

Fathers, Sons, and Grandchildren in the American Historiography of Tsarist Russia

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English version of “Otsy, deti i vnuki v amerikanskoi istoriografii tsarskoi Rossii,” *Amerikanskaia rusistika: Imperatorskii period* [American Russian Studies: The Imperial Period]. Samara: Izdatel'stvo 'Samarskii Universitet' [Samara University Press, Russia], 2000., pp. 5-47.

The works in this volume were selected for translation into Russian with several criteria in mind. First, they range over and illuminate many different areas in the American historiography of tsarist Russia. Secondly, their methodologies and approaches are as varied as their thematic focus and, as this introductory essay aims to show, are fruitfully considered alongside one another. Third, they highlight historiographical directions that, it is hoped, will be of interest to Russian historians and students alike. Represented here are both the longstanding central concerns of American historiography of imperial Russia – namely, political, social and intellectual history -- as well as certain other fields and approaches that have gained rapidly in prominence and sophistication in recent years. Some of these other fields, such as the history of Russian science, have grown in importance in recent decades simply through their own internal momentum. Others, such as the “new cultural history,” which will be discussed below, have emerged out of general trends within the historical profession in the West. Still others, such as the study of nationalities, borderlands and empire, were catapulted to prominence in the wake of the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991. Finally, the works selected here combine a number of “landmark” articles that have been broadly influential since the 1970s along with some more recent works that are likely to make a lasting impact. All of them make contributions that are both empirical and conceptual in nature.

It is risky to impose simple explanatory frameworks on large, rich and complex fields of scholarship. The history of tsarist Russia in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries is undoubtedly

a significant branch of both American historiography as a whole and of the international historiography of Russia. After all, for many decades imperial Russia, especially the period from the Great Reforms to 1917, was the center of gravity in the Western study of Russian history as a whole. There are important library and archival repositories relating to tsarist and revolutionary Russia in the United States, most notably at the Library of Congress in Washington, the Slavonic Division of the New York Public Library, at Columbia University's Bakhmeteff Archive and Stanford University's Hoover Institution of War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford.¹ In the institutionally decentralized academic system of the United States, in which scholarly research is centered in private and public research universities, there is scarcely an American higher educational institution of importance that does not offer instruction in Russian history. There are several thousand Slavists, including historians of imperial Russia of the most varied scholarly persuasions, active in the United States today.² It is possible, however, to survey this field's development and, making all necessary caveats about oversimplification, establish certain basic features of the field.

The first awakenings of significant American interest in Russia date only to the mid-1880s and after, and the first course in Russian history in the United States was launched at Harvard in 1894. Despite the foundation of the first professorships in Russian Languages and Literatures at the universities of Harvard, Columbia and Berkeley, the appearance of a handful of active

¹ The Library of Congress acquired the Iudin Collection of 80,000 volumes in 1907 from the Siberian merchant and bibliophile, but the collection was not fully catalogued and added to the Library's collections until the 1950s – a significant indicator of the slow development of Russian Studies in the US. The New York Public collection was launched in the 1890s, but began significant growth in the 1920s. *Putivoditeli* for the Bakhmeteff and Hoover archives are published as Carol A. Lendenham, comp. *Guide to the Collections in the Hoover Institution Archives Relating to Imperial Russia, the Russian Revolutions and Civil War, and the First Emigration* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1986), and *Russia in the Twentieth Century: The Catalog of the Bakhmeteff Archive of Russian and East European History and Culture* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1987).

² In recent years, due to the opening of former party and Soviet state archives and the emphasis in the academic "job market" in the United States on 20th century history, the center of gravity in the field has noticeably shifted to early Soviet history. The primary nauchnoe obshchestvo for Slavists in the U.S. is the American Society for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, which publishes a bulletin (*Newsnet*) and a journal (*Slavic Review*).

founders of the field, and their ties with libraries and universities in Germany and England (and to a lesser extent France), the discipline of Russian history in the United States is a scholarly specialization that was virtually non-existent before 1914.³ It grew somewhat, but still only gradually and slowly, in part as a result of an the influx of émigré scholars from Russia itself (such as Michael [Mikhail Mikhailovich] Karpovich (1888-1959) of Harvard University and George [Georgii Vladimirovich] Vernadsky (1887-1973) at Yale University) in the 1920s and 1930s.⁴

Clearly, however, its “heroic period” was the immediate post-WWII years, when Russian Studies experienced a burst of enormously rapid growth.⁵ As a result, the contemporary history of imperial Russia in the US can largely be conceptualized as the product of three generations of scholars, if one counts the immediate postwar generation as the first large-scale and foundational period of disciplinary growth. We might call them the fathers (from the late 1940s to the mid-1960s), the sons (*deti*) (of the late 1960s to the late 1980s) and the grandchildren (*vnuki*) (of the 1990s). This broad division into generations is hardly absolute. In a field of knowledge that is institutionally decentralized and intellectually variegated we are speaking in deliberately schematic terms about broad shifts in scholarship rather than all-encompassing explanations about the work of the entire field. In this sense, one can talk about three large and distinct shifts in interpretive frameworks and emphasis since 1945. These shifts were driven by changing

³ On origins of American interest in Russia between the mid-1880s and World War I, see Robert F. Byrnes, “Russian Studies in the United States Before the First World War,” in his *History of Russian and East European Studies in the United States: Selected Essays* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994): 3-19.

⁴ Karpovich published an influential early general history, *Imperial Russia, 1801-1917* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1932), but was primarily known as the teacher of an entire generation of American historians of Russia. Vernadsky published five volumes of *A History of Russia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943-1969). In addition, a landmark study of this era was written by the founder of Columbia University’s Russian Institute, Geroid Tanquary Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Regime* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1932).

⁵ See Byrnes, *A History of Russian and East European Studies*; George P. Majeska, “The Study of Russian History in the United States,” in *Aktual’nye problemy prepodavaniia rossiiskoi istorii v universitetakh Rossii I SshA* (Samara: Izdatel’stvo ‘Samarskii Universitet,’ 1998), 9-14. For a brief history of the field through the prism of the leading

generational ethos as well as the effects of powerful external barriers and breaks – the domestic social-political upheaval circa 1968 between the fathers and sons, and the end of Soviet communism in 1991 between the sons and the grandsons.

The “fathers” were the pioneers of the postwar boom in Russian Studies, a boom directly and indirectly financed in large part by the US Government, but also by private foundations. This was, of course, the period of the shift from wartime alliance to the Cold War, which explains the rapid growth of the field. The effects of the Cold War on the US scholarship of imperial Russia, both institutionally and intellectually, could be both crudely destructive and subtly distorting, yet not omnipresent or even uniformly negative. It gave the field élan and a sense of urgency; after all, this generation included some of the most learned scholars ever to contribute to the field, such as Barrington Moore, Jerome Blum and many others, even as travel to the USSR for scholarly research was virtually impossible before 1958. The effects of the Cold War on American Russian Studies is not the simple topic it is often made out to be, as the dismissive phrase “cold war historiography” suggests, and is itself deserving of scholarly investigation that it has not yet received.⁶

In the 1950s and early 1960s, the focus in the historical profession in general, far more than later, was on the center and the top of the historical process: the rulers, high politics and great ideas, diplomatic history, the state, parties and, in general, elites. To this, in the Russian field in particular, was added an overriding concern with the roots of revolution and, to use the words of Seton-Watson’s influential textbook, the “decline” of the Russian Empire.⁷ A preoccupation with the roots of the Soviet order also explains the great attention paid to the

journal *Russian Review* (Russkoe obozrenie), founded in 1941, see Eve Levin’s article, “Problemy Rossiiskoi istorii na stranitsakh zhurnala ‘Russian Review’ (SshA),” *Otechestvennaia istoriia*, no. 2 (March-April 1998): 143-148.

revolutionary movement and Russian Marxism. In some respects, it has often been observed, this historiography mirrored the concerns of official Soviet historiography – with, of course, the colors black and white differently distributed. Thus, if Soviet historiography emphasized the overwhelming inevitability of revolution, liberal Western historiography began a search for alternatives to revolution, in some cases projecting them as far back as the “lost opportunities” of 1730 and a series of other specific and fateful turning points in the 18th century.⁸ Most frequently, such counter-factual hopes were pinned on the period between 1905-1917 and on the Kadet Party.

Another concern, and in this the historiography of Russia resembled in some ways the long domination in the field of German history of the “Sonderweg” (special path) thesis, was to distinguish how greatly Russia differed from Western Europe.⁹ This often produced a picture of Russian history as *sui generis* and unique, although at the same time comparisons to a “normal” Western path of development were ubiquitous. The problem of constantly measuring Russia’s failures against the yardstick of an idealized “West” or “Europe,” which still plagues the field in many subtle forms and which is likely never to be fully resolved, was at first strong and explicit. These were decades of fundamental research in many areas that laid the groundwork for much future development in many subfields. The field diversified significantly in the 1960s, with the publication of such “classics” as James Billington’s interpretive history of Russian culture, the *Icon and the Axe*, and Alexander Vucinich’s encyclopaedic works on the history of Russian

⁶ A recollection affording great insight into the first, extraordinary postwar generation of U.S. Russian specialists, many of who had formative experiences in the military and intelligence, is Robert F. Byrnes, “Harvard, Columbia, and the CIA: My Training in Russian Studies,” in Byrnes, *uk. soch.*, 239-263.

