Part V

Afterthoughts and Remembrances



16. Thought, Culture, and Power: Reflections of a Russianist



Looking back on the evolution of my scholarship over five decades, I am struck both by my constant fascination with how systems of thought enthralled and inspired historical figures and by my approach to the changing subjects that became the object of this fascination. The ideas and sentiments propounded by great philosophers and writers established a necessary background for my work, but what engaged my interest and stirred my imagination was the varied ways these ideas were understood and acted upon. It was my reflection on the transformation of ideas into conscious views of the world that prompted my three research projects: the populists of the 1870s and 1880s, the legal reformers of the nineteenth century, and the emperors of Russia.

Such transformation of ideas is particularly evident in the history of Russian thought. The idealism of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, Marxism, the positivism of Mill, and Nietzsche's notions of art, morality, and the superman assumed new meanings when received in Russia. Russian intellectuals drew upon western ideas to understand Russia's political future and to guide their own life and goals. The most radical emerged as a revolutionary intelligentsia, who sought support from the people—the peasants, the workers or both, to unleash a revolution that would bring socialism to Russia. However, the conviction that foreign ideas and models could provide the content and direction for Russian historical development was shared by a broad segment of educated opinion—Slavophiles, Westernizers, even conservatives and governmental officials.¹ All of them, to a greater or lesser extent, conceived

My master's essay "Koshelev, Samarin, and Cherkasskii: Three Views of Russia's Political Future" was the basis for my first publication, "Koshelev, Samarin and Cherkasskii and the Fate of Liberal Slavophilism." It is Article 13 in this volume.

of the world as the realization of certain ideas they thought immanent in reality. Ideas provided the meaning for their lives, and they described their existential quests in what Lydia Ginzburg has called "the human document": diaries, memoirs, poetry and fiction of a confessional character.²

The application of individual psychology to history promised a means to approach the interaction of ideas and personality. Leopold Haimson's *The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism* first exemplified this approach for me. Haimson explored the different understandings of Marxism among the leading Russian Marxists, George Plekhanov, Paul Axelrod, Julius Martov, and Vladimir Lenin by tracing the divergent paths of psychological development that led each to his own conclusions about the importance of reason and feeling in history.³ On this basis, he explained the assessments they made of the role of the conscious vanguard elite and the spontaneous revolutionary impulses of the masses in the organization of a revolutionary movement. Other biographical works with acute insights into the intelligentsia's psychology were the pre-revolutionary historian Mikhail Gershenzon's essays on the Decembrist revolutionaries and the young intellectuals of the first half of the nineteenth-century, as well as Isaiah Berlin's moving account of the idealist circles of the 1830s and 1840s, "A Remarkable Generation."⁴

In 1958, I began my graduate work, under Haimson's direction, at the University of Chicago. My first book, *The Crisis of Russian Populism*, described the responses of three populist writers, Alexander Engel'gardt, Gleb Uspenskii, and Nikolai Zlatovratskii to their experiences in Russian peasant villages during the 1870s and 1880s.⁵ I was struck by these writers' unswerving determination to cling to their ideas in the face of the evident contradictions they encountered in the countryside. Their idealization of the peasants appeared to be based on far more than a strategic political calculation. It seemed a powerful emotional bond rooted in their psyches.

² Lydia Ginzburg, On Psychological Prose (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 27-106.

Leopold H. Haimson, *The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955).

⁴ Particularly M. O. Gershenzon, *Istoriia molodoi Rossii* (Moscow: I. D. Sytin, 1908) and *Istoricheskie zapiski* (Moscow: Kushnerov, 1910); Isaiah Berlin, "A Remarkable Generation," in *Russian Thinkers* (London: Penguin, 1994), 130-239. The essays were originally printed in the journal *Encounter*, in 1955 and 1956.

⁵ The Crisis of Russian Populism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).

I turned as I would in my later research to the social sciences, particularly psychology and anthropology, to understand the thinking of the subjects of my study. My use of social science insights, however, has been pragmatic, as a means to find openings to the mental world of individuals governed by ideas and imagery remote from our own. I first was attracted to works on individual psychology, particularly those of Erik H. Erikson, whose influence was widespread in the 1960s. Erikson's work, particularly Childhood and Society, focused on the concept of identity and provided an analysis of the interaction between personal development in the context of the values, goals, and self-images of different societies. His use of developmental psychology sensitized me to the importance of childhood memories and experience in the intellectual evolution of the writers I studied. Memories of their early years surfaced in their works when their ideas were thrown into doubt. These ideas had taken form as they entered maturity during the era of "Great Reforms" of the 1860s, which stirred intellectuals' hopes of liberation from the legacy of the despotic past—serfdom and autocracy. The subsequent disappointment in the results of the reforms—the peasants' loss of part of the land they farmed, the refusal of the government to consider constitutional reforms—had led to disillusionment and increasing reliance on the peasantry for the hopes of the future. Yet little was known about the peasants besides their poverty and ignorance, and as in other cases, literature filled the void by depicting the nature of reality for them.

In the midst of their ideological predicament, the populist writers revealed the depth of their psychological investment in the ideology that had promised their redemption from the inequality and egoism they believed pervaded Russian society. They resorted to various defense mechanisms to dispel their doubts—rationalization, denial, self-blame, and schemes to transform the peasants in the image of the idealized figures of their imagination. Engel'gardt, a chemist, conceived of creating better peasants by training populist intellectuals to till the land and adopt collectivistic practices. Uspenskii and Zlatovratskii escaped despair by evoking fantasy images of an idealized peasantry: Uspenskii to escape painful memories of his childhood, Zlatovratskii to restore the warm relations with his family and the peasants he remembered in his family home. Populist economists V. P. Vorontsov and N. F. Danielson answered the disturbing information about the countryside with elaborate proofs that denied the possibility of the development of capitalism in Russia.

My second book, *The Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness*, also focused on individual psychology as a frame and impetus for intellectual development.⁶ I studied the emergence and development of a mentality of reform among the group of legal reformers who appeared in the administration in the 1840s and 1850s and who pressed for, drafted, and implemented the Court Reform of 1864, which introduced a modern judiciary in Russia. However, both my high valuation of the role of ideas and individual personality and my interest in institutional mentality were at odds with dominant historical approaches of the time in the Soviet Union. Marxist-Leninist ideology discouraged or prohibited such research since the state was considered an epiphenomenon, of secondary importance to economic development and class conflict.

The Soviet scholar who opened this area for serious study was Peter Zaionchkovskii of Moscow State University. I had met Zaionchkovskii during my stay in Moscow in 1961 and 1962, and I returned to work under his guidance in 1966-67. Official ideology held that events were determined by "objective" factors, the development of capitalism and the revolutionary threat of the peasantry. Without denying the importance of these objective factors, Zaionchkovskii insisted on including what he called "the subjective factor" in historical writing. This meant taking the views and the initiatives of officials into account in explaining events like the Great Reforms, particularly the emancipation of the Russian serfs, the subject of his classic monograph. I recall the startled reaction of students to his defense of the "subjective factor," during a lecture he delivered in 1967 before the History Faculty of Leningrad State University.

While Zaionchkovskii observed the orthodoxy in print, in his teaching, scholarly advice, and public lectures, he emphasized the importance of

The Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976). Russian translation, Vlastiteli i sudii: razvitie pravovogo soznaniia v imperatorskoi Rossii (Moscow: NLO, 2004). An English version of the introduction to the Russian edition, reiterating and developing my views in reference to later works, appeared in the journal Kritika: "Russian Monarchy and the Rule of Law: New Considerations of the Court Reform of 1864," Kritika vol. 6, No. 1 (Winter 2005): 145-70 (Article No. 1 in Russian Monarchy: Representation and Rule).

P. A. Zaionchkovskii, Otmena krepostnogo prava, 2nd edition (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1968); The Abolition of Serfdom in Russia (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1978).

attitudes and ideas. Most important, as an experienced archivist he ensured that personal documents of tsarist officials were opened to young scholars, foreigners as well as Russians, and he himself published or saw to the publication of the personal papers of a number of the most significant figures, such as the diaries of Minister of Interior Peter Valuev and the War Minister, Dmitrii Miliutin.⁸ As a research advisor (*rukovoditel*') he was unequaled, a scholar who maintained the pre-revolutionary devotion to "science" (*nauka*), and drew our attention to crucial archival and published documents.

In my research, I sought explanations for the appearance of officials dedicated to the cause of the law in an administration that historically had subordinated the judiciary to executive authorities and allowed for the exercise of arbitrary personal will. This led me to a study of the emergence of a striving for "legality" (zakonnost') in the Russian state in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and particularly the efforts for legal reform and codification beginning with Peter the Great. The "reforming tsar" was a component of what I later called "the European myth," the effort of Russian rulers to cast themselves as progressive western monarchs that prevailed from Peter's reign onward.9

When Nicholas I came to the throne, he determined to place absolute monarchy as it existed in Russia on a legal basis. His first step was the codification of the laws, which had been attempted eleven times since the beginning of the eighteenth century. He assigned the task to the Second Section of his own chancellery, but he remained in charge, dictating its guiding principles, and reviewing reports carefully at every stage. His efforts resulted in the publication in 1830 of *The Complete Collection of Laws*, a compilation purportedly of all the laws issued in the empire since the Law Code of 1649 and in 1833 a *Digest of Laws* enumerating all laws presumably still in effect. He also took steps to provide legal education for future officials. In the 1830s, a "Professor's Institute" was established at Dorpat University in Estland (present day Tartu) to train young scholars in jurisprudence. They then were sent to complete their studies in Berlin under the personal direction of the

For example, D. A. Miliutin, *Dnevnik D. A. Miliutina* (Moscow: Biblioteka V. I. Lenina, 1950), 2 vols; P. A. Valuev, *Dnevnik P. A. Valueva, ministra vnutrennix del* (Moscow: Ak. Nauk SSSR, 1961), 2 vols.; A. A. Polovtsov, *Dnevnik gosudarstvennogo sekretaria A. A. Polovtsova* (Moscow: Nauka, 1966) 2 vols.

See Cynthia H. Whittaker, "The Reforming Tsar: The Redefinition of Autocratic Duty in Eighteenth-Century Russia," *Slavic Review* 51, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 77-98.

renowned jurist Friedrich-Karl von Savigny. In 1835, at the insistence of Prince Peter Oldenburg and Michael Speranskii, Nicholas established a School of Jurisprudence, an elite school to train future legal officials.

