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A NOVEL



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Published with the support
of the Institute for Literary Translation, Russia

THE MONASTERY

A NOVEL

by Zakhar Prilepin

Translated from the Russian by Nicholas Kotar

Proofreading by Emma Lockley

Publishers Maxim Hodak & Max Mendor

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BEYOND *THE MONASTERY*: PRILEPIN, PUTIN, AND THE GULAG

How can we read a brilliant work written by an author whose ideology is deeply disturbing? Discussing Zakhar Prilepin raises a host of questions that are perplexing even by the standards of Russian literature. Given the contentious climate in Russia, it is tempting to simply dismiss Prilepin and ignore his disturbing yet original novel *The Monastery* (Obitel', 2014). Yet if those in the West are to understand Putin's Russia — a country where the leader's policies are unpopular but unopposed — we must try to untangle Prilepin's web of paradoxes. Julie Fedor, for instance, labels him a “freelancer” who only supports the Kremlin when his beliefs ally with its doctrine. Determining how this onetime opposition figure came to be a symbol for Russian state oppression explains much about how both literature and culture work in the world's largest country.¹

The Monastery is no less bewildering as a novel — the Russian original weighs in at more than 700 pages as it chronicles the travails of Artiom Goriainov, a university student imprisoned in the Solovki prison camp in the late 1920s for murdering his father. Solovki — the informal name of the Solovetsky Special Purpose Camp — was the first and in many ways most recognizable prison camp set up by the Bolsheviks as part of the system of prisons, camps, exile, and places of execution known as the Gulag. There is a long and impressive roster of authors depicting these locations, which began under the Tsars but reached their horrific crescendo under Stalin, when the Gulag may have housed up to eighteen million people.² Why would Prilepin

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¹ Julie Fedor, “Spinning Russia's 21st Century Wars: Zakhar Prilepin and his ‘Literary Spetsnaz,’” *RUSI Journal* no. 6 (2018), 18, 22.

² “Gulag” comes from the Russian name for the Chief Directorate of Camps and Places of Imprisonment (Glavnoe upravlenie lagerei i mest zakliucheniia). There is a large historical debate over the number of Gulag prisoners. For an accessible overview of this mammoth system, see David Hosford, Pamela Kachurin, and Thomas Lamont, “Gulag: Soviet Prison Camps and

write a damning depiction of this system? How does this act of artistic bravery fit with his arming and fighting pro-Kremlin separatists in eastern Ukraine? This second event smacks of the Moscow-backed oppression that created the Gulag and kept the USSR's ethnic minorities (including Ukraine) firmly under the Kremlin's heel — indeed, Putin has tried to whitewash the crimes of the Soviet past as he endeavors to renew Russia's glory. Prilepin thrives on contradictions and thwarting expectations; his actions have real and deadly consequences as well as disturbing implications for the place of the author in today's Russia.³

Solovki is a sacred and cursed place for Russian culture. The name refers to the Solovetsky Islands, located on the White Sea in frigid northwest Russia. Constructed in the 1420s-1430s as a Russian Orthodox monastery, Solovki was one of the locations that opposed Church reforms in the mid-1660s until forced into submission. In 1920, three years after the Bolshevik revolution, it became a prison camp for political enemies and criminals. In the Gorbachev era Solovki was a symbol of the lingering trauma of the Stalinist terror; the camp's name appeared in an early documentary film about the Gulag and in 1990 a stone from the camp was placed across from the Lubyanka, the headquarters of the Soviet (and now Russian) secret police. In 2012 the stone was a gathering place for mass protests against the Putin regime, protests that failed to change state policies.⁴

The Monastery draws on the holiness and horror of Solovki. Zakhar Prilepin is the literary alter ego of Evgenii Nikolaevich Prilepin, born in 1975 to a nurse and history teacher in the village of Il'inka near the city of Ryazan in the Russian heartland of the USSR. He studied at Nizhny Novgorod State University in the chaotic and impoverished 1990s, an era that shaped the crisis, violence, and extreme emotions running throughout his prose. Many Russians saw these years as a period of national humiliation at the hands of the West, an experience that explains Putin's rise to power in 2000. Prilepin served with Russian forces in the disastrous First

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their Legacy," A Project of the National Park Service and the National Resource Center for Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies, Harvard University, <http://gulaghistory.org/nps/downloads/gulag-curriculum.pdf>.

³ Fedor notes that in 2017 Prilepin created a group to further the patriotic image of Russia in the arts: see "Spinning Russia's 21st Century Wars," 21.

⁴ For an overview of Solovki before and after the 1917 revolution, see Roy Robson, *Solovki: The Story of Russia Told Through Its Most Remarkable Islands* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004) and the official site of Solovetsky Monastery site: <http://solovki-monastyr.ru/abbey/geography/>.

Chechen War, where both sides tortured and executed prisoners as Moscow subdued the Muslim region on the southern edge of its crumbling empire. His time in Chechnya was the basis for *Pathology* (Patologiya, 2005), a collection of stories about the conflict that places him alongside Arkady Babchenko and others who depict Russians fighting in this brutal war.⁵

Mark Lipovetsky notes Prilepin's series of careers and political ties: the author worked as a grave-digger and a guard, was involved with the radical left National Bolsheviks, and contributed to the rightist extremist newspaper *Tomorrow* (Zavtra). Prilepin lauded Eduard Limonov, himself a former émigré who founded the National Bolsheviks; Prilepin also contributed a respected study of Soviet writer Leonid Leonov to Russia's most popular biography series. The author envisions himself as an ordinary man who decided to take up writing, glossing over his college training in literature in an effort to distinguish Prilepin from the intelligentsia that has long dominated Russian prose. He has repeatedly linked this group to a Western, liberal culture that is alien to his nation's "traditional" values of masculinity and patriotism.⁶

Prilepin began his writing career as a poet, a choice that reflects the sacrosanct status of this genre in Russian letters. *Sankya* (San'kia, 2016) established him as one of Russia's most important beginning writers — the novel focuses on Sasha Tishin, a young man from a provincial city involved with a radical group strongly resembling the National Bolsheviks. Sasha is a violent but multifaceted character embodying the crushed dreams of those coming of age after the USSR's collapse. The novel resonated with a generation deeply shaken by the ideological vacuum of the cynical post-Soviet era. Liudmila Ulitskaia, one of the country's most prominent liberal authors (and an opponent of Putin and the war in Ukraine), praised *Sankya* as a deeply moving work because of its depictions of poverty and hopelessness. The English translation has a foreword by Alexey Navalny,

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⁵ Prilepin's personal web site mixes fact with mythology as it manages his public persona: <http://zaharprilepin.ru/ru/bio.html>. For a short but disturbing excerpt dealing with his time in Chechnya, see "Pathologies: Zakhar Prilepin," trans. Arch Tait, *Index on Censorship* no. 4 (2005).

