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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are now beginning our second year of our e-journal publication. The "General Managers" had no knowledge about such online journals when we started, though we had some experience in cooperative print editing (see *New Perspectives on Russian-American Relations* (Routledge, 2016) and the series *Americans in Revolutionary Russia* (Slavica, 2016-).

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California-Alaska Trade, 1851–1867: The American Russian Commercial Company and the Russian America Company and the Sale/Purchase of Alaska

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Early relations between democratic United States and autocratic Russian Empire were surprisingly good, thanks to mutually beneficial commercial connections and Anglophobia. U.S.-Baltic trade rose rapidly from 1763 to 1812 with New England shippers gaining handsome profits from delivering sugar, coffee, and other "colonial goods" to Russian Baltic ports, mainly St. Petersburg, and returning with "naval stores"—hemp, sailcloth, and iron. By 1800 Russian-American commerce began in another quarter, the Pacific coast. The same motive that brought Russian *promyshlenniki* to Alaska—the quest for furs, mainly sea otter for the China market—attracted Yankee entrepreneurs, such as Joseph O'Cain. "Bostonians" provided the ships and navigational talent to haul the skins to China and delivered supplies to Alaska, while the Russians mobilized and managed native labor.[1]

[1] Background studies for early Russian-American relations that cover this topic are by Nikolai Bolkhovitinov, *The Beginnings of Russian-American Relations, 1775–1815* (Harvard, 1975), Alfred Crosby, Jr., *America, Russia, Hemp, and Napoleon: American Trade with Russia and the Baltic, 1783-1812* (Ohio State, 1965), and Norman Saul, *Distant Friends: The United States & Russia, 1763–1867* (Kansas, 1991). Foundation works dealing more specifically with Russian Alaska include: Bolkhovitinov, *Russko-Amerikanskie otnosneniia i prodazha Alaski* (Nauka, 1990); Frank Golder, *Russian Expansion on the Pacific, 1641–1850: An Account of the Earliest and Later Expeditions to the Arctic Regions...* (Clark, 1914); P. A. Tikhmenev, *A History of the Russian-American Company*, trans, and eds, Richard Pierce and Alton Donnelly (University of Washington Press, 1978); Richard Pierce, *The Russian Governors: Builders of Alaska, 1818–1867* (Limestone, 1986); Svetlana Fedorova, *The Russian Population in Alaska and Califronia, Late 18th Century–1867* (Limestone 1973); and Lydia Black, *Russians in Alaska, 1732–1867* (University of Alaska Press, 2004). For a more recent general survey, see Ilya Vinkovetsky, *Russian America: An Overseas Colony of a Continental Empire, 1804–1867* (Oxford, 2011).

Richard Pierce, through his own Limestone Press, has also produced a number of important translations of documents, as well as has Basil Dmytryshyn with the Oregon Historical Society. The capstone of these publications on Russian Alaska is clearly Bolkhovitinov's three volume history that remains only in Russian: *Istoriia russkoi Ameriki, 1732–1867* (Moscow: Mezhdunar. *Otnosheniia*, 1997-99)

At that time commercial cooperation in the Pacific was transitory between the two countries. Russia soon acquired its own ships and set out on voyages of discovery, and Great Britain also became more active in the area, while the United States concentrated more on its direct trade with China and on whaling. In 1806 Nikolai Rezanov established direct contact with the Spanish in California and a supply base was established at Fort Ross in 1812, but this proved inconvenient for either food or hunting expeditions, and encountered opposition from natives, Spain, and the United States. Fort Ross was sold in 1841 to an American, John Sutter.

Since 1799 the Russian America Company (RAC) held monopoly rights by imperial charter to administer and exploit the vaguely defined Russian territory in northwest America. Sea otter, beaver, and fox furs were gathered from native villages or by company hunting parties along the coast, stored in warehouses at Kodiak or Sitka, then shipped to China by way of Siberia or through the port of Canton. Sales financed the purchase of tea for the Russian market sent overland or by sea to St. Petersburg. But by the 1840s this profitable operation faced challenges from depletion of animal resources, competition from the British Hudson's Bay Company, and by the American settlement of the Oregon territory. The RAC income fell from 425,628 silver rubles in 1845 to 212,648 in 1849. In no year after 1848 did annual receipts reach 300,000 rubles, and the average for the 1850s declined to 150,000.[2] Nonetheless, the charter of RAC to operate its monopoly in Northwest America was renewed in 1842 for the usual twenty years. There was no alternative.

Hard times, however, brought new life to the management of RAC. Rear Admiral Adolf Etholin, who served as "governor" from 1840 to 1845, was a spokesman for innovation. In 1848 a mineral prospector, Peter Doroshin, was sent to investigate mining possibilities in Alaska, especially coal for steamships.[3] RAC also invested in a profitable business of their waters—whaling. The Russians had proposed joint operations with New England whalers as early as 1820, but the Yankees preferred to be independent. In 1850 RAC established the Russian Finnish Whaling Company with its center at Abo (Turku), but the first whaling ship, the *Suomi*, reached Alaskan water only in 1852 and the company never achieved a profitable level.[4]

Until mid-century the RAC was hampered by its isolation and consequent sporadic and unpredictable communications, even with its California colony, much of it due to inadequate shipping. The decline of fur resources also contributed to the depression. Nevertheless, several historians linked developments in California

[2] One silver ruble was about $.75. The figures are from the published annual reports of the RAC consulted in the Russian National Library (Saltykov-Shchedrin) in St. Petersburg and microfilms of RAC records in the Library of Congress.

[3] Frank Golder, "Mining in Alaska before 1867," in *Alaska and Its History*, edited by Morgan Sherwood (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967), 150-51.

[4] "Ob uchrezhdenii russkago kitolovstva," *Kommercheskaia Gazeta* January 12, 1852, 18.

to the Russian sale of Alaska. This examination of California-Alaska trade after 1850 will also shed further light on the reasons for the sale-purchase of 1867.[5]

The focus of the United States had shifted westward in the 1840s during the Mexican War and the considerable expansion of territory.[6] San Francisco quickly became the major center for this activity, especially after the discovery of gold in 1848, not far from the city, producing a gold rush and attendant demand for commercial houses, banks, and utilities. Even the RAC sold supplies and participated in early mining. The boom town of San Francisco rose quickly in population, with many individuals seeking business opportunities.

In 1850 Grigory Ivanov and Martin Klinkovstrem visited California to collect the final payment for Fort Ross and to investigate future prospects for sale of Russian products. Their reports prompted the directors in St. Petersburg to send samples of goods to sell and appoint Peter Kostromitinov as the company's agent in San Francisco. Arriving at Sitka in May of that year, he conferred with chief administrator Nicholai Rozenberg before departing for California to take up his assignment.[7]

Rozenberg's instructions advised exploration of sales of lumber and fish, and, in the future, coal but warned that "the continuation of disorder and the absence of civil responsibility" in California may pose a danger to the property of the company." He also asked for information regarding method of sale—through commission merchants or by public auction. The RAC had been surprisingly quick to realize an advantage in new possibilities for trade with California. By 1851, San Francisco was a bustling city with a population of over 50,000. One of the commodities in demand there and on coastal steamers was ice. Since the mild climate could not furnish a natural supply, the first amounts were brought around

[5] The best work on the later years of RAC is by Bolkhovitintov, *Russko-amerikanskie otnosheniia i prodazha Aliaski* (Nauka, 1990), but he does not examine business relations in detail.

After somewhat of a hiatus, various scholars have produced new research on Russians in Alaska, emphasizing biographies and translated documents: *Natalia Shelikhova, Russian Oligarch of Alaska Commerce*, edited and translated by Dawn Black and Alexander Petrov (a student-disciple of Bolkhovitinov), University of Alaska Press, 2010; Kenneth Owens, with Alexander Petrov, *Empire Maker: Aleksandr Baranov and Russian Colonial Expansion into Alaska and Northern California* (University of Washington Press, 2015); and Susana Rabow-Edling, *Married to the Empire: Three Governors' Wives in Russian America, 1829–1864* (University of Alaska Press, 2015).

[6] An example is my great grandfather, John Neff, who left his studies at Otterbein College and home in Southern Ohio to go by boat as far as Omaha and then overland, driving cattle, to participate in the gold rush. He and his brother had modest success, returning by Panama steamer and up the Mississippi to buy farmland in Indiana—where I was born. John Neff (1834–1930), unpublished diary, 1854, typed copy in my possession.

[7] Rozenberg to Directors, May 24/June 5 and July 23/August 4, 1851, Vol. 32, 289, 440-41, Communications Sent, Records of the Russian America Company, Record Group 261, National Archives and Record Service (microcopy 11) [hereafter cited as CS, RRAC. RG 261, NA]. Kostromitinov was also appointed the first Russian consul in San Francisco.

South America from Boston, and the price was naturally high—but you would not want to order a mint julep on a hot Pacific steamship without it.[8]

Ironically, the first attempt to bring Alaskan ice to California originated in neither California nor Alaska but in Oregon. In September 1851, the American schooner *Exact*, owned by Crosby & Smith of Portland, arrived at Sitka "to obtain a cargo of ice for sale in California." Having misjudged availability of ice at that time of year, the Americans inspected the lakes around New Archangel, conferred with Rozenberg on terms of a contract, and promised to return in the winter. The Russian administrator seized upon this new idea and instructed Kostromitinov "to seek out men of credit" in San Francisco for ice purchases.[9]

The *Flavius* arrived Sitka as promised in February 1852, but the Americans considered the Russian price—$75 a ton—too high, and the ship returned empty. Two weeks later, the *Bacchus*, chartered by the Pacific Ice Company, a voyage inspired by Kostromitinov, appeared, and the partners on board agreed to the price on condition that credit be extended. One man remained as "security" until the ship returned with full payment.[10] Thus, the first cargo of Russian ice arrived in San Francisco on April 11, 1852. A local newspaper considered this new venture in ice "a fair commencement for the enterprising gentlemen who have started this.... We congratulate our citizens on the present abundance of this luxury in San Francisco."[11] Unfortunately for the Pacific Ice Company, two ships reached San Francisco from Boston with ice the same month, and the company failed to collect enough to pay its obligation to RAC. When a second ship was sent during the summer, Rozenberg refused to sell any more on credit.[12]

Despite this initial failure, a group of San Francisco merchants and bankers under the leadership of Beverley C. Sanders, originally from Baltimore, formed a new company, the Russian and North American Ice Company, and negotiated with Kostromitinov for a three-year contract beginning October 21, 1852. Sanders had the advantage of being appointed that year as Collector of the Port of San Franscisco. The American company agreed to buy 1,200 tons of ice a year at $35 a ton and furnish materials and supervisors for the construction of ice storage houses at New Archangel. The new company was incorporated before the end of the year as the American Russian Commercial Company (ARCC).[13]

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[8] Rozenberg reported in 1851 that the price of ice in San Francisco ranged from 25 to 40 cents a pound, but in Panama and Acapulco, it sold for 50-55 cents, often as high as a dollar. Rozenberg to Directors, September 10/22, ibid., 505.

[9] Rozenberg to Kostromitinov, September 10/22, 1851, ibid., 497. Most likely the idea was conceived by Nathaniel Crosby, Jr., a pioneer in Pacific trade. Rosenberg to Crosby & Smith, September 10/22, 1851, ibid, 500.

[10] Rozenberg to Kostromitinov, March 6/18, 1852, and Rozenberg to Directors, March 7/19, ibid. 33, 37-40.

[11] *Daily Alta California*, April 12, 1852.

[12] Rozenberg to J. F. Hutton, July 13/25 and Rozenberg to Directors, July 13/26, vol. 33, CS, RRAC, RG 261, NA, 341. Only $8,732 was paid on a debt of $18,750.

[13] The chief stockholders (over 100 shares) of ARCC were as follows, in alphabetical order: Charles Baum 190, Charles Brenham 203, Henry Dexter 174, Henry Edwards 240, Abel Guy 390, Lucien Hermann 251, Samuel Hensley 200, Archibald Peachy 200, Samuel

As planned, the American ships reached Alaska on November 15, 1852, and January 15, 1853, to load ice directly from the lake. Engineers and materials arrived on the *Consort* on December 22 to begin the largest construction project of Russian America until then. The RAC bark *Ella Frances* brought an additional 403 tons in May. Besides ice, salt fish packed in barrels and small quantities of lumber were also included.[14] None of the latter were successful because of dislike of Russian-style salted fish and the ready availability of lumber in California. But officials of the RAC were pleased, however, not only by additional income at low cost (native workers were paid one paper ruble per day during the short cutting season), but also by the opportunity to buy supplies from California. Moreover, a regular trade with San Francisco would provide the Russian colony with much better communications with the RAC Directory in St. Petersburg. While ice cutting and storage changed the pace of life, the territory was drawn more into the American economic orbit.[15]

There were also signs of troubles. Rozenberg's replacement, Alexander Rudakov, complained to Sanders that his company was not keeping on schedule and not providing satisfactory equipment.[16] He also objected to Kostromitinov's consent in June to the American demand that the cost of ice be reduced in order to force Boston ice out of the San Francisco market.[17] Rudakov advised the directors to retain a free hand in the Pacific market and that machinery be purchased to expand fish and lumber exports.[18] He also resented Kostromitinov's influence, fearing company policy was determined more in San Francisco than in Alaska or St. Petersburg, and warned the directors against closer relations with Americans.

In San Francisco expansion of trade with Alaska seemed promising. Sanders, having lost his post as Collector of the Port in June 1853 due to the national Democratic victory in 1852, decided to devote all his energy to the new business and go to St. Petersburg to negotiate directly with the RAC directors. He hoped to achieve a long-term contract that would give his company exclusive rights to

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Moss, Jr. 190, and Beverley Sanders 203. This represented a "who's who" of leading businessmen in the San Francisco area. Samuel Moss, Jr., an Oakland pioneer and builder, would succeed Sanders as director of ARCC. "List of Stockholders, ARCC, San Francisco, July 25, 1855," Sanders Papers.

The "Sanders Papers" were loaned to me in Providence by a descendant of Beverley Sanders. Though I urged that they be made available at a reliable public facility, such as the Brown University Library or the Rhode Island Historical Society, I have not been able to trace them recently and fear they may have been lost. Also, see my "Beverley C. Sanders and the Expansion of American Trade with Russia, 1853–1855," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 67, 2 (Summer 1972): 156-70.

[14] San Francisco Port Records, 1853, RG 36 (Bureau of Customs), NA.

[15] Father Ivan Veniaminov, legendary head of the Orthodox mission in Alaska, reported in 1854 that ice had become the principal business of the colony. "Torgovlia l'dom v novo-arkhangel'ske," *Posrednik: gazeta promyshlenosti, khoziaistva i real'nykh nauk,* October 20, 1854, 167.

[16] Rudakov to Sanders, July 10/22, 1853, CS 34, 172, RRAC, RG 261, NA.

[17] The change was to scale the purchase to $25 a ton for the first 1,200 tons, $20 for the next 800 tons, and $15 for any additional tons.

[18] Rudakov to Directors, July 14/26, ibid., 179-81.

market Alaska produce in the whole Pacific arena. In Washington he met with President Franklin Pierce, Secretary of State William Marcy, and Russian minister Alexander Bodisko, receiving their support and a courier's passport. Upon arrival in St. Petersburg, he began negotiations at the headquarters of the RAC.[19] The timing was fortuitous, since the beginning of the Crimean War created concern about the safety of the Russian possessions in America. Although RAC negotiated separately a neutrality agreement with the British Hudson's Bay Company, commerce with Alaska was considered under British blockade.[20] RAC could negotiate with Sanders with the knowledge that the territory was safe but that commerce for the duration of the war was dependent on neutral ships willing to risk running a blockade that never would be enforced. It could thus approve a long term monopoly contract with the ARCC in return for its agreement to supply the colony during the war.

While this was being worked out, Sanders discussed commercial affairs in general with Foreign Minister Karl Nesselrode, Grand Duke Constantine, and Nicholas I himself, and visited Moscow with the idea of a possible railroad project.[21] On June 13/25 the RAC directors signed what Sanders termed a "treaty" for 20 years, approved by the tsar. The directors were relieved that this seemed to insure the renewal of its own charter, which would expire in 1862. In a profit sharing arrangement, RAC would do the producing and ARCC would distribute and sell. Income was to be divided equally between the two companies after expenses were deducted. These would be determined by agents of the two companies in California and Alaska.[22]

Sanders also agreed to other capital arrangements for RAC: upon return to the United States he ordered a 450 ton steamship in New York for $54,000 for the company, purchased the *Cyane* (250 tons) for RAC, and chartered the *Levanter* (840 tons) to carry a cargo of general supplies to Petropavlovsk for the Russian government. Sailing under the American flag the *Cyane* brought essential supplies to Alaska during the war, and then was renamed *Nakhimov* after the war. But during Sanders absence commerce had faced difficulties: the first ice house was still unfinished, and little ice could be shipped, though lumber, produced by a new saw mill took cargo space on the *Ella Frances* and the RAC ship *Kodiak* delivered 600 barrels of salt fish, but the price was so low that Kostromitinov sent the ship on to Honolulu, where only 200 barrels were sold. The Crimean War curtailed most of sending cargoes on company ships.[23]

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[19] Sanders, "A Journal of the Trip," Letterbook 1, Sanders Papers, private collection (copies in author's possession. This collection was loaned by a great granddaughter of Sanders to the author, who made copies.

[20] Directors to Voevodsky, April 16/28, 1854, CR 21, 109-10, and Addington to Hudson's Bay Company, March 22, 1854, copy in above, 61.

[21] Sanders diary, 1854, Sanders Papers.

[22] Sanders to Directors, June 4/16, 1854, Letterbook, and copy of treaty, ibid. and Directors to Voevodsky, June8/20, 1854, CR 21, 109-10, RRAC, RG 261, NA. Bolkhovitinov found the original of the treaty in TsGIA, f. 18, op. 5, d. 1344, 16-20. *Russko-amerikanskie otnosheniia i prodazha Aliaski, 1834–1867*, 78 n19.

[23] Vladimir Voevodsky to Directors, May 1/13, 1854, CS 35, 30-32, RRAC,RG 261, NA. Voevodsky had just replaced Rudakov as manager of affairs in Alaska.

Another problem was competition from Hudson's Bay Company territory by the North West Ice Company, also based in San Francisco. Upon return to California, Sanders solved the problem at a cost by agreeing to sell at least 3,000 tons of ice a year to that company to preserve the monopoly of ARCC Russian sales in California,[24] ARCC thus becoming mainly a wholesale operation. Meanwhile, Voevodsky pushed for expansion of ice production from a new source on Wood Island near Kodiak and planned to purchase additional ships for this route.[25] RAC certainly did not help its balance sheet during the Crimean War by lavish expenditures in San Francisco.[26] Sanders also purchased a modern 800 ton bark, the *Zenobia*, that became the major hauler of ice to California in the later 1850s, making over 15 voyages, until it was wrecked in San Francisco Bay in April 1858.[27] It was replaced in 1860 by an expensive RAC purchase, a classic "Yankee clipper", *Coeur de Lion*, renamed *Tsaritsa.* Built in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, it could carry over 1,000 tons on each voyage.

Unfortunately, the man mainly responsible for obtaining ships, supplies, and markets for RAC was a victim of financial failure. On November 5, 1855, the Sanders bank failed. A local newspaper reported, "the firm has been largely engaged in Russian trade, but the failure is attributed to other causes."[28] Despite this disclaimer, an unpublicized aspect of the Russian trade probably contributed to it. A request by Voevodsky for a shipment of gunpowder had been refused by ARCC officers in Sanders absence, but he overruled them upon return, and the first shipment of 1,250 lbs arrived in Alaska in September 1855, which could be considered contraband, though RAC claimed it was for hunting. Moreover, mindful of the fragile state of San Francisco business, stockholders were not pleased with the extended nature of Sanders operations that included ventures in coal mining on the Kenai Peninsula in 1956.[29]

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[24] This matter was complicated by the lease by RAC to the Hudson's Bay Company of the mouth of the Stikhin River that was claimed by RAC. This provided exit to the Pacific for HBC. The *Ida* brought 300 tons of ice from there in the summer of 1854. Voevodsky to Directors, June 8/20, ibid, 85; San Francisco Port Records, vol 7, RG 36, NA.

[25] Voevodsky to Sanders, January 24/February 5, 1855, and Voevodsky to Furuhelm, May 27/June 8, 1855, CS 36, 15,65, RRAC, RG 261, NA. This transaction is summarized in *Kommercheskaia Gazeta,* December 26, 1856, 602-03.

[26] By early 1855, it had ordered 740 gallons of wine, 3,000 flasks of rum, cognac, brandy and whisky, 1,800 lbs. of coffee, 50,000 Manila cigars, and 5,400 lbs. of tea, along with quantities of clothing, shoes, flour, sugar, and salt. In fact, costs greatly exceeded the income in 1855 because of additional purchases of new equipment for coal mining and ice cutting, and high shipping charges because of war. Much of his was paid by remittances from St. Petersburg through the Sanders and Brenham Bank in San Francisco. Compiled from Voevodsky's correspondence to directors, and to Sanders, and San Francisco Port records.

[27] Voevodsky to Directors, June 6/18, ibid., 83.

[28] "Continuation of the Annals of San Francisco," comp. Dorothy Huggins, *California Historical Society Quarterly* 16 (1937), 338. Sanders returned to Baltimore in 1857, regained business stature and later found employment in the New York port customs office and died in Newark, New Jersey, in 1883. Sanders Papers.

[29] Overlapping business involvements also produced opposition to Sanders. Charles Baum, secretary of ARCC was also vice president of the Bellingham Bay (Washington)

Efforts by Sanders to obtain relief from RAC fell on deaf ears. No wonder, considering the results of the first year of the "Sanders Treaty."[30] Although the cost of production ($3.25 a ton) and export duty ($.75 a ton) were paid upon delivery, RAC received little more than to offset its other expenditures. From the beginning ARCC took advantage of keeping the accounts. Voevodsky claimed that the Americans padded their expenses to recoup more. He calculated that the treaty should have yielded over $65,000 for the 3,385 tons of ice shipped. Instead, the Russian share was only a little more than $2,000.[31] ARCC, under direction of J. Mora Moss a wealthy banker in Oakland, continued to concentrate on ice and was successful especially in 1857 and 1858 with imports of over 4,000 tons in those years, though RAC continued to complain of ARCC's manipulation of accounts.

