

Human Rights & Human Welfare

Volume 11 | Issue 1

Article 23

2011

Peeking Out from Behind the Curtain

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Recommended Citation

Reese, Ian (2011) "Peeking Out from Behind the Curtain," *Human Rights & Human Welfare*: Vol. 11: Iss. 1, Article 23.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/hrhw/vol11/iss1/23>



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Peeking Out from Behind the Curtain

Abstract

Absconded by airport security to middle-of-nowhere Russia, Nikolai Alexeyev sat for several days in early September 2010 unaware of his infractions or of his fate. Like a page from a Cold-War spy novel, the point of his abduction was to terrorize; Alexeyev's abductors psychologically tortured and berated him with homophobic remarks. Nikolai Alexeyev is the leading gay rights activist in Russia and has been a twisting thorn in the side of local and national government for several years. Upon his release, he resolved to agitate further by leading a public demonstration to boycott the Swiss International Air Lines for its involvement in his kidnapping. On October 4, 2010, protestors rallied in the streets of Moscow to support Alexeyev when no recourse was taken against his kidnappers and, essentially, to exercise newfound rights. Although members of the media nearly equaled the number of protesters, the rally symbolized progress—a distinct break from the way things were. This particular rally was the first government-sanctioned demonstration by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community in the Russian capital (The Moscow Times, 2010).

Keywords

Human rights, Russia, LGBT rights, Discrimination, Hate crimes

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Peeking Out From Behind the Curtain

By Ian Reese

Introduction

Absconded by airport security to middle-of-nowhere Russia, Nikolai Alexeyev sat for several days in early September 2010 unaware of his infractions or of his fate. Like a page from a Cold-War spy novel, the point of his abduction was to terrorize; Alexeyev's abductors psychologically tortured and berated him with homophobic remarks. Nikolai Alexeyev is the leading gay rights activist in Russia and has been a twisting thorn in the side of local and national government for several years. Upon his release, he resolved to agitate further by leading a public demonstration to boycott the Swiss International Air Lines for its involvement in his kidnapping. On October 4, 2010, protestors rallied in the streets of Moscow to support Alexeyev when no recourse was taken against his kidnappers and, essentially, to exercise newfound rights. Although members of the media nearly equaled the number of protesters, the rally symbolized progress—a distinct break from the way things were. This particular rally was the first government-sanctioned demonstration by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community in the Russian capital (*The Moscow Times*, 2010).

The fall of the Iron Curtain and dissolution of communist regimes opened Eastern Europe to the idea of liberal democracy and to all of its trappings. It liberalized its economies, politics, and social order, flooding many countries with as many opportunities as trials. Opportunities appeared for sexual minorities as the prohibition of homosexuality died with the crumbling of the Soviet Union; the official Stalinist ban on homosexuality was lifted in Russia in 1993. However, members of the Russian Duma have taken action in the last decade to reinstate the discriminatory law; though. Ultimately, they have failed. Russia has called itself an open democracy for nearly two decades, though it falls short in practice. The state of current human rights for lesbians and gays⁴ in Russia remains grim, albeit recent actions have given the cloud that hangs over the LGBT community a silver lining.

Public Disservice

The power of assembly has engendered inclusivity for human rights, given some much needed comfort, and brought governments to their knees. It is an integral part of healthy communities and a foundation for democracy. The sexual revolution of the 1990s, emboldened by the advent of the Internet, propped open the closet door for many gays and lesbians, providing opportunities to meet and associate. The LGBT community has legally been allowed to organize and to commune since the Stalinist ban was lifted. However, they have been forced to live in secrecy and to assemble away from the public sphere.