⁶ On Prilepin's contradictory activities, see Mark Lipovetsky, "Politicheskaya motorika Zakhara Prilepina," *Znamia* no. 10 (2012), <http://magazines.russ.ru/znamia/2012/10/li12.html>. Concerning Prilepin crafting his persona, see Igor' Frolov, "Zakon sakhraneniia strakha," *Kontinent* no. 139 (2009), <http://magazines.russ.ru/continent/2009/139/fr29.html>. For one example of Prilepin disparaging the liberal intelligentsia, see his Live Journal post: Zakhar Prilepin, 24 July 2017, <https://prilepin.livejournal.com/tag/интеллигенция>.

the political figure who in recent years has solidified opposition against Putin.⁷

His writing before *The Monastery* focuses on alienated young men scarred by the 1990s and then Putin's restrictions, implying that being Russian means being victimized by others — whether they be the new class of mobster-businessmen or immigrants from the Caucasus. This array of enemies constitutes what sociologist Lev Gudkov terms “negative identity”: one's sense of self is defined by alienation from others, a trait common to Prilepin's protagonists (including Artiom). His prose promotes the superiority of his ethnicity and connects physical and political dominance to aggressive sexuality — all these, Lipovetsky notes, are hallmarks of fascist culture. This is a particularly disturbing facet of Prilepin's prose given that he, like all born after 1945, has been raised in the shadow of his nation's horrifying losses in the war against Hitler.⁸

Prilepin's *Monastery* is itself steeped in the tragedy of Russia's bloodiest century. The novel takes place in the first decade of the USSR, when Vladimir Lenin had already begun the political repressions that Stalin would expand and intensify. The novel appeared in 2014, the same year as Russia's seizure of Crimea and support for rebels in eastern Ukraine. Shortly before *The Monastery* appeared, Prilepin criticized including Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* in the high school curriculum. This groundbreaking historical study of the labor camps and prisons, Prilepin alleged, was not founded on sufficient evidence. The accusation, while having little merit, was intended to stoke reader interest in *The Monastery*. No author writing “camp prose” (prose about the Gulag) can escape comparison with Solzhenitsyn. By condemning the magnum opus by the Nobel laureate, Prilepin stakes out his own claim to camp prose, including works by Solzhenitsyn, Varlam Shalamov, Evgeniia Ginzburg, and others. Prilepin's comments exemplify the charged discourse surrounding public discussion and documentation

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⁷ For brief mention of Prilepin as poet, see Frolov. On the success of *Sankya*, see Tomi Huttunen and Jussi Lasila, “Zakhar Prilepin: The National Bolshevik Movement and Catachrestic Politics,” *Transcultural Studies* no. 12 (2016), 137. Liudmila Ulitskaia discusses *Sankya* with the famous liberal journalist Vladimir Pozner: “Zagadochnaia russkaia dusha. Ulitskaia-Pozner,” 18 February 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KmlBSsuWwXA>. See the foreword by Alexey Navalny in Prilepin, *Sankya*, trans. Mariya Gusev and Jeff Parker (Ann Arbor, MI, Disquiet, 2014).

⁸ Lipovetsky notes the connection with Lev Gudkov's concept of negative identity, outlined in Gudkov's *Negativnaia identichnost': Stat'i 1997–2002 godov* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2004). In discerning traits of fascism, Lipovetsky draws on Umberto Eco, “Urfascism,” in *Five Moral Pieces*, trans. Alastair McEwen (New York: Harcourt, 2002).

of the Gulag — already in the early 2000s Putin began attacking Memorial, the most prominent human rights group commemorating the nine million who perished in the camps.⁹

The Monastery, like many works of camp prose, emphasizes how the Gulag became its own civilization within Soviet society. Solovki has a hierarchy of prisoners and the work they perform, as Artiom discovers when speaking to the intellectual Vasilii Petrovich.

“I need to find another place to live [. . .] What other brigades do they have here? Let’s count them together, maybe we can figure something out.”

Vasilii Petrovich didn’t need any convincing.

“You were already in the thirteenth,” he said. “You’re sick of the twelfth, and I agree, you need to leave it. The eleventh is the brigade of the negative element. It’s also the icebox and I don’t recommend anyone go there. The tenth is the clerical workers. With your obvious literacy, that’s the best place for you. You won’t get into the ninth — that’s the so-called informer’s brigade. It’s filled with former Chekists from the lower ranks, meaning they’re useless for positions of authority, and so they work as guards or overseers.” [. . .]

“The seventh is the artistic brigade, also not the worst place in Solovki. By the by, did you happen to take part in school plays? If so, you’d be perfect for a few of the classical roles.” It wasn’t clear whether Vasilii Petrovich was laughing or not. “The sixth is the custodial brigade. It’s good there too, but by [warden] Eichmanis’s order, they only take former clergymen there.” [. . .]

“The fifth is the fire brigade,” continued Vasilii Petrovich. “It’s wonderful there, but if you can get into the artists’ for your talent or into the clerical because of your ability, for example, to correctly count and beautifully write, to get into the fire brigade, you need to bribe someone. Or, as they call it here, ‘the luck of the draw’. We don’t burn here that often,

⁹ The head of Memorial in the northwest region of Karelia, for instance, was arrested several times on fictitious charges: see “Zaderzhan glava karel’skogo ‘Memoriala’ Iurii Dmitriev,” Radio Liberty, 27 June 2018, <https://www.svoboda.org/a/29324182.html>. “Truth in Dmitriev’s case – this is what we speak up for,” message sent to the Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe, <https://www.memo.ru/en-us/memorial/departments/intermemorial/news/413>. See also the organization’s website: <https://www.memo.ru/en-us/>. Documenting the number of dead in the Gulag is contentious and complex — see, among others, Steven Blyth, “The Dead of the Gulag: An Experiment in Statistical Investigation,” *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* no. 3 (1995).

so they're not overwhelmed with work. They play checkers more than anything. But we don't have any money to bribe, so let's go on. The fourth brigade is the musicians of Solovki's orchestras. You haven't hidden any musical talent from me, have you? Maybe, Artiom, you can play on the trumpet? No? Too bad. The third brigade is the Chekists of the highest rank and Information and Investigation Department. So we won't even consider the third. The second is specialists in positions of authority, for example, professional scientists." Here Vasilii Petrovich looked at Artiom carefully again, but he didn't meet his gaze. So he continued, "The first is inmates from among the camp's administration — the commandants, the leaders of various industries and their helpers. You still have to grow a bit before you can get to the first... or, maybe not."

