

Antropologicheskii Forum # 8

Forum: Nationalism and xenophobia as research topics

Research in the humanities and social sciences has certain frontline zones, and nationalism, xenophobia, and religious fundamentalism are obvious cases in point. When working on topics like these one is very much in the public eye, and often has to engage in tense dialogue not just with other members of the academic community, but with the subjects of one's research. The material itself can shunt anthropologists (sociologists, psychologists, etc.) out of their comfortable academic niche into the social space inhabited by the problems under scrutiny. Issues of nationalism and xenophobia as research topics are being addressed in the answers of anthropologists, sociologists, folklorists.

Articles

Mikhail Sokolov. The End of Russian Radical Nationalism?

The article explores the evolution of the 'ideological market' of the Russian Far Right. In the 90s an eclectic mix of religious fundamentalism, old-fashioned racism, ethnic nationalism, and Soviet socialism was the single most demanded 'product' within this part of the political spectrum. After the year 2000, however, the previously undifferentiated market has been divided

into various sub-markets for particular kinds of the Rightist ideology which were no longer treated as complimentary or substitute 'goods'. One of the unexpected consequences of this process has been a decline in the Russian ethnic nationalism in the strict sense of the term. The causes of this outcome are not completely clear; according to one of the possible explanations, the once-prevalent eclecticism concealed the fact that Russian ethnic nationalism had never been popular among the Russian Rightists. According another one, its social base has been diminished by the appeal of the regime.

Yulia Cherniavskaya. Identity on a Mythic Background

The article is devoted to the analysis of ethnopolitical ideologies of the Post-Soviet territory (and accordingly constructed identities and ethnic stereotypes) from the point of view of their comparison with chthonic, cosmogonic and eschatological myths. The author traces the contiguity of contemporary ideologies and chthonic myths in primordial beliefs about 'blood' and 'soil'; the parallels between cosmogonic myths and contemporary ideologies are most obvious in the modern 'myth about the state' — in the beliefs of contemporary ethnic elites about the ancient statehood of their people and its role as a popularizer of culture in relation to contact peoples, etc. The eschatological aspect of contemporary ethnopolitical studies is connected with the creation of an image of an anti-hero nation, with ideas of a victory over it and the coming of a new 'Golden Age'. The author analyzes ancient and contemporary myths on the basis of examples from scientific articles, textbooks and journalist rhetoric, and puts forward a thesis about a need of constructing a new 'Proteus' type of identity, based on tolerance and dialogue.

Albert Baiburin, Alexandra Piir. Happiness on Holidays

The article is devoted to the phenomenon of Soviet happiness which became apparent during the Stalin era. At this particular time a new canon of happiness formed which remained topical for a long period. The authors regard state holidays and its main aspect, demonstration, as one of official models of Soviet happiness. The authors conclude that the specific symbiosis of official and personal happiness was an integral part of the worldview of several generations of people, whose views were shaped during the Soviet epoch.

Catriona Kelly, Svetlana Sirotinina. "I Didn't Understand, But It Was Funny": Late Soviet Festivals and their Impact on Children

The article considers the evolution of mass holidays during the Khrushchev and Brezhnev epochs and children's perception of these holidays. Special attention is paid to the interaction of folk and

‘invented’ traditions, and the contradictory processes of ideologizing and ‘privatizing’ Soviet holidays are described. The article is based on the analysis of archival documents, as well as interviews with informants from St. Petersburg, Moscow, Perm and Taganrog.

Konstantin Bogdanov. Ritual Rhetoric. Soviet Sociolect in the Light of Ethnolinguistics

Propaganda, publicistic and literary texts of the Soviet epoch construct an ideologically recommended reality which can be called a reality of (quasi-)ritual experience. The article shows the discourse and rhetorical features of the Soviet sociolect that made it an effective means of persuasion. Taking linguistic, pragmatic and neo-rhetoric research into account, the use of a Marxist sociolect is described in terms of language aggression, language violence or language expansion — the variety of rhetorical means strengthening the persuasiveness of speech in these cases is constructed not for the discussion and logic of proofs, but for interiorizing the words as inevitable or due. An influence on the listener is, however, achieved indirectly rather than directly — by references to moral, ethical or ideological presuppositions, rendering speech notoriously axiomatic and emotionally persuasive. So, demagogical conclusions, as a rule, are enthymemes — “incomplete” judgements based on missing ‘granted’ premises, speech implications, tautological identifications, metaphorical amplification, etc. One of the most typical indicators of language demagogy is a reference to reality and *argumenta ab evidentibus causis*, ‘arguments from the obvious’ — the misuse of introductory phrases, implying the ‘visual’ solidarity of orator and audience, ‘evidence’ of what does not demand proofs, etc.

Olga Brednikova, Tkach Olga. Dirty Village and Litter Town (Everyday Practices of Dealing with Litter in Different Communities)

The article discusses the practices of dealing with litter in urban and rural communities. Based on their own experience of participant observation and the results of other research, the authors reconstruct social meanings attributed to litter in different social contexts. The article analyzes routine practices of the ‘creation’ of litter and its ‘management’, and control over it in private and public spaces. The conclusion discusses the differences in litter practices of village inhabitants and townspeople.

Vadim Zhuravlyov. “Having Given That Person the Name of the Supreme Governor”: On the Title Assumed by Admiral A.V. Kolchak on 18th November 1918.

The article considers the origin of the title of Supreme Governor assumed by Admiral A.V. Kolchak during the military coup in Omsk

on 18th November 1918. In order to clarify the semantics and origin of the title the author turns to the memoirs of participants of the coup, legal documentation, and also analyzes public the resonance of this event. But the explanation of the title origin is finally found by the author in the Old Testament tradition, and proposes a hypothesis of a religious genesis of the title.