As previously mentioned, the government only recently sanctioned the first public demonstration of the LGBT community in Moscow. Prior to this rally, government officials refused to allow peaceful assembly and condemned any attempt at pride parades. The Gay Pride parade—a staple of LGBT activism and awareness throughout the world—has never been given approval in Russia. Yuri Luzhkov, mayor of Moscow from 1992 until his removal from office in 2010, denied permits to the Russian gay community for

⁴ Gay and lesbian will be often used as blanket terms to denote all members identifying as a sexual minority. This includes men who have sex with men, women who have sex with women, bisexuals, and transgendered, intersexed and queer persons. LGBT community and gay community will be employed interchangeably.

the last five years of his term. His vehement opposition increased when he branded the parades ‘satanic activity’ and called on Russians to realize the blasphemous, radical agenda being promulgated by the gay community (*The Other Russia* 2010). Gay activists were not just denied the permit, which they have argued in Russian court as their right under Russia’s constitution, but were physically brutalized by anti-gay extremist attackers and by police who were dispersing crowds that tried to march in 2006, 2007, and 2008. Marchers avoided direct violent conflicts in 2009 by moving the location of the parade at the last minute; although once found, all participants were arrested. In 2010, they disbanded at the first sign of police and reemerged to march a while longer in another part of Moscow. This blatant disregard for a basic human rights inhibits progress on several levels, most obviously gays’ and lesbians’ ability to enter the public sphere.

“Diskriminatsia Normalnaya”

Official laws of non-discrimination, while offering protection on the basis of ‘social status’, do not explicitly include sexual minorities or transgendered persons. Russian society at-large may afflict the LGBT community with any number and combination of discriminatory acts without recourse. Thus, gays and lesbians continue to live secretly throughout Russia, remaining closeted even to friends and family for fear of persecution. Persecution takes several forms, including verbal and physical harassment, forced migration, reparative medical treatments, and disregard for health and its necessity for a full life.

Discrimination is inherent in Russian verbiage down to the terms used for sexual minorities: *nenormalnyi* (not-normal) or *netraditsionnyi* (non-traditional). The separateness induced by such language affects lesbians and gays at every level of society. Harassment plagues the LGBT population in their villages and their government. Public officials from its national legislative body—the Duma—sought to recriminalize homosexuality within the last decade. The recently removed Mayor of Moscow, Yuri Lushkov, described opposition to gay rights as an axiom that all Russian society should acknowledge. The Governor of Tambov Oblast, Oleg Betin, advocated that, “Faggots must be torn apart and their pieces should be thrown to the wind! ... This rotten nest must be wiped out!” Intolerant language like this breeds, and even begs for, intolerant acts of physical violence.

However, the numbers for hate crimes committed against LGBT are elusive and obscured. Police rarely denote whether a crime was motivated by hatred of gays, often having been the ones perpetrating such crimes. Courts have failed to recognize sexual minorities as ‘social groups’ when cases of hate crimes have been brought to criminal trials. Without safety or recourse from abuse, gays and lesbians remain private members of their communities, never considering open acknowledgement of who they are, let alone engaging in public displays of affection with one another. The silence perpetuates their situation to where little empirical evidence exists to make a claim for discrimination abuses.

Silence in the field of medicine also led Russia to be one of the last-developed countries to depathologize homosexuality when it adopted the World Health Organization’s classifications of diseases in 1999, which left homosexuality and bisexuality off the list (Kon 2010, 18). This declassification—transgender is still considered throughout the international medical community as a mental disorder—did little for the stigma placed on gays and lesbians by society, and by their families. National surveys conducted by the Levada Center in 2005 revealed 31 percent of the Russian population believes homosexuality to be a disease or caused by mental trauma (Kon 2010, 19). Reparative therapies, including electric shock therapy, continue to be used to ‘cure’ gays and lesbians of their homosexuality. Fear of persecution through medical treatment became the pivotal argument for a Russian lesbian, Alla Pitcherskaia,

in a U.S. asylum case in 1999. Hers was the first case to grant asylum based on widespread reparative therapies use, establishing the ‘well-founded fear’ necessary in such cases.

Aggressive—and unsubstantiated—treatment is not the only place in medicine negatively affecting the rights of gays and lesbians. Social stigmatization of the LGBT community has also infringed on their right to health (and life) by ignoring education of and treatment for the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The virus is transmitted through bodily fluids; sexual contact has replaced intravenous drug use as the highest form of transmission in Russia. The Executive Director of UNAIDS, Dr. Peter Piot, spoke to an assembly of Eastern European and Central Asian Ministers on the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Moscow in 2005. He pressed for urgent action to combat the virus that had flourished at the fall of the Soviet Union. He asks for prevention programs and access to medical care to halt HIV/AIDS with subtext that implores attending leaders to stop ignoring entire portions of the population. In an address a few months earlier, Dr. Piot warned of the implausibility of containing HIV/AIDS without shifting public attitudes toward youth sexuality, in particular, homosexuality. However, altering a society’s norms and morals is no simple task.

