criminal law. Before the trial, Phillipova was examined by a doctor who confirmed that she had not been raped by Beliagin or Truberg as her hymen was still intact.⁶⁴ In the Russian empire, sexual maturity was more important than age for establishing whether rape had occurred.⁶⁵ The

1845 Criminal Code introduced the notion of statutory rape in stating that girls under the age of 14 could not legally consent to sex. However, in the 1870s, Senate rulings implemented an “intermediate age range of knowledgeable consent” for girls. The Senate recognized that girls under the age of 10 were always innocent, but in order to deliver a rape conviction in case of victims between the ages of 11 and 14, juries would need to be convinced that the girls did not know what they were doing.⁶⁶ In the case of the rape of adult women, the punishment for the perpetrator lessened depending on the marital status and age of the victim. For example, the rape of an adult unmarried woman was not a crime, unless she had been “taken advantage of” by her guardian, tutor, or teacher.⁶⁷ Therefore, the reputation of the victim was important in rape cases of girls older than 10 years old. Negfeldt was evidently aware of this, as in an appeal to the authorities she insisted that Phillipova was a “girl constantly wandering the streets,” implying that she was already engaged in commercial sex prior to entering her apartment.⁶⁸

In her statement, Phillipova insisted that Truberg had forcefully held her down but had not been able to maintain an erection, but the court rejected this claim citing lack of evidence. The 1903 Draft Criminal Code broadened definitions of sexual crimes against children to include acts that resulted in emotional and psychological damage, rather than merely focusing on the “rupture of a specific membrane” as in earlier legislation.⁶⁹ The Draft Code emphasized the detrimental psychological and psychosexual impact of non-penetrative sexual abuse of both male and female children, in line with the opinion of other European legal experts.⁷⁰ The drafting of the Code happened against a backdrop of discussions between jurists, doctors and criminologists regarding the protection of children from new, international crimes that hindered their “normal” sexual development, including sex trafficking and the circulation of pornography.⁷¹ Despite this, the 1903 Draft Code was never adopted, although it made an imprint on the legislation

eventually adopted in the Soviet era.⁷² During the investigation, the forensic investigator looked only for physical ailments on Fillipova's body. He explained the blood on her nightgown as the result of fleabites and her unusual vaginal discharge was dismissed as a sign of "uncleanliness."⁷³ The authorities in Revel' did not consider the potential psychological damage brought about by the attempted rape of a 13-year-old girl by a 49-year-old man in this case.

A similar lack of male culpability appeared in the second procurement case brought against Anna Negfeldt. In 1914, Amaliia Virt a peasant migrant living in Revel', claimed that Negfeldt tried to force her into prostitution when she was 18 years old. Virt visited Negfeldt's apartment seven times and found girls aged between 16 and 18 having sex with "respectable men," some of whom were merchants or city council members.⁷⁴ Virt did not engage in prostitution but kept returning to Negfeldt's apartment "out of stupidity and fear." The Revel' police interviewed one of the men named in Virt's statement, 50-year-old Vilgelm Iakgeim. Iakgeim stated that he went to Negfeldt's apartment on four occasions to have sex with girls aged 16 and 17, and that he paid two rubles each time.⁷⁵ In an interview with another policeman, Iakgeim admitted that he had had sex with 15-year-olds at Negfeldt's place, but that he could not remember any of their names.⁷⁶ As the girls were over the age of 14, Iakgeim's actions just fell short of statutory rape, but he had knowingly paid for sex with girls too young to consent to selling sex in the eyes of the law.⁷⁷ However, there were no legal consequences for men who paid for sex with underage women, and in fact, certain local authorities actually facilitated such transactions. The Revel' police registered 21 minors as prostitutes between 1901 and 1908: 18 17-year-olds, two 16-year-olds and one girl of just 15.⁷⁸ In 1909 in St Petersburg, there were 124 minors working as prostitutes, and 10 girls between the ages of 14 and 18 were registered with the police in the Baltic port of Libava.⁷⁹ By ignoring the

age limit set out by the MVD and failing to target the financial backbone of underage prostitution, the tsarist authorities did not make any meaningful progress in preventing the procurement of young girls.

In August 1913, 30-year-old Paulina-Mariia Bartland was accused of procuring 19-year-old Ioganna Ianikh in Revel'. The police protocol detailed how Ianikh had travelled the 100km from her birth region for a job at a city tailor. There, Ianikh met Bartland, who offered her a room for rent. After a few weeks, Bartland encouraged Ianikh to stop going to work as she could make so much more money if she just "lived with men," and in her "naivete," Ianikh agreed.⁸⁰ One evening, the two women met a Russian naval officer on the street who offered Ianikh 25 rubles for her virginity. Bartland spoke Russian with the officer to strike up a deal, after which Ianikh had sex with him at the Hotel Toulon, and Bartland took all the money. After this, Bartland continued to encourage Ianikh to have sex with men at the hotel, until Ianikh realized that she did not want to lead "this debauched life" and went to the police. After hearing the testimony of Ianikh, a man who paid her for sex, and the building's janitor (*dvornik*), the court sentenced Bartland to six months in prison under Article 524.⁸¹

Throughout the investigation and trial, Bartland pleaded not guilty. She tried her best to sully Ianikh's reputation by emphasizing her sexual maturity in the hope of swaying the prosecutor in her favor. Bartland claimed that Ianikh had made "various obscene proposals" to her husband and that she became angry when he refused to have sex with her.⁸² In a petition to Revel' District Court in August 1914, in a further attempt to cause reputational damage, Bartland asked the court to check whether Ianikh had previously received venereal disease treatment at the hospital, as she was certain that Ianikh suffered from an infection in 1912. In a second petition, Bartland gave the names of two witnesses who, she alleged, could confirm that Ianikh had worked as a prostitute

“for a long time.”⁸³ Bartland was keen to minimize her role in facilitating illegal and unregistered commercial sex and demonstrate that she had not deprived the authorities of income by running a secret brothel. In her statement, she adamantly insisted that she had not “assist[ed] Ianikh in finding men to have sex with”, nor profited from the transaction.⁸⁴

Bartland’s decision to slander Ianikh illustrates the importance of the victim’s reputation in cases of procurement, as in cases of rape. Victims needed to appear naive and sexually immature in order to be taken seriously. The fact that Ianikh had been financially exploited by Bartland was not enough; she also needed to emphasize how she had been a virgin who had been pressured into engaging in commercial sex in the first place. In the late Russian empire, official and popular discussions of prostitution divided women into the fallen “good girls,” who were lured into commercial sex and could be rescued through moral education, and “bad girls,” who refused to conform to ideals of chastity. Women who worked as prostitutes were regarded as separate from the general female population and categorized as “debauched women” or “public women” in state legislation. Local authorities often conflated promiscuity with commercial sex and registered women found to be acting inappropriately onto the police lists of prostitutes. When women wrote to the authorities to protest against their forced registration, they drew a sharp line between the “debauched” behavior of prostitutes and their own honest, moral qualities.⁸⁵ This binary separation of “good” and “bad” women contributed to the stigmatization of women who sold sex. The fact that Ianikh had not worked as a prostitute prior to the trial would have certainly worked in her favor.

