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## Twenty five years of scholarly collaboration: The International Russian History Colloquium of the St. Petersburg Institute of History, RAS<sup>1</sup>

The welcome renewal of the esteemed *Vestnik* of the St. Petersburg Institute of History is a fitting moment to review and celebrate a project that has involved twenty five years of close collaboration between its members and scholars in Western Europe and North America: the International History Colloquium on Russian History. This remarkable effort, organized and administered by the Institute, had its origins already in the Soviet period in the midst of perestroika, when meetings were held in Paris, Moscow, and Leningrad to discuss how to take advantage in mutually constructive ways of new cooperative scholarly initiatives. The colloquia were formally inaugurated in June 1990 when the Institute of History hosted the first gathering in the hotel Sovetskaia, devoted to the theme “The Working Class and Russia’s ‘Revolutionary Situation’ at the Beginning of the XX century”. The proceedings were soon published, and widely read in both Russian and abroad<sup>2</sup>. Since then, colloquia have been held on a regular basis every three years. Each has involved by careful organization and design equal numbers of Russian and non-Russian scholars. Each has also resulted in (or will result in) a major publication distinguished both by the quality

<sup>1</sup> RAS – Russian Academy of sciences.

<sup>2</sup> См.: Реформы или революция? Россия 1861–1917: Материалы международного коллоквиума историков. СПб: Наука, 1992.

and innovation of formal *doklady* as well as the critical and constructive intensity of discussions that each volume has included. The Institute is justly proud of its role in fostering lasting scholarly engagement across countries, historical fields, and generations, and in the ways the Institute International History Colloquium has stimulated innovative and imaginative historical research of the highest quality within Russia and abroad.

The principal initiators of this collaborative project were the renown historians Leopold Haimson from Columbia University in New York and the Maison de Science de l'Homme in Paris, Academicians V. S. Diakin and B. V. Anan'ich (SPbII, RAS), and P. V. Volobuev (II RAS, Moscow). In 1988 Haimson convened a small meeting in Paris, attended by B. V. Anan'ich, P. V. Volobuev, Z. Galili, S. I. Potolov, J. Sherrer, and others, to discuss how the intellectual and scholarly possibilities being created under perestroika might be used to the best mutual advantage. Joining him were in this effort at subsequent meetings in Soviet Russia and New York were a group of scholars who had managed to develop collegial long term scholarly relations with their Soviet colleagues, some going back as far as the 1960s. They included Gregory Freeze, Daniel Field, Richard Wortman, Reginald Zelnik, William Rosenberg, Alfred Rieber, and Terrence Emmons from the United States; Jutta Scherrer, Andreas Kappeler, Manfred Hildemeyer, Teodor Shanin from Europe, and Rafail Ganelin, Taisia Kitanina, Boris Mironov, Alexander Fursenko, Valentina Chernukha, Leonid Shepelev, Nikolai Smirnov, Vladimir Cherniaev, and Aleksei Tsamutali in Lenin-grad/St. Petersburg. In addition to Academician P. V. Volobuev, the effort also had the strong support in Moscow of I. D. Kovalchenko, Iu. I. Kir'ianov, L. G. Zakharova, K. F. Shatsillo, I. M. Pushkareva, and V. I. Bovykin, all of whom presented reports or offered critical commentary at the first colloquium. For many years Sergei Potolov played the invaluable role of academic secretary to the sessions. Leopold Haimson also chaired an International Commission housed at the Harriman Institute of Columbia University which provided the colloquia with initial funding. Subsequent support for the initiative came both from American universities and foundations, RGNF, the Likhachev Foundation in St. Petersburg, the European University at St. Petersburg, and the Institute of History itself.

From the start, the colloquia had three primary goals. The first was to contribute in a significant way to the development of new approaches to Russian history in Russia and abroad through collaborative discussion and constructive critique. It was hoped this would encourage new kinds of archival investigations, built on the respected traditions of the so called "St. Petersburg school"; a careful and critical examination of new theoretical approaches; and a mutual re-examination of the competitive conceptual frameworks that had long dominated the field in the Soviet Union and abroad. A second goal was to stimulate the recruitment, training, and support of the new generation of Russian historians. Here it was hoped that younger scholars might be encouraged to withstand the very challenging conditions post-Soviet Russia was experiencing and continue their studies. From the start, the

colloquia organizers therefore made a point of assuring the participation of the most promising *aspiranty* from the Institute as well as from the U.S. and Europe, establishing what was hoped would be new contacts and lasting relationships.

