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Contents

On the Cover: *Reception of the Ambassadors in Damascus*, unknown artist, 1511

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To the Great Socialist Beyond: Fairhope, the Organic School, and Russia (The Journey of Willard and Helen Edwards)

Larry E. Holmes

As a historian of education in the USSR, I was curious to learn whether any contact existed between progressive educators in the Soviet Union during the 1920s and people associated with the Organic School founded by Marietta Johnson in Fairhope, Alabama, in 1907. Johnson's institution, free of grades (marks), examinations, and homework, quickly gained national fame, a mecca for such pilgrims as John Dewey, Clarence Darrow, and Upton Sinclair. Although the school attained international renown as well, I found no evidence of cross-fertilization between the school's initiatives and similar efforts in the USSR during the first decade of Soviet power. I did, however, come across a host of material on one teacher at the school, Willard Hemenway Edwards, who expressed more than a passing interest in the "Soviet experiment." He became sufficiently enthralled with the new socialist state that he traveled to it in 1933. In 1934, his wife, Helen, and their three children joined him there. Willard returned home in 1935. Helen and two of their children departed later. One son remained in Russia for the remainder of his life.

As it has turned out, Willard and Helen Edwards have made for a fascinating study. "The lives they lived," Mary Lois Timbes Adshead, a graduate of the Organic School and local historian, has aptly observed, "were to take bizarre twists far beyond the norm even for Fairhope."[1]

Sources

I rely heavily on reports in the weekly newspaper, *Fairhope Courier*. Additional information and photographs have been kindly provided by Marina Edwards, the wife of the grandson of Willard and Helen. I am especially grateful to Olga Bukhalova, the great granddaughter of Willard and Helen, for responding to multiple inquiries and providing many photographs. Images of the early history of the Organic School are at alabamamosaic.org

1. Mary Lois Timbes Adshead, "When We Had the Sky: Fairhope beyond the Butterfly Tree," 55, in the Marietta Johnson Museum's computer, Box 4/Dissertations and papers on Marietta Johnson, no. 22.

Considerable documentary evidence on the Organic School may be found in uncatalogued files at the Organic School and at the Marietta Johnson Museum in Fairhope. The latter contains an incomplete run of the school's senior yearbook, *Cinagro* (Organic spelled backwards). The Museum also houses a large number of scrapbooks that include correspondence and newspaper clippings. Most valuable to this, the present, project is a huge quantity of material stored in the Museum's computer. It is arranged in six folders, labeled "Boxes." Box 1 contains student records as well as Edwards' typewritten sketch of the content and purpose of his history courses taught at the Organic School. Box 4 holds dissertations and papers, including the informative fifty-five-page memoir, "Out of Russia," written in 1992 by Marjorie Edwards Ewing, the daughter of Willard and Helen. Her remarks, repeatedly cited below, are on the whole trustworthy, although they occasionally focus on, if not exaggerate somewhat, the negative. A separate folder labeled "Videos" includes interviews of former students. Among them, I found sessions with twenty-two individuals who attended the school in the 1920s and early 1930s when Willard and Helen taught there. Dorothy "Dot" Beiser Cain, a pupil herself during that period, conducted most of them in the early 1990s. Not all of the interviewees, of course, spoke specifically about the Edwards. Box 2 contains brief biographical information on the people interviewed. My heartfelt thanks to Maggie Mosteller and Wayne Miller for making the Museum's records readily accessible. And my thanks to the Fairhope Public Library for providing past issues of the *Fairhope Courier* in a digitized format. I am also indebted to Catherine King for directing me to documents in the Archives Collection of the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation.[2] As discussed below, Moscow's archives were largely a disappointment.

Early Life

Willard Edwards was born in Hinsdale, a suburb of Chicago, Illinois, in November 1886. After work at the monthly *Engineering Magazine*, he served as an ensign in the United States Navy in 1918 and 1919. That experience in the armed forces helps to explain his interest and expertise, as discussed below, in boats and sailing. During the early 1920s, Edwards probably worked as a designer of maps, charts, and globes for the A. J. Nystrom Company in Chicago. The company, founded in 1903 and still in existence, proclaims on its website to be the "United States' oldest publisher of wall maps and globes for classroom use."[3] When in April 1933, Edwards left for Moscow, he traveled through London,

2. These archives may be accessed at http://fairhopesingletax.pastperfectonline.com/ In addition to documents, I found there, thanks to a tip from Olga Bukhalova, an interesting and useful paper by Shae Sherertz, "From Fairhope to Russia: In Pursuit of Utopia," a paper written in April 1984 to fulfill requirements for a senior level undergraduate course at the University of Virginia taught by Paul Gaston, a former pupil at the Organic School. Sherertz interviewed Marjorie Edwards and several former students who recalled the instruction at the school of Helen and especially of Willard. It is accessible at: https://fairhopesingletax.pastperfectonline.com/Archive/E9C25A97-5CF4-4BFC-8E98-805207221339

3. https://www.nystromeducation.com/c/about.web?s@16pn.3fw9.zhI. The firm produced pull-down maps as well.

Edinburgh, and Paris to represent, if not in France and the USSR, then certainly in Great Britain, the Nystrom Company, presumably to sell its products.[4] Helen May McCurdy was born into a well-to-do family in 1888. She and Willard married in October 1914.

Figure 1: Young Willard Edwards.
Courtesy of Olga Bukhalova

Attracted by Fairhope's reputation as a single-tax and politically progressive community, a subject discussed in detail below, Willard and Helen Edwards relocated there in late 1923 from Hinsdale. Before their departure south, the family purchased a new Ford, described as a "special family car" that awaited them at Fairhope's Gaston Motor Company garage.[5] With the approval of the city's Colony Council, Willard and Helen purchased 4.28 acres, the former "Jenney Place," on the southwest corner of Fairhope Avenue and Ingleside Drive.[6] It had first been developed by Truman and Susan Jenney, who came to Fairhope in 1916 where they established "a most attractive home."[7] In 1925, the Edwards hoped to purchase additional land. That June, Fairhope's Colony Council considered their application for property, much of which was a swamp, which the couple hoped to preserve for the purpose of protecting its plant and animal life.[8]

When Willard and Helen arrived in Fairhope in December 1923, they brought with them their three young children.[9] Marjorie, born in November 1918, was adopted when she was two years of age. Three years later, her parents adopted a boy they called Bert.[10] They also had a son, Daniel Sheldon Edwards, often referred to as Kenneth, born March 22, 1916.[11] All three children were placed

4. See the report of Edwards' travel in *Fairhope Courier* [henceforth *FC*] April 27, 1933, 1. The report indicated that Edwards was a director of the Nystrom firm. The Nystrom Company's website indicates that shortly after the company's creation in 1903, it became the agent for W. & A. K. Johnson, school map publishers of Edinburgh.

5. *FC*, November 30, 1923, 4.

6. See *FC*, October 26, 1923, 3 and December 23, 1926, 2.

7. Information on the Jenneys is in the obituary for Susan W. Jenney, in *FC*, March 12, 1936, 4.

8. *FC*, June 19, 1925, 3. I do not know what became of the application. In 1928, Willard and Helen Edwards wished to lease land near the golf course: *FC*, April 26, 1928, 8. I do not know of the reason for this interest nor of its outcome.

9. See reports in *FC*, November 30, 1923, 4 and December 14, 1923, 5. Willard then returned for a short spell to Chicago and traveled back to Fairhope either in December 1923 or early January 1924.

10. Marjorie Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 3-4 in Marietta Johnson Museum's computer, Box 4/Dissertations and papers on Marietta Johnson, no. 20, Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia." I do not have a birthdate for Bert, but as indicated above, he was about three years older than Marjorie.

11. Folder "Videos" in the Marietta Johnson Museum, a thirty-eight minute interview of Kenneth Edwards, 1994. Later, Dan changed his name to Kenneth in honor of a family friend who had been wounded in World War I.

in the Organic School. Years later Marjorie recalled that she and her brothers enjoyed their time there. "We loved the school with its arts and crafts, English folk dancing, and casual approach to academic subjects…. We hammered and painted, danced and swam and sailed in our own Eden."[12]

Figure 2: Children, left to right: Marjorie, Bert, Dan (Kenneth). Courtesy of Olga Bukhalova

Figure 3: Willard Edwards, 1928. Courtesy of Marina Edwards

12. Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 5-6.

Instruction

Soon after their arrival in Fairhope, the Edwards began teaching at the Organic School, which by 1930 offered instruction to well over 200 students on a ten-acre campus that consisted of ten buildings. Willard taught history in the high school grades (and helped out with woodworking). Helen taught nature study—a mixture of biology, botany, and zoology in the elementary grades. The pay, as it was for all the school's instructors, was poor. The Edwards, as most of their colleagues, taught out of a love for the type of instruction on which the school's director insisted. The Edwards, however, did not need the income. As Marjorie later remembered it, her father "could do pretty much as he pleased because he was not dependent on his small salary from the school: he had a portfolio of blue-chip stocks."[13] That would remain the case at least until the stock market crash of October 1929. Moreover, the family grew much of its own food on its sizable plot of land.[14] They also possessed a large number of chickens to sell, presumably, eggs and chicks to their fellow citizens.[15] In March 1925, Willard offered to accompany at his own expense Marietta Johnson on some of her multiple visits to cities and towns throughout the nation in an effort to raise funds for the school.[16]

The Edwards also had an income from a boat, the "Osprey." It had been built in 1926 in the Organic School's arts and crafts building by Willard as well as by the school's woodworking instructor and students. Then and later Edwards served as an assistant in the school's shop. One former pupil, Douglas Kier, who attended the school from 1931 through 1934, recalled during an interview that Edwards was the shop teacher. His interlocutor injected that officially Edwards had taught history not shop.[17]

Upon its completion, the Osprey, a thirty-four foot structure, was large enough that the end wall of the school's arts and crafts building had to be removed so the boat could be pulled out. It was then transported on rollers to the pier about two miles away.[18] Powered by sails and an engine, the vessel, sometimes referred to as the "Ospray," was variably described as a "fine comfortable auxiliary schooner,"

13. Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 5. Willard may not have taught a full load at the school prior to the 1927/28 academic year. See the report in *FC*, August 25, 1927, 6. In an interview, Marjorie later recalled that her parents had profitable investments as a gift from Helen's father: Sheila Propp, "From Russia, with Love: Russian Citizen Returns to Childhood Home," *FC*, April 20, 1994, 1B.

14. Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 5.

15. Information on the family's chickens in *FC*, January 2, 1925, 5 and August 30, 1928, 8.

16. See the report on a meeting of people in Fairhope to discuss the school's financial needs in *FC*, March 6, 1925, 5. Willard promoted nationally the school's philosophy and appealed for contributions and creative teachers willing to work for minimal pay. See "To Redeem the High School," *New Republic* 25, no. 553 (July 8, 1925):168-169, an article in which Willard is prominently mentioned and assuredly one prompted by information sent to the journal by him.

17. Interview of Douglas Kier.

18. Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 5.

an "ocean-going cruiser," and "a comfortable and commodious boat."[19] It could take up to fifteen people, albeit, as one of Edwards' advertisements in the *Fairhope Courier* put it, a group of five to twelve was best.[20] For those willing to pay for the privilege, the Osprey had six spring beds. Passengers could also take advantage of a stove, a toilet, electric lights, and awnings for shade.

Edwards was rightly proud of his ship's wares. One advertisement in the *Courier* appropriately enticed paying customers to a vessel "luxuriously fitted out with box spring berths, a private wash room, clothes hanging lockers, etc."[21] Often with "Captain Edwards" himself at the helm, the Osprey ventured forth on frequent fishing expeditions and on excursions to locations throughout the area.[22] By all accounts, these outings were popular especially with Fairhope's finest.[23] Trips had to be booked days if not weeks in advance. Edwards also put the Osprey at the disposal of faculty and students at the Organic School, often, if not always, at no charge.

Figure 4: Map drawn by Willard Edwards. It features many of the designations of the Osprey's tours.
Courtesy of Olga Bukhalova

Multiple reports testified to Edwards' expert seamanship.[24] On one occasion, he used his skills to save lives. In July 1932, a squall capsized a sailboat over one-half mile south of the Magnolia Beach (Fairhope) pier. Edwards who had just come in on another vessel that

19. In succession: *FC*, August 26, 1926, 5; *FC*, January 13, 1927, 8; *FC*, June 20, 1929, 8.

20. *FC*, March 31, 1927, 3.

21. *FC*, March 1, 1928, 2.

22. Excursions went to such locations as Magnolia Springs, Daphne village, Pascagoula, Dauphin Island, and Bon Secour. Ft. Morgan and Ft. Gaines were popular destinations for trips that could last several days to include a tour of the forts and presentations on the history of battles fought there during the Civil War.

23. The Osprey could be chartered for $2.50 an hour, $10 for an afternoon, $18 for a day (coffee or lemonade served free of charge at lunch time), $20 for a day and night, $90 for a week (cooking extra, if desired): *FC*, June 16, 1927, 12; September 22, 1927, 8; March 15, 1928, 4. Tickets for most day excursions cost $2.50 per adult, $1 for children.

24. See, for example, reference to his skills in reports in *FC*, August 5, 1926, 1 and September 9, 1926, 5.

he had recently purchased, the "Bootlegger," went to the rescue, accompanied, as strange as it seems, by his children, Marjorie and Kenneth. They found several boys clinging to the overturned boat "and pretty well water logged."[25]

Figure 5: Willard Prepared to Set Sail? Courtesy of Olga Bukhalova

Willard and Helen Edwards quickly became two of Fairhope's most prominent citizens. In April 1924, Willard was the secretary of the Fairhope Co-Operative Credit Association, for which the famed attorney, Clarence Darrow, served as treasurer.[26] The following year, he became a trustee of the Fairhope Colony Council.[27] Helen spoke on numerous occasions at meetings of the local Nature Study Society (Nature Club) and the Fairhope Bird Club. She served on several committees of the town council and as curator and director of the natural history exhibit in the library's museum. These positions corresponded to her keen interest in nature and especially in birds and reptiles (most notably snakes and turtles). In November 1924, Helen addressed the Nature Study Society on the topic, "Poisonous Snakes of Fairhope."[28] Both the Edwards joined the local Scribblers Club where members read stories and poems that they themselves had written. Helen enjoyed, as her daughter, Marjorie, recalled, composing verses.[29]

Willard became an indispensable member of the community in other ways. In early 1924, he appeared before one of the periodic sessions of the Fairhope Forum with a presentation, "Preventive Medicine and Curative Surgery." There he emphasized the importance of germ theory and warned against the many enticing nostrums for multiple ailments.[30] In addition, Edwards was an accomplished baritone and cellist.[31] In March 1933, shortly before his departure for the USSR, Edwards spoke at a mid-week luncheon of Fairhope's citizens on astronomy and

25. *FC*, July 14, 1932, 5. By now, it seems, he had sold the Osprey.

26. *FC*, August 22, 1924, 8.

27. *FC*, February 20, 1925, 3. In January 1928, Edwards resigned as a trustee of the Fairhope Single-Tax Corporation: *FC*, January 26, 1928, 1.

28. *FC*, November 7, 1924, 4.

29. Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 5.

30. *FC*, May 2, 1924, 1.

31. *FC*, December 30, 1926, 1 and May 22, 1930, 5. The report of December 30, 1926, indicated that apparently, when in Chicago, Edwards had performed as a singer on the radio under the name of Mr. Graham. Admittedly, all this sounds so impressive that it may have been the product of exaggeration. An Edwards, perhaps Willard, performed an offertory solo, "Jesus of Nazareth," at a Christmas service at Fairhope's St. James Episcopal Church: *FC*, December 23, 1926, 8.

Figure 6: Helen and Willard Edwards (and two ten-year old boys) with an alligator gar. Courtesy of Olga Bukhalova

making one's way by the stars.[32] As a sailor, he knew it well.

Students at the Organic School held Willard Edwards in high regard. In 1930, the school's senior graduating class devoted their yearbook, *Cinagro*, to "Mr. W. H. Edwards, our faithful history teacher … whom we respect as a teacher and trust as a friend."[33] The following year, *Cinagro's* authors spoke of Edwards as "one of the most generally liked members of the faculty … a born teacher always ready to assist."[34]

In the twenty-two interviews of former pupils who attended the Organic School when Edwards taught there, few mentioned any of their teachers by name. But those who did usually spoke specifically of Edwards. Jack Stapleton, who attended the school for only one, his senior, year in 1929, did so. Frank Beaty, who attended the school from the first through the twelfth grades, to graduate in 1935, recalled Edwards as "a really good teacher [who] made history very interesting." He and George DuBrock, the latter enrolled in the school from 1929 to 1935, fondly remembered Edwards' use of maps and charts, a practice, they said, that made it easy to recognize countries and the ebb and flow of boundaries throughout history. Helene Beiser Hunter, who attended all twelve grades at the school to graduate in 1934, brought up not merely her instructor's use of maps but also joint exercises he arranged with his pupils to make maps out of large sheets of paper.[35]

32. *FC*, March 30, 1933, 1, 6.
33. *Cinagro*, 1930, 20.
34. *Cinagro*, 1931, 5.
35. Willard's former students spoke glowingly of his instruction and personality when interviewed in 1984 by Shae Sherertz, "From Fairhope to Russia," 9-10.

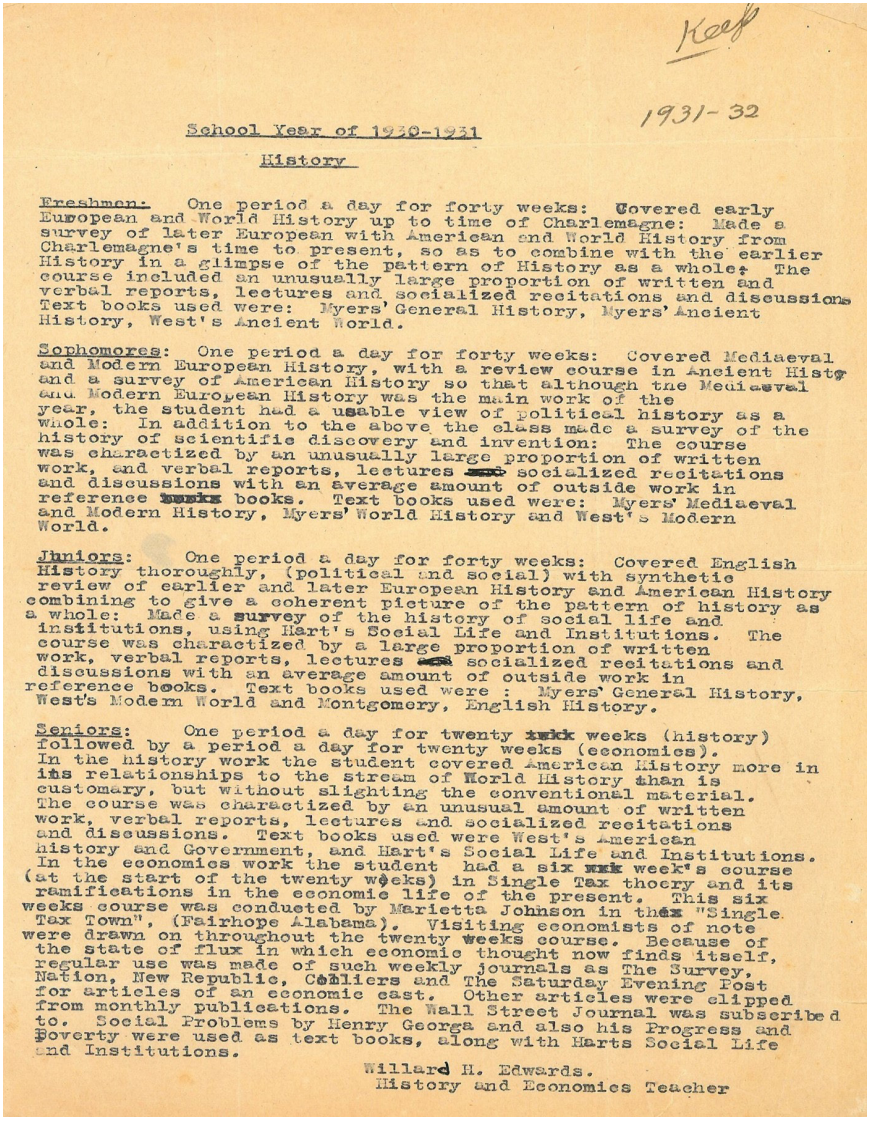
The Marietta Johnson Museum contains no full-fledged syllabi or lesson plans of Edwards' instruction. Given the focus at the Organic School on a child-centered approach and "organic" activity-oriented learning, their absence is not surprising. They probably never existed. The museum's computer does contain, however, Edwards' notes on his instruction in the four high school grades for the 1930/31 academic year. There he described the purpose and content of his courses in ancient history, medieval and modern European history, English history, and American history.[36] A demanding instructor, Edwards required considerable reading and multiple written and oral reports. His efforts corresponded to Marietta Johnson's philosophy for schooling. To that end, Edwards emphasized over and again class discussion. In so doing, he hoped to put the period or subject under study into a larger global and chronological context. Students were asked to grasp the past's relevance to contemporary issues.[37]

Former pupils also recalled fondly the instruction of Helen Edwards. In interviews, they mentioned how she often brought different animals to school, especially snakes. "We draped snakes around our necks," Bill Payne recalled.

Figure 7: Friends Together at the Organic School.
Bert Edwards with a snake.
Source: alabamamosaic.org

36. See Marietta Johnson Museum's computer, Box 1/Organic School/student records, 1923-1936.

37. See Edwards' notes in the Marietta Johnson Museum's computer, Box 1/Organic School/student records, 1923-1936. In the 1930/31 academic year, the school offered a six-week course in single-tax conducted by Marietta Johnson and under Edwards' tutelage when Johnson was out of town, as she often was. It included assigned reading of articles from contemporary journals *Survey*, *New Republic*, *Nation*, *Colliers*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*. Students also read, of course, Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*.



Keef

1931-32

School Year of 1930-1931

History

Freshmen: One period a day for forty weeks: Covered early European and World History up to time of Charlemagne: Made a survey of later European with American and World History from Charlemagne's time to present, so as to combine with the earlier History in a glimpse of the pattern of History as a whole. The course included an unusually large proportion of written and verbal reports, lectures and socialized recitations and discussions Text books used were: Myers' General History, Myers' Ancient History, West's Ancient World.

Sophomores: One period a day for forty weeks: Covered Mediaeval and Modern European History, with a review course in Ancient Hist and a survey of American History so that although the Mediaeval and Modern European History was the main work of the year, the student had a usable view of political history as a whole: In addition to the above the class made a survey of the history of scientific discovery and invention: The course was charactized by an unusually large proportion of written work, and verbal reports, lectures and socialized recitations and discussions with an average amount of outside work in reference books. Text books used were: Myers' Mediaeval and Modern History, Myers' World History and West's Modern World.

Juniors: One period a day for forty weeks: Covered English History thoroughly, (political and social) with synthetic review of earlier and later European History and American History combining to give a coherent picture of the pattern of history as a whole: Made a survey of the history of social life and institutions, using Hart's Social Life and Institutions. The course was charactized by a large proportion of written work, verbal reports, lectures and socialized recitations and discussions with an average amount of outside work in reference books. Text books used were : Myers' General History, West's Modern World and Montgomery, English History.