Coal prospects appeared better and RAC made a considerable investment in buildings and equipment on the Kenai Peninsula. Initial samples were positive, but the first—and only—shipment of Alaskan coal came to San Francisco in August 1956. To Voevodsky's surprise reports were that it was too inferior for the market.[32] The only coal sold by the company in California was 150 tons of British New Castle coal brought to Alaska by the *Tsaritsa* in 1860.[33]

Two other problems plagued Alaska-California trade. An unusually mild winter in 1855–56 reduced the amount of ice available for cutting and shipping to San Francisco, leading to both companies to look for suitable sites for ice farther north. A source would be found at Wood Island, near Kodiak. The first ice from there would shipped in 1858.[34] The other problem was that large vessels loaded with ice were vulnerable to rocks below the surface, especially prevalent in Sitka harbor. This was the case with the workhorse of the ARCC, the loss of the *Zenobia*, in 1858, the *Kodiak* of RAC in 1860, and the pride of the RAC that replaced it, the New England built Yankee clipper *Tsaritsa* in 1861. This also bolstered the shift to waters that were less susceptible to such accidents.

Nevertheless, Hampas (Ivan) Furuhelm, the new "governor," managed to negotiate a contract, that replaced the "Sanders Treaty" in 1860. It provided for

Coal Company, which naturally saw a threat.

[30] Sanders returned to Baltimore, recovered his stature somewhat, then was employed in the Customs Collectors Agency in New York for a number of years before his death in 1883. Sanders Papers.

[31] Voevodsky to Directors, February 7/19, 1856, CS 57, 19-22, RG 261, NA. He listed expenditures as follows: RAC—first ice house in New Archangel $7,000, second $10,000, third on Wood Island $12,000, instruments and horses $4,080, total $33,080; ARCC—*Zenobia* $15,000, ice house in San Francisco $12,161, one in Sacramento $8,075, total $25,236. But he claimed the ship should not be counted.

[32] Voevodsky to Directors, October 24/November 5, 1856, and Voevodsky to Kostromitinov, December 24/January 5, 1856, CS 37, 182-83, 231. One factor preventing coal from Alaska may have been the interlocking nature of American business. Charles Baum, a major investor in ARCC, was also vice president of the Bellingham Bay Coal Company (Washington). *The San Francisco Directory for the Year 1860* (San Francisco, 1860), 455.

[33] Ivan Furuhelm to Kostromitinov Jan. 28//Feb. 9, 1960, CS 42, 7, RG 261.

[34] See Appendix I.

a simpler arrangement: ARCC agreed to pay a flat rate of $7 a ton and $8 a ton for shipment on RAC ships, and guaranteeing purchase of 3,000 tons a year.[35] Ice became the major business between California and Alaska with yearly average of 4,000 tons shipped, thanks to the *Tsaritsa* that made three trips in 1860, before its wreck in early 1861. Subsequent shipments on chartered ships achieved a record total in1864 with 4,785 tons.[36] Income would have exceeded $60,000 from ice for these years, much greater than the income from furs.[37]

Considerable capital expenditures were involved, however, in the purchase of ships and construction of new ice houses on Wood Island, which had a convenient fresh water pond. Ice storage required thick walls and deep foundations; the first of three on Wood Island was 102 feet long, 46 feet wide, and 25 feet high.[38]

Unfortunately, RAC was plagued by bad luck concerning ships. Poor Russian seamanship may have contributed to this. In 1860 the *Kodiak* was lost in a storm and the following year the *Tsaritsa*, loaded with ice, was badly damaged in being towed out of New Archangel onto rocks, witnessed by an inspector of the Ministry of Navy, Captain Pavel Golovin.[39] The wreck of the *Tsaritsa* was perhaps the last straw, proving that the RAC could not compete in business with its American partner. When its twenty-year charter expired the next year, it was renewed for only one year, clear evidence that Russia was ready to sell, strongly favored by the naval and finance ministries, in order to concentrate on the Far East and Vladivostok. But the only potential buyer was engaged in a major civil war, so a sale had to wait until after its conclusion.[40]

The Alaska-California ice business continued from the facilities on Wood Island, but the American company was unwilling to supply the year around supervisors.[41] Besides, new competition from the recently completed trans-continental railroad that supplied ice by the carload in regular and predictable shipments from mountain lakes to the West Coast, before electric or gas refrigeration entered the picture by 1880s. But artificial production of ice was

[35] Capt-Lt. P. N. Golovin, *Obzor Russkikh kolonii v Severnoi Amerike,* supplement to *Morskoi Sbornik* 57, 1 (1862), 188.

[36] Appendix I, is a list of over 100 voyages, 1851–67 with dates and cargoes, obtained from San Francisco Port Records, RAC records, and San Francisco newspapers, and Appendix II, a summary of ships in the ice trade.

[37] Costs are difficult to calculate. Native labor was cheap, but regular supervisors had to be imported on a contract basis, which would be expensive and probably reduced net income by half.

[38] Voevodsky to Kostromitinov, January 19/31, 1857, CS 38, 1, RAC, RG 261, NA.

[39] Golovin to parents, March 31/April 12,1861, "Iz putevykh pisem P. N. Golovina," edited by Vladimir Rimsky-Korsakov, *Morskoi Sbornik* 58, 6 (1863), 306. Golovin died soon after his return to Russia. The letters describing his journey from St. Petersburg to New Archangel via London, New York, Washington, and San Francisco, and back, were edited by a close friend, the brother of the composer.

[40] Some opposition occurred in Russia from stockholders of the company, which included Alexander II, and from xenophobic Russians who resented any loss of territory.

[41] Information is scarce since commerce between Alaska and California after the purchase was domestic instead of foreign and thus was no longer recorded at the Customs house in San Francisco.

still expensive and only feasible on a large scale—until much later when home refrigerators became common. Besides, many consumers preferred "natural" ice from frozen lakes. The icebox would remain a fixture in American homes for many more years.[42]

The results of the California-Alaska trade was the major factor in the Russian decision to sell Alaska to the United States. That decision was reached by 1862 after the reports of the inspectors sent to Alaska by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Navy. But the actual sale had to wait until Union victory in the American civil war. It was apparent by that time that the Russian America Company had failed to establish a profitable relationship with its California neighbor. Ice was clearly the only product it could sell there. Coal, fish, and lumber proved unmarketable. Especially apparent was the mismanagement of the RAC in the shipping of ice with the costly loss of expensive vessels. Another factor was the shift of the source from Sitka to Kodiak, which denied one of the benefits–the advantage of a return of supplies from California to the Russian administrative center at Sitka. Certainly the administrative staff of Russian America could not have been pleased with the shift of the ice trade to the Kodiak area, nor probably the income of the Tlingit natives to the Aleuts to the north.

[42] The author remembers the iceman making regular deliveries to his family's farm late in the 1930s, before electricity reached it.

Appendix I[43]
EXPORTS FROM ALASKA TO SAN FRANCISCO, 1851–1867

Departure Date		Ship	Cargo	Owner	Arrival Date
1851	January	*Prince Menshikov*	Equipment	RAC	January
	September	*Exact*	None	Crosby	September
1852	January	*Prince Menshikov*	Fish–150 barrels	RAC	February
	February	*Flavius*	None	Crosby	March 17
	March	*Bacchus*	Ice–250 tons	Pacific Co.	April 11
	July	*Whiton*	None	Hudson Bay	Nov. 27
1853	February	*Kodiak*	Fish–150 barrels	RAC	Feb. 23
	February	*Consort*	Ice–220 tons	ARCC	March 5
	April	*Ella Frances*	Ice–403 tons	ARCC	May 10
	July	*Ella Frances*	Ice–30 tons	ARCC	Aug. 8
	September	*Shelikhov*	Lumber	RAC	Oct. 22
	November	*Ella Francis*	Ice–480 tons	ARCC	Dec. 14
1854	January	*Kodiak*	Fish–600 barrels	RAC	Feb. 9
	January	*Harriet Thompson*	Ice–240 tons	Northwest	Feb. 14
	February	*Ella Francis*	Ice–435 tons	ARCC	Feb. 18
	March	*Zenobia*	Ice–880 tons	ARCC	April 10
	June	*Zenobia*	Ice–880 tons	ARCC	July 5
	September	*Zenobia*	Ice–425 tons, fish	ARCC	Oct. 14
1855	February	*Zenobia*	Ice–770 tons	ARCC	Feb. 21
	March	*Chalcedon*	Ice–265 tons	Charter	March 29
	June	*Zenobia* (from Kodiak)	Ice–580 tons	ARCC	Aug. 9
	September	*Polynesia*	Ice–1,200 tons	Charter	Sept. 20
	October	*Zenobia*	Ice–570 tons, fish	ARCC	Oct. 30
	November	*Cyane*	Lumber–26,891 ft.	ARCC	Dec. 14
1856	February	*Zenobia*	Ice–710 tons	ARCC	March 15
	May	*Zenobia*	Ice–none	ARCC	June 7
	July	*Zenobia*	Lumber	ARCC	August 11
	August	*Lucas* (from Kenai)	Coal–500 tons	RAC	September
	November	*Nakhimov* (*Cyane*)	Furs	RAC	Nov. 24
1857	January	*Zenobia*	Ice–830 tons	ARCC	Jan. 30
	January	*Kodiak*	Ice–300 tons	RAC	Feb. 17
	March	*Zenobia*	Ice–870 tons	ARCC	April 4
	March	*Nakhimov*	ce–260 tons	RAC	April 18
	June	*Zenobia*	Ice–810 tons	ARCC	August 1
	August	*Nakhimov*	Ice–275 tons	RAC	Sept. 9

[43] Statistics compiled from Records of the Russian America Company (RG 261), San Francisco Port Records (RG 36), and San Francisco newspapers.

Departure Date		Ship	Cargo	Owner	Arrival Date
	October	*Zenobia*	Ice–900 tons	ARCC	Oct. 18
	October	*Kodiak*	Ice–300 tons	RAC	Nov. 20
1858	March	*Nakhimov*	Ice–240 tons, furs	RAC	March 21
	April	*Zenobia*	Ice–835 tons	ARCC	Wrecked
	May	*Kodiak* (from Kodiak)	Ice–275 tons	RAC	June 6
	June	*Vitula*	Ice–1,200 tons	Charter	June 17
	June	*Phenix*	Whale oil	Charter	July 6
	August	*Kodiak* (from Kodiak)	Ice–275 tons	RAC	Oct. 8
	September	*Cartyne* (from Kodiak)	Ice–1,000 tons	Charter	Sept. 26
1859	January	*Kodiak*	Furs, fish, lumber	RAC	Feb. 10
	February	*Nakhimov*	Ice–255 tons	RAC	March 1
	April	*Kodiak* (Kodiak)	Ice–250 tons	RAC	April 30
	June	*Sophia Adelaide*	Ice–545 tons	Charter	June 17
	July	*Aspasia* (Kodiak)	Ice–700 tons	Charter	Aug. 9
	July	*Kodiak* (Kodiak)	Ice–250 tons	RAC	Aug. 21
	September	*Sophia Adelaide*	Ice–560 tons	Charter	Sept. 26
	October	*Gray Feather* (Kodiak)	Ice–950 tons	Charter	Oct. 27
1860	February	*Nakhimov*	Coal–150 tons	RAC	March 1
	April	*Kodiak*	Ice–355 tons	RAC	Wrecked
	May	*Tsaritsa*	Ice	RAC	May 22
	July	*Tsaritsa*	Ice	RAC	Aug. 11
	October	*Tsaritsa*	Ice–3 trips, 2,715 tons	RAC	Oct. 20
1861	January	*Nakhimov*	Ice–210 tons, furs	RAC	Jan. 20
	April	*Nakhimov*	Ice–255 tons	RAC	May 2
	April	*Tsaritsa*	Ice–930 tons	RAC	Disabled
	April	*Nvu Ed*	Ice–270 tons	Charter	May ?
	July	*Elise*	Ice–270 tons	Charter	July 25
	July	*Franklin Haven*	Ice–1,105 tons	Charter	Aug. 10
	July	*Tsaritsa*	Ballast, for repair	RAC	Aug. 11
	December	*Kamchatka*	Ice–280 tons	RAC	Jan. 13
1862	June	*Camden* (Kodiak)[44]	Ice–525 tons	Charter	June 27
	June	*Kamchatka*	Ice–600 tons	RAC	July 5
	June	*Dollart*	Ice–310 tons	Charter	July 7
	August	*Kamchatka*	Ice–600 tons	RAC	Sept. 10
	September	*Windward*	Ice–820 tons	Charter	Sept. 12

[44] Henceforth all vessels with ice came from Kodiak (Wood Island).

	October	*Regulator*	Ice–965 tons	Charter	Oct. 13
Departure Date		**Ship**	**Cargo**	**Owner**	**Arrival Date**
1863	February	*Nakhimov*	Ice–290 tons, sealskins	RAC	Feb. 16
	May	*Shelikhov*	Ice–200 tons	RAC	June 2
	June	*Nakhimov*	Ice–290 tons	RAC	June 18
	July	*Hamburg*	Ice–?	Charter	July 26
	July	*Dollart*	Ice–310 tons	Charter	Aug. 3
	July	*Constance*	Ice–?	Charter	Aug. 10
	August	*Nakhimov*	Ice–290 tons	RAC	Aug. 30
	September	*Helios*	Ice–775 tons	Charter	Sept. 18
	September	*Camden*	Ice–525 tons	Charter	Oct. 5
1864	May	*Tsesarevich*	Ice–530 tons	RAC	June 5
	June	*Nakhimov*	Ice–290 tons	RAC	June 13
	June	*Caroline Reed*	Ice–?	Charter	July 9
	August	*Tsesarevich*	Ice–530 tons	RAC	Aug. 17
	August	*Helios*	Ice–775 tons	Charter	Aug. 30
	August	*Sophie Helene*	Ice–330 tons	Charter	Sept. 10
1865	May	*Tsesarevich*	Ice–530 tons	RAC	May 27
	July	*Tsesarevich*	Ice–530 tons	RAC	July 31
	August	*Helios*	Ice–695 tons	Charter	Aug. 13
	August	*Lotta Maria*	Ice–1,140 tons	Charter	Aug. 30
	August	*Susannee*	Ice–420 tons	Charter	Sept. 6
	October	*Tsesarevich*	Ice–530 tons	RAC	Oct. 22
1866	July	*Imperial*	Ice–1,730 tons	Charter	July 13
	August	*Kamchatka*	Ice–610 tons	RAC	Aug. 26
	August	*Mary Glover*	Ice–735 tons	Charter	Sept. 9
	September	*Kentucky*	Ice–255 tons	Charter	Nov. 11
1867	April	*Tsesarevich*	Ice–530 tons	RAC	May 4
	June	*Helen Angier*	Ice–655 tons	Charter	July 3
	August	*Gem of the Ocean*	Ice–630 tons	Charter	Aug. 11
	August	*Helen Angier*	Ice–655 tons	Charter	Sept. 1

APPENDIX II
SUMMARY OF ALASKAN ICE SHIPPED TO CALIFORNIA[45]

Year	Shipments	Tons Shipped Est.	Tons Arriving	Gross Receipts in Thousand Dollars
1852	1	250	200	9
1853	4	1130	850	41
1854	6	2870	2300	61
1855	6	3385	2700	52
1856	1	710	570	6
1857	8	4555	3650	21
1858	6	3825	3390	16
1859	9	3510	2785	21
1860	6	3075	2665	24[46]
1861	6	3075	2665	29
1862	6	4275	3645	32
1863	9	3570 +[47]	2850	20
1864	6	4785 +[48]	3825	35
1865	6	3835	3070	25
1866	4	3160	2525	19
1867	4	2650	2000	13

[45] Compiled from Appendix I and Records of the Russian America Company (RG 261).
[46] Indicates change in contract.
[47] Two shipments tonnage unrecorded.
[48] One shipment tonnage unrecorded.

Isadora Duncan's Dance in Russia: First Impressions and Discussions. 1904–1909

Elena Yushkova

Abstract

This article analyzes the ways in which Isadora Duncan's dance oeuvre was perceived in Russia by different sections of the literati and the intelligentsia. Although Duncan's tours took place in 1904, 1905, 1907–1908, 1909, 1913, and again in 1921–1924 when she lived and worked in the Soviet Union, I argue that during the 1904–1909 period, Duncan's performances were very influential for the development of Russian ballet, theater, literature, and dance criticism.

In December 1904, Isadora Duncan's first performance took place in St. Petersburg, at the famed Hall of the Nobles. Her Russian tours followed in 1905, 1907-1908, 1909, and 1913, and all of them were widely reported in Russian newspapers and magazines. The coverage varied according to the artistic and social contexts of certain periods, as well as to the evolution of the dancer's ideas and techniques across different stages of her life. Duncan's performances and activities of her Moscow school in 1921–1924 also produced significant resonance in Soviet criticism, especially as this represented a major shift in her artistic sensibilities. But for the purposes of this essay, I will analyze her performances from the 1904–1909 period, as they were extremely influential for the development of Russian ballet, theater, literature and dance criticism.

This essay represents a major historiographical departure within the history of Russian-American relations that has been for the most part concerned with diplomatic, economic and political relations, and less so with the important field of culture.[1] While we have important accounts of the reception of Silver Age Russian

[1] Christopher Lasch, *American Liberals and the Russian Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 962); David Charles Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003); Malia Martin, *Under Western Eyes: From the Bronze Horseman to the Lenin Mausoleum* (Cambridge:Harvard University Press, 1999); Norman Saul, *Concord and Conflict: The United States and Russia, 1867–1914* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1996); Norman Saul and Richard McKinzie, eds., *Russian-American Dialogue on Cultural Relations, 1776–1914* (Columbia:University of Missouri Press, 1997); Robert Williams, *Russian Art and American Money, 1900–1940* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980); William Appleman Williams, *American Russian Relations, 1781–1947* (New York: Rinehart, 1952). For Russian perspectives see,

art, literature and theater in the West, the English-language accounts of Duncan's experiences in Russia and the Soviet Union are quite insufficient although several biographies, memoirs, articles and book chapters have been published.[2]

Furthermore, this article analyzes the Russian reception of Duncan's performances by not only theater and dance critics, but also considers the reactions, both positive and negative, of major Russian intellectuals, poets, and choreographers to Duncan's dance oeuvre. Finally, I also analyze the significant ways that the philosophical implications of Duncan's artistry connected with the central concerns of Russia's Silver Age.

The American dancer came to Russia when the culture there entered a very fruitful period, "a moment of unprecedented flowering,"[3] later called the Silver Age. Since the 1890s poetry, literature, and fine art, as well as dramatic theater went through significant modernization. Numerous developments in literature (Symbolism, and later Acmeism and Futurism), fine art (Art Nouveau, then Constructivism), music, theater, philosophy, and in the sciences made this period of Russian history unique and incredibly innovative. However, classical ballet in Russia at that time was in a state of stagnation, even though in the 1890s it had reached considerable heights of achievement in the works of the great choreographer Marius Petipa (1818–1910). By 1896, the Russian ballet had received recognition

Etkind Aleksandr, Tolkovanie puteshestvii: Rossiia i Amerika v travelogakh i intertekstakh (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2003); A. V. Golubev et al., eds., *Rossiia i zapad: Formirovanie vneshnepoliticheskikh stereotipov v soznanii rossiiskogo obshchestva pervoi poloviny XX veka* (Moscow: RAN, 1998); V. I. Fokin, *Mezhdunarodnyi kul'turnyi obmen i SSSR v 20-30 gody* (St. Petersburg: Izd-vo St. Peterburgskogo universiteta, 1999); Aleksandr Nikolaevich Nikolukin, *Literaturnye sviazii Rossii i SShA: Turgenev, Tolstoi, Dostoevsky i Amerika* (Moscow: Nauka, 1981); O. E. Tuganova et al. , eds.,*Vzaimodeistvie kul'tur SSSR i SSHA, xviii-xxvv* (Moscow: Nauka, 1987); Ivan Kurilla, *Zakliatye druzia. Istoriya mnenii, fantazii, kontaktov, vzaimo(ne)ponimaniia Rossii i SSHA* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2018).

[2] E. Souritz, *Isadora Duncan's Influence on Dance in Russia*// Dance Chronicle.—1995.—Vol. 18.—No.2.—P. 281-291; E. Souritz, *Isadora Duncan and Prewar Russian Dancemakers*/ The Ballets Russes and Its World. New Haven and London, 1999; Roslavleva, Natalia Petrovna. *"Prechistenka 20: The Isadora Duncan School in Moscow*." Dance Perspectives. Vol. 16, Winter, New York: M. Dekker, 1975; 38; Duncan, Isadora, Edward Gordon Craig, and Francis Steegmuller. "*Your Isadora": The Love Story of Isadora Duncan & Gordon Craig* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976); Duncan, Isadora, and Rosemont, Franklin. *Isadora Speaks: Uncollected Writings & Speeches of Isadora Duncan* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1981). Shneider, Ilia Ilich. *Isadora Duncan, the Russian Years* (London: Macdonald, 1968); Duncan, Irma, and Macdougall, Allan Ross. *Isadora Duncan's Russian Days & Her Last Years in France* (New York: Covici-Friede, 1929); Dikovskaya Lily, with Gerard M-F Hill. *In Isadora's Steps. The story of Isadora Duncan's school in Moscow, told by her favorite pupil*. (Book Guild Publishing, Great Britain.2008); McVay, Gordon. *Isadora and Esenin: The Story of Isadora Duncan and Sergei Esenin*. (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Ardis, 1980). See also biographies of Duncan by Victor Seroff, Fredrica Blair, and Peter Kurth.

[3] John Bowlt, *Russia's Silver Age: Moscow and St. Petersburg, 1900–1920*. (Thames & Hudson. 2010), 9

abroad and even surpassed its French and Italian counterparts, which were technically the 'parents' of Russian professional dance in the eighteenth century.[4] A special ballet school in St. Petersburg prepared about 150 professional dancers for the stage during the period of 1779–1896. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the twentieth century, certain ballet traditions were becoming obsolete. The young choreographer Mikhail (Michel) Fokine, was deeply unsatisfied with them, and in 1904 suggested that Russian ballet be reformed.[5] Belonging to a narrow circle of the audience—the court and aristocratic elite, "the ballet had fallen behind the increasingly rapid pace of Russian cultural life,"[6] and suffered on account of its reputation of being "an aristocratic bauble."[7] Criticism of the dance form existed, but there were as yet no specialized magazines and journals that concentrated on dance as an art form. Instead, critics published their reviews in the sections devoted to the ballet that were contained in theater and literary journals.