The third and final goal, set at a meeting of Haimson's International Commission in Moscow in January 1992 following the success of the initial colloquium in 1990, was to assure regular future meetings every three years on what the Commission members regarded as *aktual'nye topics* of the new history of Russia. In a intensive discussions, the Russian members of the Commission (including I. D. Koval'chenko, A. A. Fursenko, P. V. Volobuev, R. G. Pikhoia, A. O. Chubar'ian, S. V. Mironenko, A. P. Nenarokov, B. V. Anan'ich, and others) joined their American and European colleagues (L. Haimson, D. Field, Z. Galili, R. Wortman, T. Emmons, W. Rosenberg, M. Hildermaier, F. Gori, J. Scherrer, and J. Klosterman) in identifying eleven major directions for future joint study and research. These included the broad problems of reform and revolution in comparative historical perspective; the role of the intelligentsia in Russian social and political life; the question of "mentality" and socio-economic development; the history of social movements and political parties; reconceptualizing the history of the working class in Russia; and the development of new approaches to the historical study of cultural forms and formations, religion, and Russia's multi-ethnic empire. As the original members of the "Haimson Commission" gave way over the years to their younger successors (including D. Orlovsky, L. Engelstein, Z. Galili, R. Zelnik, M. Steinberg, J. Hellbeck, J. Plamper, N. Smirnov, V. Cherniaev, N. Mikhailov, B. Kolonitskii, T. Abrosimova, and B. Dubentsov) the colloquia themes were expanded to include a variety of important but understudied themes as well as some that, while well reflected in the international historiography, needed reexamination very much. These included, among others, the nature and effects in Russia of the First World War, the meanings and historical uses of "social memory", the nature and forms of Russian urban life, and the importance of "subjectivity" and "personality" in effecting historical change. As each successive meeting of the colloquium proved to be a gathering of international scholarly importance, the issues addressed became more complex and the discussions correspondingly more intense.

Contention, however, was a constructive element of the colloquia from the start, however, even if it did not always seem so in the moment. The very first colloquium took place in the fraught environment of 1990, when, despite dire circumstances, the participants could hardly imagine that within a few months the U.S.S.R. would cease to exist. In these conditions, the path breaking *doklad* by B. V. Anan'ich and R. Sh. Ganelin, "The Crisis of Power in Russia. Reforms and the Revolutionary Process", carried contemporary as well as historical resonance as these two distinguished Academicians challenged still dominant interpretations about the relationship between the tsarist regime own failure to reform and its collapse. In the opening session of the colloquium, they argued that reforms and revolution were alternative ways to resolve the pressing problems of society and the state. "One of the causes for

the collapse of autocracy in February 1917 was the inability and the lack of desire of the government to pursue a course of consequential reforms"<sup>3</sup>. By implication, Russia's powerful workers' movement, however much it may ultimately had help set the social foundations of the October revolution, might well have helped create a far less radical socio-political system had the regime itself been amenable to social-democratic reforms. The historical inevitability still entrenched in dominant Marxist-Leninist conceptualization and methodology was thus directly challenged by a competitive notion of historical contingency that encouraged among other new research a re-examination of individual biography (like that, esp. of S. Witte and Petr Stolypin) as well a new looks at workers' culture and mentality itself and their relations with other social formations. Not surprisingly, the colloquium soon heard a powerful argument in support of historical materialism, presented by V. I. Bovykin. In his view, discarding old dogmas did not mean serious socio-economic historical scholarship could or should be disregarded. Citing recent work by Western as well as Russian scholars, including Leopold Haimson, Yuri Kir'ianov, Diane Koenker and Irina Pushkareva, Bovykin argued that mass consciousness, as many historical episodes demonstrate, essentially restricted the range of actions available to political parties and limited the subjective factor in the revolutionary process"<sup>4</sup>.