"Is that it?" Artiom asked.

"Why?" said Vasilii Petrovich. "There's still the fourteenth [. . .] maximum security. Those are the inmates that work only within the walls of the kremlin, so they won't run away. The cooks, the lackeys, the ostlers working for the Cheka. In essence, they're supposed to be especially punished, because they don't have the freedom to walk about on Solovki, but they only made it better for them. You decide — it's one thing to carry logs, it's a completely different thing to brush the tail of the commissar's horse. The fifteenth brigade is the artisans — the carpenters, joiners and coopers. There's one more brigade that doesn't work at all. You can get there easily without any bribes, and it's called...?"

"The cemetery, I know," answered Artiom without smiling. "The cemetery of Solovki."¹⁰

The camp has its privileged and despised classes, with all of them subservient to the Chekists, the secret police whom the Soviets inherited from the Tsarist state. Many of them would be arrested and shot under Stalin's orders in the 1930s, including Eichmanis, the fictional stand-in for the historical figure Fiodor Eichmans.

The Monastery depicts the horrifying effects of state violence yet Prilepin actively encouraged it in another context. The author's literary works are impossible to divorce from his role in the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine, dominated by Russian-speakers who often felt slighted by the Ukrainian-speaking majority of the country. In 2014 two areas, backed by

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¹⁰ Zahar Prilepin, *The Monastery*, trans. Nicholas Kotar (London: Glagoslav Publishing, 2020), 115-116.

Russian troops, tried to separate from Ukraine, beginning a war that has claimed 10,000 lives in the region that separatists (including Prilepin) have proclaimed the Donetsk People's Republic. The author's website prominently displays links to songs supporting the breakaway region as well as soliciting donations to his charity. Prilepin proudly discusses how he funded his own battalion and created his own charitable organization to aid victims of the same war he helped promulgate. In a widely-viewed clip he announces that writers are on the side of peace and then gives a command to fire, presumably at enemy forces. In December 2018, however, he announced that the war had become a struggle for big business. Given that the separatists have been connected to corrupt businessmen since the war's beginning, Prilepin's change of heart did not come from his long hatred for capitalism.¹¹

In 2018 Prilepin starred in *Phone Duty* (*Dezhurstvo*), a film praised by the Tribeca Film Festival despite its pro-separatist stance. This role encapsulates his mutable identity — he is a former soldier who became a writer then served as a soldier while portraying a soldier. Tomi Huttunen and Jussi Lasila point out that his actions before and during the war in Ukraine share a macho “patriotic vitality” that Prilepin juxtaposes against a “bourgeois’ liberal mainstream” he derides as immoral, weak, and a holdover from the 1990s. Both Prilepin and Putin exploit Russia's desire for strong, decisive public figures who force respect from other nations.¹²

Despite upholding brawn over intellect, Prilepin sees his literary persona as an outgrowth of the books he read as a child. He devoured the collected works of Leo Tolstoy and Jules Verne, as well as Hemingway, who was popular in the last decades of the USSR. The list then becomes more surprising, combining the long-banned Vladimir Nabokov, Isaak Babel' (a Jewish modernist killed by Stalin), and canonical Soviet author Valentin Kataev. This combination rep-

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¹¹ Cynthia Buckley, Ralph Clem, Jarod Fox, Erik Herron, “The War in Ukraine is More Devastating than You Know,” *Washington Post*, 4 April 2018, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/04/09/the-war-in-ukraine-is-more-devastating-than-you-know/>. On Prilepin's earlier support for the war, see Sergei Aleksandrov, “Nash fil'm o Donbasse popal v long-list 'Oskara,’” 27 June 2018, *Svoi*, republished in *Gazeta Kul'tura*, <http://portal-kultura.ru/svoy/articles/zvanyy-gost/210970-zakhar-prilepin-nash-film-o-donbasse-popal-v-long-list-oskara/>. On his clip, see *ibid.* Concerning Prilepin's criticism of the separatists, see “Prilepin ob'iasnil pochemu on brosil voevat' v Donbasse,” *Gazeta.ru*, 6 December 2018, <https://news.rambler.ru/ukraine/41382899-prilepin-obyasnil-pochemu-brosil-voevat-v-donbasse/>.

¹² On *Phone Duty*, see Aleksandrov, 45. Huttunen and Lasila, 139, 151. For a wide-ranging discussion of how Putin uses masculinity, see *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*, ed. Helena Goscilo (London: Routledge, 2014).

resents the precocious and eclectic reading tastes of the late-Soviet intelligentsia, a group Prilepin mocks in *Sankya* as estranged from the common people.¹³

Prilepin is far from the original iconoclast he tries to resemble. His blurring of political action, posturing, and talented prose is the evolution of what Andrew Wachtel calls Russian literature's "obsession with history." Wachtel focuses on authors such as Solzhenitsyn, who blend historical analysis with fiction and the philosophizing that has been a mainstay of Russian prose before and after the USSR. Prilepin updates this by cannily exploiting social media and the internet to become a household name beyond the angry young men his writing emphasizes. In this sense he fits into the celebrity culture Vlad Strukov and Helena Goscilo see as emblematic of the Putin era, where real news is subsumed by fame, wealth, and carefully managed scandal. Prilepin is the "anti-celebrity celebrity", who masquerades as an ordinary man from outside Nizhny Novgorod, a patriot, a soldier, and a writer more authentic than the liberal intelligentsia he scorns.¹⁴

It is thus all the more surprising that Prilepin created an original, moving, and thought-provoking novel about Solovki. *The Monastery* is at one level a thriller — Artiom escapes death multiple times and his fortunes shift by the day if not by the minute as he tries to survive the anger of professional criminals, sadistic camp officials, and the brutal Arctic climate. The prisoner's constantly shifting fate comes from the arbitrary and cruel life in the Gulag. What results is an omnipresent uncertainty and fear — depicting this is one of the affinities camp prose shares with literature of the Holocaust. *The Monastery* is a success precisely because it stretches these individual moments of possible triumph or disaster out over the course of Artiom's sentence, immersing readers in a world that it is at first alien then quickly becomes familiar.

