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The culture of justice : reflections on punishment in Dostoevsky's The Idiot

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The article investigates Dostoevsky's juridical discourse and demonstrates that the apologist of the Russian soul had a genuinely European mind. In his novel The Idiot in particular, in which the death penalty and imprisonment are explored, Dostoevsky unmasks-more radically even than Victor Hugo-the supposedly civilised and lenient forms of modern criminal justice. Dostoevsky's criticism is ahead of its time; his arguments resemble those subsequently put forward by Foucault. A comparison with Anatoly Pristavkin's report on post-Communist crime and jurisdiction underscores the topicality of these reflections.

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