This contentious question of historical "alternatives" emerged in other ways at the sessions as well, although somewhat less directly. Richard Wortman, for example, presented a paper that looked at the rule of Nicholas II from the perspective of its symbolic imagery. Some in the audience were clearly surprised by his argument that "fearing the challenge to his own autocratic power, Nicholas II presented him as bearing the traditions of Russian autocracy and played a role that was no less destructive to existing institutions than the programs of the oppositional parties"<sup>5</sup>. In the discussion, however, Wortman's views were linked in a constructive way with the interventions of V. S. Diakin, R. Sh. Ganelin, and B. V. Anan'ich; and indeed, a synthesis of the perspectives of these four renown scholars has essentially recast our understanding of complexities of the late imperial reform. The *doklad* of Laura Engelstein, "The Gender Questions' and the Political Crisis of the Professional Intelligentsia after the 1905 Revolution" also created something of a sensation, although twenty years later an understanding of how questions of gender affected political thinking and behavior has become a fundamental part of historical interpretation. For their part, O. D. Koval'chenko and V. S. Diakin also roiled traditional waters with their emphasis on alternative possibilities, and therefore alternative choices, for Russia economic development. Here, too, threads of interpretation that had begun to find voice in the last 1950s and then again in the 1980s were given clear statement, generating considerable intellectual excitement.

<sup>3</sup> Реформы или революция. С. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Там же. С. 206–207.

<sup>5</sup> Там же. С. 28.

Partly because of the interest generated by the first international history colloquium, the second St. Petersburg history colloquium in 1993 turned more directly to an analysis of the roots of the 1917 revolution in political, social, national, and cultural terms. With the support of Leopold Haimson, the Harriman Institute, Professor Ziva Galili of Rutgers University, Academicians A. A. Fursenko, P. V. Volobuev, and V. A. Shishkin, and Academic Secretary S. I. Potolov, the Initiative Group for this second set of meetings (B. Kolonitskii, N. Smirnov, and V. Cherniaev) represented a new generation of Russian historians. 80 historians of Russia from the Russian Federation, the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Finland, and Ukraine gathered in St. Petersburg for what may have been the largest international colloquium to ever have gathered historians of Russia together for four days of intensive discussion. The *21 doklady* and extensive discussions produced in 1994 the second important volume in the colloquium series, «Анатомия революции. 1917 год в России: массы, партии, власть»<sup>6</sup>.

Two features distinguished these meetings. The first was a comprehensive rethinking of the historical roots of the February and October Revolutions, offered by Leopold Haimson and Pavel Volobuev. The second was an extension of the revolutionary subject beyond issues of party and class to those of political culture, political consciousness, and their relationship to something that could be called “revolutionary culture”. In two complementary plenary reports, Haimson and Volobuev both reflected on the conceptual limitations of contemporary Russian historiography. In Haimson’s view, these limitations had produced the current “crisis” he argued now characterized the field: “insubstantial theoretical schema, conceptions and most important, forms of thinking with which Soviet historians earlier analyzed historical processes”<sup>7</sup>. Taking up themes presented at the 1991 colloquium, Haimson charted the limitations in political thinking and tactics especially among centrist and left liberals which in his view accentuated the dynamics of social crisis at all levels of society: “above” in the contradictions between the state, its aristocratic and gentry social base, and the empire’s developing entrepreneurial classes; “below” in the struggles by (and among) industrial workers to effect social and political change. Citing an important point made by V. Chernaev at the 1990 colloquium concerning the decisive role in the February revolution of the Petrograd garrison, Haimson suggested it also bore a larger symbolic meaning in terms of convincing participants that unlike previous revolutionary situations, “the revolution that they either expected or feared, frequently with very mixed feelings, had finally actually begun”<sup>8</sup>.

Academician Volobuev did not directly disagree. His perspective concerning the social and political underpinning of 1917 was a longer one, however, touching both radical thinking in the 1840s and the limitations of the 1860s Great Reforms.

<sup>6</sup> Анатомия революции. 1917 год в России: Массы, партии, власть / Отв. ред. В.Ю. Черняев. СПб.: Глаголь, 1994.

<sup>7</sup> Там же. С. 21.

<sup>8</sup> Там же. С. 36.

An important element in this process he suggested was that “the decision to undertake industrialization and the general modernization of the country along capitalist lines was set within the confines of a limited internal market afflicted by the backwardness of Russian agrarian production”, a failure which carried over into political failures as well. In an historiographically important shift of determinants away from Lenin’s Bolsheviks to more objective social circumstances, Volobuev concluded by suggesting that the “February bourgeois-democratic revolution... opened for Russia the prospect of becoming a normal bourgeois-democratic order... The alternatives of capitalism or socialism that was not considered by Lenin and the Bolsheviks were rooted in the foundations of Russian society, in the social consciousness of the *narod*”. Lenin’s great success, in Volobuev’s view, was that he turned abstract questions about socialism into a language with direct relevance to the revolution. At the same time, he maintained, “in the concrete-historical circumstances of 1917, even more decisive was the fact that the Russian bourgeois, coming to power, either could not or did not want to carry through desperately needed reforms”<sup>9</sup>.

