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## Summary

### Non-Imperial Russia: Images, Ideas, Practices

## The (Non)Imperial in Today's Socio-Humanitarian Reflection

The issue opens with an interview with **Willard Sunderland** held by Arseniy Kumankov and Tatiana Weiser. In the interview titled "Revisiting the Imperial Past: History and Reinterpretation" Sunderland reveals how the understanding of empire and imperialism changed over the past three hundred years and discusses the concepts of post- and neoimperialism, as well as answers the questions of why and how Russia became an empire, and if there were any imperial projects proposed in Russia from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the 1950s and 1960s, colonial empires seemed to give way to a world of nation-states. But the first wave of decolonization in the Americas occurred between the 1780s and 1820s. Frederick Cooper's article "Decolonizations, Colonizations, and More Decolonizations: The End of Empire in Time and Space" examines the relationship between these two waves of decolonization and the wave of colonization that occurred between them. Rather than fitting the two periods of decolonization into a single narrative, he argues that each entailed fierce struggles in which national sove-

reignty was only one possible outcome, and that in between decolonizations empires blossomed with renewed vigor, transformed, and found themselves reinvented. The second wave of decolonization, unlike the first, dealt a blow to the very idea of empire. However, both waves failed to answer the question that preoccupied the activists who led them: could political liberation be turned in favor of economic and social justice? This article points to the uses and limits of the term "decolonization" in terms of understanding struggles for global justice.

The issue also features a discussion "Empire and the Multitude: A Dialogue on the New Order of Globalization" between **Antonio Negri**, one of the most preeminent political philosophers of recent time, and **Danilo Zolo**, a political theorist and a visiting fellow in several universities of Europe, USA, and South America. On debating *Empire*, the book Negri co-authored with Michael Hardt, Zolo poses the questions about the idea of multitude, which is a key concept of the book, and Negri's answers provide the reader with some highly nuanced interpretations.

## The Empire and its Alternatives in Russian Historiography

This cluster of essays presents several views on the problem of the empire in Russian history and historiography. **Kirill Solovyov** in his essay "Parliament of the Empire or Parliament against the Empire" discusses the influence of the Duma on Russian political life at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. **Vitaly Tikhonov**'s article "Soviet Historiography of the 1920—1930s: From Anti-Imperialism to

Great Power" reflects on the transformations of historical ideology from the radical denial of the pre-revolutionary past to its partial recognition and ideological adaptation for the needs of the Stalinist regime. **Michael Khodarkovsky** in his essay "Eurasian Roots of the Russian Empire" considers Russia's imperial history in the context of its Eurasian neighbors.

### **War and Imperial Consciousness**

Andrei Zorin's article "'Why Do People Kill Each Other?' (Tolstoy and Empire)" shows that Tolstoy's perception of the war in the beginning and in the end of his creative career differed rather in nuances and accents than in content. Understanding of his early stories and War and Peace implies seeing here the germs of Tolstoy's consistent anti-militarist and anti-imperial stance while the heritage of Tolstoy's the pacifist cannot be fully interpreted without considering his view of violence as an integral part of human nature. Tolstoy always believed that the resistance to invaders and the defence of land where humans were born, by which products they are fed and where they are going to life after death is natural, but considered this instinct as pre-moral and pre-Christian contradicting the personal moral conscience that unconditionally rejects all sorts of violence.

In her article "People's War and Beehive: Nation and Empire in *War and Peace*" **Olga Maiorova** focuses on Lev Tolstoy's worldview in the 1860s and explores symbolic representations of the Russian people in *War and Peace*. The author

considers the novel in the context of the nation/empire dichotomy — the central issue of the Russian 19<sup>th</sup> century national imagination, and juxtaposes Tolstoy's vision of the War of 1812 with a trope of people's war, as it was utilized by the Russian patriotic press of the 1860s, to argue that *War and Peace* challenges key tenets of the imperial discourse that took shape in Russia during the Great Reforms.