In a similar case, Martin and Rosaliia Hindreus, a married couple living in Revel’, were convicted for the procurement of 18-year-old Louiza Krebs. In late July 1913, Krebs was approached by Rosaliia Hindreus while out walking with her friend. Hindreus offered

the two girls “easy” jobs doing “light work” as domestic servants.⁸⁶ The protocol detailed how Krebs eagerly accepted, left her family home and moved in with the Hindreus couple on August 1. Shortly after, Rosaliia encouraged Krebs to drink alcohol and spend time with various guests who arrived at the apartment. One night, Krebs became so intoxicated that she went to lie down, when soon after she was raped by a man named Iurii Ikherman, who then paid Rosaliia the substantial amount of 25 rubles. After the incident, Rosaliia bought Krebs a summer jacket and a scarf and told her that she could earn a lot of money and get an education by selling sex. After this, Krebs continued to have sex with “different unknown men” every day and give the money to Rosaliia.⁸⁷ Upon hearing rumors that her daughter was working at a brothel, Krebs’ mother Anna Gol’m tracked her down and forced her to return home on August 7. On July 13, 1915, the Hindreus couple were convicted under Article 524 and imprisoned for 18 months.⁸⁸

Two statements given during the investigation further illustrate the importance of the victim’s reputation in procurement trials. First, Anna Gol’m explained that before she had taken her daughter home, she had “chastised [Krebs] for falling under the influence of bad people and upsetting me in my old age,” even after she learned that Krebs had been raped.⁸⁹ The blame for what had happened rested firmly on Krebs’ shoulders, despite her being classified as the victim in the criminal case. Second, the man who was accused of raping Krebs, Iurii Ikherman, claimed that he assumed from Krebs’ behavior that she was not a virgin and that she had been working as a prostitute for a while.⁹⁰ The court investigator took this claim very seriously and ordered a full medical examination of Krebs. After forensic doctors confirmed that Krebs had only had sex with only a handful of men, Ikherman’s testimony was dismissed as unreliable. Intercourse with a woman deliberately rendered unconscious was considered an “aggravated form of rape” according to the 1845 Criminal Code.⁹¹ The police protocol for the trial stated that on the

night of the rape, Krebs was helped into bed as she was so intoxicated, yet the authorities did not order a rape investigation and cited lack of evidence. For the Revel' authorities, the most grievous crime in this case was the facilitation of illegal prostitution, rather than the rape of a teenager. The tsarist authorities played lip service to the idea of protecting vulnerable young women, but in reality, procurement legislation afforded them the means to target individuals who failed to obey the state and deprived local government of valuable income.

The tsarist authorities' lack of interest in adult men who paid for sex with teenagers provoked outrage among members of Russia's educated public. In 1913, the journal *Zhenskii Vestnik* published a report by ROZZh on child prostitution. ROZZh detailed how two girls had arrived at their shelter in the capital after being found having sex with a soldier by the police.⁹² When the police patrolman arrived on the scene, he told the soldier that he would "not bother him," whereas the two girls were taken to the police station for a medical examination. The Society claimed that the only way to sort out this "disgrace of humanity" was to send such men to prison or to psychiatric institutions. Boris Bentovin, a physician who wrote widely about the regulation of prostitution, exposed the fact that the St Petersburg medical-police committee had girls as young as 12 years old registered on the police lists in the early 1900s.⁹³ Targeting procurers allowed the tsarist authorities to conveniently ignore their own role in facilitating the entry of young girls into prostitution. Perhaps prosecuting madams for procurement allowed the imperial state to avoid responsibility for its lukewarm approach to preventing child prostitution.

The imperial authorities did not care about clients, but they cared deeply about losing government revenue. Accusations of procurement allowed the police to close down illegal enterprises that failed to pay the appropriate tax to the local government. In February 1913, Iogan Miarsk, a 43-year-old peasant migrant, stood trial in Revel' region

on procurement charges. Miarsk was unemployed and rented out the rooms in his apartment to four women, aged between 18 and 23.⁹⁴ One of the women living at the apartment, Emma Riakhni, brought Miarsk to the police's attention when he refused to return her personal belongings after she decided to move out. The Revel' police conducted a raid on Miarsk's apartment on the night of the February 10, 1911 and found four women who they believed were engaging in commercial sex with men. When the police arrived, the women ran into their rooms "leaving oranges and chocolates on the table, which were treats from the men."⁹⁵ Miarsk was accused of procuring women under the age of 21 for prostitution and of running a secret brothel. Despite protesting his innocence, he was sentenced under Article 524 to 18 months in a penitentiary, which was eventually commuted to one year.⁹⁶ He also received a fine of 100 rubles for the unauthorized sale of strong alcoholic drinks.⁹⁷

The Revel' police interviewed the four female residents of Miarsk's apartment and the four men found there on the evening of February 10. Riakhni, a 21-year-old peasant migrant, stated that she had lived at Miarsk's apartment for three weeks before the raid and that she was aware that he ran a secret brothel.⁹⁸ Her descriptions of the relationship between the tenants and Miarsk suggest that he acted as a pimp and facilitated the women's involvement in illegal, unregistered prostitution. Each tenant paid Miarsk 10 rubles per week for bed and board, an amount which they made by charging visitors to the apartment between one and three rubles for sexual intercourse. If they made more than 10 rubles, Miarsk either let the women keep the additional money or bought them clothes and dresses. According to Riakhni, the tenants told the police that they worked as seamstresses to avoid any harassment for engaging in unregistered, or "clandestine" (*tainaia*), prostitution.⁹⁹ None of the women living at Miarsk's apartment mentioned procurement in their statements, despite their victimhood being of key importance for

the purposes of the trial.¹⁰⁰ Instead, the women focused on the fact that Miarsk sold alcohol to guests at his apartment, a transaction that was officially prohibited in state-licensed brothels.¹⁰¹ Two of the men found by the police during the raid confirmed that they had specifically visited Miarsk's apartment with the intention of engaging in commercial sex.¹⁰²

From the witness statements, it appears that the Revel' police were more interested in establishing whether alcohol and sex had been sold at Miarsk's apartment, rather than investigating whether the female residents had been forced into prostitution. Despite this, Miarsk was still charged under Article 524 for procuring women under the age of 21. The tsarist government generated income from both the sale of alcohol and from the regulation of prostitution. In 1894, Minister of Finance Sergei Vitte created the State Vodka Monopoly, which confined the sale of alcohol to government-run shops and forbade alcoholic drinks in establishments that served food.¹⁰³ Vitte announced that the aim of the State Monopoly was not to generate profit for the government, but rather to reduce alcohol consumption for the purposes of public health. Nevertheless, the yield was substantial. Between 28 and 40 percent of all revenue in the imperial state's budget came from alcohol in one way or another.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, it was in the tsarist authorities' interests to stringently police the unauthorized sale of alcohol. In addition, as Miarsk also facilitated unregistered prostitution, he deprived the local authorities of the income derived from the taxation and bribes of brothel keepers. Financial concerns were key in Miarsk's case, and procurement legislation was another tool in the tsarist authorities' arsenal for bringing those who deprived the state of income to justice.