Seniors: One period a day for twenty weeks (history) followed by a period a day for twenty weeks (economics). In the history work the student covered American History more in its relationships to the stream of World History than is customary, but without slighting the conventional material. The course was charactized by an unusual amount of written work, verbal reports, lectures and socialized recitations and discussions. Text books used were West's American history and Government, and Hart's Social Life and Institutions. In the economics work the student had a six week's course (at the start of the twenty weeks) in Single Tax theory and its ramifications in the economic life of the present. This six weeks course was conducted by Marietta Johnson in the "Single Tax Town", (Fairhope Alabama). Visiting economists of note were drawn on throughout the twenty weeks course. Because of the state of flux in which economic thought now finds itself, regular use was made of such weekly journals as The Survey, Nation, New Republic, Colliers and The Saturday Evening Post for articles of an economic cast. Other articles were clipped from monthly publications. The Wall Street Journal was subscribed to. Social Problems by Henry George and also his Progress and Poverty were used as text books, along with Harts Social Life and Institutions.

Willard H. Edwards.
History and Economics Teacher

Figure 8: Willard Edwards on the Teaching of History.
Courtesy of Marietta Johnson Museum

To this day, he added, he respected rather than feared even the poisonous variety. Mary "Buddy" Gaston Goddard, a 1939 graduate, credited Helen Edwards for her, Mary's, lack of a fear of snakes "unless they hissed." The interviewer, Dorothy Beiser Cain, a pupil herself at the time, injected that pupils and visitors had to take precaution when taking a chair at school. They might sit down on a snake.[38]

Figure 9: Dan (Kenneth) Edwards with five-foot King snake. Courtesy of Olga Bukhalova

Willard Edwards endeared himself further with the school's students by taking them on frequent trips on the Osprey. In September 1926, he captained a party of the Eastern Shore Yacht Club members that included six boys, presumably enrolled at the school, to New Orleans for yacht races .[39] On other occasions, Edwards arranged for a special trip for boys living in the school home (dormitory), or took members of a class, often graduating seniors, on a special outing.[40] Georgia Lloyd recalled that in 1931 Edwards took her and fellow members of the school's graduating class on a three-day trip to Biloxi, Mississippi, where, among other activities, they put on a folk dance demonstration.[41]

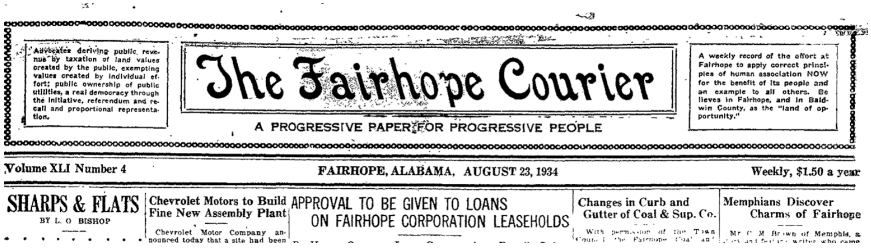
Politics

Prior to their arrival in Fairhope, the Edwards had shown sympathy for progressive politics. Helen had been associated in some capacity with Chicago's Hull House, founded by Jane Addams. Upon adoption of their daughter, Marjorie,

38. Interview of Mary "Buddy" Gaston Goddard.
39. *FC*, September 2, 1926, 5 and September 9, 1926, 5.
40. See reports in *FC*, October 27, 1927, 4; May 15, 1930, 5; April 30, 1931, 3.
41. Interview of Georgia Lloyd.

they named Addams her godmother.[42] While temporarily moving back and forth between Fairhope and Chicago, Willard visited the Hull House in late December 1923. From there he sent to Fairhope Addams' Christmas greetings of good will and peace.[43] Years after her relocation to Fairhope, Helen spent time at the Hull House in the summer of 1928.[44]

Willard and Helen had become interested in Fairhope for its reputation among progressive circles for its single tax colony and emphasis on something other than business as usual for profit (despite their own profitable stocks). In his book published in 1879, *Progress and Poverty*, Henry George posited that unequal and unjust distribution of wealth resulted from private ownership of land. He proposed the collective ownership of all land and its rent by individuals through the payment of a "single tax." Inspired by George's vision, Fairhope was established as a single-tax colony, which issued leases on land to individuals and families for a period of ninety-nine years. By 1907, the Single Tax Corporation possessed 4,000 acres with 125 homes in which 500 people resided.[45] The town's citizens were proud of its radicalism. The community's newspaper, the *Fairhope Courier*, appropriately declared in its masthead to be "a progressive paper for progressive people." The town's reputation aroused the ire of communities around it. In the early 1920s, Eleanor Risley, who had moved to Fairhope as an adult, wrote sarcastically for the *Courier* about the scorn of those nearby. "It is so easy to make a scandal in Fairhope," she noted. "Over in a town right by here the minister preached the other day about Fairhope. He said we were all headed straight for the bad place."[46] In her book on Fairhope in the 1920s, Cathy Donelson described the town as "a cauldron of reformists, cutting-edge writers, sexual and social renegades."[47]


Advocates deriving public revenue by taxation of land values created by the public, exempting values created by individual effort; public ownership of public utilities, a real democracy through the initiative, referendum and recall and proportional representation.

The Fairhope Courier

A PROGRESSIVE PAPER FOR PROGRESSIVE PEOPLE

A weekly record of the effort at Fairhope to apply correct principles of human association NOW for the benefit of its people and an example to all others. Believes in Fairhope, and in Baldwin County, as the "land of opportunity."

Volume XLI Number 4 FAIRHOPE, ALABAMA, AUGUST 23, 1934 Weekly, $1.50 a year

SHARPS & FLATS
BY L. O. BISHOP

Chevrolet Motors to Build Fine New Assembly Plant

Chevrolet Motor Company announced today that a site had been

APPROVAL TO BE GIVEN TO LOANS ON FAIRHOPE CORPORATION LEASEHOLDS

Changes in Curb and Gutter of Coal & Sup. Co.

Memphians Discover Charms of Fairhope

Figure 10

42. Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 3. In 1916, Willard Hemenway Edwards of Hinsdale, Illinois, copyrighted a 148-page typescript, "Saving the Country; Comedy in 4 Acts," listed in the Library of Congress, copyright office, *Catalogue of Copyright Entries*, Part 1, Group 2, 1916, new series 13, no. 9 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1916), 1003. I have not been able to locate this typescript.

43. *FC*, January 4, 1924, 2.

44. *FC*, June 7, 1928, 7.

45. Phyllis Marie Lobdell, "The Marietta Johnson School of Organic Education: An Historical Study," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Auburn University, 1984, 99.

46. Eleanor Risley, *Real Fairhope Folks* (Fairhope, AL: Courier Press, 1928), 5. This pamphlet is a collection of sketches that appeared in the *Courier* from 1921 to 1924.

47. Cathy Donelson, *Fairhope in the Roaring Twenties* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2013), 8.

Just after their purchase of property in Fairhope, Willard wrote the *Courier* in September 1923 to explain his abiding interest in the place. He addressed in particular the editors of the newspaper's single page supplement, "The Co-operator" that represented a corporation operating a People's Cooperative bakery, lunch room, and mercantile store "of the people, for the people, by the people."[48] Edwards wrote that he had for some time subscribed to the *Courier* and had read with great interest the supplement. He and Helen, he added, had attended the last cooperative convention held in Chicago. He admired the *Courier* for its "progressiveness and insight, the poem instead of a cartoon, are what gives us confidence enough in Fairhope's emancipation from private profit domination to move there." He was buying a membership in the cooperative for fifty dollars.[49] Willard, identified as "a farmer and orchardist," soon became an associate editor of the supplement, presumably without pay.[50] That December, the *Courier* reported on Helen's pleasant experience in the store. She happily discovered that women selected their purchases from the shelves and wrote out their own bills for the amount due.[51] The following August, its shareholders elected Willard the store's director.[52]

In her memoir, "Out of Russia," the daughter, Marjorie, wrote that the depression further radicalized her father and mother. As she put it, they began to read (as if they had not done so before) left-wing magazines. Willard, in particular, grew disillusioned. "My father's private income was vanishing … He had persuaded himself—and Mother, too—that capitalism had failed and would not recover."[53]

In mid-1932, Willard played a prominent, if not the leading, role in successful

48. The store sold groceries, shoes, clothing, tools, and roofing materials, among many other items. In 1923, it had a membership of around 150 people with shares worth 50 dollars: *FC*, May 4, 1923, 8. Lunch was served for anywhere from 5 to 50 cents: *FC*, May 18, 1923, 8; February 15, 1924, 8.

49. *FC*, September 28, 1923, 8.

50. *FC*, December 14, 1923, 8.

51. *FC*, December 21, 1923, 8. The newspaper is citing a letter by Helen Edwards. She wrote about the store: "There is a different feel in the atmosphere, a spirit of good will and understanding helpfulness, I never experienced in any of our stores in the old home town. I feel so loyal to that store that I never want to bother going to any other, but get along with what they have."

52. *FC*, August 8, 1924, 8. See Willard's article written as the store's director in *FC*, August 22, 1924, 8. Members were a highly opinionated if not rowdy group. "In Fairhope, as elsewhere throughout the world," Willard wrote, "meetings of stockholders in the co-operative store are more or less stormy." Difficulties inevitably arose with "the effort to turn profits back to producers or consumers."

53. Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 6. It is likely that Edwards suffered losses with the stock market crash. He may have felt it financially imperative to sell his Osprey. The *Fairhope Courier* no longer mentioned the boat after its edition of April 30, 1931. In late 1931, Edwards purchased something less luxurious, a new craft, the aforementioned "Bootlegger," so named for its previous use. Edwards christened it, appropriately enough, with salt water. It was, he said, "a fast and seaworthy craft." See the report in *FC*, November 5, 1931, 8.

efforts to organize in Fairhope a local of the Socialist Party.[54] By August, he was its candidate from Alabama's second congressional district for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. That month, he attended the state's socialist convention in Birmingham.[55] At the same time, Edwards actively supported Fairhope's Boatman's Union[56] and addressed a meeting of 200 local farmers in nearby Silverhill with a presentation, "The Need for More Socialization in America."[57]

Even prior to any radicalization of their politics in 1929, it is highly probable that Willard and Helen, like so many others in Fairhope, had been more than curious about the USSR. In late January 1926, Michael Gold, former editor of the monthly leftist magazine, *Liberator*, spoke at Fairhope's Forum. He had recently been in the USSR and, the *Courier* announced, would speak on "The Russian Experiment." An unusually large turnout heard a sympathetic account in which Gold declared that the Soviet government was "probably the most firmly established in Europe."[58] Months later, Oliver Carlson, one of the founders of the Young Communist League of America, was scheduled to speak on Russia to Fairhope's Forum.[59] In early April 1926, Carl D. Thompson, formerly a prominent socialist and Congregationalist minister and now secretary of the Public Ownership League, recalled for the *Courier* a previous pleasant visit to the town. Perhaps with the Soviet Union in mind, he now advised Fairhope's citizens: "Keep the land speculation out of Fairhope. Keep it to the wonderfully high ideals you have cherished. Keep it as a … possible retreat and rendezvous of the rare souls who love life more than money."[60] In November 1928, Lola N. Lloyd of Winnetka, Illinois, socialist and pamphleteer for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, who had recently traveled widely in Europe and whose daughter, Georgia, attended the Organic School, addressed the school's assembly on the topic "Russia." The *Courier* reported that the presentation "was very vivid."[61] Almost ten years later, the secretary of the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation, C. A. Gaston, wrote of the Soviet Union's appeal over the years among Fairhope's citizens. On April 7, 1938, he did so in a letter to Alabama's senator, Lister Hill, regarding the case of Albert Melville Troyer, to be discussed below. Gaston described it well if, perhaps, with some exaggeration.

54. See reports in the *FC*, July 14, 1932, 1; August 4, 1932, 1; and August 11, 1932, 6.

55. *FC*, August 18, 1932, 1.

56. See the report in *FC*, August 18, 1932, 2.

57. *FC*, March 16, 1933, 6.

58. See news of the planned presentation for January 31 in *FC*, January 28, 1926, 1 and the report on the speech, February 4, 1926, 1.

59. *FC*, April 1, 1926, 8. I cannot confirm that Carlson spoke as scheduled. In September 1932, now teaching at the University of Chicago, Carlson returned to Fairhope for a brief visit. See *FC*, September 22, 1932, 5. His parents resided in Fairhope: see *FC*, December 5, 1935, 5 and May 14, 1936, 8.

60. *FC*, April 8, 1926, 4.

61. *FC*, November 22, 1928, 5. See the fascinating description of the mother in the interview of her daughter, Georgia, in Videos in the Marietta Johnson Museum's computer. Lola's husband and father of Georgia, William Bross Lloyd, helped found the Communist Party of the United States of America (initially called the Communist Labor Party) in 1919. Several years earlier, Lola had divorced William.

> In Fairhope many of us have, throughout the existence of the Soviet government, entertained a great sympathy for it and its people who are so ably trying to establish in their land a more equitable social and economic life. The Soviet Republic probably has a larger proportionate number of well-wishing friends here than in any other section of our country.[62]

So it was with Willard Edwards. Confronted with the purported failure of capitalism as the daughter, Marjorie later recalled, her father turned his gaze eastward. He decided that the "right and sensible course was to build a new, socialist society, to make a model for a better world. The Soviet Union, he thought, offered an opportunity to do precisely that."[63] One evening over dinner the father abruptly announced that he was going to the Soviet Union. "Ten days later, he said goodbye."[64]

In late April 1933, Edwards left Fairhope to begin a prolonged journey for Russia with stops in London and Paris.[65] Initially, he did not necessarily intend to stay long. His plan, as his daughter recalled it, was to summon his family only if all went well.[66] A report in the *Courier* indicated that Edwards thought he might return to Fairhope in mid-August or early September.[67]

Educational Policy and Practice in Soviet Russia

Willard hoped to put his acumen as an educator and cartographer to good use in the USSR. He already had some contact, albeit undocumented, as best I can tell, with a person or persons in the Soviet Union's Commissariat of Education. They had an agreement that he would design maps and charts for classroom use. Edwards no doubt envisioned their utilization, as at the Organic School, in a child-centered environment. It would all transpire in anything but the traditional eggcrate classroom with bolted-down desks dominated by a teacher's lectures and canned questions and answers to follow. Sadly, Edwards was badly misinformed about educational policy and practice in the country of his destination. He had missed his opportunity by several years.

In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many educators in the United States, most notably John Dewey, believed that schools could inspire, if not mold, pupils into active agents for the creation of a just and more equitable community and nation. Emboldened by Marxist theory that espoused the possibility (indeed necessity) for grand socio-economic transformation, educators in the infant Soviet Republic embarked on a bold journey to remake human behavior and society through schooling. The Commissariat of Education created the United Labor

62. Gaston's letter can be accessed at www.fairhopesingletax.com, helpful links/ Fairhope Single Tax Corporation Archives/Search by Name/Elva Troyer/7.9.1-17, 4.
63. Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 6.
64. Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 7.
65. *FC*, April 27, 1933, 1; *FC*, May 4, 1933, 5. He arrived in London on May 29.
66. Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 7.
67. *FC*, April 27, 1933, 1.

School to offer all children nine years of non-specialized polytechnical instruction with a curriculum devoid of traditional subjects, homework, examinations, and grading marks.[68] The commissariat demanded the replacement of subjects with so-called complex themes, a system of instruction that integrated into a single whole reading, writing, arithmetic, history, geography, literature, chemistry and other subjects heretofore allegedly isolated from each other. For the initial grades, syllabi featured themes on familiar and concrete topics concerning nature, labor, and society, such as seasons of the year, household labor, and the family. Themes for higher grades included more general and abstract fare, such as world geography, the international economy, and Soviet government.

The commissariat's reach, however, exceeded its grasp. School administrators and teachers refused to implement the new curriculum or could not manage after an initial attempt to do so. Teachers preferred to focus their instruction on the three R's in the elementary grades and on the usual subject-matter fare in the secondary school. They relied in the process on homework, marks, and the familiar cycle of dictation, memorization, and drill.[69] Faced with such resistance from below, the commissariat began to accommodate its critics with the adoption of curricula from 1926 to 1928 that retained the complex method in name but encouraged systematic presentation of a predetermined body of knowledge by subject. That compromise metamorphosed in the 1930s into an unapologetic embrace of a teacher-centered classroom and a curriculum that relied on subjects, fixed lesson plans for specific classes, homework, grades (marks), and annual promotion examinations. The state wanted an education that taught discipline, obedience, and order in and outside of the classroom.[70] It was not what Willard Edwards, the reform-minded pedagogue, had hoped to find. He had missed, as previously mentioned, his chronological window of opportunity in Soviet Russia by several years. He did not know it, or perhaps he chose not to know.

Years later, Edwards' daughter, Marjorie, understood her father all too well for her own comfort. He had ventured forth blissfully ignorant of Stalin's USSR.

> In reality, he knew very little about the Soviet Union, and that little had come from sympathetic books and articles. He had no informed understanding of the conditions of life there, of the country's internal politics and the methods of Stalin's rule, of the limitations and risks to which foreigners were subject. Like so many other idealistic non-

68. On the commissariat's initiatives and the philosophy behind them, see Larry E. Holmes, *The Kremlin and the Schoolhouse: Reforming Education in Soviet Russia, 1917-1931* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 1-11, 33-36. In the following survey of policy, I skip the period from 1928 to 1931 when a newly radicalized Commissariat of Education attempted to impose on schools the so-called project method. This novel approach featured such highly politicized projects as campaigns against drunkenness, religion, and political deviation.

69. Holmes, *Kremlin and the Schoolhouse*, 36-55.

70. On this effort, see Holmes, *Kremlin and the Schoolhouse*, 80-83 and Larry E. Holmes, *Stalin's School: Moscow's Model School No. 25, 1931-1937* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999), 7-12.

> Russians at that time, he saw himself using his energies and expertise—he had done innovative work in visual education—in the service of a grand and promising experiment in the use of reason and science for the benefit of humanity.[71]

In the Promised Land

And so Willard Edwards went merrily on his way to the promised land. Willard was confident enough in the relevance abroad of his approach to teaching that he brought with him several world history charts to impress officials at the Commissariat of Education. His confidence only grew when in June in London he spoke about Russia at a conference of the Society on Cultural Relations with Russia. In it he used one or more of his charts. Russian representatives in attendance, Willard wrote the *Fairhope Courier*, appreciated his presentation. He was particularly pleased with three meetings he had with an official from the commissariat.[72] Cheerily upbeat weeks later while aboard the ship transporting him across the Gulf of Finland to Leningrad, he wrote the *Courier* of his imminent arrival in "a society that is owned and managed by workers with private profiteering left out of the plan."[73]

Edwards may have been disappointed by the job that awaited him. He expected an appointment in Moscow to a position in the Commissariat of Education. Instead, he was sent 800 miles south to the Kuban region that bordered on the Black Sea. There he was put in charge of the educational and cultural upbringing of a wide range of residents from the youngest children in nurseries to adults in special courses at a grain and cattle state farm (*sovkhoz* in abbreviated Russian), named after the American correspondent, John Reed, author of the famous book on the 1917 revolution. It was not an insignificant post. The farm, as Edwards informed readers of the *Courier*, consisted of 60,000 acres and 2,500 people. Nevertheless, he still hoped for something else, more in line with his original intentions of employment in the USSR. He wrote that he would stay in the Kuban region for a year and would then, he anticipated, work in Moscow. Once ensconced in the capital, he would summon his family.[74]

The farm, another example of Soviet gigantomania, no doubt failed to live up to official expectations. Edwards soon shared the state's disappointment. His responsibilities involved "cultural education" not just in the classroom but also in the field to preach against the evils of drinking on the job and of lax discipline. Some of his students, peasants deprived of their private plots a few years earlier by collectivization and subsequently dragooned into the state farm, hardly appreciated Willard's lessons. One night, as his daughter recalled it from a subsequent conversation with her father, he slept in the open field "to escape the

71. Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 6.

72. See Edwards' letter in *FC*, July 7, 1933, p. 2. Willard identified the official only as the "head of the Soviet Pedagogic Institute," perhaps the director of one of the commissariat's research institutes. In his presentation, Willard also put in a good word about Fairhope and the Organic School. See also *FC*, August 3, 1933, 3.

73. *FC*, July 20, 1933, p.1.

74. *FC*, September 28,1933, 1.

odors of the crowded barracks in which he and the workers lived. He woke to the sound of an approaching tractor. He rolled away [just] as the driver tried to run over him."[75]

The incident, happily for Edwards, led to his transfer to Moscow in February 1934. He began that month as a senior instructor for quality control at the State Academic and Pedagogical Press, then under the jurisdiction of the Commissariat of Education. The job paid him 200 rubles a month, a modest sum but slightly more than the average pay at the time.[76] Soon thereafter, Edwards received an appointment as a consultant at the commissariat's Research Institute.[77]

The posting to Moscow boosted his spirits. On February 14, 1934, with more apparent enthusiasm than ever, Edwards wrote the *Courier* from Moscow. He did not plan to write again, he said, or, perhaps ever. "I am so happily busy with my work that I begrudge the time, and if I fail with my work I won't feel like writing in the interval remaining before I return to America."[78] He described an idyllic life. Moscow boasted of eighty-one live theaters in addition to movie theaters and three opera houses that played to capacity. The city's multiple palaces and museums were open to the public at little or no cost. Edwards happily reported that he had just returned from a skiing trip with his colleagues where he had witnessed "the rosy cheeks and laughing faces of the workers" of a new world. They and all citizens of the USSR, Edwards added, enjoyed cradle-to-grave support "free from the heavy hand of economic uncertainty." They had a free choice of jobs "regardless of former politics or even enmity and crime." Divorce

75. Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 14. Edwards Ewing writes that her father aroused jealousy and anger among other workers by overfulfilling his norm and not by any instruction he might have given. The story of the Willard's brush with death is also recounted by Kenneth Edwards in his memoirs: "Kenneth Edwards Memoirs," in the computer of Marietta Johnson Museum, 23. "In the barracks where my father lived it was stuffy and at night he would go out to sleep on the ground. Once my father woke up because of the tractor's noise which was moving straight towards him. My father managed to dodge and the tractor passed by. Later it was found out that someone wanted to kill my father."

76. As of February 16, 1934, Edwards is listed in this position in a document in the State Archive of the Russian Federation (Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii), fond (collection) R-4851, opis' (group) 1, delo (folder) 450, list (page) 58. Edwards was not mentioned in any other folders of potential relevance (folders 447-449, 453, 460-466) in that collection. Nor is he mentioned in any of the potentially relevant folders in the collection of the State Pedagogical Press, an agency that specialized in the printing of materials for schools: State Archive of the Russian Federation, fond A-514, opis' 1, folders 8-16.