I found key insights into the psychology of the legal reformers in Marc Raeff's *Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia*. Raeff described how eighteenth-century noblemen, separated from their estates and family as young men, had little contact with their parents and looked to other authorities and intellectual doctrines as guides to their behavior. The noble officials I studied proved to be either orphans or individuals who grew up apart from their parents. They had been initiated into the adult world by their reading, university lectures, intellectual circles, and the comradeship of similarly disposed young men in the educated society of Moscow and Petersburg. As with the populists, intellectual influences played a decisive role in shaping mature identities and political goals.

Nicholas expected that this training would prepare students to be able and knowledgeable executors of the laws. Contrary to his expectations, many of them embraced western legal concepts on the role of the judiciary. They developed a powerful consciousness of the dignity and the role of law, a legal ethos that impelled them to consider basic reforms of the Russian court system. The diaries and writings of these officials revealed the intensity of their emotional commitment to these ideas. The diaries of Sergei Zarudnyi and Constantine Ushinskii, the memoirs of Boris Chicherin, the articles of Constantine Pobedonostsev, and the correspondence of Ivan Aksakov all attest to the depth and power of their commitment.

The School of Jurisprudence inculcated an ethos of devotion to the law, turning what had been a sphere of expertise considered inferior to the military into an exalted cause. The young noblemen were also inspired by examples of honor and triumph that they discovered in the novels of Scott, Bestuzhev-Marlinskii, Hugo, and Dumas. An image of a romantic hero replaced for them the passive model evoked by the sentimentalist poets of the early part of the century such as Nicholas Karamzin and Vasilii Zhukovskii. They saw themselves as active agents of change engaged in a valiant struggle to realize principles of justice in the Russian legal administration.

At the newly founded law faculties of Russian universities, noble students became devotees of German idealism, particularly the philosophy of Hegel,

Marc Raeff, Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia: The Eighteenth Century Nobility (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1966), 129, 140-7.

which was propounded at Moscow University in the lectures of the jurist Peter Redkin, and the historians Timothy Granovskii and Constantine Kavelin. Redkin in particular made philosophy seem to be the key to understanding the law. The students began to see law as part of the advancement of knowledge and the product of ineluctable universal progress. Juridical science then meant not an enumeration of laws, as the Ministry of Education prescribed, but as the historian and jurist Boris Chicherin wrote, "a live organism, penetrated by high principles."¹¹

The faith in the progress of the idea turned their work in the judicial system into a mission. The diaries and letters of the young legal scholars and later officials express an unbounded optimism. One of them, Sergei Zarudnyi, wrote in 1834, when he was eighteen years old, "I see only the idea, I chase it." When he took charge of the Consultation of the Ministry of Justice in 1849, Zarudnyi brought both passion and intellectual rigor to his work and began to formulate a systematic approach to the legal cases. He served as mentor to the generation of younger legal officials who began to staff the Ministry. A new group appeared in the Russian state administration dedicated to an autonomous and exalted concept of the law. The Court Reform of 1864 would enable them to realize their ideals in institutions discordant with the mentality of administrative officials who served the Russian emperor and the Russian state.

The mentality of the monarch and his administrative officials, however, remained a mystery to me. The monarchs and most officials were not intellectuals. Few of them expressed a commitment to philosophy or ideas. Yet the sources I encountered in my work on legal institutions suggested that they continued to understand and justify their actions through systems of concepts, values, and esthetic and personal principles expressed in art and literature.

My first attempt to gain insight into the mental universe of Russian monarchy was a study of the upbringing and education of the heirs to the throne. In the course of my research on the judicial reform, I had examined letters and diaries of members of the imperial family that revealed an intellectual and emotional world that was absent from historical accounts, yet seemed crucial to understanding the workings of Russian monarchy. I also learned of archival documents on the heirs' preparation for the throne. In 1975, I received a Social Science Research Grant to study psychology at the Chicago

The Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness, 231, 226.

Institute of Psychoanalysis, where I took classes and participated in workshops at its Center for Psychosocial Studies. I also worked with psychoanalyst Dr. George Moraitis on the analysis of some important texts of intellectual history.¹²

My work focused on the heirs' relationship to their parents and tutors, and the lessons that introduced them to history, literature, and political and legal concepts. I was struck by the efforts of both parents and tutors to present an image of the monarch as strong and infallible in wielding the vast powers of autocrat, but also showing a sense of responsibility that could justify his extensive prerogatives. These insistent demands often came from the heir's father, the emperor, who embodied a confident authority that daunted the heir with lofty and often unattainable expectations.¹³

Both my participation in the Center's workshops and changes in the external circumstances of my research led me to recast my study of monarchy more broadly. The workshops alerted me to the limitations of applying psychoanalytical categories to the interpretation of historical figures. One session made an especially strong impression. A distinguished analyst described an assignment he had given to his students for a clinical course. He distributed detailed materials on a case and asked them to present and explain a specific diagnosis for the patient. The diagnoses differed radically. The analyst then went through each diagnosis, finally concluding that they all could be argued convincingly. The point was that the categories could never exactly describe the condition, which could be understood only through interaction with the patient in which the analyst could test his hypothesis.

I understood that this meant that any psychological analysis I undertook, considering the nature of my sources, would have to remain on a highly superficial, phenomenological level, and that the characterization of historical figures in terms of psychoanalytic categories would be arbitrary and not

See my articles, "Biography and the Russian Intelligentsia," in *Introspection in Biography: The Biographer's Quest for Self*, ed. Samuel H. Baron and Carl Pletsch (Hillsdale, NJ:The Analytic Press, 1985), 157-74; "Tolstoi and the Perception of Poverty," *Rossija*, No. 4 (1979): 119-32. (Article 14 in this volume.)

See "Power and Responsibility in the Upbringing of the Nineteenth Century Tsars," Newsletter of the Group for the Use of Psychology in History (Spring 1976): 2 and "The Russian Empress as Mother," in The Family in Imperial Russia, ed. David L. Ransel (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 60-74 (Article No. 4 in Russian Monarchy: Representation and Rule).

particularly meaningful. At another workshop, I presented a paper on the relationship of the emperors to their fathers, which relied on an Oedipal model. The Chicago School was very much under the influence of its leading theorist, Heinz Kohut, whose teachings emphasized the importance of narcissistic disorders, which had their roots at an earlier developmental stage than Oedipal relationships. The analysts listened skeptically and suggested that my material might indicate rather a pattern of narcissistic involvement with the mother.

At the same time, I became increasingly aware of the reductionist tendencies of psychohistory, which often enclosed individual figures in a web of family antagonisms and ambivalences, diminishing if not eliminating the effect of ideas and the evolution of their intellectual consciousness. Such problems were particularly evident and troubling in psychological treatments of revolutionaries that construed revolutionary doctrines and activity as reenactments of Oedipal forms of rebellion and destruction.¹⁴ Objective analysis seemed to metamorphose into thinly veiled polemics. The revolutionaries' ideas were characterized as expressions of neurosis and the depreciation of ideas—what Stefan Possony described as the "over-valued ideas" characteristic of disturbed minds. 15 Such treatments are extreme examples, but the problem seemed intrinsic to the approach. Freud himself, in a biography of Woodrow Wilson, written in collaboration with the diplomat William C. Bullitt, characterized Wilson's idealist vision as little more than a neurotic expression of unresolved Oedipal conflicts. Freud concluded that these conflicts gave rise to Wilson's grandiose conception of self and his inability to confront facts. 16

Similar shortcomings beset other more scrupulous and objective historical studies. An example, close to my own interests, was Elizabeth Wirth Marvick's biography, *Louis XIII: The Making of a King.* Marvick drew on the diary of

¹⁴ For example, "As has been argued, the revolutionist generally is a person with severe conflicts over masculinity. He is a person on the one hand whose Oedipal hatred of his father has not been dissipated and on the other who feels unusually guilty about asserting his masculinity" (E. Victor Wolfenstein, *The Revolutionary Personality: Lenin, Trotsky, Gandhi* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971], 228). See also Stefan T. Possony's treatment of Lenin's "psychology of destruction" in *Lenin: The Compulsive Revolutionary* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1964), 376-400.

Possony, Lenin, 390.

Sigmund Freud and William C. Bullitt, Thomas Woodrow Wilson, Twenty-Eighth President of the United States: A Psychological Study (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1967), x-xiii, 102.

the physician Jean Héroard, who cared for Louis until he was age 26. On the basis of the diary, she constructed a detailed, virtually clinical, account of the strained relations between the child Louis and his father, King Henri IV. Marvick denied that her work was "psychohistory," but it was focused on "sources of the distinctive character traits" of the king rooted in an Oedipal nexus. She argued that "attached to Louis's desire for his father's love was the fear of becoming his passive object," and that the anger the king inspired in him "had to be directed elsewhere." It was expressed, she concluded, in Louis' impulsive and unpredictable impulsive violence as heir and later king.¹⁷

Marvick based her analysis on Louis' childhood on a thorough and convincing narrative of his life as heir and first years as king. However, I found that the emphasis on unconscious motivation had obscured how Louis conceived the world, and, most important, had omitted the cultural context of French monarchy, which imposed its own determinants on the monarch's rule. A review of Marvick's book by Lawrence M. Bryant made this point most effectively: "Louis's personality cannot be separated from the cultural world and institutional traditions in which it developed and particularly cannot be seen apart from the seventeenth-century royal obsession that everything that went into or came out of the king's body be witnessed by the public. Louis's milieu identified decorum and personal conduct with the substance of political institutions and societal values." 18

My intention became to use psychological insight, not to diagnose and thus introduce closure to the historical narrative, but rather to discern the emergence of the heir's personality as he began to assume the beliefs, attitudes, and tastes represented by his parents and family as exemplifications of Russian monarchy. Images, ideas, and beliefs were thus invested with affect, but they represented more than the sublimation of base instincts. They made the heir's world comprehensible. They defined his identity and the principles that would guide his conduct as monarch.

The materials I encountered about the heirs' early lives yielded increasing evidence of the importance of the milieu, particularly court and military ritual, in their personal development. The father, to be sure, as a towering image of authority, proved to be a crucial factor in his son's own self image. The heir

Elizabeth Firth Marvick, *Louis XIII: The Making of a King* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), xiv, 2-3, 39.

