cultural production and popular consumption. What, he asks, was the impact of the "implied reader" on the material, message, and techniques of the penny press? Brower has some very interesting conclusions, though at times he appears to conflate the popular values of actual readers with the newspapers' own view of its constituency.

Although there are always topics that could be added to a collection (commercial culture, fashion, movies), this is an unusually coherent and intelligent work with much to tell us about lower and upper class life in late Imperial Russia. It is highly recommended for scholars and students of this period or for those interested in cultural history more generally.

Anne E. Gorsuch
University of British Columbia


Joan Neuberger's sophisticated and nuanced treatment of the crime wave that gripped fin de siecle St. Petersburg adds new dimensions and depth to the political and social conflicts of the late imperial era. She asks readers to understand hooliganism as contemporaries did, including, she argues, hooligans themselves: namely, not as random criminal violence but as a purposeful challenge to established political and social authority. In a well-written introduction informed by theoretical and comparative work on the history of crime, she introduces the idea that hooliganism should be viewed as a "dialogue" between "respectable" society and the ruffians, vandals and muggers who committed hooligan acts. Neuberger exploits several kinds of sources to ascertain respectable society's side of the dialogue, but most original is her careful reading of the "boulevard press," the mass circulation newspapers that reported on daily life in the capital, especially Peterburgskii listok. The boulevard press provides Neuberger with a continuous narrative from 1900 to 1914 that she mines for changing attitudes toward crime, poverty, and the working classes.

To both the intelligentsia and the "middle-class" writers and readers of Peterburgskii listok, hooliganism was disturbing because it conflicted with what Neuberger calls their "culturalism"; their assertion of a universal cultural standard based on reason, order and progress. Hooliganism, she argues, undermined Russians' faith in progress and reason, and symbolized "in particularly aggressive forms" the fragmentation of society as a whole and the corresponding diversification and democratization of culture." (p. 69) Intolerant of cultural difference and pluralism, respectable society dismissed any deviation from its standards as barbarism.

For the hooligans' side of the dialogue, Neuberger solves the problem of sources by asking the reader to view their actions as a "text" that can be read to reveal their identities, motives, and goals. The insights such evidence yields about hooligan identity are suggestive but ambiguous. For this reader, Neuberger did not provide enough of what cultural anthropologists call "thick description" of hooligan incidents to buttress her sometimes sweeping generalizations. Potentially useful lines of interpretation are hinted at but not pursued; dress and appearance, for example, seems to have been important signifiers in representations of hooligans, but are not explored here.

More description and interpretatio would especially have helped to illuminate connections between hooligans, peasant migrants, and urban workers. While Neuberger frequently maintains that hooliganism was related to peasant migration into the capital, she does not discuss how.
The causal connection becomes particularly confusing in the discussion of “rural hooliganism” in chapter 3. On the one hand, Neuberger asserts that hooliganism was an “urban phenomenon” that spread to the countryside during and after 1905. On the other, she seems to see the roots of urban hooliganism in the “massive influx” of rural migrants that “transformed social relations on the streets.” (p. 111)

At the same time, Neuberger regards hooliganism as an integral part of urban working-class life, and hooligan acts as originating from the same discontent as more conscious working-class protest against government and privileged society. The evidence to support this assertion is not wholly convincing for the pre-905 period, for hooligans preyed not only upon higher-class victims but also upon each other. In chapter 2 on the 1905 revolution, however, Neuberger draws convincing connections between hooligan brawling, rioting, and attacks on police during 1905, and organized working-class protest. Indeed, the revolution gave hooligans an unprecedented opportunity to express their violent social hostility and defiance of the established order. This chapter offers a valuable new perspective on the course of the revolution itself and its impact on attitudes toward authority and class differences.

Chapters 3 and especially 4 examine government’s and social reformers’ responses to hooliganism. According to Neuberger, everyone involved, from deputies to the State and Petersberg Dumas to criminologists and philanthropists, was blinded by their “culturalism” and hostility toward the poor, and consequently misunderstood hooliganism and the slum life and culture out of which it grew. This criticism seems overly harsh and one-sided. It hardly seems fair, for example, to attack reformers for lack of insight into adolescent psychology when that field was only beginning to develop in the twentieth century. The specialists on juvenile delinquency she cites appear to have had a fairly realistic understanding of the complexities of that problem and the difficulties of fashioning workable solutions.

Neuberger’s dismissal of the actions taken to combat poverty and deviance in Petersberg as failures seems similarly one-sided. Her discussion of the special juvenile courts introduced after 1905 highlights the difficulty of using a juvenile system to solve a social problem—a situation hardly unique to Russia. In judging the Petersberg city government’s response to be inadequate, she disregards its complete reform of municipal poor relief in 1907. According to Neuberger, hooligans and delinquents were waging a war of values against reformers. This interpretation leads her to accentuate the moral component of reformers’ rhetoric at the expense of their concrete efforts in areas like job training and education, while it also grants to hooligans’ actions a degree of intentionality that the sources cannot fully sustain.

In the final chapter, drawing again on the boulevard press, Neuberger paints a dark picture of Petersberg on the eve of 1914: its streets engulfed by a resurgence of hooligan and revolutionary violence, its inhabitants stricken by fear of the lower classes. It is difficult to distinguish representation from reality here, as Neuberger herself acknowledges. Crime statistics for the post-1905 period, though ambiguous, show some rise in violent crime; but better reporting and rapid population growth may account for much of the increase. What was unambiguous, she argues, is the “fear, horror, and contempt” of the press and respectable society as a whole that replaced former attitudes of sympathy for the poor.

This ambitious, engrossing, and stimulating book makes an original and major contribution to understanding one of the most problematic periods in Russian history. Not all readers may be willing to accept her sweeping claims about the centrality of hooliganism as symbol and reality in late imperial Russia, or her deeply pessimistic conclusions about the degree of social