

ABSTRACTS

Central Europe as Ground Zero of the New International Order

NATASHA WHEATLEY

This article presents post-Habsburg central and eastern Europe as the flagship campus of the new international order of 1919. It shows how the international project of imperial liquidation, and the predicament of the successor states, produced a wide range of new international schemes, techniques, and frameworks—spanning the economy, crime, humanitarianism, and rights—that significantly shaped the global governance of today. Where historians customarily trace the implications of imperial collapse for the region’s nationalization, I focus instead on internationalization. I isolate three different “border effects” in which the boundaries of sovereignty were reworked or challenged. International authority and jurisdiction grew and thrived on the sorts of qualified sovereignty that emerged in empire’s wake.

The Paradoxical Czech Memory of the Habsburg Monarchy: Satisfied Helots or Crippled Citizens?

ONDŘEJ SLAČÁLEK

The article reconstructs the ambivalence of the relationship of Czech society to the Habsburg monarchy and its legacy. While this period can be retrospectively contrasted with the twentieth century as a time of relative stability, it is also recognized in Czech collective memory as a time of national subalternity and inequality. Sometimes the imperial legacy is also blamed for the absence of civic virtues in Czech political culture. The study traces the roots of these Czech approaches in the thought of Czech historian and national leader František Palacký (who proposed federalist reform of the empire) and the ideas of the first Czechoslovak president Tomáš G. Masaryk (who declared “de-Austrianization” to be a doctrine of the new state as well as a basis for new civic virtues). The essay also touches on popular culture images in Hašek’s *Schweik* and the phenomenon of Jára da Cimrman, which contribute to an ambivalent and infantilizing image of the times of empire.

1918 and a Hundred Years of Habsburg and Yugoslav Historiography

MILOŠ VOJINOVIĆ

A century has passed since the demise of the Habsburg Empire and the birth of Yugoslavia, and for the last hundred years, historians have tried to make sense of this change. I strive to answer the question, what are the loudest silences of the two states’ historiographies? I employ a mountain metaphor, and argue that although a mountain looks different from various positions, every mountain still has only one shape. I analyze how the turbulent history of the last hundred years pushed historians toward different “truths” and watchtowers, and demonstrate how both historiographies were shrouded

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around notions of loss and creation, in the case of both Hapsburg and Yugoslav historiographies, respectively. This essay argues that the loudest silence of both historiographies is the fact that historiography itself constitutes, at least in part, the “mountain” of both Yugoslav and Hapsburg history.

Revolution through the Lens of Ordinary Life in Kyiv

OLENA BETLII

This essay discusses the Ukrainian revolution of 1917–1921 from Kyiv’s perspective. It emphasizes that mainstream historiography (that is, a concentration on reconstructing political and military events combined with an elite-centered approach) has exhausted itself. In order to explain the revolutionary events and how they were experienced, new approaches are needed. This essay demonstrates the potential of focusing on “little people,” of examining the revolutionary years from a polycentric perspective, and of broadening our perception of the revolutionary epoch as a way out of World War I. The essay demonstrates how an inclusive urban Kyiv narrative with a focus on ordinary life raises a number of new research questions and provides a variety of fresh topics. It also shows how productive it can be to study “big events” while closely following the life of a city and its dwellers.

Searching for the Ukrainian Revolution

SERHY YEKELCHYK

This article discusses the possible ways of conceptualizing the revolutionary and nation-building struggles in the Ukrainian lands between 1917 and 1921. The author argues that these processes, which stemmed from the collapse of two European empires, display features not easily accommodated within the traditional interpretive model of the “Russian Revolution.” In comparison, the Ukrainian concept of “national-liberation struggle” is too reductionist and teleological. The term “Ukrainian Revolution,” which was widely used by the participants of these events, is better suited for an inclusive analysis of this period that emphasizes the significance of the national factor without ignoring the others. Rather than “nationalizing” the story of the Revolution, such an approach highlights the transnational dimensions of the Ukrainian question.