77. In a page from Kenneth Edwards' handwritten autobiography, Kenneth indicated that his father worked as a consultant for the Commissariat of Education's Research Institute (Nauchno-issledovatel'skii institut pri Narkomprose). Olga Bukhalova kindly sent me this page. I have examined the archival collections of the commissariat's Research Institute for Polytechnical Education, the Research Institute of Pedagogy of the Higher Communist Institute of Education, and the Central Pedagogical Laboratory and found no mention of Edwards. For these collections, see the Research Archive of the Russian Academy of Education (Nauchnyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Akademii Obrazovaniia), fond 11, 13, and 17. It should be noted that the lists of people associated with each of these agencies has been lost or discarded.

78. *FC*, February 15, 1934, 2.

was easy to come by and thus there was no need, as Edwards put it, for the "great American triangle." And yet divorce in the USSR was rarer than that in the United States. Becoming more ecstatic as he went, Edwards proclaimed that people's genuineness and wholesomeness made him "ashamed of the ideology that I brought from a harsher society." He reminded his readers that just a year ago, he had spoken at the Fairhope Forum on the subject, "The Place in History of the Soviet Union." "I am glad," he continued, "that in my talk I made the Soviet Union's place in history large enough [that] I don't have basically to revise my ideas now. It looks to me here as it did there like the biggest thing in history so far."

Edwards got a lot wrong about Soviet politics and society at the time, to say nothing of the near future. He also had badly misread, as previously mentioned, Soviet educational policy and practice. His ideology if not intellectual stubbornness did not permit him, for the moment at least, to think otherwise. For whatever reasons, still bravely confident about the land of socialism and his own, if temporary, place in it, Edwards invited his wife and family to join him.

In February 1934, Helen Edwards departed for the Soviet Union.[79] Her children remained in Fairhope in order to complete the school year. While en route, she wrote the *Fairhope Courier* that she had spent some time in Havre, France, and was now on a ship bound for Germany. One fellow passenger, Helen was delighted to report, had met Marietta Johnson, another had heard of the Organic School. Anxiety, however, tempered her good spirits. She worried that customs officials in a Germany now ruled by Hitler might show more than passing interest in her and the literature she carried. "With me are currently copies," she wrote, "of The Nation, New Republic, New Masses and a small volume of Karl Marx. Fellow passengers say that confiscation is the only penalty. Well, I'll soon know."[80] In March, she, if not her literature, arrived safely in the USSR.[81]

On March 27, Helen informed the *Courier* of her experience, albeit modest to date, in her new locale.[82] She shared her husband's enthusiasm for the place. Moscow boasted of many theaters and a multiplicity of other opportunities for common citizens who could now enjoy the benefits of high culture. Factories and schools possessed up-to-date equipment. Women employees at the Red Rose Silk Factory worked a seven-hour day and had access there to a modern restaurant, a day nursery, and a dispensary.[83] Like Willard before her, she enjoyed if not skiing at least the season's last snow, something the couple had not experienced in the American Deep South's Fairhope. "It is ten years since I've seen snow." She wrote that her husband was gratifyingly busy with the preparation of a series of charts to illustrate classroom study of botany, zoology, geography, and mathematics.

79. The daughter, Marjorie, reported that her mother departed for the USSR in February 1934: Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 8.

80. *FC*, March 15, 1934, 1.

81. See Helen Edwards' letter from Moscow, dated March 21, 1934, in *FC*, April 19, 1934, 4.

82. *FC*, April 19, 1934, 4.

83. In the new post-communist Russia, the factory has been converted into upscale offices.

He hoped for their use according to the "same principles of synthetic visual presentation that we tried out experimentally in Marietta Johnson's School of Organic Education in Fairhope."

Helen was pleased to report that the Moscow's Anglo-American School, serving children of the diplomatic corps, had hired her to teach biology. She had already spoken about nature to a group of the school's twelve-year old pupils. Edwards had no doubt reminisced about Fairhope's animal life because her audience responded in particular with questions about alligators.

The Edwards couple expected shortly the arrival of their three children. In June, accompanied by a friend of the family, Marjorie, Kenneth, and Bert departed by train for New York.[84] Before the trip, the family donated many, if not all, of the animal specimens in their collection to the Fairhope library's natural history exhibit.[85] The library was also heir to 176 "fine volumes." [86] The family's Ford was parked in a garage, the house closed, and friends took the family's furniture and other items. Later that month, the children left New York by boat on a seventeen-day trip to Leningrad (with stops in Copenhagen and Helsinki).[87] They arrived in Russia on July 10.[88]

Figure 11: Helen, Kenneth, Bert, Willard, and Marjorie Edwards. (Moscow, 1934-35) Courtesy of Marina Edwards

84. *FC*, June 14, 1934, 5.
85. See the report in *FC*, July 12, 1934, 5.
86. See "Library Notes" in *FC*, September 27, 1934, 1.
87. Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 8.
88. On the date, see a letter from Helen Edwards to the *FC*, published in the newspaper's edition of August 23, 1934, 1.

Leading by Example: Fairhope's A. M. Troyer to the USSR

The Edwards' children had not been the parents' first rendezvous in the Soviet Union with people from Fairhope. Albert Melville Troyer, born in about 1870, a prominent Fairhope citizen had preceded them. After moving to Fairhope in 1909, Troyer, soon possessed a large orchard of satsuma oranges. Troyer was one of the associate editors of the initial issue of the *Fairhope* Courier's supplement, "The Co-operator," listed as a representative of the Fairhope Citrus Growers Association. By 1925, if not before, Troyer served as the president of the Board of Directors of the Peoples Cooperative Store.[89] In March 1934, two representatives of the Russian agricultural industry visited the area. They purchased a large number of satsuma nursery stock and buds. The items were for a major plantation, yet another Soviet monstrosity, envisaged for the USSR's south along the Black Sea coast. In need of an expert consultant for the enterprise, they hired Troyer to follow them to Russia. He might have been convinced to go in part because he had recently endured financial problems. For two consecutive years, he had lost his crop to freezing temperatures. In May 1934, the *Fairhope* Courier put it bluntly: Troyer "had suffered shipwreck in the depression."[90]

Troyer left for the USSR in mid-April.[91] A few months later, he proudly wrote the *Fairhope Courier*: "I am down on the Black Sea where we plan to produce the largest satsuma orchard on the globe." He added that he well understood that "it sounds like a phantasy." He would nevertheless plough blissfully ahead. His visa was good for only six months but "unless they put me out at the end of my time, I expect to stay here the rest of my days."[92] And so it was. On May 28, 1937, Troyer became a Soviet citizen.[93] He thereby renounced, in the estimation of the U.S. Department of State, as we will see, his American citizenship. The enterprise and "the rest of my days" turned out to mean something other than what Troyer had in mind.

Certain of her husband's success in the new land, Troyer's wife, Elva, left

89. *FC*, May 1, 1925, 8.

90. *FC*, May 27, 1937, 4. See also information in "Seeks to Free Man in Russian Prison: Nebraska Woman Appeals to Washington to Act in Her Husband's Case," *New York Times*, April 4, 1938, 24. In general, Fairhope's satsuma industry fell on hard times in the early 1930s. A letter to the Troyers from the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation, May 23, 1935, mentioned that the industry "has practically bankrupted all those who stuck to it." It added that in 1935, if not earlier, the Bank of Fairhope had foreclosed on the Troyers' property. That year, Fairhope's Colony Council put up for sale the Troyers' leaseholds to cover payments due and to find someone who could pay the rent. The letter can be accessed at www.fairhopesingletax.com, helpful links/Fairhope Single Tax Corporation Archives/ Search by Name/Troyer/3.18.1-47, 14.

91. See reports in *FC*, March 15, 1934, 1 and April 19, 1934, 1. See also a later report in the *Courier's* edition of September 5, 1957, 1. In total, Soviet representatives purchased in Fairhope and in the surrounding region 9,000 trees and 40,000 buds.

92. *FC*, July 12, 1934, 1.

93. In 1938, Mrs. Troyer told a reporter for the *New York Times* that her husband was told that the Soviet government intended to dismiss all foreign consultants. If he wanted to continue his work on the development of useful hybrids, he should apply for Soviet citizenship. See "Seeks to Free Man in Russian Prison," 24.

to join him in May 1935.[94] Before her departure, she sold off their workhorse, household goods, furniture, including a solid mahogany dining-room suite, ornamental pieces, and an Olivetti typewriter.[95] She also turned over 145 volumes to Fairhope's library.[96]

The *Fairhope Courier* could not help but comment ruefully on the loss of so many of the city's finest to the socialist land faraway. Noting the departure for the USSR of the Edwards, then Troyer, and now the latter's wife, its edition of April 19, 1934, lamented on its first page: "This thing of drawing on Fairhope's citizens for emigration to Soviet Russia is getting serious." Fairhope was proud to send its people to the Soviet Union, although in the process the city had lost "it must be admitted regretfully the highest type of liberally minded and usefully inclined citizens."[97]

On his way in 1934 to the Black Sea area, Troyer dropped by to see Willard and Helen at their residence in Moscow. On June 11, he wrote to the *Fairhope Courier* that he found both in good spirits mentally and glowing physically. Helen "looks ten years younger, so pretty and sprightly and fairly bubbling with enthusiasm." "Mr. Edwards," he continued, "takes the cake. He is just boiling over." Troyer passed on Willard's wish to tell the *Courier's* readers that he was more enthusiastic about the USSR than ever.[98]

Perils of Moscow

No doubt buoyed by his enthusiasm for Soviet Russia and his own projected contribution to it, Troyer exaggerated the well-being of his newly relocated friends. Marjorie Edwards described a reality far different from Troyer's and, as well, from her mother's commentary at the time. Helen Edwards described the scene in Leningrad on July 10, 1934, when she and Willard greeted their children "as a real family reunion."[99] Marjorie, then fifteen years of age, later remembered it quite differently. "As our ship moved to the pier in Leningrad, my brothers and I pressed against the rail, each trying to be the first to sight our parents." But what happened was "disappointingly humdrum." Their mother hardly looked for them. Ever the ornithologist, she was instead "gazing at the gulls overhead. Father, too nearsighted to pick us out on the deck, was pacing near the gangplank."[100] Marjorie described a couple, her parents, in a way that radically departed from what Troyer had purportedly witnessed just weeks before. Soviet life had worn badly on Willard and Helen.

94. *FC*, May 9, 1935, 4.

95. See the items as advertised for sale in the *FC*, January 17, 1935, 8; January 24, 1935, 8; January 31, 1935, 8; February 7, 1935, 8; February 28, 1935, 4; March 7, 1935, 8; March 25, 1935, 8; March 28, 1935, 8.

96. See "Library Notes" in *FC*, May 7, 1936, 8.

97. *FC*, April 19, 1934, 1.

98. *FC*, July 12, 1934, 8.

99. See her report in *FC*, August 23, 1934, 1.

100. Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 1-2.

> After a year in the Soviet Union, Father had become almost an old man, although he was still in his forties. He had lost much of his hair, and his skin was pasty. Worst of all, there were gaps between his remaining teeth. Mother, shabbily dressed, looked thin and drawn. They hugged us warmly, but both seemed self-conscious and anxious. I began to chatter about the trip over, wanting to cover their embarrassment—and my own.[101]

Helen had written in March 1934 that she and Willard lived in a comfortable room in a newly built section of Moscow.[102] The daughter described it as a room only twelve by sixteen feet with a single table and four chairs and five camp cots. They shared the corridor, kitchen, and toilet with their landlady and her son, dog, and cat.[103] The Edwards' son, Kenneth, later recalled: "I remember a great amount of bed-bugs in that flat."[104]

Moscow was a shock for the daughter and, no doubt, for her siblings. Back home, they had performed well in the Organic School.[105] They had enjoyed their cruises on the Osprey. Marjorie became a Girl Scout first-class and Kenneth a Boy Scout.[106] Kenneth had accompanied his mother on forays to take a census of the local bird population[107] and once spoke to a luncheon of Fairhope's citizens on bird life, a presentation that "captivated listeners."[108] Now not three weeks in their new country, the children missed home. Their parents did not seem to share their sentiments, not yet anyway. In comments written on July 30, 1934, for the *Fairhope Courier*, Willard and Helen spoke of their delight with Soviet Russia. But in accompanying notes, the children expressed a more nuanced view. Marjorie wrote that she was having a good time but hastened to add for the benefit of her young readers in Fairhope: "Hoping to see you all again next summer." Bert mentioned an interesting campfire but then confided: "I would like to see all my Fairhope friends." Kenneth spoke of his enrollment in a course of sociology at Moscow State University and efforts to play the accordion. He then wrote: "Greetings to my Fairhope friends."[109]

Going Home

In mid-1935, Willard Edwards wrote to a business acquaintance about his and his family's experience in Moscow. "We are all well and enjoying life in the

101. Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 2.
102. *FC*, April 19, 1934, 4.
103. Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 10.
104. "Kenneth Edwards Memoirs."
105. For Kenneth and Marjorie, see the Marietta Johnson Museum's computer, Box 1/ Organic School/student records, 1923-1926.
106. For Marjorie *FC*, December 14, 1933, 1; for Kenneth, *FC*, January 14, 1932, 6.
107. *FC*, December 31, 1931, 6.
108. *FC*, March 30, 1933, 1.
109. *FC*, August 23, 1934, 4. For the children, especially Marjorie, conditions went from bad to worse. See Marjorie's description of everyday life in Moscow in Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 10-14.

new society." He signed off with "Yours for public land ownership." Edwards was at his disingenuous best. He knew better. He now understood that the era of progressive education in the USSR had ended, that there was little or no interest in visual aids that he might produce for a child-centered classroom. The Soviet state had dismissed many of his contacts at the Commissariat of Education. Those now in charge no doubt found Edwards an ill-fit with a traditional curriculum and assigned him few if any important tasks. Without meaningful work but still holding out hope for the Soviet project, Edwards left the USSR in late 1935 for New York City. According to Marjorie, he later told his family: "Revolutions are tough things—look at the French Revolution."[110]

Before his departure, Willard talked to American delegates who attended the Seventh Congress of the Communist International (Comintern), held in Moscow from July 25 to August 20. He asked them for their help in arranging his return to the United States.[111] They may have put in a good word for him, but it is likely that most, if not all of the delegates, returned home before Willard left later in the year. Nevertheless, the permission for Willard's departure may have been facilitated by Comintern's central office in Moscow.[112] "Father," Marjorie later wrote, "made up

110. Interview of Marjorie by Paul Gaston: Sherertz, "From Fairhope to Russia," 18.

111. According to a page from the diary of Kenneth, the son, Willard worked out an agreement with delegates from the Comintern who had come from America to go back with them. Kenneth also mentions that Willard helped prepare propaganda manuals. This page sent to me by Olga Bukhalova, June 1, 2022.

112. See a memorandum dated October 21, 1935, to Moisei Chernomordik, the deputy head of the Cadres Department of the Comintern's Executive Committee: Russian State Archive for Social and Political History (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii) [henceforth RGASPI], fond 495, opis' 261 delo 1517, list 6. I say "may have been facilitated" because in late 1935 and in mid-1936, a political inspector (*politreferent*), Arvid Brigader, in Comintern's Cadres Department wrote that he had no information about Willard: see documents in RGASPI, fond 495, opis' 261, delo 517, list 4 and 2. See also Brigader's handwritten note of April 15, 1936, across a typed memorandum, l. 3. It should be noted that list 4 and 2 discuss primarily another Edwards, someone other than Willard and Helen.

his mind to go to New York and work for socialism in America."[113] There Willard started a new business, the Visual Education Press.

Edwards left his wife and three children behind. Helen planned to soon follow him home. She had one problem—an application in July 1935 for Soviet citizenship. Now, later that year, Helen asked for its withdrawal from consideration.[114] In March 1936, her request was still pending.[115] Whatever the status of her application, Helen may have decided to remain for the moment in the USSR. Two of her children, for reasons discussed below, were not free to leave. In addition, Helen enjoyed her independence and her teaching position at the Anglo-American School.[116]

Willard had dabbled in the study of Russian when in Fairhope. On his way to Russia in 1933, he took it more seriously, writing from Paris that "I have put all spare time on the Russian."[117] It is unlikely that he learned the language well enough for unassisted conversation with his colleagues at the Commissariat of Education. Helen, however, learned it rather well, a skill that no doubt contributed to her sense of fulfillment with work and life in Moscow.[118] And yet, ominously, she and her children soon learned of a wave of arrests in 1936 and 1937, the first years of the Great Terror. They also endured official suspicion of foreigners, especially, ironically, of those who had sympathized with the communist cause. In January 1938, the government closed the Anglo-American School. "Now, even Mother," Marjorie recalled, "recognized that we must leave as quickly as

113. Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 13. When asked in 1994 in an interview about his parents' presumptive disillusionment with the USSR, Kenneth seemed perplexed, strikingly puzzled, by the question. A handwritten page from the son's, Kenneth's, autobiography indicated that Willard returned to the United States on invitation of the American Communist Party and that he joined the party in 1935. That page shared with me by Kenneth's granddaughter on April 14, 2020. On March 9, 1936, Boris Berman, deputy head of the Foreigners Department of the state security police, sent a memorandum about Willard and Helen to Bort Miuller, head of the Comintern's Department for International Relations. According to Berman, Helen had indicated that Willard had returned to the United States for work in the Communist Party: RGASPI, fond 495, opis' 261, delo1517, list 3. I have seen no documentation that confirms Willard's membership in the party. Answers to a number of questions regarding the political affiliation and political connections of both Willard and Helen while they were in the USSR may well be in three documents in RGASPI's folder about them (delo 1517) that remain classified, still labeled "secret." The deputy director of RGASPI, M. S. Astakhova, informed me of the existence and inaccessible status of these items in a letter of June 9, 2022. The four officials, authors of the correspondence in RGASPI about Helen and Willard—Chernomordik, Brigader, Miuller, and Berman—were subsequently shot, victims of the terror in 1937-38.

114. See the memorandum to Chernomordik, October 21, 1935: RGASPI, f. 495 op. 261, d. 1517, l. 6.

115. See Berman's memorandum, March 9, 1936: RGASPI, f. 495, op. 261, d. 1517, l. 3.

116. This information as recalled by the daughter, Marjorie, in Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 14. On the children's successes for the moment, see 14-19.

117. See Edwards' letter to *FC*, June 8, 1933, 2.

118. Olga Bukhalova shared with me a letter that Helen wrote in Russian in October 1959 to her "Russian" family. Helen expressed her warmest feelings in excellent Russian, albeit with a few understandable grammatical and spelling errors.

possible."[119] Helen's application for citizenship by now presumably tabled, she and her son, Bert, received exit visas and left that year for New York. Kenneth and Marjorie, however, could not accompany them.

In 1935, Helen had willingly sought to become a citizen of the USSR. During the 1930s, however, tens of thousands of Americans (among other foreigners) who had come to the Soviet Union were asked, often coerced, to surrender their passports. Soviet authorities pressured still others to formally adopt Soviet citizenship, which the U.S. State Department interpreted as the abrogation of their American citizenship.[120] In a paroxysm of his bewitchment with the Soviet version of socialism, the father had encouraged to the point of compulsion his son, Kenneth, to apply for and receive Soviet citizenship.[121] The son thereby surrendered his American passport. Marjorie found herself in the same predicament. Under the threat, she thought, of arrest and imprisonment, she too had applied for Soviet citizenship.[122] Kenneth remained in the Soviet Union, earning a degree in engineering and finding gainful employment in a factory. He started his own family. Years later, accompanied by his own son, Kenneth visited Fairhope for a month in 1994 and then returned to Russia.[123] Marjorie had a difficult time that included an interrogation at the security police's infamous headquarters in Moscow, Lubianka. She eventually found employment at the American embassy. The ambassador helped her receive anew an American passport. She left the USSR on the last day of 1941.[124]

The Edwards' fate, though troubled, was one far better than what awaited the aforementioned Troyer. In May 1937, now joined in the Soviet Union's south by his wife, Elva, he informed the *Courier* that all was well with plans for a huge satsuma orchard. He had not forgotten Fairhope but remained enamored with the project in his new land. "Just now," he wrote, "the Soviet economic experiment has the greater lure, but Fairhope will always be a close second."[125]

But not all was well. No doubt, the fantasy of satsuma gigantomania, as Troyer himself styled it, failed to live up to expectations. Concurrently, foreigners, above all those sympathetic with the communist experiment, fell under suspicion for political heresy and economic sabotage. In June 1937, agents of the Soviet security police came to the Troyers' home at 3 AM, searched it for three hours, and departed with the husband. A year earlier, Marjorie Edwards and her brother,

119. Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 22.

120. For a discussion of this matter, see Tim Tzouliadis, *The Forsaken: An American Tragedy in Stalin's Russia* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2008), 48, 62, 64.

121. In an interview, Kenneth recalled his application to do so "at father's behest."

122. Edwards Ewing, "Out of Russia," 24.

123. On Kenneth's life in Russia, including his own reflections, see "Kenneth Edwards Memoirs" and "Russian Article-Kenneth Edwards," both in the computer of the Marietta Johnson Museum. The latter is a copy of the article, "Rozhdennyi voinoi," in *Biblioteka Zlatoustovskoi entsiklopedii*, originally published in the newspaper, *Vestnik Zlatousta,*, January 4, 1991.

124. Marjorie was one of the more fortunate Americans. Many others disappeared, some of them after submitting urgent requests for help to the American embassy. See Tzouliadis, *Forsaken*, 106, 129, 135, 140, 195.

125. *FC*, May 27, 1937, 1.

Bert, had visited the Troyers. Now Elva journeyed to Moscow in the hope that their mother, if not her children, could help free her husband. There was nothing they could do.[126] Despite multiple appeals to Soviet authorities, Elva never heard from him again. She was told that he had been charged with counterrevolutionary activity and sentenced to a Soviet prison camp. Tired of her subsequent appeals, officials ordered her to leave the country in February 1938.[127] It is unlikely that Troyer, almost seventy years of age when arrested, survived what was probably a rough interrogation and subsequent journey to a forced labor camp.[128]

Back in the United States, Elva Troyer launched a concerted campaign on behalf of her husband, who, she hoped, remained alive. Shortly after her arrival in New York City in February 1938, she petitioned the Soviet embassy in Washington, DC. She enlisted the support of several senators, including Edmund Burke of Nebraska (her home state), William Borah of Idaho, and the aforementioned Lister Hill of Alabama. Two congressmen from Nebraska, Henry Lucky and Charles McLaughlin, wrote the embassy. In addition, more than 200 letters and telegrams were sent to it. The Soviet ambassador, Aleksandr Troyanovsky, personally received some of the petitioners, Senator Burke perhaps one of them.[129]

On April 7, 1938, C. A. Gaston, secretary of the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation, wrote Senator Hill. He suggested that the politician convey to Soviet authorities that they might have badly misjudged any apparent objectionable behavior on Troyer's part. Gaston desperately offered that Troyer somehow could have misspoken because he had not yet mastered the Russian language "sufficiently to properly express himself." Or a man Troyer's age might have suffered mental problems that could have led to a "reversal of long-held convictions."[130]

Hill duly appealed to the U.S. State Department for help. On April 21, 1938, Acting Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, responded to the senator in a formally correct yet heartless manner.

