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978-0-521-86545-6 - Suicide and the Body Politic in Imperial Russia

Susan K. Morrissey

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Suicide and the Body Politic in Imperial Russia

In early twentieth-century Russia, suicide became a public act and a social phenomenon of exceptional scale, a disquieting emblem of Russia's encounter with modernity. Drawing on an extensive range of sources, from judicial records to the popular press, this book examines the forms, meanings, and regulation of suicide from the seventeenth century to 1914, placing developments into a pan-European context. It argues against narratives of secularization that read the history of suicide as a trajectory from sin to insanity, crime to social problem, and instead focuses upon the cultural politics of self destruction. Suicide – the act, the body, the socio-medical problem – became the site on which diverse authorities were established and contested, not just the priest or the doctor but also the sovereign, the public, and the individual. This panoramic history of modern Russia, told through the prism of suicide, rethinks the interaction between cultural forms, individual agency, and systems of governance.

SUSAN K. MORRISSEY is Senior Lecturer at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies of University College London. She has written *Heralds of Revolution: Russian Students and the Mythologies of Radicalism* (1998) and published articles in *Past and Present*, *The Journal of Modern History*, and elsewhere. In 2004–5, she was a member of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton.

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Some of my earlier efforts to conceptualize the history of suicide were published as journal articles. None of these are reproduced in this book, but pieces of them do appear, generally scattered across several chapters and in a changed form. I would like to acknowledge these articles and thank the presses for copyright permission: “Patriarchy on Trial: Suicide, Discipline, and Governance in Imperial Russia,” *Journal of Modern History* 75:1 (2003) © by the University of Chicago, all rights reserved; “In the Name of Freedom: Autocracy, Serfdom, and Suicide in Russia,” *Slavonic and East European Review* 82:2 (Apr. 2004); and “Drinking to Death: Vodka, Suicide, and Religious Burial in Russia,” *Past and Present* 186:1 (Feb. 2005), by permission of the Past and Present Society.

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I have used the Library of Congress system of transliteration and partially modified old-style orthography to conform to modern usage. In the main text, the names of rulers and well-known cultural figures have been rendered in the more familiar English versions – Nicholas (not Nikolai), Dostoevsky (not Dostoevskii), and place names written without the soft sign. All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted. Finally, dates are given according to the Julian calendar.

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Abbreviations

<i>ASMOG</i>	<i>Arkhiv sudebnoi meditsiny i obshchestvennoi gigieny</i>
<i>BE</i>	<i>Entsiklopedicheskii slovar' Brokgaus i Efron</i> , 84 vols. (SPb, 1890–1907)
d.	delo (file)
EM	Etnograficheskii muzei
f.	fond (collection)
GANO	Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Nizhegorodskoi oblasti
GARF	Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi federatsii
l., ll.	list, list'ia (folio, folios)
IRLI	Institut russkoi literatury (Pushkinskii dom)
op.	opis' (inventory)
<i>OPNiEP</i>	<i>Obozrenie psikhiiatrii, nevrologii, i eksperimental'noi psikhologii</i>
<i>PSS</i>	<i>Polnoe sobranie sochinenii</i>
<i>PSZ</i>	<i>Polnoe sobranie zakonov</i>
<i>RAPKMB</i>	<i>Russkii arkhiv patologii, klinicheskoi meditsiny i bakteriologii</i>
RGADA	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnykh aktov
RGB	Rossiiskaia gosudarstvennaia biblioteka: Rukopisnyi otdel
RGIA	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv
<i>RP</i>	<i>Russkie pisateli 1800–1917: biograficheskii slovar'</i> , 4 vols. to date (Moscow, 1989–99).
SPb	St. Petersburg
<i>SSSM</i>	<i>Sbornik sochinenii po sudebnoi meditsine, sudebnoi psikhiiatrii, meditsinskoi politsii, obshchestvennoi gigiene, epidemiologii, meditsinskoi geografii i meditsinskoi statistike</i>
<i>SZ</i>	<i>Svod zakonov</i>
<i>TS</i>	Vladimir Dal', <i>Tolkovyi slovar' zhivogo velikorusskogo iazyka</i> , 4 vols. (reprint: Moscow, 1994)
TsGIA SPb	Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv, g. S.-Peterburga
<i>VKSPN</i>	<i>Vestnik klinicheskoi i sudebnoi psikhiiatrii i nevropatologii</i>
<i>VNPM</i>	<i>Voprosy nervno-psikhicheskoi meditsiny</i>

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List of abbreviations

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<i>VOGSPM</i>	<i>Vestnik obshchestvennoi gigieny, sudebnoi i prakticheskoi meditsiny</i>
<i>VPKAG</i>	<i>Vestnik psikhologii, kriminal'noi antropologii i gipnotezii</i>
<i>VSMOG</i>	<i>Vestnik sudebnoi meditsiny i obshchestvennoi gigieny</i>
<i>ZhMVD</i>	<i>Zhurnal Ministerstva vnutrennykh del</i>
<i>ZhMNP</i>	<i>Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia</i>
<i>ZhROONZ</i>	<i>Zhurnal Russkogo Obshchestva okhraneniia narodnogo zdравиia</i>