¹⁸ Journal of Modern History vol. 1, no. 3 (September 1989): 610.

seemed to perceive and understand himself within a context of ceremony, symbols, and myth which would shape his concept of the role of emperor. The literature on Russian monarchy described individual rulers with their idiosyncratic personalities as well as concepts and manners of rule, but ignored a continuity of monarchical traditions, values, and patterns of behavior.

My research, on the other hand, indicated the importance of culture in the shaping of the ideas and practices of Russian monarchy. This culture did not coincide with the category of "political culture," which connoted character traits attributable to an entire nation, such as Nicholas Berdyaev's concept of a "Russian Idea" or dispositions to authoritarianism or messianism. Nor is it related to the later, more sophisticated political science efforts to characterize a political culture on the basis of quantitative studies and models. I understand "culture" in the more restricted sense, articulated by Mary McCauley, as a description of a pattern of thought and activity that dominated a particular group or institution.¹⁹ A pattern indicating the presence of a culture of Russian monarchy, comprising the emperor, members of the imperial family, the entourage, and the imperial suite, emerged unmistakably from my materials. The inhabitants of this milieu entertained shared ideas, symbols, and imagery that shaped their understanding of reality. It was this common manner of seeing and thinking that I now sought to understand and figure into the narrative of Russian history.

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Although I did not immediately realize it, I had undertaken a project vastly more ambitious and daunting than my previous work. To pursue this project, I had to fulfill three tasks. First, I had to engage in a broad and detailed study of the ceremonial texts and other forms of representation that had remained untouched by the historical literature. Second, I had to determine how they reflected the ideas and attitudes of the monarchs and their circles—their significance as expressions of monarchical culture. Third,

For efforts to use the notion of political culture to understand particular Russian institutions, in this case the contemporary legal system, see Mary McAuley, "Bringing Culture Back into Political Analysis: The Reform of the Russian Judiciary," in *Political Culture and Post-Communism*, ed. Stephen Whitefield (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005); Peter H. Solomon, Jr., "Informal Practices in Russian Justice: Probing the Limits of Post-Soviet Reform," in *Russia, Europe, and the Rule of Law*, ed. Ferdinand Feldbrugge (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 2006).

if I was to show that the ceremonies and representations of the monarchy were more than embellishments to monarchical power, I had to integrate what I had learned about them into the historical narrative of the Russian state. Initially, I had conceived a one volume work on three emperors, Nicholas I, Alexander II, and Alexander III. It soon became clear to me that to tell the story I had to include the beginnings and bring it to its tragic end. The project lasted twenty years, and is still with me.

This reorientation of my interest, beginning in the late 1970s, accompanied two major changes in my professional and personal life. In 1975, for the first time, I was denied a visa to work in the Soviet Union. I remained persona non grata until perestroika, the late 1980s. This deprived me of access to the archives of the imperial family and many materials on the upbringing of the heirs, which I could consult only after the ban had been lifted. Ceremonial texts, on the other hand, though rare, were available in western libraries. Secondly, in 1977 I moved from the University of Chicago to Princeton, where the ideas and methods of the anthropologist Clifford Geertz were pervasive in their influence.

Geertz's semiotic approach provided a way to comprehend the "webs of significance" that prevailed in alien and distant cultures. In particular, he showed how ritual could be read to understand the mental world of a monarchy. His analyses of "cultural performances," such as the Balinese "theater state" and royal processions in Elizabethan England, Morocco, and Java, revealed the importance of ceremony as a central function of monarchy. He made clear that ceremonies invested authority with an aura of sacrality that set the rulers above and apart from the subject population. Although he used few illustrations in his texts, his descriptions of "charismatic centers" of power gave examples of how public displays conveyed meaning in pageantry, dress, art and architecture.

Imagery and presentation had been banished from historical accounts of Russian monarchy, thus eliminating the world of visual representation it inhabited. In the early 1980s, I began to discover ceremonial texts, first

In Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz (New York: Basic Books, 1973); Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); "Centers, Kings and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power," in Rites of Power: Symbolism, Ritual, and Politics Since the Middle Ages, ed. Sean Wilentz (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 13-40.

in the Russian collection of the Helsinki Slavonic Library, then, most important, in the rich collection of coronation albums and plate books in the Slavonic Division of the New York Public Library. I collaborated with the director of the Division, Edward Kasinec, on an article about the coronation albums in the division's holdings and also worked with him as co-curator for an exhibition of books from the collections of the imperial family belonging to the division.²¹ The pictures in these texts revealed the visual imagery of the monarchy, while the written texts suggested the meanings those images were supposed to convey.

Geertz offered synchronic glimpses into different cultures and the social structures that underlay them. But these glimpses, like a series of still photographs, lacked a sense of human agency and intention. Meaning was locked in semiotic webs with little sense of the thoughts or purposes of the individual men moved by them. Geertz referred to the mythical grounding of these performances, but the myths themselves remained in the background, explaining the source of the beliefs, but not figuring in the adaptation of these symbols to the historical situation and the dynamic processes of change in which they figured.²²

During my research, I had been struck by prominent themes and imagery of conquest that suggested an overarching myth revealing a continuity of imperial representation. This led me to the writings of Marshall Sahlins, whose work emphasized the importance of myth in early monarchies. Sahlins's analyses of Polynesian myths showed how persistent mythical narratives about the outsider provided structures of understanding that evolved to meet new historical challenges and make them comprehensible.

In the heroic, mythical history of Polynesian kings, Sahlins perceived a structure that "generalizes the action of the king as the form and destiny of the society." The myths demonstrated that these rulers did not "spring from

Edward Kasinec and Richard Wortman, "The Mythology of Empire: Imperial Russian Coronation Albums," Biblion: The Bulletin of the New York Public Library vol. 1, No. 1 (Fall 1992): 77-100 (Article 1 in this volume). The Romanov books are described in Robert H. Davis, A Dark Mirror: Romanov and Imperial Palace Library Materials in the Holdings of the New York Public Library; A Checklist and Agenda for Research (New York: Norman Ross, 1999).

²² For a critique of this tenor, see Aletta Biersack, "Local Knowledge, Local History: Geertz and Beyond," in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), 72-96.

the same clay" as their subjects. Rather they came from the heavens or different ethnic groups. Sahlins concluded, "Royalty is the foreigner." "Heroic history" also dictated "an unusual capacity for sudden change or rupture: a mutation of the cultural courses as the rapid popular generalization of a heroic action." 23 Myth provided a conceptual framework to guide responses to historical conjunctures, such as the appearance of foreigners like Captain Cook, who was seen as the fertility god Lono and the introduction of commerce from abroad by the king. 24

The same type of "heroic history" figured largely in the narratives of Russian monarchy. The motif of the foreigner, "the stranger king," was present in the tales of origin and the assertions of the foreign character of the Russian emperor from the beginnings of the Russian state. The central motifs of conquest, bringing with it sudden rupture and the adoption of new foreign antecedents and models, run through Russian history. They were expressed in the legendary accounts of the Vikings, "the Varangians" coming from abroad to bring order and justice to Novgorod. During the sixteenth century, the tsars of Rus' laid claim in word and ceremony to descent from the Byzantine emperors, and in the seventeenth century adopted Byzantine vestments and ceremonies. Peter the Great staged his rule as a show of the cultural and political westernization of the Russian ruler, noble elite and the state. Under Nicholas I and Alexander II, the invitation of the Varangians was presented as the central, determining event of Russian history.

The persistence of what might be described as archaic imagery, the depiction of the ruler as superhuman representative of a distant realm reflected the highly personalized character of Russian political authority, which resisted the type of institutionalization that moderated the monarch's power in the west. I traced the evolution of this imagery by close examination of the evolution of ideas,

Marshall Sahlins, Islands of History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), xi, 41, 78.

This emerges from Sahlins's revision of Ferdinand de Saussure's distinction between langue and parole, language and speech, according to which speech represents changing expressions of the underlying structure of language. Sahlins casts this distinction on a historical grid, the myth containing the structure—langue, historical actions or events representing the parole, guided by but representing transformations of the myth (Marshall Sahlins, Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities: Structure in the Early History of the Sandwich Islands Kingdom [Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1981], 3-8, 17-22, 43-6).

literature, art, and architecture in successive reigns. Through this process it became clear that Russian rulers, until the last decades of the nineteenth century, asserted their foreign character in order to elevate their rule—to sustain absolute dominion by creating the distance, what Nietzsche called "the pathos of distance," between themselves with their elites and the subject population, whether Russians or the other diverse nationalities of the empire. Russian monarchy was dominated by a performative imperative. While other monarchies also emulated foreign examples, a distinguishing characteristic of Russian monarchy was the perpetuation of images of foreignness.

These observations drew heavily upon the works of what is now known as the Moscow-Tartu school, which I became acquainted with in the 1980s, particularly the many articles of Iurii Lotman, Boris Uspenskii, and Victor Zhivov. The study of cultural semiotics developed in the relatively free precincts of Tartu University in Soviet Estonia under Lotman's leadership and inspiration during the 1960s and 1970s and his followers are now referred to as the Moscow-Tartu school.²⁵ Soviet historians had not investigated or taught the history of Russian culture, since culture did not fit the Marxist-Leninist conception of history as the study of the interaction of economy, class, and state. The culture and life of the nobility and merchantry were regarded as the result of their exploitation of the ruling classes, and not worthy of scholarly attention. Literary scholars and linguists, however, were given more leeway than historians in their studies of the great works of Russian literature. They began to approach culture as grounded in the science of semiotics and as a search for a universal system of signs. Their journal and conferences provided what Henrik Baran described as "a defined politically neutral space."26 When I visited these scholars in the 1990s, my historian friends were always bemused by my interest in what they called "the formalists."

Examining the processes of the reception of foreign culture, precluded by Marxist-Leninist historiography, they showed how Russian tastes and behavior emulated first Byzantine, then European cultural models. They described a dynamic of the processes of cultural rupture that led to the adoption of one set of models and repudiation of the past. Uspenskii and

For a discussion of the rise and decline of the Moscow-Tartu school and its contribution see my review of Sergei Nekliudov, ed., *Moskovsko-tartuskaia semioticheskaia shkola. Istoria, vospominania, razmyshleniia* (Article 17 in this volume).