⁷ Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Decline of Imperial Russia, 1855-1914* (London: Methuen and Co, 1952).

⁸ For example, see Isabel de Madariaga, “Portrait of an Eighteenth-Century Russian Statesman: Prince Dmitry Mikhaylovich Golytsin,” *Slavic and East European Review*, 62:1 (January 1984): 37-39.

⁹ The major English-language assessment of the Sonderweg thesis is David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth Century Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

science.¹⁰ Prevailing concerns with alternatives, roots of revolution and Russian uniqueness hardly prevented sophisticated works, such as Martin Malia's erudite intellectual biography of Alexander Herzen, from emerging as well.¹¹ And, as later, there were always exceptions to the main tendencies: for example, the school of "modernization theory" of the 1950s-1960s was highly comparative, often crossed the otherwise rigid boundary of 1917 in its considerations, and refined a social and economic rather than primarily political and ideological prism for viewing Russian historical change. Later rejected entirely as overly universalistic in its claims and overly sociological in its approach, in its most sophisticated incarnations the modernization school produced work that still seems insightful today.¹²

The sons (*deti*) were politically more leftist and their rebellion came in explicit reaction to the fathers – like their namesakes in the nineteenth-century Russian intelligentsia.¹³ Coming of age in the 1960s and 1970s, they responded to some of the sweeping changes introduced into the historical profession and in scholarship in general resulting from the generational and social revolts of that era. The 1970s and 1980s became the heyday of quantitative social history, of history "from below," of so-called revisionism, which had its own dynamics especially in Soviet but also in imperial Russian history. Much of this work was shaped by what came before, if only in response. If the fathers had written history from the top down, the sons said they would write it from the bottom up. If the fathers had stressed the determining role of politics, important leaders and (especially in the revolutionary and Soviet periods) ideology, the sons moved "social

¹⁰ James H. Billington, *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1966); Alexander Vucinich, *Science in Russian Culture: A History to 1860* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963).

¹¹ Martin Malia, *Alexander Herzen and the Birth of Russian Socialism, 1812-1855* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961).

¹² See, for example, the lively exchange between Cyril Black and Hugh Seton-Watson in Thomas Riha, ed. *Readings in Russian Civilization*, vol. 2 (Chicago, 1965). Black's major work was *The Dynamics of Modernization: A Study in Comparative History* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

forces” into the center of their interpretive framework. If an implicit emphasis on Russia’s alternatives to 1917 and Bolshevism were part of the retrospective, *post hoc* focus of the fathers, the sons posited the likelihood, even the social inevitability of revolution, and emphasized popular responses to the revolutionary parties and Social Democracy. Some of this work paralleled rather than inverted the postulates and evidence presented by official Soviet historiography, and some -- but hardly all -- was directly influenced by Marxism (academic brands of neo-Marxism of numerous varieties). But mostly it functioned within a broader paradigm of Western social history that also incorporated such influences as the French Annales School, one that was concerned with exploring vast uncharted areas of Russian society on the basis of archival, empirical, and quantitative new evidence. Recovering the complexity of Russian social structure was the greatest contribution of the period, for it irrevocably broadened the focus of historians’ inquiry.

The historiography of the sons produced a strong series of heavily documented, fundamental studies of social groups, including such well known studies as Field and Emmons on the peasantry and emancipation, Zelnik on labor history, Rieber’s work on the *kupechestvo*, Freeze on the *dukhovenstvo*, and Manning and others on the *dvorianstvo*.¹⁴ Many historians of the 19th century were not only responding to the fathers, but to their readings of the prerevolutionary Russian classics of historiography, and they therefore entered into a scholarly dialogue with the state school and other prerevolutionary historiographical voices stressing the autonomy of society.

¹³ For a revealing reflection on some perceived parallels between 1860s Russia and 1960s America by a historian of nihilism, see Abbot Gleason, *Young Russia: The Genesis of Russian Radicalism in the 1860s* (NY: Viking Press, 1980), introduction.

¹⁴ Terence Emmons, *The Emancipation of the Russian Serfs* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, 1970); Daniel Field, *The End of Serfdom: Nobility and Bureaucracy in Russia, 1855-1861*; Reginald Zelnik, *Labor and Society in Tsarist Russia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971); Alfred J. Rieber, *Merchants and Entrepreneurs in Imperial*

At its best, the “new social history,” as it was then called, transformed the study of politics and ideology by showing the import and weight of the social matrix in which all politics and ideology had to function. But many of the sons, of course, were not concerned with providing mere background, or of studying the interconnections of various historical spheres; they wanted to explain Russian history anew by making deep social factors into the most decisive ones. The biggest paradigm that emerged from the era of the domination of social history was one of a sharp opposition between state and society, which, in Riasanovsky’s famous phrase “parted ways” under Nicholas I and in the revolutionary epoch, in Haimson’s [*Kheimson cherez –i-kratko*] even better-known formulation, led to a “double polarization” between state and the intelligentsia, on the one hand, and the broad masses and all elites, on the other.¹⁵ Moreover, all social groups were not studied equally; this wave of social history tended to favor urban workers at the expense of peasants (peasant studies flowered somewhat later¹⁶) or other groups, for that matter. This was also the era in which such new directions as women’s history were introduced into the historiography; the study of women was inspired by the rise of Western feminism, just as social history was by 1960s radicalism, and both initially began as attempts to restore the history of a neglected, oppressed group. Both kinds of studies initially tended to focus not on interaction among groups, or to incorporate social or gender perspectives into many kinds of considerations; rather, they typically attempted to recover the history of the favored group

Russia (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Gregory Freeze, *The Russian Levites: Parish Clergy in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977).

¹⁵ Nicholas Riasanovsky, *A Parting of Ways: Government and the Educated Public in Russia, 1801-1855* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976); Leopold Haimson, “The Problem of Social Stability in Urban Russia, 1905-1914,” *Slavic Review*, chast’ I, 23:4 (1964): 616-642, chast’ II, 24:1 (1965): 1-22.

¹⁶On the historiography of Russian peasant studies in the West, see Esther Kingston-Mann and Timothy Mixer, eds. *Peasant Economy, Culture, and Politics of European Russia, 1800-1921* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

(workers, women) separately or within the context of organized politics (the revolutionary movement, the women's movement).¹⁷

Nonetheless, as an “antithesis” of the work of the fathers, social history still maintained many continuities with the fathers’ “thesis.” Some historians (hardly all) still placed the lost alternatives of Russian history near the center of their interpretations, but now the alternatives included the moderate socialist as well as the liberal or conservative variety.

A strongly retrospective mode of writing history backwards from 1917 was perpetuated; Michael Confino has examined in detail the distorting effects this could have in historians’ treatments of the “crisis of the old regime” and examinations of the structure of Russian society.¹⁸ The revolutionary movement still attracted a great deal of attention, as did the roots of revolution broadly conceived, but a new development was the great wave of urban workers’ history centered largely in the last decades of tsarism. This led to a whole social interpretation of the collapse of tsarism that focused on radicalized industrial workers as the key to the entire revolutionary process. This has been critically examined by Stephen Kotkin, who attacks many defects of this paradigm, including the way it led historians to accept social and class categories as immutable and underlying rather than politicized and the subject of political struggles themselves.¹⁹

Partly as a result, certain areas of imperial history continued to be very much understudied in the 1970s and 1980s. Chronologically, these areas were located in the prereform era; thematically, in the study of culture and especially Orthodoxy and religion, as well as non-

¹⁷Formative studies in this area include Barbara Alpern Engel, *Mothers and Daughters: Women of the Intelligentsia in Nineteenth-Century Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) and Richard Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism, 1860-1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

¹⁸Michael Confino, “Present Events and the Representation of the Past: some Current Problems in Russian Historical Writing,” *Cahiers du monde russe*, 35:4 (1994): 839-868.

¹⁹Stephen Kotkin, “‘One Hand Clapping’: Russian Workers and 1917,” *Labor History*, 32:4 (Fall 1991): 604-620.

Russian nationalities; and geographically, in the regions and localities as well as almost all of non-Russian areas of the empire, the historiographies of which were dominated by émigré groups writing national history and largely separated from the “mainstream” of Russian studies.²⁰

The historiographical rise of the “grandsons” came in the period ushered in after the changes of the late 1980s during Gorbachev’s perestroika and the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991. It is an unfinished period in which these lines are written, so that the dangers of generalization and schematic oversimplification are even greater here. Even so, a distinct enough shift has occurred so that a definitively new historiographical period can be discerned. For one thing, the empirical and archival base of the field has noticeably expanded, due to the “archival revolution” after the late 1980s and the lifting of Soviet-era restrictions on foreign travel. The grandsons tend to spend much more time in Russia; while the “sons” had benefitted from official academic exchange agreements between the US and USSR beginning in 1958, they could rarely make repeated trips outside the official bureaucratic framework.