Russian society is deeply entrenched in Orthodox Christianity. It maintained a large underground presence even during the Soviet era, where the state replaced religion and where communism replaced God. Church leaders use their clout today to admonish gays and lesbians and condemn them as destroyers of Russian society. Youth Orthodox organizations have responded to the October 2010 European Court of Human Rights’ (ECHR) decision with unflagging commitment to overturn the ruling and to perpetuate the hostile environment for gays and lesbians. Orthodox organizations and leaders have railed against the parades and public activism, calling gays abnormalities and threatening violence if demonstrations were to take place. Clashes with members of Orthodox organizations when gay activists try to demonstrate have occurred repeatedly in the last five years. The Russian gay community seems finished with covert organization and accepting intolerance and violations of basic human rights.

Future Outlook

The public sphere is where exposure to, and eventually personal contact with, gays and lesbians has proven to curb homophobia and to increase the acceptance of the LGBT community. Russian gays and lesbians have only recently gained a small presence in the public sphere. In 2010, Mayor Luzhkov was removed by President Dmitry Medvedev amidst speculation that his removal from power went further than disagreement with the Kremlin. Some suspect that the Russian federal government finally saw his outspoken hatred of gays as unfavorable on the world stage. The recent ECHR ruling, legal demonstration and change in government forecasts Russia’s movement towards secured rights for the gay community. They have just begun to peek out from behind that iron curtain.

Annotated Bibliography

Alekseyev, Nikolai (Trans. by Mark Windsor). 2010. “As It Was... My Abduction.” *UK Gay News*. Available online: <http://www.ukgaynews.org.uk/Archive/10/Sep/1901.htm>.

Annotation: Nikolai Alekseyev, Russian gay rights activist, recounts the ordeal of his detainment in various prisons in Russia in September of 2010. He conveys his confusion and fear when airport security absconded him to unknown locations without explanation. Alekseyev describes the

'psychological torture' he endured and the security officers blatant homophobia as they relentlessly berated him with insults. This critical firsthand account elucidates the entrenched stigma and persecution of gays and lesbians in Russian society and the state.

_____. 2010. In *Journal Alexeyev*. Moscow.

Annotation: This primary source from Russian gay rights activist Nikolai Alexeyev, covers the latest progress and pitfalls for LGBT rights in Russia. Alekseyev responds to Lyudmila Mikhailovna's announcement on the European Court of Human Rights' decision to punish Russia's violation of the gay community's right to assembly. He questions her flippant attitude toward the ruling, as she doubted any change, especially in Russian legal process, would come of it--only the 30,000 Euro fine. Concerned with the *Ekho Moskvy*--the nation's last independent radio station--announcement, Alexeyev laments Lyudmila's downplay of such a significant step forward for the Russian LGBT community. This online blog presents timely dialogue on LGBT rights and simultaneously highlights skepticism from someone outside the movement that any real progress has been made.

Amnesty International. 2008. "Overview of Lesbian and Gay Rights in Eastern Europe." Available online: http://www.amnestyinternational.be/doc/IMG/pdf/doc_18433.pdf.

Annotation: This report by Amnesty International is an in-depth survey of lesbian and gay life in Eastern European countries. It dates the legal status of homosexuality and any subsequent non-discrimination legislation and recognition of partnerships as of 2008. The report also comments on current homophobia cases and includes quotes from national leaders to contrast the reality of lesbian and gay life with national and international conventions which governments have signed.

Baer, Brian James. 2002. "Russian Gays/Western Gaze: Mapping (Homo)Sexual Desire in Post-Soviet Russia." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 8 (4):24.