Agency in Procurement Legislation

The Russian empire's anti-procurement statutes focused on criminalizing those who coerced or forced women to engage in prostitution. While it was undoubtedly true

that certain victims in procurement cases were adamant that they had absolutely not consented to selling sex, in other instances the line between choice and coercion was muddier. Yet, the way in which procurement legislation was applied in practice served to cast young women as passive, as often the testimony of those identified as victims was deemed unimportant in criminal cases. Article 529 criminalized those who merely “accepted a woman under the age of 21 into a den of debauchery.”¹⁰⁵ Although the article did not include the term procurement, it excluded the possibility that young women might consent to prostitution, implying that underage women who engaged in commercial sex must have been forced by the perpetrator. Under the statute, a “den of debauchery” (often used as a synonym for a brothel) was identified as any space where commercial sex occurred, even if the landlord or landlady did not earn a profit from the transaction. Like other anti-procurement statutes, Article 529 offered local authorities another opportunity to extract income from subjects of the Russian empire.

The raising of the minimum age of brothel workers to 21 in 1901 was a result of pressure by ROZZh. The society’s influence is clear from the wording of the MVD’s subsequent circular, which justified the new age limit on the grounds of the “extremely harmful moral and physical effect” of allowing women to practice “debauchery” too early.¹⁰⁶ Women who sold sex independently (known as *odinochki*) were of less interest to philanthropists and the authorities, despite the fact that they constituted the majority of women on the police lists.¹⁰⁷ Unlike brothel workers, women who sold sex independently could legally consent to prostitution at the age of 18, and the police registered many much earlier. Perhaps the increased visibility of brothels on Russia’s urban landscape, brought about by early twentieth-century urbanization and industrialization, put brothel workers at the forefront of discussions of procurement among the empire’s educated public.

ROZZh championed the severity of Article 529 in their commentary on Russia's anti-procurement legislation. The criminalization of the mere "acceptance" (*priniatie*) of an underage woman meant that individuals could be punished for simply letting women under the age of 21 within the walls of the brothel, even if the women did not engage in commercial sex. ROZZh delighted in the fact that an individual could be prosecuted even if the woman had been admitted "according to her expressed desire or even at her insistent request."¹⁰⁸ Brothels were the chief focus of the Russian campaign to end sex trafficking, which many educated observers claimed was rife in the empire. In most European contexts, the "trade in women" (or "white slavery" as it was more commonly known) meant the forced transportation of a woman across national borders for the purposes of prostitution. In Russia, the definition was more fluid as feminist activists conflated *all* forms of brothel prostitution with white slavery.¹⁰⁹ Under the 1909 anti-procurement statutes, the consent of women identified as victims was irrelevant. However, in certain procurement cases, young women were keen to emphasize that they had chosen to sell sex. Even though their testimony was discounted most of the time, their statements complicate official narratives of procurement and demonstrate individuals' rejection of their classification as passive.¹¹⁰

In January 1912, Iakob and Iuliia Barst faced trial for the procurement of underage girls for prostitution.¹¹¹ Following an anonymous tip-off that the couple were running a secret "den of debauchery," the Revel' police raided the Barsts' apartment and found two teenagers engaged in prostitution: 18-year-old Adele Anier and 17-year-old Iuliia Vinni. In their witness statements, both Anier and Vinni were keen to emphasize their choice. Anier, an orphan, moved to Revel' to work as a domestic servant in May 1911, where she became acquainted with Vinni.¹¹² On Vinni's advice, Anier gave up her job and began working as a prostitute as she had already lost her virginity and recognized that she could

earn more money by selling sex. The girls shared a room in the Barst couple's apartment and brought men to the house "both night and day." Vinni moved to Revel' when she was 15 years old to work at a paper factory and began working as a prostitute after losing her job.¹¹³ Vinni claimed that she "sometimes had sex with different men" and that she left the Barsts' apartment after contracting syphilis. Neither Anier nor Vinni suggested that they shared the profit generated from commercial sex with the Barsts. Nevertheless, the couple's apartment was classified as an unlicensed brothel and they were sentenced to three months' imprisonment under Article 529 for allowing women under the age of 21 to work at a "den of debauchery."¹¹⁴

The malleability of what exactly constituted a brothel is evident in another case from Iur'ev-Verro district.¹¹⁵ In spring 1914, the district magistrate brought three employees of the Hotel Commercial to trial: 39-year-old Karl-Viktor Kuursk (the general manager), 39-year-old Artur Arrak (restaurant manager) and 28-year-old Eduard Prikkel (a waiter).¹¹⁶ The three men were charged with allowing underage girls into a "den of debauchery" under Article 529. The authorities were alerted after two young girls were found to be receiving venereal disease treatment at Iur'ev city hospital. The girls claimed that they had caught their infections at the Hotel Commercial. Sixteen-year-old Lucii Lang stated that she had visited the hotel twice to have sex with men, and that she had given her address to Prikkel in case "a girl was needed for sex" at a later date.¹¹⁷ Amanda Marmor, 18-years-old, also stated that she had been at the hotel several times with men for "carnal relations" (*plotskaia sviaz*). Two other 16-year-old girls were questioned as witnesses, and they admitted to having sex with Kuursk and Arrak at their apartments.¹¹⁸ The convicted men protested after receiving their sentence of two-months' imprisonment. Kuursk claimed that he had committed no crime, given that the court could not prove that the hotel was a "den of debauchery."¹¹⁹ Arrak reminded the

magistrate that because he had had sex with a girl at his apartment, it could not be considered a criminal offense.¹²⁰ The magistrate took these appeals into consideration and overturned the convictions of Kuursk and Arrak later in the year.¹²¹ The fact that the court did not have enough evidence to prove that the Hotel Commercial also functioned as an unlicensed brothel carried more weight than Lang's and Marmor's outward rejection of victimhood.