> You will appreciate, I am sure, that in as much as Mr. Troyer abandoned his allegiance to this Government and formally acquired citizenship in the Soviet Union it is impossible for this Government to make any formal representations to the Soviet authorities on his behalf.[131]

Three weeks later, on May 7, 1938, the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull,

126. Propp, "From Russia," 1B.

127. See reports in "Seeks to Free Man in Russian Prison, 24 and *FC*, November 16, 1950, 1-2.

128. There is no information on Troyer in the collection of victims of the Soviet terror, a source maintained by the Russian NGO, "Memorial" (unfortunately closed since late 2021 for violation of Russia's foreign agent law). The deaths of many individuals who perished during interrogation or transport to a camp were never officially recorded.

129. This information in letters from Elva Troyer to the secretary of the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation, April 7, 1938 and May 14, 1938. They can be accessed at www.fairhopesingletax.com, helpful links/ Fairhope Single Tax Corporation Archives/Search by Name/Elva Troyer, 7.9.1-17 [henceforth FSTC Archives, Elva Troyer], 2, 16.

130. FSTC Archives, Elva Troyer, 3.

131. FSTC Archives, Elva Troyer, 9.

reinforced that very point in a letter to Senator Hill. "Because of the considerations set forth in the Department's letter to you of April 21, 1938, this Government is unable to take any steps with a view to effecting [sic] the release of Mr. Troyer."[132] Hull was hopeful that other avenues of relief might succeed. The State Department did concede that if somehow the Soviet government freed Troyer, the United States would grant him a visa to return to his homeland.[133] It did not happen.

Elva Troyer continued her search of news of her husband, but to no avail. She died in October 1950.[134]

Marjorie Edwards later married Gordon Ewing, a member of the United States' diplomatic corps. Upon his retirement, the couple settled in Fairhope. Marjorie died there in February 2010 at the age of ninety-two.

Helen Edwards kept in touch with Fairhope through a subscription to its *Courier*. In February 1945, she wrote that she had recently read in the newspaper an article on native birds. The piece "brought my past experiences with the rich bird life of the Fairhope region vividly to mind." She added: "For real ornithological adventure and discoveries, the best area that I ever visited was the Fairhope region."[135] In May 1951, Willard Edwards offered to surrender his certificate of membership in Fairhope's Single Tax Corporation.[136] Meanwhile, as previously mentioned, he had founded the Visual Education Press. It sold teachers and parents visual aids appropriate for use in a variety of subjects offered in elementary schools. Such items, Edwards advertised, would "save young children now in their formative years from the harmful effects of large classes, text book limitations, worry, 'failure'."[137] Willard Edwards died unexpectedly on March 22, 1953.[138] Helen returned to the Soviet Union in the late 1950s to visit her son, Kenneth. She died in March 1969.

Conclusion

How can we explain the behavior of Willard and Helen Edwards, especially of the former? Why despite all apparent evidence to the contrary, did Willard think he could venture "to the Great Socialist Beyond" in an attempt, however, unreal and phantasmagorical, to forge a new person, society and world? The same questions can also be put to Edwards' fellow Fairhope citizen, Troyer, and to many others like them. "Explaining the blindness of so many Western intellectuals when they looked at Stalinism," the historian Michael David-Fox has written, "has proven one of the most durable riddles in the history of the twentieth-century

132. FSTC Archives, Elva Troyer, 14.

133. "Fruit Specialist Jailed by Reds; Release Sought," *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, April 6, 1938, 2.

134. *FC*, November 21, 1957, 9.

135. *FC*, March 1, 1945, 2.

136. *FC*, May 24, 1951, 6.

137. This information from a letter Willard Edwards sent to his son, Kenneth, March 20, 1950. A copy provided by Olga Bukhalova.

138. In February 1955, Helen wrote the *Courier* of news of the family, informing her readers that her husband had "died suddenly in March of 1953": *FC*, February 10, 1955, 7.

Figure 12: Willard and Helen Edwards.
Courtesy of Marina Edwards

Figures 13 and 14: Long Island National Cemetery, located in Farmingdale, Suffolk County, NY, and administered by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.
Courtesy of Olga Bukhalova

politics and intellectual life."[139]

This essay has provided several suggestions for Willard Edwards' behavior. As his daughter, Marjorie, forthrightly (and bitterly) commented, her father was horribly naïve about Stalin's USSR. He had read, as had so many others, the

139. Michael David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to the Soviet Union, 1921-1941* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 244. It is curious that neither Willard nor Helen wrote of their experience in the USSR after their return to the United States. Perhaps they preferred not to do so to avoid creating any problems for Kenneth and his family back in the Soviet Union.

appealing philosophical and ideological treatises of and about socialism but not the probing assessments of its practice. To be sure, many so-called objective accounts of Soviet reality, some of which Edwards might have examined, also missed the point by a wide margin. And like so many of his compatriots, Edwards wanted to participate, not just observe from afar as an armchair socialist, the building of a new society.

Willard and Helen were hardly alone in their adventure in the USSR. Thousands of their fellow Americans (and thousands more from other countries) visited the land of socialism in the 1920s and 1930s. Many of them stayed for prolonged periods. They did so for many reasons. The opportunity to participate in building something big—a dam or a sprawling factory, a state farm or, as in Troyer's case, an orchard—brought Americans (and others) to the Soviet Union. Women and Afro-Americans went for the promise of gender and racial equality. Other people sought, often successfully so during the depression, meaningful employment at decent pay. They found a sense of fulfillment, a chance to be treated as professionals. And still others went, like Willard and Helen, to contribute to the making of a new world. The inadequate response of western governments to the apparent iniquities and inequities in their own societies in the 1920s and in the depression that followed reinforced a frustration by the Edwards with the west and an attraction to something they thought to be far different in the east. [140]

Perhaps Willard's own conscience, guilt-ridden by his possession of blue-chip stocks (at least before the great crash of 1929) and by his hobnobbing with Fairhope's finest, including its Yacht Club members, further inclined him to escape the west for the east. As David-Fox has perceptibly put it, the very elite status of people like Edwards led them to believe that as the chosen ones they could engineer souls and society, if not at home, then across the ocean. Their faith in the power of scientific planning, a reflection of their elitism, reinforced their

140. On the hope to find an absence of racial discrimination in the USSR: Homer Smith, *Black Man in Red Russia: A Memoir* (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1964); Meredith Roman, "*Soul to Soul*: Americans' Discovery of Yelena Khanga and the Promise of Russian-American Relations," *Journal of Russian American Studies* 6, no. 1 (May 2022): 52-72; and Joy Gleason Carew, *Blacks, Reds, and Russians: Sojourners in Search of the Soviet Promise* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008). On the appeal of the Soviet Union for American women, see Julia L. Mickenberg, *American Girls in Red Russia: Chasing the Soviet Dream* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

belief.[141] Another American sympathetic to the Soviet cause, the journalist, Anna Louise Strong, much like Edwards, came to the land of socialism "full of awe, enthusiasm and muddled ideas."[142] She long remained there out of an abiding faith that humans could "conquer all problems presented by nature, even the problems of our own very backward souls."[143] Yet for Edwards any such faith, ironically, departed from Marietta Johnson's very philosophy for Fairhope's Organic School. Johnson insisted over and again that the school did not seek to mold a person in a preordained image. Rather it sought to provide an environment in which children under the general guidance of the school's teachers would fashion themselves by following their own instincts and wishes in concert with the surrounding natural world. Not so much the result but the process energized Johnson and, she hoped, her school. As for Strong, more emphatically than Edwards, she put aside what had initially motivated her—to be as an individual a "creator in chaos." Unlike anything that Edwards expressed, she wrote how she came in effect to lose herself by a belief in the Communist Party "as a living mechanism through which a person attained their own deep will."[144]

I would venture to suggest one other consideration for Edwards' behavior. Surely somehow he and others realized that their urge to make the world anew through the example of the USSR emanated from inadequate information and willful ignorance. And yet they ventured forth and persisted at least for a time when confronted face-to-face with an unwelcome reality. To be sure, as Willard and Helen Edwards pointed out, the Soviet state provided its citizens with opportunities, albeit limited in many instances, for employment, relaxation,

141. For a further discussion of these factors, see David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment* and also Larry E. Holmes, "Western Perceptions of Soviet Education, 1918-1931," *Educational Forum* 39 (November 1974): 27-32. Much like the American friends of the USSR, the country's critics were moved by a transformationist impulse. But rather than remake the Soviet Union in the image of what they thought the United States was not, they sought to remake it into the image of what they thought the United States (and the West, more broadly) was—a land of economic and political freedom. See Peter G. Filene, *Americans and the Soviet Experiment, 1917-1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967) and David S. Foglesong, *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire": The Crusade for a "Free Russia" since 1881* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007). As Foglesong indicates, the American missionary spirit to remake Russia into something that the United States was presumed to be continued up to the end of the twentieth century and beyond.

142. Anna Louise Strong, *I Change Worlds: The Remaking of an American* (Seattle: The Seal Press, 1979), 159. See David C. Duke, "Anna Louise Strong and the Search for a Good Cause," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (July 1975): 123-137. Strong had "a deep personal need to be part of a great cause or movement" (136). On Strong, see Mickenberg, *American Girls*, 91-98, 106-117, 162-199.

143. Anna Louis Strong, *The Soviets Expected It* (New York: The Dial Press, 1941), 10.

144. Strong, *I Change Worlds*, 223, 417. In the end, it did not fare well for Strong. In 1949, the Soviet government expelled her from the country for alleged espionage (in fact, probably for her evident preference for Chinese communism over its Soviet variant). All that despite her earlier uncritical and naïve embrace of Stalin the person and politician, of collectivization, of the Moscow show trials which she attended, and of Soviet occupation of the Baltic states in 1940. Strong briefly returned to the USSR following de-Stalinization.

entertainment, and social mobility. But that state also made, as they surely knew from their own experience, everyday existence difficult for many of its people.

Julia Mickenberg has written that many idealistic American women in the USSR made "ethical concessions" out of a belief that the suffering that they and others endured validated as all the more authentic their own quest for a new world. Moreover, their overwhelming desire for what could be attained as opposed to what existed "made it possible to rationalize things that would otherwise be hard to tolerate."[145] In that spirit, Willard and Helen may have regarded the uglier aspects of Soviet reality as an ephemeral phenomenon. The glorious future, not the difficult present, was for them the "really real." They dismissed current problems as a mere passing reminder of what the "real ever-present future" was not. In so doing, the Edwards and others like them (including many Soviet citizens) engaged in a contraction of time: the glorious future became, in fact, the present. Time, like history itself, was a state of mind.[146] It was, of course, all very subjective, but when believed, such subjectivity was in its own way reality.[147] To Willard Edwards' credit, if only because of personal disappointment with his job in Moscow, he may have eventually abandoned such subjectivity (while, in turn, abandoning his family).

About the Author

Larry E. Holmes is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of South Alabama. He is author of *Kremlin and the Schoolhouse: Reforming Education in Soviet Russia, 1917-1931* (1991); *Stalin's School: Moscow's Model School No. 25, 1931-1937* (1999); *Stalin's World War II Evacuations: Triumph and Troubles in Kirov* (2017); and most recently, *Revising the Revolution: The Unmaking of Russia's Official History of 1917* (2021). He is currently working on a study of Soviet football from the 1920s to 1985.

145. Mickenberg, *American Girls*, 20, 151, 241.

146. Stalin and his government vigorously promoted such thinking. Stephen E. Hanson has spoken of a Stalinist "charismatic-rational conception of time." Stalin's First Five Year Plan would in a charismatic way achieve the impossible by transcending the restraints of time and yet occur within a specified chronological period. See Stephen E. Hanson, *Time and Revolution: Marxism and the Design of Soviet Institutions* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997). In 1932, Stalin declared that the impossibly ambitious First Five Year Plan had been achieved not in five but in four years. A year earlier, he had promised to compress time in an even more dramatic way. In February 1931, he famously commented that the Soviet Union lagged behind a hostile West that had had the luxury of decades to industrialize and then to weaponize the product. The Soviet Union would need, Stalin declared, to make up the difference in a single decade. "We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries, we must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do it, or we shall be crushed." I. V. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 13 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954), 41. .

147. On subjectivity as reality for many Soviet citizens, see Holmes, *Stalin's School*, 101-104, 150-151.

George Kennan's Photography Collection of Political Exiles in Labor Camps of Late Imperial Siberia

Maria Garth

Well before the start of the Soviet era, Siberia was infamous for its association with exile and forced imprisonment. Though many of the camps have been dismantled since, the archival photographs of life in incarceration remain. What then, do we do with these photographs and their difficult legacy? These photographic records carry many meanings and relate in complex ways to conceptions of bodies, politics, history, and memory. In the archive, photographs transcend their original context to be given a new meaning through their institutional preservation. The traces of meaning that they hold are multifaceted, and it is this tension between the state institution and the personal object that needs further critical inquiry.

This article examines an album of photographs collected and assembled by the American explorer and scholar George Kennan (1845-1924), taking into consideration the album's historical, photographic, and archival history—that is, both what the album meant to Kennan and the album's place within the larger history of Siberian penal colonies and efforts of maintaining their memory for political ends. A century after its creation, the collection still contains unexplored insights into the relationship between photography and political exile in Imperial Russia. Although many of those pictured in the album had a personal connection with Kennan, the collection was a way for him to create a historical record out of his memories and experiences. Kennan's collection forms an archive of criminal photographs, but one that is different from a state police archive. While the archive depicts exiled prisoners, it does not operate as an institutional police archive would. It was an album of assorted people, ranging from friends, acquaintances, and strangers Kennan came to know through his travels.[1] For him, it fulfilled the dual function of a personal archive of memories and a source for historical research to support his scholarly publications and lectures. This article shows how photography enabled the archiving of political prisoners in institutional archives through collections like Kennan's album and interprets the album as an object of

1. As described in George Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System, Volumes I and II* (New York: The Century Co., 1891).

Kennan's personal history, a photographic index of people, and an important key for understanding Kennan's politics and activism.

Without the captions, these portraits might resemble a personal album of one's family, friends, and acquaintances, as was commonly done with *carte de visite* portrait photographs in the nineteenth century. Elizabeth Siegel has argued that early photograph albums have an immense social and cultural significance which has been under-examined in the history of photography.[2] She states that "the codified poses of cartes de visite—the small, inexpensive, and widely reproduced portrait photographs that filled albums in the 1860s—and the repetitive formats of albums themselves reveal a trend, in even these most personal of images, toward standardization and assimilation."[3] Certainly, the photographs in Kennan's collection exhibit these same traits. Siegel continues by explaining that no individual photograph within the album could be representative of the whole, since "as collections of photographs, albums performed many more functions and possessed wider meanings than any single picture could alone."[4] This also applies to Kennan's album. Each photograph and its caption tell an individual story that's unrelated to any other, but they are all unified through the album's coherent presentation format which links them together through the numbered index system. However, there is a major difference between this album and what would commonly at this point constitute a vernacular portrait album of family and friends. One of the key distinctions is that the photographs are organized alphabetically by last name and numbered sequentially. Thus, it does not fit with the characteristics of personal albums of the time since they were not usually structured this way. Another feature is that a typed table of contents listing the names of those pictured (alphabetized by the order of the last name followed by the first name) precedes the pages with photographs.

Although Kennan's passion for exposing the injustices of tsarist prison camps was genuine, his activism was limited in scope. His interest in prisons did not extend beyond the ones he visited in Russia, despite his extensive travel throughout the United States and the world. He avoided placing his studies of Russian prisons within a broader context of abolition or reform, and the entirety of his interest in this area was limited to prisons he visited in Russia. That is, Kennan was not a prison abolitionist in a broad sense.[5] In general, his politics were more progressive in foreign affairs than in domestic ones. He did not publicly support progressive political reform in the United States and in his later years became outspokenly conservative in his views on domestic politics.[6] Viewing his political activism in this context is useful for understanding the limitations of his scholarship on the injustice of the exile experience. It seems that Kennan felt that the political exiles in Russia were especially undeserving of such punishment, as

2. Elizabeth Siegel, *Galleries of Friendship and Fame: A History of Nineteenth-Century American Photo Albums* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 1.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 7.
5. Travis, 169.
6. Ibid., 364-365.

Figure 1. Richards of Medina, N.Y., *G.K. i.e., George Kennan in Siberian Exile Dress, Each Piece Given by an Exile from the Dress He Had Worn*, between 1886 and 1890, Photograph. Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/item/99615539/.

though the Imperialism of the tsars were somehow exceptionally cruel when in fact such torturous practices of incarceration were not unique to Russia.

After his return back home to the states, in 1891 Kennan became a founding member of the American branch of an American and British anti-authoritarian organization called the Society of the Friends of Russian Freedom.[7] Among its membership, the organization included such famous public figures as the writer Mark Twain. Kennan served as the vice president of the organization's American branch to fundraise in support of anti-tsarist exiles.[8] However, Kennan's anti-imperialist stance became a double-edged sword when it came to his reputation. He was chiefly responsible, through his books and public lectures, for influencing the largely-negative late nineteenth-century American public opinion of the tsarist government in Russia.[9] As an anti-Imperial activist, he gave several hundred lectures in 1889-1900 on the topic of Russian prison camps.[10] Dressed in the camp uniform and shackles worn by the prisoners in Siberia (Figure 1), he appeared before audiences in the North American Northeast, Midwest, and South on his transcontinental tours.[11]

The title of the photograph is "G.K. [i.e., George Kennan] in Siberian exile dress, each piece given by an exile from the dress he had worn." It is attributed to Richards of Medina, New York (the same city where Kennan lived), and dated between 1886 and 1890.[12] Certainly, Kennan's desire to have himself photographed dressed as a prisoner is remarkable. I argue that it was not only a form of political activism on behalf of political prisoners. We can interpret the

7. Laura Ruttum, "Biographical Note," George Kennan Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division (New York: The New York Public Library, 2008), vi.

8. Ibid., vi.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., v.

11. Ibid.

12. Richards of Medina, N.Y., *G.K. i.e., George Kennan in Siberian Exile Dress, Each Piece Given by an Exile from the Dress He Had Worn*, between 1886 and 1890, photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/99615539/. (Accessed April 10, 2022.)

act of putting on the exile uniform as a way for Kennan to remember his time in Siberia. Wearing the uniform on stage may have helped him feel that he was part of the exile community and its supporters. Although Kennan hadn't been an exile in Russia, he felt a connection to the prisoners there. On a certain level, perhaps he also identified with their experience of dispossession when he could no longer return to Russia. Putting on the uniform metaphorically transported him back and memorializing that feeling in the portrait helped to cement the memory and his connection to Russia.

The drama of his presentation shocked and delighted the large crowds who turned out to see him, and he received positive reviews from critics.[13] The success of these public lectures made Kennan famous and helped further his cause, but his public criticism of exile and his antagonism toward the Russian monarchy led to his banishment from Russia. Despite his efforts, Kennan's activist campaign did not result in the abolition of either the tsarist government or the exile system, but only in his own expulsion. The Russian government would not allow him to return after his last trip there in 1901.[14] Even after he was banned from Russia, Kennan's interest in Russia continued. In his later years, he completed lecture tours around the United States, actively corresponded with Russian revolutionaries, and published opinion pieces in American newspapers on the topic of Russian politics.

George Kennan in Russia

Since the origins of the album are closely tied with Kennan's biography, a brief overview of how the American's interest in Russia developed is necessary. Between 1865 and 1868, Kennan traveled to Russia for the first time. This was the inaugural trip of his many expeditions to Russia. In fact, at the time of his first trip, he was not yet established as the famous explorer and historian of Russia that he would become in later years. Even his first trip there happened almost by chance. According to Kennan's biographer Frederick Travis, the young Kennan had been working at an office as a telegraph operator when he was invited to join an expedition to Russia.[15] He was asked to be part of the Russian-American Telegraph Expedition to Siberia, an invitation that he eagerly accepted.[16] The opportunity to work for Western Union as a surveyor for a potential telegraph route through the northeastern portion of Siberia was both a way to explore the world and a career prospect that would take Kennan away from his native Cincinnati, Ohio. Though the multi-year expedition proved to be an unexpected emotional, physical, and financial hardship for Kennan, he used his journal entries to later publish a personal account of his travels through Siberia entitled *Tent Life in Siberia* (1870).[17] It was an ethnographic account of the people he encountered in Northern Siberia while on the telegraph expedition as a member of their Asiatic

13. Travis, 179.
14. Ibid., 254.
15. Frederick Travis, *George Kennan and the American-Russian Relationship, 1865-1924* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1990), 13.
16. Ibid.
17. George Kennan, *Tent Life in Siberia and Adventures Among the Koraks and Other Tribes in Kamtchatka and Northern Asia* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1870).

Division. As a result, he developed a lifelong interest in Russia that occupied him for the remaining decades of his life. His second trip to Russia occurred in 1870 when he traveled through the Caucasus.[18] In the coming years, Kennan would go on to become a seasoned traveler, prolifically writing, publishing, and lecturing about his experiences. In the time since, the Kennan family name has become associated with American and Russian foreign affairs because the senior Kennan was the first cousin twice removed of the American foreign policy expert George Frost Kennan (1904-2005), who would, decades later, shape US and Soviet relations in a very significant way through his Cold War strategy of "containment."

Throughout his long career, the elder Kennan's views of Russian politics changed as they were shaped by increasing degrees of exposure to its people, society, and culture.[19] During the first two trips through Russia, Kennan's outlook on the Imperial government remained favorable and he was not yet critical of the regime. At that time, Kennan was deeply committed to his travels and embraced the role of an explorer, traveling widely throughout Imperial Russia and documenting his encounters with indigenous Siberians. Over time his fame grew with subsequent trips, and his reputation as an expert on Russia was well-established before the end of the nineteenth century.[20] Through his public lectures and popular publications, his political views on Russia became widely influential in the American media sphere.[21] The articles, books, and lectures he produced on the topic of Russia were aimed at an American audience unfamiliar with the intricacies of the Imperial penal system. After the first two initial trips, his area of scholarly focus became Siberia and its prison camps. His methodological approach also became more developed beginning in the 1880s. At that time, he began to organize his trips to Russia as research expeditions for gathering information for subsequent publications.[22]

Although Kennan was initially sympathetic to the Imperial regime in Russia, continued exposure to the exile system in Russia changed his opinion.[23] According to Travis, Kennan was aware as early as 1870 that political exiles and criminal exiles received distinctly different types of punishment.[24] Although both types of exiles were subjected to cruel working conditions of daily hard labor, political exiles were typically exiled for life, while criminal exiles usually served a set term after which they were allowed to return to their previous lives.[25] During his initial period of sympathy with the Imperial regime, Kennan often downplayed this important difference for his American audience in order to make a sweeping

18. Travis, 43.
19. Ibid., 88.
20. Frith Maier, Introduction to *Vagabond Life: The Caucasus Journals of George Kennan*, ed. Frith Maier and Daniel Clarke Waugh (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 8-9.
21. Ibid, 3.
22. Travis, 89.
23. Maier, 10.
24. Travis, 40.
25. Ibid., 39.

generalization that cast the Imperial regime in a positive light.[26] However, he eventually came to emphasize the distinction as being important. In what would become a highly influential experience, Kennan traveled through Siberia again in 1885 as part of a year-long trip through Russia. A special confluence of factors made this journey different from the ones that came before. Kennan had carefully planned with a particular purpose in mind, setting out to learn more about the exile system in Siberia in order to write a detailed study for an American audience. This time he was writing on assignment for the publisher Roswell Smith of *The Century Magazine,* a popular illustrated monthly magazine with a large readership among the American public of the late-nineteenth century. Upon the completion of the journey, he planned to publish his reflections in a series of articles in the magazine.[27]

This trip became pivotal to Kennan's relationship with the Imperial system in Russia and changed both his personal politics and the course of his career. The 1885-1886 trip through Russia marked a turning point in his opinion of exile as a method of punishment in Russia.[28] Now writing for a new publisher and their magazine audience, he reversed his previous views and became a critic of the Imperial government and its penal system. Kennan published his second book about Russia, detailing what he had seen. The 1891 two-volume, anti-tsarist text, *Siberia and the Exile System,* is a damning exposé of the living conditions of exiles in Siberia.[29] Its lasting effect was to solidify Kennan's reputation as a crusader against the Russian penal system. It was based on his earlier articles for *The Century Magazine* and published by Century Company, also the publisher of the magazine.