²⁶ Cited in Ibid., 247.

Zhivov explicated the changes in religious rhetoric and symbols during Peter's reform that transformed Russian Orthodoxy into a religion resembling the Erastian, natural law teachings of the German states, which elevated the ruler as a god on earth. Lotman described the cultural semiotics of noble behavior in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, revealing how educated noblemen showed their western character by acting out scripts drawn from prominent works of European literature. I consulted with these scholars and participated in several of their "Lotman Conferences" (*Lotmanovskie chteniia*) during the 1990s.

The members of the Moscow-Tartu school made it clear that by acting as Europeans, Russian noblemen were displaying their adherence to the code of western behavior imposed by Russian emperors and in this way established their distance from the lesser estates of the realm. Most important, I recognized a similar code of acting according to western literary and philosophical scripts in the presentation of the rulers themselves. When it became possible at the end of the 1980s for me to make annual trips to Russia and to gain archival access, I began to study the scenarios of each reign with a broader range of sources—program books, journal and newspaper descriptions, as well as discussions of the works of art and architecture that provided the stage effects of imperial power. The new materials and the interaction with the scholars of the Moscow-Tartu school enabled me to develop my interpretation and formulate the conceptualization of Russian monarchy that I set forth in my two-volume study of Russian imperial myths and representation, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy*.²⁷

In *Scenarios of Power*, I traced how each successive Russian monarch, beginning with Peter the Great, presented him or herself as heroic protagonist of a myth of conquest that had its origin in early Russian legends and chronicles. Each performed the myth according to the ideals and cultural modes of the era, bringing the narrative of Russian monarchy as living representation into the present. I called these individual realizations of the myth "scenarios," the *mise en scène* for each reign. The scenarios communicated the emperors' tastes, goals, and style of rule to the noble elite. They were set

²⁷ Richard S. Wortman, Scenarios of Power: Volume 1, From Peter the Great to the Death of Nicholas I (Princeton:Princeton University Press, 1995); Volume 2, From Alexander II to the Abdication of Nicholas II (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

forth at the beginning of each reign in manifestos, panegyrics, ceremonies, culminating with the imperial coronation.

The myth created a continuity of imperial representation. The scenarios introduced notes of change, promises of renovation, while reaffirming the bond with the dynasty. The upbringing of the heirs played the crucial role in the successive transformations of the myth. On the one hand, the heir performed in his father's scenario and regarded his father as the embodiment of imperial authority. On the other, within the context of the previous scenario he began to develop a sense of his own role. This came from his teachers, who introduced him to different conceptions of monarchy, nationality, and religion. He also drew his own notions of personal feeling and deportment from his mother, grandmother, and other relatives as well as from his reading.

By the time of his accession, the heir had developed his own understanding of the office of emperor. The new scenario was announced in the opening months of his reign and established a dramatic unity that shaped the ceremonies and representations of his reign. Descriptive texts make clear that imperial ceremonies underwent significant change. Even if the rituals remained fixed, both the manner of performance and the verbal interpretations conveyed the feelings and meanings of the moment. Like plays or ballets, imperial ceremonies provided scripts that could be reinterpreted in productions that filled them with contemporary meaning. The upbringing and accession of each monarch thus lent the representation of the Russian monarchy dynamism within the reaffirmation of the continuity of the dynastic myth.

For example, we witness such changes in the imperial coronation, the principal public ceremony of Russian monarchy until the end of the empire. The crowning and anointing of the emperor both consecrated his power and promulgated his scenario. The coronation ceremonies and celebrations lasted several weeks and included, in addition to the rites of crowning and anointment in the cathedral, the gala entry into Moscow, the announcement of the coronation, parades, balls, banquets, and fireworks. All of these were described in accounts, many of them richly illustrated.

One of the most important innovations occurred at the conclusion of Nicholas I's coronation rites in 1826. After the crowning and anointment, he proceeded, according to tradition, in full regalia to the Archangel and Annunciation cathedrals and climbed the steps of the Red Staircase. There he turned and, to the traditional thunderous shouts of "Hoorah!," bowed three times to the throng of people in Kremlin square. The triple bow indicated

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for the first time a mutuality of sentiment: the people were recognizing and acclaiming their monarch; the monarch was showing recognition and gratitude to the people. The gesture prefigured the national elements in Nicholas I's scenario. It was a true example of the invention of tradition, one repeated at all future coronations and many imperial visits to Moscow. By the end of the century, it was considered "an ancient Russian tradition." ²⁸

Alexander II introduced another significant innovation during his coronation in 1856. For the first time, a delegation of peasants marched in the procession to the Assumption Cathedral, where the rites were administered. This gave symbolic significance to the growing sentiment that peasants had to be considered members of the nation, an augur of emancipation still in secret deliberation. It also suggested that imperial ceremonies, previously functions of the elite attended by the people only for ceremonial acclamation, now would be broadened to include them as participants.

Coronation albums provided a valuable source for tracing the relationship between myth, scenarios, and ceremony. They were elaborate and luxurious volumes, published in several foreign languages as well as Russian, in limited editions in order to make known the emperor's image and scenario to both Russian and foreign elites. For example, Alexander II's coronation album gloried in the color, variety, and dashing appearance of the horsemen from the Caucasus and Central Asia, making clear the love that prevailed for the Russian monarch among the multi-ethnic imperial elite after the disastrous defeat of the Crimean war. Alexander III's coronation album, on the other hand, called attention to their subjection and acceptance of Russian domination, announcing the theme of Russian national supremacy proclaimed during his reign and that of his son, Nicholas II. See Article 1 in this volume.

* * *

The shift to an ethnic, national symbolism, suggested in the last example, indicates not only a new scenario, but the beginning of the transformation of the myth, from the European to what I call "the National Myth." The

See my article "The Invention of Tradition and the Representation of Russian Monarchy," in Rus' Writ Large: Languages, Histories, Cultures: Essays presented in honor of Michael S. Flier on his sixty-fifth birthday, ed. Harvey Goldblatt and Nancy Shields Kollmann (Cambridge, MA: Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University, 2009), 651-62 (Article 6 in Russian Monarchy: Representation and Rule).

European myth had preserved the heroic history that ensured the monarch's transcendence by identifying the ruler with western images of sovereignty and transmitting this narrative from generation to generation in the upbringing of members of the imperial family. Russian emperors from the reign of Peter the Great identified with state institutions and even presented themselves as their embodiment. At the same time, they displayed their distance from the state administration by asserting their supreme character and exerting power freely, as befit superhuman absolute monarchs.

The exercise of power and the representation of the monarch thus were reciprocal processes: absolute rule sustained the image of a transcendent monarch, which in turn warranted the untrammeled exercise of power. It was this nexus that defined absolute monarchy in Russia and that came to be understood under the term "autocracy" in the nineteenth century. The capacity of Russian monarchs to live in the context of myth explains their refusal to compromise, to accept intermediaries such as a chancellor, or parliamentary institutions in order to ensure the monarchy's survival, as in the case of the German and the Austrian emperors. Their intellectual aversion to constitutionalism reflected merely one aspect of a mentality that knew only absolute domination or utter defeat.

Until the assassination of Alexander II on March 1, 1881, the representations of the ruler as foreigner sustained the distance that enabled him to exercise absolute power in the interests of both social stability and progress. The Great Reforms of Alexander II's reign—the emancipation of the serfs, reform of the courts and local institutions, culminated a tradition that identified the monarchy with European style progress. When Alexander III ascended the throne, officials dedicated to the goals of reform dominated many high governmental organs, such as the State Council and the Senate. As heir, he had been imbued by his teachers with nationalist sentiments and became increasingly critical of his father's policies under the influence of his mentor, Constantine Pobedonostsev. When he became emperor, Alexander III denounced the liberal policies that he and his advisors regarded as incitements to revolution.

With his mentor Pobedonostsev, now Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod, Alexander III recast the myth so that it presented the emperor as the expression not only of a monarchical nation, but as the most Russian of Russians, struggling against the contagion of subversive doctrines coming from the West. Distance between ruler and ruled was now sustained by reaching back to the

pre-Petrine past and evoking the images of Muscovite tsar who presumably exercised untrammeled patriarchal power and of the *bogatyrs*, the heroes of folk epics. The National Myth showed the tsar's authority emanating from his spiritual union with the Orthodox Church and the Russian people and was expressed in his image of most pious practitioner of Russian Orthodoxy.

The mythical union with people and church conjured a separation, a distrust between the emperor and the institutions of state, which he regarded with increasing suspicion and even hostility as potential threats to his power. The evocation of an ethnic nationalism, itself of European provenance, introduced an element of contradiction into the westernized culture of Russian monarchy, whose representatives continued to share the culture of European royalty. The increasingly national tenor of official statements and policy threw doubt on the multinational grounding of the emperor's authority intrinsic to the European myth and inflamed the opposition of national minorities in the empire.

For Alexander III, the ideal national monarchy was evoked as an extension of the monarch's personal power, deriving from the sanction of the Orthodox Church and centered in the Ministry of Interior, which was obedient to his will and unencumbered by law. Nicholas II distrusted both the Orthodox Church and governmental officials. His sense of self emanated from the faith that he enjoyed a direct personal relationship with God and the absolute sympathy and devotion of the Russian people. As it emerged in the first years of the twentieth century, his scenario presented him in different national personas. He appeared as a man spiritually close to simple Russian people, especially holy men, as a pilgrim, and as Muscovite tsar. These identities emphasized his distance from and spiritual superiority to educated society, the imperial administration, and after the 1905 revolution from the parliamentary institutions he had reluctantly established and strove to undermine.²⁹ He sustained these beliefs regardless of the bloody peasant uprisings that swept the countryside during the revolution of 1905, and maintained them even after his abdication in 1917.³⁰

See Andrew M. Verner, The Crisis of Russian Autocracy: Nicholas II and the 1905 Revolution (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 109-10, 239-41; Geoffrey Hosking, The Russian Constitutional Experiment: Government and Duma, 1907-1914 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 201-5.

