

## ABSTRACTS

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### **Between the Labor Camp and the Clinic: *Tema* or the Shared Forms of Late Soviet Homosexual Subjectivities**

ARTHUR CLECH

Based on interviews with twenty-one women and fifteen men who expressed homosexual desires during the late Soviet period, this article seeks to shed light upon Soviet homosexual subjectivities in the Russian SFSR. As a result of the drive to “close off the entire topic of gay subjectivity to respectable inquiry, so as to prevent gayness from ever again being understood as a sickness,” queer studies has for a long time been “silent” on this topic (David Halperin). My objective here is to take into account both the effects produced by Soviet medical and penal discourse on the subjectification of individuals who experience homosexual desire and the room to maneuver open to individuals for constructing the subject of their sexuality from their experience. I suggest that men and women were able to construct homosexual subjectivities that cannot be reduced to binary stigmatization as either sickness or criminality. In reality, men and women rendered themselves the subjects of their homosexuality in confrontation simultaneously and non-exclusively with both the pathologizing and criminalizing definitions of homosexuality.

### **Soviet Legal and Criminological Debates on the Decriminalization of Homosexuality (1965–75)**

RUSTAM ALEXANDER

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, almost three decades after consensual sodomy was declared a crime in the USSR, voices began to speak out in favor of its decriminalization. This article traces the history of the ensuing debate on this issue, conducted between Soviet criminologists and legal academics in the period from 1965–75. Through a close reading of the related texts, I explore the evolution of the different positions put forward. These fall into two camps: on the one hand, legal scholars who, together with their graduate students, made the case for decriminalization, and on the other, criminologists affiliated with the Interior Ministry, who opposed their views. The article provides the first detailed historical account of this extraordinary discussion and contributes to expanding our scant knowledge on the history of homosexuality in the Soviet Union.

### **“That’s Not the Only Reason We Love Him”: Tchaikovskii Reception in Post-Soviet Russia**

PHILIP ROSS BULLOCK

This article examines the writing and reception of Tchaikovskii’s biography in Russia since 1991, arguing that there has been a constant tension between documentary approaches to the composer’s life on the one hand, and popular responses that have frequently resisted scholarly narratives

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on the other. After the Soviet collapse, a number of former taboos relating to Tchaikovskii's life were lifted, including his homosexuality. Documentary sources began to appear in print, including unexpurgated editions of his letters and diaries. Yet this process has not been without its detractors. Alongside a general tendency to decry the publication and citation of intimate personal correspondence, there have been a number of attempts in the popular press to “disprove” that Tchaikovskii was a homosexual. Social media have proved to be a further site for the discussion of these issues, disseminating the findings of scholarly literature to a readership far wider than originally anticipated. By way of conclusion, it will be suggested that one of the fundamental reasons for the frequent denial of Tchaikovskii's sexuality is that the cause of equal rights is in tension with current trends in Russian politics and society.

### **Identity, Belonging and Solidarity among Russian-speaking Queer Migrants in Berlin**

RICHARD C. M. MOLE

Drawing on the experience of Russian-speaking queer migrants in Berlin, the article furthers our understanding of queer migration by analyzing the motivations and integration strategies of LGBQ migrants, as well as their attempts to maintain and perform both their sexual and national identities in the post-migration context. The risk that they could be doubly marginalized—as ethnic minorities within the host society and sexual minorities in the established diasporic community—led to the establishment of *Quarteera*, a forum for Russian-speaking queers to perform and maintain both their sexual and ethnocultural identities and give and receive social and psychological support, as well as a channel for expressing feelings of solidarity towards other Russian-speaking queers in the post-Soviet homeland. A further contribution of the article is thus highlighting the benefit of “queer diaspora” as a heuristic device to think about identity, belonging, and solidarity among sexual minorities in the context of dispersal and transnational networks.

### **The Maiden and the Wolf: Law, Gender, and Sexual Violence in Imperial Russia**

KATHERINE PICKERING ANTONOVA AND SERGEI ANTONOV

This article is a close reading of an 1859 court case from Moscow, in which a young orphaned noblewoman accused a much older, wealthier, and better-connected man. It situates the case in its cultural context among the striving middling classes of Moscow on the eve of the Great Reforms, revealing deeply fractured understandings of respectability, civic versus private spaces, masculine violence, and personal safety that permeated Russia's urban classes. Legally, the trial's outcome is not as surprising as the sharply conflicted reasoning of pre-reform judges. Each of the three tiers in the court system produced a radically different decision, pitching the obvious facts of the case

against the state's pressure to convict the rapist and pre-reform Russia's supposedly archaic—but actually quite flexible—evidence law. Ultimately, the article argues that this noblewoman was able to use notions of female honor and domesticity in her favor, while the accused's status did not entirely serve to protect him where the need to protect male status conflicted with concerns over the dangers of westernization and modernization.

### **The Making of an Artist as National Hero: The Great Karl Briullov and His Critical Fortunes**

KATIA DIANINA

This article examines the uneven reception of the famous Russian artist Karl Briullov and problematizes the canonization of the classics in imperial society. Drawing on contemporary literary and artistic sources, broadly available at the time but largely forgotten in the years since, I argue that Briullov's status as a cultural icon grew out of the wide-ranging controversy that followed the artist throughout the decades. Now feted as the national genius, now dismissed as a fraud, Briullov became part of the popular imagination as a complicated character of sundry written texts, a literary figment more than a historical person. The discursive aspect of this cultural scenario was crucial in fashioning the image of the artist as national hero: Briullov's canonization was propelled by the written word more than pictorial imagery. Moreover, in a peculiar Russian twist, it was Briullov's association with the great poet Aleksandr Pushkin that advanced the artist's reputation decisively.

### **Against the Double Erasure: Georgi Markov's Contribution to the Communist Hypothesis**

NIKOLAY KARKOV

This paper argues against what can be called a “double ontological erasure” of state socialism in eastern Europe, by both the east European right-wing intelligentsia and the west European militant left. In an effort to challenge said erasure, the paper draws on the journalistic and fictional work of Bulgaria's major dissident writer of the 1970s, Georgi Markov. Against mainstream readings of his work as staunchly anti-communist, the paper suggests that Markov makes at least three major contributions to the “communist hypothesis” from the perspective of eastern Europe. First, by offering a “postcolonial” (rather than a political-economic) critique of the “cult of things” and consumerism in the region. Second, by developing a truly immanent critique of state socialism from the position of the communist ideal. Lastly, by proposing what could be called a “communism of the abject” among individuals and communities on the margins of socialist governmentality. Arguably, this triple contribution not only proffers a more nuanced and complex understanding of life under socialism, but also has important insights for contemporary debates on the left today.

**Split Memory: The Geography of Holocaust Memory and Amnesia in Belarus**

ANIKA WALKE

The remote location of Beshankovichy's mass grave for Jewish victims of the Nazi genocide reflects the exclusion of local Jews during the German occupation of Soviet territories and limits their memory to a few knowledgeable survivors and witnesses. In contrast, local commemorative practices focus on memorials for Soviet soldiers, partisans, and their aides. The paper reveals an incongruence of the place of historical experience on the one hand, and the locale of popular commemoration on the other, highlighting the impact of the Holocaust in Belarus to destroy Jewish history and its memory. The spatial division reflects the trauma of loss as much as shame for local participation in the mass murder. Drawing on oral histories, archival materials, and field visits, the study builds on a growing field of scholarship on the role of space and place in the construction of memories and identities in the aftermath of atrocity and trauma to discuss the geographical dimensions of memory and amnesia.