Photographs of Exile

The legacy of George Kennan lives on in the archives of The New York Public Library (NYPL), which houses a photograph album of a collection of late-nineteenth-century photographs which belonged to him. Located within the Slavic and East European Collections, it is part of the Kennan collection and

26. Ibid.

27. Another aspect that set this trip apart was the planned addition of a pictorial element to go along with Kennan's writing. Unlike on previous journeys, for the length of the expedition Kennan planned to be accompanied by an artist as his traveling companion. He invited his friend, the American artist George Albert Frost (1843-1907). The two had previously travelled to Russia together years earlier on a different voyage, during Kennan's first trip to Russia as part of the telegraph expedition. Kennan commissioned Frost especially for the journey so that Frost could create illustrations of the places that they planned to visit, including forced labor camps in Siberia. Frost's illustrations of their trip were intended to accompany the text that Kennan planned to write for *The Century Magazine*. In his later published account, Kennan periodically refers to Frost sketching scenes of notable local buildings seen during the trip. He also refers to Frost taking photographs, although it is only a brief reference in the published text without much detail. George Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System, Volume II* (New York: The Century Co., 1891), 1 and 223.

28. Maier, 10.

29. George Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System, Volumes I and II* (New York: The Century Co., 1891).

labeled "Portraits of Russian Political Exiles and Convicts, with some Additional Photographs Depicting the Life of both Political and Common Criminals in Siberia, Collected and Presented to the New York Public Library by George Kennan."[30] It contains two hundred and forty-six mounted yellowed, two-tone albumen photographs accompanied by a typed table of contents and captions. The subject matter ranges from landscape photographs, group photos, and individual portraits, all of which are pasted onto blank paper pages, with several to a page. The entire collection was compiled by Kennan and given by him to the library in 1920, just four years before his death in 1924.[31] The photographs were just one part of the sizable archival donation, which included pictorial, printed, and manuscript materials. This archive is the culmination of the materials Kennan had collected during his expeditions and subsequent research on Russia and its political system over the course of his lifetime.

Within the album, the photographs are sequentially numbered by hand and labeled underneath with typed captions (Figures 2). Most of the captions are typed on a piece of paper pasted underneath a photograph, and some contain handwritten corrections. In general, the labels are inconsistent in the degree of detail that they provide (Figure 3). For example, some of the photographs are not labeled, while others are only labeled with a name. Others provide a more complete biographical history, such as the subject's name, the crime they were charged with, and the location of their exile (Figure 4).[32]

30. George Kennan, "Portraits of Russian Political Exiles and Convicts, with some Additional Photographs Depicting the Life of both Political and Common Criminals in Siberia, Collected and Presented to the New York Public Library by George Kennan," *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*. 1920. Accessed March 10, 2020. http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/portraits-of-russian-political-exiles-and-convicts-with-some-additional#/?tab=about.

31. Hee-Gwone Yoo, "Holdings of Rare Photographs and Plate Books at the Slavic and Baltic Division of The New York Public Library," *Rosia Yongu (Russian Studies)* 12, no. 1 (2002): 323-332.

32. The caption text was composed by Kennan with the help of library staff, as described on the typed note pasted at the beginning of the album, which reads:

"The text of the legends placed below the photographs or on the opposite page consists of a copy of the inscription on the back of the photograph, coming in most cases from Mr. George Kennan's pen, with additional notes supplied by Mr. Konstantin Oberuchev and the Slavonic Division. Mr. Kennan's and Mr. Oberuchev's notes are followed by letters K and O respectively."

Konstantin M. Oberuchev was a Russian revolutionary living in New York as an émigré at the time. It is unclear exactly how Kennan and Oberuchev came to work on the project together, but they likely had a personal connection since Kennan was eager to befriend Russian activists. On the whole, captions signed with the letter K are more predominant throughout the album, with the "O" inscriptions appearing less frequently.

Figure 2. George Kennan, *Mines of Kara; eastern Siberia; Prison, barracks in 1885. Katorga for both common criminals and political offenders. (K)*, Slavic and East European Collections, The New York Public Library. https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-415c-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99.

Figure 3. George Kennan, *A Siberian "etape" or exile station house 1885. (K),* 1920. Slavic and East European Collections, The New York Public Library. https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-41d3-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99.

Figure 4. George Kennan, *Exiled bell in Uglich; Fialka, Izmailova, Spiridonova, Yaros, Bitzenko, Yezerskaya; Political exiles in Chita, Trans-Baikal (Lazaref, Shishko, Fanny, and others). For names see "Siberia & the exile system. (K)*, 1920. Slavic and East European Collections, The New York Public. http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-41a4-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99.

One of the most interesting and valuable features of the album is its multimedia presentation, combining images and text in a bound book form. The album is both photographic and textual, and meaning is conveyed through the juxtaposition of text and image together. The photographs that make up the collection are mounted to the paper pages of a red cloth hardcover album in a standard library binding. Inside the album, a variety of photographs show different scenes from forced-labor prison camps and include individual portrait photographs of political prisoners in Russia. In addition to the studio photographs which make up the majority of the album, there are landscape photographs taken outdoors of rivers, exile barges,

prisons, houses, and mines. There are also several postmortem photographs. The formats and styles of the photographs differ throughout the album. Some portraits are within an oval shape centered on a blank white rectangle, while others are printed to the edge of the photographic paper (Figure 5). Though the individual poses differ, most of the subjects sit facing the camera in either a frontal or three-quarter view from the shoulders up.

Many of the photographs are from the Kara Katorga (*Kariyskaya katorga* in Russian), a forced-labor prison camp. Located in a geographically remote area in Transbaikalia, the Kara camp was near the Shilka River and the city of Nerchinsk, in Eastern Siberia. Kennan described traveling through this region and stopping

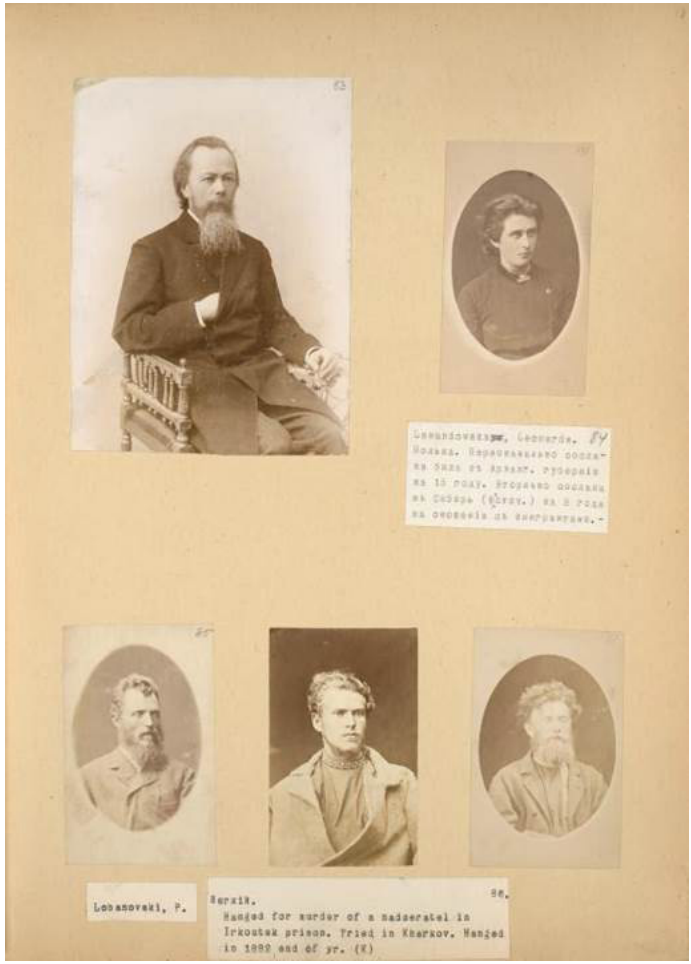


Figure 5. George Kennan, *Lesevich, Lewandowska, Lobanovski, Legkii, Logovski*, 1920. Slavic and East European Collections, The New York Public Library. https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-41b5-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99.

in Nerchinsk in *Siberia and the Exile System*. For a time, Kara functioned as a destination for exiled prisoners from Western Russia. It was shut down a few years after Kennan's visit. Like other such camps, it was a self-contained settlement with permanent structures, as shown in Figure 3. Many of the prisoners depicted in the album were exiled to the camps from their homes in Western Russia between the 1860s through 1880s, to work as punishment for their crimes. The camp was situated at the site of Imperial gold mines where many of the prisoners worked daily from sunrise to sunset and in all seasons. Due to the political nature of their persecution, their prison sentences were of varied—sometimes indefinite—duration. On some of the captions, Kennan noted the criminal charge after the person's name. As described by the captions, several of the prisoners identified in the album never left exile, tragically dying during their sentence.[33]

A closer look at the history of the album reveals unpublished information about the subjects pictured and Kennan's relationship with them. Studying the history of the album as an object also provides insight into Kennan's motivations as a scholar and collector. In a library article published in February 1921, the next year after the collection was given to the NYPL, the then-chief of the Slavonic Division, Abraham (also known as Avrahm) Yarmolinsky, extolled the value of the acquisition and described in detail the voluminous contents of the Kennan collection. Praising the scholarly breadth of the donated materials and their value to future researchers in his article, Yarmolinsky paid special attention to the pictorial materials in the collection.[34] Though Yarmolinsky establishes that Kennan brought the photographs from Russia in 1886,[35] it is difficult to know under what circumstances Kennan acquired the photographs in the collection. No mention of them is made by Kennan in *Siberia and the Exile System*. Yarmolinsky argues that at least some of the photographs were made by either Kennan or his associate George Frost in the 1880s.[36] He notes that "others were given [to] them by political exiles, while others the donor [George Kennan] purchased while he was in Siberia."[37] Although we know that Frost had a camera and photographed on the trip,[38] the majority of the photographs do not bear a visible date, studio stamp,

33. For example, see photograph number 121, which identifies Dmitri Mikhailovich Rogachov as having "died of prison consumption at the mines." Also see photograph number 128, which says, "Semyanovski, Yevgeniy Stepanovich. Committed suicide at mines of Kara. (K)." Other similar examples appear throughout the album.

34. He noted that the collection contains photographs of "over 200 of early Russian political exiles and convicts. Most of the pictures the donor brought back from Siberia in 1886. Some are probably the only portraits in existence of the early revolutionists. 'When the complete history of the Russian revolutionary moment comes to be written,' says Mr. Kennan in a letter to me, 'these portraits of the early revolutionists will be of great interest and value. I doubt whether there is a larger collection of them in existence.'" Abraham Yarmolinsky, "The Kennan Collection," *Bulletin of The New York Public Library* (February 1921): 7.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid., 8.

37. Ibid.

38. George Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System, Volume II* (New York: The Century Co., 1891), 223.

or any other type of distinguishing mark identifying a photographer.[39] As Tatiana Saburova has argued, many political exiles became photographers because it was one of the few occupations available to them and provided a reliable source of income.[40] It is likely that many of Kennan's photographs in the album were taken by political exiles in the labor camps of Siberia.

We might also continue to wonder how Kennan conceptualized the collection and what he intended to do with it. For example, some photographs did appear in *Siberia and the Exile System*, but many did not. In a quote from a correspondence with Kennan published in Yarmolinsky's article, Kennan stated that only he had used the materials in his collection for research, and that he estimated that he only used less than a quarter in *Siberia and the Exile System*.[41] Even today, the photographs remain mostly unpublished, except for the ones that appeared in Kennan's book.

Visualizing Imprisonment

Who then is represented in the album? Kennan's close connections with dissident political figures fueled his passion for anti-tsarist activism. After the 1885 journey to Eastern Siberia, he continued to keep in touch with them through overseas correspondence, as evidenced by the many personal letters in his archive.[42] He was friends with the famous Russian revolutionaries Catherine Breshkovskaia, Peter Kropotkin, and Sergei Stepniak-Kravchinskii.[43] According to Kennan, it was the trip to Kara that facilitated his introduction to the imprisoned friends and acquaintances of Leo Tolstoy.[44] As Kennan later recounted in an 1887 article about the experience published in *The Century Magazine*, it was then that he made a promise to them to try to meet Tolstoy.[45] Kennan described touring the estate and meeting Tolstoy's family and quotes the conversations he had with Tolstoy. In the article, Kennan also references his earlier trip to Kara and the dissidents he met there,[46] and described his conversation with Tolstoy about the sixteen-day hunger strike undertaken by four women in December 1884 at an Irkutsk prison.[47] Although those he met at Kara made a strong impression on Kennan, he traveled widely to meet others connected to the revolutionary movement. The album also includes a photograph of the anarchist Peter Kropotkin, whom Kennan met in London in 1886 following his trip to Russia, and photographs of the revolutionary

39. According to Yarmolinsky, "each portrait, except for a few unidentified pieces, has on the back a biographical note penned in most cases by Mr. Kennan." Ibid., 7.

40. Tatiana Saburova, "Geographical Imagination, Anthropology, and Political Exiles: Photographers of Siberia in Late Imperial Russia," *Sibirica* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2020): 77.

41. Yarmolinsky, 6-7.

42. Laura Ruttum, "Series I. Correspondence, 1866-1924, n.d.," George Kennan Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division (New York: The New York Public Library, 2008), 1.

43. Maier, 10.

44. George Kennan, "A Visit to Count Tolstoi," *The Century Magazine* (June 1887): 252.

45. Ibid., 252-265.

46. Ibid., 252.

47. Ibid., 258.

Vera Figner, who was at the time of Kennan's 1885-1886 trip serving a sentence at the Shlisselburg Fortress near St. Petersburg in Northwestern Russia.[48]

Overall, the table of contents lists two hundred and forty-six entries, the last one written in by hand. The first photograph in the album is a portrait of Kennan, followed by a page with two group photographs and a photograph of a church bell from the city of Uglich (Figure 4), and then on the third page appears the first individually listed portrait, which is of Aleksandrov, at number six (Figure 6). After Aleksandrov the names continue in alphabetical order with some entries duplicated, such as numbers fourteen and fifteen and seventeen and eighteen (Figure 7), until they reach the entry of Zundelevich at number one hundred and ninety. Following that are several group photographs, with the last entry being Maria Spiridonova at numbers two hundred forty-five through two hundred forty-six. Despite these differences, the album has an undeniable memorial, even sentimental, quality due to Kennan's treatment of the materials. This is suggested by aspects such as the careful arrangement of photographs and written captions, and the placement of Kennan's portrait at the beginning.

Figure 6. George Kennan, *Exiled People*, 1920. Slavic and East European Collections, The New York Public Library. https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-41a5-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99.

48. Also known as *Schlüsselburg Fortress.* See Book 2, Chapter 3, "Execution and Suicide," in Vera Figner, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, ed. Alexander Samuel Kaun, trans. Camilla Chapin Daniels (New York: International Publishers, 1927).

Figure 7. George Kennan, *Exiled people; Butzinski, Bukh and others*, 1920. Slavic and East European Collections, The New York Public Library. http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-41a6-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99.

In volume one of *Siberia and the Exile System*, Kennan mentions photographs being used for identification purposes in the camps, saying, "since my return from Siberia, an attempt has been made to secure certainty of identification in criminal parties by means of small photographs of the convicts attached to their *stateini spiski* [police files], but I do not know how it has resulted."[49] Thus, based on Kennan's account, we know for certain that during this period, photographs of the prisoners (what are typically called "mugshots") were used for identification purposes by the government officials of the camp. According to Aglaya Glebova, after the 1881 assassination of Tsar Alexander II, the government relied on photographic

49. *Stateini spiski* were the documents which constituted the official file of the prisoner. In *Siberia and the Exile System, Volume I,* (Russell & Russell)*,* pages 290-291*,* Kennan describes how *stateini spiski* were used by the officials of the camp for ensuring that prisoners did not switch names in order to assume each other's sentences, which was a common practice.

archives to identify political dissidents.[50] At least some of the photographs in this collection fall within that category. For example, the photograph numbered 174 in Figure 8, of the prisoner Pyotr Filippovich Yakubovich, is identified in the caption as a police photograph.

Figure 8. George Kennan, *Yakimov, Yakubovich, Yatzevich, Yokhelson, Yonov*, 1920. Slavic and East European Collections, The New York Public Library. http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-41c2-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99.

50. Aglaya Glebova, "A Visual History of the Gulag," in *The Soviet Gulag: Evidence, Interpretation, And Comparison,* ed. Michael David Fox (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016), 163.

Kennan's description of the small photographs attached to the *stateini spiski* is consistent with the way that late nineteenth-century police photographs are described by Mary Warner Marien, who states that due to differences in format and distribution, police photography was only standardized in the 1880s.[51] Certainly, the photographs in Kennan's collection also show a lack of unifying consistency, varied as they are in style and format, some featuring people dressed in their own civilian clothing and others in a prison uniform (Figure 9). Though the individual appearance of the subjects sometimes differs, the style of the portraits meant that they could easily be used for police identification. In particular, the single portrait photographs show a large portion of the upper half of the person's body from the shoulders to the top of the head. Certainly, this was done intentionally. Taking the photograph in this style made for an aesthetically pleasing portrait of the subject, but it also clearly showcased individual features. This created a possibility for the photograph to be used for identification purposes by the police.

Figure 9. George Kennan, *Preobrazhenski, Prikhodko, Revitzki, Rogachov, Rubanchikova, Sadovnikov,* 1920. Slavic and East European Collections, The New York Public Library. https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-41bc-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99.

51. Mary Warner Marien, *Photography: A Cultural History* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2011), 70.

In his account of his travels through Siberia and the political prisoners he encountered, Kennan describes the administrative process by which exiles were sent to Siberia, which at the time was still considered a land of opportunity for the quickly expanding empire. Regarding the injustice of the sentencing system, Kennan observes that,

> The person may not be guilty of any crime, and may not have rendered himself amenable in any way to the laws of the state, but if in the opinion of the local authorities, his presence in a particular place is "prejudicial to public order," or "incompatible with public tranquility," he may be arrested without a warrant, may be held from two weeks to two years in prison, and may then be removed by force to any other place within the limits of the empire and there be put under police surveillance for a period of from one year to ten years.[52]

He further explains that in such an instance, the accused is without any means for self-defense, because they may not be informed of the charge, cannot cross-examine the witnesses who have testified against them, cannot summon their own witnesses, and cannot demand a hearing nor a trial.[53] Regarding the failure of the administrative system to verify the identity of the arrested person, Kennan writes,

> In the years 1877, 1878, and 1879, no attempt was made, apparently, by the Government to ascertain whether an arrested person was deserving of exile or not, nor even to ascertain whether the man or woman exiled was the identical person for whom the order of banishment had been issued. The whole system was a chaos of injustice, accident, and caprice.[54]

As described by Kennan, the system was mired in administrative issues with prisoner identification and record keeping. Many people went through this broken system, and in the Siberia of the late-nineteenth century, exile was a fact of life for many. There was no single unitary type of prisoner, either by gender, class, or criminal act (Figure 10).

According to Daniel Beer, in tsarist Russia, "exile was an act of expulsion" by which those perceived as politically and socially dangerous could be disposed of.[55] It is through these associations with cleansing the undesirable that Siberia became a repository of convicted bodies, whether "guilty" or not. Due to the cruel nature of exile, photographs were an important evidentiary marker of an individual's identity, and, at times, humanity.[56] Exile involved a multiplicity

52. Kennan, *Siberia And The Exile System, Volume I* (Russell & Russell), 242.

53. Ibid., 243.

54. Ibid., 247.

55. Daniel Beer, *The House of the Dead: Siberian Exile Under the Tsars* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017), 15.

56. As Beer notes, "if the individual fates of famous writers and revolutionaries in Siberia became widely known and discussed both in Russia and abroad, the same could not be said of the vast majority of Siberia's exiles. For every banished radical, thousands of unknown common criminals and their families were marched off to Siberia and into oblivion. Their fates survive only in the police reports, petitions, court records and official correspondence that were compiled and retained by the apparatus of an increasingly developed and sophisticated police state." Ibid, 6.

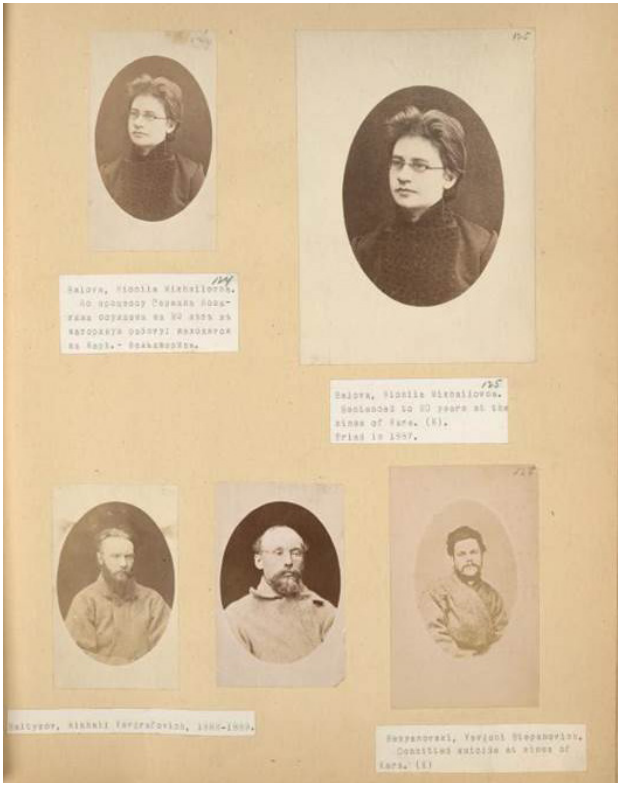


Figure 10. George Kennan, *Salova, Saltykov, Sazhin, Semyanovski*, 1920. Slavic and East European Collections, The New York Public Library. http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-41bd-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99.

of documentary evidence created from within the government system, but that information remained locked away in the archives. For every photograph that survives, we can imagine that there are many more that have been lost through time. Kennan's outsider viewpoint helped to create an alternative record of the exile system separate from the government archive. The photographs in Kennan's collection were a way for him to preserve the memory of those he met through an indexed system. The collection represented a reference catalog of people Kennan wanted to remember for historical, scholarly, and personal value. By linking the photograph with a person's name, he created a visual record that could be referenced to remember individual faces, making the album an essential object of memory. This system of categorization allowed Kennan to cross-reference the names of people in the album with their portrait photographs.

