

Suicide and the Hermeneutics of Political and National Community in the Interwar Czechoslovak Republic

JOHN PAUL NEWMAN

According to comparative data, suicide rates in Bohemia remained at a statistically high level in comparison to global-figures from the nineteenth-century until late in the twentieth, a matter of grave concern for successive political regimes. In the interwar-republic of Czechoslovakia, patriots were troubled that the high rates of suicide in Bohemia had failed to decline following the transition from the Habsburg empire into the new Czechoslovak state. The article uses sociological works to show how the problem of suicide was negotiated and rationalized in the context of the patriotic culture of the state. This involved eschewing the most compelling explanations of the problem in favor of those better adjusted to the political mood of the times, passing over immediate and apparent problems in favor of explanations that related suicide to the war years or the previous imperial experience. These rationalizations ultimately achieved few concrete solutions, but rather provided an interpretation of the ongoing problem that was compatible with the state-forming patriotism of the day.

No Song for Birds in Flight: The Life and Afterlife of Suicide in the Warsaw Ghetto

EMILY ROCHE

This article is an exploration of how individuals in the Warsaw Ghetto discussed and remembered wartime suicide, as well as the ways in which these events were translated into legend by subsequent generations. First-person sources show how witnesses understood and evaluated suicide as one of the few choices available to Jews under Nazi occupation; Their reactions ranged from admiration or yearning to disapproval, disgust, and indifference. Although death and violence became part of daily life, suicide was not: in fact, the suicide rate in the ghetto was over a third lower than what it was in pre-war Warsaw (Lindenthal, 2014). The goal of this study is not to condemn, glorify, or even understand events of suicide in the Warsaw Ghetto. Rather, the study of suicide in the context of the Holocaust presents an opportunity to rigorously question preconceived notions of agency, survivorship, and testimony. The Warsaw Ghetto existed in the physical space of the city for just three years, but its legacy of violence has endured for decades. This research builds not only on the historiography of the Holocaust in Poland, but also adds to the broader fields of the history of psychology and memory in the midst of genocide.

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Introduction

POLINA BARSKOVA

The present situation urgently calls for the multifaceted studies of Russo-phone literature against war. The authors of the following essays develop their inquiry through the following questions: How does the relationship with the notion of the enemy shape the war poetry of Boris Slutskii and Ian Satunovskii? To what extent can the war poetry of the latter be seen as a matrix of his biographic narrative construction, especially considering that Satunovskii's lyrical subject is shattered, stuttering, de-language/d? How does today's popular poetry of protest differ from today's avant-garde poetics? What are the differences between their means of expression, address, and foci? All of these studies seek to explore the anti-war position in modernist poetry that has been developed through drastically different means, yet the general purpose is aptly formulated by one of our authors as "to bear witness and respond to the ongoing atrocities and destruction."

Ian Satunovskii: Identity and Biography, from the War to the Lyric

LUBA GOLBURT

Ian Satunovskii's war lyric is an extensive corpus drawn from the entirety of his poetic career (early 1940s–early 1980s). Focusing on a few closely read selections, this essay attempts to make sense of this body of work, paying particular attention to the compounding of identities and temporalities in Satunovskii's very short texts. How does Satunovskii's poetry resist the hardening and polarization of identities occasioned by war? And how can we interpret Satunovskii's identification of war as a structuring event of his biography as well as the source of his poetics?

Keywords: poetry, non-official literature, Soviet Union, autobiography, Ian Satunovskii, World War II literature

“Anecdote in the Vein of Herodotus’: Shuttling between Particulars and the Universal in Boris Slutskii’s and Ian Satunovskii’s War Poetry”

MARAT GRINBERG

The article provides a comparative analysis of how two key poets, Boris Slutskii and Ian Satunovskii, responded to World War II, in which they both fought, in the poems written at the front or shortly thereafter. Via Lydia Ginzburg's notion of the deductive and inductive modes in lyric poetry, the article reveals how Slutskii and Satunovskii approach the figure of the enemy and shuttle between particulars and the universal in their verse. Dissimilar in their life choices (official for Slutskii and underground for Satunovskii), they share an aesthetic kinship, with Slutskii pressing harder toward generalizations, often radically revisionist, and Satunovskii insisting on the particulars and aphoristic fragmentariness. Both poets resist the grandiose and odic in figuring out how to navigate between the collective, personal, and intimate in confronting the catastrophe.

