

The Unofficial Field of Late Soviet Culture

ANN KOMAROMI

This article proposes a new interdisciplinary model for investigating unofficial culture and dissident social activity in the post-Stalin period. Although binary oppositions like art versus politics and unofficial versus official are recognized today to be ideologically implicated and critically outmoded, Ann Komaromi argues that they have a certain usefulness when reconceived as structural components of an autonomous unofficial field. This critical model is developed with polemical reference to Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the field of culture. The late Soviet opposition between art and politics is explored through Andrei Siniavskii's struggle with editors over the 1965 edition of Boris Pasternak's poetry and via the organization of the famous 5 December 1965 "Meeting of Openness" coordinated by Aleksandr Esenin-Vol'pin. The critical model proposed emphasizes the material history of conceptions of autonomy fundamental to the field, profiling dynamic binaries and permeable boundaries as sites of critical interest.

The Dictatorship of Reason: Aleksandr Vol'pin and the Idea of Rights under "Developed Socialism"

BENJAMIN NATHANS

The Soviet mathematical logician Aleksandr Vol'pin is often credited with introducing the post-Stalin dissident strategy of attempting to hold the Soviet government to its own laws. In this article, Benjamin Nathans asks how Vol'pin himself arrived at the deceptively familiar rhetoric of civil rights and rule of law and how that rhetoric functioned in emerging dissident circles in the 1960s. Rather than approaching rights through classic liberal notions of social contract and self-interest, Vol'pin drew on the strikingly cosmopolitan and interdisciplinary ferment of Soviet intellectual life during the thaw years, putting logic, philosophy of language, and the burgeoning field of cybernetics to unexpected purposes. The result, Nathans suggests, was a counterintuitive blend of idealism and literalism that became an indispensable element of dissident thought and practice within late Soviet culture.

"Pardon, Monsieur": Civilization and Civility in Turgenev's "The Execution of Tropmann"

EMMA LIEBER

In this article, Emma Lieber situates "The Execution of Tropmann," a late essay by Ivan Turgenev, as a key work in the author's oeuvre. Since the essay's publication, readers from Fedor Dostoevskii to contemporary critics have focused on the scene of the public execution—in which the narra-

tor, one of a crowd of spectators, averts his gaze—as a signal instance of the reserve, moderation, and civilized refinement that are the cornerstone of the author’s poetics. Lieber argues that this scene must be understood in the context of the essay as a whole, which she reads as an expression of anxiety about, and a troubled subversion of, the very civilizing influences that have been read as redemptive in Turgenev’s novels and short stories. This interpretation therefore urges, not only a reconsideration of the place of “Tropmann” and its central scene in Turgenev’s work, but also a reassessment of the tenor of the author’s fiction.

Nationality Policy and the Russian Imperial Officer Corps, 1905–1914

GREGORY VITARBO

This article examines the imperial Russian army’s attempt to formulate a comprehensive nationalities policy for its officer corps after 1905. The army sought to establish service quotas for each nationality according to its percentage of the empire’s population. The professed goal of this policy was the preservation of the numerical, and thus cultural, predominance of Orthodox, ethnic Russian officers. Yet this attempt to fashion an officer corps both “imperial” and “Russian” exposed competing paradigms of service, loyalty, and identity among tsarist officers, raising broader questions about the relationship between army, state, and empire. Thus concerns of nationality and nationalism affected the officer corps more deeply than has been assumed. Gregory Vitarbo’s work provides new insights into the intersection of military reform, nationality policy, and imperial ideology in the late Russian empire, while further illustrating suggestive linkages with contemporary pan-European trends concerning military practices, nationality politics, and cultural ferment.

Genre and Ideology in Vladimír Holan’s *Red Army Soldiers*

PETER STEINER

Among Vladimír Holan’s postwar poetic output, the cycle *Rudoarmějci* (Red army soldiers, 1947) enjoys high critical acclaim while the trio of his other works, *Děk Sovětskému svazu* (Thanks to the Soviet Union), *Panychida* (A memorial service), and the cycle *Tobě* (To you), is regarded as a crude exercise in propaganda. Peter Steiner argues that the main reason for this evaluative difference is that the genre of the cycle enables Holan to disseminate an ideological message similar to that of the unappreciated trio in a more subtle, less ostentatious manner. The first part of the article analyzes the various techniques of portraiture Holan employed to represent ordinary Russian soldiers (prosopopeia and ethopoeia). In the second part, Steiner discusses the genre’s ideological potential. Since portrait by definition must depict an actual human subject, the very selection of the model and his or her features embroils such a work in a specific social reality and reflects the author’s attitude toward it. This worldview, however, is not added to the text mechanically, from without, but comprises

an integral part of the very mimetic apparatus that generates its overall meaning.

Remembering Romanian Communism

CHARLES KING and VLADIMIR TISMANEANU

The report of the Presidential Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania, issued in December 2006, is the most serious attempt to understand Romania's communist experience ever produced. Coordinated by the American political scientist Vladimir Tismaneanu, the report covers virtually every aspect of communism as a lived system, from the installation of Communist Party officials during the postwar occupation, through the instruments of coercion, to the fate of religious institutions, the economy, national minorities, and education. The release of the report also contributed to a major political crisis, during which the parliament attempted to unseat the president, Traian Băsescu, who had lauded the report and officially condemned communism as an illegitimate system. The question now is whether the commission's report will be used as yet another opportunity to reject history or as a way of helping Romanians learn, at last, how to own it.