In other instances, women were even more keen to emphasize that they were not passive victims of procurement. In late 1914, Vera Podol'skaia was accused of procuring Gelli-Mariia Linge, a 21-year-old peasant migrant born in the countryside of Doblenskii district.¹²² In the protocol drawn up before the trial, a police officer claimed that Linge had arrived in Revel' as a refugee from the port town of Libava, which was captured by the German army within the first months of the First World War.¹²³ After her arrival in Revel', Podol'skaia allegedly tricked Linge into working at a brothel, and since then Linge's life became "a hell from which [she] cannot break free."¹²⁴ However, Linge's written statement told a different story. Linge wrote that she had lived in Riga with Podol'skaia before moving to Revel'.¹²⁵ She travelled the 300 kilometers north to Revel' in summer 1914 after Podol'skaia claimed that she had found her a room and a job as a barmaid in the city. When Linge arrived, Podol'skaia told her that she no longer had a room for her and that she had found her somewhere else to stay. At the new apartment, the landlady took Linge's passport, and she guessed that the apartment was actually a brothel. The landlady informed Linge that she could leave anytime she wanted, but as she had no money, Linge stayed there for two months and had sex with men.¹²⁶ At the end of her statement, Linge explained how the police had become involved in the case:

I became nervous and there were many misunderstandings between me and my clients. Eventually the landlady invited a police officer over and we drafted the protocol. I do not blame Podolskaia for anything. The fact that she did not

find me a place to stay after she promised to do so meant that I stayed at the brothel. But I do not blame her, and I was surprised when I received a summons to appear in front of you.¹²⁷

Linge's case reveals how a woman's decision to sell sex was a result of a myriad of factors, including economic circumstances, social status and personal choice. Rather than blame Podol'skaia for deceiving her, Linge emphasized that she had chosen to remain in the brothel as a response to the unforeseen circumstances. After a thorough investigation, the Revel' authorities dropped the case in January 1916 on the grounds that the victim was already 21 years old and therefore able to consent to prostitution at the time of the incident.¹²⁸ The fact that the landlady called the police to draft the protocol suggests that the brothel either had a valid license or that the landlady was in the financial position to pay bribes, so there was no further income to be extracted for the municipal authorities.

Family Matters

Anti-procurement legislation was not just used by the authorities to bring individuals who failed to obey the state to legal responsibility. Parents brought procurement charges to bring their wayward daughters back into the fold, calling on the authorities to intervene in their family disputes. In December 1915, Savvatii and Uliana Lagunov approached their local police patrolman regarding their 18-year-old daughter, Mariia. The couple claimed that Mariia had "stopped behaving well" and that they did not like their daughter's new group of friends.¹²⁹ After a heated argument, Mariia left her parents' house and went to stay in Revel' with her friend Tatiana Moshchekova, a woman that the Lagunovs described as a girl of "poor character" and "easy behavior." The Lagunovs were concerned that Moshchekova had "misled" (*sob'et s tolku*) their daughter and convinced her to engage in prostitution. Mariia claimed that she had left home after arguing with her mother and stayed at Moshchekova's for 10 days. She insisted that she was not forced into having sex during this time.¹³⁰ Other witnesses confirmed the fact

that Mariia was not a victim of procurement. Their statements revealed that Moshchekova had previously given birth to an illegitimate child and that she now resided out of wedlock with another man. Both of these factors made Moshchekova an appealing scapegoat in Savvatii and Uliana Lagunov's saga. Before 1902, the "illegal cohabitation" of consenting unmarried men and women was considered a "crime against public morality" in the empire's Criminal Code, yet illegal cohabitation was common both before and after its decriminalization.¹³¹ Such unions were criticized in both urban and rural settings, although the extent to which they were condemned varied widely on a community basis.¹³² Unwed mothers were also heavily stigmatized. The Russian empire had a low rate of illegitimate births and women admitting their illegitimate children into founding homes were promised anonymity.¹³³ When Mariia returned to the family home, her parents withdrew their accusations against Moshchekova and the police did not take the case any further.¹³⁴ The procurement charges had ensured police intervention in a family argument and served the Lagunovs' intended purpose.

Elsewhere in the Baltic region, the police received letters from distressed families claiming that their young relatives were victims of procurement who needed to be returned to the family home. In winter 1899, Aleksandr Ruben implored the Riga Police Chief to intervene in a family matter. He stated that his sister Emma was about to marry Mikhail Korkum, a man who was known to "collect women for prostitution in bordellos."¹³⁵ Ruben claimed that he was traumatized when he learned that his sister had been registered as a prostitute and began to drink heavily. Ruben begged the Police Chief to free Emma from the "shame of prostitution" and bring her back to the family home. On March 2, 1907, Emma Nimand wrote to the Riga Chief of Police regarding her 19-year-old daughter Emma Al'bertina, who had gone missing for 10 days.¹³⁶ When Emma Al'bertina eventually returned home, she was accompanied by a woman who Nimand was

convinced wanted to “lead her daughter to an immoral life.” Nimand implored the Police Chief to find Emma Al’bertina and return her to the family’s apartment. By calling on the tsarist authorities to intervene in their family lives for the protection of female honor, Ruben and Nimand helped to bolster the patriarchal and honor-based nature of late imperial society, particularly by reinforcing the perception that women required custodial supervision either by the family or the state.

Conclusion

Procurement cases from the Estonian provinces reveal how local authorities prioritized financial concerns over the wellbeing of the young women and girls that they claimed to protect. In each case, investigators were more concerned with establishing whether money had been exchanged for sex and alcohol, than with investigating accusations of the rape and financial exploitation of women identified as victims. This was largely because these two commodities generated significant income for the government through taxation. Brothel keepers made formal, and informal, financial contributions to their local authorities, so unlicensed brothels reduced the amount of funding available for regional governments to fulfill their duties in adequately supervising urban prostitution. Provincial governments received little financial support from central government and largely had to fend for themselves when purchasing equipment for the compulsory medical examinations of registered prostitutes, or for the salaries of policemen to ensure that those in the commercial sex industry followed the rules of regulation. In the Estonian provinces, the tsarist authorities used anti-procurement statutes to bring to justice individuals who deprived local government of income.

International conversations about procurement had a far-reaching impact on local legal culture in the Russian empire. Rather than grappling with the complicated social

and economic reasons for young women and girls' engagement in commercial sex, the tsarist authorities focused on punishing individual perpetrators. Much to the outrage of educated society, prosecutors and criminal investigators directed their attention towards the supply side of juvenile prostitution, as the adult men who paid for sex with underage women and girls were never criminalized. The fact that women under the age of 21 were unable to consent to selling sex legally reinforced the idea that female honor was an important asset to be preserved and protected by the tsarist state. The brothel was at the center of concern regarding procurement, both for the authorities and upper-class commentators who lamented the apparent widespread nature of the international "trade in women."

Conversations about procurement did not occur within an elite echo chamber, as lower-class people drew on these discourses when asking the imperial authorities to intervene in their family disputes or to help them locate their wayward daughters. Court records also allow historians to "hear" the voices of individuals often marginalized in official discourse, namely the empire's vast lower-class population. Russia's educated elite predominantly spoke *about* and *for* lower-class young women, rather than entering into a dialogue about the meanings of choice and exploitation in the context of commercial sex. By participating in procurement trials as perpetrators, victims, or witnesses, lower-class women etched their own words onto the historical record. We cannot escape the fact that their words are visible only through a kaleidoscope of official channels, yet these documents offer us a vital glimpse into the complex lived experiences and self-expression of women and girls on the complex issues of choice and consent in late imperial Russia.