Natalia Potapova's article "War Trauma of 1812: Physical Injuries and Public Dumbness" analyzes the correlation between the production of anti-war discourses and the social presence of the wounded in society, new forms of cultural experience of survival with war-damaged bodies after the Napoleonic wars, changing medical practices of caring for the wounded associated with the desire to overcome marginalization, isolation and muteness in connection with bodies that shock. The author proves how the traumatic experience of the Napoleonic wars was entangled with the anti-war discourse of modernity.

## (Non)Imperiality in the Russian Public Sphere and Social Thought

The defeat of Russia in the war with Japan and the events of the revolution of 1905—1907 produced a surge of journalistic and philosophical reflections on Russian statehood and its future. A prominent trend in these reflections is the critique of the empire, both as an autocratic political regime and as a regime that hampers the national-cultural building. As Irina Shevelenko's article "Anti-Imperial Visions of the Revolutionary Epoch (1900—1910s)" demonstrates, these two aspects of the critique of the empire are not symmetrical: it is more difficult for Russian authors to imagine the dissolution of the country than the democratization of the regime. The intellectual positions that inform this asymmetry constitute an important legacy of the epoch of the first revolutionary crisis in Russia.

Among the distinguishing features of empires, "imperial consciousness" is the most elusive and defies universal definition. The characterization of imperial consciousness in Russia is often limited to a set of politicized clichés not based on applied research. The article "Did Russians Want War? War and the Imperial Consciousness in 18th Century Russia" by **Denis Sdvizhkov** aims to define the content and paths of how imperial consciousness was shaped in the formative period of the Russian Empire in the eighteenth century through the attitude of its subjects towards wars. The article shows that the formation of Russia as a military empire was accompanied by more than structural measures with the establishment of a proper army and navy. The "distant" imperial wars typical of this period demanded from the authorities a new regime of publicity marked by the

emerging ideology of patriotism/"love of the fatherland." The invitation of the authorities to participate in the "common cause" / res publica, which the wars became, to circles far beyond the elites not only increased the effectiveness of imperial military policy, but also shaped political consciousness and the culture of publicity and inevitably contributed to the transformation of the subjects of the empire into its citizens.

Mikhail Velizhev's article "Towards the History of the 'Moscow Fronda': Sergei Stroganov, A. de Tocqueville and the Unintended Consequences of the Chaadayev's Scandal" examines a chain of episodes connected by the theme of confrontation between two concepts of monarchical rule — a fully autocratic model and a model in which autocratic power is limited by law and aristocracy. The main protagonist of the study is Count Sergei Stroganov, who reflected on the possible limitation of imperial power in 1836 during the scandal surrounding the publication of Chaadaev's first "Philosophical Letter", and in the early 1860s, when Stroganov was engaged in the education of Grand Duke Nicholas Alexandrovich. The aim of the paper is to show how projects designed to soften the absolute character of the Russian autocracy developed within the political elite loyal to the monarch.

In his article "The Russian Nation after the Russian Empire? A Model for the Setup of the Liberal Chronotope in the 21st Century" **Timur Atnashev** analyzes three versions of original assemblage by Russian nationalist thinkers of the unique post-imperial puzzle of a symbolic chronotope, including and excluding certain

territories people, and the characteristics that unite them in the past and present. For modern post-imperial imagined communities in the phase of retreat, the task of rethinking what was "ours" as "not ours" emerges or, on the contrary, an attempt to make what was already "not ours" once again "ours." They are looking for markers and principles of a new unity in the preserved whole. At the same time, the deliberative constructivism of thinkers and ideologues offering their setups is combined with primordial basic elements and a degree of plastic-

ity to identity. An analysis of the intellectual moves of Solzhenitsyn, Krylov, and Remizov allows us to expose the very *logic of the setup* of the symbolic chronotope, preliminarily assess the relevance of the national model in society, and pose the question of the "primordial" foundations of liberal alternatives — the existing two-level identification in particular. Contemporary Russian nationalism surpisingly looks more like transfer of old European models, which does not really fit the current Russian puzzle.