Recent scholarship has made clear Nicholas II's role in insisting on the most aggressive and brutal responses, imposing his views on his ministers, whom he often hid behind. For example, he was clearly behind Peter Stolypin's introduction of the

Russian monarchy has been characterized as a largely reactive institution, striking out defensively to preserve the institutions of autocracy. But its mythical narratives conjured the image of an active force, building and maintaining an empire, educating and uplifting the populace, and establishing legality and order. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, on the contrary, the monarchy proved a subversive force, turning first against the institutions produced by the Great Reforms and later against the parliamentary bodies established in 1905. The violent catastrophic events of early twentieth-century Russia resulted not from a decrepit monarchy collapsing before insurgent oppositional movements, but from the clash of an insurgent monarchy, bent on restoring a mythical pre-Petrine past, with the forces of liberalism and revolution determined to transform Russia according to western models of progress.

My books have explored the mentality of members of three groups and their responses to political reality. Their modes of thinking can be described under different categories—ideology, ethos, and myth. Each involved the embrace of a picture of reality that inspired a heroic dedication and often a disregard for expedience. In each case, their solutions evolved as conscious acts that left traces in personal sources and public statements that are open to the historian's gaze. Looking back, I realize that I engaged in an ongoing process of discovery of aspects of history that had eluded historians who focused on the great ideas, major political events, or dominant social and economic trends of the period.

The process of discovery presumes a strategy of openness in approaching sources—openness to the expressions of ideas and feelings, and to the visual manifestations of political attitudes. The strategy of openness entails a wariness of the preconceptions or theoretical constructs that have possessed the academic world and can lead to premature closure of the process of discovery. It reveals the ways that ideas become objects of affect while maintaining a rational basis in consciousness. The social sciences, psychology, and anthropology have opened me to other aspects of human experience, like emotional development and symbolic expression, as objects of scholarly study and suggested avenues of approach. However, abstract universal models, when applied to a particular

notorious field court-martials in 1906 and the "Stolypin coup d'état," the change in the election law in June 1907. See Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905: Authority Restored* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 244-59.

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situation, can obscure the specificity and variety of human experience and impoverish the historical narrative.

By emphasizing specificity, as my books show, I do not deny the possibility of viewing these individuals in a general comparative context. The revolutionary movement, the reform of the Russian judiciary, and Russian monarchy must be understood in terms of their Western counterparts. But if comparisons are to be cogent and informative, they must be based on an understanding of the phenomena to be compared. They must take into account what might be described as a view from inside—the thinking and representations of the individuals involved—which may disclose a quite different picture from that governed by general categories and lead to quite different understandings of the motivations and ideas of the figures involved.

My goal has been to write my subjects into the narrative of Russian history. The narrative form provides a cultural and political context that makes it possible to understand the dilemmas and preoccupations that found expression in their thought. It places their ideas in a sequence that relates them to contemporary events they knew. Most important, it evokes the drama of their quests to see themselves as agents of history itself, who, gifted with special knowledge and insight, could influence its direction and outcome.

17. The Moscow-Tartu School: Review of S. Iu. Nekliudov, ed., Moskovsko-tartuskaia semioticheskaia shkola. Istoriia, vospominaniia, razmyshleniia

(Moscow: Shkola "Iazyki russkoi kul'tury", 1998)



The term "Moscow-Tartu" school describes a movement that arose during the 1960s among linguists, specialists in literature, folklore, ethnography, and allied disciplines in the Soviet Union. Its governing doctrine was semiotics, and the theory and practice of semiotics as a science of signs continued to provide its guiding principles through the 1970s. The study of semiotics liberated scholars from Marxist-Leninist principles and institutional constraints, opening new possibilities and areas of research. It established culture as an autonomous sphere of research. By demonstrating the vitality of the Russian tradition of linguistic and literary studies, the movement restored academic pride and purpose to scholars in those areas. By the 1970s and 1980s, the intellectual interest of the leaders of the school had shifted: semiotic theory receded into the background, and many earlier adherents adopted different approaches and interests. But the school's influence endured in the works of those trained under the guidance of its leading figures and in the memories of those for whom it was a defining formative experience.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the school's adherents began to come to terms with historical significance and its meaning for their own personal development. This volume, edited by the folklore specialist S. Iu. Nekliudov, represents the summation of these efforts, bringing together previous published memoirs and articles and several new contributions regarding its impact abroad. The first section deals with the early history of the school, the second is devoted to memoirs, the third considers its relationship to developments in Europe and the United States. An appendix contains a summary of works on Eastern Studies by distinguished Moscow orientalists published in the

Works on Sign Systems (Trudy po znakovym sistemam), the principal scholarly periodical of the school. The twenty-six contributions are diverse both in the assessment of the importance of the school and the authors' own personal responses. Here, rather than summarize their content, I will try to convey my own sense of what the volume tells us about the school's significance, especially for the study of Russian history.

The opening articles of the volume, by the linguists Viacheslav Ivanov and Boris Uspenskii, describe the movement's origins and early years. At the beginning of the 1960s, a group of prominent Moscow linguists endeavored to revive the pre-revolutionary and émigré traditions of Russian structuralist linguistics. Ivanov traces these to the Kazan school of I. A. Baudouin de Courtenay and N. V. Krushevskii, whose traditions were carried on after the revolution by the Prague school, and particularly N. S. Trubetskoi and Roman Jakobson. In his memoir, V. N. Toporov mentions three major events that marked the revival of linguistics and the beginnings of a semiotic school in the Soviet Union (146-47). Jakobson's visit to Moscow in 1956 inspired the formation of a Seminar on Structural and Mathematical Linguistics under the philological faculty of Moscow University. In 1960, the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences established sectors of structural linguistics in several of its institutes. Finally, the Symposium on the Structural Study of Sign Systems, held in 1962 under the auspices of the Institute of Slavic Studies and the newly formed Sector of Structural Typology, discussed an array of semiotic subjects the importance of signs in language, art, mythology, and even card tricks. The theses of the symposium were published in a small edition. Official organs, like Voprosy literatury, criticized them in great detail, unwittingly making their content known to a broad public.

If the Moscow founders of the school reclaimed the pre-revolutionary linguistic heritage, the Tartu component came out of the setting of early twentieth-century formalist criticism in Leningrad. When Iurii Lotman began his studies at Leningrad University in 1939, the Slavic Faculty boasted a veritable roster of luminaries, V. M. Zhirmunskii, V. Ia. Propp, M. K. Azadovskii, B. M. Eikhenbaum, B. V. Tomashevskii and G. A. Gukovskii. When Lotman returned after the war in 1946, the last three were still on the faculty, soon to fall victim to Stalin's anti-cosmopolitan campaign. After graduation, Lotman could find work only in Estonia, where the pressing need for teachers of Russian after its recent annexation gave the authorities leeway to hire Jewish candidates. Lotman also took graduate courses at Tartu University. In 1951, he defended his

Candidate's dissertation, "A. N. Radishchev's Struggle Against the Social and Political Views and Noble Esthetic of N. M. Karamzin" at Leningrad University. The social and literary life of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century nobility would remain his interest throughout his career. At this time, Lotman married Zara Mintz, a fellow graduate of the Philological Faculty of Leningrad University, specializing in the literature of the Silver Age, who became another leading figure of the Tartu school. After the death of Stalin, Lotman was appointed to the Faculty of Russian Literature at Tartu University.¹

The catalytic meeting of the two currents took place during the "summer school" organized by Lotman in 1964 at the university's sports camp at Kääriku in southern Estonia. This, the first of five such schools held between 1964 and 1973, resembled a conference more than a school, but a very informal conference that fostered participation and comradeship. Lotman said: "The School was entirely a series of conversations" (85); the discussions continued long after the end of the presentations. The site, rural and sequestered, where new ideas and new academic bonds could propagate encouraged a sense of distance from official centers and official thinking. Toporov invoked a neologism, "nezdeshnost" -- perhaps translatable as "otherworldness" -to evoke the feeling of the setting (142). The memoirs of D. M. Segal, S. D. Serebrianyi, and S. Iu. Nekliudov recall the shared experiences collecting mushrooms, boating on the lake, long nighttime discussions before the fireplace. Both eminent scholars and students presented papers, many of which appeared in the Trudy, published under the auspices of Tartu University. The bonds persisted after the summer, creating a network of the elect that extended to Moscow, Leningrad, Riga, as well as Tartu.

In 1966 and 1967, I was astonished to meet young Russians in Moscow with an extraordinary intellectual sophistication and knowledge of western scholarship, who introduced me to others in Leningrad and Riga. All were imbued with a common sense of dedication to the tradition of literary scholarship, a contempt for the canons of official literature and criticism, and a sense of their own special mission. As a foreigner, I was treated with special respect, though my scholarly interests at the time had little to do with theirs. The sense of special designation and solidarity later evoked criticism, exemplified by the articles by Boris Gasparov and T. M. Nikolaeva in this

V. F. Egorov, *Zhizn' i tvorchestvo Iu. M. Lotmana* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 1999), 17-19, 32-76.

volume. In a controversial critique first published in 1989, Gasparov claims that the esprit of the participants in the school arose from a self-imposed alienation from their environment. Using a polemical style reminiscent of the *Vekhi* group's denunciations of the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia, he argues that the isolation of the rural setting heightened this sense, giving them a one-sided and distorted notion of western ideas and inclining them to introspective themes and approaches. T. M. Nikolaeva indicates that the sense of corporate solidarity discouraged criticism of the ideas of other members of the group and intellectual debate. But these are minority viewpoints in the volume.

The summer schools, Serebrianyi observes, were in many respects "creative games" (128), a form of youthful protest. Boris Gasparov, in his synoptic study of the movement in its international context, included in Part 3, notes the similarity with the non-conformist and egalitarian intellectual movements in Europe and the United States in the 1960s. These movements shared a loss of respect for authority and a euphoric sense of equality, a state that the anthropologist Victor Turner called at the time "communitas"—a temporary, transitional state, akin to rites of passage that marks "liminal" phases in societies, when they "are passing from one cultural state to another."² The 1960s represented such a phase in Russian academic life, when the old academic hierarchy had been discredited, and new ideas required validation by a group united by common experiences.

The proponents of these ideas envisioned a science of signs, a universal system that could be applied to all languages and forms of linguistic expression and cultural systems that could be modeled on them. This inspiration came from no one less than Jakobson, himself, who in 1960 had proposed "a universal scheme of communications' acts." He hoped to formulate a methodology for a science that would approach social conduct as a system of signs.³ These principles were set forth in the theses of the 1962 symposium and in various articles in the *Trudy*. Jakobson's program also provided grounds for international scholarly contacts, what Henrik Baran describes as "a defined politically neutral space" (247). In 1966, Jakobson attended the second summer school.