Endnotes

¹ Rahvusarhiiv (National Archives of Estonia, EAA hereafter) 417.1.8358, lk. 1-2.

² EAA.417.1.8358, lk. 40.

³ Russian delegates attended the 1899 and 1913 Congress(es) on the White Slave Traffic in London and the 1904 and 1906 International Conference(s) on the White Slave Traffic in Paris. At the 1913 London congress, delegates agreed that the event would be held in St Petersburg in 1916, although we can assume that the First World War interrupted these plans. Stephanie A. Limocelli, *The Politics of Trafficking: The First International Movement to Combat the Sexual Exploitation of Women* (Stanford, 2010), 59; Laurie Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters: Prostitutes and Their Regulation in Imperial Russia* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1995), 290.

⁴ For an excellent review of this literature, see Julia Laite, "Between Scylla and Charybdis: Women's Labour Migration and Sex Trafficking in the Early Twentieth Century", *International Review of Social History*, 62:1 (2017): 37-65.

⁵ Nancy M. Wingfield, *The World of Prostitution in Late Imperial Austria* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 171-208; Nancy M. Wingfield, "Destination: Alexandria, Buenos Aires, Constantinople: 'White Slavers' in Late Imperial Austria", *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 20:2 (2011): 291-311; Keely Stauter-Halstead, *The Devil's Chain: Prostitution and Social Control in Partitioned Poland* (Ithaca and London, 2015), 137-168; Keely Stauter-Halstead, "'A Generation of Monsters': Jews, Prostitution and Racial Purity in the 1892 L'viv White Slavery Trial", *Austrian History Yearbook*, 38 (2007): 25-35; Paul Knepper, "The 'White Slave Trade' and the Musk Hall Affair in 1930s Malta", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 44:2 (2009): 205-220; Brian Donovan, *White Slave Crusades: Race, Gender, and Anti-Vie Activism 1887-1917* (Champaign, 2005); Trace L. Wilson, "Migration, Empire and Liminality: Sex Trade in the Borderlands of Europe", *Aspasia*, 11 (2017): 71-96.

⁶ Jennifer Suchland, *Economies of Violence: Transnational Feminism, Postsocialism and the Politics of Sex Trafficking*, (Durham, NC and London, 2015); Elizabeth Bernstein, "Militarised Humanitarianism Meets Carceral Feminism: The Politics of Sex, Rights, and Freedom in Contemporary Antitrafficking Campaigns", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 36:1 (2010): 45-72.

⁷ Paul Knepper, *The Invention of International Crime: A Global Issue in the Making, 1881-1914* (Basingstoke, 2010), 98-127; Stauter-Halstead, *The Devil's Chain*, 1-20; Jessica Pliley, *Policing Sexuality: The Mann Act and the Making of the FBI* (Cambridge, MA, 2014); David Petrucci, "Pimps, Prostitutes and Policewomen: The Polish Women Police and the International Campaign against the Traffic in Women and Children between the World Wars", *Contemporary European History*, 24:3 (2015): 333-350.

⁸ Daniel Gorman, "Empire, Internationalism and the Campaign against the Traffic in Women and Children in the 1920s", *Twentieth Century British History*, 19:2 (2008): 186-216; Jessica Pliley, "Claims to Protection: The Rise and Fall of Feminist Abolitionism in the League of Nations' Committee on the Traffic in Women, 1919-1936", *Journal of Women's History*, 22:4 (2010): 90-113.

⁹ The first empire-wide census of 1897 found that 88 percent of the population of Estland province spoke Estonian as their first language, Tsentral'nyi Statisticheskogo Komiteta Ministerstva Vnutrennikh Del, *Pervaia Vseobshchaia Perepis' Naseleniia Rossiiskoi Imperii 1897 g. XLIX. Estliandskaia Guberniia* (St Petersburg, 1905), xiv. In the northern Lifliand province (including Verro, Pernov, Iur'ev, Ezel'skii and Fellin districts, which now comprise southern Estonia and Saaremaa island), 92 percent of the population were native Estonian speakers, Tsentral'nyi Statisticheskogo Komiteta Ministerstva Vnutrennikh Del, *Pervaia Vseobshchaia Perepis' Naseleniia Rossiiskoi Imperii 1897 g. XXI. Lifliandskaia Guberniia* (St Petersburg, 1905), 3.

¹⁰ Toivo U. Raun, "The Estonians" in Edward C. Thaden (ed). *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914*, (Princeton, 1981), 308-309.

¹¹ Knowledge of the Russian language offered lower-class Estonians greater economic opportunities and shorter stints of military service, so it is likely that much of the population would have also had at least a basic command of the Russian, Aneta Pavlenko, "Linguistic Russification in the Russian Empire: Peasants into Russians?", *Russian Linguistics*, 35:3 (2011), 341.

¹² On Estonians working in the late tsarist bureaucracy, see Bradley D. Woodworth, "Multi-Ethnicity and Estonian Tsarist State Officials in Estland Province, 1881-1914" in Don K. Rowney and Eugene Huskey

(eds), *Russian Bureaucracy and the State: Officialdom from Alexander III to Vladimir Putin* (Basingstoke, 2009), 72-88.

¹³ *Pervaia Vseobshchaia Perepis', Estliandskaia Guberniia*, p. xv; *Pervaia Vseobshchaia Perepis', Lifliandskaia Guberniia*, 3.

¹⁴ In the preface to their collection of documents regarding Jewish life in imperial Russia, ChaeRan Y. Freeze and Jay M. Harris acknowledge the problem of Yiddish-Russian translation in court cases, ChaeRan Y. Freeze and Jay M. Harris (eds), *Everyday Jewish Life in Imperial Russia: Selected Documents, 1772-1914* (Waltham, MA, 2013), xviii.

¹⁵ Ilya Gerasimov, *Plebeian Modernity: Social Practices, Illegality and the Urban Poor in Russia, 1906-1916* (Rochester, NY, 2018), 8-10.

¹⁶ Several pioneering works have used court records and appeals to the authorities to access a variety of female lower-class voices, such as: Jane Burbank, *Russian Peasants Go to Court: Legal Culture in the Countryside, 1905-1917* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2004), especially 32-48; Barbara A. Engel, *Breaking the Ties that Bound: The Politics of Marital Strife in Late Imperial Russia* (Ithaca and London, 2011); ChaeRan Freeze, *Jewish Marriage and Divorce in Imperial Russia* (Hanover, NH, 2002).

¹⁷ On lower-class people's use of rhetorical strategies and appropriation of official discourses, see Siobhán Hearne, "To Denounce or Defend? Public Participation in the Policing of Prostitution", *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 19:4 (2018): 717-744.