Prilepin's novel is a strange mixture of genres that all work together. In constructing such a hybrid work, he emulates the classics of Russian literature. Solzhenitsyn's novel *The First Circle* (V krughe pervom, 1968) used the fate of imprisoned scientists in a secret lab to mediate on human nature, discuss Dostoevskii, and even develop a steamy (if unconsummated) romance plot. Mikhail Bakhtin, explaining the rise of the novel, praises this genre for its ability to incorporate aspects of many types of

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¹³ Zakhar Prilepin, "Ot avtora," in *Doroga v dekabre. Vsia proza v odnom tome* (Moscow: AST, 2012), 5.

¹⁴ Andrew Wachtel, *An Obsession with History: Russian Writers Confront the Past* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1994). On celebrity culture, see *Celebrity and Glamour in Contemporary Russia: Shocking Chic*, eds. Helena Goscilo and Vlad Strukov (London: Routledge, 2011).

literature while still remaining grounded in everyday life — *The Monastery* exploits this flexibility just as its author skillfully navigates his contradictory status as critic of the state, patriot, author, and ordinary veteran. The novel’s structure reinforces this mix. In the author’s preface, the “real” Prilepin discusses how the plot comes from the comments of his great-grandfather: for many years the author had assumed these stories were about the Second World War, not the Gulag. The main body of the novel focuses on Artiom, imprisoned for murdering his father and thus deemed a “normal” prisoner as opposed to the priests, anarchists, and sundry actual and imagined opponents of Bolshevism populating the camp. My discussion will not reveal more of the plot than is necessary — *The Monastery* is built around the thrill of unexpected actions and their consequences, a trait it inherits from Prilepin’s earlier prose. Indeed, Artiom is not much older than Sankya, suggesting that *The Monastery* is the apotheosis of Prilepin’s fixation on violent men. In an afterword, Prilepin explains how he spoke to the daughter of Eichmanis. This is followed by the diary of Galina Kucherenko, Artiom’s lover in Solovki — Prilepin consulted it when writing *The Monastery*, but received the diary only after he had made significant progress on the manuscript. Following the diary are a series of notes by Prilepin, explaining the fates of the principal characters after the main plot ends in the late 1920s.¹⁵

The Monastery also harbors traits of documentary prose: life writing that claims to be based on actual events — the novel purports to be built around the experiences of Prilepin’s great-grandfather Zakhar Petrov (whose first name the author appropriated as his literary synonym). Documentary prose gained popularity in the last decades of the USSR, presenting itself as a supposedly more reliable alternative to the idealized (and sanitized) state versions of history. Yet *The Monastery* is in reality a clever manipulation of facts with many fictional additions, a scenario recalling Prilepin’s critique of Solzhenitsyn for relying too much on hearsay in writing *The Gulag Archipelago*. In *The Monastery* the archival sources and family stories that Prilepin consulted are secondary to the authorial skill that makes them into a coherent fictional narrative.¹⁶

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¹⁵ Mikhail Bakhtin, “Epic and Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

¹⁶ For a discussion of the relationship between fact, fiction, and genres in *The Monastery*, see Benjamin Sutcliffe, “Pravdy ne khvataet: Obitel’ Z. Prilepina: dokumental’nost’ i roman vospitaniia,” *Slovo. Journal of Slavic Languages, Literatures and Culture* no. 55 (2014).

The Monastery is also a strange and twisted version of the novel of development (*Bildungsroman*), familiar to readers of Dickens' *Great Expectations* or Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. In Russian prose Ivan Turgenev and, in a different manner, Tolstoi and Dostoevskii were the most famous authors of this genre, which the USSR chained to the cliché ideological awakening of war heroes and exemplary workers. Artiom matures in many ways, in great part due to his relationship with Galina but also because of his friendship with intellectual Vasilii Petrovich and kind priest Father John (despite both resembling the intelligentsia Prilepin scorns). Prilepin's entire corpus is a single *Bildungsroman*, but one where his male protagonists age without internalizing the 'life lessons' that shape most novels of development. This is due to the cult of violence and lack of self-reflection in Prilepin's works; likewise, Solovki as setting raises an obvious question: can characters learn anything positive from the Gulag? The camps were allegedly created to reform prisoners, yet early on any real effort at transformation devolved into slave labor for projects in the inhospitable corners of the USSR.¹⁷

Camp prose is, of course, another genre of *The Monastery*. Prilepin follows in the tradition of Solzhenitsyn and more terrifying vision of Shalamov, the two figures who most shaped writing about the Gulag. Leona Toker identifies the features of this writing, which also appear in Prilepin's novel: initiation into the camp (the panicked fear of prisoners arriving at Solovki), "Room 101" (a phrase drawn from Orwell's *1984*, denoting a prisoner's worst experience), and so forth. When Artiom talks to the imprisoned poet Afanasiev after the two have been hauling logs, the man tersely summarizes: "Man is a log to other men." This odd aphorism is a pun on the prisoner saying "Man is wolf to man," conveying that one can expect no mercy in the Gulag. Camp prose is suspicious of those who modify its rules: the late-Soviet author Sergei Dovlatov, for instance, was lambasted in the West for his novella *The Zone* (*Zona*), an absurdly comic account of the author serving as a camp guard for non-political prisoners in the 1960s. Prilepin, as is obvious from his attack of Solzhenitsyn, thrives on this sort of controversy, using it to attract more readers.¹⁸

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<http://uu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1263773/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.

¹⁷ For an examination of the novel of development, see Lina Steiner, *For Humanity's Sake: The Bildungsroman in Russian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).

¹⁸ Prilepin, *The Monastery*, 96. Leona Toker, *Return from the Archipelago: Narratives of Gulag Survivors* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 82-94.