Figure 11. George Kennan, *Sukhomlin, Sukhomlina*, 1920. Slavic and East European Collections, The New York Public Library. http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-41c2-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99.

One of the most striking photographs in the collection shows a seated man looking directly at the viewer and dressed in prominently visible leg shackles (also called "leg-fetters"). He is labeled by the caption as Vasili Ivanovich Sukhomlin (Figure 11). The photograph is numbered 145 in the upper right-hand corner. In the portrait, Sukhomlin reclines on a chair against an ornate backdrop and next to a carved piece of furniture. His clothes are simple in style, and he wears a side-buttoned shirt, pants, boots, a tilted beret-like cap, and metal shackles that are attached just above his boots and connected to a belt worn around his waist. In the first volume of *Siberia and the Exile System*, Kennan mentions such leg fetters as being commonly worn by prisoners. In a description of exiles trekking southeast across Siberia from Tomsk to Irkutsk, he states, "The bodies of marching convicts,

kept warm by the exertion of walking in heavy leg-fetters, steam a little in the raw, chilly air, but a large number of the men have lost or removed their shoes, and are wading through the freezing mud with bare feet."[57] In the portrait, a long and voluminous coat is draped over his right shoulder and behind his back. The label describes him in English as a "(landed proprietor) sent into penal servitude at the mines of Kara for 15 years with exile for life. (A police photograph in convict dress and leg-fetters.)" (Figure 11). The caption then continues in Russian and identifies him as a *narodovolets*. A *narodovolets* was a member of the political organization *Narodnaia Volia*, the People's Will, the same group whose members assassinated Tsar Alexander II in 1881.[58] This caption is perhaps the most descriptive of any of the captions that accompany the photographs. Its detailed information provides ample insight into the person pictured, allowing for cross-referencing with other published sources and further research on the subject in the portrait. Exceptionally, the photograph of Sukhomlin is duplicated on the page, with one print slightly smaller than the other, though outwardly they are identical.

After leaving exile, Sukhomlin was one of the founders of the Society of Former Convicts and Exiles. It existed between 1921 and 1935, when it was suppressed by the Soviet government. The group published a journal about exile titled *Katorga i ssylka* (Penal Servitude and Exile), about their memories and experiences being imprisoned under the Imperial regime.[59] Also on the page in Figure 11 are two duplicate photographs labeled "Madame Sukhomlina" with no other information given. The convention of applying the French term "madame" to women was Kennan's way of designating married women, usually those who took their husband's last name. She was Sukhomlin's wife, who voluntarily accompanied him to exile in 1888,[60] as many free women did when their husbands were charged, rather than face a lengthy and uncertain forced separation. A relationship between the subjects is implied through the pairing of the photographs on the page and the shared last name, although there is no direct connection made via the caption text. Though Kennan wrote about her in his book *Siberia and the Exile System* and used the same photograph of her as an illustration that accompanied the text,[61] he did not include those details in the caption analogous to her photograph in the album. By positioning them this way, he probably intended for them to be viewed together.

Another photograph in the collection appears to have been taken in the same location as the portrait of Sukhomlin, because it features the same backdrop and furniture. As mentioned earlier, the photograph is numbered 174, and the label describes the subject as Pyotr Filippovich Yakubovich and lists his occupation as being a poet (Figure 12). Like Sukhomlin, he wears leg shackles that connect to a belt worn around the waist. He also wears the same pants, shirt, coat, and cap as Sukhomlin, an indication, perhaps, that this was a standard uniform worn

57. Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System, Volume 1*, (Russell & Russell), 399.
58 Travis, 115-117.
59. Glebova, 164.
60. Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System, Volume II* (Russell & Russell), 270.
61. Ibid.

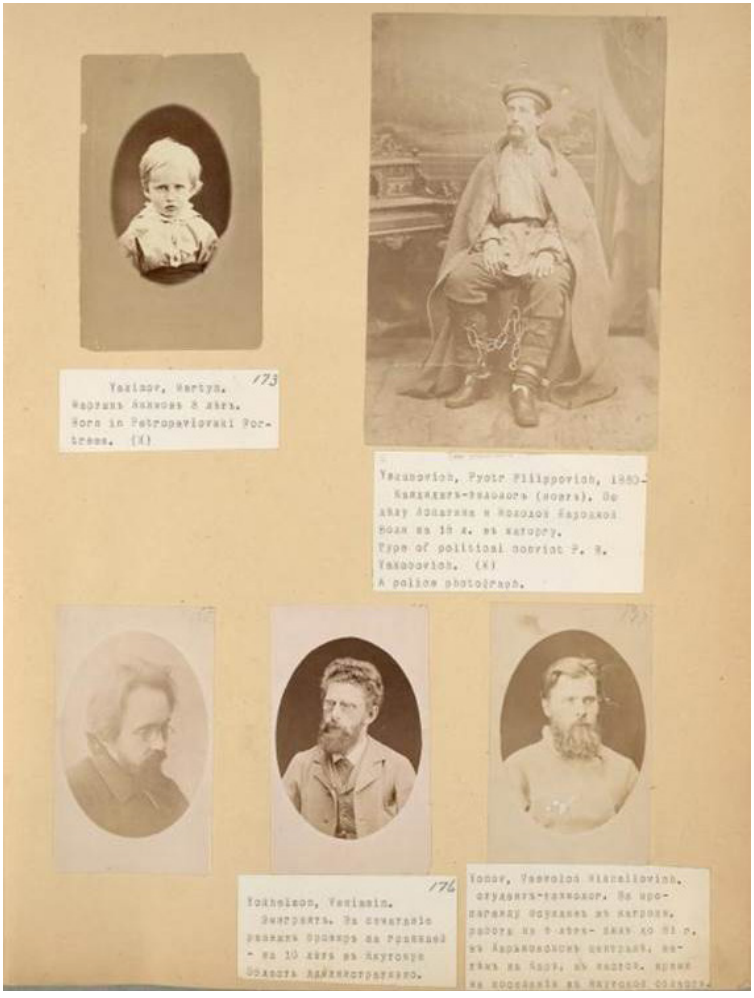


Figure 12. George Kennan, *Yakimov, Yakubovich, Yatzevich, Yokhelson, Yonov*, 1920. Slavic and East European Collections, The New York Public Library. http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-41c2-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99.

by male prisoners. The subject has his head turned to the side in a three-quarter view, looking outside the frame of the photograph, unlike Sukhomlin, who gazes straight ahead directly and defiantly.

Overall, the subjects are positioned and framed similarly and even have their hands resting in the same place on their respective upper thighs. Obvious similarities in the composition suggest that consistency was a goal for the photographer. The subjects were directed on where to sit and how to pose for the photograph in the studio. In their style, and appearance the photographs are consistent and similarly ordered from one to the next. Furthermore, the many similarities between the two photographs suggest that they were taken in a studio setting where the lighting

and setup were consistent. Specifically, the background against which they were photographed remained unchanged from one photograph to the next, suggesting that the photographs were likely taken a short time apart in a highly controlled environment. The uniforms, shackles, and similar compositions emphasize the disciplinary regimes that govern both portrait photography and imprisonment.

Both photographs resemble the one of Kennan dressed in the same uniform worn by the two subjects, though the photograph has a different history than the two photographs from the album (Figure 1). In this full-length photograph, which is part of the George Kennan papers in the collection of the Library of Congress, Kennan also wears pants, a shirt, coat, cap, and shackles that are the same style as the ones worn by Sukhomlin and Yakubovich.

Memory and the Archive

Now a common tool of mass surveillance and social control, the government archive of identification photographs first came into existence in the nineteenth century as a criminal archive. However, the criminal archive exists as more than a database of photographs used by the police for identification. As Allan Sekula argues in "The Body and the Archive,"[62] the criminal archive exists as a social construct of deviance.[63] Within the archive of surveillance, the photographs exist as both accomplices and opponents of the subject. In Sekula's words, they exist within a "double system: a system of representation capable of functioning both *honorifically* and *repressively*."[64] This is especially true in the case of portrait photographs. Their honorific function "is that of providing for the ceremonial presentation of the bourgeois *self*."[65] On the other hand, the repressive function of the photographic portrait is how it "came to establish and delimit the terrain of the *other*, to define both the *generalized look*—the typology—and the *contingent instance* of deviance and social pathology."[66] This repressive function is particularly applicable to the instance of the police photograph, because "criminal identification photographs are a case in point, since they are designed quite literally to facilitate the *arrest* of their referent."[67] Thus, although the photographs from Kennan's collection give us a glimpse of the internees as they looked when alive, the very photograph that speaks of their humanity is also the mechanism that the state apparatus used to systematically and brutally eradicate them since many did not survive imprisonment due to the harsh living conditions, insufficient medical care, and punishment through hard labor.

The album had a strong personal significance for Kennan, and he took pains to make sure that the collection would be preserved. He invested time in writing the captions and assembling the album with NYPL librarians, a process that took place about 35 years after he initially acquired the photographs. Since the album

62. Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* 39 (Winter 1986): 3-64.
63. Ibid., 14.
64. Ibid., 6.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid., 7.

included photographs of political prisoners from Siberia and those imprisoned elsewhere, it provided a way to recall his connection not just to the prisoners in Siberia, but to all those he knew who were part of the broader revolutionary struggle in Russia. Though it connected him to Kara, it also functioned something like a conceptual index of his radical friends, acquaintances, and experiences in Russia at a time when he was, in a sense, exiled from them. This is also evident in Kennan's desire to dress in the prisoner shackles and exile uniform as a way to identify with that community. Putting together the album through the process of arranging the photographs and writing the captions gave Kennan the opportunity to trace the personal connections and political genealogies of a close-knit collective of dissident prisoners in Imperial Russia. Inasmuch as the album wove together a historical narrative, it also reflected on Kennan's personal history as an explorer and scholar.

The mistakes and omissions in the album's written captions testify to the faults and fluidity of memory. Certainly, not all the contents of the album are factually accurate or complete, which challenges a straightforward interpretation of the album as a secondary source historical document. While Kennan may have intended the album to read like a monumental history of Russian exiles, it does something different. In fact, it operates on multiple registers of memory, history, and the archive. Accepting its flaws requires an understanding of the album's value as being a primary source document, one with the natural fissures, faults, and inaccuracies native to memory. Its particular mix of photographic and textual material gestures to the documentary impulse that pervaded Kennan's work on exile in Russia. In this way, the album remains poised on the edge of unrealized potential as a way to see into the past. It is imperfect, but nevertheless powerful, evocative, and symbolic. This project shows just some of the ways that Kennan's methodological practice affected the structure and content of the album and how we interpret the photographs within it.

When Kennan donated the album to the NYPL, he did so with his future legacy in mind. Just as he had dressed in a prisoner costume to raise awareness across the United States about injustice half a world away, while remaining mostly uninvolved in political struggles domestically, this gesture was somewhat self-serving. At the end of his life, he sought to present the photographs in his collection as valuable historical tools for the scholarly study of the past, partly through the radical political histories of the Russian revolutionaries. Nevertheless, these photographs offer valuable insight into Kennan's role in shaping the memory of Imperial forced labor camps in the West and the legacy of his effect on Russian American relations.

About the Author

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Orientalization of America: The Soviet Imagination of the American 'Other' and Modernization in Brezhnev's Era

Igor Tarbeev

Introduction

In the last three decades there were plenty of publications that focused on "orientalization" of Russia. From the early modern times Eastern Europe and Russia were perceived as "non-West."[1] Western writers and travelers described Russia using oriental metaphors and underlining Russian exotic wildness.[2]

Orientalism as a methodological framework can be applied not only to western perception of Russia, but to Russia itself. The Russian Empire and the Soviet Union had their own Orient. Russian politics toward its eastern provinces could be studied through the lens of Edward Said's approach.[3] Although approaching Russian history with this methodological framework is still a matter of academic debates,[4] it can be productive to use Orientalism as Max Weber's ideal type that can highlight differences and similarities of certain phenomena of Russian history.

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1. Larry Wolf, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford University Press, 1994).

2. For example: Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: "the East" in European Identity Formation* (University of Minnesota Press, 1999), Martin Malia, *Russia under Western Eyes: From the Bronze Horseman to the Lenin Mausoleum.* (Harvard University Press, 2000), Alexander M. Etkind, *Tolkovanie puteshestvij. Rossiya i Amerika v travelogah i intertekstah* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2001), Viktoria I. Zhuravleva *Ponimanie Rossii v SSHA: obrazy i mify. 1881-1914* (RGGU, 2012).

3. For example: Alexander M. Etkind, *Internal Colonization. Russia's Imperial Experience*, (Cambridge: Polity 2011), Roy Bolton, Edward Strachan, Sphinx Fine Art, *Russian Orientalism: Central Asia and the Caucasus* (Sphinx Books, 2009); David Schimmelpenninck, *Russian Orientalism: Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration* (Yale University Press, 2010), Alfrid K. Bustanov, *Soviet Orientalism and the Creation of Central Asian Nations* (Taylor & Francis, 2014). There is also a PhD dissertation dedicated to imagination of Russia in the USA and imagination of the USA in Russia: Anton S. Panov, *Rossia i SSHA v poslednej chetverti XVIII - pervoj treti XIX vv.: opyt vzaimnyh reprezentacij.* http://www2.rsuh.ru/binary/object_23.1592390857.83573.pdf

4. For example, the book Orientalism vs. orientalistika (Moscow, OOO "Sandra," 2016) was dedicated to the problem of implementation of Orientalism concept to Russian History.

One of the key points of Said's argument is that western scholars did not merely study the East but invented it and interpreted it; those researches of the eastern past were highly influenced by contemporary political and power relations between the West and the East.[5] To demonstrate the politicization of knowledge Said writes about Russian studies in Cold War America of the late 1970s. At the same time, Said insists that this politicization is possible not because scholars, writers, and painters wanted to construct the East in a bad way, but because the political context and the power relations determined their perception, and because a European in the East was a European in the first place and only then he was a scholar.[6]

Orientalism as a unique discipline also appeared within this context. While western society wanted to know about the East, the politicians needed expert knowledge that could be used in the process of policymaking. That is why Orientalism combines pure academic research with practical expertise. These two parts of the discipline did not contradict, but complemented each other, making the expertise more fundamental and the academic research more applicable. This combination turned Orientalism into a unique institution "for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements of it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, setting it, ruling over it…"[7]

Quite similarly, Amerikanistika as a special area studies discipline emerged in the Soviet Union in the 1950s. After Stalin's death and declaration of "peaceful coexistence" as a new concept of Soviet foreign policy, Soviet leaders realized that they needed a deeper understanding of the American "Other."[8] At the same time, Soviet society had a huge interest in the US, their everyday life, history, and culture. Amerikanistika responded to this demand. Amerikanists wrote confidential expert memos and advisory notes for Soviet officials, published academic papers for scholars and students, and created popular books and documentaries for the general public.[9]

Unfortunately, there are almost no academic publications focusing on Soviet Amerikanistika or on Soviet foreign expertise in general. There are no publications about Amerikanists in Russian language, except for short biographical "in memorial" papers. There are several publications in English about Soviet historians specializing in the USA by Sergei Zhuk.[10] He studies an academic part

5. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western conceptions of the Orient* (New York: Penguin, 1995), 9-12.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., p. 3.

8. Igor M. Tarbeev, *The Formation of American Studies in the USSR as an Expert and Academic Discipline in the 1950s – 1960s, RSUH/RGGU Bulletin Series "Political Science. History. International Relations".* 2018 №3 (2018) :77-92. (In Russ.), https://politicalscience.rsuh.ru/jour/article/view/197

9.Ivan I. Kurilla, Viktoria I. Zhuravleva, *Soviet Studies in the United States, Amerikanistika in Russia: Mutual Representations in Academic Projects.* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016), p. vi-xviii.

10. Sergei Zhuk, Soviet Americana: The Cultural History of Russian and Ukrainian Americanists (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018).

of the Soviet Amerikanistika, i.e., scholars that worked in the Institute of World History, were interested primarily in early American history and supposedly had little to do with expertise, and policymaking process or construction of the public image of the American "Other." This paper, instead, studies the image of American "Other" created by experts, and journalists for different stratus of Soviet society.

It is important to discuss who *A*merikanists were and what kind of works they produced.[11] Experts coming into Amerikanistika had very different academic backgrounds. They had scholarly degrees in history, philosophy, or economics. Many of them were journalists in foreign departments of Soviet journals such as *Kommunist, Problemy Mira i Socialisma, Voprosy* Philosophii, or *Novoe Vremya.*[12] In the late 1950s and early 1960s, many experts worked at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), the first Soviet "think tank." In the first half of the 1960s, the Central Committee of CPSU created its own expert groups and employed a lot of experts from journals and academic institutions to work as foreign policy advisors. By the 1970s, these foreign policy advisors had left the CPSU and entered different academic institutions. Some of them went to the Institute for the USA, which had been created in 1968 and was part of the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

Their career trajectories could be a case for a study of the Soviet "revolving doors" system. But for now, it is important that they initially were journalists, academicians, and experts. They had never forgotten their backgrounds. They published academic papers, but at the same time they created popular essay collections about their trips to the United States.[13] They got doctoral degrees and at the same time they filmed a series of documentaries about the USA in the 1970s and political talk-shows that were broadcasted across the whole Soviet Union. Some of them were correspondents of main Soviet newspapers but were considered to be experts by party officials who required their opinions and commentaries on political situations.

By the 1970s, Amerikanistika's process of institutionalization had finished. Former journalists and advisors had turned into academicians who were involved in offering expertise from time to time. Paraphrasing Said's famous definition of Orientalism, Amerikanistika turned into a special corporate institution for dealing with the US, dealing by making statements, by interpreting their past and present from the only right and proven point of view. For Orientalism this point of view was a western and European one, for Amerikanistika it was a Marxist point of view.

In some ways Marxism was quite similar to Orientalism. Both intellectual

11. The question of background and career track of Soviet American experts was not in the center of any academic research. Unfortunately, this publication has no room to fully answer it, but I am going to publish a paper about this topic as soon as possible.

12. Only one of these journals – Problemy Mira i Socialisma – focused primarily on international relations and foreign policy.

13. See for example a brochure by Yuri Shvedkov, a scholar from the Institute for the US: Yuri A. Shvedkov, SSHA, 1968 (Moscow: Znanie, 1968). This brochure was published in a series called "New in life, science and technologies: International series," "Znanie" publishing house was specialized in popular science publications.

movements were created by the Enlightenment, and they both had an idea of constant and universal progress of humanity. History was considered to be a story of development. Orientalism imagined western societies as modern, dynamic, and progressive. It constructed western identity by opposing it to eastern societies, which were ancient, static, and undeveloped. In turn, the Soviet Union used Marxist theory to imagine itself modern, dynamic, and progressive. Quite the opposite, western countries were imagined to be in decline, stuck in the past.

Marxism also claimed to know the only way of social progress and the only way to the future. From that perspective, one can predict the American future by researching and interpreting the American past and present. That is why history and social sciences were considered to be an important part of the ideological struggle between the Soviet Union and the capitalist West. Amerikanists were constantly trying to comprehend and to construct contemporary America through historic metaphors and comparisons.

This paper focuses on how the images of the USA was constructed through images of European and Oriental past and how they fit into Soviet idea of modernity. I am going to use different kinds of sources such as academic publications, documentaries, popular books and classified notes. All these materials were created by Amerikanists but for various groups of people: party officials, scholars, and the general public. This way we can demonstrate how the United States were imagined and constructed for different audiences, and how it created different discourses. These images of the American "Other" and Soviet "Self" were influencing both processes of political decision-making and popular perception of the US.

It is important to note, that almost every term and notion we have to describe Soviet expert community and foreign policy expertise was initially developed and applied to the American expertise. I have already used terms like "experts," "think tank," and "revolving doors system," but none of these notions were used in the Soviet Union. So, by experts I mean people who studied the United States and influenced the process of foreign policy making by advising officials, writing confidential memos, etc. I apply the term "think tank" to those Soviet academic institution that were constantly involved into policymaking process by writing confidential memos, advising politicians etc. Still, it should be noted that these terms could not truly represent soviet historical reality and I use them only because there is nothing to substitute them.

Oriental metaphors

In the second half of the 1970s, the famous Soviet Amerikanist Valentin Zorin made TV documentaries called "America of the 70s." Zorin was not merely a journalist, but also a scholar and an expert. In 1943, he entered Moscow State University (MSU) and studied foreign relations. By the time of his graduation in 1948 the department of foreign relations had been turned into a new University of Foreign Relations known as MGIMO. In 1940-1950s, Zorin worked as columnist for different Soviet newspapers and journals. In the 1960s he became a Doctor of Sciences, a professor of his *alma mater* and an expert at the new Institute for the

US studies in which he was a head of the US domestic policy department. Zorin also worked on Soviet TV, and in the 1970s he became very popular as a political commentator and a host of political shows.

Every episode of "America of the 70s" was focused on one American city, taking it as a case for showing American lifestyle and American social problems. The first episode of this documentary was called "Two New Yorks." Zorin focused on two sides of New York – it was a very wealthy city of Wall Street and 5th Avenue on the one hand, and it was a very poor city of Harlem and slums on the other.

There was no better time to make such an episode than in 1976, because in 1975 New York almost declared its bankruptcy. The city had a lot of problems such as fiscal and housing crises, high crime rates, and an outflow of population. In July of 1977, the year after Zorin's documentary, there was a famous New Your blackout, that lasted 25 hours and was followed by crimes, looting, and massive arrests. Thus, Valentin Zorin came to the city in the middle of its decline.

Zorin portrayed the wealthy side of New York through buildings of main American banks, calling the Rockefellers and Morgans "counts and dukes of Wall Street."[14] Then he showed 5th Avenue's private mansions, clubs, and fancy magazines, to underline the detachment of New York aristocracy from ordinary people of the city. Owning mansions with servants and doormen, "counts and dukes" rarely lived there, while buildings for ordinary people were demolished despite of the housing crisis.

In that episode, Zorin did not use the word "aristocracy" itself, but it was a common notion for the Soviet discourse about America. For example, another famous Soviet Amerikanist Aleksander Fursenko[15] wrote in the introduction of his book about the Rockefellers:

> There are entire dynasties of business world kings in the US, and among them the first place rightfully belongs to the Rockefellers, the richest family in the world. "Although the absence of nobility in America has become a traditional point of pride," writes the famous journalist Manchester, "many Americans, especially women, secretly yearn for titles. Evidence of this is the popularity of the English Queen Elizabeth. Attempts to find their homemade American substitute for nobility lead to the fact that the public turns a Hollywood movie star or a gangster into its idol. But usually, attention is focused on the wealthy class, and therefore newspapers publish pages about the social life of the rich. If

14. "Amerika 70-h. Dva N'yu-Jorka (1976)," Sovetskoe televidenie. GOSTELERADIOFOND, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yI2_olezbbA&t=153s (5:25)

15 In 1990's Alexander Fursenko became very famous because of his and Timothy Naftali's book *One Hell of a Gamble: Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964 – The Secret History of the Cuban Missile Crisis.* Back in Brezhnev's era he was famous Soviet scholar from Leningrad, specializing in history of American oil industry. His book about Rockefellers was written as popular scholarly publication and became quite popular in the Soviet Union.

