

ABSTRACTS

Rural Russia on the Edges of Authority: *Bezvlastie* in Wartime Riazan' November-December 1941

SETH BERNSTEIN

Central Russia's Riazan' province was on the front lines of World War II for two weeks in late 1941. Placed between German and Soviet forces, the province was on the edges of authorities' ability to exert full control over the region. In that time, Soviet power dissolved in the countryside. Peasants raided warehouses and dismantled collective farms while enterprising local notables aided the embryonic occupation regime. Documents created during the two weeks and their immediate aftermath show that rural Russians, even collaborators, defied simple classification as anti-Soviet. Instead, they exhibited survivalist instincts and a traditional antipathy toward central authority rather than a preference for either German or Soviet power. As Soviet power returned to Riazan' authorities grappled with the mass upheaval that the power vacuum had enabled. Unlike later interpretations, which would stress the role of German atrocities in occupation regimes, Riazan' authorities blamed "anti-Soviet elements" among the province's population.

Nationalist Utopianism, Orientalist Imagination, and Economic Exploitation: Romanian Aims and Policies in Transnistria, 1941–1944

VLADIMIR SOLONARI

Based on a wide range of sources, this article explores the aims, methods, and evolution of Romanian occupation policy in southwestern Ukraine and the local non-Jewish population's reactions to it. It shows that the policy was more oppressive than is usually assumed and that it resulted in a substantial deterioration of relations between occupiers and occupied, especially in the countryside.

The Ambivalent State: Determining Guilt in the Post-World War II Soviet Union

FRANZISKA EXELER

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the search for alleged traitors took place in each country that had been under foreign occupation. The most active country in this regard was the Soviet Union. This article analyzes how the Soviet authorities dealt with people who had lived in German-occupied territory during the war. It discusses divergent understandings of guilt, and examines means of punishment, retribution and justice. I argue that inconsistencies in Moscow's politics of retribution, apart from reflecting tensions between ideology and pragmatism, resulted from contradictions within ideology, namely the belief that the war had uncovered mass enemies in hiding, and the belief that it had been won with the mass support of the Soviet population. The state that emerged from the war, then, was both powerful and insecure, able

to quickly reassert its authority in formerly German-occupied areas, but also deeply ambivalent about its politics of retribution.

Peasants into Perpetrators: The OUN-UPA and the Ethnic Cleansing of Volhynia, 1943–1944

JARED McBRIDE

The Ukrainian nationalist-led ethnic cleansing campaign against Poles in Volhynia during 1943–44 has long been the subject of international tension and contentious public and scholarly debate. This article analyzes the topic through a microhistorical lens that looks at one ethnic cleansing operation in the Liuboml' area of Volhynia that killed hundreds of Poles. Using newly declassified materials from Ukrainian secret police archives, alongside more traditional testimonial sources, I demonstrate that not all participants were prepared nationalist ideologues eager to kill. Rather, there was a range of actors involved in the massacres and the Ukrainian nationalist leadership was able to recruit average peasants to participate in ethnic cleansing through diverse mechanisms. This disaggregation of the killers and their motives not only contributes to growing social science research on mobilization for violence, but also challenges assumptions inherent in the double or triple occupation thesis frequently used to explain violence in Volhynia from 1939 to 1945.

Stalin's Doctrine of Price Reductions during the Second World War and Postwar Reconstruction

KRISTY IRONSIDE

This article examines how price reductions became a late Stalinist economic doctrine. When rationing was abolished in 1935, Stalin linked reducing retail prices to economic and revolutionary progress. This progress was derailed by the war, which saw the return of rationing and its accompanying price distortions, as well as the explosion of private trade at exorbitant market prices. After an unsuccessful attempt to compete with the market through state commercial trade at high prices, the government repeatedly reduced prices from 1944 onward in an effort to clear stockpiles of too-expensive items, regulate the currency supply, shift the population's spending from food to consumer goods, bring down market prices, and attack the private sector. Price reductions were presented as an expression of Stalin's care for workers' economic interests during the process of recovery and as a blow at those who had unfairly profited during the war. By the early 1950s, annual price reductions had become an explicit economic doctrine and a new Stalinist ritual and celebration, despite the persistence of serious shortages, especially of food, and growing evidence of the policy's shortcomings.

The Silent Side of Polyphony: On the Disappearances of “Silentium!” from the Drafts of Dostoevskii and Bakhtin

JASON CIEPLY

In drafts, correspondence, and diaries from the mid-1870s, Fedor Dostoevskii makes repeated allusions to Fedor Tiutchev’s paradoxical articulation of the inefficacy of the word in “Silentium!” but removes them from the printed versions of his texts. The only exception is *Brothers Karamazov*, where Dmitrii reproduces garbled fragments of the poem under interrogation and in commenting on Ivan’s silence-like speech. I use these “traces” of “Silentium!” to shed light on Dostoevskii’s conscious experimentation with authorial silence in novels conventionally understood in terms of the polyphonic proliferation of speech. Beginning with Mikhail Bakhtin’s own allusion to “Silentium!” in the unpublished *Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity*, the theorist came to emphasize the role of silence in polyphony. Drawing on Jacques Derrida’s acknowledgement of the affinity between negative theology and the negative path to affirmation taken in deconstruction, I show how Bakhtin comes to conceive of the history of the novel as the gradual development of apophatic strategies for approximating the unspoken interior world of the other in writing.

Crimea vs. Donbass: How Putin Won Russian Nationalist Support—and Lost it Again

PÅL KOLSTØ

The article analyzes how the nationalist segment of the Russian public has engaged in attempts to interpret and evaluate the Crimean annexation and the war in Donbass. The Crimean annexation was justified in the Kremlin by a novel use of nationalist rhetoric. Initially, this rhetoric paid off particularly well—boosting Putin’s popularity ratings and endearing him to virtually all Russian nationalists. He could present himself as the foremost defender both of ethnic Russians abroad *and* of Russia’s state interests, stealing the thunder from Russian ethnonationalists and the state-centered nationalists alike. However, in spite of the initial euphoria, the war in Eastern Ukraine has antagonized the nationalist segment of the Russian public which had been won over by the Kremlin only months earlier. Russian TV footage of burned houses in East Ukrainian towns and hamlets prompted questions about why Putin was not doing more to defend them.