Victor W. Turner, The Ritual Process (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969), 95-6, 112-3.

For a more detailed discussion of Jakobson's "utopian ideas" of a scientific linguistics at the this time and its influence on the formation of the school, see Victor Zhivov, "Moskovsko-Tartuskaia semiotika: Ee dostizheniia i ee ogranicheniia," *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie*, No. 98.4 (2000): 14-8.

Semiotics thus represented both a scientific method that could be implicitly counterpoised to Marxist dogma and a basis for association with western scholars. It was embraced, as many ideologies were by the nineteenth-century Russian intelligentsia, as a totalistic system, grandiose in its possibilities, representing a new truth that had a markedly utopian character, as Gasparov points out in his 1989 article. It was a late flowering of positivist aspirations at a moment when positivism had lost its hold on western philosophy. Several of the articles share Serebrianyi's sense of embarrassment with this phase of the school's development. But it was precisely the ideological fervor generated by the semiotic project that energized literary and linguistic scholarship in the 1960s and that led its practitioners along new paths in the 1970s.

The initial presentations of research took the form of scientific tracts and theses couched in esoteric, technical terminology that suggested rigorous adherence to semiotic principles. These writings followed the categories established by the father of continental semiotics, the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, of langue and parole—language and speech. Language provided the basic structure of grammar, signs and so forth. Speech was the concrete expression of language in usage. The same relationship between structure, the fundamental codes governing expression, and the expressions themselves were found in the various forms of culture. These cultural systems were called "secondary modeling systems," a term suggested by the mathematician Vladimir Uspenskii.

By the early 1970s, the "secondary modeling systems" had eclipsed the goal of a universal semiotic system in the studies of the Moscow-Tartu school. Structuralism had fallen out of fashion in the West, supplanted by new semiotic theories and eventually overshadowed by deconstructionist criticism. Lotman's major structuralist work *Lektsii po struktural'noi poetike*, published in 1964, was received respectfully, but without great enthusiasm by such critics as Umberto Eco, Tzvetan Todorov, and Julia Kristeva. Members of the school who emigrated found themselves teaching among colleagues who regarded structuralism as a doctrine out of the past and Russian literature as a peripheral regional specialty, an experience described vividly in Alexander Zholkovskii's memoir. Some like Boris Gasparov moved away from the semiotic approach.

But for the study of Russia's past, the most significant tendency was the elaboration by Lotman, Boris Uspenskii, and others of a semiotics of Russian culture. We witness what may seem a paradoxical reorientation: a form

of inquiry, striving for a universal system is transformed into a concept to study a particular national past. The result was liberating, giving authorities in literature and social attitudes, like Lotman, a methodology to understand the past in a new way. This cultural turn is described with some unease in the memoir of the linguist A. M. Piatigorskii. Piatigorskii writes in his memoir that culture became the object of their study, not because of the nature of semiotics, but because of "the concrete Russian cultural context. (We thought that we wrote about culture from the outside; it [culture] led our hand from within.)" The focus of the scholar shifted from language and the theory of semiotic systems, to texts, as semiotic expressions of that culture. The theses Piatogorskii delivered with Lotman at the 1968 summer school, published under the title "Text and Function," introduced the notion of a "text of culture." "From the point of view of the study of culture, there exist only those communications that are texts. All others virtually do not exist and are not taken in by the attention of the scholar. In this sense we can say that culture is an aggregate of texts or a complexly constructed text."4

The search for a metaconcept of culture was now replaced by a search for concrete expressions of culture in history in the aggregate of cultural documents and texts that made up that culture. One cannot exaggerate the energizing effect of this reversal, for it immediately presumed the culture in the text, the macrocosm in the microcosm. The literary critic stepped into the intellectual void left by historical materialism. Lotman expressed it as a return to history. "In turning to a synchronic model, the historian found freedom. He was liberated from the methodological garbage piling up in historical studies, gained real freedom and a scholarly basis to return to his circle" (86). Guided by proper method and understanding of the nature of signs, even the beginning scholar could find significant answers in specific, accessible literary, historical, ethnographic, or artistic texts. It created what D. Segal calls "semiotic historicism." In a period when Russians had lost a sense of their own connection to history, Segal writes, "thanks to semiotics we learned of another sense and understanding of history—a state of existence in history" (102). Semiotics had become a means to national self-discovery.

Lotman and his students began to read texts to determine the semiotic codes or texts expressed in the social behavior of a given time. Discovering such

Iu. M. Lotman and A. M. Piatigorskii, "Tekst i funktsiia," in Iu. M. Lotman, *Izbrannye stat'i* (Tallin: "Aleksandra," 1993), 133.

texts revealed to the scholar the language, the thought patterns—the mentality of the people they studied. Lotman showed the role of literary texts in guiding the social conduct of the Russian nobility in the eighteenth century and the participants in the Decembrist movement in the early nineteenth century. He focused not on the ideological contributions of the Decembrists, but on the forms of behavior prescribed by romantic literature as they understood and enacted it. The noble landed estate, masquerades, dueling, drinking, and card playing all became texts that yielded evidence of the social codes of the period. Lotman developed the notion of "theatricality" to describe the highly "semioticized" behavior of the westernized nobleman. His followers applied his approach in particular areas; to mention several notable examples, Irina Reyfman in regard to the duel in nineteenth-century Russian literature and society, Irina Paperno in her study of nihilism as a behavioral text and Marina Mogil'ner by studying the evolution of the myth of the underground man in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵

Cultural semiotics proved so revealing about the Russian past because educated Russians were expected to act according to codes and signs borrowed from the west that made up Russian noble culture. Europeans acted like Europeans because they were Europeans; Russians acted out roles of Europeans because they were not Europeans, but had to resemble them, and the Moscow-Tartu school made these roles for the first time the center of historical study. The semiotics of St. Petersburg, a city built to represent the West to Russia and Russia to the West, proved equally illuminating. A volume published in 1984 on the semiotics of St. Petersburg included papers by such scholars as V. N. Toporov, M. L. Gasparov, Iu. G. Tsivian, Z. G. Mints, and Lotman himself that analyze Petersburg as a symbolic presence in Russian culture. Lotman placed the symbolism of the city in the context of the myth of empire and the forms of theatricality of Russian culture. G. V. Vilinbakhov contributed an important article on the founding of Petersburg and imperial emblems.

Irina Reyfman, Ritualized Violence Russian Style: The Duel in Russian Culture and Literature (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); Irina Paperno, Chernyshevskii and the Age of Realism: A Study in the Semiotics of Behavior (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988); Marina Mogil'ner, Mifologiia "podpol'nogo cheloveka": Radikal'nyi mikrokosm v Rossii nachala XX veka kak predmet semioticheskogo analiza (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 1999). See Deborah Pearl's review of Mogil'ner's book in Kritika vol. 1, No. 2 (Spring 2000): 416-22.

Several of these themes were later developed in Grigorii Kaganov's study of the symbolic space of Petersburg. 6

In collaboration with Lotman, Boris Uspenskii brought the culture of early Russia into the sphere of semiotic studies, showing how the concepts encoded in Muscovite language defined sacrality, cultural attitudes, and Russian history itself. Their article of 1977, "The Role of Dual Models in the Dynamics of Russian Culture (Up to the End of the Eighteenth Century)," described a structure of dual antithetical normative signs—evil and good, past and present—dominating Russian cultural history. The dual structure encompassed oppositions and precluded a "neutral axiological zone" like that found in the west. It defined a dynamic of change that was realized most strikingly in the tenth century with the conversion, and in the eighteenth century with westernization. At these moments, the normative values of signs were reversed, the past—whether pagan or Muscovite religion—was defined as evil, the future, Christianity or Europeanization, as good. Uspenskii's article of 1976, "Historia sub specie semioticae" approached history as a process of communication, by which information was inscribed in a particular semiotic language that functioned as a code for society. He focused particularly on the cultural conflicts of the Petrine era, between the signs and the old and the new culture, a theme developed in the works of Victor Zhivov on eighteenth-century language. Uspenskii and Zhivov also examined the development of notions of political sacrality in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, showing how eighteenth-century language and symbols continued to reflect earlier religious conceptions of Russian empire. Uspenskii went on to devote himself to the study of religious-political ritual, particularly the significance of the Russian anointment and communion, in consecrating the tsar and patriarch. In the United States, the linguist Michael Flier published a series of semiotic analyses of the ritual, architecture, and iconography of Muscovite Rus'.7

Semiotika goroda i gorodskoi kul'tury. Peterburg (Trudy po znakovym sistemam, XVIII) (Tartu: Tartu University Press, 1984); G.Z. Kaganov, Sankt-Peterburg: obrazy prostranstva (Moscow: Indrik, 1995).

For example, "Court Ritual and Reform: Patriarch Nikon and the Palm Sunday Ritual," *Religion and Culture in Early Modern Russia and Ukraine*, ed. Samuel H. Baron and Nancy Shields Kollmann (De Kalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1997), 73-95; "Filling in the Blanks: The Church of the Intercession and the Architectonics of Medieval Muscovite Ritual, " *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* vol. 19, nos. 1-4 (1995): 120-37.