The setting for Duncan's first tours—the Silver Age of Russian culture

The multilayered socio-cultural phenomenon, called the Silver Age, has been the subject of vast academic research and most scholars consider the era between the mid-1890s and 1917 as the age of Russian modernism.[8] Remarkable innovations in architecture, poetry, philosophy, literature, and drama showed a propensity to break with established traditions, as artists searched for different ideas and new means of expression. The Russian cultural elite protested against the supremacy of critical realism and naturalism in the arts, that had for a few decades been oriented entirely towards representing social antagonisms in society. Artists refused to simply reproduce a reality of Russia with its numerous social problems, and instead, they claimed that art should express spirituality and personal experiences. In particular, the main trend of the *fin-de-siècle* period symbolism "was the product of the search for new means of artistic expressiveness, and the rejection of the overdetermined ideology and the psychologism of Russian classical realism."[9] Greek antiquity became one of the most significant sources of inspiration for the Symbolists.[10] The ideas of European philosophers such as Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and the French thinker, Henry Bergson, became very influential. [11] Slavic and Russian history, Sumer-Babylonian epic literature, ancient mysteries, esoteric studies from the Bhagavad Gita to the contemporary theosophy and occultism of Yelena Blavatsky, also enriched the intellectual

[4] Alexandr Plescheev. *Nash balet* (*Our ballet*). (St. Petersburg. 1886), 10-20.

[5] *International Encyclopedia of Dance.* Ed. Selma Jeanne Cohen. Volume 3, (N.Y., Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1998), 14.

[6] Tim Scholl. *From Petipa to Balanchine: classical revival and modernization of ballet* (N. Y.: Taylor and Francis Group. 2005), 16.

[7] Ibid., 10-11.

[8] Bowlt, Gasparov and Rylkova. Gasparov, in Rylkova, 4.

[9] Dobrenko, in Cambridge Companion, XXII.

[10] See *Antichnost' i Kultura Serebryanogo Veka* (*Antiquity and Culture of the Silver Age*). (Moscow. Nauka. 2010)

[11] See *Nietzsche in Russia*, ed. by B. G. Rosenthal (N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1986)

background of the 1900s. Organic forms of *Art-Nouveau* architecture decorated Moscow and St. Petersburg streets, and magazines attracted readers' attention by publishing images of home grown and authentic Russian design.

Spiritual aspirations penetrated all kinds of arts. The magazine, *Mir Iskusstva* (*World of Art*), published in St. Petersburg in 1899–1903 represented a new approach to analyzing painting, architecture, and theater, paving the way for a new kind of art criticism. This art criticism was be based on a canon of refined aesthetics and it acknowledged the importance of spiritual content in art, and allowed for discussions about the human soul. "*Mir iskusstva* was committed to exploring the category of beauty, and this credo, along with its alignment with European modernist art, made it anathema to Russia's more utilitarian-minded critics.[12] New aesthetics penetrated into theater as well. Even in the realistic works of Moscow Art Theater led by Konstantin Stanislavsky, a spiritual atmosphere prevailed during the performances of Vsevolod Meyerhold in Vera Komissarzhevskaya's plays.

Theater tried to create a hypnotic influence on the public, using mystical sets, unusual declamation and mysterious music. "The Symbolists urged the theater to turn away from external reality towards the inner life of the human soul, dwelling on philosophical content."[13] Russian poet Vyacheslav Ivanov argued for the merging of actors and the audience during theater performances, following the precedents laid down in ancient theater).[14] In general, the cultural paradigm was changing rapidly from positivist thinking to a more idealistic one. "New art, being tired of realism's flatness, searched for broader tasks and chose more elevated aims. Universal and abstract problems, the idea of God and fate once again imbued art, which dreamt of an ancient theater, the origins of which were from a religious cult, as Nietzsche announced with feeling,"—recalls a participant of the cultural life of the Silver Age who later immigrated to Europe, dramatist and art historian, Evgeny Znosko-Borovsky.[15]

Considering this background, the first tours of the American dancer Isadora Duncan in Russia were timely. She was infatuated with antiquity and the philosophy of Nietzsche, and like the Russian Symbolist poets and writers. She also turned to nature and the past in search for new meanings of expression like the painters from the *Mir Iskusstva* group. Duncan also used traits of the popular *Art Nouveau* style with its organic, flowing forms and lines. The American dancer wanted to make a theater performance more than just a social event: she wanted her performance to

[12] Lynn Garafola. *Dyagilev's Ballets Russes* (Boston. MA. Da Capo Press. 1998), IX.

[13] Birgit Beumers. Drama and theater, in *Cambridge Companion*, 215-234.

[14] See Ivanov Vyach. *Predchuvstviya i predvestiyua* (*Presentiments and premonitions*) —.in Vyacheslav Ivanov. Collections of works. Ed. D.V. Ivanov and O. Deshart (Brussels, 1974 Volume 2), 94-95, see http://www.v-ivanov.it/brussels/vol2/01text/01papers/2_005.htm. In 1910, Ivanov implemented his ideas into practice and tried to create that kind of theater at home based on dramaturgy by the Spanish playwright Calderón. *Devotion to the Cross* (1637). Vs. Meyerkhold was a director of that performance, see Elena Yushkova. *Plastika preodoleniya,* (*Plastique of the Overcoming*), (Yaroslavl: YGPU, 2009), 135-138.

[15] Evgeny Znosko-Borovsky. *Russky teatr nachala XX veka* (*Russian theater of the beginning of the 20th century*) (Praga: Plamya. 1925), 231-232.

be a spiritual act involving the public emotionally and intellectually like Russian theater directors of that time (Stanislavsky, Meyerhold). Isadora Duncan easily and successfully broke many traditions of the dance form, while proclaiming a new role of dance in a human life. She also broke artistic stereotypes like Russian symbolist poets and philosophers did, claiming that dance would be a new religion of the twentieth century. Duncan charmed the Russian cultural elite with her devotion to the high art. They were ready to accept her manifesto in which Duncan declared her intention to overcome the Cartesian duality between body and mind through dance.[16] "Indeed, the first serious discussion on Duncan in Russia came from poets, painters, and thinkers, as well as art and ballet critics who viewed dance within a broad cultural and artistic framework."[17]

Russian critics meet Duncan: first impressions

The first tours of Isadora Duncan took place in St. Petersburg on December 13th and 16th of 1904.[18] She presented a program that was dominated by dance pieces by Chopin, as well as the *Dance Idylls* composed by Rameau, Picchi, and Couperin. In the beginning of 1905 Duncan came to Russia again, and visited not only the capital of St. Petersburg, but Moscow and Kiev as well. Publications on Isadora Duncan appeared in Russian periodicals before her first tour: two short newspaper articles in 1903,[19] and then in May 1904 famed poet and artist Maximilian Voloshin, who had seen Duncan perform in Paris, introduced her to the Russian public. Duncan's dance oeuvre, in Voloshin's opinion, expressed the essence of music and the dancer's attitude towards the world, the human soul, and the cosmos. Duncan's dance was rooted in remote antiquity, but was directed towards the future and as such would remain throughout the centuries as a model of beauty and freedom. According to Voloshin, "dance is the highest of the arts because it reaches the most primary of rhythm, the one enclosed in the pulsation of a human heart."[20] Being a poet, Voloshin was able to create an unforgettable image of an inspired woman in a semi-transparent tunic whose flowing movements were far removed from the precision of ballet technique. He concluded that Duncan "dances everything that other people speak, sing, write, play, and draw."[21] A month prior to her tour, *Sankt-Peterburgsky Dnevnik Teatrala* (*St. Petersburg Diary of Theater Lover*) published an interview with Duncan, which she gave to

[16] See Isadora Duncan and Sheldon Cheney. *The Art of the Dance* (New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1928), Isadora Duncan, and Franklin Rosemont. *Isadora Speaks*: *Uncollected Writings & Speeches of Isadora Duncan* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1981).

[17] See Elizabeth Suritz. *Isadora Duncan and Prewar Russian Dancemakers*, in *The Ballet Russes and Its World*, ed. by Lynn Garafola and Nancy Van Norman Baer. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 98.

[18] Steegmuller. *Your Isadora*, 38.

[19] See Elizabeth Suritz. *Isadora Duncan and Prewar Russian Dancemakers*, 98, 359.

[20] Maximilian Voloshin. *Isadora Duncan,* in—*Aisedora. Gastroli v Rossii.* (*Isadora. Tours of Russia*). Collection of reviews, ed. T. Kasatkina. Preface by E. Souritz. (M.: ART, 1992), 32.

[21] Voloshin—in *Aisedora*, 30.

Maurice Girschman, the Berlin correspondent of the newspaper.[22] She explained to the Russian public that her main tasks were to revive the beauty of the ancient dance, to illustrate the thoughts of composers such as Beethoven in dance, and to make art publics believe that dance was an elevated art form.[23] Most of the first reviews published in St. Petersburg were gathered in the advertising brochure for Duncan's Moscow tour in January 1905, and supplemented with two articles by German critics. The aim of this brochure was to convince the audience that "Isadora Duncan is a serious, thoughtful *artiste* who strives to purely artistic ideals, and her art is as lofty and noble as drama, music and sculpture." The editors, used the authority of German art critics to elevate Duncan's dance form as true art![24]

The discussions, which took place after her first tours in 1904 and 1905 in St. Petersburg and Moscow, split into several directions. Critics wrote about topics as diverse as Duncan's bare feet and legs, nudity, women in antiquity and the emancipation of women. Isadora's philosophical approach to dance and her claims about using classical music to create a total artwork on the basis of dance were also widely discussed.

Bare legs

After Duncan's first tours, we can find descriptions of her bare feet and legs in every review. "The fact that "barefoot" is one of the interviewer's [Girshman's] opening words underlines the great novelty, indeed the sensationalism, of Isadora's stage appearance: in those days her bare feet, bare legs, and scanty garment produced a shock"[25] states contemporary American scholar Francis Steegmuller. In the criticism of this period, we see many attempts to describe Duncan's feet and legs. Writers' perceptions of these parts of the body depends on their personal taste, their ideal of woman's beauty, and their understanding of theater aesthetics. Sometimes the descriptions are very controversial. "Ordinary woman's legs, strong and graceful, but devoid of any alluring perfections,"[26]—this is the opinion by theater and ballet critic Valerian Svetlov. "Thin, pale feet, not at all beautiful,"—stresses writer Nikolai Shebuev in *Peterburskaya Gazeta*[27]. He also describes numerous foyer talks in which the famous one-line poem by the leading poet-Symbolist Bryusov, "O, cover thy pale legs!"[28] devoted originally to Jesus Christ but interpreted by the public mostly in an erotic way. Journalist and playwright, Yury Belyayev confesses that he really admires the view of the legs, because they are "strong, with well-developed muscles in the knees and trim,

[22] Girshman—in Steegmuller, 39-40.

[23] Ibid., 40.

[24] Tikhomirov. V.D. *Programs of performances, collected by V.D. Tikhomirov. 1891–1952* RGALI (Russian State Archive for Literature and Arts), fund. 2729, opis'.1, #. 134, 38-48.

[25] Steegmuller, 41.

[26] Svetlov V. *Duncan*, in Steegmuller, 44.

[27] Shebuev G. *Duncan*, in Steegmuller, 44.

[28] Ibid., 43.

with perfectly formed feet; they flew across the stage like two pink wings."[29] However, Belyayev peppers his review with irony: "Old Strauss was [shown] without pants,"[30] meaning that bare legs in a combination with music by a famous composer look quite unusual and provocative.

"Her feet are too thick"[31]—Maximilian Voloshin cites the talk of commoners heard at the foyer. He avoids his own opinion on the legs, only mentioning that they are long.[32] His poetic description transforms physiological details into a poem in prose. "The least beautiful body flashes with inspiration in the ecstasy of the dance,"[33]—writes Voloshin introducing two new topics—natural body in motion and dance as ecstasy which were not present in classical ballet criticism prior to Duncan's arrival in Russia. "Duncan's bare legs are like those of a rustic vagabond"[34]—states Shebuev in a poetic vein. He persuades the readers that the legs are a harmonic part of Duncan's show, in which "everything dances: waist, arms, neck, head—and legs." Critic confirms, "the legs play the least important role in these dances"[35] attracting reader's attention to the art of Isadora, and sums up that "being bare, [the legs] touch the ground lightly, soundlessly."[36] Alexander Filippov, writer for the newspaper *Rus'*, almost repeats Shebuev when he writes, "When the accompanist started to play Chopin's Mazurka, Isadora began to sing and speak with her legs, arms, eyes, and lips. No one had ever danced the Mazurka this way. There was no dance, no *pas*… But there was a rhythm of life and a music of fragrant feeling."[37] 'The barefoot girl shocked nobody, and her nudity was pure and perceptible. Indeed, it would be ridiculous to force a pair of boots on Terpsichore…'—summed up critic Y. V.[38] The novelty of bare legs and feet was digested quite easily. Most critics saw something more significant in Duncan's dance than the absence of traditional parts of her costume.

'Nudity'

Despite the fact that Duncan had never performed naked, her semi-transparent tunic looked quite shocking at that time. "Miss Duncan dances with bare legs, without sandals, without tights, without… anything!"—exclaims Yury Belyaev obviously exaggerating the absence of the cloths.[39] "No one knew how to react […]: to take it seriously or as a joke,"—adds Valerian Svetlov,[40] characterizing the public confusion about Duncan's performances. Isadora's

[29] Yury Belyayev. *Miss Duncan*, in *Aisedora*, 76.
[30] Ibid., 79.
[31] Voloshin, in *Aisedor*a, 33.
[32] Ibid., 30.
[33] Ibid., 37.
[34] Shebuev, in Steegmuller, 43.
[35] Ibid., 43.
[36] Ibid., 44.
[37] Alexander Filippov. *Chopin's evening*, in *Aisedora*, 53.
[38] Y.V. in Steegmuller, 44.
[39] Belyayev, in *Aisedora*, 76.
[40] Svetlov, in *Aisedora*, 49.

jumps to him looked 'wild,'[41] her 'poses were risky.'[42] Nevertheless, all critics agree that Duncan's 'nudity' has nothing to do with pornography or entertainment. Alexander Rafalovich writes about her being a "chaste virgin,'[43] and most other critics thought the same way. "This is not a *nudité* that arouses sinful thoughts, but rather a kind of incorporeal nudity"[44] and "there is nothing here to shock the moral sense,"[45] add Shebuev and Svetlov. While Belyayev claims, that "except her legs and proportional body, there is nothing attractive in Miss Duncan as a woman,"[46] Rafalovich finds that not only her feminine attractiveness is of importance on the stage: "she is not beautiful […] but [in dance] becomes splendid."[47] She is "such a natural in the graces, the movements, the feelings and such a genuine story of the human soul"[48] observed Alexander Filippov.

As we can notice, the physical aspects of Duncan's semi-naked body on the stage, shocking at the first sight, gradually are replaced by aesthetic images, which she herself created while dancing. Critic Svetlov stresses, that "only a thoroughly corrupted member of our present bourgeois society will see this nudity of the revived classical statue as a violation of the laws of decency or morality."[49] Voloshin goes further: "nudity is a necessary condition for dance… The body should be like an undulating flowing stream… Dance and nudity are inseparable and immortal."[50] Statements such as these were quite revolutionary for that time. Some imperfections of Duncan's body do not disturb the critics. The dress covered the young woman as "a light cloud,"[51] and she impresses the reviewers with her spirituality, musicality, and poetical gestures. "This nudity is just ancient, and, as such, natural,"—summarizes Valerian Svetlov[52]. The discussion on "antiquity" as immanent to Duncan's dance starts from the very beginning, because poses of Isadora evidently reminiscent of ancient Greek statues and vase paintings.

Antiquity

There were many descriptions, especially written by the critics from the Symbolists' circle connecting Duncan's dance with Greek statues, figures on vases and with Greek mythology; but critics' opinions about the nature of this 'antiquity' differed. Svetlov believes that she "reconstructs, restores and revives the ancient Greek dance,"[53] and also combines and spiritualizes elements taken from vases and frescoes. He even called Duncan the "Schliemann of ancient choreography"[54]

[41] Plescheev, in *Aisedora*, 46.
[42] Belyayev, in *Aisedora*, 76.
[43] Rafalovich, in *Aisedora*, 59.
[44] Shebuev, in Steegmuller, 43.
[45] Svetlov, in Steegmuller, 45.
[46] Belyayev, in *Aisedora*, 78.
[47] Rafalovich, in *Aisedora*, 59.
[48] Filippov, in *Aisedora*, 54.
[49] Svetlon, in Steegmuller, 45.
[50] Voloshin, in *Aisedora*, 37.
[51] Belyayev, in *Aisedora*, 76.
[52] Shebuev, in Steegmuller, 45.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Svetlov, in *Aisedora*, 49.

meaning that she is a real discoverer of the Greek art. Nikolai Shebuev, on the contrary, finds in her dance fake antiquity—contemporary images, which remind him paintings by the representative of the late Russian academicism Henryk Siemiradzky's (1843-1902)[55] therefore, he sees Greek poses and movements through the prism of the late pseudo-classical style, full of affected pathos.

Belyayev identifies Duncan with the early and late Renaissance tracing her light tunics back to Botticelli and Titian's pictures.[56] Alexander Benois connects Duncan's 'dance reform' with the Pre-Raphaelites' transformation of painting, which was aimed to "return to people their godly face."[57] Protesting against the ugliness of life in a bourgeois society, this group of artists turned to the early Renaissance epoch, where they found an ideal of woman's beauty with pure and naïve faces, but with expressions of slight sadness, melancholy, and the presentiment of death. Andre Levinson found traits of several epochs, but all of them in contemporary interpretation. He "discussed Isadora's dance, the Hellenism of 1900s Russia, and the art of the English Pre-Raphaelites as clichéd, popularized forms of classicism, designed to appeal to the public, but stopping short of a real break with conventional art."[58]

Valerian Svetlov recalls the famous mystification that French poet Pierre Louÿs *Songs of Bilitis,* published in 1894, produced among the public. This popular book of erotic poetry misled even specialists on the Ancient Greek literature, as the poet copied to perfection the writing mannerisms of the Ancient Greek poetess, Sappho. "If you are familiar with the *Songs of Bilitis*, you will easily notice [images from this collection] in Miss Duncan's reconstruction"—notes Svetlov.[59] This comparison meant that the critic saw a clever parallel in Duncan's appropriation of images of antiquity. Voloshin finds elements of ancient Egyptian culture ("she makes visible the color of the air surrounding her body"[60] like an Egyptian statue) and images from the Sevres vases of the 18th century that depicted the special elegance of Greek female dancers. Voloshin was reminded of Bernini's famous baroque sculpture of Daphnae, which showed the process of the girl's transformation into a Grecian laurel. And he also mentioned Diana of Versailles and Botticelli's famous painting, *Primavera*. However, Voloshin starts his article with a poetic description of Duncan, dancing at the Greek amphitheater near the Athens Acropolis and the Parthenon. He uses many picturesque details: the ruins of the stage supported by hunched-backed dwarfs with bearded faces such as Socrates, sparse and spindly olive trees, accompanied by the deafening, dry and ringing crackle of cicadas, Doric pillars, and white and dusty roads, creating the atmosphere of a hot Greek day and an abandoned space of ancient civilization.[61] Rafalovich is sure that Duncan "stands on the firm

[55] Shebuev, in Steegmuller, 43.
[56] Belyayev in *Aisedora*, 77.
[57] Benois, in *Aisedora*, 60.
[58] Tim Scholl. *From Petipa to Balanchine*, 41.
[59] Svetlov, in *Aisedora*, 51.
[60] Voloshin, in *Aisedora*, 36.
[61] Voloshin, in *Aisedora*, 30.

ground of historical truth,"[62] denying his colleagues' doubts in the authenticity of her dances. But Andre Levinson noted ironically that "the public received her dances as antique artifacts, despite their obvious unauthenticity and the fact that Isadora preferred to discuss them as dances of the future, not the past."[63] However, Russian Symbolists continued to look for different artistic epochs in Duncan's performances.

Duncan's dance in Symbolists' perception

The Moscow magazine *Vesy—Scales* (1904–1909) welcomed Duncan ecstatically. It belonged to the group of young Moscow Symbolists, led by the famous poet Valery Bryusov, who had already declared new principles of art. Bryusov's article of 1902 'Unnecessary Truth" which appeared in St. Petersburg magazine *Mir Iskusstva* was devoted to Moscow Art Theater, an organization that he accused of using an ultra-realistic approach to performances. "I summon you from the unnecessary truth of the contemporary stage to the deliberate conventionality of the ancient theater" proclaimed Bryusov.[64] This call to turn theater principles to that of antiquity was a part of the restrospectivism of Russia's *fin de siècle* culture with its interest in Greek and Roman antiquity and other historical epochs.[65] Probably Duncan's channeling of antiquity was reason enough to consider her art in every issue of the journal, *Vesy.* Duncan's many connections with European modernist art was also considered to be of importance to Russian artistic circles. The journal, launched in 1904, had a great interest in the new artistic trends in Europe, and in every issue, articles on European modernist writers such as Emile Verhaeren, Charles Baudelaire, Maurice Maeterlinck, Oscar Wilde, Rainer Maria Rilke and others names were introduced to the Russian audience.[66] There were foreign correspondents in France, England, and Germany which let the magazine keep pace with contemporary art in Europe. In this context the *Vesy's* decision to publish numerous articles on the modernist dancer Isadora Duncan, who was visually connected with antiquity but belonged to modern European culture, despite her American origin, was in keeping with the cultural coordinates of the journal.

In 1905, after Duncan's Moscow tour, *Vesy* published articles on her art almost in every issue. Andrey Bely, later a theorist of Symbolism, Sergey Solovyov, a nephew of the famous Russian philosopher, Vladimir Solovyov, and a specialist on antiquity, poetess Lyudmila Vil'kina, and others left many descriptions of of Duncan's programs. They described the numerous historical and aesthetic associations that were present in Duncan's dance. Lyudmila Vil'kina saw in Duncan's performances "sacred symphonies"[67] "sun- and moon-lit mysteries of

[62] Rafalovich, in *Aisedora*, 57.
[63] Levinson, in Scholl, 42-43.
[64] Bryusov, in Scholl, 41.
[65] Ibid., 40.
[66] A.V. Lavrov, D.E. Maximov, "*Vesy". Russkaya literatura i zhurnalistika nachala XX veka* (*Russian literyture and Journalism of the beginning of the 20th century*) (M.: Nauka, 1984, 65-136), 86-87.
[67] Lyudmila Vil'kina. *Aisedora Duncan*. *Vesy*, 1905, № 1, 40.

passion and sorrow."[68] She described images of an awakening nature, a flautist from an Etruscan vase, a refined face of Botticelli's Venus, a female body on the Burn-Jones' Golden ladder; Aphrodite turning into furious Maenad, and praying Artemis… She depicted a "lunar ecstasy" in which the dancer "was becoming more and more transparent and now she is lifted up toward the sky."[69] Thus, the attempts to search for traits of different historical epochs in Duncan's dance and use elevated style was represented in Vil'kina's descriptions quite clearly.