Annotation: In this article, Brian James Baer, a leading author on conceptions of homosexuality in Russia, describes the social status of lesbians and gays since the collapse of the Soviet Union. He recounts the debates of when homosexuality became despised, how it was hidden away at the dawn of the Soviet era, and the anemic reawakening at its end. Baer critically analyzes the flood of (homo)sexuality in media that prompted many in the West to declare a new day for Russian gays and the reality that Russian gay movements would take a different path-- initially failing. The article becomes a dissection of literature in which Baer deconstructs characters of novels and memoirs to portray Russian sexual identity. He rightly claims that Russian sexism profoundly impacts its homophobic tendencies and aversion to embracing gay rights as human rights, or even embracing gender equality.

_____. 2009. "Making a Spectacle of Homosexuality: The Problem of Gay (In)Visibility ". In *Other Russias: Homosexuality and the Crisis of Post-Soviet Identity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Annotation: Prompted by his essay 'Russian Gays/Western Gaze', Baer completes a book examining Russian identity and homosexuality in the post-Soviet era. Chapter two describes the role of gay invisibility, in which gays are blamed for being detrimental to the heterosexual male identity, and are also forced to keep their homosexuality hidden from society. Baer notes Russian psychologists' and

sex pathologists' attempts to explain homosexuality through feeble heterosexual identities. Concerning these identities, he explains a 'disciplinary project' to restore Russian heterosexual male masculinity. Though mostly understanding identity in cultural and media contexts, Baer reveals the circular plight of the homosexual in post-Soviet Russia as he is closeted by fear-mongering 'science' and unable to convey anything different because of public fear.

Caceres, Carlos F., Mario Pecheny, Tim Frasca, Roger Raupp Rios, and Fernando Pocahy. 2009. *Review of Legal Frameworks and the Situation of Human Rights Related to Sexual Diversity in Low and Middle Income Countries*. Porto Alegre: UNAIDS.

Annotation: In this report, Dr. Caceres, et al., study legal systems, policies and regulations concerning homophobic practices and human rights violations in developing countries throughout the world. For Eastern Europe, their findings portray a disconnect between the civilist legal systems that provide some non-discrimination provisions and the widespread fear of disclosure by LGBT populations and the prevalent hate crimes committed against them. The authors convey more egregious abuses of human rights: in Eastern Europe, there lacks liberty and security of person, peaceful assembly, freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, and the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The study provides well-constructed recommendations for logical and considerate development of LGBT rights within each country's legal system.

Diene, Doudou. 2007. Report of the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Addendum: Mission to the Russian Federation: United Nations General Assembly.

Annotation: This addendum to a larger 2007 UN report recommends certain objectives for the Russian Federation to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related tolerance. It advises that Russia establish an independent institution devoted to the promotion and protection of human rights and to combat against all forms of discrimination, including sexual orientation.

Donnelly, Jack. 2001. "Non-Discrimination and Sexual Orientation: Making a Place for Sexual Minorities in the Global Rights Regime," in P. Hayden (ed.), *The Philosophy of Human Rights*. St. Paul, MN: Paragon House.

Annotation: Jack Donnelly, professor at the University of Denver, makes a compelling case for the inclusion of sexual minorities in the international human rights agenda. He explains the history of human rights as the inclusion of minority groups through political struggle for non-discrimination. He recounts the centuries of discrimination faced by sexual minorities and proffers strategies of inclusion, which need to be multi-tiered. Donnelly writes for the student of international affairs and human rights groups, but also for the logical individual willing to empathize with this issue.

Ferris-Rotman, Amie. 2010. "Gays Win Landmark Rights Case against Russia." Reuters (21 October). Available online: <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE69K1LD20101021>.

Annotation: This newspaper article highlights the landmark decision on 21 October 2010 by the

European Court of Human Rights for the Russian LGBT community. The Court passed down a ruling that admonished the Russian government for its consistent human rights violations of gays' and lesbians' rights to assembly and non-discrimination, concerning its refusal to allow Gay Pride parades in Moscow. This article recounts past discrimination, including police brutality against parade marchers, and refers to the deep societal prejudice against gays and lesbians. It quotes Nikolai Alexeyev's hope for the LGBT community, as he calls it a 'crippling blow to Russian homophobia.' This article is a solid synopsis of the Court's decision and the events surrounding it, as well as an extremely current source regarding the LGBT rights struggle in Russia.

Francoise F. Hamers, and Angela M. Downs. 2003. "HIV in Central and Eastern Europe." *Lancet* 361 (9362):10.