The Monastery also has a substantial romantic plot involving Artiom and Galina: one is a prisoner while the other is the lover of Eichmanis, the Solovki warden. This scenario is inextricably linked to a key pattern in camp prose: the irony that prisoners and guards could have easily had different fates (and sometimes changed places during Stalin's purges). Artiom and Galina's affair begins when Galina is interrogating the prisoner and he shoves his hand up her skirt, prompting her to embrace him. This unlikely scene echoes the connection that Lipovetsky makes between sex and violence in Prilepin's works: male ferocity conquers women. The power dynamics are now reversed: it is Galina who can destroy Artiom, yet she becomes his lover in response to his brutally masculine behavior.¹⁹

The Monastery also contains elements of the philosophical novel, that aspect of great Russian prose that uses literature to debate the purpose of life (be it holiness or building communism) or even the course of human history. Tolstoi famously discusses this last point in the second epilogue to *War and Peace*; in the twentieth century Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* argues for humane mercy in place of the Bolsheviks' bloody utopia. Artiom has numerous conversations with more erudite prisoners, a scenario reinforcing how the intelligentsia was a group often persecuted under communism. Some of the prisoners gather for philosophical evenings, reenacting the pre-1917 literary salon (until the camp authorities send its members to the punishment cells). At one point a prisoner compares Solovki to all of Russia, which is like a fine fur coat: "Everyone thinks it's the Bolsheviks, the Bolsheviks who ruined everything. [. . .] But it's merely the empire turned inside out, the entire fur coat! There, you find lice, all kinds of vermin, bed bugs — it was all there! It's just that now, we're wearing the fur coat with the lining out! And that's Solovki!" This comment is important for several reasons. First, it presents the camp as a microcosm of Soviet society, a pattern found in many works about the Gulag. More importantly, the comment reveals that oppression and poverty have always been a part of Russian history — it is only now that the intelligentsia and former aristocrats are aware of it.²⁰

The Monastery places special emphasis on discussions of Orthodoxy, which Prilepin sees as inseparable from Russian culture: this assumption is correct yet elides the long presence of Judaism and Islam (both predate Christianity in the country). Given the context of Prilepin's earlier works, ignoring the religious traditions of Russia's minorities is a subtler sign of his

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¹⁹ Lipovetsky, 8.

²⁰ Prilepin, *The Monastery*, 212.

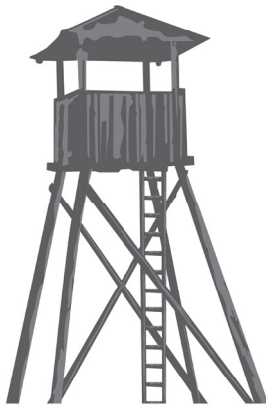
muscular ethnocentrism and xenophobia. This approach is another similarity between Prilepin's fiction and Putin's policies — both fuse church, state, and ethnicity to create an exclusionary image of Russia.²¹

The Monastery is a remarkable book produced by a deeply flawed author whose politics and prose promote extremism. This does not mean that Prilepin's novel is not worth reading, but it places a special burden on the reader (and even more so on the critic). Literature — especially in Russia — does not exist without context; it echoes society's hopes, worries, and shapes how generations will view their country and its place in the world. *The Monastery* suggests the artistry and introspection that Prilepin is capable of while underscoring the sad consequences of the intolerance and bloodshed he has often encouraged.

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²¹ For a discussion of the philosophical novel that emphasize Dostoevskii, see Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 25.

THE MONASTERY



FROM THE AUTHOR

People said that in his youth my grandfather was noisy and angry. Where I come from, there's a good word to describe such a character: *vzgal'nyj* (crack-brained).

Even in his old age, he had this strange habit. If a single cow separated from the herd walked past our house with a cowbell, he would forget whatever he was doing and run outside, grabbing whatever he had at hand—a crooked rowan walking stick, a boot or an old kettle. From the threshold, swearing horribly, he would throw whatever thing his crooked fingers grabbed at the cow. Sometimes, he would even run after the frightened beast, shouting all manner of retribution on it and its owners.

“Rabid devil!” Grandmother used to call him. She had an odd way of pronouncing this phrase, with the vowels mismatched, and hearing it like that ran shivers down your spine.

The “a” in “rabid” looked like great-grandfather’s possessed, almost triangular, up-hoisted eye that twitched when he was irritated. It didn’t help that his other eye squinted. Why she called him a devil, well, whenever he would cough or sneeze, it sounded like he was saying “devil” in Russian. Not “aaaa... chooo!” but “aaaa... *chiort! Chiort! Chiort!*” You could just imagine that great-grandfather saw the devil in front of him and was yelling at him, casting him out. Either that, or every time he coughed, he expelled another devil that had gotten inside him.

As I repeated grandmother’s phrase by syllables — “ra-bid-de-vil!” — I listened in on my own whisper. In the familiar words, streams of wind blew in from the past, from a time when he had been completely different — young, black-hearted and insane.

Grandmother recollects that after she married grandfather and lived in his house with his family, great-grandfather used to beat “Mamania” — her mother-in-law, my great-grandmother — severely. Her mother-in-law was tall, strong and severe, a head taller than great-grandfather and broader in the shoulders. But she feared him and listened to him without question.

To properly strike her, great-grandfather had to stand up on a bench. From there, he would demand that she approach. After which he grabbed her by the hair and walloped her ears with his balled fist.

His name was Zahar Petrovich.

“Whose son is that?” — “Zahar Petrovich’s.”

Great-grandfather was bearded. His beard was like a Chechen’s beard, barely curly and still not completely white, although the sparse hairs on his head were whiter than white, insubstantial and fluffy. If a down feather from an old pillow had gotten stuck on his head, you could hardly distinguish it from his hair.

Only we fearless children dared to take off those feathers. Not grandfather, not grandmother, not father — none of them dared touch his head. Also, if they ever made jokes about him, it was only done so in his absence.

He wasn’t tall. By the age of fourteen I had already outgrown him, although, of course, by this time Zahar Petrovich slouched, limped badly and seemed to be slightly growing into the earth. He was either eighty-eight or eighty-nine at that point. His passport had one year of birth, but he was actually born in another year. But whether it was a year before the passport or after, he himself had forgotten over time.

Grandmother used to say that great-grandfather got kinder after he turned sixty, but only to the kids. He adored his grandkids, fed them, pampered them and washed them. By the standards of village life, this was all a little strange. All of the children took turns napping with him on the stove under his massive, curly, smelly overcoat.

He sometimes visited their house; I think I was six years old when I had a few turns under the overcoat — that rugged, woolen, sleepy overcoat. To this day, I still remember its aura.

The overcoat was like ancient tradition — you honestly believed that seven generations had worn it and couldn’t wear it out. All our kin had warmed themselves under its wool. In winter, newborn calves and piglets were wrapped in it as they were carried into the hut, lest they freeze in the shed. It’s entirely possible that a quiet family of house-mice could live in those huge sleeves for years at a time. If you poked around in the folds and corners of that coat, you could even find the cigarette that great-grandfather’s great-grandfather hadn’t finished smoking a century ago, or a ribbon from the wedding decorations of grandmother’s grandmother, or even a piece of sugar that my father lost. He spent three days of his hungry post-war childhood looking for it, but never found it.