We host “Zhivaya starina”

Maria Akhmetova, Sergey Nekliudov. On the “Zhivaya Starina” Journal

The text reviews the journal “Zhivaya starina” (founded in 1992, first issue published in 1994). The editors emphasize the continuity between the present edition and the pre-revolutionary “Zhivaya starina”, published from 1890–1917. The renewed journal publishes articles on a wide range of problems of folklore and cultural anthropology (including materials on modern culture). Priority is given to Russian folklore and traditional culture. The journal is designed for a wide audience.

Vladimir Kalutskov. Russian Geographical Urban Songs of Russia

The article deals with geographical songs in the context of cultural landscape. The example of the urban geographical song “Farewell, our Lalsk suburb” allows the consideration of the spatial structure and ‘social topography’ of Lalsk in the Vologda province, at the end of the 18th century.

Gennady Lopatin. “An Icon was Called a Candle”: From the Experience of Studying the Candle in East Polesye. Based on Expeditions of the Vetka Museum of Folk Creative Work

The article describes the local, historical, semantic, and functional features of the Candle ritual in East Polesye based on pre-revolutionary sources and expeditions of the Vetka Museum of Folk Creative Work of the mid-1990s. Some authentic transcripts of interviews collected on expeditions are published in the article.

Materials from expeditions

Mikhail Alekseevsky, Anastasia Zherdeva, Mikhail Lurie, Anna Senkina. Materials for ‘Dictionary of the Local Text of Mogilev-Podolsky’

The work is a pilot publication of separate entries from the prepared ‘Dictionary of the Local Text of Mogilev-Podolsky’. The introduc-

tion sums up the history of studying local text in the Russian tradition, introduces the dictionary conception and describes its structure. A separate section is devoted to the specificity of the local text of Mogilev-Podolsky, a small Ukrainian town on the border with Moldova. Entries are taken from the sections ‘Symbols of Identity’ (Cesspit), ‘Locis and Toponyms’ (119th micro-district), ‘Events’ (Rumour about a break of the dam), ‘Persons’ (Yasha Krasnopolsky), and ‘Communities and Institutes’ (the Kirov Plant, the Blue Danube).

Reviews

The section contains reviews of books on Soviet history, contemporary anthropology and the history of culture. According to the principles of the journal, English-speaking books are reviewed by Russian researchers and vice versa. Reviewers briefly describe the contents of reviewed books and mention their merits and deficiencies. The basic object of criticism in S. Abashin’s review of P.A. Michael’s book ‘Curative Power: Medicine and Empire in Stalin’s Central Asia’ is the author’s thesis of the imperial character of biomedical politics of the Soviet government in Kazakhstan in 1920s–1930s. O. Ken reviewing C. Merridale’s work ‘Ivan’s War. The Red Army 1939–1945’, pays attention to the author’s attempt to give a new interpretation to the social history of participants of the Great Patriotic War, but points to some factual mistakes and simplifications. O. Khristoforova in her review of G. Lindquist’s book indicates the importance of research into contemporary magic and healing, though she criticizes the author’s conclusion on the semiotic nature of the discussed phenomenon. Finally, A. Kahn reviewing K. Bogdanov’s book ‘On Crocodiles in Russia’, writes about the author’s successful combination of various methods and research strategies, which allow the reconstruction of one aspect of Russian identity of the Early Modern time based on a wide range of sources belonging to the category of the exotic.

Publications

Maria Yanes. Fania Davydovna Liushkevich

The article is devoted to the biography and the scientific career of the well-known ethnographer and researcher into Central Asia, F.D. Liushkevich. The autobiography is devoted to years of work in the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Great attention is shown to the history of expeditions and some methodological aspects of the ethnographer’s fieldwork.

Conferences

Valeria Kolosova, Konstantin Rangochev. International Symposium 'Ruler and Saint'. Tsar Ivan Shishman and the Festival Balkan Cultural Film Library

The text contains a review of the international symposium 'Ruler and Saint'. Tsar Ivan Shishman (4th–7th October 2007, Samokov, Bulgaria), devoted to the 600th anniversary of Tsar Ivan Shishman's last battle in the Samokov region combined with the Festival of Cultural and Historical Films of the Balkan Cultural Film Library. The symposium was organized by the Association of Anthropology, Ethnology and Folklore at Ongal. Participants' papers concerned the problems of forming a national consciousness, interpreting folklore and author's texts (both oral and written), studying historical memory mechanisms, and the archaeological and written heritage of Bulgaria.

Vlada Baranova. Soyuz.ru, or What Shall We Do with Russian Anthropology

The report reviews the conference 'Social Anthropology in Russia as a Research and University Discipline: Search for Past and Future' organized by the State University 'Higher School of Economics' on 11th–13th September 2007 in Pushkin. The purpose of the conference was to discuss a wide range of problems about the situation of anthropology in Russia. The program of presentations included three sections: social anthropology as part of a curriculum, social anthropology as a scientific discipline and the peculiarities of the academic community.

In memoriam

Albert Baiburin. Kirill Vasilievich Chistov

The obituary is devoted to the memory of the Russian ethnographer and specialist in folklore, K.V. Chistov (1919–2007). Being a student of Kirill Vasilievich, the author traces the basic stages of the scientific research and personal biography of the scholar, whose texts became classical works of Soviet ethnography and folklore studies alongside those of V.Y. Propps, E.M. Meletinskys, B.N. Putilov.