

Sex in the City that Peter Built: Demimonde and Sociability in Mid-Eighteenth Century St. Petersburg

IGOR FEDYUKIN

This article uses the materials of the Drezdensha affair, a large-scale investigation of “indecentry” in St. Petersburg in 1750, to explore unofficial sociability among the Imperial elite, and to map out the institutional, social, and economic dimensions of the post-Petrine “sexual underworld.” Sociability and, ultimately, the public sphere in eighteenth century Russia are usually associated with loftier practices, with joining the ranks of the reading public, reflecting on the public good, and generally, becoming more civil and polite. Yet, it is the privately-run, commercially-oriented, and sexually-charged “parties” at the focus of this article that arguably served as a “training ground” for developing the habits of sociability. The world of these “parties” provides a missing link between the debauchery and carousing of Peter I’s era and the more polite formats of associational life in the late eighteenth century, as well as the historical context for reflections on morality, sexual licentiousness, foppery, and the excesses of “westernization.”

Probing the Heart and Mind of the Viewer: Scientific Studies of Film and Theatre Spectators in the Soviet Union, 1917–1936

ANNA TOROPOVA

A vast array of research institutes and cultural organizations began to study the viewer of Soviet cinema and theatre in the years following the October Revolution. These investigations called on the techniques of sociology, psychology, and physiology to make Soviet cultural production more “efficient” and “rational.” Belying the conventional assumption that the cultural revolution of 1928–1932 brought empirical research in aesthetics to an abrupt end, this paper traces the continuation and redefinition of studies of the viewer in the Soviet Union after the “Great Break.” My analysis of the work of the “Scientific Research Sector” at the State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK) between 1933 and 1936 outlines how Stalin-era researchers shifted their gaze from viewers’ tastes and attitudes to questions of perceptual management and effectiveness. Exploring the VGIK researchers’ attempts to determine the “laws” of aesthetic perception and optimize intelligibility, the article brings to light the developments in scientific knowledge underwriting Soviet culture’s transition to a form “accessible to the millions.”

Unholy Alliances? Language Exams, Loyalty, and Identification in Interwar Romania

GÁBOR EGRY

This article analyzes national loyalty and identification by examining the language exams administered to minority public officials in Romania in 1934 and

1935. The exams aimed at testing officials' knowledge of the state language, but given the broader political context they were more than a survey of linguistic skills. Examinees were singled out as non-Romanian and subjected to an additional requirement not demanded from their ethnic Romanian colleagues, interpreting the use of the official language as a sign of loyalty. Drawing upon theories of loyalty as a historical concept, the paper analyzes how the particular situation of minority public officials was reflected in these texts and how they created a specific identification for themselves, composed of important elements of their minority ethnicity but also expressing their identification with the state and its modernizing goals as members of a unified, professional public body. The language exams signaled the emergence of a specific category of minority public servants who were part of both the minority group and the middle-class functionaries of the Romanian state. Nationalist public discourse on both sides—Romanian and minority—have denied and erased the history of these hybrid loyalties and identities, but the language exams help us to recover them.

The Battle for Language: Opposition to Khrushchev's Education Reform in the Soviet Republics, 1958–59

JEREMY SMITH

Nikita Khrushchev's proposal to give parents of non-Russian children the choice of whether to send their children to a school with education in their own tongue, or to a Russian school, was first advanced at the end of 1958. It immediately provoked a furious response from leaders of the non-Russian republics of the multi-national Soviet Union, and was an issue contributing to political purges in Azerbaijan and Latvia in 1959. In this article, Jeremy Smith uses documents from archives in four Soviet republics to analyze the responses from the republics. Smith shows that republic leaders were mostly agreed on an alternative solution to the question of language of instruction, and pursued different strategies both to oppose the introduction of the reform and to obstruct its implementation once it was passed. The episode also underlines the uncertainty involved in center-periphery relations in the USSR.

Between Scholarship and Dissidence: The Dissident Historical Collection *Pamiat'* (1975–1982)

BARBARA MARTIN AND ANTON SVESHNIKOV

This article examines the history of the Soviet dissident historical collection *Pamiat'* through the lens of liminality. It argues that the publication sought to bridge the gap between dissident and professional scholarship, between grassroots memory collection, with its emphasis on the witness's voice, and historical research's reliability and "scientificity." Although *Pamiat'* was inspired by earlier dissident historiographical projects and its editorial team was closely linked to the human-rights movement, its ambitions of objectivity and representativeness also connect it to later Perestroika projects based on citizen involvement, such as *Memorial*. *Pamiat'*'s ambiguous identity and

claim to neutrality may have delayed the Soviet authorities' response to it, but repression eventually hit the publication. By putting into question the state's monopoly on historical scholarship and connecting readers and contributors across the Iron Curtain, *Pamiat'* had clearly overstepped the boundaries of the permissible and acquired a political meaning it disingenuously claimed not to have.

Confessing to Leviathan: The Mass Practice of Writing Autobiographies in the USSR

YURY ZARETSKIY

Yury Zaretskiy's article examines the mass practice of composing formal autobiographies by Soviet citizens. The major part of the study covers the period from the 1950s to the 1980s when the Soviet records management protocol requested this type of document from individuals belonging to different social groups and to different occupations. Zaretskiy reviews the concrete social circumstances in which the narrative structure of formal autobiographies was fashioned before moving on to argue that their final addressee was the Soviet state, that their content changed in line with political and ideological changes in the USSR, that the practice of writing them had much in common with Christian confession, and that the spread of this practice among millions of people functioned as a mechanism of subjectification aimed at "making them Soviet."