The fifth issue of *Vesy* reprinted the above-mentioned article by poet, artist and critic Maximilian Voloshin, which was very poetic, sublime and close to the aesthetic program of the journal. The images in this article which he uses to describe Duncan's dance, are related to Ancient Egypt, Greek and Roman Antiquity, and Renaissance and Baroque periods. He praised "the immortal union of the dance and nudity, apotheosis of life and youth," and referred to Duncan's abilities to "pull away from the ground and run through the air, like a little child."[70] The Duncan dance, in his opinion, wonderfully expresses the essence of music and attitude of the dancer towards the world, the human soul, and the cosmos. Her dance had come from remote antiquity, but is directed at the future and will remain throughout centuries a model of beauty and freedom.

Similarly sublime is the description by Andrey Bely, who 'realized that [her dance] was about the unspoken … She rushed to the heights of immortality'[71] He asserted that Duncan reached in her art the highest spirituality and embodied something beyond words, which had an enormous philosophical and esoteric value. Sergey Solovyov found the creation of 'spiritual corporeality' in Isadora's work. 'In her dance the form finally overcomes the stagnation of matter, and each movement of her body is an embodiment of spiritual acts.'[72] He also glorified Isadora in his collection of poems *Flowers and Incense* as a "spring smile, a Nymph of Ionia."[73]

Poet-symbolist Mikhail Sizov in the magazine *Art* stressed that Duncan had brought to the world a new meaning of corporeality and broadened the traditional understanding of a human body and its mission. 'Duncan's art affirms and represents the Body in its self-worth, its beauty and free love toward the Spirit… In her heart, there many strands are vibrating intended to unite the cultures of West and East … She is a comet, shining with a light from afar.'[74]

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[68] Ibid., 42.
[69] Ibid., 41-42.
[70] Voloshin, in *Aisedora*, 36.
[71] Andrey Bely. *Isadora Duncan*, in *Aisedora*, 89.
[72] S. S. *Aisedora Duncan v Moskve*. *Vesy*. 1905. № 2, 40.
[73] Solovyov S., in *Aisedora*, 382.
[74] M. Sizov. *Vechera Aisedory Duncan v Moskve*, *Iskusstvo.* 1905, volume. 1, 48-51, see 50-51. His guess about a mixture of Western and Eastern traditions in San Francisco of the Duncan's childhood time will be developed later in a PhD thesis by the American scholar Mark Frederick Wheeler *Surface to Essence: Appropriation of the Orient by Modern Dance*. (The Ohio State University, 1984).

One publication in *Vesy* looks quite strange. Most likely Bryusov himself had prepared it, since he did most of the work during the first two years.[75] The article was entitled 'Heinrich Heine on Isadora Duncan,'[76] although the poet had died a long time before. This was not a real article and was not devoted to Duncan—the editor used a fragment from the unfinished novel of 1837 *Florentinische Nächte* ("*Florentine Nights*") by Heine where the German representative of Romanticism described a dancer Mademoiselle Laurence who amazed him. He saw the main achievement of this girl as her ability to express her inner feelings in special and unique movements, which were far from the classical ballet technique, but close to ancient pantomime. Sometimes she reminded the writer of a furious Bacchante from antique vases, especially when she made some wild movements with her head. Describing the dance of Laurence, Heine claims that her movements are the "words of a special language."[77] We can assume that Bryusov was looking for a way for dance perception in the epoch of Romanticism and using Heine's writings, tried to substantiate his own admiration of a new choreography.

Reviewers from the Symbolists' circle demonstrate an elevated style of writing, richness of imagination, breadth of historical associations, attempts to understand the essence of Duncan's art, and find the origins of her creativity.

Philosophical approach to dance

A contemporary American scholar Kimerer LaMothe called Isadora Duncan a dancer philosopher,[78] who was able to express her thoughts through dance. The dancer and scholar of Duncan Jeanne Bresciani, who cataloged in 1975 the remains of Isadora's library, contained numerous books by famous philosophers, historians, psychologists and scientists, confirms the same idea,[79] analyzing sources of Isadora's inspiration. Some Russian critics foresaw these future insights, for instance, the above-mentioned Symbolists, while some writers ridiculed her for her ambitions to be an artist and a dancer. Alexander Benois stated, that "it is pointless to look for philosophical principles in her ideas; as a genuine artist, she is motivated not by logic, but by elemental inspiration."[80] He admits the artistic talent of Duncan, but refuses to see philosophical principles in her choreography. While dismissing the philosophical basis of Duncan's art, Benois cannot deny a great spiritual power in her activities. He calls her a "a real apostle of her own teaching," and claims that "the small and modest art of Madame Duncan contains the origins of the eternal and global: it should put out sprouts everywhere, and

[75] K.N. Azadovsky, D.E. Maximov. *Bryusov i Vesy* (*Bryusov and Vesy*) (M.: Nauka. Literaturnoe nasledstvo.1976, 257-324), 271.

[76] Ibid., 86.

[77] Ibid., 86.

[78] Kimerer L. LaMothe. *Nietzsche's Dancers: Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham, and the Revaluation of Christian Values* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), X.

[79] Jeanne Bresciani. *A Catalog of the Isadora Duncan Library in the Victor Seroff Collection*. Unpublished MA thesis. (New York University, 1982), Appendix E.

[80] Benois, in Steegmuller, 47.

from it should grow the reform of one of the most exhausted and abandoned forms of life: dance."[81]

Retelling the speech of Duncan, which he listened to at the dinner after her second performance in St. Petersburg, Benois pays a special attention to her aesthetic ideas focusing on her thoughts about beauty: "The only thing that matters is beauty, the pursuit of beauty in order to make all life beautiful. In the presence of beauty, even suffering has no terror, even death does not frighten, beauty illumines everything, and it is mankind's best comforter."[82] He describes her thoughts on the beauty of nature in which the most beautiful creature is a human being. "Everything is good when it repeats, harmonizes, fits together, gives a lively life, when it's not uniform, not disjointed or accidental. Beauty is in motion, in repetition, in rhythm,"[83] comments Benois on Duncan's ideas about a necessity to restore a beautiful human image familiar to ancient artists.

Voloshin also believes that dance can surpass words. "Nothing can shake the soul so much as the dance… Dance is the highest of the arts because it reaches the most primary of rhythm, the one enclosed in the pulsation of a human heart,"[84] claims the poet. Philosopher Vasily Rozanov will soon predict that 'Isadora Duncan's personality, her school will play a large role in the battle of ideas of the new civilization'[85] recognizing her contribution to the history of ideas. However, many reviews of Duncan performances represented negative records. There were critics who refused to see any depths in her dance, which evidently challenged them.

Poor theater of a 'silly American miss'

In an open letter by the famous conductor and musical critic Alexander Ziloti to the violinist Leopold Auer, who conducted the orchestra during Isadora's second tour in Russia in January 1905, Ziloti chastised Auer for participating in Isadora's program, asserting that it was unacceptable for a musician of his level to accompany such a 'primitive' dance.' "Despite all my efforts, I could not find any connection between the music and the movements of Ms. Duncan. She first raised her hands upwards; suddenly she went down as if searching for a paper lost on the floor… Then she began to dance a kind of cancan, then to jump like a goat."[86] The next day Auer published an open reply, excusing his decision by explaining that he had never seen these dances before, and during the performance looked only at his musical score in order not "to shudder from horror," which occurred at the first moment he was acquainted with the style of the dance.[87] "To many people, it was strange to see Duncan, her bare legs, her wild leaps, her jumping like a baby goat, her whirling, illustrating the miraculous sounds of Chopin… This was wearyingly

[81] Benois, in *Aisedora*, 60.
[82] Benois, in Steegmuller, 47.
[83] Benois, in *Aisedora*, 69.
[84] Voloshin in *Aisedora*, 32.
[85] Vasily Rozanov. *Tantsy nevinnosti* (*Dances of innocence*), in *Aisedora*, 145.
[86] *Open letter from A.I. Ziloti to L.S Auer*, in *Aisedora*, 80.
[87] Ibid., 83.

dull, very monotonous and very daring,"[88] wrote Plescheev in December 1904, representing the opinion of general public. "She does not charm, doesn't move [the audience], she only shows original poses that are reminiscent of dancers depicted on antique vases. She embodies ancient dances and from this perspective deserves our attention. But then again to see this is pleasant only in small doses,"[89] assumes he, supposing that the admiration by Isadora was provoked only with a help of the European press.

Belyayev thinks that Duncan should add her dance to the collection of Russian sans-culottes' art, meaning by that the literary works by Maxim Gorky and paintings by the *Peredvizhniki* (*Wanderers*). "Sans-culotte" Gorky represented a new generation of have-nots, who in the Russian language were called "bare-foot" people—they traveled around the country without shoes (*bosyaki*). The painters of *Peredvizhniki* group, which was created in 1874 and existed at the beginning of the 20th century, expressed their compassion to the poorest people of Russia who were living in desperate conditions even 40 years later after the abolition of the serfdom. In Repin's famous painting *Haulers on the Volga-river,* we can see shoeless people in the rags pulling the barge. Figuratively, the reformers took off the shoes from the old art. Belyayev states sarcastically that Russian art lives through an epoch of a great revolution and concludes sarcastically: "Long life to the free art!" having in mind Isadora's bare feet representation ("bosyachestvo"), as it was at Gorky's and Repin's works.[90] Alexander Benois, being a passionate lover of classical ballet and considering Duncan as its "dangerous enemy,"[91] nevertheless, tries to protect Isadora Duncan from critics of *Slovo* newspaper whose denunciation of Duncan as a "vulgar poseur, a silly American miss" he found unfair and hostile.[92]

Despite a certain lack of understanding, we do not find anything offensive in these negative reviews; they just represent a view from a different perspective and a different background. Part of the audience was not ready to perceive Duncan's innovations including her usage of classical music to accompany her dance!

Classical music for dance?

This issue was one of the most controversial for Duncan's contemporaries from the very beginning of her career, although a decade later the music of Chopin, List, Gluck and others were commonly used in dance performances. Lyudmila Vil'kina thinks that Duncan uses motifs by Chopin, Beethoven, Rameau and Gluck because ancient music and rhythms had been lost. Chopin's waltzes and Beethoven's symphonies are connected with Duncan's movements only "accidently,"[93] without any logic. Moreover, the critic claims, at Duncan's performances the audience immersed so deeply in the spectacle, does not listen to the music and is not

[88] Plescheev, in *Aisedora*, 46.
[89] Ibid., 47.
[90] Belyayev, in *Aisedora*, 79.
[91] Benois, in *Aisedora*, 61.
[92] Ibid., 61, 59.
[93] Vil'kina in *Vesy*, 1905, #1, 40.

interested in what is being played.[94] However, Shebuev in his description of the dance to Chopin's Mazurka in B-major, op.7, no 1, shows that the dance fitted in with the music completely. "She [Duncan] emerged and swam like Undine, swaying in time with the beat, waving her hands with the beat, smiling, diving with the beat… her dancing merged into a single chord with Chopin's Mazurka." Then he adds that "her body is as though bewitched by the music. It is as though you yourself were bathing in the music."[95] Voloshin writes about music as an embodied partner of Duncan. "You do not hear the music. The music is instilled and falls silent in her body like in a magic crystal. The music becomes radiant and flows with fluid streams from her every gesture, music begins to blossom with roses appearing in the air around her, music hugs her, kisses her, falls like a golden rain, swims as a white swan and shines with a mystic halo around her head."[96] However, this perception is not shared by some critics. For instance, Plescheev does not see any connection to the music. He is sure that trying to illustrate Chopin, Isadora can hardly express the mood of the composer.[97] The only thing she can represent is her individuality, which shows her a way of interpretation of the music.

Benois as well cannot agree with Duncan's approach to working with the music. The pieces of Chopin and Beethoven, in his opinion, could be possibly illustrated by the means of dance, but they do "require … other mime-dramas and other facial expressions." Both composers are "too rich in content, dramatic, and tumultuous" for Duncan and exceed her plastique potential. Duncan's "depictions" are quite lame, and Beethoven "is beyond her means."[98] Besides, Duncan is too "sentimental" for these composers, and her facial expressions are too "monotonous and poor." The most unsuccessful interpretation is the dance to Gluck's Orpheus, in which she replaces singing by the pantomime, making it "sluggish and unnecessary" like in all her illustrations of Chopin's pieces. However, if she uses different music, like "the transparent, clear and absolutely wonderful music of the 16th–18th centuries," working with "pieces with very light dramatic content" (staging myths about Pan an Echo, Narcisse, Bacchus, and Ariadne), she makes a very charming impression.[99] "Rebelling against vulgar dances to vulgar music, Duncan turned toward ... the 'absolutes' of austere music, which cannot be connected with vulgarity. But in the choosing of these "absolutes," and applying them to the particularities of her own talent she made a mistake,"[100] - sums up Benois categorically. He also starts a discussion on *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total artwork), which could possibly stem from Isadora's dance.

Gesamtkunstwerk (total artwork)?

The ideas by the German composer Richard Wagner about the total artwork corresponded with the ideas of art practitioners of the Silver Age who also

[94] Ibid., 41.
[95] Shebuev, in Steegmuller, 42.
[96] Voloshin, in *Aisedora*, 36.
[97] Plescheev, in *Aisedora*, 46-47.
[98] Benois, in *Aisedora*, 64.
[99] Ibid., 66-68.
[100] Ibid., 61.

dreamed about the synthesis of arts and turned to antiquity to find ways to restore the lost wholeness of the art. Wagner believed that artistic synthesis could be found in musical drama, while Russian thinkers switched the focus to the dance. Duncan's first tours fueled further discussions on the subject.

Benois, in his search for ways to transform the contemporary theater and make the audience experience catharsis, referred to Wagner's ideas on musical drama and to the Ancient Greece theater experience. "The more profoundly the author's idea is expressed, the more comprehensively it is perceived by the people; thus, we could come closer to the aim of art. It was meant by Wagner in his Gessammelte Kunstwerke, and is the same ideal the antique theater strived for in its tragedies, which were poems enriched with dances and music. Why should music not be enriched by poetry and dances? After all, a composer deals not only with sounds but with the whole world of ideas and images."[101] He will return to his thoughts not only in the following reviews of Duncan performances, but also in practice, creating with Sergey Diaghilev the new Russian ballet.

Critic, Rafalovich, also discusses the problem of the historically conditioned separation of different kinds of arts, syncretic in their beginning. He claims that fine art, sculpture, and poetry had renewed themselves successfully by the beginning of the 20th century, but dance had frozen itself in the dead forms of classical ballet. Although the critic never says that Duncan's mission is to merge separated arts and, thus, to infuse divine religious character into art, but the fact that he writes these thoughts after her concert shows that he possibly has it in mind.[102] Voloshin adds, "Crushed by the mirrors of our perceptions, the world achieves eternal, extra-sensual integrity in the movements of dance. Cosmic and physiological, emotional and rational, feeling and cognition merge in the united poem of dance."[103] He sees a new kind of wholeness in Isadora's dance.

The discussion on the total artwork continued after subsequent Duncan's tours of 1907-1908 and 1913. Alexander Rostislavov in the journal Theater and Art, № 5, 1908, still believed that 'In Duncan's dances there are distinct allusions to the possibility of arts merging on their common basis.'[104] However, later, in 1913, Alexander Kugel mocked this idea. "It is only the fantasy [of the critics] that erases the boundaries between the arts, and not Duncan herself."[105] By that time, the idea of a total artwork was tightly connected with the Diaghilev's productions, created for the *Ballets Russes* by the group of Russian artists, musicians, and choreographers.

Duncan dance vs ballet

The juxtaposition of classical ballet and Duncan's dance was central for discussions of that time. Of course, critics compared her movements to rigid techniques of the ballerinas and they saw in Duncan simplicity, freedom, expressive

[101] Ibid., 61-62.
[102] Rafalovich, in *Aisedora*, 58.
[103] Voloshin, in *Aisedora*, 37.
[104] Alexandr Rostislavov. *Duse and Duncan. in Aisedora*, 121.
[105] Alexandr Kugel. *Zametki* (*Notes*), in *Aisedora*, 196.

hands and arms, an absence of acrobatics and of steel toes. Shebuev stressed that "Duncan has no ballet technique; she does not aim at *fouettes* and *cabrioles*. But there is so much sculpture in her, so much color and simplicity."[106] Benois retells the conversation with Duncan, in which she says: "There is no human dignity in the ballet. The dancers are mere puppets in motion, not people,"[107] having in mind that "the ballet … represents an overcoming of difficulties, an acrobatism, some sort of complicated and excruciating mechanism … the most horrible thing in ballet is a total disregard of rhythm in the movements, the jerkiness of the gestures."[108] However, he does not admit that he shares her ideas and does not disregard the achievements of the classical dance.

Rafalovich compares classical ballet to artificial flowers and labeled as acrobatics, writing about Duncan's dance. "There is no space for creativity in the form in which the formerly lively and inspired dance has frozen…. Only a competition in technique remains."[109] He also regrets that the "crowd worships the 'steel toe' of the ballerina"[110] instead of worshiping a divine revelation.

In the fragment by Heinrich Heine, mentioned above, Bryusov also gives special attention to this contradiction: in classical dance, he sees the supremacy of artificiality, the ideal, and falsehood. In the dance by Laurence (whom Bryusov evidently identifies with Duncan) the writer stresses that the soul of the woman dances with her face and body,[111] and danced as the nature told her, although Laurence had no idea about the classical ballet taught by Vestris.

Vil'kina notes that classical ballet had lost its creativity and become a series of exercises, a kind of refined acrobatism, aesthetic pedantry, and idle pleasures, and Duncan revived the creative side of the dance, adding to antique movements the new joy and pride of a super-man.[112] Rafalovich asserts that "rejecting the dead formalism of the so-called ballet, she [Duncan] strives to create a dance not severed from nature and life, but flowing from life…Miss Duncan has taken the art of the dance, which had found itself in a blind alley, on to the true road."[113] By the true road, he probably means the renovation of a dance pallet, which should fit in with a contemporary search of expression in the arts. He adds, "She doesn't return to the ancient art, but steps back only to the crossroad where it had lost its way."[114] Benois also notes, that Duncan "does not despise [classical] ballet, but strives to rework it."[115] He is sure that there is an opportunity to "save" the Russian ballet from "destruction," and Duncan's dance will help to do it.[116] "Her movement idiom was largely self-taught and free form, a perfect Dionysian antithesis to the rigors

[106] Shebuev, in Steegmuller, 44.
[107] Benois, in Steegmuller, 47.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Rafalovich, in *Aisedora*, 57.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Heine, in *Vesy*, 1905, #4, 85.
[112] Vil'kina, in *Vesy*, 1905, #1, 40.
[113] Rafalovich, in Steegmuller, 46.
[114] Rafalovich, in *Aisedora*, 57.
[115] Benois, in *Aisedora*, 68.
[116] Ibid.

of the nineteenth-century ballet's apollonian danse d'école,"[117] sums up critic and later—a historian of ballet Andre Levinson, using Nietzsche's terminology, dear to Isadora, which also can be found in Vil'kina's reviews. Thus, most writers see in Duncan's dance an overcoming of the numerous ballet clichés and new freedom of bodily expression.

By 1908, the rhetoric on Duncan dance changes and a new term flashes about in many articles. In some publications, we can find the Russian word *plyaska* instead of *tanets*.

Plyaska, tanets and a new meaning of dance

The word *tanets* has a more formal meaning in the Russian language than *plyaska* (or *plyas*). The first one refers to social and ballet dance, the second one, which some writers used to characterize Duncan's art relates to a folk, ancient, wild, unrefined, ecstatic and natural dance. Soon this word becomes quite widespread among those who cover concerts of Isadora.[118]

It is difficult to say who used this word first; probably Sergey Rafalovich[119] in 1904, but the definition was so apt that most of the articles written in 1908 already contain it. Writer Nikolai Molostvov organized a discussion with his famous colleague Akim Volynsky, devoted to this issue. In his brochure, Molostvov stresses the difference between tanets and plyas, contrasting the artificial and routine dance in quadrille and ballet to the dancing of Georgian lezghinka and other national dances, "where the music fuses with the gesture and rhythm of the dance, and the music is in harmony with the national temperament"[120]. Molostvov notes that the 'plyas' of Duncan causes a psycho-physiological impression in the audience, but yet the dancer has not found the right embodiment of the proclaimed 'dance of the future.' He also turns to the issue of compatibility between the high aesthetical goal, which Isadora propagates, and her choreographic means. Volynsky thinks that Duncan's dance gestures and sounds are both quite elemental, spontaneous and natural, that is why they can be merged harmonically, although in some cases this merger is not successful, for instance, in her work based on Botticelli's paintings. Still even this imperfect embodiment is a "poetically inspired gesture" and a "heroic deed of art", and the reincarnation of music in

[117] Levinson in Scholl, 42-43.

[118] Russian scholar Irina Sirotkina, devoting the article to the differences between *plyaska* and tanets, explains: "In its wide and generic meaning, *plyaska* is the opposite of dance (*tanets*) just as the free and even wild expression of feeling <…> If *tanets*, especially of the ceremonial ballroom, is a rule-bound "art" combining, in uneven proportions, "order" and "freedom",<…> in *plyaska* the latter prevails... *Plyaska* and *tanets* are also antipodes of class: the aristocracy dances at balls, ordinary people *plyashut* (dance) in taverns. *Plyaska* celebrates freedom from prohibitions imposed by the repressive authorities or the official culture". (Irina Sirotkina. Dance-plyaska in Russia of the Silver Age. *Dance Research.* Volume 28, Page 135-152, November 2010). This topic was touched upon by Elena Yushkova in her PhD dissertation (2004) and the book *Plastika preodoleniya,* 77-85.

[119] Rafalovich, in *Aisedora*, 57.