Annotation: In this article, Doctors Hamers and Downs research the growing HIV epidemic in Central and Eastern Europe and further east in post-Soviet countries in Asia. They chronicle the spread of HIV during the years since the dissolution of the Soviet Union with regard to the most common ways the virus is spread: intravenous drug use; sexual contact; and mother-to-child transmission. The conclusions showing low numbers of infection in homosexuals were most important. The authors assert that numbers may reflect the social vulnerability of homosexual and bisexual men of the post-Soviet bloc rather than the actual occurrence of the disease. This article is slightly outdated but the predictions concerning many of the eastern countries HIV rates actually came to pass.

"Gays Hold First Legal City Rally." 2010. *The Moscow Times* (4 October). Available online: <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/gays-hold-first-legal-city-rally/418263.html>.

Annotation: This article from *The Moscow Times*, a Russian newspaper for English speakers, reports on the first legal rally held by the gay community in Moscow. The reporters explain the protesters intentions--the boycott of Swiss International Air Lines for its mistreatment of Russian gay rights activist, Nikolai Alexseyev--and the scene that unfolded as a result. According to the article, police protected the protesters from a group of hooded 'neo-Nazis' bent on disrupting the rally. It juxtaposed police protection with the crackdown and crowd dispersion of previous public LGBT rallies and parades. This article reveals some of the most current issues and events of the struggle for LGBT rights in Russia.

Healey, Dan. 2001. Homosexual Desire in Revolutionary Russia. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Annotation: In his book, Healy conveys the most comprehensive account of homosexuality in Russia from about 1870 to 1991. He mostly explores medical and legal documents from Tsarist and Soviet Russia to examine the attitudes toward gays, lesbians and other dissenting sexual/gender identities. He argues that silence has been the most pervasive common thread toward homosexuality over the last century in academia and, certainly, the public sphere as court cases and convictions never made it to Soviet newspapers. He concludes that Russia has viewed itself as the innocent in a tripartite 'geography of perversion' between the corrupt, neurasthenic West and the depraved East. His account critically reveals a psyche that lingers in modern Russian attitudes toward the LGBT community.

_____. 2010. "Active, Passive, and Russian: The National Idea in Gay Men's Pornography." *Russian Review* 69 (2):21.

Annotation: In this article, Healy argues that the development of Russian pornography, although influenced by globalization and Western culture, is embedded in a distinctly Russian gay desire. Concerning erotic imagery, he explains the root of male archetypal roles and fantasy in gay pornography. He details the history of gay press throughout the 1990s and the conservative backlash that generated the rise of Vladimir Putin and erased any progress towards gays in the public sphere. Healy recounts the past decade's attempts and successes of the government to deny gays and lesbians civil and political rights, such as association and expression. His analysis is intriguing, specifically his portrayal of the relationship between the emergence of purely Russian gay pornography and Russian gays' and lesbians' struggle to reconcile public openness and good citizenship.

Kon, I. 2010. "Homophobia as a Litmus Test of Russian Democracy." *Russian Social Science Review* 51 (3):22.

Annotation: Arguably the leading scholar of homosexuality in Russia, Kon describes the present state of public attitudes toward gays and lesbians in the Federation and uses it as a measure for Russian democracy. He chronicles the 'official' position of Russia concerning homosexuality, from decriminalization in 1993, to depathologization in 1999, to the current situation as political and social outcasts without rights or security. His research conveys a positive shift in public opinion regarding civil rights for homosexuals, though the overwhelming hostility that exists is rooted in traditional homophobic indoctrination from the Orthodox Church and lingering Soviet attitudes. He adds blame to a less-than-free press that downplayed the violent events that unfolded after the prohibited Gay Pride parades proceeded anyway in 2005 and 2007. In response to these events, international members admonished Russia for its human rights abuses, including its apparent indifference to a growing HIV epidemic. Kon concludes with an appeal to his country to obey its own laws without deference to Church or national traditions.

"Luzhkov Calls Ban on Gay Parades 'An Axiom.'" 2010. *The Other Russia*. Available online: <http://www.theotherussia.org/2010/01/25/luzhkov-calls-ban-on-gay-parades-an-axiom/>.