The events of 1991 prompted a set of almost immediately discernable scholarly reconsiderations and reactions. Most notably, the study of empire, non-Russians within the empire, and the non-Russian regions of tsarist Russia became one of the most active areas in the field.²¹ Some of this work involved comparison of the continental, supranational Russian Empire to the maritime, nation-state empires of Europe, but also, in terms of imperial policies the 19th century “age of nationalism,” to the Ottoman and Habsburg empires.²² Others took their cue from the scholarly industry of “Orientalism,” which began with the publication of the enormously influential study by Edward Said, *Orientalism*, which focuses on the image of the

²⁰ See Mark von Hagen, “Does Ukraine Have a History?” and responses, *Slavic Review*, 54:3 (Fall 1995): 658-717.

²¹ See, for example, the transformation of the journal *Nationalities Papers* after 1991.

²² Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863-1914* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996); Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen, eds.

Orient in France and the connections between ethnographic science and imperial domination.²³ Russianists, while not hesitating to challenge Said's methodologies, also began an intensive focus on ethnography and the images of non-Russian areas and peoples in Russian culture, literature, and art.²⁴ Also influenced by what is known as "postcolonial" studies and "subaltern studies" of the non-Western parts of the world, Russianists began to study Central Asia, the Caucasus and Transcaucasus, as well as the Western borderlands far more intensively. A second way in which 1991 influenced the historiography has to do with the previous focus on the roots of revolution and tsarism's collapse. Suddenly, with the Soviet Union no longer in existence, it began to seem less urgent to read the imperial past backwards from 1917 and October and to privilege the "road to revolution." As the historiographical introduction to a recent, landmark volume of new work on imperial Russia notes, "Many studies of the imperial era were scholarly autopsies, performed in confident awareness of the body's chronic ailments." As in the recent history of the Ottoman Empire, a new revisionist trend now is concerned with explicating why the empire persisted and cohered so long, rather than why it collapsed, or at least not to view everything primarily through the "thick lens of revolutionary hindsight."²⁵ Certain topics, such as the history of the revolutionary movement and Social Democracy, have lost their privileged status; certain other topics, some surprisingly long neglected, such as the history of Orthodoxy and the Church, as well as new investigations of popular religion, are noticeably on

After Empire: Multi-Ethnic Societies and Nation-Building: The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997).

²³ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

²⁴ A notable study of imperial policy and ethnography is Yuri Slezkine's *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small People's of the North* (Berkeley: University of California, 1994). An important recent anthology of recent work is divided into two sections: "Empire and Orient" and "Frontier Encounters." See Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini, eds. *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).

²⁵ Jane Burbank and David L. Ransel, "Introduction," in Burbank and Ransel, eds. *Imperial Russia: New Histories for the Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), xi, xv.

the rise. Finally, one of the main goals of the “grandsons” is to cultivate a much more comparative approach to Russian history.²⁶

Like the sons before them, the grandsons’ efforts have been partly shaped by prevailing changes in the historical profession and partly by their own challenges to the approaches of the previous generation. Within the realm of social history, for example, some have moved from the study of single groups to the study of the interaction among groups, making the issue of how illiterate or non-elite groups are portrayed in sources as a primary problem of investigation.²⁷ Others have moved to different understandings of class and society itself as concepts that are constructed rather than objective realities that exist in all times and places.

Such changes have been deeply influenced by contemporary changes in the writing of history in the West as well as in broader intellectual life. The complex of changes that have affected historical scholarship includes many elements. The first is the displacement of social history with cultural history in the center of historical field, a phenomenon sometimes referred to as the “new cultural history.” This history-writing understands concepts of culture in an anthropological sense as systems of values and meaning, rather than high culture. In part, the new cultural history draws on the methods of kul’ turologiia (cultural studies), as well as other fields such as literary studies, semiotics, and cultural anthropology. It is therefore preoccupied with mentalities, identities and popular culture as well as aesthetic or high culture in a traditional sense.²⁸ As this suggests, the cross-disciplinary orientations of historical studies have shifted: from the predominance of quantitative methods, social science methodologies and sociology in

²⁶ For a compilation of recent work on imperial Russia by the post-1991 generation of scholars, see David L. Hoffmann and Yanni Kotsonis, *Russian Modernity* (London: Macmillan, forthcoming in 1999).

²⁷ For a prominent example of this kind of study, see Joan Neuberger’s wide-ranging exploration of lower-class crime that began to be discussed and classified as “hooliganism” in the press in turn-of-the-century Petersburg press: *Hooliganism: Crime, Culture and Power in St. Petersburg, 1900-1914* (Berkeley: University of California, 1993).

the period of the “sons” they have moved toward the other human (gumanitarnykh) sciences in the period of the grandchildren.

As this suggests, the preoccupation with language and discourse (*diskurs*) currently so prevalent in the humanistic sciences, and largely drawn from French “post-structuralism” in literary criticism and philosophy, has permeated contemporary historical writing as well. In the historical field, by far the most important figure in this French influence has been the social philosopher Foucault (*Fuko*). The influence of Foucault’s writing has so great in the last two decades that his influence on Western historians might even be compared to Marx or Weber – it has gone far beyond the direct influence of the original thinker and spawned entire historical areas of inquiry, characteristic topics of concern that have developed beyond their original inspiration. Among the most characteristic Foucauldian problems are the study of the interrelations between power and knowledge in the history of the professions and human sciences; the history of sexuality, medicine and the body; and the study of “discourse” not merely as language but as the way in which systems of knowledge are codified and put into practice.

Finally, any discussion of contemporary influences on historiography must grapple with that condition, set of ideas, and cultural movement collectively termed “postmodern” – a notoriously elusive, amorphous and often misleading phrase, but one central to Western and American intellectual and scholarly debates in the 1980s and 1990s. Postmodernism means different things in the different arts and sciences; it originated, for example, in the movement to repudiate modernism in architecture in the 1960s and was soon applied more broadly. In history, on the most basic level, the very concept of postmodernism implies that Western society has

²⁸ For a recent compilation that reflects this understanding of culture in the Russian field, see Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd, *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution: 1881-1940* (New York: Oxford University

shifted into a new epoch, that the “modern” era, usually held to begin with the Enlightenment’s faith in reason, progress, and human emancipation, is over. This highly contested proposition first coalesced in cultural and ideological movements of the 1970s, which, it has been argued, were distinctively American in their original incarnation.²⁹ In the study of history in the United States, the postmodernism has been associated with a kind of radical relativism. It is commonly linked to theories of language that claim there is no extralinguistic reality independent of our use of language, and that language itself holds no stable meaning and does not refer to an independent world of facts; that key concepts and phenomena traditionally held to be objective and stable are culturally or socially “constructed”; that historical writings employ methods of narrative that are similar to those used in fiction and the novel; and that there can be no grand explanations, no “meta-narratives” in the writing of history. In a recent article, one critic of these trends cites evidence that they have in fact been far less influential the discipline of history than in literary studies in the US. For obvious reasons: it is often remarked that there would be little sense left in studying the past if they were fully accepted. While many practicing historians have simply ignored postmodern methodological challenges, one can identify a range of responses from hostile rejection, to eager embrace, to partial and critical acceptance.³⁰

Even so, if postmodernism is not so much a set of specific ideas and approaches as a cultural-intellectual style and mood shaping the world in which historians write, it can be said to have had an impact that cannot be ignored. In this sense, it has provoked certain trends that many enemies of postmodernism might welcome: a greater skepticism towards sources, greater theoretical interest in source criticism and textual analysis, less certainty in the objectivity of

Press, 1998).

²⁹ In my opinion, one of the best places to start in understanding the “postmodernism” debate is with Andreas Huyssen, “Mapping the Postmodern,” in Joseph Natoli and Linda Hutcheon, *A Postmodern Reader* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993): 105-156.

quantitative data, and a tendency to shun grandiose explanations. By the same token, it can be connected to a greater concern with the anomalous and the non-typical in history, with micro-settings, as well as with paradox and irony in historical writing. In addition, in the Russian field, while perhaps more recent scholarship merely flirts with rather than embraces such methodological directions, it is fair to say that because of the “linguistic turn” and the “new cultural history” several other more traditional approaches with lengthy pedigrees have gained greater prominence. Among them are the history of ideas, of high culture, and the history of key concepts, all of which have lengthy roots in the historiography, in the last case not so much in the United States as in the German school of “*Begriffsgeschichte*” (history of concepts and terminology). In each case, however, the broad shift from social and “material” history of the sons to the cultural and “spiritual” history of the grandsons has provoked a resurgence of traditions that predate the heyday of the social history of the previous generation.³¹ The grandsons are not only looking to the latest French fashions or literary finery but, at least in part, to their grandfathers.