Re-thinking the Revolution in Ukraine: the Jewish Experience, 1917–1921

LARYSA BILOUS

This article examines how the Jewish experience can change the larger picture of revolution and war in Ukraine and conventional history of “the Russian Revolution.” The case study of Kyiv’s Jewish community shows that its creation as an imagined community and development in 1917 was in fact made possible by the war, which served as a catalyst for social development. The interethnic relationships in revolutionary Ukraine were built on the legacy and foundation of prewar tensions, which were reinforced by the ethnicization

of politics brought by the war. The collapse of the Russian empire, the rise of nation-states, the emergence of a new order, which was neither known nor universally welcomed, pushed people to transgress old boundaries of social behavior, leading to mass violence in 1919 and 1920.

The Geography of Revolutionary Art

MAYHILL C. FOWLER

This article argues that a focus on Ukraine challenges the general understanding of culture in the revolutionary period, which either focuses on artists working in Moscow making Soviet art, or on non-Russian (Ukrainian, Jewish or Polish) artists in the regions making “national” art. Neither paradigm captures the radical shift in infrastructure during the imperial collapse and civil war. Placing the regions at the center of analysis highlights how Kyiv was an important cultural center during the period for later artistic developments in Europe and in the USSR. It shows that revolutionary culture is fundamentally wartime culture. Finally, the article argues that peripheral visions are central to a full geography of culture in order to trace how cultural infrastructures collapse and are re-constituted.

Reading Novels at the Winter Palace under Nicholas I: From the Tsar to the Stokers

DAMIANO REBECCHINI

How did the reading material enjoyed by Nicholas I differ from that of one of his stokers? This article focuses on the novels enjoyed by a broad spectrum of readers at the court of Nicholas I, from the tsar himself and the members of the imperial family to their servants, shedding new light on certain mechanisms of court culture. Based on archival sources such as the loan registers and the correspondence of the tsar’s and the palace staff’s libraries, this paper shows how, despite social and cultural differences, these two communities of readers actually often ended up reading the same authors and novels. What distinguished them was less their consumption of different texts than the way in which they read and interpreted the same books and, more generally, the different purpose that they attributed to reading. Based on their position at court and what they experienced in the Winter Palace—a political cabinet in which state ideology was discussed, a place in which courtiers felt suffocated by hierarchies and etiquette, or a place where servants could find otherwise unobtainable books—reading novels could constitute either a form of social control, escapism, or a school of good taste and proper behavior.

Jewish Social Mobility under Late Stalinism: A View from the Newly Sovietizing Periphery

DIANA DUMITRU

This article expands our knowledge of nationality policies, center-periphery relations, and Jewish life under late Stalinism, a period which has heretofore been viewed predominantly through the lens of Stalin’s terror and

marginalization. By focusing on Soviet Moldavia, the article demonstrates that developments in this region followed a different trajectory from those displayed in the center. Local expediencies, derived from the needs of a newly Sovietizing territory with “suspect” locals, encouraged the professional advancement of ethnic Jews to positions of power and prestige previously unmatched in this region. The study explores both the opportunities and limitations faced by Jews in this peripheral region, while placing these phenomena inside the framework of Soviet nationality policies and its accompanying policy toward government professionals. Simultaneously, the article highlights both the legacy of Romanian official antisemitism within this region of postwar Soviet society and the role of the “neo-korenizatsiia” program in displacing Jews within Soviet state structures.

Escaping the Double Burden: Female Polish Workers in State Socialist Czechoslovakia

ONDŘEJ KLÍPA

From the 1960s to 1989, thousands of female Polish workers were sent to Czechoslovak enterprises. I analyze how the Polish women used their stay in the CSSR during the peak period of labor force cooperation to escape the dual burden of production and reproduction. My argument is that the advantageous position enjoyed by skilled male workers in state-socialist regimes could also partly apply to the otherwise vulnerable and marginalized unskilled female and migrant work force. Mutually countervailing policies of the two “cooperating” states, which in fact competed for the same workers, forced Czechoslovakia to relax control over the Poles and allowed the workers to choose relatively freely whether to stay in the host country or return. I conclude that these favorable conditions endowed the female Polish workers with agency and empowered them to flee from their determined roles in paternalist state-socialist society.