Annotation: This online article gives a lengthy translation of comments made by Mayor of Moscow Yuri Luzhkov pertaining to the Russian gay community. The article details Luzhkov's historically staunch opposition to 'Moscow Pride' since 2006, which he described as 'satanic activity'. Citing words uttered like 'blasphemy' and 'propaganda,' it conveys Luzhkov's commitment to branding gays and lesbians as depraved members of society. The article closes by mentioning the outcome of the 2009 Moscow Pride, which ended in the arrest of all 30 participants. This balanced article comes from an independent news source, outside the grasp of the Kremlin.

Nartova, Nadya. 2007. "'Russian Love,' or What of Lesbian Studies in Russia?" *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 11 (3/4):8.

Annotation: Nadya Nartova, a sociological researcher and PhD student in St. Petersburg, explains the lack of study concerning strictly feminine issues in gay academia, or lesbian issues, in Russia. Her conclusions are oriented toward homosexuality in general, though her discussion harangues the

current academic situation that neglects lesbian culture and issues particular to women. She briefly mentions the access to press and association in modern Russia. The article seems to be more of a diatribe on the absence of serious study of lesbians rather than a critique of inhibitors to lesbians in society.

Omel'chenko, Elena. 2000. "My Body, My Friend?' Provincial Youth Between the Sexual and the Gender Revolutions," in S. Ashwin (ed.), Gender, State and Society in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia. London: Routledge.

Annotation: Administrator at the Ul'yanovsk State University, Omel'chenko studies Ul'yanovsk's youth and their views on sexuality as it unfolds after the fall of the Soviet Union. She uses the provincial Russian town as the perfect setting to examine the dissemination of the sexual and gender revolutions of the 1990s. As a researcher, she skillfully asks open-ended questions to young men and women of different socio-economic statuses about sexuality and the contemporary conception of sexuality in Russia. Her conclusions regarding homosexuality reveal intrigue among young women and disdain among young men, reflected also in the perceptions of their own sexuality. Citing I. Kon, she argues that the transformation from an extremely homophobic (and generally sexually repressed) Soviet Russia to the acknowledgement of the right to exist for homosexuals today will be further ameliorated when Russian youth relate to their own sexuality more tolerantly. Omel'chenko provides a critical outlook on (homo)sexuality in Russia, especially outside its major cities.

Ottosson, Daniel. 2010. "State-Sponsored Homophobia:" International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association.

Annotation: This is the latest full International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association's report on homophobic laws throughout the world. David Ottosson breaks down the ways in which countries are homophobic and homophobic. He details states that legally oppress gays and lesbians--with distinct levels of severity -- and asserts that these laws are usually harsher toward gay men. He also lists the countries with legalized homosexuality and equal age of consent for homosexual and heterosexual acts, and the years in which these homophobic laws were adopted. This is useful to understanding the distinction between legality and reality: a government might adopt laws while continuing to disenfranchise a group.

Piot, Peter. 2004. "Breaking the Barriers - Partnership to Fight HIV/AIDS in Europe and Central Asia." Paper read at Ministerial Conference (23 February), Dublin.

Annotation: In his opening plenary speech at the Ministerial Conference devoted to AIDS in Europe and Central Asia, UNAIDS Executive Director and United Nations Under Secretary-General Dr. Peter Piot details some of the successes of HIV prevention campaigns throughout Europe, reminding his audience that HIV is once again on the rise in European countries--especially in Russia and Ukraine. Dr. Piot rightly blames social exclusion and stigma for the spread of the virus, specifically homophobia in the Caucasus and in Central Asia. He presents the challenges ahead and the approach that should be taken, emphasizing the necessity to openly discuss 'young people's sexuality, homosexuality, and injecting drug use.' This speech is an important address on HIV and homophobia in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

_____. 2005. "Keynote Address." Paper read at Meeting of East European and Central Asian Ministers on 'Urgent Response to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic' (31 March), Moscow.