As the Moscow-Tartu school moved away from structural linguistics, it seemed to move closer to western cultural anthropology, a development discussed in Baran's article. The efforts of the school to distinguish and examine a discrete sphere of "culture" resemble the notion of "thick description" of cultures set forth by Clifford Geertz in 1973. "Thick description," a concept that Geertz borrowed from the English philosopher, Gilbert Ryle, was a way, he wrote, of "sorting out the structures of signification" in cultures. "The whole point of a semiotic approach to culture is, as I have said, to aid us in gaining access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live so that we can, in some extended sense of the term, converse with them."8 Irene Portis-Winner noted the similarity in the early 1980s and hoped for further convergence and interchange between the schools. This convergence did not take place. Portis-Winner concluded in 1994 that western scholars overlooked the views of the Moscow-Tartu school, or misunderstood them as "basically variants of the long outmoded Russian formalism, and if not that, then a strictly Saussurean binarism" (263).9

The lack of communication with western anthropologists is in part to be explained by the specifically literary and historical focus of Russian cultural semiotics, a focus that makes the works of the school so valuable for Russian specialists in the West. However, this conception of national culture omits the entire political order. To be sure, the aversion to political history enabled scholars to avoid the clichés of early treatments of politics, the "methodological garbage" Lotman referred to; but it also removed human agency, leaving the relationship between the forms of taste and behavior and the history of a specific era uncertain, and at times presenting literary, religious, and artistic categories as causal factors in themselves. Their works mention the monarch and the state principally as examples of cultural symbols and norms rather than as active forces in their own right. This contrasts with the works of Geertz, for whom the state represented the creator and the custodian of the symbols and myths uniting a society. The theater state, the concept of rulers as symbolic centers

⁸ Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 9, 24. The similarities were discussed in relation to the question of ideology by Andre Zorin, "Ideolgiia semiotiki v interpetatsii Klifforda Girtsa," *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie*, no. 29 (1998): 39-54.

⁹ Citation is from Irene Portis-Winner, Semiotics of Culture: "The Strange Intruder" (Bochum: Universitätsverlag Dr. Norbert Brockmeyer, 1994), 153.

in various societies, showed the polity as an active symbolic force. Geertz viewed ideology, including political ideology, in terms of cultural systems.

Geertz conceived of semiotic analysis as a means to breach the conceptual barriers between cultures. The Moscow-Tartu school used it to understand the meaning of signs in the history of their own culture, which had been barred to them by the Soviet regime. In studying their own culture, many found their cultural identity. Indeed, it is the combination of the academic distance of the semiotic method with the feeling of belonging to Russian culture that made possible the resonance and power of their best works. Their contributions both opened the moribund field of cultural history in Russia and gave foreign historians and literary scholars the kind of "access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live" and the ability in some sense to "converse with them" that Geertz sought.

The achievements of the 1970s mark only a beginning. Many of the school's early adherents moved away from its doctrines. Others continue to study literary texts in terms of their historical context, applying approaches of semiotics. The most recent generation, which is not represented in this retrospective volume, has used the insights of the old school if not its specific methods to study Russian cultural history. Their research, set forth in article form and conference papers, brings a sophistication in textual analysis to bear on various historical problems. Oulture remains a center of focus, but represents a means to understand the historical role of the Russian state, not to deny it. Many scholars are now working on the official culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They have profited from the ideological fervor of the Moscow-Tartu school, witnessed in this volume, but now seek to bring its heritage into a post-ideological age.

These have been presented at recent Lotmanovskie chteniia in Moscow and some of them published in Lotmanovskii Sbornik, volume 2 (Moscow: O.G.I., 1997); Rossiia/ Russia. Vol. 3 [11] Kul'turnye praktiki v ideologicheskoi perspektive: Rossiia, XVIII-nachalo XX veka (Moscow-Venice: O. G. I., 1999), and in numerous recent issues of the journal Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie. See also Mogil'ner's book cited in note 5.

18. Brief Recollection of Vladimir Nabokov



As a student at Cornell University, I attended several of Nabokov's lectures in his survey course on European literature, I believe in the 1955-1956 academic year. I had heard a great deal about Nabokov—that he was a famous writer who delivered brilliant lectures and that his last novel could not be published in America for reasons I didn't understand, and had to be smuggled in from Europe. Nabokov's lectures were distinguished by their good humor, sweep, and witty and scornful judgments, delivered as categorical judgments that delighted the undergraduates on writers whose works were not to his taste. His wife, who attended all his lectures, sitting next to him, gave a very different impression, her intimidating gaze fixed on the rows of students before her. Together, they gave me an initial idea of stereotypical Russian characters: one generous and outgoing, with the sweeping abandon, the *razmakh* of the Russian soul; the other moody and hostile. In the surroundings of upstate New York in the 1950s, they seemed something exotic, from another world.

I attended only three or four lectures and can recall only a couple of fragments from two of them, on Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and Kafka's *Metamorphosis*. He modulated between wide-ranging generalizations about great writers and the words the authors used to describe the tiniest details in French, German, and English. He constructed his own hierarchy of great writers, based entirely on the criterion of literary style. At the summit stood Joyce, Tolstoy, Proust, and even Robert Louis Stevenson, at the bottom Thomas Mann, and even lower, Dostoevsky, whom he branded as "messenger boys," because they used literature as a vehicle for philosophical or even intellectual content. He mercilessly derided those who favored the latter as philistines, his English equivalent of *meshchanstvo*, and particularly liked to dwell on "ladies clubs" swooning over Mann or Dostoevsky. He made it abundantly clear that he was no "messenger boy."

PART V. AFTERTHOUGHTS AND REMEMBRANCES

As far as I remember, he assigned six or seven novels as required reading each semester, not a great burden in a literature course of fourteen weeks. But he demanded that the students know the texts almost by heart and recall every minute detail. Examination questions focused on such details: interpretations of the texts or psychological subtleties were not of interest to him. He would ask students to identify the color of the ribbon on Emma Bovary's hair when she was seduced by Jacques in a carriage, or the brand of pomade in Jacques' hair, and then took the opportunity to expatiate on the various types of pomade in the text. Surprisingly, he made such digressions seem interesting and even necessary to understand the work.

The only substantive recollection that remains in my memory was part of his lecture devoted to Kafka's Metamorphosis. Nabokov was determined to disabuse all of us of any inclination to view the novella as an allegory, the meaning of which related to a lack of a sense of universal justice or some other profound truth, and he forcefully ridiculed such thoughts. Metamorphosis, he asserted, was not an allegory or pure fantasy: it described an event that could actually happen. He then opened a copy of the New York Daily News and declared that this tabloid was his favorite. He had read a report that morning of an episode that he believed resembled the one described in Metamorphosis. A young man and his girlfriend had decided to murder his mother to inherit her fortune. They killed her, I can't remember how, but then wondered what to do with the corpse. This matter became urgent, for now they recalled that they had invited some friends for a beer party that evening. The young man had heard somewhere that plaster of paris dissolves bones. They then proceeded to lay the corpse in the bathtub, and filled it with water mixed with plaster of paris. When the friends arrived, they encountered a grim scene. Nabokov looked out at the lecture hall with a sweet happy smile: he had proved his point.

19. Marc Raeff: Memorial Thoughts



I will speak about Marc Raeff as a historian. This will make it possible for those who knew him as a scholar as well as those who didn't to reflect on the magnitude and significance of his achievement.

I first met Marc Raeff just over fifty years ago in early 1958. I was a senior at Cornell majoring in French history, trying to decide where to pursue my planned graduate studies in Russian history. My teacher, the French historian Edward Whiting Fox, gave me good advice. He had taught two outstanding students of Russian history at Harvard; one was Marc Raeff, then teaching at Clark University, the other Leopold Haimson at the University of Chicago. I met Marc in his mother's apartment somewhere on the upper west side of Manhattan. He was very genial and gave me excellent advice. One suggestion particularly impressed me. He warned that in finding a subject for dissertation research, the student should choose a subject in his advisor's general area of expertise, but avoid working in his specific field of research. This struck me as quite sound, and I followed it later when faced with that decision.

I did not study with Marc, but we kept in contact, and he was always generous with suggestions and advice. From time to time, he would send me notes, always hand-written, pointing out a particular publication that I would not normally have come across, a particular archive that I might examine, a colleague worth consulting. Often the notes would contain a succinct, acerbic remark, sometimes distressing, but always indisputable and to the point. I received such a note shortly before his death this summer in response to an article I had published.

I was not to be one of Marc's students. But in a sense we—that is, Russian historians—have all been his students. Marc represented a model of scholarly creativity and responsibility for all of us. He came out of a European tradition pursuing scholarship as an end in itself, one might say as a sacred calling.

He was one of that first "remarkable generation" of scholars mentored by Michael Karpovich, who laid the basis for the serious study of Russian History in the 1950s and afterward. Unlike several of his colleagues, Marc was not lured away from the scholarly calling by the enticement of political engagement. However strong his political convictions, they did not shape his understanding of or devotion to history. His dedication resulted in a large, rich, and varied contribution of books, articles, and reviews that numbered 275 in the bibliography that accompanied his Festschrift, published in 1988. Of course, he wrote more afterward.

Marc's contribution, however, is distinguished not so much by the quantity of his output, as by his achievement in opening new areas of inquiry and research and in producing books that were fundamental in the very restricted sense of the word—that they provided and indeed still provide the basis for approaching eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russian history. I am not going to give a listing of his groundbreaking works, but will simply point out several areas of scholarship that Marc opened and the approaches he originated.

The first was the study of the Russian state and officialdom, a subject ignored after the revolution both in the Soviet Union and the West. Marc's first major publication was his 1957 biography of Michael Speranskii, the reformer of the first decades of the nineteenth century and the director of first modern codification or systematization of Russian law. His book *Michael Speransky: Statesman of Imperial Russia* was not the usual intellectual biography, but a work of commanding erudition and insight that revealed the entire mode of thought that animated the rationalistic constitutionalism of the reign of Alexander I.

This was a subject that had been approached within the conventional framework of an opposition between liberal constitutionalists and conservative officialdom. Marc went beyond this to reveal the presence of a bureaucratic reform ethos—a state of mind that made the events of the early nineteenth century comprehensible and meaningful. He traced the emergence of a rationalist constitutionalism that combined *l'esprit de système* with the principle of monarchical absolutism. The work remains fundamental: his description of Speranskii's reform efforts, his struggles to advance the cause of the law under Alexander I, and later, in a conservative manner under Nicholas I retains its validity and freshness today.

The same year, 1957, he published a brief article called "The Russian Autocracy and Its Officials," which, for the first time, brought the actual

functioning of the Russian state and the mentality of its officials under serious scholarly scrutiny. Marc examined the actual workings of the Russian administration, calling upon the social sciences to open new modes of understanding. Models and concepts of Weberian sociology appear in his writings, used to frame a comparative understanding of the subject, in this case the limited degree of professionalism in the Russian administration. Under Marc's guidance at Columbia, Hans Joachim Torke wrote his definitive monograph on the Russian Officialdom in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century. Other scholars followed, and I was one of those who studied the Russian state in the nineteenth century and the institutions and social dynamics that both brought about the Great Reforms of Alexander II's reign and yet limited their extent.