But I found it, and I ate it, although it was mixed up with old tobacco.

When great-grandfather died, my family threw away the overcoat. No matter how much I went on about it, they said it was old garbage and stank terribly.

We celebrated Zahar Petrov's ninetieth birthday three years in a row, just in case.

Great-grandfather sat, seeming, to a careless eye, to be filled with self-importance, but actually quite cheerful and a little mischievous. It's like he was saying, "I fooled you all! I lived to be ninety and forced you all to gather in my honor!"

He drank, as did all of us, no worse than the young people, even in his old age. When midnight struck and he felt that maybe it was time to stop (the parties began at noon), he got up slowly from the table and, waving off grandmother who had rushed to help him, walked to his perch on the stove, looking at no one.

While great-grandfather was walking out, everyone sat at the table frozen and silent.

I remember my godfather saying once, "He walks like a generalissimus." This was my uncle who was killed the next year in a stupid quarrel.

I found out that great-grandfather was imprisoned in a camp at Solovki when I was still a child. For me, it was as though he had walked to Persia to buy a kaftan during the reign of Alexei Mikhailovich or had reached Tmurtarakan with a shaved Sviatoslav.

People didn't talk much about it, but, on the other hand, great-grandfather occasionally remembered Eichmanis or the group leader Krapin or the poet Afanasiev.

For a long time I thought that Mstislav Burtsev and "Curly" were great-grandfather's war buddies, only later did I realize that they were fellow inmates.

When I stumbled upon some photographs from Solovki, for some strange reason I immediately recognized Eichmanis, Burtsev and Afanasiev.

They felt like my near, though not always dear, relatives.

When I think about that now, I understand how short the path to history is. It's right next to you. I touched my great-grandfather; he had seen saints and demons with his own eyes.

He always remembered Eichmanis as "Fiodor Ivanovich"; you could hear in his tone that he had grudging respect for the man. I sometimes try to imagine how they killed that handsome and intelligent man — the founder of concentration camps in Soviet Russia.

To me, personally, great-grandfather never said anything about life on Solovki, although sometimes, speaking only to the grown men, especially my father, he would say something in passing. Every time it was like he was finishing a story that he had started just before — for example, a year ago, ten years ago or even forty years ago.

I remember how mother, bragging in front of the old men, checked how my sister was getting on in French. Suddenly, great-grandfather reminded father — who, it seemed, had heard the story before — how he had accidentally been given the assignment to pick berries and how he had unexpectedly met Fiodor Ivanovich, who had started speaking French with one of the inmates.

In two or three phrases of his raspy and loud voice, great-grandfather quickly sketched some scenes from the past, which turned out vivid and clear. Plus, his look, his wrinkles, his beard, the down on his head, his chuckle — it reminded me of a metal spoon scraping a frying pan — all of this added even more significance to the words themselves.

I had heard the stories of the logs in October's frozen water, the huge and hilarious "sauna switches of Solovki", the massacred seagulls and the dog nicknamed "Black".

I named my own dark-colored mutt "Black".

My puppy, in play, accidentally smothered a chick. Then it spread out the feathers of a second one on the porch, then a third... basically, one time, great-grandfather grabbed the puppy, who was hopping about, chasing the last chick by the tail. He swung the puppy around and smacked him against the corner of our stone house. After the first strike the puppy shrieked horribly, but after the second he was quiet.

My great-grandfather's hands remained, even at ninety, if not strong, then at least tenacious. The conditioning of the Lubianka and Solovki kept him healthy for the whole century. I don't remember his face, only his beard and crooked mouth, always chewing something. As for his hands, I only have to close my eyes to see them. Bluish-black fingers covered in dirty, curly hairs. He was sent away, after all, for savagely beating an authorized agent of the government. Another time, only a miracle prevented him from being sent away a second time when he single-handedly slaughtered all of the cattle that belonged to him and that had been scheduled to be communized.

When I look at my hands, especially when I'm drunk, I note with some distress that the crooked fingers of my great-grandfather, with their hoary, brass-like nails, are pushing their way out into mine more and more every year.

Great-grandfather used to call pants "skerries", a razor blade was a "washer" and cards were "church calendars". If he caught me lying about reading a book, he used to say, "O look, it's a dead body lying there." But he said it without malice, as a joke, as though he approved of it.

No one talked like him, nobody in the family or in the whole village.

Some of the stories my grandfather told in his own way, while my father told them in a different style and my uncle in a third way. Grandmother

always talked about camp life from her pitying, womanly point of view, as though contradicting the male point of view.

However, with time, the general picture began to become clearer in my mind.

Father told me about Galia and Artiom when I was fifteen, which coincided with the beginning of the age of revelations and repentant idiocy. Father told this story for the record and in few words, but it impressed me, even then.

Grandmother also knew this story.

For a long time, I couldn't comprehend how and when great-grandfather told all of this to my father. He didn't speak much, but somehow he did tell him.

Later, when I put together all the stories into a single picture and compared it to what actually happened, at least according to archival evidence, personal notes from the camp and official reports, I noticed that, for great-grandfather, a series of unconnected events merged into a single tale, happening chronologically; while, in actual fact they were sometimes separated by one or even three years.

Then again, what is truer than that which is remembered?

Truth is what you remember.

Great-grandfather died when I was in the Caucasus — free, cheerful and camouflaged.

Soon afterwards, nearly all of our huge family went into the ground. Only the grandkids and the great-grandkids remained. Alone, without the adults.

Now we have to pretend that we're the adults, even though I still haven't found any significant differences between my fourteen-year-old self and my adult self.

Except that I now have a fourteen-year-old son.

It so happened that while all of my old people were dying, I was always somewhere far away. I didn't make it to a single funeral.

Sometimes, I still think that my relatives are alive; otherwise, where have they all gotten themselves to?

A few times I've dreamt that I've returned to my village, where I try to find great-grandfather's overcoat. I climb through some kind of shrubs, cutting my hands. Restless and without a purpose, I roam along the river, near the cold and dirty water, then suddenly I'm in the shed — old rakes, old scythes, rusted metal — all of this accidentally falls on me and it hurts. Later, for some reason, I climb into the hayloft; I dig around there, choking from the dust and I cough: "*Chiort! Chiort! Chiort!*"

But I don't find anything.

BOOK I

“Il fait froid aujourd’hui.”

“Froid et humide.”