If one were to crown this schematic overview of generational shifts with the broadest possible conclusion about methodological change, it could be said that the primary framework through which historians have viewed the historical process has shifted from high politics and ideas with the grandfathers, to society and social forces with the fathers, and to culture broadly conceived in the sense described above with the grandsons. While each shift of framework

³⁰ Perez Zagorin, “History, the Referent, and Narrative: Reflections on Postmodernism Now,” *History and Theory*, 38:1 (1999), 1-24.

³¹ On the German school of the history of key historical concepts (*Begriffsgeschichte*), which developed its own methodologies, see the monumental *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialer Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck, 7 vols. To date (Stuttgart: E. Klett, 1971-1997). The main methodologist of this school is Koselleck, whose writings have been translated into English as *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985). The primary interpreter of this tradition in the Anglophone world has been Melvin Richter; see, for example, Richter,

brings with it certain advantages and new insights, and the field itself has been formed around the perception of sharp reversals and epistemological breaks, there have been notable continuities among the three dominant generational approaches. In particular, each carries the possibility of ignoring or downplaying other kinds of historical explanations. Each carries within it the possibility of reductionism, as historical causality can potentially be explained by reducing it to political forces, to social forces, or to the force of culture.³²

This tripartite schema of American historiography of Russia allows us to situate the eight works in this anthology more precisely. In what follows, I will make some observations about the place of these authors' works in the historiography, about their scholarly biographies, and about the contribution and context of each of the works that are translated here. In addition to situating their general approaches, I will also highlight the implications and positions of these particular works for two issues that, as suggested by the discussion above, are crucial for evaluating the work of all three generations of American scholarship of Russia. The first is the unavoidable question of the "West" and "Westernization" or "Europeanization" in imperial Russian history beginning in the 18th century. Although it is even today often taken as such, the West is neither an obvious geographical entity nor a unified historical model of development.³³ The history of how the divisions between East and West, Russia and Europe have been

"Begriffsgeschichte and the History of Ideas (Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being, and the History of Ideas," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 48 (1987): 247-264.

³² The critique of new brands of reductionism is elaborated by Laura Engelstein in her *obzor* of new works in cultural history, "Paradigms, Pathologies, and Other Clues to Russian Spiritual Culture: Some Post-Soviet Thoughts," *Slavic Review*, 57:4 (Winter 1998): 864-877.

³³ On the process by which the main division in Europe began to be conceived as an East-West divide during the Enlightenment and after, see Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994). For a new interpretive history of Western perceptions of Russia from 1700 to the present, see Martin Malia, *Russia Under Western Eyes: From the Bronze Horseman to the Lenin Mausoleum* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); for a methodologically significant treatment of these issues in relation to the Balkans, see Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1997). On Western models of economic development in Russian history, see Esther Kingston-Mann, *In Search of the True West: Culture, Economics and Problems of Russian Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

conceived is, of course, a longstanding and tangled topic that affects both history and historiography. How have these historians approached the problem of comparisons in the writing of Russian history, both explicit and implicit? How have they dealt with models of development, interactions and perceptions in dealing with the problem of Russia and the West? The second problem I will examine along with this is equally central to the historiography, but it has to do with the way treatments of time, rather than space, affect basic ways in which tsarist history is conceptualized. How have these historians dealt with the problem of the roots of revolution, of reading imperial Russian history in light of its ultimate demise and, by extension, of evaluating the stabilities and instabilities of the tsarist order? This question might be characterized as the problem of teleology and the roots of revolution.

Few would argue with the statement that Marc Raeff [NB: in Russian spell as **Raev throughout**], author of the article on the *reguliarnoe gosudarstvo*, is the leading historian of Russia in the 18th and early 19th centuries in the United States. A complete bibliography of his work beginning with his first book review in 1946 lists 276 items, although it ends only in 1987.³⁴ Raeff, as testified in his scholarly interest in the history of the Russian emigration, was shaped by his own experiences as a child of *Rossia za rubezhom*.³⁵ He studied with Karpovich at Harvard and spent his career at Columbia University from 1961 to 1987, whose Russian Institute (later renamed the Institut im. Averell Garrimana) was from the 1950s-1980s one of the leading centers of the study of Russian history in the West. Raeff's work spans the generations of the fathers and the sons, and his voluminous work also spans the study of political, intellectual, and social history. His first major study, *Siberia and the Reforms of 1822*, reflected an unusual

³⁴ Edward Kasinec, "Marc Raeff: A Bibliography (1946-1987)," in Ezra Mendelsohn and Marshall S. Shatz, eds. *Imperial Russia 1700-1917: State Society Opposition. Essays in Honor of Marc Raeff* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1988), 289-313.

interest in regional history; other principal works dealt with the workings of the state, such as his study of Speranskii and reform (1957), but also social-historical studies on the Pugachev rebellion and the origins of the Russian intelligentsia in the 18th century nobility. Subjects of his edited volumes have been Peter I and Catherine II, the Decembrists, and Russian intellectual thought. The two volumes of his collected essays, which give insight into Raeff's catholic interests, suggest that one abiding theme of his work has been the relationship between Russian state and society, yet with an appreciation of the transformative power of both the state and ideas that made him skeptical of "revisionist" theories of change "from below."³⁶ Yet Raeff's work is unusual in the historiography of both the fathers and the sons in that his fluency in European languages and histories gave him a deeply comparative outlook that pervaded his understanding of Russian history. Paul Bushkovitch, who is also represented in this volume, recalls how he entered Columbia University in 1970 to study with Raeff and the scholar of pre-Petrine court ceremonial and myth, Michael Cherniavsky. Bushkovitch notes about Raeff and Cherniavsky (and himself) that they can be seen as products of both the Russian emigration and American universities. "Cherniavsky's seminars at Columbia followed the model of the precise and detailed analysis of Russian chronicles, charters, and other documents. Raeff brought to Russian history an unparalleled knowledge of Russian and European historiography and culture and their interactions. He taught me to see Russian history in the broadest European context, something then very unusual among Russian historians in the West."³⁷

³⁵ Mark Raev, *Rossiia za rubezhom. Istoriia kul'tury russkoi emigratsii, 1919-1939* (Moskva: Progress-Akademiia, 1994), first published in English in 1990.

³⁶ Marc Raeff, *Michael Speransky, Statesman of Imperial Russia, 1772-1839* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1957); *Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia: The Eighteenth-Century Nobility* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1966); *Imperial Russia: Understanding State and Society in the Old Regime* (New York: Columbia, 1984); *Political Ideas and Institutions in Imperial Russia* (Boulder: Westview, 1994).

³⁷ Paul Bushkovitch, personal correspondence with the author, 5 April 1998.

It is fitting, therefore, that Russia appears only one-third of the way through Raeff's article on the importance and legacy of the early-modern police state. The term "police state" has, of course, an utterly different ring to the 20th century ear than the administrative organization originating, as Raeff shows, in Protestant Central Europe – which did not have a supranational Catholic Church to modify the new state drive for uniformity, the mania for regulation, and the dynamic new intervention of the state into economic, social and cultural life. In the German tradition it is known as the *Polizeistaat*; the pre-revolutionary and Soviet historian Syromiatnikov referred to the "reguliarnoe" gosudarstvo Petra I, which corresponds closely to what Raeff is describing.³⁸ The amount of space Raeff devotes to European and not Russian developments in the development of state administration, ideology and bureaucracy is, however, central to his conception of Russian history. According to Raeff, what emerged in 17th century Germany reached Russia only in the 18th century: a continuum of state development stretched from the Rhine to the Volga. The development of the Petrine state thus appears in a radically different light. Peter I is compared to Austrian Kaiser Joseph II in his centralizing bureaucratic statism; the brutal didacticism of Peter I, often taken as unique to his personality and role within Russia, are referred to as a straight copying of earlier German administrative ordinances. Catherine II also appears not only as an Enlightenment ruler, but as a cameralist descendent of her 17th and 18th century German forebearers.³⁹

Russia, in Raeff's account, is, however, accorded a special obstacle in its part of the pan-European historical process: Raeff argues that Russia introduced a particularly Central European forms of state practices while possessing a radically different social fabric, so that Russia had to

³⁸ B. I. Syromaitnikov, *'Reguliarnoe' gosudarstvo Petra I i ego ideologiya. Chast' I.* (M-L: Izd. AN SSSR, 1943).

³⁹ This view was borne out in subsequent reevaluations of Catherine, such as Max J. Okenfuss, "Education and Empire: School Reform in Enlightened Russia," in Gary M. Hamburg, ed. *Imperial Russian History, I: 1700-1861* (NY: Garland Publishing, 1992): 107-134.

try to create a “new social matrix” along with the instruments of state. Raeff’s focus here is thus on state and society from the perspective of the development of the state. Although Raeff describes this as a kind of delayed development along a continuum, it might in the case of Russia be portrayed as combined development – particularly if one were to extend his discussion to the massive import of European ideas and culture into post-Petrine Russia precisely while, according to Raeff, a form of the 17th century administrative state was being developed. Raeff avoids this notion of combined development, perhaps, because one of his central arguments is to show that earlier forms of state administration can in fact be seen as more influential than Enlightenment philosophy (a main concern of previous historiography) in producing the patterns we often associate with modernity.