[120] Nikolai Molostvov. *Isadora Duncan*, in *Aisedora*, 103.

the viewer's impressions of the dance is necessary.[121] Molostvov summarizes that Duncan's *plyas* and her inspirational gesture is much more important than the perfect technique of the contemporary ballet. In Volynsky's opinion, the dancer's work becomes an appeal to a new art, to the spiritual art of Apollo, contrary to Dionysus.[122]

The philosopher Vasily Rozanov in 1909 wrote: "In her *plyaska* the entire human being is reflected, the entire civilization lives—its plasticity, its music, its lines, its soul, its everything!"[123] Rozanov was looking for answers to questions about the relationships of physiology and beauty, natural harmony and perfect ballet technique, which had been polished for centuries. He described Duncan's plyaska as "primary dances, early like the morning, 'primary' as food and drink, 'not invented', just as with drink and food, and stemming from a human being's physiology and sense of self![124] He affirmed that the dance of Duncan was ancient and consisted of naïve, pure, and natural jumps and leaps. Comparing Duncan's *plyaska* to ballet, Rozanov welcomed the revival of the movements of upper torso, arms, neck, head and chest and absence of ballet pas. He concluded: 'Nature dances—not fallen nature, but primordial nature.'[125]

Famous literary critic and translator Alexander Gornfeld in his volume *Books and People*, published in St. Petersburg in 1908, also refers to this new trend: "What can I say about her plyaska? This is an extraordinary, inexhaustible flow of beauty, naturalness, purity, … which is involved in its magical life…This is an absolute expression of a human being in all its natural grace, a god-like vitality in its movements, spirituality of its outer form… Isadora Duncan does not dance, she just lives… [Nevertheless], everything is a result not of a primitive naturalness… but of high art: it is a creative work of genius, and not raw nature."[126] Thus, he substantiates the new idea that *plyaska* could be a product of a contemporary elite culture and a result of hard work as well.

Alexander Benois was furious about Duncan's "'baroque idea' to illustrate Beethoven, Chopin and other classics with the plyas;" he sees in it "a profanation" and "tactlessness."[127] Nikolai Vashkevish in his research on choreography of 'all times and nations,' actively uses the term *plyaska* telling about the pre-ballet choreography and the art of Duncan.[128]

The discussion on *plyaska* continues in *Apollon* magazine in 1909-1914, where scholar Yulia Slonimskaya writes on Ancient Greek dances and pantomimes actively using this word. No doubt, Duncan was a reason for the appearance of

[121] Ibid., 102-112.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Vasily Rozanov. *Dances of innocence*, in *Aisedora*, 144.
[124] Ibid., 142.
[125] Ibid., 143.
[126] Arkady Gornfeld. *Isadora Duncan*, in *Aisedora*, 101.
[127] Benois, in *Aisedora*, 61.
[128] See—Nikolay Vashkevich. *Istoriya khoreografii vseh vremen i narodov* (*History of choreography of all times and nations*). (M. 1908, second edition—St. Petersburg. Lan'. Planeta muzyki. 2009).

that kind of discussion, which switched later to the new plastique of Diaghilev's ballets, also based on ancient rituals and very modern at the same time.[129]

Influenced by Duncan, Russian scholars launched a research on dance history. We can find traces of these discussions in several significant books, which were written in 1906–1918.

Isadora and dance history: new books

Isadora's dance became a catalyst for the further development of Russian dance history. Critics Valerian Svetlov, Nikolay Vashkevich, Sergey Khudekov, Andrey Levinson and later—Alexey Sidorov in their volumes reflected this huge interest in Duncan's work and acknowledged that choreography in Russia had received a strong impulse.[130]

Valerian Svetlov's books, *Terpsichore* (1906) and *Modern Ballet* (1911) were devoted to discussions on the dance reforms of the beginning of the 20th century, the art of Duncan, and the work of choreographers-innovators such as Michel Fokine, and Alexander Gorsky. Nikolai Vashkevish wrote a history of choreography starting from prehistorical times and focusing on the dances of Ancient Greece, Rome, and… Isadora Duncan (published in Moscow in 1908), but his first brochure, published earlier in 1905, was entitled "Dionysian theater of contemporary life. "Sketch on the synthesis of art," which was evidently influenced by discussions on Isadora. He also wrote about the theater of the future, which apparently was Duncan's idea. His books had been forgotten for many decades and appeared in Russia again only in 2009. Another attempt to write a history of choreography was made by amateur scholar Sergey Khudekov whose book *The history of dances in four parts*, released in 1913-16, and 1918, represented a broader picture of dance development, and analyzed not only Ancient Greek and Roman, but also medieval dances and history of European classical ballet. He planned to add to his book a rich illustrative material, which he had collected during a long time. His book also had not been republished until 2009.

Critics and art historians such as Alexander Benois, Andre Levinson, Yakov Tugendhold, Akim Volynsky, Alexander Cherepnin, Boris Asafiev (to mention only the most prominent figures) began to take an interest in dance forms. Levinson's books *Ballet masters* (1914) and *Old and new ballet* (1918) were based on new approaches to the analysis of choreography, and the application of aesthetical terminology to ballet criticism. Later, Levinson became a propagandist

[129] See Yushkova. *Plastika preodoleniya*, 73-105.

[130] See Vashkevich, 1908, 2009; Levinson. *Mastera baleta* (*Masters of ballet*). 1914, *Staryi i novyi balet* (*Ballet old and new*), 1918—republished in Levinson Andrey. *Staryi i novyi balet. Mastera baleta*. (St. Petersburg, Moscow, Krasnodar: Lan'. Planeta muzyki. 2008); Svetlov Valerian. *Sovremennyi balet* (*Modern ballet*). (SPB. 1911), republished Valerian Svetlov. *Sovremennyi balet* (*Modern ballet*), (SPB, Moscow, Krasnodar: Lan'. Planeta muzyki., 2009); Khudekov Sergey. *Illyustrirovannaya istoriya tantsa* (*Illustrated dance history*), 1913-16, 1918, republished Khudekov Sergey. *Illyustrirovannaya istoriya tantsa.* (M.: Eksmo, 2009). Sidorov Alexey. *Sovremennyi tanets* (*Modern dance*) (M.: Pervina, 1922).

of Russian ballet abroad. He stood for the purity of ballet and did not accept Duncan's innovations in dance in general, but probably was inspired by the discussions on the relationship between a free dance and classical ballet. Composer and critic, Cherepnin, published his works *On the ways of ballet realism* (1915-16) and *Ballet symbols* (1917), while searching for common methods of analysis between ballet and musical forms. He insisted that ballet had to be understood not through the prism of principles of dramatic theater, but only through its plastic and choreographic means.[131] A detailed consideration of all these books is beyond this article's limits. However, as we can see, the appearance of literature on dance history coincides with and follows the extensive tours of Isadora Duncan in Russia.

"Genuine beauty:" coverage of Duncan's tours in the following prerevolutionary years

After 1905, tours of Duncan took place in 1907-08, 1909 and 1913, and reviews of that time became less impressionistic and more analytical. In 1907, the Russian translation of Duncan's essay *Dance of the future* was published[132] and after that, critics could use her own theoretical statements in their descriptions of her dance. In the preface to the book, writer Nikolay Suslov stressed that Duncan had spiritualized the dance, "transformed it into a story of emotional depth."[133] Duncan's other achievements included the concept of the solo dance, bringing dancing to the human level and making it personal to the dancer, as well as a form of rehabilitation of the human body itself. [134]

In 1913, Duncan's Russian tour caused another flow of reviews. At this time, critics were no longer in a state of shock. They attempted to figure out what led the public to concerts of the barefoot dancer beside the considerations of novelty. Valerian Svetlov, commenting on Duncan's sold-out concerts, wrote, "She gives simple visual forms, but under them there is a rich spiritual content. Plastic beauty is the real cult of 'Duncanism.' Since there is less beauty in our gray average life, thirst for beauty becomes increasingly greater."[135] Alexander Benois admitted that Duncan's art had become vital for the modernization of the Russian ballet theater, which he considers as an art of the 18th century. "In ten years the principles of the 18th century will be gone. Being a passionate lover of this mincing art, I feel pain thinking of it, but I believe that it doesn't make sense to galvanize the deceased anymore. The new life is needed. The new life in dance is preached by Duncan. Maybe she or her principles could revitalize our ballet."[136] He was

[131] Elizaveta Suritz, Natalia Roslavleva, Oleg Petrov. *Baletovedenie* (*Ballet studies*) in Ballet: Entsiklopedia. M. Sovetskaya entsiklopedia. 1981, http://dancelib.ru/baletenc/item/f00/s00/e0000231/index.shtml, last visit—01.03.2016

[132] Aisidora (sic) Denkan, *Tanets buduschego, Lektsiya*. Transl. N. Fil'kov, ed. and intr. Nik. Suslov, (M. Tipo-litografiya Cherokovoi, 1907).

[133] Duncan Aisedora. *Tanets Buduschego* (*Dance of the Future*). Lektsiya. Transl. N. Fil'kov, Ed. N. Suslov. Moskva, 1907.

[134] Ibid., II.

[135] Svetlov. *Duncan*, 1911, in *Aisedora*, 164.

[136] Benois, in *Aisedora*, 68.

right: the practitioners of the Russian ballet were enraptured by her performances and found new ideas for their work. Among them were young choreographers of the Mariinsky and Bolshoi theaters Michel Fokine and Alexander Gorsky, and ballerinas Anna Pavlova and Vera Karalli.[137]

Critics again accented the spiritual content and the embodiment of "genuine" beauty, despite some imperfections of the body and the limited lexicon of the dancer. 'I don't know any other plastic actor of our time who could express in the movements of the body the motion of his/her soul with greater power and naturalness than Duncan,'[138] wrote theater director Komissarzhevsky, reflecting on the recognition which the dancer received in Russia.

In 1914, *Severnye zapiski* magazine published Duncan's article *What I think about dance*[139] which consisted of several chapters named, *Wave movements in nature*, *Choir*, *Gymnastics and dance*, and *School of dance*. This literary-political liberal-democratic monthly, published in 1913–1917 in Petrograd (St. Petersburg changed its name during the World War I) gathered the most famous authors of that time: poets Alexander Block, Anna Akhmatova, Osip Mandelshtam; writers Boris Zaitsev, Ivan Shmelyov, Alexei Remizov, as well as literary and art critics, as well as philosophers. This publication took place a year after the last prerevolutionary tour of Duncan, demonstrating that the interest of Russian audience to the American dancer remained and Duncan was recognized in Russia as a writer as well.

The coverage of Duncan's last prerevolutionary tour in general was quite interesting, although we do not see a significant shift in it. Analysis of these numerous reviews is beyond the limits of this work. However, the post-revolutionary activities of Duncan and their coverage in Soviet newspapers and magazines deserve a special attention.

Blare of the revolution's trumpet or Isadora Duncan in the early Soviet criticism

A new wave of reviews appeared in 1921 when the dancer, desperate in her attempts to find a support for her school in Europe, unexpectedly received an invitation from Soviet Russia.[140]

At this time, there is a noticeable shift in critical focus in coverage of Duncan's performances.[141] The focus changes constantly since early Soviet culture was

[137] See Elizabeth Suritz. *Isadora Duncan and Prewar Russian Dancemakers.*

[138] Fedor Komissarzhevsky. *Isadora Duncan*, in *Aisedora*, 198.

[139] Isadora Duncan. *Chto ya dumayu o tantse* (*What I think about dance*) *Severnye Zapiski*, 1914, February-March, № 2, p. 7-38, № 3, p. 24-52, № 4-5, p. 50-78.

[140] The invitation came from the Russian trade representative Leonid Krasin, who was impressed by her concert in London; and then, an official one, from Anatoly Lunacharsky, the People's Commissar of Enlightenment, in Gordon McVay. *Moskovskaya shkola Aisedory Dunkan* (*Moscow school of Isadora Duncan*) Pamyatniki kultury. Novye otkrytiya. Pismennost. Iskusstvo. Archeologiya. Yezhegodnik. Ed. T.B. Knyazevskaya (Moscow. Nauka. 2003, 326-475), 329.

[141] See Elena Yushkova. *Isadora Duncan in Soviet Criticism* (*1921–1927*). *Sergey Esenin and arts.* Series Sergey Esenin in the 21st century *(*Moscow-Ryazan'-Konstantinovo.

itself riddle with contradictiosn and was in extreme flux. Literary and art criticism was looking for new approaches, which could be appropriate in the new state of workers and peasants. Art criticism of this period reflected the transition for from revolutionary romanticism to ideological service.

Sometimes in the 1920s, descriptions of Duncan's dances were very poetic, but it was a new poetry. 'New' proletarian critics saw in Duncan's art a protest against the Western bourgeoisie, and her freedom from old culture. They evaluated her pedagogy as revolutionary and proper for children of the new State. Lunacharsky in August 1921, published in the newspaper *Izvestiya* an article, entitled 'Our guest', full of revolutionary rhetoric: 'She [Duncan], as a rare type of genuine artist, rebels against the atmosphere in bourgeois Europe: impudent, naked, ravaged, breathinghatred and disappointment.' He justified the necessity of this strange school in a country almost ruined after the Revolution and the Civil War, which did not have money even for essentials.[142] Lunacharsky's fellow critic and official Pavel Kogan found some points of intersection between Duncan's work and the new proletarian culture. 'She has always tried to escape from the bonds with which European Philistinism chained any impulse for freedom in a human being. Her creative aspirations are consonant with the unlimited ideas of the Revolution.'[143] He found the 'blare of the revolution's trumpet' in Duncan's art. Writers also stressed her proletarian origin (although that was not true), her sympathy for the poor and oppressed people, and her radical fight against old artistic traditions. Thus, the idea to use a world-famous *artiste* to legitimize the Soviet regime was instituted at the very beginning.

'Old' professionals, who saw Isadora before the Revolution, discussed her new technique, which was closer to a mime drama.[144] Ballet critic, Akim Volynsky, who was amazed by the novelty of her dance in 1908. In 1922, 14 years later, wrote that "Isadora Duncan hasn't saved and won't save Humanity… Her announced beauty has nothing to do with antique beauty…Maybe her dances reproduce some vulgar dances in ancient Greek small restaurants, depicted on vases. But they don't even touch the soul of the dance in Dionysus's orchestra." He stressed that "this soft and loose… plastique… without a metal frame inside… can weaken a young generation's psyche… and paralyze its activity."[145] However, there are also enthusiastic descriptions: some critics liked new labor movements in her dance, her expressiveness in dramatic pantomimes. Director of Duncan's Moscow school Ilya Schneider describes *March Slav*, performed at her first

Institute of World Literature, Russian Academy of Sciences. 2015, 528-543).

[142] Anatoly Lunacharsky. *Nasha gost'ya* (*Our guest*), in *Aisedora*, 289.

[143] Duncan I. *Dvizhenie—zhiz'n* (*Motion is life*). (M.: Izdanie shkoly Duncan, 1921), 1.

[144] V. *Vecher Duncan* (*Duncan's performance*). *Izvestiya*. 11.11.23. State Bakhrushin Theater Museum (Moscow), Makarov V.V. *Isadora Duncan. Clips from newspapers*, file 152. list 342-352, № 252504/4291-4301 Their statements are close to the views of contemporary American scholars—see Daly, A. *Done into Dance: Isadora Duncan in America*. (Middletown, Connecticut, Wesleyan University Press). 2002; 15.

[145] Akim Volynsky. *Shkola Aisedory Duncan* (*School of Isadora Duncan*). Zhiz'n iskusstva, 1922, № 35, 5.09 Makarov V.V. *Clips from newspapers*, file 152. list 342-352, № 252504/4291-4301.

concert in November 1921, showing how the dancer, using only the means of pantomime, transformed herself into a bow-backed workman—a symbol of the oppressed Russia, who succeeded to tear his fetters and become free.[146] Some of the authors were disappointed by Duncan's body (not that young now), by some of her sentimental pieces, and later—by her marriage to Esenin. However, newspapers and magazines started to write ecstatically about Duncan's students—young and beautiful, harmonically developed. They wished all Russian children could have studied at the Duncan's school.

The year 1923 became an important milestone in the formation of the cultural policy of the Soviet Union. The Twelfth Party Congress of the Bolshevik Party resolved that the theater had to be used for systematic mass propaganda of the communist ideas.[147] On the other hand, in Moscow the Choreological Laboratory of the State Academy of Artistic Sciences under the leadership of art historians Alexei Sidorov and Alexei Larionov, conducted fundamental research on human motion with small groups of plastique dancers. In the process they developed new forms of 'free' dance, and which the Government tried to liquidate.[148] At that time, there were more and more skeptical articles on Duncan in magazines and newspapers. "Duncan still shows us the harmonious human being's emotions… But there is no appropriate environment to create new Hellenes,"[149]—writes theater critic and writer Victor Ardov. Nevertheless, in August 1923, after Duncan's return from the United States, the press reports on the deep connection of Isadora's thoughts with the Soviet ideology—mostly because of her involuntary propaganda on behalf of the Bolsheviks that she conducted in the United States (she was deprived of her American citizenship after that). "Duncan returned to Russia... Her ideas about the free and harmonious education of a spirit and a body in beauty, in her opinion, could take root only in Russia,"[150] wrote *Ogonyok* magazine. The educational program of Duncan was recognized as useful for the regime again. "To take a poor proletarian child and to make a healthy and joyful creature out of him—this is a big accomplishment,"[151] wrote ballet critic Viktor Iving in the newspaper *Pravda* after the performance of the school in Moscow in November 1923.

The year of 1924 could hardly be successful for the school because after Lenin's death in January 1924. Cultural policy dramatically changed for the worse, fostering the Communist Party control over all kinds of arts. On August 26, the

[146] Stepanida Rudneva. *Vospominaniya schatlivogo cheloveka. Stefanida Dmitrievna Rudneva i studiya muzykal'nogo dvizheniya Geptakhor v dokumentah Tsentral'nogo moskovskogo arhiva-muzeya lichnyh kollektsyi*. Ed. A. Kats. (M.: Izdatel'stvo Glavarhiva Moskvy, 2007), 664.

[147] V. Zhidkov. *Teatr i vremya: ot Oktyabrya do perestroiki*. (M.: STD, 1991), 105.

[148] N. Misler. *Vnachale bylo telo. Ritmoplasticheskie eksperimenty nachala XX veka*. (M.: Iskusstvo—XXI vek, 2011), 109.

[149] Viktor Ardov. *O tantse so storony* (*On dance from aside*), in *Aisedora*, 288.

[150] D.K. *Vozvrzaschenie Aisedory Duncan*. *Ogonyok*. 26.08.1923, State Bakhrushin Theater Museum (Moscow), Makarov, file 152, list. 342-352.

[151] Pravda, № 263, November 21, 1923, № 22. RGALI (State Archive for Literature and Arts, Moscow) Iving (Ivanov) Viktor Petrovich. file 2694, list. 2, document.18, p. 83.

Decree of the Moscow Council ordered the closure of more than ten famous studios of plastique dance, and demanded the inclusion of a communist functionary into Duncan's school staff, who could supervise its activities.[152] Nevertheless, thanks to the Commissar of Sports Nikolay Podvoysky, in the summer of 1924, the school got a right to work. He helped organize a training for six hundred[153] proletarian children at the huge Red Stadium in Moscow. Irma Duncan taught children to dance revolutionary dances, that she had been choreographed earlier.[154]

In 1924, Duncan's departure to the West was inevitable. There was no state support; Russian tours of the dancer were financially disastrous. In September, two farewell performances of the school took place at the Chamber and Bolshoy theaters, where Isadora was visibly distressed in her introduction, stressing that the students did not have food and funds to pay for utilities.[155] The press after the performances was ecstatic again. *Izvestiya* wrote that "the whole program manifests a revolutionary spirit", and represents "the realism of feelings."[156] *Rabochy zritel* insisted that "the Duncan pedagogical system should be used more widely, and for ALL proletarian children."[157] Of course, that was unrealistic. After the departure of Irma Duncan to the USA in 1928, the school became almost illegal: it did not fit in with the new emphasis on Socialist Realism and mass sports, and survived only because some former students had a long tour of Siberia at the beginning of the 1930s, and staged anti-fascism pieces during the wartime in 1940s. In 1949, the school was closed and was not referred to again until the end of the 1970s.

In 1927, after the tragic death of Isadora Duncan, Russian criticism summed up her main achievements. Alexander Gidoni in the journal *Contemporary theater*, № 4, 1927, wrote, "Isadora Duncan has been dispersed in the contemporary art of dance. Still, this dispersal is very fruitful for the artistic culture of our days."[158] Aleksey Gvozdev, who considered Duncan's art as bourgeois, asserted in *Krasnaya Gazeta* (*Red Newspaper*) that 'Duncanism' outlived itself, "without having created a monumental form capable of expressing the heroic mood of the epoch. But it did open the first breach and cleared the way for new achievements, which must be reached by a new generation of dance reformers under the more profound influence of the social revolution."[159] Very soon, the name of Duncan disappeared from Russian newspapers and magazines, along with most of the representatives of the Silver Age to be rehabilitated only after the end of the Soviet Union.

[152] Misler. Ibid., 109.

[153] McVay. Ibid, p. 377; see also Roslavleva, N.P. *Prechistenka 20: The Isadora Duncan School in Moscow*. Dance Perspectives. Vol. 16, Winter, New York: M. Dekker, 1975, 26.

[154] McVay, 379.

[155] McVay, 384.

[156] Ibid., 383.

[157] Ibid., 384.

[158] V. Iving. *Isadora Duncan,* in *Aisedora*, 308.

[159] Ibid., 309-312.

Conclusions

Summarizing discussions of Isadora Duncan in Russian criticism, we can note that the perception of her dance changes according to situations in Russian and Soviet art. Duncan had always been welcomed by the Russian press, but the nature of this enthusiasm varied. The Symbolists saw an elevated spiritual meaning in her work; the early Soviet newspapers and magazines employed propagandistic rhetoric to justify the invitation of the world-famous *artiste* at a moment when the country was suffering the devastation of war and revolution.

Writing on Duncan and trying to understand her free dance, Russian critics opened new perspectives, learning how to explain non-canonic movements of the body, its musical and rhythmical potential and its ability to fit in with an invisible motion of the human spirit. They were able to form a set of new ideas on dance and classical ballet in discussions about the American dancer.

The impulse, which Russian criticism of the beginning of the 20th century received from Isadora Duncan's tours in the country, is difficult to overestimate. Most of the journals, magazines, and newspapers widely covered her performances. Moreover, trying to define and describe her dance, Russian critics came to very new themes: for instance, dance as philosophy. They also explored such topics as a possibility to create a total artwork based on dance, relationships between dance and music, and a revival or a stylization of antiquity. Moreover, inspired by Greek motifs in Isadora's dance, some critics turned to the history of European dance, to studies of authentic Greek dances through antique sources, as well as European literature on dance. Quite soon, several high-quality books on the history of dance were written. Being always thought provoking, Duncan's tours and publications of her manifestoes helped to shape and innovate dance criticism, which was making first steps in the beginning of the 20th century pushing the limits of classical ballet critique. Russian classical ballet itself made great progress and acquired international fame in the 1910s using some innovations invented by Duncan.

The Soviet criticism of the 1920s, which successfully used Duncan's art for propagandistic purposes, soon was not allowed to cover free dance performances and the activities of the Duncan school in Moscow. Studies of this kind of art had been frozen until the fall of the Soviet Union when freedom of thought, self-expression and freedom of press returned to the Russian life along with interest in Duncan's personality and the history of dance.