“Quel sale temps, une véritable fièvre.”

“Une véritable peste...”²²

“You’ll recall that the monks here said, ‘In labors are we saved!’” said Vasilii Petrovich, for a moment shifting his contented, often-blinking eyes from Fiodor Ivanovich Eichmanis to Artiom. Artiom nodded for some reason, although he had no idea what they were talking about.

“C’est dans l’effort que se trouve notre salut?”²³ asked Eichmanis again.

“C’est bien cela!”²⁴ answered Vasilii Petrovich with pleasure, and so vehemently nodded his head that several berries fell to the ground from the basket he held in his hands.

“Well, I guess we’re right, then,” said Eichmanis, smiling and looking first at Vasilii Petrovich, then at Artiom, then at his companion. For that matter, she didn’t return his gaze. “I don’t know anything about salvation, but the monks knew about work.”

Artiom and Vasilii Petrovich stood on the wet grass in their dampened and dirty clothing, with black knees, sometimes shifting from one foot to the other, wiping from their faces the forest spider webs and mosquitos with hands that had ploughed the earth. Eichmanis and his woman were on horseback. He sat on a restive sorrel stallion, she was on an old piebald that seemed half-deaf.

²² “It’s cold today.”

“Yes, cold and damp.”

“What horrible weather. It’s like a fever!”

“A real plague!”

²³ “We’re saved by our work?”

²⁴ “That’s it, exactly!”

The rain began again, murky and prickly for July. An unexpectedly cold wind, even for these parts, blew in.

Eichmanis nodded to Artiom and Vasili Petrovich. The woman silently pulled her reins to the left, seemingly irritated by something.

“Her seat is no worse than Eichmanis’s,” Artiom remarked, watching them leave.

“Yes, yes...” Vasili Petrovich answered in a way that made it clear that he didn’t hear Artiom’s words. He put his basket on the ground and silently gathered the berries that he had dropped.

“You’re tottering from hunger,” said Artiom, looking from above at Vasili’s cap. It wasn’t clear whether or not he was joking. “The sixth hour has chimed already. A lavish meal awaits us. What do you think? Potatoes or buckwheat today?”

A few more members of the berry brigade pulled themselves towards the road from the forest.

Without waiting for the infernal drizzle to end, Vasili Petrovich and Artiom walked towards the monastery. Artiom limped a little. While he was gathering berries he had twisted his ankle.

He was no less tired than Vasili Petrovich. To add insult to injury, Artiom obviously had come short, once again, of his quota.

“I won’t do this work anymore,” said Artiom quietly, oppressed by the silence. “To hell with these berries. I’ve eaten enough for a whole week, but I get no joy from it at all.”

“Yes, yes...” repeated Vasili Petrovich once again, but he finally managed to grab a hold of himself and answered unexpectedly, “At least it was without the guards. A whole day not seeing those black hat-bands, nor those stool pigeons, nor the ‘leopards’ Artiom.”

“Plus my ration is gonna be halved, I won’t have a second portion at lunch,” parried Artiom. “Alas for my boiled cod!”

“I could always give you some of mine,” offered Vasili Petrovich.

“Then we both won’t have met our quota.” Artiom laughed quietly. “That will hardly make me happy.”

“You know how hard it was for me to get today’s job... at least it’s not uprooting trees, Artiom.” Vasili Petrovich grew a little more animated. “By the way, have you noticed what else *isn’t* in the forest?”

Artiom had noticed something for sure, but he couldn’t for the life of him understand what it was.

“Those thrice-damned seagulls don’t scream there!” Vasili Petrovich actually stopped and, after considering, ate a single berry from his basket.

In the monastery and in the port, you could hardly walk through the clouds of seagulls, but it was the icebox for anyone who killed a seagull. The director of the camp, Eichmanis, for some reason treasured the shrieking and obnoxious breed of the Solovki gull. It didn't make any sense.

"Bilberries have iron, chromium and copper," Vasilii Petrovich shared his knowledge, having eaten another berry.

"For some reason I feel like I'm the bronze horseman," said Artiom gloomily. "And the chromium horseman."

"Besides, bilberries improve your eyesight," said Vasilii Petrovich. "You see that star on the church?"

Artiom looked.

"So?"

"How many points does it have?" asked Vasilii Petrovich, completely seriously.

Artiom stared for a moment, then understood everything; Vasilii Petrovich saw that he understood and they both giggled.

"It's good that you only nodded significantly but didn't talk to Eichmanis. Your whole mouth is black with bilberries," said Vasilii Petrovich through his laughter, then they laughed twice as hard.

While they looked at the star and laughed at what it meant, the berry brigade overtook them, and everyone considered it necessary to peek into the baskets of those already standing on the road.

Vasilii Petrovich and Artiom remained a little apart from the rest. Their laughter quickly died, with Vasilii Petrovich suddenly turning severe.

"You know, it's a shameful, abominable trait," he said heavily and with distaste. "It's not enough that he just decided to have a chat with me, he even spoke to me in French! I'm immediately ready to forgive him for everything. Even to love him! I will now come and swallow that foul brew, then I will climb to my bunk to feed the lice. But he will eat meat, then they'll bring him the berries that we gathered. And he will wash down the berries with milk! I really should, forgive me most graciously, spit in these berries. But instead I'm carrying them with gratitude for the fact that this person can speak French and condescend to my level! But my father spoke French too! And German, and English! And what cheek I gave him! How I humiliated my father! Why didn't I give *him* cheek, me and my old bones? How I hate myself, Artiom! Devil take me!"

"Enough, enough, Vasilii Petrovich, stop it." Artiom's laugh was different now. He had managed to come to love these monologues over the past month.

“No, it’s not enough, Artiom,” said Vasilii Petrovich strictly. “Here’s what I’ve come to know. The aristocracy, it’s not the blue blood, not at all. It’s just that people ate well from generation to generation. The serf girls gathered berries for them, made their beds and washed them in the *banya*, then brushed their hair out with a comb. They washed off and brushed up so much that they became the aristocracy. Now we’ve been dumped in the mud, but they’ve taken the high places. They’re well fed; they’re washed; and they... well, perhaps not *they*, but their children... also, will become the aristocracy.”

“No,” answered Artiom and walked on, rubbing off the raindrops from his face in a frenzy.

“You don’t think so?” asked Vasilii Petrovich, catching up with him. His voice rang with an evident hope that Artiom was right. “In that case, I think I’ll eat another berry. You eat one too, Artiom. My treat. Here, even take two.”

