

ABSTRACTS

Discussion of Eric D. Weitz's "Racial Politics without the Concept of Race: Reevaluating Soviet Ethnic and National Purges"

ERIC D. WEITZ, FRANCINE HIRSCH, AMIR WEINER,
AND ALAINA LEMON

Eric D. Weitz argues that the Soviet Union promoted the development of national institutions and consciousness and explicitly rejected the ideology of race. Yet traces of racial politics crept into Soviet nationalities policies, especially between 1937 and 1953. In the Stalin period particular populations were endowed with immutable traits that every member of the group possessed and that were passed from one generation to the next. Recent scholarship, he suggests, has been resistant to drawing out the racial elements in the Stalinist purges of certain nationalities. Francine Hirsch challenges Weitz's argument, arguing that the Soviet regime had a developed concept of "race," but did not practice what contemporaries thought of as "racial politics." Hirsch argues that while the Nazi regime attempted to enact social change by racial means, the Soviet regime aspired to build socialism through the manipulation of mass (national and class) consciousness. She contends that it is imperative to analyze the conceptual categories that both regimes used in order to undertake a true comparative analysis. Weiner proposes that Soviet population politics constantly fluctuated between sociological and biological categorization. Although the Soviets often came close to adapting bioracial principles and practices, at no point did they let human heredity become a defining feature of political schemes. Race in the Soviet world applied mainly to concerns for the health of population groups. Despite the capacity to conduct genocidal campaigns and operate death camps, the Soviets never sought the physical extermination of entire groups nor did they stop celebrating the multiethnicity of their polity. The radicalization of state violence in the postwar era was triggered by the nature and role of the war in the Soviet world, the alleged conduct of those who failed to rise to the occasion, and the endemic unstable and unassimilated borderlands, and not by the genetic makeup of the internal enemies. Alaina Lemon's contribution suggests that scholars seek racialized concepts by treating discourse as situated practice, rather than by separating discourse from practice. This allows consideration of the ways people use language not only to name categories but also to point to social relationships (such as "race") with or without explicitly naming them as such. Doing so, however, is admittedly more difficult when the only available evidence of past discursive practices are printed texts or interviews. In conclusion, Weitz responds to these critics.

Between Arcadia and Suburbia: Dachas in Late Imperial Russia

STEPHEN LOVELL

In the last few prerevolutionary decades, dachas (summer houses) became an amenity accessible to wide sections of the population of Russia's two main cities. Dachas offered middle-income urbanites unprecedented

scope to free themselves from the workplace, cultivate new lifestyles, and create new communities and subcultures. Dachas thus constitute an important element in the history of late imperial leisure, entertainment, consumption, everyday life, and urban development. They also illustrate the complexity and hybridity of urban culture in this period. The dacha public was diverse in its tastes and sociocultural allegiances; it blended the intelligentsia's commitment to the simple country life with a more "petit bourgeois" interest in diversion and domestic comfort. As an isolated bridgehead of urban civilization in an undercivilized rural hinterland, the dacha provides an important focus for discussing the middle strata of Moscow and St. Petersburg. If the tag "middle-class" could be applied to anyone in late imperial Russia, it was to the dachniki.

The Rise of *Crime and Punishment* from the Air of the Media

KONSTANTINE KLIOUTCHKINE

The rapid expansion of the Russian press at the turn of the 1860s had a profound effect on how literary texts were written and read. Fedor Dostoevskii was among the writers most closely involved in the changing discursive environment. The vicissitudes of his precarious position in the field of letters put him under pressure to adopt the most successful discursive strategies and to open his work to the popular genres (feuilleton, local news, courtroom reports), themes (crime, the identity of the new man), and characters (struggling university students, who are also writers or translators) that were enjoying the greatest popularity in the Russian press of the time. By opening his text to the press, Dostoevskii became the first Russian writer to investigate the effects of the media on the personal identity of writer and reader in the new context of uncontrolled discursive proliferation.

Metaphor Is to Dostoevskii as Metonymy Is to Tolstoi

JAMES M. CURTIS

The terms *metaphor* and *metonymy*, as defined by Roman Jakobson, produce important insights when applied to the novels of Fedor Dostoevskii and Lev Tolstoi. The oeuvre of each novelist constitutes a remarkably consistent whole because it emanates from the creative unconscious, rather than from conscious thought processes. In Jakobson's view, metaphor involves the "combination of heterogeneous elements"; such elements in Dostoevskii include contrasting styles, genres, and references to other art forms such as painting. Windows juxtapose interior and exterior space, as the reading of letters juxtaposes private to public communication. By contrast, metonymy involves the linking of similar elements. As a metonymical writer, Tolstoi tended to take the opposition between self and other that he inherited from the romantic tradition and transform it into a relationship between self and self. The purpose of his well-known device of estrangement is to create just such transformations. In courtship, the self-other relationship is that of man to woman; Tolstoi minimizes this relationship by avoiding all sincere expressions of desire that lead to marriage.