

## **Field Notes**

### **Museum of Russian Impressionism (Moscow), “Other Shores: Russian Art in New York, 1924”**

The exhibition project “Other Shores: Russian Art in New York, 1924” will be held in the Museum of Russian Impressionism (Moscow) from September 16th, 2021 to January 16, 2022.

This exhibition will be a result of the research project dedicated to the Russian Art Exhibition in New York in 1924. That was an extraordinary event because of its scale: more than 100 Russian artists and more than 1,000 pieces of art were displayed there. In addition, it was an important historical occasion in the context of the USSR foreign policy and relations between USSR and USA. We would like to tell our visitors how this exhibition was organized and what kinds of art were exhibited and bought by collectors in the USA. By the opening of the exhibition, a bilingual catalogue will be published, which will include not only the articles of Russian and American scientists, but also lots of images and photos. <http://www.rusimp.su/en/about>

### **Hall Center for the Humanities – University of Kansas**

The Hall Center for the Humanities and the Center for Russian and East European Studies at the University of Kansas will be sponsoring a series of lectures on “Cold War in the Heartland” in March and April. It includes a number of familiar speakers, and they will be available via Zoom. Please check by e-mail to [crees@ku.edu](mailto:crees@ku.edu).

It will be kicked off by Erik Scott (History KU) with “Cold War in the Heartland” on March 4 (3:30 - 5:00) and continue with Alexis Peri (Boston University) on March 18 3:30-5:00 with “From Russia (and Kansas) with Love: the Cold War Friendships of Soviet and American Women”, followed by the following: David Engerman (Yale University), April 1, same time; “In Search of the Global Cold War”; Victoria Zhuravleva (Russian State University for the Humanities), April 15 (12:00-1:30) “How Russia and America’s ‘Cold War of

Images' Ended and Began Again"; and Ivan Kurilla (European University of St. Petersburg), April 27 (12:00 - 1:30 "Necessary Rivals? The Cold War and its Aftermath in Russia and the United States."

## IN MEMORIAM

### **Gennadii Petrovich Kuropiatnik (1924-2019)**

We learned recently of the death in December of Gennady (Gennadii Petrovich) Kuropiatnik (1924-2019) one of the Russian Academy's pre-eminent scholars in American history and the history of Russian-American relations of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He was a close friend and supporter of his younger colleague, Nikolai Bolkhovitinov (1930-2008) in leading the Center of North American Studies of the Institute of World History of the Russian Academy of Sciences through *glasnost* and *perestroika* of the Gorbachev years. Both had Ukrainian connections, Bolkhovitinov's with Simferopol in Crimea, and Kuropiatnik was born and raised in the Poltava region. And both became distinguished scholars of American history and Russian-American relations in Moscow, despite obstacles. Unfortunately, Gennady suffered from diabetes in later life, lost both legs to the ailment, and had become understandably something of a recluse in recent years. Still, he managed to publish in 2009 a major book on the American Civil War.

He and his wife Vera (from St. Petersburg) had a very nice commodious apartment overlooking Sokolniki Park in Moscow: nothing but silver birches to be seen from it, and an invitation to dinner would usually be preceded by a "stroll in the park." This was followed by a multi-course meal. I know others who would echo the sentiment that "I have never eaten better in Russia than at the Kuropiatniks." Gennady and Vera were superb hosts and cooks.

A student of the English language, Kuropiatnik received a bump start as an Americanist by an assignment to the Soviet delegation to the United Nations, in the immediate post-World War II years, where he perfected his spoken English. More than most Soviet specialists, he was comfortable in speaking before university audiences on the American Civil War as the "Second American Revolution," the topic of an early book (1961). Actually his first book was the somewhat Cold Warish *The Seizure of the Hawaiian Islands by the USA (1958)*, but it was still interesting reading. One of his most important efforts, however, was in weaving together American foreign and domestic policies for the Reconstruction years, 1867-1881 (1981); this was later expanded to 1918 to cover the war and revolution (1997). He was also the contributor of many articles to *Amerikanskii Ezhegodnik* and other periodicals. At least one of them was published in English translation: "Russians in the United States: Social, Cultural, and Scientific Contacts in the 1870s" in *Russian-American Dialogue on Cultural Relations, 1776-1814* (University of Missouri Press, 1997).

Norman Saul

**Vladimir Pozniakov (1945-2021)**

We were saddened to learn of the death in early January of Vladimir Pozniakov, a dear friend of many American historians who knew him from their involvements in conferences, and research programs in Russia and the United States. Committed to the cause of friendship and cooperative study between the two countries, he aided the work of many scholars of both countries in their pursuits of common goals. Vladimir was born officially in Murmansk in the Russian far north, where his father (also Vladimir) was working as a mining engineer during the Second World War. Actually, his mother made the arduous trip south to war-torn Leningrad, where he was born in a foundling hospital on Vasilovskii Ostrov. He began his academic studies at Leningrad State University, but they were interrupted by his involvement in early “free speech” movements in the city.