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David R. Francis, Ambassador to Four Russian Governments

Vladimir Noskov

David R. Francis presented himself as the "United States Ambassador to Russia under the Czar, the Provisional Government and the Bolshevists." Actually he represented his country before four Russian Governments: the Imperial, Provisional, Soviet, and Northern ones. During his stay in Russia Francis changed the place of his residence three times moving from Petrograd first to Vologda and finally to Archangel. He was an eyewitness of the greatest events in history of Russia: the First World War, February Revolution, downfall of the Empire, October Revolution, and Civil War. During two and half years of his residence in Russia, Francis met a lot of prominent people of the time, including Nicholas II, the last Emperor of Russia, and Vladimir I. Lenin, the first Soviet leader. Francis' diplomatic experience was unique and had no parallel in the history of Russian-American relations. That is why his memoirs are of special interest for historians and general public as well.

The most striking feature of his Russian experience is the fact that Francis was not a diplomat at all. Practically nothing in his previous life might help him in his ambassadorial work. David Rowland Francis was born in Richmond, Kentucky, in 1850, and removed to St. Louis, Missouri, in 1866 to enter Washington University. After graduation he became a clerk and soon afterwards partner in a commercial house, thus beginning his successful business career. Francis was also an officer or trustee in many banking and philanthropic institutions. At that same time he rose to prominence in politics, serving as mayor of St. Louis (1885–1889) and the youngest governor of Missouri (1889–1893). For a short time Francis served Secretary of Interior in President Grover Cleveland's cabinet. He was a devoted Democrat but opposed William J. Bryan's candidacy in 1896 and afterwards was out of politics for ten years. Francis married Jane Perry, belonging to a prominent Missouri family, and they had six sons.

One of Francis' most brilliant achievements was his campaign to organize the 1904 World Exposition at St. Louis. From one side, it was a typical story illustrating his unusual business and administrative abilities. From another, the episode was of special importance in Francis' biography because it provided him with the only international experience prior to his appointment to a diplomatic post. This wonderful saga begun in the summer of 1889 when Francis began pushing for a world's fair to be held in St. Louis and lasted for fifteen years.

In 1903 Francis made a tour around principal European capitals to encourage foreign participation. He met King Edward VII of Great Britain, French president Emile Loubet, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, and King Leopold II of Belgium. From Europe Francis hastened back to St. Louis, where on the Dedication Day Ceremony he welcomed members of the diplomatic corps including British, French, Italian, and Russian ambassadors. The St. Louis Fair lasted for seven months during which Francis was said to be "the most photographed man in America."[1] The fair was the largest international exposition the world ever seen by the moment and it was a great financial success.[2] In mid-1906, Francis, with his companions, made another trip to Europe where he "was tireless in tracking down monarchs and prime ministers" wherever they might be found.[3]

At the same time Francis returned to active political life and came around to support Woodrow Wilson in 1912. Francis also strengthened his friendship with Charles R. Crane, a wealthy Chicago businessman and prominent Democratic campaign contributor, who was a friend of the new president. Crane had reputation of one of the most active and influential promoter of the rapprochement with Russia. The so-called Crane circle included, among others, such diverse people as journalists Arthur Ruhl and Stanley Washburn, businessmen Frederick M. Corse and Raymond Robins, and the YMCA leader John R. Mott,—to list only those persons whom, as well as Crane himself, Francis would meet later in Petrograd. The most outstanding figure among Crane's followers was an expert in Russian language and institutions Samuel N. Harper.

On the eve of the First World War the post of the US Ambassador at St. Petersburg was vacant and interrelations between two powers were rather cool. In July 1914, the ambassadorship to Russia was offered to an international lawyer and active Democratic supporter George T. Marye but in the early 1916 he was forced to resign as a result of his inability to meet Wilson's hopes. With Crane's assistance a new ambassador in the person of Governor Francis was appointed and Harper was named an unofficial advisor to accompany him to Russia.[4] As his biographer wrote, in his mature years Francis represented "the perfect image of a successful American businessman and civic leader" and was "proud of his contributions to the community, pleased with his accomplishments and with himself." He was "a brash, opinionated, stubborn, smart, sometimes foolish, straight-talking, quick-acted, independent-minded, proud, self-made man." Francis "was rich and getting richer, busy with his directorships and his civic duties, regularly travelling the country to speak to large audiences and meet with other powerful men, who were his friends."[5]

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[1] Harper Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*. *The Life and Times of David Rowland Francis* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 2001), 72-75, 123-125, 131, 144.

[2] Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's Fair*: *Visions of Empire at American International Expositions*, *1876–1916* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1984), 155-183.

[3] Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 168.

[4] Paul A. Goble, "Samuel N. Harper and the Study of Russia," *Cahiers du monde russe and soviétique* XIV, no.4 (Octobre–Décembre 1973): 613.

[5] Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, VII, XI, 178.

In the meantime, as the editor of his letters noted, "Francis was shrewd and capable in the world he knew, but international diplomacy was not in that world."[6] The Russian ambassador in Washington characterized him as a thriving provincial businessman with a good fortune and great self-assurance.[7] The new American ambassador had but a little international experience, no theoretical preparation, no practical knowledge, no diplomatic abilities required for the post. In George F. Kennan's opinion, "Francis was not what you would call a cosmopolitan person. He was a product of the old West, a 'provincial' in the best sense of the term, in whose character there was reflected something of the 'showboat' Mississippi: the vigor, the earthiness, the slightly flamboyant elegance, and the uninhibited enjoyment of the good things of life. His values and opinions were, at his age of 67, firmly established, and were not to be essentially shaken even by the experience of residence in a foreign capital in dramatic times."[8] He was made a diplomat by chance as a consequence of a "Democratic débauche" in the Foreign Service and demoralization of the State Department that followed Woodrow Wilson's rise to presidency.

Francis sailed for Russia on April 8, 1916, leaving his family at home. He was accompanied by his African-American valet Philip Jordan. Arthur Ruhl, who crossed the Atlantic on the same steamboat, remembered that "his man Friday, Phil, a body-servant of the old-fashioned Southern kind, already mourning, after but a week of foreign ways, for the hot biscuits of St. Louis."[9] Harper, another Francis' companion, wrote after several days of cruise: "I heard enough of them to realize that our new ambassador was a very blunt, outspoken American, who believed in speaking his mind regardless of the rules of diplomacy."[10]

Francis arrived at Petrograd in the morning on April 15 (28) and was met at the station by the embassy people. Staff of the US embassy in the Russian capital at the moment consists of nine men. The senior diplomat was a veteran Herbert H.D. Pierce, a Special Agent of the State Department with the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary, appointed in 1915 to assist the ambassador in Russia. Long before this appointment he served in Russia for seven years and his prolonged experience taught him that the "entire social fabric of Russia, the point of view of the Russian mind and its manner of thought, differ widely from our own, and are not susceptible of estimation upon the same basis of comparison."[11] Francis had not enough time to know this lesson because his cooperation with the experienced adviser was very short. The next in rank was first secretary of the embassy Fred M.

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[6] Jamie H. Cockfield, ed. *Dollars and Diplomacy*: *Ambassador David Rowland Francis and the Fall of Tsarism*, *1916–1917* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1981), 4.

[7] See: Vasyukov, V.S. *Vneshnyaya politika Rossii nakanune Fevralskoy revolyutsii* (Moscow: Mysl', 1989), 182.

[8] George F. Kennan, *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin* (Boston & Toronto: Little, Brown & Company, 1960), 50.

[9] Arthur Ruhl, *White Nights and other Russian Impressions* (N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917), 4.

[10] Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 188.

[11] Herbert H.D. Pierce, Russia, in: *Atlantic Monthly* 90, no. 540 (October 1901): 465.

Dearing, Francis' fellow-countryman but his antipode in the realm of diplomacy. Another Missourian, Frederick A. Sterling, and John C. White held the posts of second secretary, and John L. Ryan was third secretary.

The staff of attachés to the embassy included a brilliant naval officer Newton A. McCully who was appointed the first permanent US naval attaché with residence in Petrograd and played a prominent part in Russian-American relations during the First World War, the 1917 Revolution, and the Civil War in Russia. By April 1916, McCully had served in Petrograd for one and half a year, was well acquainted with Russian affairs and won the reputation of the most experienced and informed member of the embassy staff. A former newspaperman Henry D. Baker became the first US commercial attaché in Russia. He served there from the end of 1914 and was active in promoting closer Russian-American relations in trade and commerce. Military attaché 2d Lt. E. Francis Riggs reached the post just recently and was officially presented to the Emperor on February 10 (23), 1916. The last addition to the embassy staff was Captain James C. Breckinridge of the Marine Corps. He was assigned to duty as assistant naval attaché at Petrograd on February 16 and arrived there shortly before Francis' arrival. All diplomats mentioned above accompanied the ambassador to the official Imperial reception which took place in the Aleksandrovskii Palace at Tsarskoe Selo on April 22 (May 5), 1916.[12]

Within a few months after the reception, almost the whole embassy staff was substituted. In May and June 1916 attaché Baker and all secretaries were reappointed to other posts. Harper also left Petrograd in August. Dearing, who was very critical of embassy's work and elaborated plans "to revamp U.S. Embassy," entered into conflict with Francis and in the fall of the year left Russia without a new appointment in the Foreign Service. In the course of 1916 secretaries Norman Armour, Sheldon Whitehouse, and Livingston Phelps joined the staff, followed by first secretary James G. Bailey in the early 1917. Of great help to Francis were the appointments of J. Butler Wright as counselor and William C. Huntington as commercial attaché later in 1916. The last imperial Russian foreign minister stated that Francis produced "an impression of not a diplomat, but a businessman, as well as all his embassy staff; even their residence was more like a commercial office than an embassy". In his opinion, only Wright and Huntington looked like real diplomats. "Especially Huntington was able to serve as an example for foreign diplomats."[13]

Counselor Wright arrived at his post on November 4 (17), 1916, and found a staff beset with disorganization and inefficiency. Francis seemed "a rather daft, grandfatherly country gentlemen" with "great sense of nature, good keenness and common sense." But as ambassador he had "very little conception of the social amenities as regards the Diplomatic Service." As the weeks passed, Wright and

[12] D.R. Francis to Frank L. Polk, May 9, 1916, in: *Dollars and Diplomacy*, 20-22. Russian official account of the reception see: *Kamer-furyerskiye zhurnaly 1916–1917* (St. Petersburg: D.A.R.K., 2014), 138-139.

[13] Pokrovsky, N.N. *Posledny v Mariinskom dvortse: vospominaniya ministra inostrannykh del* (M.: NLO, 2015), 192.

many of the embassy staff worried that the ambassador's inexperience might cause him to do something foolhardy and embarrassing. As a result Wright and his colleagues hovered nervously around the ambassador, creating a tense work environment.[14] "Wright performed his duties with great conscientiousness, but found it difficult to strike the right tone in his relation to Francis," Kennan wrote, "In Wright's eyes, Francis personified all the characteristic weakness of the political appointee in a diplomatic position. In Francis' eyes, Wright manifested the worst traits of the career officer."[15]

After the First World War erupted the US embassy at Petrograd was assigned to represent the German and Austro-Hungarian interests in Russia. The main part of this job was supervision over a great number of prisoners of war. To coordinate the POW work the so called Second Division of the Embassy was created and a prominent social worker Edward T. Devine arrived in March 1916 to head it. The Division was assisted by the members of the American Young Men's Christian Associations headed by Dr. Archibald C. Harte. Devine's friction with Francis over their respective jurisdiction and his reputation of being pro-German led to his recall and in October the former secretary of the St. Petersburg embassy Basil Miles replaced him as head of the Division. "Mr. Basil Miles, the new head of the Second Division of the Relief Branch of the embassy, has taken charge and gives promise of being very satisfactory," Francis wrote to his wife.[16] Miles was appointed special assistant to the Ambassador with the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary. Soon the Foreign Service "emergency man" William F. Sands arrived in Petrograd as another special assistant to the Ambassador to help Miles in his division. On the whole, in the early 1917 at least 50 people made up the US embassy in Petrograd: 28 of the regular staff and 22 in the Second Division, making it the largest diplomatic mission in Russia.[17] The staff of the US Consulate-General at Petrograd consisted of five people headed by an experienced diplomat North Winship.[18]

Most of the people named above was not mentioned in the Francis' ego-centric memoirs or mentioned but scarcely. The ambassador constantly presents on the first plan in his self-centered memoirs. For example, Francis wrote practically nothing about the Second Division that carried out the main part of the embassy's routine jobs. Meantime most of secretaries and attachés were more informed and experienced in their duties than the ambassador in his ones. Unfortunately, Francis' "awkwardness made itself felt in the Ambassador's relations with his career associates,—Kennan noted.—He could not help but be aware of their greater familiarity both with diplomatic life in general and with the Petrograd

[14] William Allison, *American Diplomats in Russia*: *Case Studies in Orphan Diplomacy*, *1916–1919* (Westport, CT, & London: Praeger, 1997), 51-53.

[15] George F. Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 43.

[16] D.R. Francis to Jane Francis; October 18/31, 1916, in: *Dollars and Diplomacy*, 55.

[17] Norman E. Saul, *War and Revolution*: *the United States and Russia*, *1914–1921* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 69-70.

[18] *Ves' Petrograd na 1917 god*, 97.

scene in particular. On the other hand, it was difficult for him to seek and accept their opinions without betraying his own ignorance and forfeiting the dignity of his position."[19] "Apart from his ignoring the appearance of things in a capital rife with rumors about spying and espionage, Francis made additional mistakes due to the unfamiliarity of both setting and role,—another historian stated.—His outlook was shaped by the shibboleths around which he had fashioned careers in business and the Democratic party."[20]

Arriving at Petrograd, Francis found that the state of the embassy building was a problem. The US Embassy rented the mansion of Count Michael N. Grabbe on Furshtatskaya street. The ambassador had his office on the second floor, near two small private rooms that Philip Jordan had furnished as his bedroom and sitting room. But this poorly furnished "palace" was considered a "laughing stock among Russians and diplomats alike," chargé Charles S. Wilson reported.[21] Francis was appalled at the rundown condition and inadequate furnishing of the embassy that was described by an eyewitness as looking more like a warehouse than a residence. "It is a large house and susceptible of being made very attractive, but it is out of repair and has little furniture and no furnishing whatever," the ambassador wrote to his son.[22] "The Embassy building is in very poor condition. I am sleeping in the Embassy and taking breakfast here, which is furnished by the wife of one of the messengers; my luncheon and dinner I get elsewhere," he reported to the Secretary of State.[23] On May 17 (30) Francis cabled Lansing: "Just completed visits to my colleagues whose elegantly founded, well located embassies put me to shame. Am. Embassy inconvenient ill adapted almost absolutely unequipped."[24] Francis was obliged to advance his own cash to pay for a dining room suite, kitchen utensils and supplies, curtains, and shades.[25] From another side, the Francis residence was located "in a fashionable part of the city lying between its center and the Tauride district to the east. Since this latter district included the later Soviet headquarters at the Smolny Institute, as well as the Parliament building, the American Embassy found itself in the midst of some of the most dramatic and violent happenings of the revolutionary period."[26]

Francis' personal connections in the Russian capital were rather limited. As Kennan noted, "Francis' taste and habits were the robust and simple ones of the American Middle West at the turn of the century. As such, they bore little affinity to the refined predilections of continental diplomatic society." The "Governor's preference for an evening's entertainment ran to good cigars, good whisky, and a few cronies around the card table, rather than to large and elegant mixed gatherings. For this reasons, as well as by reason of a certain parsimoniousness,

[19] Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 38.
[20] David Mayers, *The Ambassadors and America's Soviet Policy* (N.Y.–Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 72.
[21] Saul, *War and Revolution*, 9.
[22] Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 194-195.
[23] D.R. Francis to R. Lancing, May 2, 1916, in: *Lansing Papers*, *1914–1920*, II, 312.
[24] Saul, *War and Revolution*, 67.
[25] Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 201.
[26] Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*. P. 36.

he lived for the most part quietly in his Embassy apartment, confining his social life largely to the American colony, taking relatively little part in the social doings of high Petrograd society."[27] In April 1916 there were 202 American citizens in the Russian capital.[28]

Significantly, Francis first visitor after his arrival was H. Fessenden Meserve who represented the National City Bank of New York in Russia.[29] A Missourian, Samuel McRoberts, vice president of the bank, also arrived in Petrograd on May 2 (15), 1916, for the purpose of consummating a loan of $50,000,000 to the Russian government.[30] Francis actively supported McRoberts during his visit to Petrograd and helped to negotiate a loan. At the very end of the year a branch of the National City Bank was opened at Petrograd. Another respected American businessman in the Russian capital was L. McAllister Smith of Guaranty Trust Company of New York. But the main figure in the local American business community was the representative of the New York Life Insurance Company Frederick M. Corse. "The tall, fifty-one-year-old Vermonter was fluent in Russian and considered to be the dean of the American colony in Petrograd. He was Francis's closest male friend."[31] It was Corse who initiated the establishment of the American Hospital in Petrograd. In December 1916, Francis was personally introduced to each of the wounded soldiers at the hospital.[32] Friction within the American community led to one faction separating to sponsor the American Refuge for Refugee Women and Children from the war zone. Its main backers were the Meserves and McAllister Smiths. Both factions received the additional support from the US embassy.

Another circle of the Francis' acquaintances consisted of American wives of Russian noblemen with high social standing: Baroness Frances Ramsay who was a sister of Sheldon Whitehouse; Countess Lilie Nostitz; Princess Susan Beloselskaya-Belozerskaya; Princess Julia Cantacuzéne-Speransky, granddaughter of President Grant. Assistant foreign minister Vladimir A. Artzimovich, a former consul at San-Francisco, also was married to an American. He was America's confidential friend in the ministry but was dismissed in October 1916. There was also the educational and philanthropic *Mayak* (Lighthouse) Society in Petrograd, sponsored by the YMCA and headed by General Secretary Franklin A. Gaylord. Pastor George A. Simons ran the affairs of the American Methodist Episcopal Chapel in Petrograd. In 1915 a branch of Russian-American Chamber of Commerce and the Society for Promoting Mutual Friendly Relations between Russia and America were established at Petrograd. The Society was headed by the former Russian

[27] Ibid., 36-38.

[28] *Izvestiya Obshchestva sblizheniya mezhdu Rossiyey i Amerikoy*, 2 (Aprel 1916): 45.

[29] Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 193.

[30] D.R. Francis to R. Lansing, May 20, 1916, in: *Lansing Papers*, I, 149; D.R. Francis to R. Lansing; July 25, 1916, in: *Dollars and Diplomacy*, 37.

[31] Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 207.

[32] Lyubov Ginzburg, Rediscovering the "Living Human Documents" of a Goodwill Initiative. Letters from Russian Soldiers cared for at the City Hospital of the American Colony in Petrograd, 1914–918, in: William Benton Whisenhunt & Norman E. Saul, eds. *New Perspectives on Russian-American Relations* (New York & London: Routledge, 2016), 129-131, 135.

Ambassador to Washington Roman R. Rosen. In June 1916 the Society Council gave a dinner in honor of the new US Ambassador.[33] Nevertheless Francis was slow to make friends among the Russians. "I gave a Fourth of July reception yesterday," he wrote to his wife. "The guests were mainly, if not altogether, Americans, as Russians do not understand the Fourth of July, and furthermore I have made comparatively few social acquaintances among the Russians."[34]

Francis' circle of knowledgeable acquaintances, his place in the Russian high society, and his influence in governmental lobby were far smaller than that of the British or French ambassadors. Francis "had found himself overshadowed, in his relation to Russian court circles, by his French and British colleagues, who were more experienced, better connected, more at home in the world of dynamic diplomacy and aristocratic social forms."[35] The most influential foreign representative in Petrograd was obviously the British ambassador Sir George W. Buchanan. The stuffy and proper Englishman sharply contrasted with the casual Francis.[36] Next in influence was the French ambassador Maurice Paléologue. His first meeting with the US ambassador went very poorly because Francis efforts to avoid giving the slightest hint of partiality in the war won the ire of the French ambassador[37]. "Francis seems to have found no easy approach to his diplomatic colleagues,"—Kennan noted.—"They, for their part, tended either to ignore him or to view him with amusement and condescension. His rare diplomatic dinners … failed to accord with the standards of diplomatic elegance then prevailing in the Russian capital."[38] Francis "was alternately ignored and patronized by his British and French colleagues. He seldom entertained and led an unsociable life in the dilapidated embassy."[39] Both Buchanan and Paléologue scarcely mentioned Francis in their memoirs and so Russian officials did.

The whole term of Francis' stay in Russia may be divided on five periods: last months of the Imperial Russia (April 1916–February 1917), revolutionary turmoil under the Provisional Government (February–October 1917), dawn of the Bolshevik era in Petrograd (October 1917–February 1918), stop-off in the Soviet Vologda (March–July 1918), and the final sojourn to Arkhangel'sk occupied by the Allied forces (August–November 1918). Actually, Francis saw five different Russias from his windows. He was made to act in five different historical situations and presented five different images of Russia in his book. That is why his *Russia from the American Embassy* appeared before the reader as many-faced, varied, and even contradictory.

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[33] *Izvestiya Obshchestva sblizheniya mezhdu Rossiyey i Amerikoy*, 3 (Sentyabr 1916): 34.

[34] D.R. Francis to Jane Francis, July 5, 1916, in: *Dollars and Diplomacy*, 31.

[35] Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 16.

[36] Saul, *War and Revolution*, 71.

[37] Benson L. Grayson, *Russian–American Relations in World War I* (N.Y.: Frederick Ungar Publishing C°, 1979), 79.

[38] Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 38.

[39] Mayers, *The Ambassadors and America's Soviet Policy*, 74.