¹⁸ These themes are explored in reference to court records in Burbank, *Russian Peasants Go to Court* and Corrine Gaudin, *Ruling Peasants: Village and State in Late Imperial Russia* (DeKalb, 2007).

¹⁹ Peter Waldron, *Governing Tsarist Russia* (Basingstoke, 2007), 82.

²⁰ For an excellent discussion of legal and administrative differences, especially for the Central Asian regions under military rule, see Alexander Morrison, "Metropole, Colony and Imperial Citizenship in the Russian Empire", *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 13:2 (2012): 327-364.

²¹ For the failure to fund regional public health initiatives, see Charlotte E. Henze, *Disease, Health Care and Government in Late Imperial Russia: Life and Death on the Volga, 1823-1914* (Abingdon, 2011), 46-48.

²² Joseph Bradley, "Moscow: From Big Village to Metropolis" in Michael F. Hamm (ed). *The City in Late Imperial Russia* (Bloomington, 1986), 26.

²³ Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Voenno-Morskogo Flota (RGAVMF hereafter) f. 408, op. 1, d. 1581, l. 223.

²⁴ Henze, *Disease, Health Care and Government*, 104-105.

²⁵ Tovia U. Raun, "The Development of Estonian Literacy in the 18th and 19th Centuries", *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 10:2 (1979), 115-126.

²⁶ Tovia U. Raun, "The Latvian and Estonian National Movements, 1860-1914", *Slavonic and East European Review*, 64:1 (1986), 73. The average across the empire increased significantly in the decades after the 1897 census, Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861-1917* (Princeton, 1985), 4.

²⁷ The number of Estonian newspapers and magazines leapt from 27 in 1900 to 51 in 1905, Raun, "The Estonians", 335.

²⁸ Jews made up just 1.69 percent of the urban population in Estliand province in 1897, *Pervaia Vseobshchaia Perepis', Estliandskaia Guberniia*, p. xiii. Just four percent of Iur'ev's urban population were Jewish in the same year, *Pervaia Vseobshchaia Perepis', Lifliandskaia Guberniia*, 3. According to a prostitution survey of 1889, there were no Jewish brothel keepers in Estliand province and just one in Lifliand province. There were no Jewish registered prostitutes in Estliand and just seven out of Lifliand's

593 registered women were Jewish. Dubrovskii, *Prostitutsiia*, 14, 20. In comparison, within the Pale of Settlement, 70 percent of brothel keepers were Jewish, Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters*, 164.

²⁹ Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters*, 161-167; Stauter-Halstead, "A Generation of Monsters"; Wingfield, *The World of Prostitution in Late Imperial Austria*, 172-178; Alain Corbin, *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France After 1850*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Cambridge, 1990), 292.

³⁰ The full text of this legislation appears in a pamphlet compiled by the Russian Society for the Protection of Women, Rossiiskoe Obshchestvo Zashchity Zhenshchin, *Zakon 25 dekabriia 1909 goda, O Merakh k Presecheniiu Torga Zhenshchinami v Tseliakh Razvrata* (St Petersburg, 1911).

³¹ Between 1895 and 1912, France, Germany, the USA and Great Britain all enacted legislation prohibiting the "trade in women". On the lack of convictions, see Philippa Hetherington, "Victims of the Social Temperament: Prostitution, Migration and the Traffic in Women from Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union, 1885-1935" PhD Dissertation (Harvard University, 2014), 6.

³² Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia* (Ithaca and London, 1992), 91. The hypothesis that Russia was not an exceptional example of a modernising state and rather involved in European-wide conversations among elites in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is explored throughout Susan McCaffray and Michael Melacon (eds), *Russia in the European Context, 1789-1914* (Basingstoke, 2005).

³³ Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF hereafter), f. 539, op. 1, d. 293, l. 1.

³⁴ Legislation focused exclusively on the procurement of women and girls. When medico-legal experts did discuss the procurement of young boys, they focused exclusively on southern and eastern regions of the empire. They criticised the practice of *bachebastvo* and detailed how the supposedly "savage morals" of local Georgian, Armenian and Uzbek populations contributed to the apparently widespread abduction and procurement of young boys for prostitution. Dan Healey, *Homosexual Desire in Revolutionary Russia: The Regulation of Sexual and Gender Dissent* (Chicago and London, 2001), 97.

³⁵ Under regulation, women selling sex were legally required to register their details with the police and attend weekly gynaecological examinations with the stated aim of preventing the spread of venereal diseases. The system was spectacularly unsuccessful and widely unpopular. Siobhán Hearne, "Female Prostitution in Urban Russia, 1900-1917", PhD dissertation (University of Nottingham, 2017); Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters*.

³⁶ GARF, f. 102, op. 58, d. 65, l. 2. This rule did not apply to women who worked outside brothels as 'independent prostitutes' (*odinochki*), who could be registered as prostitutes from the age of 18.

³⁷ GARF, f. 102, op. 58, d. 65, l. 3; Tsentralnyi Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv Sankt-Peterburga (TsGIASPB hereafter) f. 569, op. 18, d. 4, l. 32. The minimum age of registration was raised from 16 to 18 in Vienna in 1911 following the highly-publicised Riehl trial, Wingfield, *The World of Prostitution in Late Imperial Austria*, 53, 115. In Italy, the age of majority for women selling sex was raised from 16 to 21 in 1881, Mary Gibson, *Prostitution and the State in Italy, 1860-1915* (Columbus, 1999), 92. In France, the minimum age of registration was raised to 18 in 1906, Corbin, *Women for Hire*, 328.

³⁸ Vseslav, "Prizrenie Maloletnikh Prostitutok v Rossii", *Novoe Vremia*, (August 12, 1901), 4.

³⁹ Critics in the Polish-language press also chastised young girls from the countryside who strove for upward social mobility and ended up working as prostitutes, Stauter-Halstead, *The Devil's Chain*, 158.

⁴⁰ Peasant women made up 50 percent of the women registered on the police lists of prostitutes in 1889. Lower-class townswomen (*meshchanki*) made up 35 percent and soldiers' wives around 4 percent, A. Dubrovskii, *Prostitutsiia v Rossiiskoi Imperii po Obsledovaniiu 1-go Avgusta 1889 goda* (St Petersburg, 1890), 36-37. The Revel' police lists for 1901 show that almost 75 percent of registered women were peasants and 20 percent were townspeople, EAA.31.2.3722.

⁴¹ The same can be said for discussions of white slavery in other contexts, Wingfield, *The World of Prostitution in Late Imperial Austria*, 182; Corbin, *Women for Hire*, 291; Kara L. Ritzheimer, 'Trash', *Censorship and National Identity in Early Twentieth-Century Germany* (Cambridge, 2016), 115.