Fortunately, Pozniakov was able to resume his studies at Moscow State University (GUM), where he benefitted from the guidance of historians of the Department of American history, under the leadership of Nikolai Sivachev (1934-1983), graduating in 1976. He then entered the kandidat program, which he completed in 1992. Meanwhile he gained much experience in shepherding delegations of American historians on the academic exchanges that were gaining momentum due to easing, and then the ending, of the Cold War. Fluent in English and respected for his skills at maneuvering through the restrictions presented visitors by Soviet and Russian bureaucracy and for the support he received from colleagues at the Institute of General History of the Academy of Sciences. He thus became a reliable guide for making foreign scholars feel at ease in the often hostile environment they faced in Russia. Pozniakov also taught and conducted research in the United States on a number of occasions, especially on his area of expertise: early Soviet intelligence operations in the United States. For example, in the spring of 2000 he taught a regular advance course in Russian history in Russian at the University of Kansas in a special program devoted to “language across the curriculum.”

Vladimir and his wife, Tatiana, who was a member of the Institute of Russian Literature of the Academy, and who preceded him in death by a few months, were gracious hosts at their apartment overlooking much of central Moscow—and abroad. He was fond of Samuel Adams beer, Kentucky bourbon, Weaver’s department store in downtown Lawrence, Kansas, and, especially, summertime cruises on many of Russian rivers with Tatiana. Besides many articles and conference papers, his major work was on his area of expertise, *Sovetskaia pazvedka v Amerike 1919-1941* [Soviet Intelligence in America] (Moscow: mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 2005), 505 pp.

Several of his close associates at the Center for North American Studies of the institute also preceded him in death: Grigory Sevostianov (1916-2013), Nikolai Bolkhovitinov (1930-2008), Gennady Kuropiatnik (1924-2019), and Robert Ivanov (1925-2003). The many Americans who came to appreciate his knowledge and skills are a who’s who of American-Russian studies and include, most of those, both Americans and Russians, affiliated with this journal.

## A Polenov Mystery

Many of you I know have had similar experiences in that research finished and done with never quite goes away. A Charles R. Crane episode occurred with me recently. In late March I received an e-mail from a Russian art historian who was visiting New York in search of missing paintings by Vasily Polenov (1844-1927) of the *peredvizhniki* (wanderers) school. She had discovered evidence that Crane had purchased six large Polenov paintings of a series called “Life of Christ” at a Russian art auction in New York in 1924, and she had been referred to me and my book on Crane by the curator of the Bakhmeteff Archive at Columbia University, which was, of course, closed due to the pandemic. I had a vague idea of the importance of Polenov but had no knowledge of Crane’s connection with him or of the New York sale. I had not seen any references to these in the Crane papers in the Bakhmeteff archive. So I referred the art historian to Tom Crane, a grandson, who had often come up with Crane miscellanea from a closet or somewhere, while I was doing research for the book, *The Life and Times of Charles R. Crane, 1858-1939* (2013).

Tom was equally in the dark as to the whereabouts of the Polenov paintings but knew, as I did, that his grandfather was often haphazard about keeping records, but he also knew that his grandfather was quite interested in promoting Slavic artists such as Vasily Vereshchagin and Alphonse Mucha. But he passed the query on to other family members. And two of the Polenov paintings showed up. The art historian reported last week that it turned out that Crane had given these to his granddaughter, Bruce Crane, who had subsequently married a Fisher and her son Fred Fisher remembered that his mother, now deceased, had donated them to an Episcopal church in Richmond, Virginia, where they were currently displayed. Bruce Crane Fisher and her son were the heirs to Westover Plantation on the James River that Charles Crane had purchased for his son Richard after he completed his tour as the first American minister to Czechoslovakia. (It was also where Crane pastured his prize Arabian horses that King Ibn Saud had given him for Crane’s discovery of oil on his land—though he was really looking for water.)

It only took me a few minutes to discover the reason for this awakened interest in Crane’s Polenov paintings. A brief internet search revealed that two comparable Polenovs had sold not long ago in London for over \$5,000,000 each. A mystery remains: where are the other four paintings by Polenov that Crane purchased back in 1924?

Norman Saul

# Americans in Revolutionary Russia

EDITORS

Norman E. Saul and William Benton Whisenhunt

*Americans in Revolutionary Russia* is an exciting new series of republications of books by American eyewitnesses in Russia during the turbulent Russian Revolutionary Era (1914–21). The men and women who wrote these accounts left a rich treasure of insights on a kaleidoscopic range of issues such as politics, ethnic identity, military, war, travel, and much more, offering readers a first-hand view of a tumultuous, complex, and controversial era. Providing a broad range of American perspectives, the series accompanies each account with an expert introduction and annotation by a leading scholar in order to make the work accessible to the modern reader.

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