"The mission upon which I have started is a very difficult one", Francis wrote after his appointment.[40] But he was not able to realize then how difficult it would prove! His main assignment in Russia was to negotiate a new commercial treaty instead of the old 1832 treaty abrogated by the US government in 1911. Surprisingly for the instigators of the abrogation this sanction did not affect Russian policy at all. The abrogation had accomplished nothing. Meanwhile, Russian-American relations were frigid and the abrogation only added to existing difficulties.[41] Woodrow Wilson himself actively supported the abrogation in search for votes at the eve of the 1912 election but becoming President he was forced to try to restore normal commercial relations with Russia. Ambassador Marye could not accomplish the task. And now, the military correspondent Richard W. Child wrote in 1916, we "need diplomatic and commercial representation in Russia of a standard of excellence which can eradicate a growing suspicion of our sordidness;" we "need the proper official representation also because at the end of the war we must strive to make a commercial treaty with Russia."[42]

Interested primarily in negotiating a new commercial treaty, Francis accepted the post under the mistaken impression that he could accomplish this end without difficulty. But from the very beginning he was shockingly disappointed by Russian refusal even to discuss the matter. Instead Russian foreign minister Sergei D. Sazonov several times reminded Francis that "the treaty had been denounced by America and not by Russia."[43] With the treaty his primary interest, Francis was to find his stay in Russia marked by frustration, bitterness, and failure.[44] Actually, the main job of the US embassy in Russia during the First World War was the care of German and Austro-Hungarian prisoners-of-war. Ambassador Marye complained that "operation of the embassy was swamped by the influx of unexpectedly high numbers of POWs; 80 percent of its work was devoted to this issue."[45] The POW work was greater than all other business of the embassy combined, Francis reported in July 1916.[46] "At the end of 1916, the American Embassy and Consulates in Russia were undertaken to care for more than two million military and civilian prisoners in concentration camps scattered throughout European Russia and Siberia", Countess Nostitz wrote.[47] The necessity to fulfill these enormous obligations became an unpleasant surprise for Francis who had but a little interest in the job. "He would have preferred to ignore the military-

[40] D.R. Francis to Ch. S. Hamlin, April 20, 1916, in: *Dollars and Diplomacy*, 14.

[41] Clifford L. Egan, Pressure Groups, the Department of State, and the Abrogation of the Russo-American Treaty of 1832, in: *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 115, no. 4 (August 1971): 334.

[42] Richard W. Child, *Potential Russia* (N.Y.: E.P. Dutton & C°, 1916), 199-201.

[43] D.R. Francis to R. Lansing, May 7, & June 16, 1916, in: *Dollars and Diplomacy*, 18, 28–29.

[44] Grayson, *Russian–American Relations in World War I*, 74.

[45] Mayers, *The Ambassadors and America's Soviet Policy*, 69.

[46] Saul, *War and Revolution*, 45.

[47] Countess Nostitz, *The Countess from Iowa* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1936), 172.

prisoner issue and was dismayed by the scope of problems in what he called the 'uncongenial task' of representing German and Austrian interests."[48]

Francis had one-sided view of internal situation in late Imperial Russia influenced by his acquaintances in liberal Russian circles. As Harper noted, the ambassador quickly had "interested himself in the work and views of the people's organizations, whose leaders were soon to head the revolution of March, 1917."[49] A prospect of revolution was first hinted by him as early as August 1916, when Francis reported to the Secretary of State: "I do not think there will be a revolution immediately after the close of the war," but "if the Court Party does not adopt a more liberal policy by extending more privileges to the people and their representatives in the Duma, a revolution will take place before the lapse of even a few years."[50] "It is more than interesting to be in the position which I occupy at this time,"—Francis wrote in December 1916.—"This is the most critical period of the world's history in my opinion, and Petrograd is occupying a very prominent place in the theater of affairs – in fact it is second to none."[51] Francis anticipated some events of importance in Russian history but was sure that "there is no danger of a revolution before the end of the war."[52] His own position began to strengthen due to the breaking off the diplomatic relations between the USA and Germany on February 3, 1917. "The Russians are very much pleased with the stand we have taken and are already beginning to treat us as Allies," Francis reported.[53] A bit later the ambassador repeated to Wilson, that he did "not anticipate any revolution … in the immediate future."[54]

On February 23 (March 8), 1917, the revolution in Petrograd did erupt. According to Countess Nostitz, when its outcome had become clear Francis said to her: "It doesn't surprise me. But all the same I consider my colleagues of some of the other Embassies have made a great mistake in backing up the opposition movement against the Imperial Family. I told them so at our last conference. I said —'Gentlemen, in the Middle States, from where I come, we don't swap horses while crossing a stream.'"[55] Only after the Emperor's abdication he recognized that "This is undoubtedly a revolution, but it is the best managed revolution that has ever taken place for its magnitude."[56] A downfall of thousand years Empire meant a dawn of the new era in Russia and in history of Russian-American relations as well as in the Francis' diplomatic career.

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[48] Mayers, *The Ambassadors and America's Soviet Policy*, 73.

[49] Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 204.

[50] D.F. Francis to R. Lansing, August 14, 1916, in: *Lansing Papers*, II, 319.

[51] D.R. Francis to Ph. B. Fourke; December 10/23, 1916, in: *Dollars and Diplomacy*, 71-72.

[52] D.R. Francis to C. Thompson; January 4/17, 1917, in: *Dollars and Diplomacy*, 78.

[53] D.R. Francis to R. Lansing; January 29/February 11, 1917, in: *Lansing Papers*, II, 321-322.

[54] David S. Foglesong, "A Missouri Democrat in Revolutionary Russia: Ambassador David R. Francis and the American Confrontation with Russian Radicalism, 1917," *Gateway Heritage*, 12, no. 3 (Winter 1992): 26.

[55] Countess Nostitz, *The Countess from Iowa*, 195.

[56] D.R. Francis to R. Lansing; March 2/15, 1917, in: *Dollars and Diplomacy*, 91.

The US ambassador was the first foreign diplomat who posed the question of recognition of the Russian Provisional government. Three days after the Emperor abdication Francis telegraphed to Washington his reasons for speedy recognition trying to convince Lansing that it was "the most amazing revolution" which was "the practical realization of that principle of government which we have championed and advocated, I mean government by consent of the governed."[57] To his mind the Russian revolution was the equivalent of the American one almost a century and a half before.[58] His decision was influenced also by the new Russian foreign minister Pavel N. Milyukov who found in Francis "a credulous interlocutor."[59] Milyukov himself recalled: "The Ambassador from the United States, the dear Francis (who was in no way a diplomat), clearly wanted America to be the first to recognize the Russian revolution, and I willingly entered a little conspiracy with him."[60] As George Buchanan noted ironically, "The United States Ambassador was the first to recognize the Provisional Government officially on March 22, an achievement of which he was always proud."[61]

But Francis was not able to follow the rapid and chaotic sweep of events that led Russia from one crisis to another. His view of unfolding events was limited and based on illusions. Francis confessed such "assumptions concerning the Russian situation" which "were least likely to be fulfilled," namely, "that Russian political life would advance at once toward a stable parliamentary system and that Russia would continue to wage war."[62] "In the euphoria that followed the tsar's abdication, Francis and other U.S. officials neglected the deeper social and economic origins of the revolution, underestimated the strength of the Soviet, and exaggerated the power of the Provisional Government. An inflated notion of the influence and authority of the Duma leaders distorted Francis' perspective and alleviated his concern about the unpredictability of the workers and soldiers."[63] He "never grasped the degree to which political authority had become fragmented or understood the army's demoralization." Besides, "Francis labored under the haziest knowledge of the ideological divisions within the Marxist and non-Marxist socialist parties."[64] Francis "was sufficiently aware of the plight of the Russian people to welcome jubilantly the overthrow of the Tsar and the coming to power of the Provisional Government," the former consul DeWitt C. Poole said. With "the members of the Provisional Government Francis had a bridge of understanding, and with them in power over a period of years Francis might have gone down as a pretty successful ambassador." Those pro-Allied liberals, Poole

[57] Francis telegram to Lansing, March 18, 1917, in: *FRUS 1917*, 1207.

[58] Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 227, 239.

[59] Mikhaylovsky, G.N. *Zapiski. Iz istorii rossyskogo vneshnepoliticheskogo vedomstva. 1914–1920* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, 1993), 1, 280.

[60] Paul Miliukov, *Political Memoirs, 1905–1907* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967), 439.

[61] Sir George Buchanan, *My Mission to Russia, and Other Diplomatic Memoirs* (London a.o.: Cassel & Company, 1923), II, 91.

[62] Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 16.

[63] Foglesong, "A Missouri Democrat in Revolutionary Russia," 28.

[64] Mayers, *The Ambassadors and America's Soviet Policy*, 77-78.

continued, "were well inside the understanding and liking of Francis or any other rather narrowly American American."[65]

On March 25 (April 7), 1917, news of the US entering the war against Germany reached Petrograd. This created new situation in Russian-American relations and made the US ambassador popular figure in the Russian capital. "That revolution and our entering the war, so nearly contemporaneous as they were, mark a new era in the history of society," Francis reported. "Our form of government is their model; our taking part in the contest has infused into them a confident spirit and imbued them with a firm determination."[66] As Francis stated a bit later, "in my judgment the American Embassy is respected to a greater extent and has more influence with the Provisional Government and with the people generally than any other mission in Russia."[67] Owing to his position as envoy of Russia's new powerful ally, Francis indeed enjoyed a rather elusive prestige in Petrograd. But his ambassadorial position was compromised and diminished by the flux of special US missions with no clearly defined responsibilities which one after another was arriving on the Petrograd scene during the summer of 1917.

The first of them were the Railway or Stevens Commission and the so-called Root Mission. Francis readily supported the former and even tried to direct its activities but was reluctant as to the advisability of the latter which was sent by the Wilson administration regardless of the ambassador's opinion. From the very beginning the question of confusion of authority arose. As Root remarked, "It is plain that we can't have three bodies dealing with the Russian Government at the same time—the regular Embassy, the President's Mission & the R.R. Commission."[68] But Wilson refused to define authority clearly. As a result, Stevens sometimes interfered to diplomatic matters, Root discussed railroad questions, and Francis tried to do everything maneuvering between two chiefs of missions and different branches of the Russian government. The Root Mission departed Petrograd on June 26 (July 9) leaving behind the US Military Mission which turned out to be one more quasi-political body representing special Army interests. It was headed by Br.-General William V. Judson.

Probably, the most exotic was the American Red Cross Mission (ARCM) which soon arrived at Petrograd to add more embarrassments for the ambassador. The mission was promoted by a Montana copper magnate William B. Thompson who tried to use it as an instrument of America's support of Russia's continued participation in the war. Neither the ambassador nor other official representatives on the scene felt that there was a need for such a mission.[69] The result was deplorable misunderstanding between the ARCM and the US embassy.[70] One

[65] See: Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 17; Foglesong, "A Missouri Democrat in Revolutionary Russia," 28.

[66] Francis telegram, April 21, 1917, in: *FRUS 1917. Supplement 2. The World War*, I, 36.

[67] D.R. Francis to R. Lansing, April 25/May 8, 1917, in: *Lansing Papers*, II, 332-334.

[68] E. Root to R. Lansing, May 6, 1917, in: *Lansing Papers*, II, 329.

[69] Neil V. Salzman, *Reform and Revolution: The Life and Times of Raymond Robins* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1991), 177.

[70] Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 61.

more US agency was created by the Committee on Public Information (CPI) under the title the American Press Bureau at Petrograd. The CPI was represented by journalist Arthur Bullard and the Committee associate chairman Edgar Sisson who considered himself as "Special Representative of President Wilson in Russia." "Thus the making of trouble and confusion were implanted firmly in the situation by official Washington before Sisson even arrived in Russia."[71]

After the CPI emissaries' arrival, the situation with US official representation in Petrograd was confused to the highest degree. Petrograd was "host to high-level U.S. commissions, delegations, and missions that collectively eclipsed the embassy's significance."[72] Francis and "a number of other high-ranking State Department officials already at their posts in Russia did not look favorably at the prospect of the preemption of their responsibilities by the special commissions. The ambassador and his staff viewed the personnel of the various commissions as Johnnies-come-lately and as too inexperienced to understand either the political complications of the Revolution or the Russian military's failures on the eastern front."[73] Bullard described the situation in the following words: "No one of the ambassadors was of strong enough character to dominate and control his own flock. Grouped, about each embassy, there were military missions, secret services, publicity agents, commercial attachés, all busily engaged in trying to serve their country, but with no one to co-ordinate their actions. They were continually getting in each other's way." And, he added. "Our own representatives—embassy, military mission, Red Cross, and consulates—were just as bitterly divided."[74]

At the same time the ambassador's "neglect of discerning reports" by his more competent and informed subordinates "meant that Francis denied himself real familiarity with the Russian situation."[75] In the mid-September J. Butler Wright noted in his diary that amid rumors "that the 'Bolshevik' sentiment is growing in strength throughout the country everyone, with only the exception of D.R.F., believes that a clash—and a serious one—is bound to occur soon." The counselor was amused by "the glowing reports of D.R.F." which were not distinguished by brilliant insights or farsighted prescriptions.[76] On the morning of October 26 (November 8), 1917, Francis once more woke up in a completely new country. "Situation here undetermined but this Bolshevik government can not survive and I think will collapse within few days," Francis telegraphed to Washington on the fourth day of the October Revolution.[77] The " 'Governor,' as Harper and other advisers called Francis—and in character he remained the ex-governor of Missouri, the Show-Me state—was confident that the Bolsheviks

[71] Ibid., 50-51.

[72] Mayers, *The Ambassadors and America's Soviet Policy*, 86.

[73] Neil V. Salzman, ed. *Russia in War and Revolution: General William V. Judson's Accounts from Petrograd, 1917–1918* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1998), 30.

[74] Arthur Bullard, *The Russian Pendulum* (N.Y.: The Macmillan Company, 1919), 111-113.

[75] Mayers, *The Ambassadors and America's Soviet Policy*, 86.

[76] Foglesong, "A Missouri Democrat in Revolutionary Russia," 37-40.

[77] Francis telegram, November 11, 1917, in: *FRUS 1918. Russia*, III, 207.

would not take power, and then, that they would fall."[78] With such a view the ambassador "seemed to have no policy at all except to insist that the Bolsheviks could not last."[79]

Lt.-Colonel Raymond Robins, who replaced Thompson as the head of ARCM, and General Judson from the very beginning were in favor of some limited contacts with the Bolshevik government considering them as a matter of necessity. But Francis officially informed Judson on November 7 (20) that "it was my policy to do nothing or permit no act to be performed by anyone connected with the Embassy or under my control that could be construed as a direct or indirect recognition of what is generally known as the 'Bolshevik' government."[80] The start of the Soviet-German peace negotiations at Brest-Litovsk created a new situation. Judson insisted on contacts with the Soviet leadership in order to influence conditions of the armistice and Francis begun to be inclined to his opinion but on November 23 (December 6) Lansing forbade "all direct communication with the Bolsheviks." Under pressure from opposite sides, a disoriented Francis acted contradictorily or preferred not to act at all.

All the significant American representatives in Petrograd jointly agreed to recommend opening informal channels of communication with the Bolshevik government in order to coordinate actions against Germany. The American community was united on one other issue as well: the necessity of replacing the ambassador with someone more reliable and with better judgment.[81] After Francis' conviction was proved wrong by the Bolshevik seizure of power, the sense that the elderly ambassador was tired, confused, and out of touch with Russian reality contributed to a movement by other US envoys in Russia to have him recalled.[82] Sisson, the prime instigator of the recall move, reported on November 21 (December 4): "Found Ambassador without policy except anger at Bolsheviks, unamenable to arguments or entreaties of his official advisers, military and civil." In his opinion "no fruitful work can be done here by any division of our Government so long as Francis remains in charge of Embassy." The ambassador "impress every one as a sick man absolutely unfitted to the strain physical and mental of his great post," Sisson added.[83] The next day Judson wrote in his diary that Francis "seems to me completely exhausted and overwrought by the strain he has recently been under."[84] Two days later Huntington reported to Harper that Francis was increasingly tired, despondent, and in ill health[85]. Bullard shared the common opinion in his letter to Edward House: "Francis is a sick man entirely overwhelmed by the situation," and "he has created hopelessly

[78] Albert Rhys Williams, *Journey into Revolution. Petrograd, 1917–1918* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969), 82.
[79] Ibid., 196–197.
[80] *Russia in War and Revolution*, 136.
[81] David W. McFadden, *Alternative Paths: Soviets and Americans, 1917–1920* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 91-92.
[82] Foglesong, "A Missouri Democrat in Revolutionary Russia," 38.
[83] Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 125-126.
[84] *Russia in War and Revolution*, 165.
[85] Saul, *War and Revolution*, 201.

hostile relations with people where it is his obvious duty to seek cooperation."[86] The recommendations for Francis' removal were supported by Basil Miles and William F. Sands, who had already returned to Washington and tried pushed the decision through the State Department.[87]

Sir George Buchanan left Petrograd on December 25, 1917 (January 7, 1918), and Francis, being the next in seniority, replaced him as a doyen of the diplomatic corps. His debut in this capacity took place a week later when Francis led the entire corps in its unanimous protest against the arrest of the Romanian minister Count Diamandy and all his staff by the Bolsheviks.[88] Vladimir Lenin responded by pointing to the extremely dangerous situation in which Russian troops found themselves in the Romanian front. Nevertheless, the Romanians were released the following day and then deported from Russia. Significantly, unpublished version of the Francis' memoirs differs in this particular case from the published one.[89] In the course of further events Francis was becoming increasingly isolated—from Washington, the Soviet government, and his own staff.[90] On February 7, 1918, Harper concluded that a new ambassador was needed because "men of wide vision and men of action are required at this most critical post."[91] At the same time, Robins was bound to appear in Petrograd as "the real American Ambassador" and thus to diminish Francis' prestige and his potential usefulness in the formal ambassadorial position.[92]

By the end of January the wife of the naval attaché at Petrograd came to a conclusion that there was "no place for Americans! There is nothing that they can accomplish."[93] The same day the Soviet delegation at Brest-Litovsk interrupted peace negotiations giving a pretext for German offensive which begun on February 18, 1918, and created danger for Petrograd.[94] Two days later at a conference of Allied representatives the decision had been made to abandon the Russian capital. While the Soviet government was preparing to escape to Moscow the Americans made a choice in favor of Vologda, a railroad junction 300 miles to

[86] McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 92.

[87] Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 385-386.

[88] See: *FRUS 1918. Russia*, I, 477-478; Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 330-342. French version: Louis de Robien, *The Diary of a Diplomat in Russia, 1917–1918* (N.Y. & Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1970), 190-194. Romanian version: Flavius Solomon & Andrei Cuşco, "How Much Ideology can Diplomacy Endure? The Early Phase of Soviet-Romanian Relations, November 1917–February 1918," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, N.F. 63, Heft 3 (2015): 400-407. Soviet version: Zalkind, I.A. "NKID v semnadtsatom godu," in: *Utro Strany Sovetov* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1988), 204.

[89] Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 338.

[90] Saul, *War and Revolution*, 222-224.

[91] Ibid., 229.

[92] Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 395-396.

[93] Pauline S. Crosley, *Intimate Letters from Petrograd* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1920), 273.

[94] In between the change of calendars occurred. Until February 1918 Russia clung to the Julian (or Old Style) calendar, which was 13 days behind the Gregorian (New Style) calendar used in Western Europe and the United States. So February 1, O.S., turned into February 14, N.S.

the east of Petrograd. There Francis might decide to continue his way further east until Vladivostok or to go to Arkhangel'sk in the Northern Russia. On February 26 & 27 the American colony consisted of more than 60 people left Petrograd.[95] It included the embassy staff, officers of the military mission, Red Cross and YMCA people, personnel of the New York City Bank, and some other Americans. Most of the other diplomatic missions followed the Americans or joined them later. Thus Vologda turned to be a "diplomatic capital of Russia", as Francis termed the city.

"I went out from Petrograd to Vologda to see Mr. Francis early in March 1918, ten days after all the embassies had fled from the panic-stricken capital," the theatric critic Oliver M. Sayler wrote. "The day I arrived in Vologda, the Ambassador gave out to the Russian press the following statement, which was copied throughout Russia: … America still counts itself an ally of the Russian people and we shall be ready to help, no matter what Government organizes a vigorous resistance to the German invasion." "Here again, with all its genuine sympathy, was the same misunderstanding of the social revolution as a mere political quarrel,"—concluded the author.—"Here again was the delusion in which most people outside Russia resisted—the delusion that Russia could fight once more if she wished to."[96]

News of the Brest-Litovsk treaty concluding on March 3, 1918, quickly reached Vologda. Francis decided to "inveigh against Brest-Litovsk" hoping to destroy it especially after the Murmansk experiment where the Allies cooperated with the local Soviet in the joint efforts to organize anti-German front. On April 5, Francis telegraphed to Lansing: "Transportation conditions deplorable and require improvement, which we can best render having demonstrated our ability thereof by bettering Soviet government service." The ambassador even suggested "to place American Railway Commission in charge of Soviet government." "Furthermore, in event of Allied intervention from east or west or both, railroad efficiency is essential," he continued. Francis recommended to ignore "mistakes of Soviet government and outrages practiced" in order to "induce Soviet government to ask Allied assistance, so that when Allies enter Russia, will not with Soviet government's refusal, but Soviet government's welcome."[97] By May 2, Francis had decided that "time for Allied intervention has arrived" because the Russian people were ready to welcome it.[98] On June 4, after the Czecho-Slovak revolt, he made a trip to Petrograd trying to establish contact with anti-Bolshevik forces in the former capital on the assumption that soon the Bolshevik power would collapse.[99] In his opinion, the Czecho-Slovak case might justify the intervention of the Allied powers in Russia.[100] "Russian people confidently expecting Allied intervention and will welcome it," Francis stated. "Russian people are expecting

[95] Saul, *War and Revolution*, 234-235.

[96] Oliver M. Sayler, "Russia looks to America," *North American Review*, 209, no. 759 (February 1919): 191-193.

[97] Francis telegram, April 5, 1918, in: *FRUS 1918. Russia*, III, 228.

[98] Francis telegram, May 2, 1918, in: *FRUS 1918. Russia*, I, 519-521.

[99] McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 136.

[100] Francis telegram, June 11, 1918, in: *FRUS 1918. Russia*, I, 561.

America to lead in intervention," he continued. "At the same time these people require leadership and look to us therefore."[101]

During his stay in Vologda and later in Arkhangel'sk, Francis kept acquaintances with a lot of people prominent not only in local affairs but in all-Russian politics as well. On July 4, 1918, he reported: "I gave a Fourth of July reception to-day." The "feeling in Vologda is very friendly towards the Embassy as it is realized that we have added much to the reputation of the city."[102] But this idyll disappeared two days later when Left Socialist-Revolutionaries assassinated Count Mirbach, Germany's envoy to Russia, and anti-Bolshevik uprising erupted in Moscow followed by a mutiny in Yaroslavl'. In response the Extraordinary Revolutionary Staff was created in Vologda. It assumed all powers in the city and stationed the military guard at the door of the embassy. The Soviet government tried to force the diplomats to remove to Moscow. Instead they decided to escape to Arkhangel'sk where the Allied intervention was anticipated.