⁴² V. P. Okorokov, *Vozvrashchenie k Chestnomu Trudu Padshikh Devushek: Sfera Deiatel'nosti Uchrezhdenii Marii Magdaliny v Moskve* (Moscow, 1888), 14.

⁴³ Okorokov, *Vozvrashchenie k Chestnomu Trudu*, 15.

⁴⁴ Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters*, 212.

⁴⁵ Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters*, 124.

⁴⁶ Most recently, Julia Laite has expertly traced the “carefully constructed omission” of women’s labour from international campaigns and national policies against trafficking in early twentieth-century Britain, Laite, “Between Scylla and Charybdis”. See also Wingfield, *The World of Prostitution in Late Imperial Austria*, 181-183; Wingfield, ‘Destination: Alexandria, Buenos Aires, Constantinople’, 299-301; Stauter-Halstead, *The Devil's Chain*, 117-121; Stauter-Halstead, “A Generation of Monsters”, 30; Wilson, “Migration, Empire and Liminality”, 83.

⁴⁷ There are no comparative figures that detail the age at which girls started work across the Russian empire, but select examples indicate that many were teenagers. In Shuia district, Vladimir province, 50 percent of the female workers started work before the age of 15, Barbara Alpern Engel, *Between the Fields and the City: Women, Work and Family in Russia, 1861-1914* (Cambridge, 1995), 107. In Moscow province, over a quarter of the female labour force were under 19 in 1908, Rose Glickman, *Russian Factory Women: Workplace and Society, 1880-1914* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1994), 95. An Imperial decree of June 1, 1882 stated that only children over the age of 12 could be employed in factories, plants and manufacturing establishments, and limited the working day for children between 12-15 years old to eight hours per day. Boris B. Gorshkov, *Russia's Factory Children: State, Society and Law, 1800-1917* (Pittsburgh, 2009), 181-182

⁴⁸ In Moscow in 1902, 12 percent of domestic servants were under 20. On the difficulties faced by domestic servants see Engel, *Between the Fields and the City*, 140-149.

⁴⁹ For a contemporary account of the lives of women (and men) working in the garment trade and the industry’s overreliance on young apprentices see E. A. Oliunina, “The Tailoring Trade in Moscow and the Villages of Moscow and Riazan Provinces: Material on the History of the Domestic Industry in Russia” in Victoria E. Bonnell, *The Russian Worker: Life and Labour under the Tsarist Regime* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1983), 155-184.

⁵⁰ Glickman, *Russian Factory Women*, 6, 93.

⁵¹ Stauter-Halstead discusses the false promises used by individuals convicted of trafficking in Partitioned Poland in the same period, Stauter-Halstead, *The Devil's Chain*, 156-159.

⁵² Latvijas Valsts Vēstures Arhīvs (LVVA hereafter) f. 51, apr. 1, l. 23469, lp. 6.

⁵³ Henze, *Disease, Health Care and Government*, 188n44.

⁵⁴ EAA.30.6.3628, lk. 2-4, 8; EAA.54.1.64, lk. 18.

⁵⁵ EAA.139.1.4272, lk. 4.

⁵⁶ EAA.139.1.4272, lk. 5.

⁵⁷ EAA.139.1.4272, lk. 6.

⁵⁸ EAA.139.1.4272, lk. 109, 126.

⁵⁹ EAA.139.1.4272, lk. 50.

⁶⁰ EAA.139.1.4272, lk. 127. Women’s wages varied widely from industry to industry. At the turn of the twentieth century, the average wage of a female textile worker living in the capital was 12-16 rubles per month. Domestic servants, tobacco workers and confectionary workers all earned less. Engel, *Between the Fields and the City*, 149. Gerasimov puts the average wage of a lower-class person as between 35-50 rubles per month, but he does not address whether this varied by gender, Gerasimov, *Plebeian Modernity*, 20.

⁶¹ TsGIASPB, f. 569, op. 18, d. 4, l. 34.

⁶² Police patrolmen in St Petersburg earned 30 rubles per month and just 11 rubles per month in the Baltic town of Libava (Liepāja). Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters*, 35-36; RGAVMF, f. 408, op. 1, d. 1658, l. 24. In comparison, white-collar workers at large-scale industries earned between 58-122 rubles per month just before the outbreak of the First World War, Peter Gatrell, *Russia's First World War: A Social and Economic History* (London and New York, 2005), 53.

⁶³ Hearne, "Female Prostitution in Urban Russia", 203-205.

⁶⁴ EAA.139.1.4272, lk. 108.

⁶⁵ Establishing whether rape had occurred was also dependent on local conditions of different regions across the empire. On the Caucasus, see Kristin Collins-Breyfogle, "Negotiating Imperial Spaces: Gender, Sexuality & Violence in the Nineteenth-Century Caucasus", PhD dissertation (Ohio State University, 2011), 126-137.

⁶⁶ Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, 80; Dan Healey, "Defining Sexual Maturity as the Soviet Alternative to an Age of Consent" in Frances L. Bernstein, Christopher Burton and Dan Healey (eds), *Soviet Medicine: Culture, Practice and Science* (DeKalb, 2010), 112.. Even though the Russian age of consent was not dissimilar from other European contexts, philanthropic societies like ROZZh strongly criticised the existence of the "intermediate age range" and called for all sexual acts with girls under the age of 14 to be punishable by law. ROZZh's chairperson, Princess Evgeniia Ol'denburg wrote to the Ministry of Justice on May, 28 1914 on this very issue. GARF, f. 564, op. 1, d. 768, ll. 1-2. In the United States in 1890, the age of consent for heterosexual sex in the majority of states ranged between 10 and 15 years old. Just New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey set the age of consent at 16, Carolyn Cocca, *Jailbait: The Politics of Statutory Rape Laws in the United States* (New York, 2004), 23-24. Various European countries today still set the age of consent at 14, including Italy, Germany and Austria, Matthew Waites, *The Age of Consent: Young People, Sexuality and Citizenship* (Basingstoke, 2005), 50-51. In Spain, the age of consent in Spain was 13 until it was raised to 16 in 2015.

⁶⁷ Laura Engelstein, "Gender and the Judicial Subject: Prostitution and Rape in Nineteenth-Century Russian Criminal Codes", *Journal of Modern History*, 60:3 (1988), 474-475.

⁶⁸ EAA.139.1.4272, lk. 18.

⁶⁹ Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, 79-80.

⁷⁰ Attempted rape was a criminal offense in the Netherlands from the implementation of the new Dutch criminal law in 1886, Willemijn Ruberg, "Trauma, Body and Mind: Forensic Medicine in Nineteenth-Century Dutch Rape Cases", *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 22:1 (2013), 91-92.

⁷¹ Philippa Hetherington, "'The Highest Guardian of the Child': International Criminology and the Russian Fight Against Transnational Obscenity, 1885-1925", *Russian History*, 43 (2016): 275-310.

⁷² Healey, "Defining Sexual Maturity", 113.