Annotation: In this keynote address speech from 2005, Dr. Peter Piot, executive director of UNAIDS, critically looks at the future of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. He conveys the rampant outbreak of the virus in the last ten years, placing Russia and Ukraine at the top of the list for the highest rates of infection in Europe. He explains that AIDS is most common among youth and has immense impact on a state's public health, security and future economic development. He entreats the political leadership of Eastern Europe and Central Asia to take a proactive stance on fighting the spread of HIV, particularly in creating accessibility to HIV treatment and medical care. His speech is for specific audiences who often have trouble hearing criticisms or touching on taboos. Without condemning or judging, Piot provides a comprehensive strategy to slowing, if not halting, the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

"Russia Extended Oral Statement." 2010. Paper read at International Women's Rights Action Watch Asian Pacific, 46th Session. Available online: http://www.iwraw-ap.org/resources/pdf/46_oral_statements/Russia_Extended_Oral_Statement_DRAFT.pdf.

Annotation: In this draft of a statement to an International Women's Rights Action Watch forum, the speaker discusses discrimination particular to rural women, lesbians, bisexual women and transgender people in Russia. The author condemns the Russian government's indifference to discrimination against women and LGBT people, citing poor healthcare, the absence of anti-discrimination law and open discourse of the 'propaganda of homosexuality.' The author is a member of several LGBT organizations in Russia and writes this draft to draw attention to the grave civil, political, and social rights abuses sanctioned by the government and culture.

Stulhofer, Aleksandar, and Theo Sandfort. 2005. Sexuality and Gender in Postcommunist Eastern Europe and Russia. New York: Haworth Press.

Annotation: Doctors Stulhofer and Sandfort are prominent figures in sociological studies of sexuality and gender. In this book, the authors comprehensively evaluate the social constructs that shape gender and sexuality in post-Soviet Eastern Europe. They posit that the three main factors that affect gender roles and sexuality are religion, family, and societal institutions. Due to an entrenched legacy of the aforementioned factors, responses of each society to newly found economic and social liberalism has left women and sexual minorities frustrated with limited progress and even subjugation.

_____. and Ivan Rimac. 2009. "Determinants of Homonegativity in Europe." *Journal of Sex Research* 46 (1):9.

Annotation: This article is a social scientific analysis of the factors that cause negative attitudes toward homosexuals in Europe. Aleksander Stulhofer and Ivan Rimac examine three main sources of social regulation of sexuality: religious tradition; processes of modernization; and post-modernization, or a shift in values. Their study uses two indicators to gauge homonegativity: social

distance, measured by the percentage of people who would not want a homosexual neighbor; and justification of homosexuality, measured by percentage of people who think homosexuality can be justified. It places Lithuania, Romania, Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus as the most homonegative societies of the 31 countries assessed. Stulhofer and Rimac conclude that modernization processes have a central role in social tolerance of homosexuality and that persisting religious traditions, specifically Eastern Orthodox Christianity, limit the effects of modernization.

UNAIDS Programme Coordination Board, 26th Meeting, 2010. "Reducing HIV Transmission among Men Who Have Sex with Men and Transgender People (UNAIDS/PCB(26)/10.10)" Geneva, Switzerland. Available online:

[http://www.nfi.net/downloads/homepage/Other%20recent%20useful%20document-27%20july%202010/May2010-Reducing%20HIV MSM transgender UNAIDS.pdf](http://www.nfi.net/downloads/homepage/Other%20recent%20useful%20document-27%20july%202010/May2010-Reducing%20HIV%20MSM%20transgender%20UNAIDS.pdf)

Annotation: In this conference room paper, the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board presents the current status of efforts to lower HIV transmission among men who have sex with men and among transgender people throughout the world. The Board reviews capacity-building and coordination activities in Ukraine and Russia. It also gives updates on UN-cosponsored human rights efforts regarding sexual minorities and HIV prevention practices. Some of it only lists the dates at which new information pertaining to HIV prevention for men who have sex with men (MSM) will be released.

Ungar, Mark. 2000. "State Violence and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Rights." *New Political Science* 22 (1):15.

Annotation: In this article, Ungar dissects the various forms of state violence against lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgender persons throughout the world. His levels of state-endorsed violence range from legal and semi-legal state violence to extra-judicial violence. Eastern European countries are referenced mostly in the semi-legal violence section where he describes hidden-- but sanctioned-- 'pink lists' used by police and forced reparative therapy of the LGBT community.