Raeff is manifestly not concerned with reading the history of 18th or 19th century Russia in light of the ultimate collapse of the tsarist state in revolution. But it is telling that the first reference to Russia in this article is to the contradictions of attempting to stimulate individual *tvorchestvo* by means of the bureaucratic centralized state – a perennial and typical, although not unique, problem of Russia (and, we might add, *mutatis mutandis*, of the Soviet Union). Raeff also makes reference to the later problem of the economic and social implications of industrialization in the 19th c undermining the entire edifice of the regular police state in the 18th c. Thus two key problems affecting the stability of tsarist Russia are, if one draws out the implications of his argument, particularly acute in Russia – but they are still not unique, and are still understandable in continental terms. If Raeff does obliquely address the roots of revolution in these typically comparativist terms, his comparative approach also has much to say about the discussion of “Russia and the West.” For if the particularly important referent for Russia in terms of state administration is Central Europe, particularly the Germanies and early modern

cameralism, the state interventionism he describes is ultimately continental, shared by Napoleonic France as well. In this light it is rather the Anglo-American tradition – in which the role of the state as the agent of change appears quite different and more minimal – which appears as the exception, not the rule. These kinds of distinctions, of course, not only complicates monolithic understandings of “the West,” but have ramifications in many branches of historiography where Russia is measured according to Western models.⁴⁰

Paul Bushkovitch, professor of history at Yale University, is one of the leading United States historians of pre-Petrine history and, more recently, the Petrine era. Bushkovitch’s father left Russia in 1923 and became a physicist in the United States; his grandfather, V.I. Bushkovitch, was a teacher of anatomy in the medical school of Odessa University from 1909-1939. Bushkovitch calls his father “in most ways a typical Russian *intelligent*, with knowledge and cultural interests far beyond his specialty.” His first knowledge of Russian history came from his stories of the first World War, the Revolution and the Civil War.⁴¹ Bushkovitch is known for his prodigious archival work and excursions into areas he considers to be understudied in the historiography. Thus his first work was in economic history, on the Moscow *kupechestvo*, for which he worked in Moscow University with N. B. Golikova in 1973-74.⁴² He next produced a major work on Orthodox religious experience in the 16th and 17th centuries.⁴³ His turn to the epoch of Peter I, reflected in the selection in this volume, began coincidentally in Vienna in 1984 when he began reading the reports of the Habsburg ambassador to Russia during

⁴⁰ To cite only one example we will encounter later, much of the extant social science literature on professionals and professionalization until recently was developed on the basis of Anglo-American examples, whereas the role of the state, both in terms of the creating the professions and in terms of the role and autonomy of the professional, was much different in both Central Europe and Russia. See Harley Balzer, ed. *Russia’s Missing Middle Class: The Professions in Russian History* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996).

⁴¹ Bushkovitch, personal correspondence with author, 5 April 1998.

⁴² Paul Bushkovitch, *The Merchants of Moscow, 1580-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

Peter's time. "I found myself reading of event after event that was essentially unknown in the historiographical tradition, so I thought that I would let the sources lead me on."⁴⁴ The result is a large forthcoming work on court politics from 1670 to 1725. Yet another of Bushkovitch's wide-ranging interests has been historiography and source criticism. This is reflected in the unusual organization of his article in this volume, divided as it is into one section on the tsarevich Aleksei and Peter I, and one section on the mid-19th century historian of Peter, Ustrialov.

Many of Bushkovitch's aims in this article are empirical, source critical, and aimed at debunking received wisdom, and these are all qualities typical of his work. First and foremost, he wishes to establish that Ustrialov's documentary publications, and the entire tradition of writing on the relationship between Peter and Aleksei that evolved out of them, involved omissions and falsified evidence. But Bushkovitch is also concerned with suggesting that Austrian plans to support some sort of rebellion against Peter using the tsarevich did in fact exist, as did Swedish plans that were unknown in Russian historiography but recognized in the Swedish historical tradition since the mid-19th century. Finally, Bushkovitch aims at characterizing the nature of the opposition to Peter reflected in the sources. Austria's actions are comprehensible, he argues, in that the great power to the West viewed Peter's rule as unstable. Indeed, he maintains, the sources reflect a deep-seated atmosphere of opposition permeating high levels of Church and State to Peter and his transformational rule – an atmosphere, he underlines, rather than a highly organized party or plot.. The conflict between Peter and Aleksei was not, then, merely personal, as the bowdlerized evidence introduced by Ustrialov suggested, but reflective of deep divisions in the Russian state. Characteristically, Bushkovitch makes a point of drawing a line against

⁴³ Paul Bushkovitch, *Religion and Society in Russia: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

beyond which the sources do not speak: the only “honest conclusion,” he writes, is that we do not know how and why tsarevich Aleksei died.

On another level, however, we can see that Bushkovitch, like Raeff before him, is deeply enmeshed in the theme of “Russia and the West.” While Raeff’s cosmopolitan approach manifests itself in transnational and comparative history, Bushkovitch in this article strives to integrate the perspectives a European multi-archival source base, and hence international and diplomatic politics, on the “affair” of tsarevich Aleskei. “In Peter’s time Russia entered European life on a grand scale, and his reign cannot be studied with Russian sources alone,” Bushkovitch insists.⁴⁵ Secondly, Bushkovitch rejects the “traditional version” that Aleskei’s world-view represents some sort of conservative religiosity, that the confrontation with his father symbolized the confrontation between old Russia and the new. Rather, Bushkovitch asserts, the tsarevich belonged culturally to Baroque Europe and Peter to the Protestant North – in this sense, both were “Europeans,” but different sorts.

Thomas Barrett’s article deals with long-term processes in the Russian expansion into the North Caucasus in the 18th and 19th centuries. Barrett belongs unambiguously to the generation of the “grandsons” – he is the youngest of all the contributors here, having defended a dissertation on the Terek Cossacks from 1700-1860 at Georgetown University and taken part in the recent explosion of interest in non-Russians in the Empire and the borderlands.⁴⁶ Much of the recent work on nationalities has focuses on Russian representations and study of non-Russians in literature, culture and ethnography. Barrett has contributed to this historiography with his study

¹⁶Tam zhe.

⁴⁵ Tam zhe.

⁴⁶ Thomas M. Barrett, “The Terek Cossacks and the North Caucasus Frontier, 1700-1860,” Ph.D. diss., Georgetown University, 1997.

of Shamil in captivity.⁴⁷ But as a specialist in two relatively new subfields --- known as environmental history and frontier history -- Barrett has raised issues in this article that differ significantly from either the literature on cultural approaches or Russian imperial policies that have made up much of the recent literature.⁴⁸ Barrett is interested here in applying new approaches developed in the study of the American West to the history of the North Caucasus. By doing so, he hopes to move beyond the Russian expansion into the area as either the history of military conquest (the focus of prerevolutionary Russian historiography), or an emphasis on *sblizhenie* and *druzhiba narodov* (the ideological imperatives of Soviet historiography) or an exclusive focus on repression and local resistance (the focus of many Western and national accounts in the history of non-Russian parts of the empire).

Barrett sketches an agenda in which the US historiography of the American frontier of the last 20 years can apply to the history of the North Caucasus. The first such application is environmental history. Here Barrett focuses on how settlers transform the landscape, the importance of disease, and the mixing of agricultural methods, from “extensive” Russian to “intensive” local methods of cultivation. The second is what he calls “frontier exchange,” which includes trade, cross-cultural mixing among various groups, and mutual influences between Russians, Cossacks and various local populations. The third is what he calls a “middle ground” created in the frontier zone in which populations, practices and cultures intermingled to create new entities. Here he emphasizes intermarriage, crossing of ethnic boundaries (for example in Ossetian enrolment in Cossack service), and the mixing of customs and allegiances in complicated ways. Speaking of a group of Armavir Armenians who moved from across the

⁴⁷ Thomas M. Barrett, “The Remaking of the Lion of Dagestan: Shamil in Captivity,” *Russian Review*, 53:3 (July 1994).

⁴⁸ In addition to his historical scholarship, Barrett has a second interest in horticulture and has even published a reference guide to North American Horticulture.

Kuban in 1839 as an example of this hybridity, he writes that they were “Armenian in self-identity, Christian in faith, members of the Russian Empire, surrounded by Cossacks, and Circassian in speech, dress, cuisine and custom...”