On July 24, 1918, Francis at the head of the entire diplomatic corps left Vologda and reached Arkhangel'sk after the Allied forces occupied the city. Now Arkhangel'sk turned to be the second diplomatic capital of Russia alongside with Moscow. From Arkhangel'sk Francis "called for large, aggressive military campaigns to reorganize Russian resistance to Germany and eradicate the menace of Bolshevism."[103] "There Francis became enmeshed in the affairs of Nicholas Chaikovsky and the ant-Bolsheviks of the area, whose career involved coup, countercoup, and kidnappings."[104] He practiced direct and sometimes crucial personal intervention in the local politics acting more like a governor of Missouri than an ambassador. Francis even pressed (or "advised" "very categorically," in his own words) the appointments of officials in the Northern Government. But by the fall of the year he depleted his own resources of energy and health. The timely arrival of Rear Admiral McCully, who was appointed commander of the American naval forces in North Russia, saved him. Placed aboard the USS *Olympia* on a stretcher, Francis left Arkhangel'sk for England on November 7, 1918. It was the first anniversary of the October Revolution and four days before the Armistice that ended the First World War.

Francis spent the remaining eight years of his life trying to convince the American public that he was right, as he did in his testimony before the Overman Committee and in his memoirs.[105] He published his *Russia from the American Embassy* soon after his official resignation in 1920. But the ambassador's book "proved to be more a defense of his actions in Russia than a historical memoir."[106] "His political role was not a great one, but his simple, outspoken, American pragmatism provided a revealing contrast to the intensely theoretical controversies

[101] Francis telegram, June 22, 1918, in: *FRUS 1918. Russia*, II, 220-223.

[102] Francis telegram, July 4, 1918, in: *FRUS 1918. Russia*, I, 568.

[103] David S. Foglesong, *America's Secret War Against Bolshevism. U.S. Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1917–1920* (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 295.

[104] Mayers, *The Ambassadors and America's Soviet Policy*, 83.

[105] Allison, *American Diplomats in Russia*, 44-46.

[106] Ibid., 47.

that raged around him, and one comes away from the reading of his memoirs with the feeling that America could have been in some ways much worse served, if in other ways better," Kennan noted.[107] Russian historian Yurii Got'e stated in his review of Francis' memoirs that documents cited by the author constitute the most valuable part of the book. But "Russia, Russian people, and Russian interrelations were not very comprehensible mystery for him." Francis, in his opinion, was "a foreigner with, perhaps, the most alien psychology to us." American ambassador was "not able to comprehend neither Russia itself, nor what is going on here." Therefore his memoirs are "not an impartial account of events which took place in Russia in 1916–1918, but their reflection in the mind of businessman who to his own surprise become their eyewitness," concluded the reviewer.[108]

David R. Francis died in 1927. Historians differ in their opinions of his legacy. Francis was the "most fascinating, controversial, and, perhaps, misunderstood American in Russia during the revolutionary years," William Allison noted.[109] Consequently, to evaluate "Ambassador Francis is not easy task. Historians have called him incompetent, misplaced, and more recently, astute and dedicated. His character has generally been praised. His skill as a diplomat, however, has often been criticized."[110] "If, as was the case, he was poorly prepared in many ways for this unusual task, one cannot deny him a certain admiration for the spirit in which he accepted and performed it," George F. Kennan wrote.[111] But even his carefully balanced study "have not erased the negative portrait of David R. Francis as a nice old fellow who had no experience in diplomacy and was over his head representing the United States in revolutionary Russia."[112] According to Jamie H. Cockfield's opinion, the "problem with his work came in his inability to comprehend and interpret events."[113] David Mayers stated categorically: "Mediocre U.S. diplomacy in St. Petersburg, broken by the accidental appearance of able envoys, culminated in the careers of Marye and Francis."[114] Only David S. Foglesong stays apart with his conclusion that "a careful review of the available evidence suggests the need to revise the common image of Ambassador Francis as a doddering, diplomatic dilettante."[115]

As Kennan wrote many years ago, "It was easy for the members of the American community and the diplomatic corps to ridicule Francis and to deprecate his ability. An injustice had been done to him, and undeserved one, in sending him to such a post at such a time. Only the greatest unfamiliarity with the requirements of normal diplomatic life could have explained a belief that Francis at his age and with his experience and temperament, would have been well equipped to

[107] Kennan, *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin*, 50-51.
[108] Got'e, Yurii, "Vospominaniya posla Frensisa o Rossii," *Annaly*, 3 (1923): 292-293.
[109] Allison, *American Diplomats in Russia*, 13.
[110] Ibid., P. 47.
[111] Kennan, *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin*, 50.
[112] Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, XII.
[113] *Dollars and Diplomacy*, 4.
[114] Mayers, *The Ambassadors and America's Soviet Policy*, 85.
[115] Foglesong, "A Missouri Democrat in Revolutionary Russia," 39.

meet those requirements."[116] This conclusion paves the way for considering the Francis problem as a part of the much broader Wilson problem. It was President Wilson who "thought that all people, whether they be Mexican peons or Russian peasants, whites or orientals, were capable of being trained in the habits of democracy."[117] "In both Mexico and Russia, finally, Wilson had started out fighting counter-revolution, and ended struggling to contain and control the very forces he had unknowingly encouraged by condemning reactionary special interests and imperialism."[118] "In wartime Russia,"—Christopher Lasch explained,—"Wilsonians sought initially to buttress the pro-Allied liberal-nationalist regime of the March Revolution, in order to save the moral and material strength of a liberalized Russia for the anti-German coalition. Then too, even after failing to prevent the triumph of Russian Bolshevism, the Wilson Administration continued its limited efforts, by means of intervention and diplomacy, to end the single-party rule of the Bolsheviks and hopefully to bring Russia back to the lost liberalism of the March Revolution."[119] As David McFadden concluded, "Wilson's policy was so torn between anti-Bolshevism and anti-intervention that it was not a Wilson policy at all, but instead a nonpolicy, often determined by subordinates, allies, or events in Russia."[120]

Francis' diplomatic career is a particular case of Wilsonianism with its liberal illusions and democratic prejudices. That is why Francis' failure as a diplomat may be considered as a display of Woodrow Wilson's greater diplomatic fiasco which culminated in the Senate refusal to ratify the Versailles Treaty. Francis was an ordinary American politician with a rather narrow provincial outlook. Finding himself in Petrograd he wished to see in Russia as another America. But Russia is a world in itself, and a foreign embassy is not the best point for observation. History itself, with the magnitude of events, was against Francis. Nevertheless he was not the worst of the US ambassadors in Russia. Francis was not, of course, the right man in the right place, but obviously he deserves sympathy and his memoirs—the closest attention.

[116] Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 40.

[117] Arthur Link, *Wilson the Diplomatist* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957), 14.

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Book Reviews

Eva Dillon. *Spies in the Family*. New York: Harper Collins, 2017. 285 pp., plus abbreviated endnotes and index. Hardcover, $28.99.

Spies and espionage are always hot topics, as the success of the International Spy Museum in Washington, D. C. demonstrates. Consequently, Eva Dillon's book, *Spies in the Family: An American Spymaster, His Russian Crown Jewel, and the Friendship that Helped End the Cold War*, has a leg up over many other books on the Cold War when it comes to attracting a general readership. But Dillon's book stands on its own merits, as well. *Spies in the Family* is a well-written exploration of Cold War espionage and spycraft told through the lens of a few select individuals, primarily the author's father, Paul Dillon, and the Soviet spy he "handled," the Soviet general and the CIA's highest ranking agent, Dmitri Fedorovich Polyakov.

Paul Dillon began working for the CIA in 1950, and over the course of his career he would operate in Germany, Mexico, Italy and India. For three decades, he worked with Soviet spies, recruiting and training them, and then serving as the contact for the exchange of information. One of the spies he oversaw was Dmitri Polyakov, an agent for the GRU (Glavnoe Razvedyvatel'noe Upravlenie), a Soviet intelligence agency whose mission was primarily to steal military technology and monitor foreign threats, especially enemy spies. Polyakov came to the United States undercover as a member of the Soviet Mission to the United Nations Security Council Military Staff Committee, but his real job was to oversee a network of Soviet spies who were living in the United States as legal citizens. Over the course of a decade, however, from his first posting in the United States in 1951 through the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961, Polyakov became disenchanted with the direction of the Soviet system and its leaders, particularly Nikita Khrushchev, whom he saw as an uncouth, hot-headed boor. Polyakov feared that Khrushchev's

temperamental, rash nature might lead to an actual war between the two superpowers. Believing that he was doing what was best for the Russian people, Polyakov gave the CIA the names of Soviet spies in the United States and elsewhere, secret technical data, directives on military and foreign policy, information on the North Vietnamese and Chinese militaries, and copies of military journals. In the end, Polyakov provided American intelligence officers and military analysts with literally reams of classified documents. The author's father was Polyakov's contact for only a small period in the Soviet general's long career, however, making the book's subtitle a bit hyperbolic.

Though Polyakov's story is more compelling than Dillon's in many ways, both men's careers reveal the dangerous world of espionage in the Cold War era and intersect with several names and events that are familiar to the general public. So, for example, early in Dillon's career he worked in Germany, training teams of spies to be inserted into the Soviet Union. All of theses spies were captured and executed thanks to information provided by the British Secret Intelligence Service officer and Soviet spy, Kim Philby. Later, in 1958, Dillon was sent by the CIA to the World's Fair in Brussels as part of the agency's plan to sneak copies of Boris Paternak's forbidden novel, *Dr. Zhivago*, into the Soviet Union. Finally, *Spies in the Family* also reveals that Polyakov's exposure as a spy, his arrest, and execution (in 1988), were a direct result of the spying activity of the CIA's own man, Aldrich Ames, who had been working for the Soviet government.

Spies in the Family is well-written and readable. (Dillon gives credit in her acknowledgments to a "writing partner," David Chanoff, whom she thanks for "wordsmithing," but she is the only person listed as an author.) The book's source base is largely primary and secondary English-language sources, including memoirs of both Russian and American agents, and some documents obtained through online sources. Dillon's thanks several translators, but there are very few Russian sources, and no archival research is evident. This is no surprise, since the author is not a scholar of history, but rather someone who has spent her life in the magazine publishing business. Nonetheless, Dillon's book is a fascinating and useful addition to the popular literature on this particular aspect of Russian-American relations during the Cold War.

Lee A. Farrow
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Kate A. Baldwin, *The Racial Imaginary of the Cold War Kitchen: From Sokol'niki Park to Chicago's South Side*, Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2016, xviii. 236pp. Index. $45, Paper.

The convergence of cultural studies and diplomatic history poses complex dilemmas within Cold War scholarship. The interplay between Joseph Nye's "soft power" and its relationship to "hard power" has been subsumed by a new term—that of "smart power." It is this latter term that perhaps best encapsulates what Kate Baldwin investigates in *The Racial Imaginary of the Cold War Kitchen*. Cul-

ture became increasingly politicized and politics became acculturated throughout the ideological conflict. The personal was political, domestic, and universal; at once a microcosm within which to gauge larger identity implications.

Baldwin attempts to unravel such constructs by focusing on a particular portion of the house—that is, the kitchen. She argues that the kitchen should be construed as a rhetorical conceit (xi) within which historians can analyze the omission of women and race from Cold War narratives (xviii). This typically proscribed female realm served as a backdrop for two powerful male leaders to sound-off about the commodity race, space race, and the East-West binary relationship in the 1959 "Kitchen Debate" at the American National Exhibition in Moscow (ANEM). Vice President Richard Nixon and Premier Nikita Khrushchev quarreled about American exceptionalism in the model of an American kitchen replete with appliances that eased capitalist housewives' duties. Baldwin argues that Nixon used universal gendered connotations to denote the American kitchen as a symbol of freedom and democracy.

Yet Nixon conflated "woman" with "housewife" (pg. 6)—the latter term not easily translated into Russian; *khoziajka* is the closest lexical equivalent. Such a seemingly simple linguistic blunder underscores Baldwin's argument: the elision of gender and race from Cold War scholarship neglects key cultural and political components. Baldwin reconstructs an examination of Cold War "smart power" by using the kitchen and its gendered, racial identity constructs as a symbolic stand-in for silenced narratives. A place for intimate, private familial conversations and a public hub-bub during get-togethers, the kitchen serves as an ideal cultural space against which to analyze Cold War gender and race relations.

Baldwin's study examines literature and film, although the scope of her chosen mediums is a bit myopic. She examines *Glimpses of the USA*—a short film showcased at ANEM—as well as the Hollywood musical *Silk Stockings* – a 1957 remake of *Ninotchka* (1939). Baldwin argues that both films sold America and its ideals of white, feminine beauty. *Glimpses of the USA* played on Henry Luce's 1941 declaration of the "American Century." *Silk Stockings* in some ways mirrored this mentality by recalling David Riesman's 1951 essay entitled "The Nylon War." Both movies sought to undermine Soviet Communism through the infiltration of American cultural objects and exceptionalism. Yet these filmic renditions of American life showcased an inherent conformity. As Simone de Beauvoir posited in *The Second Sex* (1949), women are deemed passive objects while men are rendered active subjects throughout history; "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." Moviegoers witnessed this transformation in *Silk Stockings*. The central character Nina converts from an androgynous, drab Soviet to a consumer-oriented female adorned with the title garment. Capitalist consumerism proves no match for a staunch Soviet female. Yet, as Baldwin states, many moviegoers proved adverse to such filmic renditions; Soviet females did not necessarily display the envy the United States Information Agency (USIA) had wanted to elicit. Baldwin's parallels with Luce's "American Century" would perhaps therefore been more effective had she instead incorporated a discussion of Henry Wallace's rebuttal of Luce's piece entitled "Century of the Common Man." Attainable ideals played more to Soviet sensibilities. Russians' ingenuity in disseminating jazz

records on X-rays points to a new crossroads where East meets West. It is not so much an American century as it is a triumph of commonplace resourcefulness.

Baldwin's impressive examination omits some key comparisons. She mentions that African Americans fought for a double "V" in World War II—freedom abroad and freedom at home—as well as the double shift expected by Soviet females. Yet she does not contrast the counterparts to these identity issues—that is, the double shift also experienced by American women and the Cold War's rejection of the World War-II era reformulation of femininity with "Rosie the Riveter" and "Jenny on the Job" propagations. Much of what Baldwin examines stems from the wartime re-characterizations of gender, hence the underpinnings of conformity and the whitewashed mentality that prevailed during the Cold War period. Part of safeguarding American society from fifth-column threats meant shoring up its defenses against divergent ideals. An incorporation of these reactionary norms would have propelled her assertions and better situated them within their historical contexts.

The literature sections analyze Alice Childress' *Like One of the Family* (1956), Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* (1963), and Natalya Baranskaya's *A Week Like Any Other* (1969). Baldwin does an exceptional job situating these fictional works within the confines of the kitchen and extrapolating larger implications of gender and race onto the Cold War narrative. The placement of these sections, however, would have proven more advantageous had they been organized chronologically. The study begins in 1959 and ends in 1957. Although Baldwin based her analytical assumption on the 1959 "Kitchen Debate" at ANEM, and therefore needed to discuss it early on in her book, the thrust of her arguments loses potency by jumping chronologically.

Despite these drawbacks, *The Racial Imaginary of the Cold War Kitchen* is admirable in its ambitious scope and fills a much-needed gap in the existing Cold War scholarship. As Baldwin eloquently asserts, "we must work through the Cold War logics of the kitchen in order to refute the fantasy of historical progression and its related affective racial conditioning" (pg. 128). American studies and public diplomacy historians would benefit greatly from more engaging studies such as this that probe into historical narratives' omissions as much as their rumbling bellows. As Baldwin posits, "Cold War speech is empty; it requires articulation and then translation into imprecise idioms" (pg. 66). The utility of Baldwin's study stems on her efforts to enunciate the hushed kitchen voices so they reverberate throughout the annals of Cold War history.

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Robert W. Cherny, *Victor Arnautoff and the Politics of Art*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017, xxiv, 213pp. Index. $34.95, Paper.

The life and times of Russian-American artist, Victor Arnautoff, is examined in Robert W. Cherny's new work, *Victor Arnautoff and the Politics of Art*. Born

in the late nineteenth century in the Russian Empire, Arnautoff lived a long and complex life during turbulent times in the history of Russian-American relations. Arnautoff was the son of a Russian Orthodox priest, fought in World War I, and participated on the White side in the Russian Civil War. After the Civil War, he had to flee Russia with a stop as a calvary officer for a Chinese warlord. By the early 1920s, he reached the United States and settled down in northern California to pursue his real interest, art.

Arnautoff studied at the California School of Fine Arts, a leading art school in San Francisco at this time where he excelled in his studies and emerged as an excellent student. After two years of study in Mexico with Diego Rivera, he returned to San Francisco to take his place a leading muralist during the New Deal Federal Art programs. His painted murals still exist in the San Francisco area, across California, and in other parts of the United States like Texas and beyond. His work took on a distinctive political tone with images of workers, African-Americans, and others who struggled to survive in Depression-era America. Even though the country suffered from economic despair, Arnautoff's star was on the rise as in the San Francisco art community. However, tensions over the subject matter of his art made him doubt his being in the United States. Even though he fought on the White side in the Russian Civil War, he and his wife, Lydia, longed to be back in the Soviet Union.

In the late 1930s, Arnautoff joined the Communist Party of the United States at about the same time that he and his wife became citizens. Their lives during the World War II were consumed with Russian relief efforts, but after the war their lives changed radically. They became targets of investigations by the House Un-American Activities Committee for their politics and his art. After being forced into retirement from his faculty position at Stanford University in a tormented political era, he returned to the Soviet Union in 1963 until his death in 1979.

Arnautoff experienced a renaissance of sorts in the Soviet Union, but his life was very different. His wife, Lydia, had died accidently just weeks before their departure. He left behind his long-time mistress and adult children in the United States. In the Soviet Union, he was recognized for his artistic achievements, but it came slowly. He did remarry and seemed to have a happy life to the end.

Arnautoff's life is an interesting vehicle through which to see Russian-American relations, the world of art, and the Cold War. Cherny's work is well-written and compelling. The only drawback to the work was the uneven coverage of Arnautoff's life. While his early life is probably less documented, more detail on this part of his life would help understand the full scope of his life and career.

In the end, this is an interesting study of the life and times of a lesser-known Russian-American artist whose life and work revealed much about the times in which they lived. It is a welcome addition to the growing body of all aspects of Russian-American relations.

William B. Whisenhunt
College of DuPage

David Ramseur. *Melting the Ice Curtain: The Extraordinary Story of Citizen Diplomacy on the Russia-Alaska Frontier*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2017. 334pp., preface, epilogue, endnotes, bibliography and appendix. Paper, $10.00.

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This well-written book is a valuable contribution to the scholarship on Russian-American studies. The appearance of David Ramseur's book is an important addition to a lamentably small literature devoted to Russian-American contact in the Russian Far East and Alaska.

The book gives a detailed account of the events of the 1990s in the Russian Far East and American North Pacific. It is divided into twenty-three chapters, as well as an epilogue, appendix, notes, selected bibliography, acknowledgments, index, and information about the author. The book tells the story of how inspiration, courage, and persistence by citizen-diplomats bridged a widening gap in superpower relations. Ramseur was indeed a firsthand witness to the danger and political intrigue of the period, having flown on the first Friendship Flight across the Bering Sea, and having spent thirty years behind the scenes with some of Alaska's highest officials.

The list of references at the book's end is admirable in content, but short and highly selective. The individual reader will probably want to make additions. The Russian-language works of N.N. Bolkhovitinov, A.N. Ermolaev, Metropolitan Kliment, and A. Petrov, for example, would be of interest in connection with various chapters of the book.

The author's arguments could be strengthened by a number of documentaries filmed in both Russia and the United States. Some of them received international recognition and prestigious awards.

His unostentatious use of his wide knowledge of Russian-American relations at the end of the twentieth century is felt throughout the book. Mr. Ramseur is especially interested in politics, so at first glance the volume seems unbalanced, such as with his discussion of the Russian period of Alaska's history. But a careful reading convinces readers that the balance is correct. Ramseur's accounts of the important engagements involved in transnational relations are critical. Unfortunately, the author has not taken the opportunity to undertake a proper evaluation of Russian scholarship on the history of the Russian-American Company. The story of Russian engagement with Alaska Natives is based on selected works to show Russian misbehavior. His account of these important engagements could be on better footing by using a variety of sources that may be found both in Russia and the United States. We would certainly be happy to help the author in this way, should he think of another edition or another volume of the fascinating subject he shed light on.

The influence of political factors or political affairs on people's diplomacy is everywhere well recognized. Ramseur's account of the most important matters in the international field, which are scattered through several chapters, are uni-

formly good. A terrific upheaval like reconstruction of American-Soviet and, later, Russian-American relations is sure to leave a plethora of material for historians, economists, and all those who believe in a new era of better Russian-American relations. Among the mass of records that Ramseur was fortunate to store in his garage were newspapers, reports, and trinkets. It is a chief occupation of Ramseur's to collect such valuable materials.

As could have been predicted, the chapters of the book dealing with Mr. Ramseur's own experience in international relations are as reliable and substantial as those concerning people's diplomacy. He is at his best as press secretary for Governor Cowper, and seconded him most ably in the development of Russian-American relations in the Far East. That is to say, he gives his own calculations. On the whole, the book gives a fair picture of the many individuals, both from the Russian and American sides, and their relative importance.

Criticism, while inevitable in dealing with a book that covers so many phases of Russian-American interaction in Alaska and the Russian Far East, seems a bit ungracious in view of the pleasure and profit so many readers will derive from *Melting the Ice Curtain* – be they students entering on their first study of the history of the North Pacific, or businessmen, or policy-makers, or general readers seeking to enjoy the fruit of the labor of scholars in the field of Russian-American relations.

The book also reveals to what an extent Ramseur's work was aided by his friends. He has the power of making friends who can help him, in both Russia and the United States. To the men who helped him or worked with him, his words were filled with kindness and gentle persuasion. Among these men were diplomats, historians, journalists, scholars, and men with significant business interests, and they were equally marked in their eagerness to help him and serve him for friendship's sake.

In conclusion, it may be said that the value of this book, written with admirable fairness, is increased by the fact that it recognizes the unity of people and people-to-people diplomacy. Ramseur's details of intellectual activity are shown to be symptomatic of life at the end of the twentieth century – to have counterparts in the social life of people across the Russian and Alaskan Pacific rim. This constant recognition gives vitality to the book and increases its power of illumination.

The book exhibits sound judgment and suggestive comment. It admirably serves the purpose for which it was intended.

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Field Notes

Americans in Revolutionary Russia published by Slavica Publishers
https://slavica.indiana.edu/series/Americans_in_Revolutionary_Russia

Association for Slavic, Eurasian, and East European Studies (ASEEES) National Convention in Boston in December 2018 will feature several panels related to teaching, researching and publishing Russian-American relations topics. Stay tuned to these pages for more details...