## The Past and Future of the Republican Project in Russia

Oleg Kharkhordin's article "Classical (Civic) Republicanism in Russia" gives a brief summary of the development of classical (civic) republicanism in Russia before and after the 1917 revolution. An overview of usual arguments that figure in the debates between Russian adherents of classical republicanism and liberalism are given in the end. If classical republicanism had feasible chances to become reality in pre-revolutionary Russia, and might have realistic chances to be implemented today, then trying to find it in the USSR is difficult if not wellnigh impossible. In terms of classical political theory the USSR is described

as a one-party despotism or as a corrupt form of res publica named monarchy. The paper evaluates republicanism's current popularity and its contemporary prospects.

This section also presents the questionnaire "On Republicanism in Russia".

Natalia Potapova, Nikolaj Plotnikov, and Alexei Gloukhov discuss which of the projects for the republican transformation of Russia were successful and why, and if the republicanism was perceived as an alternative to empire, monarchy, and autocracy.

## The Imperial and the Non-Imperial in Russian Literature

Ilya Vinitsky in his article "The Shield of 'Self-Standing': Did Pushkin Coin a Key Term of Russian Nationalism?" analyzes the role of Pushkin as a symbol of Russian imperial culture, which has been actively discussed recently. In particular, some have justly spoken about the "weaponization" of Pushkin. In the

political sphere the battle with the state idol of Pushkin has been expressed in the iconoclastic destruction of numerous monuments to him in Ukraine (it is worth recalling that the first to call for the destruction of the sanitized image of Pushkin were the Russian futurists, and Mayakovsky — himself a state poet

after his death — advocated for blowing up his monument with dynamite). In the scholarly sphere it has been expressed in attempts at deconstructing Pushkin's imperial ideology, examples of which scholars have found in his works from "The Prisoner of the Caucasus" to "I raised a monument" (at the center of such deconstructions one often finds the anti-Polish and anti-Western poems of the early 1830s). Of course, Pushkin was and considered himself an imperial poet (just as Ovid. Horace and Catullus were poets and translators of the ideas of imperial Rome), but the scholarly task of Pushkin studies is at the moment, in my view, to read his work in new, nuanced, and topical — both for him and for us historical, cultural, aesthetic, and international contexts. The solution to Pushkin's question is in turn inseparable from the study of various scenarios of the mythologization of Pushkin, whether for motives of state propaganda or for liberal and educational purposes. The present lecture represents such an attempt and is dedicated to the genealogy of one word in Pushkin (samostoian'e literally "self-standing"), which is alleged to have been invented by the poet and has been appropriated by his interpreters in various periods and from various perspectives.

Evgeny Dobrenko's article "Soviet Multinational Literature as an Imperial Project and as a Challenge to the Empire" considers Soviet multinational literature as an imperial project. However, institutionally, ideologically, and aesthetically, it produced a non- and even anti-imperial space. It developed as a byproduct but turned out to be perhaps the only available platform and domain for the formation of national consciousness on the imperial outskirts of the USSR. If an anti-colonial national discourse was cultivated in the Soviet republics, then in Moscow an internationalist discourse

was officially transmitted and supported, dominated by the ideas of national diversity, "interaction and mutual enrichment." The article examines these processes at the level of institutions, the discourse that shaped them and the aesthetic practices they generated.

Authors of Russophone literature of the 1980s elaborated one or more models of the postcolonial and post-traumatic Bildingsroman, which were "suppressed" (in Freudian sense) and forgotten in the course of the post-Soviet transformations of society's historical consciousness. The paper "Late Soviet Literature on Ethnic Deportations in Controversy with the Soviet Novel of Education" by Maria Maiofis and Ilya Kukulin discusses two novellas: The Decade by Semyon Lipkin (1983) and The Inseparable Twins by Anatoly Pristavkin (1981). The basis of both novellas' plots is deportation of the peoples of the North Caucasus, initiated by Stalin and the other Soviet leadership in 1944: Pristavkin's story concerns the Chechens, Lipkin's one — the fictional nation of Taylars. which summarizes the features of several deported ethnic groups. Both works are of a hybrid genre, and both authors independently revisit elements of the classical and Soviet Bildungsroman, so that their novellas have significant parallels with English-language postcolonial Bildungsromans created at the beginning of the 21st century. When analyzing Lipkin's novella, the authors particularly discuss the significance of "decades of literature and art" — an important form of ceremonial representation of the "friendship of peoples" necessary for the implementation of Soviet national politics.