The result of Russian conquest, Barrett emphasizes, was not the creation of a “new Russia” in the periphery but a new entity – although this formulation leaves open the question of whether it was precisely the lack of sharp distinction between central areas and peripheries that distinguished the Russian from other historical (and especially maritime) empires. Nonetheless, frontiers (*frontir*) can be defined as areas in which central state authorities are weak, in which many influences merge, and therefore in which an unusually high degree of mixing takes place. In the North Caucasus, no one group, even Russians after 1864, Barrett stresses, was unambiguously dominant. Nor was the Russian-Caucasian relationship in economic terms a classical colonial relationship in which manufactured goods from the metropole are exchanged for raw materials. The frontier, given the degree of interactions and interdependencies among various populations, he maintains, makes all accounts oriented solely around imperial repression or local resistance politicized and simplistic. Barrett’s agenda, therefore, revolving around questions of locality and frontier mixing, is notable within our broader historiographical context for the virtually complete absence of the large traditional preoccupations with the themes of “roots of revolution” and “Russia and the West.”

With Daniel Todes’ selection we move into a much different branch of historiography – the history of science. Todes, a professor at the Institute for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine at Johns Hopkins University, is an active member of a relatively small but

important scholarly group on the history of Russian science in the USA.⁴⁹ Todes is a specialist in the history of evolutionary theory and physiology in Russia, and he published a monograph on the topic of this article, the Russian reception of Darwin in evolutionary thought.⁵⁰ He has also completed a monograph on I.P. Pavlov's laboratory and research in digestive physiology, part of a two-volume scientific biography of Pavlov, about whom he has also written a short textbook biography. His work on Pavlov has also included an important study of the academician's evolving relationship with the Bolshevik regime from 1917 to the 1930s.⁵¹ Todes spent the years 1976-77 and 1990-91 doing archival work in St. Petersburg, which he says he considers a "second home."⁵²

In fact, Todes' article, it is soon clear, might be considered to span the boundaries between the history of science, strictly conceived, and the field of the history of ideas, or intellectual history. On the first level, the article examines the reception of Darwin in evolutionary thought through the prism of the Russian reaction to the "struggle for existence," Darwin's metaphor to the earlier work of Malthus. Yet Todes examines not just the reaction of scientists but of publicists, radical thinkers, and the intelligentsia as a way of assessing the entire Russian reaction first to Malthus in the early 19th c and later to Darwin in the mid-late 19th c. His work thus suggests several ways in which research in the history of science, which is often segregated from the broader study of history, can fruitfully be integrated into the broader historiography.

⁴⁹ Significant works on tsarist Russia from this school include Alexander Vucinich, *Social Thought in Tsarist Russia: The Quest for a Science of Society* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1976), and Loren R. Graham, *Science in Russia and the Soviet Union: A Short History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁵⁰ Daniel Todes, *Darwin without Malthus: The Struggle for Existence in Evolutionary Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). See also Alexander Vucinich, *Darwin in Russian Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

⁵¹ Daniel Todes, "Pavlov and the Bolsheviks," *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 17:3 (1995): 379-418.

⁵² Daniel Todes, personal correspondence with the author, 4 May 1999.

Most important in this regard is the prominence of two notions in Todes' work – scientific metaphor and national style. A metaphor in science, as Darwin himself realized, is a shorthand way of drawing on shared perceptions of one subject in order to explicate another. As such, a scientific metaphor is dependent on the broader cultural, ideological and national context in which it is received – and it is precisely this interconnection between science and context Todes wants to uncover. Darwin's British readers, for example, immediately accepted the Malthusian associations of the "struggle for existence." But Todes traces the patterns involved in the way Russians, who had long since rejected Malthus, tended to question the Malthusian metaphor even when they still accepted Darwinian evolution more generally. Because, Todes suggests, the Russian physico-geographical environment gave them great critical distance from Malthus' central notion of overpopulation, and because a collectivist and anti-individualist orientation in politics and ideology had deep roots in many aspects of Russian society, Russian scientists tended to isolate and reject what they considered a mistaken Malthusian component in Darwin's metaphor. Indeed, Russian *obshchestvennost'* across the entire ideological spectrum, Todes shows, had varied but similarly negative reactions to Malthus and to Darwin's metaphor alike, often seeing them as examples of soulless individualism.

Todes' attempt to uncover the ways science develops in a broader social context fits squarely into the agenda of what is called the social history of science. But in this article he goes further, by examining how Kropotkin's anarchist theory of *vzaimnoi pomoshi* developed out the anarchist's reading of the ichthyologist K.F. Kessler's *zakon o vzaimnoi pomoshchi*, which in turn was an important scientific development in the Russian reaction to Darwin's metaphor. Todes draws distinctions between the scientific and extra-scientific, political, and ideological examinations of Darwin (both in his discussion of scientists themselves and a range of publicist-

intelligently), but suggests how these strands were interconnected, especially in an age when the barriers between natural science and broader intellectual life were not always sharp, and non-scientists and social scientists drew heavily on natural science to develop their ideas.

A second way in which Todes' methodology is of interest beyond the history of science lies in his notion of national style. The notion of national style in science should not be confused with nationalism in science, expressed in its most virulent forms in Nazi "racial science" or the *ura-patriotism* of Lysenkoism. Rather, national style has become an accepted term in the history of science to refer to the specific ways in which science develops within a particular national context – dependent on the institutional, cultural and social framework in which scientists within a national scientific community function.⁵³ Thus the "national" component of national style is intended as a neutral, descriptive term that does not necessarily contradict the premise that science also develops internationally as well. As for "style," the uses of that concept in scholarship its uses were developed, unsurprisingly, in art history but first applied to intellectual life by the great German sociologist Karl Mannheim. Mannheim, in his work on conservative thought and the sociology of knowledge, used style to refer to a combination of particular traits which might individually repeat themselves elsewhere, but which all came together in a distinguishable whole.⁵⁴ The common reaction to Darwin in Russia constituted a national style, Todes maintains, because it drew on a constellation of responses that in themselves were not unique to Russia but all came together in a distinctively Russian way – one that flowed not from a mystical Russian soul but the specific physico-geographical and socioeconomic (and, he might have added, political-intellectual) conditions prevalent in Russia at the time. Todes suggests several ways in which British scientific apprehension of Darwin was itself distinctive (for the

⁵³ A key study here is Jonathan Harwood, *Styles of Scientific Thought: The German Genetics Community, 1900-1933* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

British, for example, “natural selection” rather than “struggle for existence” became a problematic metaphor) and emphatically does not treat this national style as analogous to a bias that necessarily detracts from scientific accuracy. The manner in which Russian scientists were prompted to unpack the elements of Malthusian political economy in Darwin, for example, was arguably a way in which the Russian cultural context aided science, and Russia generally avoided the pernicious distortions of “social Darwinism” in which principles of natural selection were applied to human society. At the same time, the Russian scientific reception of Darwin gives insight into the pervasiveness of the collectivist ethos in Russian intellectual life. In Todes’ reach for British comparisons to illuminate his theme of national style, we can see yet another permutation in the grand theme of “Russia and the West” and historians’ treatment of it: for Todes, British and Russian reactions form two distinctive points in the development of international scientific thought.

The way in which aspects of the history of science have become more central to late imperial Russian history in recent historiography is amply demonstrated in the work of Laura Engelstein. The trajectory of the scholarly work of Engelstein, a historian at Princeton University whose work has been broadly influential in the late imperial Russian field, neatly mirrors what I have described above as the shift from social to cultural history. Engelstein’s first major work, a study of Moscow workers during the revolution of 1905, was part of the wave of social history of the generation of the “*deti*.”⁵⁵ Her book *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity* was without doubt her most influential work to date. A series of interlocking essays on Russian professionals in the medical and legal professions and their unsuccessful search for a more modern order, the book focused -- in ways that often partly anticipated, partly reflected

⁵⁴ Karl Mannheim, *Conservatism: A Contribution to the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1997).

many of the developing concerns of the “new cultural history” – on the intersections Silver Age culture, gender (*pol*) and sex (*seksual’nost’*), medicine, and law.⁵⁶ What in part gave all these topics a coherence and immediacy to many Western historians, and allowed Engelstein to speak about large issues in the nature of the pre- and post-1905 order in Russia, was her engagement with the work of Michel Foucault, whose importance to historians was just being discovered in the Russian field. Most recently, Engelstein has moved on to studies of sectarians and *skoptsy*, thus moving into religious history yet continuing the wave of new directions in cultural history.

In a widely read article in the *American Historical Review*, Engelstein discussed her approach to Foucault and problems of his application to Russian history at length, demonstrating that she was both highly critical of yet very much influenced by the work of the French philosopher of “discipline” and sexuality. Focusing on the social sciences and sexuality, Foucault described a shift from premodern administrative states (primarily in France) to modern liberal orders with civil societies, in which the role of experts, professionals who rely on the authority of science, and in many ways replace the direct and unmediated power of the state. As Engelstein put it, “Where monarchies once imposed order by brute force, through the coercive instruments of the state, Foucault observed, liberal capitalist societies exercise control through the gathering and production of information, the surveillance associated with these scientific projects...and by inculcating mechanisms of self-censorship and self-restraint that compel people to police themselves.”⁵⁷ But in Russia, the old regime survived, professionals never became fully autonomous, and liberalism failed, even as the kinds of modern disciplinary projects also

⁵⁵ Laura Engelstein, *Moscow 1905: Working-Class Organization and Political Conflict* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982).