⁷³ EAA.139.1.4272, lk. 108.

⁷⁴ EAA.139.1.4272, lk. 6.

⁷⁵ EAA.139.1.4272, lk. 7.

⁷⁶ EAA.139.1.4272, lk. 8.

⁷⁷ In line with the 1845 Criminal Code, girls were largely presumed to be sexually innocent until the age of 14, Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, 80.

⁷⁸ EAA.31.2.4283; EAA.31.2.3722; EAA.31.2.4681; EAA.31.2.5037.

⁷⁹ "Stolichnaia Prostitutsiia", *Russkie Vedomosti*, May 4, 1909. Available in Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Literatury i Iskusstva (RGALI) f. 199, op. 1, d. 116, l. 30; RGIA, f. 1298, op. 1, d. 1730, l. 30.

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- ⁸⁰ EAA.105.1.9835, lk. 4.
- ⁸¹ EAA.105.1.9835, lk 12, 64, 68, 83.
- ⁸² EAA.105.1.9835, lk. 10.
- ⁸³ EAA.105.1.9835, lk. 11.
- ⁸⁴ EAA.105.1.9835, lk. 66.
- ⁸⁵ Hearne, "To Denounce or Defend?", 735-740.
- ⁸⁶ EAA.105.1.9843, lk. 4.
- ⁸⁷ EAA.105.1.9843, lk. 5
- ⁸⁸ EAA.105.1.9843, lk. 46.
- ⁸⁹ EAA.105.1.9843, lk. 37.
- ⁹⁰ EAA.105.1.9843, lk. 45.
- ⁹¹ Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, 81.
- ⁹² "K Voprosu o Detskoi Prostitutsii", *Zhenskii Vestnik*, 9 (September 1913), 195.
- ⁹³ Boris Bentovin *Deti-Prostitutki* (St Petersburg, 1910), 36.
- ⁹⁴ EAA.105.1.9431, lk. 5.
- ⁹⁵ EAA.105.1.9431, lk. 5.
- ⁹⁶ EAA.105.1.9431, lk. 138, 139, 147.
- ⁹⁷ EAA.105.1.9431, lk. 29. For this, he was prosecuted under Article 1111 of the statutes governing corporations for failing to comply with police regulations regarding the sale of strong alcoholic drinks. For a detailed explanation of this article, see N. S. Tagantsev, *Ustav o Nakazaniakh, Nalagaemykh Mirovymi Sud'iami* (St Petersburg, 1907), 191.
- ⁹⁸ EAA.105.1.9431, lk. 14.
- ⁹⁹ EAA.105.1.9431, lk. 20.
- ¹⁰⁰ EAA.105.1.9431, lk. 15, 16.
- ¹⁰¹ TsGIASPb, f. 569, op. 18, d. 4, l. 34.
- ¹⁰² EAA.105.1.9431, lk. 23.
- ¹⁰³ Patricia Herlihy, *The Alcoholic Empire: Vodka and Politics in Late Imperial Russia* (Oxford, 2002), 16.
- ¹⁰⁴ The imperial government collected revenue from the wholesale of alcohol; licence fees on private distilleries, wine cellars and taverns; and from the bottling and sale of vodka. Yanni Kotsonis, *States of Obligation: Taxes and Citizenship in the Russian Empire and Early Soviet Republic* (Toronto, 2014), 216-217.
- ¹⁰⁵ GARF, f. 539, op. 1, d. 293, l. 1.
- ¹⁰⁶ GARF, f. 102, op. 58, d. 65, l. 2.
- ¹⁰⁷ In the 1909 empire-wide survey of prostitution, there were 13,695 women working independently and 11,965 women working in brothels, Glavnoe Upravlenie po Delam Mestnogo Khoziaistva, *Vrachebnoi-Politseiskii Nadzor za Gorodskoi Prostitutsiei* (St Petersburg, 1910), 58-59.

¹⁰⁸ ROZZh, *Zakon 25 dekabriia 1909 goda*, 12.

¹⁰⁹ Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters*, 147.

¹¹⁰ Tracie Wilson has also identified similar statements made by women who were identified as victims of trafficking in the context of Habsburg Galicia, Wilson, "Migration, Empire and Liminality", 81-82.

¹¹¹ EAA.139.1.3835, lk. 13.

¹¹² EAA.139.1.3835, lk. 59.

¹¹³ EAA.139.1.3835, lk. 72.

¹¹⁴ EAA.139.1.3835, lk. 13.

¹¹⁵ This region is now located in south-eastern Estonia and includes the town Võru and the city of Tartu.

¹¹⁶ EAA.417.1.8390, lk. 187.

¹¹⁷ EAA.417.1.8390, lk. 187.

¹¹⁸ EAA.417.1.8390, lk. 188.

¹¹⁹ EAA.417.1.8390, lk. 142.

¹²⁰ EAA.417.1.8390, lk. 143.

¹²¹ EAA.417.1.8390, lk. 177, 274.

¹²² The territory of this district is now located in present-day Latvia, southwest of the capital Riga.

¹²³ Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia During World War I* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1999), 17.

¹²⁴ EAA.145.1.52, lk. 15.

¹²⁵ EAA.145.1.52, lk. 11.

¹²⁶ EAA.145.1.52, lk. 12.

¹²⁷ EAA.145.1.52, lk. 12.

¹²⁸ EAA.145.1.52, lk. 13.

¹²⁹ EAA.146.1.60, lk. 7.

¹³⁰ EAA.146.1.60, lk. 8.

¹³¹ Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, 53.

¹³² Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, 99; Engel, *Between the Fields and the City*, 160-163; Dalia Leinarte, "Cohabitation in Imperial Russia: The Case of Lithuania", *The History of the Family*, 17:1 (2012): 16-30; Andrejs Plakans and Ineta Lipša, "Stigmatised Cohabitation in the Latvian Region of the Eastern Baltic Littoral: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries", *The History of the Family*, 20:4 (2015): 530-545.

¹³³ David L. Ransel, *Mothers of Misery: Child Abandonment in Russia* (Princeton, 1988), 94. In the 1880s and 1890s, St Petersburg physicians estimated that 9.5 out of 100 single women of childbearing age bore illegitimate children. These rates were approximately the same in Paris, but they were far lower than other European cities including Vienna, Prague, Rome and Stockholm, Engel, *Between the Fields and the City*, 126-127. However, David Ransel importantly argues that illegitimacy statistics must be treated with caution as they record a decrease in illegitimate births around the turn of the twentieth century, while data from other sources indicate a sharp increase, David L. Ransel, "Problems in Measuring Illegitimacy in Prerevolutionary Russia", *Journal of Social History*, 16:2 (1982): 111-127.

¹³⁴ EAA.146.1.60, lk. 9.

¹³⁵ LVVA, f. 51, apr. 1, l. 23471, lp. 21.

¹³⁶ LVVA, f. 51, apr. 1, l. 23575, lp. 201.