Marc complemented this work with the publication of books of documents of Russian history with his own explanatory introductions. These included interpretations of the reign of Peter the Great, plans for political reform in Russia, an interpretation and documentary history of the Decembrist Movement, and his collection *Russian Intellectual History*, which remains in print and is widely used in classes today.

Marc's second field of exploration was the social psychology of the Russian nobility, a series of articles that culminated in *The Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia*. Again, Marc focused on the mentality of the group he was describing, and again his work was informed by Weberian sophistication, but not constricted by it. The book showed the centrality of concepts of service to the Russian nobleman's life and thought introduced by Peter the Great and the role of ideas and the dedication to superordinate absolute goals that, under later circumstances, they would transfer to the people. The nobility, of course, made up a large and dominant component of what came to be known as the Russian intelligentsia.

For me, the book had larger implications, for what Marc described represented an extension of the absolutist ideology of the Russian state. He explored the implications of this interpretation in his article on the *Politzeistaat*, the police state in Russia, and then in his book comparing the implementation of the police state policies in Russia with the institutions of the German states where the concept originated. These works may well be the most influential of his publications: there is hardly a western study of eighteenth-century Russia that does not refer to it and use it as a basis for the analysis of the emergence of the westernized Russian state and society.

The third and fourth areas of Marc's new inquiry were in advance of the field of his time and pointed to areas that had been almost completely neglected during the Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet Union led to the revelation that Russia represented more than a national state—it was a multinational empire, and a spate of works followed about Russia as an empire and the role of nationalities in Russia's past. Marc ventured into the study of Russia as an empire long before the demise of the Soviet state.

In connection with his biography of Speranskii, in 1956, he published his book on the administrative code that Speranskii authored, a reform that became a cornerstone of Russian imperial policy. The articles he published in the 1970s—"Patterns of Imperial Policies toward the Nationalities" (1971), "Pugachev's Uprising" (1970), and "Imperial Policies of Catherine the Great" (1977)—remain fundamental texts that we assign in our courses. They display Marc's unique qualities of concise, forceful argument as he employed his erudition to formulate arresting ideas and interpretations of Russia as empire. In this connection, I should also mention his participation in the 1990s as editor and author in two volumes of articles on Ukraine, marking the beginning of the rediscovery of Ukrainian history that has been proceeding during the past decades.

Finally, as if all of this were insufficient, to Marc belongs the leadership in the field of Russian émigré studies, an area that was of course close to his heart. His book *Russia Abroad*, published in 1990, first brought the rich Russian émigré culture abroad between World Wars I and II into the historian's purview. The book was translated into Russian and found an admiring and sympathetic audience in Russia as well as abroad. I remember one eminent Russian scholar visiting New York, who caught sight of him at a seminar. Her jaw dropped, tears came to her eyes, and she exclaimed in wonderment "Marc Raeff!"

Eulogies are supposed to end on a note of consolation for the loss that we have sustained. Here the consolation is obvious. Marc will be with us in the future as he was with us in the past, that is, in his works, which will continue to inspire us with an example of historical scholarship and inform us with the possibility of new ways to appreciate and understand Russia's past.

20. Leopold Haimson: Remembrance on the Occasion of his Memorial Service, March 25, 2011

am so happy that we have come together to remember and commemorate a person who meant so much to us, who was a central figure in our scholarly development, in shaping our ideas and in many ways our lives. Leopold was more than a mentor to us—his vitality, his imagination, his devotion to scholarship, made him an inspiration and exemplar of the calling of historian. During this service we will hear brief remembrances of several of his students and friends.

I represent the first generation of Leopold's Russian history students. I began graduate work at the University of Chicago, if you can imagine—I can't—more than fifty years ago, when I was twenty, and Leopold a young and brilliant Assistant Professor, age thirty-one. I can still remember registration in October 1958—making the acquaintance of another eager entering student, Robert Crummey, who was planning to study French history, he thought.

I had met Leopold the previous year. My undergraduate teacher of French history at Cornell was Edward Fox, who had previously taught at Harvard. Two of his favorite students were Leopold and Marc Raeff, then at Clark University, and Professor Fox suggested I talk to both of them. I met Leopold in December 1957 at the meetings of the American Historical Association in New York. And of course he impressed me with his enthusiasm, eloquence, and energy. I had not encountered anyone like him; I still have not encountered anyone like him. From the conversation I remember only his warning that I not go into Russian history on a lark. I remember that well. I didn't quite understand what that meant. Why would I go into Russian history on a lark?

Well, I later found out the real meaning of the warning, for Leopold didn't do things on a lark. His commitment was great, all-embracing. The

late fifties and early sixties were times of great exhilaration about Russia, the opening of the Soviet Union, the Thaw, Sputnik, great musicians, astonishing ballet, adventurous and rebellious writers. Leopold caught that spirit. His love for Russia and the Russian intelligentsia was passionate; he conveyed it to his students in a dramatic, moving way. And when he spoke about Russia, he became larger than life, commanding, dominating.

For Leopold, Russian history was a mission. And he involved his students personally in that mission. The relations were ones not between a distant professor and subservient student, but between friends, members of his circle, and most accurately, though I fear to use the term, comrades. And though my research goals and his soon diverged, his interest in what I was doing never flagged. He read many of my drafts, liked some, not so much others, but his observations and criticisms showed his own unique and I would say profound grasp of the subjects, yielding powerful insights about what the work could become, how it could fit in the broader interpretations of history. His incredible faculty of empathy gave one the feeling that he understood what you were really saying when it was lost in the text.

Leopold quickly and clearly distinguished between those who belonged to his circle and those who didn't—there could be no mistakes about that. But those who did belong were fired with a sense of importance, destiny, the significance of their work, a calling. He had a remarkable ability to bring people together. We met and chatted at the Social Science Tea, which took place every afternoon in the Social Science building, at a time when the University of Chicago Library was part of that building. He and Hugh Mclean, close friends at the time, threw memorable parties. They had wonderful food, drink, high spirits, Leo's *razmakh*, the Russian spirit of glorious abandon.

At the time I was fascinated by Russian intellectual history, and Leopold's book *The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism*, which I had read before coming to Chicago, was a transformative experience, something of a revelation for me and many others. Its combination of the personal histories of the individual Marxists, illuminated by his study of anthropology and psychology, and their different visions of the revolutionary movement, was startling and new. He placed the Marxists' early evolution in the context of the intelligentsia's mentality, which swung between emphases on consciousness, the intellectuals' efforts to direct reality according to particular revolutionary programs, and spontaneity, the reliance on the masses' oppositional spirit

of revolt, *buntarstvo*, to rise against the existing order. His empathy for the figures as he followed their intellectual evolution was remarkable. His language, often difficult and involuted, for us resonated with the sense of historical truth, poetic in the way of bringing concepts to life as sources of inspiration and action.

Leopold's lectures at the time were equally commanding. Unlike many of his colleagues', they were not dry factual summaries. Rather he introduced students to the great Russian historians and their historical controversies. We learned about Soloviev, Kliuchevskii, Platonov, Presniakov, Pokrovskii and others and in this way were drawn into history as part of an ongoing debate about the contesting visions of Russia's past and thereby its destinies.

In the 1960s, Leopold's interests shifted to social history. He published his landmark articles on social stability in urban Russia, in 1964 and 1965, which revealed the social and political developments that on the eve of the First Word War made a revolution likely, though he later claimed that he never argued that it was inevitable. In any case, his theses engaged the entire field in an intense debate on the origins of the revolution. I will leave mention of his succeeding works to others who will speak today.

When he moved to Columbia in 1965, Leopold maintained his intensive commitment to his graduate students. He introduced Social History Workshops to discuss the research of students and visiting scholars, and they continue to this day. The discussions I remember were lively and penetrating and often very long, the questions sharp and irreverent. We called the workshops, not completely in jest, "the little red schoolhouse." After the meetings, the participants repaired to a Chinese restaurant for ample dinners and considerable quantities of beer, though Leopold preferred margaritas.

With perestroika, his talent for bringing people together helped establish lasting contacts between American and Soviet scholars. It culminated in the remarkable series of conferences, under the aegis of the Leningrad (later St. Petersburg) Institute of History and the St. Petersburg European University, and they continue to meet. I participated in one of the first in 1991, the subject of which was the working class in early twentieth-century Russia. But Leopold made sure that I was able to deliver a paper on the representations of Nicholas II, which was published in *Istoriia SSSR* and stirred interest in a subject long taboo in Soviet scholarship. At the banquet afterwards, amidst the food and drink, Leopold's spirit prevailed and the participants made friendships and ties, many of which have lasted to this day.

Leopold flourished most in Russia during the years of perestroika. He pursued his work in the archive with his usual intensity, shared his enthusiasm about discoveries that promised new understandings of Russian political life between the two revolutions. He thrived with the spirit of academic companionship, especially among the scholars at the Petersburg Institute. At night he was the bon vivant visiting his friends at their homes, going to restaurants. I can still see him, at his table in a special room in the archive, concentrating intensely on documents, chatting with the archivists, whom he charmed, drinking tea, even smoking a cigar or a cigarette. On one occasion, he lived in a suite in the old Leningrad Hotel (now part of the Astoria Hotel), where it was said the poet Esenin ended his life. He luxuriated in the old world opulence, sat on a couch reading, writing, and enjoying a drink, with Cuban cigars strewn about the room. In these years, he met and courted Natasha. He wed her in New York, where I had joined him to teach at Columbia, and there was a joyous reception in our apartment. He settled down for the first time, happy after decades of quest and wandering.

Perestroika in Russia had opened possibilities to reform and enliven the Russian historical profession together with western historians who would enrich their methodology and at the same time develop their own research on Russia's past. To a certain degree, Leopold succeeded in achieving that. But the Russia that emerged in the two decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union proved not to be what he had loved or envisioned. The idealism mixed with socialist inclinations that inspired his scholarly mission and those who joined him was subverted by the disorder and rampant materialism of the 1990s, the repudiation of socialism, and the idealization of western capitalism that he found most abhorrent. He was destined to live through one of the many sharp reversals of direction that characterize the Russian past and to join the ranks of the many members of the intelligentsia whose lofty missions, viewed from the present, are often depicted in the hues of tragedy.