⁵⁶ Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siecle Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992). This work has reportedly been translated into Russian under the title *Kliuchi schastia*.

⁵⁷ Laura Engelstein, “Combined Underdevelopment: Discipline and the Law in Imperial and Soviet Russia,” *American Historical Review*, 98:2 (April 1993), 338-339.

emerged. “Indeed, the Russian example represents the superimposition of the three models of power, chronologically separated (however imperfectly) in Foucault’s scheme: the so-called juridical monarchy, the *Polizeistaat*, and the modern disciplinary regime.”⁵⁸ Engelstein suggested that significantly different patterns that emerged in the Russian relationship between the state, professionals and the new modern forms of discipline bolstered by science showed that Foucault’s schema should not be accepted as a universal one. She also questioned the political implications of what she saw as Foucault’s equation of the coerciveness of the old regime custodial states and modern liberalism: “For what evolved after October 1917 was an alliance between the old tutelary state and the new disciplinary mechanisms but without the legal protections that Russian liberals had earlier considered essential to the disciplinary project itself and that *Rechtstaat* reformers had tried to insinuate into the autocratic context.”⁵⁹ In her other work, Engelstein emphasized the great role of 1905 in altering the configuration among professionals, the state, and the *narod*: with the establishment of a pseudoconstitutional system, on the one hand, and the frightening effects of the explosive revolutionary *bunt* of the lower classes on middle-class professionals, on the other, many professionals stopped struggling for autonomy from the state in the name of the people and developed a new enthusiasm for statist public intervention into the lives of the populace.⁶⁰

We can now appreciate Engelstein’s article here, which treats only medical professionals and only the period before 1905, in light of these broader conceptions. In this article Engelstein gives a detailed analysis of the debates of specialists in venereal disease over the spread of syphilis. Most striking, of course, is their widespread refusal to diagnose rural examples of syphilis as venereal; peasant syphilis was overwhelmingly considered *bytovoi*, spread innocently

⁵⁸ Tam zhe, 343.

⁵⁹ Tam zhe, 349.

through poor hygiene and the “wooden spoon.” To a large extent, the article is an extended attempt to unravel the riddle inherent in this late 19th c. diagnosis. First, Engelstein suggest how the question is medically ambiguous even today: there are documented cases of *bytovoi* syphilis, although they have largely died out in the industrialized world, and Russian physicians were far from simply being scientifically wrong in their diagnosis of nonvenereal syphilis in the premodern Russian village, even as their insistence of associating only the city with sexually-transmitted disease seems almost absurd a century later. But it is precisely because Russian physicians were presented with a clinical picture that was particularly difficult to decipher that their scientific views were wide open to an admixture of many of their own assumptions about society. They were thus debating both about the latest European scientific knowledge of the day and coloring the debates with a wide array of issues: their own conceptions of the peasantry, the city, sexual and moral behavior of men and women, as well as the how best to handle the syphilis epidemic in relation to their authority and the state.

Indeed, Engelstein views syphilis as a prime issue for examining physicians’ view of power and authority, for with such a disease they have to discuss regulation of people’s morality and most personal habits as well as public and social behavior. Most interesting is the way Engelstein analyzes the disagreements among physicians over the regulation of prostitution and anti-syphilis measures. While there were great disagreements, there were common trends beneath them: a broad tendency assume that females and peasants were incapable of making moral, conscious choices about sexuality, and that it was only urban (and not just educated or upper class) males who could regulate themselves as individuals. Assumptions about class and *pol*, urban and rural intersect in intricate ways in Engelstein’s accounts of professionals’ views. However, what emerges in the end about the pre-1905 debates, within all the complexity that

⁶⁰ Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, 254-298.

Engelstein reconstructs within them, is a broad consensus among Russian physicians about the purity and proximity to nature of the *prostoi narod*, and their insistence on enlightenment rather than statist compulsion. Hence Russian physicians largely delined or avoided the mantle of intrusive, coercive arbiters of the behavior of the masses that their West European colleagues eagerly assumed. In this we can perceive the depth of populist (*narodnicheskoi*) culture, in the broad and not purely political sense of the term, and of the ongoing professional struggle for autonomy against the absolutist tsarist state. With both these elements, then, Engelstein contrasts a particular Russian configuration of specialists–state–narod (or, in Foucault’s terms, power/knowledge) with that of Western Europe. This contrast is made even as Russian physicians are placed squarely in the context of European medicine and as many of their liberal and Victorian-era assumptions about morality are not at all exclusively Russian. If we have already seen how other historians have decided to underline either “Europeanness” or “Russianness” within the very different contexts of state and social structure, Engelstein in the realm of professional knowledge manages to emphasize both at once.

The article by Jane Burbank on the volost’ courts and conceptions of legality shows another side of the recent interest in Western historiography in specialists and their ideas: she unconventionally combines consideration of peasant legal practices in the volost’ courts after 1864 with a provocative and wide-ranging consideration of the liberal and Marxist traditions in understanding *pravo*, *pravovoe gosudarstvo*, and *zakonnost’*, arguing that both traditions have obscured the importance of the volost’ courts in creating a new legal culture. Burbank’s scholarly career goes far to explain this juxtaposition. Burbank’s major 1986 work, *Intelligentsiia i Revoliutsiia*, came at the height of the social history of “sons,” but she instead devoted herself to intellectual history and was in many ways skeptical of the simple stress on

“social forces” of that historiographical wave. That work, researched and written between 1978 and 1984 in European and American archives and libraries, and was devoted to the responses of the Russian intelligentsia, both in emigration and in Soviet Russia, to 1917 in the first five years of Bolshevik rule.⁶¹ As Burbank explains, “My goal for that book was to preserve the wide spectrum of diverse, provocative, and prescient interpretations of the revolution produced by non-Bolshevik intellectuals, whose views had been suppressed in the Soviet Union. I imagined then at some time in the distant future, Russians might be allowed to rediscover the intellectual history of 1917...[but] at the time it was impossible to use Soviet sources for research on the activities of such figures as Kropotkin, Struve, Miliukov, Berdiaev, and other ‘leaders of thought’ in Russia in the early 20th century.”⁶² Since 1987, Burbank has been working on legal culture in Russia from 1905-1925, and is completing two books – the first on the volost’ courts before 1917, and the second on legal practices and ideas from 1905 through the 1920s. She has visited Russia every year since 1987, and has worked jointly with Russian historians, including the Samara scholar P.I. Savel’ev, on a project on “empire and region” in Russia.⁶³

Burbank’s article introduces two concepts that are key to her interpretation: legal ideology and legal culture. Legal ideology she defines as the dominant traditions of viewing *pravo* and jurisprudence, which in Russia were developed after the turn of the 20th century by leading liberal jurists (Nabokov, Maklavkov, Koni, Gessen) and later by Bolshevik Marxists (Lenin, Stuchka, Pashukanis). Legal culture she defines both as the way law penetrates into daily life and habit through practice, and the way a legal system is used for solving conflicts, defining behavior, and inculcating *grazhdanstvennost’*. The crux of her article might be

⁶¹ Jane Burbank, *Intelligentsia and Revolution: Russian Views of Bolshevism, 1917-1922* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁶² Jane Burbank, personal correspondence with the author, 9 April 1998.

conceived as the notion that that *legal ideology* has obscured the great importance of peasant volost' courts in developing *legal culture* between 1864 and 1917, and that the dominance of legal ideology has inhibited the growth of legal culture in general.

This argument has many strands. She elaborates several ways in which legal ideology took attention away from the volost' courts in the tradition established at the turn of the century. For example, ideas about a *pravovoe gosudarstvo* were not based on existing practices of a law-based state, but were blueprints for the future, which drew attention away from the legal experiment of the volost' courts going on at the time. Second, the sharp distinction between *pravo* and *obychai* led legal theorists to stress how knowledge of written law defines a legal system, and in the volost' courts they therefore ignored mountains of written documentation to see only the primacy of peasant *obychai*. Stress on a uniform courts system of the future, rather than the existing estate-segregated system, also drew attention from the ways the volost' courts could in fact promote peasant citizenship.

Burbank described the historical experience of the volost' courts as positive if unintended example of how citizenship and legal culture can be developed through a legal system. She produces evidence suggesting that the peasants used the courts in great numbers, that they adjudicated them for everyday disputes involving issues of property, labor, and personal insult and dignity, and that precisely the fact that these courts were both estate-based and “national” might have brought peasants closer to the written state law and helped them develop a sense of citizenship – although in the last category it must be added that her argument is based more on deductive logic than hard evidence. While noting that such successes of the volost' courts were by no means consciously intended by the tsarist government, she maintains just such a lengthy

⁶³ Tam zhe; Jane Burbank, “Imperiia i grazhdanskoe obshchestvo: Imperskaia Konstruktsiia Rossii i Sovetskogo Soiuz,” in P.I. Savel’ev, ed. *Imperskii stroi Rossii v regional’nom izmerenii (XIX-nachalo XX veka)* (Moskva:

process of constructive legal practice is crucial for the construction of any *pravovoe gosudarstvo* in Russia. In other words, it is essential to give ordinary people a sense that they can participate in the legal system and benefit from it.