> the rich are the aristocracy of capitalism, then the Rockefellers are their royal majesty.[16]

Describing rich people, their lifestyle, their mansions etc. Soviet observers commonly used historical metaphors to underline the backwardness of American social order, in contrast to which the USSR was constructed as a modern and progressive one. Indeed, in the modern and progressive Soviet state there were no mansions or aristocrats. Those people and those mansions reminded Soviet experts and journalists of czars and kings of the past.

Unlike Orientalists who dismissed any oriental voices, Amerikanists constantly demonstrated that there were "progressive" Americans who shared the Soviet point of view or at least criticized American social order. Instead of making his own statement, Fursenko just agreed with the American journalist. Aristocracy had negative connotations in both Soviet and American context as a class which had been defeated during the American and Russian revolutions. That was something from the past that should stay in the past. Unfortunately, American society was not progressive enough to leave aristocracy in history books, instead it created a new kind of aristocracy – a moneyed one.

Fursenko expanded that comparison:

> At the beginning of the 20th century one Russian newspaper amazed its readers by comparing the profits of financial kings and those of crowned people. The list published by the newspaper began with Rockefeller. Only the Turkish Sultan was in third place, and all the other monarchs, including the German Kaiser, the Russian Tsar and the Spanish King, trailed behind the money aces.[17]

Oriental sultans were known to the Soviet (and Western) public through academic works, literature, paintings, and legends of the Orientalist period. In this western imagination of the Orient sultans were portrayed astonishingly rich, bathing in silk, gold, and concubines of harem. Comparing the Rockefellers to sultans, Fursenko aroused these images of the Orient, making the famous billionaire dynasty simultaneously exotic and outdated.

Fursenko was not the only one who used oriental metaphors to describe America. Here is another example from a famous political commentator Yuri Zhukov's book *The USA on the turn of 1970.* Zhukov worked in *Pravda* newspaper. He did not have any background in US studies, but he published a lot of books about America and was involved as an expert for the CPSU. In 1969 Zhukov interviewed Ronald Reagan, the governor of California at that time, at his residence. The residence made an impression on the Soviet correspondent:

> While I was being led to him through a suite of ceremonial halls hung and lined with paintings and engravings, souvenirs, flags, I tried to remember

16. Alexander Fursenko, Dinastiya Rokfellerov (Leningrad: Nauka, 1967), p.3-4.
17. Ibid.

> what it reminded me of: the apartments of the Sultan of Morocco, the imperial palace in Addis Ababa, or the ceremonial halls of the White House in Washington, that I had once visited.[18]

The White House naturally finished the sequence of oriental palaces, and the residence of the California governor fit well in that sequence. The richness of the residence played an important role in construction of this comparison. According to the Soviet ideological clichés American politicians were just puppets of "money aces." From the perspective of Soviet observer the lushness of the White House or the California residence underlined the intertwining of political and financial elites and separated them from ordinary people. Thus, the US society was divided into ordinary people and a new aristocracy.

This image is not easy to explain through the opposition of "Other" and "Self." Soviet leaders also had their residence inside an ancient Kremlin fortress on the old Senate Palace, built at the end of 1700s. From this perspective, Soviet leaders were not different from their Americans counterparts. Probably, the impression made by Reagan's office on Zhukov can be explained through the interiors, not the building itself. Offices of Soviet party leaders were quite modest, inheriting the tradition established by Vladimir Lenin, whose office and flat were preserved as a museum. Some interiors of the Kremlin Senate and the Kremlin palace were rebuilt during the Stalin era to fit the Soviet government. Still, this matter of symbolic power representation and perception through offices of leaders needs a more precise study.

At the same time Amerikanists used oriental metaphors not only to describe political and financial elites of the US or to underline the gap between elites and ordinary people. They also reconciled two Soviet perceptions – perception of the American glorious past and decline of the American present. The combination of these viewpoints created an idea of a failed social modernity.

Amerikanists always pictured the American past as a progressive and glorious one. Images of a glorious American past could be easily found in papers of historian-amerikanists.[19] But we could also easily find them in popular discourse about the US. For example, in his documentary series, Valentin Zorin called George Washington "a passionate fighter against colonizers and oppressors."[20] Telling a story of Independence Hall and the Declaration of Independence, Zorin called Thomas Jefferson "an outstanding thinker and a revolutionary." Signatories

18. Yuri Zhukov, SSHA na poroge 70-h godov (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoj literatury, 1970), p. 56.

19. By "historian-*amerikanists"* Soviet scholars that were not involved in foreign policy expertise. These scholars worked at academic institutions like Institute of World History of Soviet Academy of Sciences or at universities. They often focused on American history of XIX – beginning of XX century to avoid extra politization of their work. Famous researcher of early American-Russian relations Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov could be a vivid example of this kind of Amerikanist.

20."Amerika 70-h. Gorod na Potomake. Valentin Zorin," Sovetskoe televidenie. GOSTELERADIOFOND, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7RlUsaxc4ZY (2:20)

of the Declaration were described as "brave people, who challenged the most powerful county of their time."[21]

In contrast to this image of the glorious past, Amerikanists constantly pictured the decline of the American present. Valentin Zorin read out the famous line from the Declaration of Independence "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Commenting this quotation, he said:

> It was a daring challenge... The stubborn and long-term efforts of the bourgeoisie ideologists of the decline period put a textbook gloss on the once explosive lines of the Declaration of Independence. Every effort has been made to make the revolutionary demand for freedom and equality for all look like the pious, museum-preserved wishes of old-fashioned dreamers.[22]

Let us take a closer look at this image of reevaluation of history, of putting certain concepts into museums and abandoning them through the lenses of our orientalist approach. As I have already said, concepts of progress and development were very important in classical Orientalism. Orientals were not merely undeveloped, they were static. They did not participate in the historical process; they were excluded from history itself. To prove this exclusion, western observers pointed to the lack of historical knowledge of oriental people. Orientals did not know how great their past was, they had forgotten it. Because of that, they did not value ancient artifacts or buildings, they did not appreciate their history and their heroes. Only western societies could preserve these treasures.

Amerikanistika in the Soviet Union was based on Marxist vision of history. According to this vision, the USSR represented the next step of social development. Every country of the world had no other way but to follow that historical process. My hypothesis is that the oriental metaphors illustrated the process of exclusion of the USA from this universal historical process. The White House and Reagan's residence were doomed to be turned into museums just like other residences of the past. American businessmen just like old European and Oriental aristocrats were doomed to extinction. Thus, palaces and aristocrats were symbols of exclusion from progress and the future.

Americans did not merely stop and forget its social development and historical progress but turned back to the past. As we have seen they had reinvented aristocracy, because Americans "secretly yearn for titles."[23] Comparing the American past and present, Zorin underlined the greatness of the founding-fathers, but at the same time he argued that their deeds had been forgotten:

21. "Amerika 70-h. Filadel'fiya, proshloe i nastoyashee. Valentin Zorin," Sovetskoe televidenie. GOSTELERADIOFOND, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQEAd66ZRLg (8:30)

22. Ibid.

23. Alexander Fursenko, *Dinastiya Rokfellerov* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1967), p.3-4.

> Most of the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers settled in Pennsylvania. Having grown rich on the labor of those who came later, exploiting the destitute harder than European feudal lords, they built mansions in Philadelphia, acquired carriages and expensive outfits, imitating the aristocracy of the European kingdoms ... Is it necessary to say that the calls of the authors of the Declaration of Independence for equality and freedom for all aroused the anger and resistance of arrogant aristocrats who hated Washington, Jefferson, and the cause for which they fought? That is why, apparently, not the creators of the Declaration of Independence, not the heroes of the liberation war, were raised above Philadelphia, but a huge bronze statue of the Pennsylvania's ruler, the English aristocrat William Penn, installed on the city hall tower, which became the trademark and symbol of this city. Time passes, eras change, prejudices remain ...[24]

Thus, the American historical process was reversed. At the very end of this Philadelphia episode, showing poor areas of the city, Valentin Zorin vividly expressed this image of exclusion:

> The contrasts of Philadelphia are the contrasts of today's America, born in the fire of the anti-colonial revolution, but in 400 years it forgot about the inalienable right of all people to freedom and the pursuit of happiness.[25]

Two Modernities

At the same time there was another image of the USA in the Soviet Union. Soviet Amerikanists visited America a lot. They saw technological development and economic prosperity of the US and showed them to the Soviet public through colorful TV documentaries and fascinating books.

Soviet observers admitted the American development. For example, Yuri Zhukov retold his conversation with Ronald Reagan, in which the California governor had compared his state economy to economies of different countries:

> - I'm very proud of California...we're the fifth in the Western world in terms of gross national product.
> - The fifth?
> - Yes. In the first place, of course, are the United States ... then Japan, West Germany, the UK and California ...
> …And here I am holding in my hands a beautifully printed booklet, "The Governor's Economic Report. 1968," kindly handed to me by Reagan's assistant, and think of the price of the wealth and the truly

24. Amerika 70-h. Filadel'fiya, proshloe i nastoyashee. Valentin Zorin," Sovetskoe televidenie. GOSTELERADIOFOND, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQEAd66ZRLg.

25. Ibid.

> incredible level of technological development of California, which my interlocutor is so proud of.[26]

But how did Amerikanists perceive and explain the visible economic and technological advantages of the US, and how did these advantages not contradict the idea of "exclusion from historical process"? Before we used Orientalism as Max Weber's ideal type to highlight its similarities to Amerikanistika. It is time to look at their differences.

In classical Said's *Orientalism,* economic modernization always followed social development. According to that view, orientals were barbaric and because of that their countries were undeveloped. And they needed some external power to rule over them, to educate and to develop them. In later works of western modernist, the wording was smoothed out. As Niels Gilman shows in his book *Mandarins of the Future,* American Cold-war era modernists thought that institutions and economics were a key to the future. By helping to establish western-like institution, backward societies could be developed from abroad.[27]

Even though Niels Gilman himself argues with the postcolonial approach,[28] we can see certain similarities in approaches of orientalists and modernists. According to both, an economically developed society is at the same time socially progressive and vise-versa. Paraphrasing the famous Vladimir Lenin's thesis about communism and electrification from this perspective, modernization is social progress plus economic development of the country. And a progressive and developed society could be a source of modernization for backward societies.

Instead of merging economic and social development into a single idea of modernization, Soviets divided that idea into two separate processes. And while the US was ahead of the Soviet Union in economics, the Soviet Union was ahead in social order. Each of them was more modernized than the other in a different field.

There are a lot of papers exploring the image of the US in the USSR. Ideas of teaching each other and of using each other were developed by Victoria Zhuravleva in her book *The Common Past of Russians and Americans*.[29] Zhuravleva primarily researches the period from mid-XIX to mid-XX centuries and puts this bilateral learning process in a broader context. Calling this process the allure of the "Other," the author focuses on each side of it. For decades, Russians and Americans were having inside discussions of what they could adopt from their counterparts.

Before the Cold War started in the second half of 1940s, the United States was not perceived as the main Soviet foe. Instead, they were perceived as a pioneer and a teacher of technological progress, which could help to industrialize

26. Yuri Zhukov, SSHA na poroge 70-h godov (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoj literatury, 1970), pp. 54-55.

27. Niels Gilman, Mandarins of the Future. Modernization Theory in Cold War America. (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 2003). pp. 1-23.

28. Ibid. pp. 278-280.

29. Victoria I. Zhuravleva, The Common Past of Russians and Americans, (Moscow: Russian State University for the Humanities Press, 2021), pp. 549-571.

the young Soviet state. Journalists and writers went to America to describe its lifestyle and achievements. Young and progressive Soviet engineers who were able to adopt American technical experience and production approaches called each other "Americans."[30] In 1936 Anastas Mikoyan, the head of the Soviet food industry, visited the US to explore and adopt western technologies.

This image of America as a pioneer and a teacher did not change by the 1970s. Moreover, Soviet American experts took an active part in the process of technological transfer. In the context of economic reforms initiated by Soviet prime-minister Alexei Kosygin, Amerikanists collected information about implementation of advanced management practices and the newest technologies in the government and production processes.[31]

Soviet experts were also interested in the American development experience in general. For example, when American entrepreneur Charles Thornton came to the USSR in 1969. He visited the construction of a new automobile concern in Tolyatti and pointed out that America also had built such huge and full-process productions in previous decades, but they turned out to be not effective enough. In the 1960s, instead of gigantic plants Americans were creating a network of narrowly specialized factories that were more stable. Thornton also warned Amerikanists that according to the US experience that kind of industrialization led to giant shifts in the country's economy and the USSR should be preparing for those shifts. The American businessman openly told his Soviet companions that he could see all these problems and consequences because the US had faced them a couple of decades before.[32] In general, the Soviet Union was following the path the USA had finished a long time ago. That idea was considered to be so relevant and important that Soviet American experts turned the record of this conversation into a confidential memo and sent it to the CPSU.

The idea of adopting the American experience and best practices can be found not only in CPSU confidential memos, it was well known and widespread. In 1970 the Institute for the US Studies established a journal called *The USA: economy, policy, ideology*. It was not purely academic but a socio-political one: it was a monthly journal with a circulation of over thirty thousand copies.

In that journal, we can find a lot of articles focusing on the newest management practices and implementation of computers in those practices. There was even a department of management systems in the Institute for the US, which, apparently, was focused on the research of American management practices. Boris Z. Mil'ner, a famous Soviet economist, was the head of the department and he published a lot of academic works on the topic. For example, in 1971 he published an article called

30. Susanne Schattenberg, Inzhenery Stalina: ZHizn' mezhdu tekhnikoj i terrorom v 1930-e gg. (Moscow: Rosspen, 2011) pp. 260-294.

31. Igor M. Tarbeev, "Transfer of Ideas in Soviet-American Relations at the Turn of the 1960—1970s (Based on the Example of the Expert Activity of the Institute for US Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR)", ISTORIYA, Issue 6 (104), V.12 (2021): https://history.jes.su/s207987840016257-1-1/ (circulation date: 17.08.2021). DOI: 10.18254/S207987840016257-1

32. Ibid.

"About new tendencies in management."[33] Ideas from this article correlated to Thornton's advice – Mil'ner wrote about implementation of modern technologies to quicken communication, the importance of production diversification etc. Mil'ner published articles of this kind at least once a year.[34] Later, in 1977 Mil'ner and his colleagues published a book, called *American Capitalism and Management Decisions: Theory and Methods of Decision-Making*.[35] Next year they published a book *American Bourgeois Management Theories: Critical Analyses.*"[36] The book was released by publishing house 'Thought' (*'Misl'),* which specialized in popular science books or textbooks for universities. That means that the image of the US as a teacher lasted at least for another decade and was not really connected to Kosygin's reforms.

Conclusion

There are many more cases of Soviet experts studying and promoting adaptation of US practices and technologies. What is important for this paper is that there were two simultaneous faces of the USA in the Soviet Union – the modern, economically, and technologically developed America and the socially backward, excluded from historic process America. For the first face Soviet Amerikanist used a unique perception of modernization. For them, modernization was not a single process of social and economic progress. Instead, it became two different processes, and the USSR and the USA had gone two different ways. While Americans achieved a lot on their way to economic and technical prosperity, Soviets developed a supreme social order. But only a combination of these processes could lead to the future. That is why Soviet Union should have not only studied but adopted the American economic experience and management approaches. The second face of the US was constructed through oriental metaphors to help develop an image of a society that was being excluded from the historic process and its social progress was reversed. It was thought that just like orientals, Americans forgot their glorious revolutionary past and great ideas of equality and brotherhood. American aristocrats, who lived like sultans made a lot of efforts to put this past into museums.

From the perspective of Soviet ideology, there was no contradiction in that view. America was economically and technologically modernized not because of its political and social order, but in spite of it. Soviet ideology always separated elites and ordinary people, and while American people were talented and smart, elites were greedy and corrupted.

This view is quite different from the ideas of modernization, developed in classical Orientalism or modernization theories of the West. In a way, from that

33.Boris Z. Mil'ner, "O novych tendenciyah v upravlenii", SSHA: ekonomika, politika, ideologiya. №1, (January 1970), pp. 49-59.

34. See, for example, next year issue: Boris Z. Mil'ner, "Problemy ispolzovanie EVM v upravlenii," SSHA: ekonomika, politika, ideologiya. №2, (February 1971), pp. 49-59.

35. Boris Z. Mil'ner et al., Amerikanskij kapitalizm i upravlencheskie resheniya: Teoriya i metody prinyatiya reshenij (Moscow: Nauka, 1977).

36. Boris Z. Mil'ner and E.A. Chizhov, Amerikanskie burzhuaznye teorii upravleniya: Krit. analiz, (Moscow: Misl', 1978).

Soviet perspective, there were two types of modernity - economic modernity and social modernity. These modernities could be achieved separately, and the USSR and the USA had gone two different ways. However, the way to the future (communist one, of course) is through the combination of those modernities. To achieve that bright goal, the Soviets should learn economics and technologies from the Americans and simultaneously teach the Americans to reflect on their problems and to reform their social order. I believe that the Soviet perception of two modernities remains undeveloped and unresearched. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the "End of History," this vision of progress became irrelevant, but at that time Soviet observers believed in it and were shaping the world accordingly.

The process of orientalization of America and comprehension of America through historic and oriental metaphors has huge research potential. This process of imagination influenced self-perception and resulted in the development of a unique concept of modernization. Future research could help us to better understand how the Soviet Union perceived the United States in different time periods and how this perception influenced the political process and Soviet-American relations.

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Book Reviews

David P. Deavel and Jessica Hooten Wilson, ed., *Solzhenitsyn and American Culture: The Russian Soul in the West*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2020. Xxviii + 362 pp. $60.00. Hardbound.

After the dissident Soviet writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn was exiled from the Soviet Union in 1974, many American anticommunists enthusiastically embraced his fierce criticism of détente and his denunciation of godless communism. Yet when Solzhenitsyn subsequently declared that the West was not a model for the transformation of Russia and scolded Americans for their decadent consumerism, the number of his American admirers dwindled. After the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991, many American and West European intellectuals ridiculed and dismissed Solzhenitsyn as rambling, shrill, foolish, and irrelevant.

The central purposes of *Solzhenitsyn and American Culture*, a stimulating collection of 21 essays, are to challenge such harshly negative views of Solzhenitsyn and to revive interest in him as a writer and an ethical thinker. As editors David P. Deavel and Jessica Hooten Wilson argue in the Introduction, "Solzhenitsyn was not simply a crank rejecting modernity in favor of a mythical Russian past. He was a noteworthy thinker and artist" whose messages about the foundations of real liberty and the problems of secular modernity have enduring importance (xviii-xix). Deavel, a professor of Catholic studies, and Wilson, a professor with a special interest in Catholic literature, dedicate the volume to Edward E. Ericson, Jr., a scholar of Solzhenitsyn. Like Ericson, they seek to turn attention to Solzhenitsyn's literary and ethical voice as a Christian writer with a profound "vision of life" that has lasting value (xix, xxi).

Some of the contributors attempt to dispel misunderstandings about Solzhenitsyn's political views. In one of the most compelling essays, Deavel argues against the "myth" that Solzhenitsyn was anti-American (38). He notes the exiled writer's admiration of the grassroots democracy he observed while living in Cavendish, Vermont and explains that Solzhenitsyn's critique of how the selfish pursuit of happiness eclipsed the valuation of life and liberty was not a rejection of those fundamental American values. Focusing on Solzhenitsyn's Templeton prize address in 1983, William Jason Wallace, a professor at Samford University in Alabama, presents a sympathetic discussion of the Russian writer's

criticism of the West as well as the East for having "forgotten God" (237). According to Wallace, "Solzhenitsyn's great insight is that tyranny flourishes … by first distorting human nature as lacking eternal substance or significance" (244). Wallace notes Solzhenitsyn's rebuke to Billy Graham for saying that he did not notice the persecution of religion when he visited the USSR in 1982. But he does not consider whether the extensive exchanges between religious leaders in the West and in the Soviet Union during the 1980s did more to promote religious freedom in the USSR than harsh condemnation from abroad.

In an essay first published in 2016, novelist and historian Eugene Vodolazkin expressed the hopeful view that "If the West is able to move beyond its geopolitical disagreements with Russia and take a good look at the conservative project that's taking shape in Russia now, it will see one possible future for our common European civilization" (26). After the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, that seems extremely unlikely. While one can share the editors' belief that "dissatisfaction with Russian politics … should not be a block to learning from Russian culture" (xvi), Russia's fight for the Donbas region (which Solzhenitsyn called "historic Russian lands" wrongly transferred to Ukraine by the Bolsheviks) is likely to dim American interest in Russian literature.

The contributors to the volume occasionally acknowledge that some of Solzhenitsyn's public statements, particularly about the decline of the West, were "over-the-top" or perhaps "too bleak" (xii; 246). Yet they offer little analysis of why Solzhenitsyn was at times so badly wrong about the United States and the West. For example, Deavel quotes Solzhenitsyn's assertion in 1983 that after World War II Westerners decided to shut their "ears to the groans emanating from the East" (41), yet he does not address why Solzhenitsyn disregarded the United States' espousal of liberating the Soviet bloc through aid to anticommunist guerrillas and broadcasts by the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, and Radio Liberation (to which Solzhenitsyn himself later listened).

In one of the finest contributions to the volume, Ralph C. Wood, a professor of theology and literature at Baylor University, beautifully illuminates how the Orthodox faith instilled in Solzhenitsyn by his grandmother, mother, and Aunt Irina influenced his writing. More specifically, Wood elucidates the Orthodox aspiration to make oneself more closely resemble the image of God implanted in all humans. He argues convincingly that in the short story "Matryona's Home" the long-suffering, elderly peasant Matryona, who embodies her faith in her uncomplaining way of life, serves "as Solzhenitsyn's sharply etched emblem of Holy Mother Russia -- before it was crushed" by Soviet atheism and modernization (103). Wood also shows how in the novel *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* the calm, patient convict Ivan Shukov, who "has a virtually mystical regard for his work as a mason at the work camp," illustrates the Orthodox belief that "divine presence permeates everything" (108-9).

The last part of the volume ranges beyond Solzhenitsyn. It presents excellent essays on Orthodox thinking about the reformation of criminals (with a focus on Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*); the influence of Russian writers on African American authors (particularly Alexander Pushkin on Alain Locke

and Maxim Gorky on Richard Wright); the ways nineteenth-century Russian writers inspired Flannery O'Connor's emphasis on human imperfection and self-sacrificing charity in her short stories; how Catholic activists Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton drew wisdom from Russian Orthodox writers, particularly Vladimir Soloviev and Boris Pasternak; and the tribulations of free, moral individuals in a brutal totalitarian system depicted in Vasily Grossman's searingly powerful novel *Life and Fate*.

Some of the contributions to *Solzhenitsyn and American Culture* are not entirely convincing. For example, a political scientist's comparison of Westernizers in Imperial Russia to the contemporary US professional class and Slavophiles to Americans like Steve Bannon who prioritize the white working class seems a bit of a stretch (250, 259).

Yet on the whole this volume is revelatory and thought-provoking. The brevity of most of the essays would make it easy to assign some of them as supplemental readings in courses on Russian literature and on relations between Russia and the West.

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Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia and America: The Asymmetric Rivalry*, Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2019, viii. 245pp. Index. $24.95, Paper.