**Andrey Ranchin**'s article "Joseph Brodsky: Overcoming the Imperial" is devoted to the relationship between antimperial and imperial motifs in the works

of Joseph Brodsky. The poet certainly denied the Empire as the embodiment of a totalitarian principle, as evidenced by the image of the Roman state in his poems; Rome here is in many ways an allegory of the Soviet Union. Brodsky contrasts the position of the Empire with the position of a private person and a poet. The imperial element in Brodsky's work was not completely overcome. However, the poet's imperialism is devoid of a strictly political element and an appeal to history. For him, the memory of the past is not a basis for nurturing national pride, but a reminder of historical guilt.

In his article "The Underground — an Alternative Model for Russian Culture?" Mark Lipovetsky poses the question if the late Soviet underground a viable alternative to the hierarchical, centralized model of culture built in the USSR. The underground of the 1960s—80s strives to reproduce those forms for functioning of culture that shaped at the turn of the 20th century and which partially continued to operate in the 1920s. Unlike the imperial cultural edifice, the underground is decentralized and constructed as an archipelago consisting of a multiplicity of — not isolated but autonomous — "islands". This article also attempts to define a spectrum of problems that need to be addressed by those authors and scholars who see their role in the continuation of traditions rooted in the late Soviet underground and employing it as a blueprint for a new cultural architecture, anti-imperial by its logic and structure, in which the state's participation would be minimized and the role of samizdat and tamizdat redistributed to the internet.

Like other imperial languages and cultural systems (English, French, Spanish)
Russian language and culture have served and continue to serve as instruments of imperial domination. At the same time, Russian and Russophone

language and culture is a vehicle of antiimperial resistance, emancipatory political expression, and cultural subversion for many inside and outside of the Russian Federation. Kevin M.F. Platt's article "Russophone Poetic Anti-Empires: Models of Decolonization" surveys and analyzes strategies among Russian and Russophone poets of anti-imperial and decolonial writing, with a focus on poetry of recent decades and especially recent years. Such strategies include: simple rejection of the norms and canons of the Russian poetic tradition; overt anti-imperial or decolonial civic poetry; aesthetic hybridization and language-mixing; performative translation; and others. Poets under consideration include: Shamshad Abdullaev, Keti Chukhrov, Egana Dzhabbarova, Semyon Khanin, Dmitry Kuz'min, Artur Punte, Dinara Rasuleva, Vladimir Svetlov, Sergej Timofejev, Sergey Zavyalov, and others.

Kirill Ospovat's article "Ruins: Russian Philology in the Face of Catastrophe" addresses the place of Russian philology as a discipline in view of the unfolding catastrophe and its politics in the past and the future, outlining a potential alternative model for an emancipatory literary criticism. The starting point for the author's argument is a critique of the notion of culture as concept which consecrates violence and oppression. Accordingly, a conservative vision of classical heritage links culture with empire and the imperial political imaginary. Another tradition of understanding literature and philology, derived from Russian populism understands itself as "service of understanding" working in the interests of the disenfranchised. This tradition corresponds to a democratic and republican understanding of poetry and historical memory in the Ukrainian tradition. In conclusion, the article outlines possible categories for a populist and anti-imperial philology of the future.

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- Ksenia Gusarova. "Decolonialization in Focus" Seminar Cycle(Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Harvard University,3 February—31 March 2023)
- Mikhail Kurenkov. "Republicanism: Theory, History, Contemporary Practices" All-Russian Conference (Res Publica Research Center, European University at St. Petersburg, 15—16 December 2023)
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