Writing Within The Pain: Russophone Anti-War Poetry Of 2022

ILYA KUKULIN

This paper is focused on the growth of Russophone poetry after the beginning of the second phase of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 (the first phase started in 2014). There have been many poetic publications by both those who support the war (in Russia) and those who oppose the war and the political repression of the current Kremlin regime; authors of the latter kind can live in Russia and in other countries. Speaking of the anti-war poetry, I write of the convergence of two movements that previously used to exist separately: poetry addressed to the widest audience (poetry-1) and aimed at analyzing language and ideology and addressed to the audience aware of complex forms of postmodern culture (poetry-2). Today the authors of these movements are developing tools not only to counter militaristic propaganda, but also to question the cultural and social conventions of contemporary Russia.

The Bashagurov Brothers: A Story of Brigandage and Mobility in the Urals, 1789-1792

ANDREY V. GORNOSTAEV

In 1789, the brothers Ivan and Stepan Bashagurov escaped from prison in Perm. Before their capture two years later, they not only robbed houses and raided boats on the Kama but also worked as wage laborers and traveled to St. Petersburg. Their story does not fit into the traditional understanding of banditry in early modern Russia as a social phenomenon reflecting resistance against the state and nobility. The brothers were neither champions of the poor nor enjoyed sympathy and support in the countryside, as is commonly assumed. Through a detailed reconstruction of their case, this article underscores the seasonal and opportunistic nature of their banditry as well as the complexity of the interactions between the bandits and other members of society, which were shaped by acquaintanceship and kinship, on the one hand, and the Russian government's punitive policies against those who harbored criminals, on the other.

“Like a Magician Who Tricks the Eyes”: Demonism, Epistemological Uncertainty, and Religious Heterodoxy in Seventeenth-Century Ukraine

MARIA GRAZIA BARTOLINI

This paper situates early modern Ukrainian demonological discourse within the framework of the major religious, cultural, and political disruption that affected Ukraine between 1596 and 1686. I will argue that the confessional struggles that followed the Union of Brest, the period of civil war known as “The Ruin,” and the eschatological expectations of the year 1666 contributed to a perception of increased diabolic activity but also to the problem of recognizing the possible discrepancies between reality and non-reality. How could one distinguish true visions from illusory phenomena, if the devil could enter the mind through “bad thoughts” and threaten the stability of one's cogni-

tive experience? Furthermore, if there was more than one church, how could one distinguish between true and false doctrine? These questions, in turn, prompted early modern Ukrainian Orthodox intellectuals to question the role and reliability of sensory perception and human cognition, with issues of epistemology and deception becoming increasingly entangled with confessional polemics and religious dispute.

“I am a Sincere Believer”: Rethinking Religiosity and Identity in the Early Soviet Union

FRANCESCA SILANO

This article challenge scholars of religion in the early Soviet Union specifically, and scholars of early Soviet history more generally, to reconsider the ways in which we have conceived of religiosity and Soviet identity in the early years of the USSR. It argues that there was a significant subset of people who considered themselves to be both religious and Soviet in these years, in which what it meant to be both was still not clearly defined. The article draws on archival interrogation records and trial testimonies from the 1922 “Trial of the Fifty-Four” in which thirty-two laymen were charged with counterrevolutionary activity. We have the unique opportunity of hearing the voices of believers from various educational, social, and class backgrounds as they describe what they think it means to be religious and Soviet. The sources thus not only contribute to our understanding of early-Soviet religiosity, but also of early-Soviet identity in general.

Evil, Theodicy, and Jewishness in Fridrikh Gorenshtein

ANNA SCHUR

The paper argues that Fridrikh Gorenshtein’s preoccupation with evil and with the search for a proper response offers a useful lens through which to explore his conception of Jewishness and his identity as a Jewish writer working within the Russian literary tradition.