Historical debate about the current state of affairs between the United States and Russia centers around an integral question: Are we in the midst of another Cold War? Andrei Tsygankov gives a resounding "no" in his book, *Russia and America: The Asymmetric Rivalry*. He vehemently asserts that viewing twenty-first century relations within a Cold War framework is misleading because it "fails to grasp the nature of the contemporary world and Russia's objectives in it" (6). The Cold War narrative relied on an inherent understanding that the U.S. and former Soviet Union were formidable superpowers competing largely with just one another. Tsygankov strives to ascertain how Russia's foreign policy has altered since Vladimir Putin's return to power in 2012 and how that has contributed to a new conflict with the U.S. within the multipolarity of the post-Cold War period.

Tsygankov attempts to reach a Western readership overwrought with what he considers unjust Russophobia exacerbated by media mischaracterizations. Yet his staunchly revisionist approach will likely alienate those who adhere to the more widely accepted post-revisionist scholarship that understands the complexities in which both countries have exacerbated geopolitical tensions. Tsygankov instead argues that the U.S. is to blame for everything from the escalating crises in Ukraine and Crimea to information wars to Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. His selective and sometimes conflicting use of evidence for these declarations is problematic. For instance, he asserts that the West's "lack of recognition of Russia's interests" resulted in Russia's invasion of Ukraine and

the annexation of Crimea (1). He tacitly agrees with former Ambassador Jack Matlock's assertion that Ukraine is a state rather than a nation. Matlock bases that declaration on the belief that the haphazard way in which Ukraine was assembled in the aftermath of World War II led to its current disunity. Tsygankov blames America rather than failed post-war negotiations for depriving Russia of "great power status" (193). Yet he earlier justifies Russia's expansion into Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea as analogous to when European countries sought to preserve and enhance their influence with the establishment of colonies in the 18th and 19th centuries (8-9).

Tsygankov's approach therefore hinges on the underlying attempt to absolve Russia of all responsibility without sufficient incorporation of evidence to substantiate such generalizations. According to him, Russia's information war is merely a defensive effort to "confuse and disorient the West" (148); yet what of the misinformation spread within Russia's domestic borders? Tsygankov admits that Russia's interference in the U.S. 2016 presidential election is "likely," but declares its motives as simply for "power-demonstration purposes" (165). This simplification omits evidence as to the extensive social media campaign carried out by the Internet Research Agency (IRA) with Project Lakhta and the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Russian Army (GRU) military units 26165 and 74455 performing cyber-attacks using two forms of malware: "X-Agent" and "X-Tunnel". The Mueller Report found that over 127 million Americans had been in contact with IRA-controlled accounts. Tsygankov's declaration that Russia only carried out such extensive interference to demonstrate that it could is perplexing and worrisome. Other issues receive similar justifications by Tsygankov. He asserts that America's desire for energy dominance has given Moscow no choice but to develop its capacity as a "global middleman" (173). Yet he fails to mention Russia cutting off gas to Ukraine in 2006 and 2014 – what noted strategist Timothy Ash calls energy blackmail. Tsygankov's selective use of evidence with his ambitious assertions falls into the begging the question logical fallacy; a more holistic examination would have lent greater credibility to his arguments.

Therein lies an inherent dichotomy with Tsygankov's book. Although he reprimands the West and specifically the United States for attempting to overpower Russia, he tacitly adheres to what he is admonishing – that is, that Russia is entirely dependent on the West to determine its actions (or reactions) rather than a superpower capable of taking responsibility on its own volition. If Russia's foreign policy is contingent on reacting to that of the United States, how does it expect for the West to view it with equity and parity? The Kremlin's continued – and perhaps rightful – resentment of the West's declaration of victory in the Cold War and its refusal to treat Russia in an equitable manner on the world stage has, according to Tsygankov's interpretation, created a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby Putin rails against this characterization and demands greater recognition and respect, yet then continues to react rather than act.

Greater incorporation of evidence, a more cohesive approach to assertions so as to avoid contradictions, and a more discerning analysis would have enhanced Tsygankov's overarching argument. It also would have prevented

the very readership he is attempting to reach from being further alienated. The organization would have strengthened had he devoted an entire chapter to the conflicts in Ukraine and Crimea since they hold such geopolitical significance – especially in the wake of Russia's current assault on Ukraine. He discusses the regions piecemeal throughout his book, but they do not get the focused attention they deserve. Similarly, a dedicated chapter on nuclear security and a separate one on cybersecurity would have improved those analyses; that combined section is a bit choppy and does not segue cohesively between the two issues.

Despite such drawbacks, Tsygankov largely delivers on what he sets out to achieve – that is, provide an alternative examination as to why tensions continue to escalate between America and Russia. He fears that they will continue the current asymmetric rivalry with limited bouts of cooperation (193), but hopes that they can develop a mutual appreciation and "come to recognize the commonality in their perception of global threats and opportunities" (190-191). Had he taken a more post-revisionist stance with his analysis, Tsygankov would have adhered to his own aspirations, lowered the temperature on the U.S.-Russia dialogue, and set the tone for further conciliatory scholarship on such a pivotal subject.

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Aaron Weinacht. *Nikolai Chernyshevskii and Ayn Rand: Russian Nihilism Travels to America*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021. xiii, 166 pp. Index. $95, Hardback.

Ayn Rand (1905-1982, born Alissa Rosenbaum in Saint Petersburg) loved Friedrich Nietzsche in her youth, in Russia, but later repudiated his philosophy. We know this from interviews and an abundance of other archival material, including her own marked up copies of a couple of Nietzsche's works. Nevertheless, assessing whether or to what extent Nietzsche had an influence on Rand remains difficult: it requires (*inter alia*) a knowledge of the thought of both Nietzsche and Rand, including a nuanced understanding of their different conceptions of egoism and the philosophies that underlie them, as well as a recognition of the other influences on Rand and of her originality as a philosopher. It is not enough to point to the fact that Rand knew Nietzsche's works, and that both were atheists and egoists, and thus declare that Rand was influenced by Nietzsche or was in fact Nietzschean.

As difficult as this is in the case of Nietzsche and Rand, it is considerably more so (if not impossible) for anyone attempting to establish that Nikolai Chernyshevskii (1828-1889) had an influence on her. For she never mentions Chernyshevskii—not in her published works or early journals, nor in interviews about her life in Russia, nor is there any other evidence in the substantial

holdings of the Ayn Rand Archives.[1] And this difficulty persists even granting the assumption that she *had* read Chernyshevskii's *What is To Be Done?* (*Chto Delat'?*). So one not only requires the same sort of knowledge and understanding mentioned in the previous paragraph (*mutatis mutandis*), but also a healthy dose of caution concerning the limitations put on an historian of ideas inquiring into a possible Chernyshevskii-Rand connection.

Aaron Weinacht, in the monograph under review, attempts to establish such a connection: that Rand is an egoist and nihilist in part because of Chernyshevskii's influence (and that of similar figures, like Pisarev). The book consists of an introduction, four main chapters—on egoism (ch. 1), heroism and creativity (ch. 2), 'Youth, Suffering, and the Man-God problem' (ch. 3), and love, sex and gender (ch. 4)—and a brief conclusion. In my estimate, Weinacht fails to establish any of his substantive claims. This is in part because he devotes more time to derivative topics (e.g. gender and sex) and trivialities (e.g. fantasy authors who were fans of Rand) than he does to issues that should have been front and center, for instance what Rand wrote in defense of her own conception of egoism.[2] In the end, his 'demonstration' of a Chernyshevskii-Rand connection amounts to a geographical connection and historical *post hoc* argumentation (Rand came after Chernyshevskii, and being Russian must have read him) in combination with noting superficial parallels, with little attention to detail, while regularly getting Rand wrong.

I focus in what follows on two issues: Chernyshevskii's and Rand's conceptions of egoism, and Rand on nihilism in *Atlas Shrugged*. I should mention that I am a scholar of ancient Greek philosophy, as well as a Rand scholar, but that my knowledge of Chernyshevskii is limited to reading *What Is to Be Done?* in translation.[3]

Any competent comparison and analysis of the egoism of Chernyshevskii and of Rand should involve first of all determining whether either (or both) assumes or defends psychological egoism (the view that human beings simply *are* all ultimately motivated by self interest) or ethical egoism (the view that one *ought* to pursue one's own self interest). Weinacht seems unaware of this distinction. If it is established that a figure is an ethical egoist, further distinctions must be made: Is the egoism consequentialist (and if so, what kind, e.g.hedonistic), or something akin to virtue ethics, or what? Does the conception of egoism permit the sacrifice of others for one's own sake, or regard that as inconsistent with genuine self-interest?[4] These questions can be answered in detail with respect to

1. In interviews Rand gave in 1960-1961 (transcripts in the Ayn Rand Archives), she was specifically asked about the literature that interested her during her time in Russia.

2.Weinacht mentions, but does not discuss with sufficient care, Rand's *The Virtue of Selfishness: A New Concept of Egoism* (New York: Signet, 1964).

3. Nikolai Chernyshevsky, *What is To Be Done?* Translated by Michael R. Katz (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

4. Weinacht claims that Chernyshevskii's egoism is similar to Rand's in not necessitating sacrifice (p. 99); but apparently, he does not think the distinction is significant, as is clear in his earlier discussion of Max Stirner (pp. 32-37), whose egoism is radically different from Rand's in this respect, though Weinacht treats them together.

Rand's egoism, but you would not know that from reading Weinacht.[5] Turning to Chernyshevskii, it is not clear what sort of egoism he defends or presupposes, if he even held a clear and consistent conception. But it does not strike me as similar to Rand's, and in any case is not based on a systematic philosophy, as hers is. As far as I can tell, he seems to be a mix of psychological and ethical (particularly hedonistic) egoism, and it is an egoism that he considered consistent with socialism—which itself (*pace* Weinacht, pp. 52-53 n. 96) makes it markedly different from Rand's egoism.[6]

When we turn to Rand's purported nihilism, Weinacht is even worse, for Rand is not a different kind of nihilist, rather she saw herself as *combating* the growing nihilism in Western culture. Part of the problem is that Weinacht does not make clear what he thinks nihilism is. He seems to equate it with regarding the ego as of primary importance, and rejecting traditional religion. Even so, he should not have missed these descriptions (a mere sample) of the views of the *villains* in *Atlas Shrugged*:[7] the "emotion which they preach as an ideal: Indifference—the blank—the zero—the mark of death" (p. 741); their "ultimate ideal, the triumph over life, the zero!" (p. 931); "the collapse to full depravity, the Black Mass of the worship of death, the dedication of your consciousness to the destruction of existence" (1020); they are "worshippers of the zero" (p. 1024); "the ideal they strive for: the reign of the zero" (p. 1037). Weinacht does not discuss these passages, and seems (oddly) to be unaware of them.

The difference between Rand's opposition to nihilism and (for instance) Dostoyevsky's, is that whereas Dostoyevsky saw God and religion as the only alternative to nihilism, Rand saw traditional religion itself as a *form* of nihilism. John Galt, a hero in *Atlas Shrugged*, critiquing religion, states (p. 1035):

> All their identifications consist of negating: [...] God is non-man, heaven is non-earth, soul is non-body, virtue is non-profit. A is non-A, perception is non-sensory, knowledge is non-reason. Their definitions are not acts of defining, but of wiping out.

In her view, the alternative to nihilism (secular or religious) is a philosophy grounded in reason and a recognition of the nature of existence, including human nature.

It is noteworthy that Rand calls Stavrogin, a nihilist in the novel *Demons*,

5. Weinacht seems unaware of most of the scholarly literature on Rand's egoism—for instance, Tara Smith, *Ayn Rand's Normative Ethics: The Virtuous Egoist* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), and Allan Gotthelf and James Lennox eds., *Metaethics, Egoism, and Virtue: Studies in Ayn Rand's Normative Theory* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011).

6. Gregory Salmieri, "Egoism and Altruism: Selfishness and Sacrifice," in Allan Gotthelf and Gregory Salmieri eds., *A Companion to Ayn Rand* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), briefly contrasts Rand's conception of egoism with "egoistic consequentialism," which includes Epicurus, Hobbes, and Chernyshevskii—Chernyshevskii's egoism being in his view hedonistic (pp. 133-134). Weinacht cites this discussion (p. 52 n. 80), but misses Salmieri's point.

7. Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged* (New York: Random House, 1957).

"one of Dostoyevsky's most repulsively evil characters."[8] An historian of Russia writing on Rand and nihilism, who mentions the *Demons* and Stavrogin (p. 33), should not have missed this. More to the point, Weinacht could not have integrated this into his claims about Rand's supposed nihilism. But he seems to think that mentioning Rand and Stavrogin in the same passage counts as evidence that Russian nihilism had an influence on Rand. The book is riddled with such 'connections'.

An historian of philosophy requires two competencies: an historian's knowledge of the relevant facts of the life of the philosopher one is writing about and her historical and intellectual context, and a philosopher's knowlege of the views and arguments of that philosopher. It can be difficult to find the right balance, and historians can go wrong in different directions. One way, clearly evident in Weinacht's book, is by paying too little attention to the philosopher's actual ideas and the arguments meant to support them, focusing instead on historical context, and assuming from the outset that her philosophy as been determined by it.

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Fisher, Steven. *Into Russia's Cauldron, An American Vision, Undone; The Newly Revealed Century-Old Eyewitness Journal of Leighton W. Rogers*. Chicago: Forest Cat Productions, 2021. 427 pp., maps, photographs, index, epilogue, paper, $24.99.

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While working as an employee of Citibank of New York at its Kiev, Ukraine branch in 2017, Steven Fisher discovered by chance information relating to a journal that Leighton Rogers kept in Petrograd during the Russian Revolution of 1917. This manuscript was later found in the Library of Congress and is the subject of this book, along with Fisher's introductory material. Rogers had been recruited by Frank Vanderlip, director of National City Bank (NCB), Citibank's predecessor, who saw an opportunity for American banking expansion in Russia, and decided to open a new branch in Petrograd, prominently located on the left bank of the Neva across the river from the Peter and Paul Fortress. Rogers was one of a contingent of recent ivy-league college graduates recruited for the job.

During the volatile year of 1917, while dodging occasional gunfire and forced to eat many meals and sleeping nights at the bank, the contingent also dined out frequently and attended concerts, operas, and other Petrograd venues. They seemed to realize only late that they were "standing on a volcano," as Ralph Barnes described American Ambassador David Francis at that time. The fledgling bankers of NCB also seemed unaware of many other well-funded Americans in the city who made possible the initial success of the bank.

8. "What is Romanticism?" in Ayn Rand, *The Romantic Manifesto* (New York: Signet, 1975), p. 107.

As Lyubov Ginsburg's dissertation (completed in 2010) on the American community in the city, cited in the bibliography, and the late Vladimir Noskov's epic study (published in St. Petersburg in 2018) on the American diplomatic colony (embassy and consulate) noted many other Americans resided in the city, ranging from followers of the American Methodist church through an expanded embassy and its new Second Division, under Basil Miles, that supervised the neutral care of German and Austrian prisoners of war, many of the latter would form the Czechoslovak Legion. They also included contingents of American Red Cross, the YMCA, the staff of New York Life, the largest insurance company in Russia, that occupied a prominent symbol of the United States in the "Singer building" on Nevsky Prospect. In addition, there were the members and large staffs of the Root and Stevens Commissions as well as a veritable horde of journalists who descended on the city to explore the "Russian experiment" for readers at home. All sought a reliable place to keep money.

Though betraying signs of amateurishness (his first book), Steven Fisher deserves credit for employing excellent secondary sources–Figes, Kennan, Hasegawa, Foglesong, Pipes, and others--and including the works of contemporaries of Rogers, such as John Reed, Albert Rhys Williams, and Pauline Crosby, and several more, and especially for rescuing this manuscript from archival oblivion. This is an important story of an interesting, even exciting American chapter in the Russian Revolution.

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Benjamin Tromly, *Cold War Exiles and the CIA: Plotting to Free Russia*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2019, xv, 329 pp. Index, $45, Hardcover.

Legend has it that Henry Kissinger, when asked why academic politics were so vicious, replied, "Because the stakes are so small." Benjamin Tromly's *Cold War Exiles and the CIA* demonstrates that the same is true of émigré politics. In it, he traced the history of various anti-Soviet organizations created by and for Russian émigrés, and the role of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in them, from 1945 to the early 1960s.

This history is kaleidoscopic. As Tromly observes, Russia's émigré community in western Europe and the United States consisted of monarchists who had fled the 1917 Revolution, Social Democrats who had fled the Bolshevik and Stalinist terrors, collaborators with Nazi Germany who fled the advancing Red Army, and (eventually) defectors fleeing the bland squalor of postwar Russia. Each group had *very* different ideas not only about how Russia should develop but about what it was. They agreed only in their fear of and contempt for other émigré groups that represented various ethnic groups within the old Russian Empire, particularly Ukrainians. To make matters worse, this motley crew and the organizations through which they worked had to deal with constant efforts

of Soviet intelligence to disrupt their operations. Undoubtedly some influential figures in these organizations were Soviet agents.

The CIA nevertheless forged ties with and provided vital support for these organizations. In some cases, it created them. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Josef Stalin completely cut Russia off from the rest of the world, creating a major problem for outsiders who wanted to know what was going on there, much less to influence events. Émigrés offered a window into this world, however imperfect, and the CIA exploited them. For their part, émigrés often lived precarious lives in New York, Paris, or West Germany. The CIA offered them a purpose and income. Émigrés gathered intelligence and, more important, participated in "psychological warfare" designed to destabilize the Soviet government. Unfortunately, most of these efforts yielded little if any fruit. Radio Liberty, which the CIA created for émigrés to broadcast their message to Russia and eastern Europe, was the exception, providing modest but solid service throughout the Cold War. Throughout, émigrés feuded constantly with each other, often in public, often to the dismay of their American handlers. By the early 1960s, the CIA had largely abandoned the project, recognizing that it had not gained much from its involvement with émigrés. Meanwhile, the "Thaw" in Soviet society after Stalin's death created better opportunities to gather intelligence.

Benjamin Tromly has done a very good job of discovering and recounting this story. It has no central narrative, and archival sources are scattered and, in many cases, classified. To present a comprehensive, coherent account of this subject is a technical achievement of the first magnitude. The book's chief weakness is its subject. In the end, the activities of these émigrés had little impact on anyone besides themselves, their CIA handlers, and their KGB watchers. They do not seem to have affected the course of the Cold War at all. The book is valuable as a window on émigré politics in general, which are the same everywhere. *Cold War Exiles and the CIA* is perhaps most useful for the light it sheds on Russian identity, or rather identities. All nations are, to some degree, works in progress, but that is particularly the case with Russia. Émigrés included monarchists, social democrats, and fascists who all agreed on nothing except that Russia should be great. Seventy-five years of communism did nothing to resolve this question. Is Russia part of the west or a distinct civilization? Is its character autocratic or democratic? Like the émigrés Tromly studies, today's Russians agree on little except that they should possess Ukraine.

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Field Notes

1. **East-West Connections (formerly RABCC) Events:**

www.east-westconnections.com

   A. **October 26: Co-Sponsoring – Kyiv City Ballet at Northrop at the University of Minnesota** https://www.northrop.umn.edu/events/kyiv-city-ballet-2022
   B. **November 17: Co-Sponsoring – Global Costs of the War on Ukraine**
   C. **Watch their website for future events in December regarding refugees.**
   D. **In January/February, they will co-sponsor an event celebrating Vladimir Vysotsky.**

2. **Southern Conference for Slavic Studies**

The Southern Conference for Slavic Studies is hosting its annual conference this year in Gainesville, Florida in 2023 (March 30-April 1). The SCSS website includes all information, as well as a link to the form for panel and paper proposals. The deadline for proposals is December 1, 2022. Go to: southernconferenceonslavicstudies.org

3. **Panels related to Russian-American relations at the ASEEES – Virtual and in Chicago – October and November, 2022**

Russian American Encounters: New York and Petersburg/Petrograd on the Cusp of the 20th Century, Thu, November 10, 3:15 to 5:00pm CST (3:15 to 5:00pm CST), The Palmer House Hilton, Floor: 3rd Floor, Salon 1

https://tinyurl.com/2nsp837x

Urban Space as Intersection of Russian-American Relations, Sun, November 13, 10:00 to 11:45am CST (10:00 to 11:45am CST), The Palmer House Hilton, Floor: 7th Floor, LaSalle 1

https://tinyurl.com/yyyb3725

War, Suffragettes, Medicine, and Religion: The Varied and Precarious Nature of Russian-American Relations, Sun, November 13, 8:00 to 9:45am CST (8:00 to 9:45am CST), The Palmer House Hilton, Floor: 7th Floor, Sandburg 2

https://tinyurl.com/yyq22kgr

Post/Socialisms: Transnational Connections in Music, Literature, and Film, Sat, November 12, 12:30 to 2:15pm CST (12:30 to 2:15pm CST), The Palmer House Hilton, Floor: 3rd Floor, Salon 10

https://tinyurl.com/2g48ggr7

Observing Others/Others Observed: Russian, European, and American Travel Writing at the Turn of the Twentieth Century, Thu, November 10, 1:00 to 2:45pm CST (1:00 to 2:45pm CST), The Palmer House Hilton, Floor: 7th Floor, Burnham 4

https://tinyurl.com/2nyw6ys3

Borderlands and Cultural Boundaries in Imperial and Contemporary Russia, Thu, October 13, 10:15am to 12:00pm CDT (10:15am to 12:00pm CDT), ASEEES 2022 Virtual Convention, VR8

https://tinyurl.com/y3dcy3hd

Women's Cross Border Experiences: Science, Literature, Race, Thu, October 13, 5:00 to 6:45pm CDT (5:00 to 6:45pm CDT), ASEEES 2022 Virtual Convention, VR3

https://tinyurl.com/yxebpu3b

True Lies: Subversives, Spies, and Scribblers in Soviet and American Cold War Culture, Sat, November 12, 12:30 to 2:15pm CST (12:30 to 2:15pm CST), The Palmer House Hilton, Floor: 3rd Floor, Salon 6

https://tinyurl.com/2oaywjzm

US Foreign Policy and Russian Security after Trump, Fri, November 11, 4:15 to 6:00pm CST (4:15 to 6:00pm CST), The Palmer House Hilton, Floor: 3rd Floor, Salon 3

https://tinyurl.com/2ep4pm6u

Propaganda Wars: Struggles over Political Narratives in the Soviet and Post-Soviet World, Fri, November 11, 8:00 to 9:45am CST (8:00 to 9:45am CST), The Palmer House Hilton, Floor: 3rd Floor, Salon 12

https://tinyurl.com/2hnzms3f

Borderlands and Cultural Boundaries in Historical and Literary Text, Sat,

November 12, 10:15am to 12:00pm CST (10:15am to 12:00pm CST), The Palmer House Hilton, Floor: 7th Floor, Clark 10

https://tinyurl.com/2zbsjfkf

Popularizing Knowledge in the Soviet Union: I, Thu, November 10, 1:00 to 2:45pm CST (1:00 to 2:45pm CST), The Palmer House Hilton, Floor: 7th Floor, Clark 3

https://tinyurl.com/y6bcf9ct