

**Soviet Car Rallies of the 1920s and 1930s and the Road to Socialism**

LEWIS H. SIEGELBAUM

Rallying, which originated in France soon after the birth of the automobile, has remained a popular sport in Europe and elsewhere, serving to showcase developments in automotive technology and the skillfulness of professional drivers. These, in addition to demonstrating the variety of road conditions and peoples within the country and choosing the most appropriate vehicle to import, were the main objectives of the all-Russian (1923) and all-Union (1925) rallies (*avtoprobegy*). But in 1929, hard on the heels of the agreement with Ford to build a car factory in Nizhnii Novgorod, Nikolai Osinskii, president of the Society for Cooperation in the Development of Automobilmism and Road Improvement (Avtodor), undertook a journey that inaugurated a new kind of avtoprobeg. Expeditionary rather than sporting, it drew on and reinforced a discursively constructed geography of the Soviet Union, relying on two “moving metaphors” central to Bolshevik discourse: the storming of fortresses and the road to socialism. The avtoprobegy of the 1930s lent themselves to narratives of adventure and accomplishment not only for the rallyists themselves but also for the peoples through whose lands they traveled. This was especially true of the most publicized road trip in Soviet history—the Moscow–Kara Kum rally of 1933.

**Amnesty 1945: The Revolving Door of Stalin’s Gulag**

GOLFO ALEXOPOULOS

Memoir literature suggests that Iosif Stalin’s gulag was largely populated by political prisoners and that release from detention was extremely rare. In this article, Golfo Alexopoulos notes that most gulag inmates represented criminal offenders who cycled through Stalin’s labor camps and colonies in vast numbers. She argues that the gulag formed a dynamic system in which the majority of prisoners came and went and uses Stalin’s largest single release of gulag prisoners to expose the movement and tension of this revolving door. Surprisingly, Stalin’s amnesty occurred over the objections of the NKVD leadership and despite great cost to the gulag system; the law was not designed to address postwar labor shortages, relieve overcrowded facilities, or remove less productive prisoners. Rather, the postwar prisoner exodus constituted a political act, and one consistent with Stalinist penal practice in which most prisoners cycled through the camps, connecting the world of the gulag with the larger society.

**Returning the Ticket: Joseph Brodsky’s “August” and the End of the Petersburg Text?**

ANDREW REYNOLDS

One of the mysteries of Joseph Brodsky’s biography was that, even as Petersburg continued to haunt many of Brodsky’s writings of exile, the poet

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himself did not return to his native city after being exiled in 1972. In this article, Andrew Reynolds explores the notion of the “Petersburg text” as it applies to Brodsky’s work and reveals Brodsky’s deep ambivalence toward the kenoticism central to many readings of the “Petersburg text” and the “Russian idea” itself. The article argues that Brodsky’s “last” poem, “August,” is both an attempt to exorcise and, ultimately, an acceptance of the fatidic patterns which seem to make a “return to Petersburg” inevitable in art if not in life. The poem is both an elegy for a (still living?) tradition and a self-elegy, and represents Brodsky’s final recognition that he is Aleksandr Pushkin’s successor in more ways than one: the strongest Russian poets always die “in January,” irrespective of which month or season becomes one’s “fate.”

### **Modernity, Postcolonialism, and Theatrical Form in Uzbekistan**

Laura L. Adams

In this article Laura Adams examines cultural change in Uzbekistan through the evolution of European-style theater during the twentieth century. The adoption of this theatrical form was part of a broader project of cultural modernization undertaken first by the Jadids and then by the Soviets. It was also an example of a colonial hierarchy of cultures, which deemed European forms to be more advanced than indigenous ones. In spite of a pervasive discourse about the renewal of national culture, however, European-style theater continues to be strongly supported in Uzbekistan today. Adams argues that both modernization and colonialism contributed to an internationalist orientation among Uzbekistan’s cultural elites. This orientation makes an investment in indigenous cultural forms less desirable, since they are only intelligible on a local level. European-style theater, however, enhances the value of national culture both by marking its modernity and by communicating national content in an internationally understood and valued medium.

### **Patronage and Public Culture in the Russian Free Economic Society, 1765–1796**

Colum Leckey

Founded in 1765, the St. Petersburg Free Economic Society was one of imperial Russia’s first and most prestigious public associations. Historians have long recognized the society’s significance for the empire’s agrarian history, but only recently have scholars begun to pay attention to its contributions to Russian public culture. Focusing on the society’s daily activities and public practices under Catherine II, this article argues that the organization’s dependence on royal and elite protection transformed it into a patronage network that mirrored the hierarchies found in state service. Despite its egalitarian rhetoric, courtiers such as Fedor Angal’t wielded the greatest influence by virtue of their elite status while rank-and-file members like Andrei Nartov assumed responsibility for the organization’s day-to-day operations. The lived experience of the society underscores the

persistence of traditional power relationships in the empire's nascent public culture and illuminates the survival tactics devised by the first generation of Russia's educated public.

**“Discovering” the Galician Borderlands:  
The Case of the Eastern Carpathians**

PATRICE M. DABROWSKI

What happens when the modern world intrudes upon an isolated mountain region, particularly one that is a borderland par excellence? Patrice Dabrowski examines the moment of “discovery” of the most remote corner of Habsburg Galicia, the Carpathian Mountain region known as the Eastern Beskids and identified with its rugged yet artistically talented highland inhabitants, the Hutsuls. The discovery was facilitated by an ethnographic exhibition in Kołomyja, organized by the Czarnohora branch of the Tatra Society (Towarzystwo Tatrzańskie), which gained renown thanks to the presence of Emperor Franz Joseph at its opening in September 1880. The transformation of the region from terra incognita into a tourist destination for Poles, Ukrainians, and others has local, regional, national, and international dimensions and sheds light on interethnic relations within multiethnic Galicia and beyond. This article represents a historiographical meeting point of studies of nations and nationalism, environmental history, and the study of tourism.