If the liberal legal tradition drew attention away from a court system that was such a surprising success, despite the fact that it was state-sponsored and estate-based, Soviet-Marxist legal ideology, Burbank continues, rendered the crucial importance of inculcating legal culture even more obscure. By linking law to state administration, by connecting “socialist legality” to the primacy of state directives, and by avoiding even the *appearance* of impartial justice for all (her comparison here, significantly, is the case of 18th century England), the Soviet system promoted a view of the legal system as essentially a set of formal rules handed down from above. This approach, as opposed to the successes of the volost’ courts in attracting peasant participation, is unable to produce a legal culture or make people believe the legal system serves their interests.

Several aspects of this argument deserve historiographical remark. First and foremost, the old stress on the “roots of revolution” and hence the instability of the tsarist system is here reversed; the volost’ courts, albeit unintentionally, were contributing to the potential for a *pravovoe gosudarstvo* and the development of the values of citizenship. Hence Burbank is more concerned with explaining some of the successes of the prerevolutionary experience than their inevitable failures, and by extension some of the elements of stability rather than instability in imperial Russia. Secondly, in her attention to the way ideologies and intelligentsia and specialist traditions have to be reckoned with – filtered out, or at least reckoned with, in order for the historian today to gain more insight into how views of peasants and groups lower on the social hierarchy in general are shaped in historiography and sources – Burbank is developing a major

Moscow Public Science Foundation, 1997).

historiographical trend in the skeptical rather than reverent 1990s. Her dual focus on volost' courts and legal ideas is especially striking and explicit in this regard. Finally, the way she ranges across the 1917 boundary to consider certain Soviet ideas and practices that are important to her discussion of the barriers to a pravovoe gosudarstvo can also be described as a post-1991 phenomenon, in which the 1917 barrier can more readily be transcended for purposes of analysis once the Soviet state no longer exists. Finally we can note the explicit, present-day relevance of this work that Burbank does not shun but rather embraces: her discussion of volost' courts is not purely historical, but addresses the burning questions of citizenship and legality that she, at the end, links explicitly to post-Soviet Russia. This kind of engagement may be unusual among American historians of Russia. But it does have the benefit of making her stance explicit on a topic that has had such *aktual'nost'* since the late 1980s; such present-day problems might well influence the historian's treatment even were they not mentioned. Interestingly, the older practice of explaining the imperial Russian experience in light of 1917 has been replaced by discussing its relevance to the Russian Federation after 1991.

The final selection by James West deals with the period 1905-1917. Its topic, the *kruzhok Riabushinskogo*, also puts it squarely in the context of Russian liberalism, the bourgeoisie, and the political struggles of the final phase of tsarism – themes that were subject to some of the most distorting pressures of Marxist-Leninist historiography as well as the most politicized debates over Russia's historical path in the United States. The article has been republished several times and is considered a historiographical classic. Its author, James West, studied at Princeton with the late Cyril Black, the prominent exponent of the modernization school discussed above. He spent the years 1969-70 and 1978-79 in the Soviet Union. West has devoted his career to the study of the *kupechestvo* and industrialists in politics and society in late imperial Russia: he co-

edited a prominent 1991 volume on “educated society” and the public sphere in late imperial Russia and a 1999 book on “merchant Moscow,” and plans to publish a monograph on the Riabushinskii circle.⁶⁴

West’s article was published first in 1984, the era of the “sons,” with its overriding concerns with the social forces leading to the downfall of tsarism, its pessimistic evaluation of the possibilities for a “liberal” or non-revolutionary alternative to the revolutionary outcomes of 1917, and its genuine insights into the political implications of social fragmentation. Indeed, West frames his article on Riabushinskii and the “young predprinimateli” primarily as a contribution to these fiercely debated topics – and it is possible many readers interpreted it solely in that light, for it was in fact a significant intervention that debate over stability in the interrevolutionary period. Riabushinskii’s circle embraced the shift from *soslovnost’* to a class-based social structure, and he links the political failures of the Progressists to the consequences of this social flux, the readily apparent fragmentation of the groups the Progressists attempted to organize. From the perspective of this treatment of Progressism, the “constitutional experiment” of the Dumas after 1907 hardly appears as a potential political solution to Russia’s problems – it, like the industrialists, seems a victim of “centrifugal forces” of flux around it. All these aspects of the article aim to contribute to the debate over the road to revolution in its social-historical dimensions.

West’s article develops several other themes, however, that point well beyond an emphasis on “objective” social forces like the weakness of middle class groups or fragmentation preventing Progressist success. In fact, the article is only indirectly concerned with the issues of

⁶⁴ Edith Clowes, Samuel Kassow and James West, eds. *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for a Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); James West and Iurii Petrov, eds *Merchant Moscow: Images of Russia’s Vanished Bourgeoisie* (Princeton: Princeton University Press,

the “objective” social fragmentation or the shift from *sosloviia* to classes – it is concerned with them only insofar as it describes Riabushinskii and his group confronting the broader situation. The article’s original contribution lies in its description of the distinctive, even unique biographical experiences, intellectual influences, and even psychological outlook that defined the young industrialists who pretended to speak in the name of the entire bourgeoisie. The “*molodaia gruppya*” of *predprinimateli* came from some of the oldest *kupechestvo* families with roots in Old Belief, but also were among the most Westernized, cosmopolitan, and modern-looking groups in Russia. Their outlook was made possible by wealth and private property: as West puts it their economic base in the textile industry, relatively free of both state control and foreign investment, made them “among the most truly independent men ever to live in Russia” [(iz) *naibolee nezavisimykh – v istinnom smysle etogo slova – liudei, kogda-libo zhivshikh v Rossii*].

All these factors contributed to a certain political style (to borrow the concept Todes employed in his article) that included boldness and lack of deference, a patriotism and perceived link to the *narod*, a commitment to a new social structure and intransigent opposition to *tsarism*, and a firm belief that they stood at the head of a dominant new bourgeoisie. This style, whose roots and consequences are described vividly, is contrasted to moderation of *Octobrist*. Indeed, what is most striking about the Riabushinskii circle is its consistently aggressive class assertiveness – only that a new bourgeoisie, rather than the proletariat, was for it the “universal class.” West terms this “class messianism” and describes the industrialists’ faith in a class-conscious bourgeoisie that would save Russia not only economically and politically, but historically as well. Interestingly, the dominant influence in the famous “*ekonomicheskie besedy*” in which the Riabushinskii group after 1909 turned to the liberal intelligentsia and

1999). Readers are also referred to Thomas C. Owen, *Capitalism and Politics in Russia: A Social History of the Moscow Merchants, 1855-1905* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

professoriate to formulate its program was the right Kadet – and former Marxist -- P. B. Struve, who helped impart to the young industrialists the confidence to speak in the name of the bourgeoisie. Ironically, in the very group that became the quintessential symbol for Lenin and others of the *krupnaia burzhuaziia*, one can discern certain commonalities with “proletarian” political tendencies and the *ne-delovaia* intelligentsia it despised. These were a strong element of utopianism, pervasive reliance on social explanations and class generalizations, a proclivity to celebrate and exacerbate failures of the current order, and even (although West doesn’t mention this explicitly) the expectation that a *novyi chelovek* would emerge if only the desired social-economic transformation occurred. West makes the point that the Progressists were not only stymied by objective forces of fragmentation around them but themselves constituted a significant destabilizing force in the years just before the Revolution.

It is this sense of irony and paradox that subtly pervades West’s contribution: after all, it was not a bourgeoisie that threw up a new industrialist leadership, but a *kruzhok* of new leaders that went out in search of a bourgeoisie. Although their search was largely in vain, if we follow West, the effort itself contributed to the class-bound confrontations so ingrained in the political movements of the revolutionary era. This unusual and striking sequence -- class-conscious bourgeois leaders searching for the social object of their consciousness -- might be seen as a continuing step in a sequence of well known Russian reversals, in which the critique of capitalism and bourgeois culture emerged before either had developed in Russia, in which a revolutionary intelligentsia emerged before a working class, and in which Marxism and an anti-liberal Left became entrenched before a strong and organized liberal political movement.

It is not necessary for the historian to assume universal positions on the issue of “Russia and the West” or to uniformly employ or lift the prism of the “road to revolution” to appreciate

the ironies and consequences. It is only necessary to cultivate awareness of how particular avenues of research, the goals of individual historians, and the pressures of the broader historiographical context imposes choices on how these overriding issues in the study of imperial Russia are to be approached. It is hoped that the translations in this anthology will contribute to just such an endeavor.