“Forget it.” Artiom waved him off. “You don’t have any pig lard, do you?”

* * *

The closer they got to the monastery, the louder the gulls became.

The monastery was angular, with extravagant angles, untidy in its horrible ruined state.

Its body had been burned out, all that was left was moving wind and mossy boulders for walls.

It rose so heavy and huge, as though it were built not by weak mortals, but all at once, its stone body falling from the heavens whole and catching those who ended up here in a trap.

Artiom didn’t like to look at the monastery. He wanted to quickly pass through the gates and be inside.

“Already two years I’ve been scraping by here, and still, every time I enter the Kremlin, my hand itches to make the sign of the cross,” shared Vasilii Petrovich, furtively.

“Then cross yourself,” answered Artiom in a full voice.

“Towards the star?” asked Vasilii Petrovich.

“The church,” Artiom cut him off. “What difference does it make? Star, no star... The church is still standing.”

“But what if they break off my fingers? Better not anger the idiots,” said Vasilii Petrovich after a pause; he even hid his hands deeper in the sleeves of his jacket. Under his jacket he wore a shabby flannel shirt.

“... meanwhile, there’s a crowd in the church, five minutes from sainthood, filling up the three-story bunks...” Artiom said, finishing his thought. “Or even more, if you count under the bunks.”

Vasilii Petrovich always crossed the courtyard quickly with downcast eyes, as though he were trying not to accidentally attract anyone’s attention.

Old birches and lindens grew in the courtyard, even though above all of them stood poplars. Artiom especially liked the rowan tree. The inmates tore off generous bunches of berries to eat, steeped in hot water or to just chew something sour, but it turned out to be unbearably bitter. Now, only a few bunches remained on the top of the tree, and for some reason this reminded Artiom of his mother’s hairstyle.

The twelfth working brigade of the Solovki camp took up the entirety of the refectory of the former cathedral church, named after the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God.

They walked through the wooden tambour, having greeted the orderlies — a Chechen whose name and crime he could never remember (nor did he particularly want to) and Afanasiev, whose anti-Soviet agitation, as he himself boasted, was that of a Leningrad poet. He cheerfully inquired: “How are the berries in the forest, Tioma?” The correct answer was, “The berries are located in Moscow, Mr. Deputy Head of the State Political Directorate. It’s we who are in the woods.”

Afanasiev quietly snickered, while the Chechen, it seemed to Artiom, understood nothing, but you could hardly tell from looking at him. Afanasiev sat, lounging as much as he could on the backless stool. The Chechen either walked here and there, or squatted in place.

The clock on the wall showed six forty-five.

Artiom patiently waited for Vasilii Petrovich, who, having gathered water from the barrel at the entrance, drank it, huffing and puffing. Artiom would have easily drunk the whole mug in two gulps... anyway, all totaled, he drank three whole mugs and dumped a fourth on his head.

“We have to carry that water!” grumbled the Chechen, drawing every Russian word from his mouth with some difficulty.

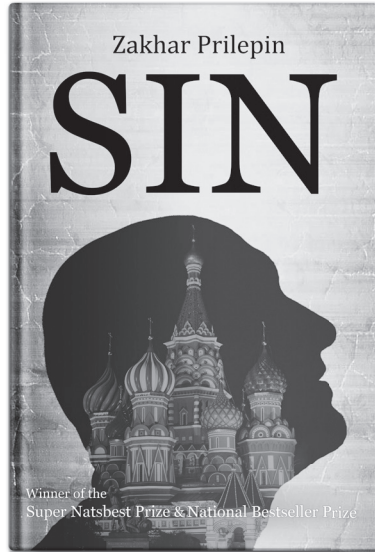
Artiom took a few crushed berries from his pocket and said, “Here.”

The Chechen took them, not understanding what he was being given. When he realized what it was, he rolled them down the table in disgust. Afanasiev caught each of them in turn and threw them into his mouth.

As soon as they entered the refectory, the smell that they had forgotten about after a day in the forest struck them — unwashed human filth; dirty, stale meat; no cattle smells as foul as man and the insects that live on him;

SIN

by Zakhar Prilepin



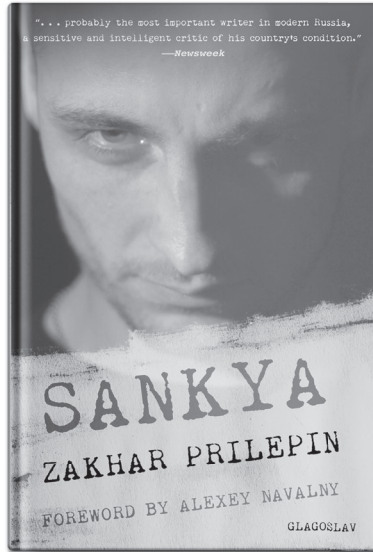
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Sankya

by Zakhar Prilepin



Sasha “Sankya” Tishin, and his friends are part of a generation stuck between eras. They don’t remember the Soviet Union, but they also don’t believe in the promise of opportunity for all in the corrupt, capitalistic new Russia. They belong to an extremist group that wants to build a better Russia by tearing down the existing one. Sasha, alternately thoughtful and naïve, violent and tender, dispassionate and romantic, hopeful and hopeless, is torn between the dying village of his youth and the soulless capital, where he and his friends stage rowdy protests and do battle with the police. When they go too far, Sasha finds himself testing the elemental force of the protest movement in Russia and in himself.

Originally published in 2006, *Sankya* is even more relevant today as a prism through which to view the recent large-scale actions against Vladimir Putin. It is Prilepin’s first novel and is widely considered his best.

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The late 1920s... Convicted of murdering his father, Artiom Goriainov is serving a sentence of several years on the Solovki Archipelago. Artiom is a strong young man who survives all facets of the hell that is the Soviet camps: hunger, cold, betrayal, the death of friends, a failed escape attempt and a love affair. Unlike the many political prisoners at Solovki, he has no strong convictions. He is an everyman who, like the Virgil of Solovki, simply narrates what is happening in front of his eyes. His only motivation is to survive.

Founded in the 15th century on an archipelago in the White Sea, from 1923 the monastery became a “camp of special designation,” the foundation stone of the Soviet GULAG system. The novel describes a period when Solovki was being converted from a re-education camp for “socially damaging elements” into what eventually became a mass labor camp. The notion of a Utopia for “forging new human beings,” complete with a library, athletic events, and research laboratories, eventually mutated into a hell of despotism and brutality.



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