Not surprisingly, both reports evoked lively responses from R. Ganelin, B. Anan’ich, and V. Diakin, as well from their younger colleagues: N. Mikhailov, V. Buldakov, V. Miller, O. Figes, and V. Cherniaev. Equally important, the arguments they posited were both directly and indirectly elaborated upon by the reports of L. Protasov, Z. Galili, A. Rabinowitch, and W. Rosenberg on political parties and state power; T. Abrosimova, B. Kolonitskii, D. Koenker, N. Smirnov, O. Figes, and A. Wildman on social groups and their political consciousness; and P. K. Kornakov, M. Ferro, R. Stites, G. Il’in, and E. Swift on political culture and revolutionary culture. Here less familiar issues of political culture, political consciousness, and their complex relationships to social formations were layered on more familiar socio-economic and socio-political processes. In retrospect, one can see the foundations here of later, widely admired new work by many of the younger scholars both within and outside of Russia who engaged in the discussions. The questions of nationality and revolution also received new attention, particularly in the reports of V. Chernaev and I. Afanasyev.

One of the more contentious issues of this colloquium had to do with the relationship between the workers movement before and during the revolution and the political parties, including the Bolsheviks, which presumed to speak in its name. Unlike the view of Richard Pipes and others, still influential at the time with many in Europe and the U.S., there was no disagreement among colloquium participants about the importance of labor activism in creating and affecting Russia’s revolutionary course in 1917. The contention was over the question of whether this movement should better be seen as a largely autonomous force pressing for social and political change, with varying political allegiances (right and centrist Menshevik, Menshevik internationalist, left SR, left and more centrist Bolshevik, etc.), or one that despite its occupational diversity was still largely mobilized in support of Leninist goals.

<sup>9</sup> Там же. С. 45–46.

At issue here was both a fundamental issue of interpretation as well as empirical research. The question of “autonomy” could be understood in terms of formal linkages to organized political parties or in terms of the ways workers kept their own organizations, affiliations, and communities while also acting in ways that supported particular party programs. In either case “autonomy” distinguished a workers movement, or even elements of the workers movement like specific trade unions, from the kind of direct party domination and control that became the norm after the Bolsheviks came to power. These questions also had implications beyond Russian and Soviet history in the ways many western political figures (and some scholars) subsequently interpreted some trade unions in Western Europe and the United States after 1918 (and especially after 1921) as communist “front” organizations.

When the colloquia first began, non-Russian colleagues often remarked that Russian historiography was in deep crisis, the resolution of which many thought at the time was only in the far distant future. But the discussion devoted to the “anatomy of the Russian revolution in 1917” clearly demonstrated that Russian historians and their non-Russian colleagues had much more in common than they had thought differentiated them from each other. The discussion clearly showed that both were moving in the same general direction, that history written by Russians and non-Russians was mutually important, and that the value of each as a whole was, for the most part, essentially the same. As a consequence, planning began immediately for the next International Colloquium to take up the extremely interesting issues relating to the analysis and very conception of the Russian “working class”, the everyday life of Russian workers, and the mutual relations between workers and the Russian intelligentsia, all under the rubric “Workers and the Intelligentsia in Russia in the Era of Reform and Revolution, 1861 – February 1917”. The organizational committee was now broadened to include Iuri Il’ich Kir’ianov, who had introduced the concept of *облик* into the soviet historiographical lexicon during the period of relative intellectual liberalization in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and was considered one of the most imaginative Soviet historians of Russian labor; the noted American historian of Russian labor, Reginald Zelnik; Mark Steinberg, then a promising assistant professor at Yale University; and Nikolai Mikhailov, representing the Institute of History in St. Petersburg as well as its younger generation. Academician P.V. Volobuev again represented colleagues from Moscow.

Fittingly, the five day conference took place in the film screening room of the former Communist Party hotel in St. Petersburg, across the plaza from Smolnyi Institute. About 60 people participated as paper givers or commentators including scholars from Germany, France, Finland, Azerbaijan, and Australia as well as the United States and Russia. The three major themes of the colloquium were defined as: 1) Russian Workers: Self-Definition, Identity, Mentality; 2) Workers in the Russian Social Movement; and 3) Workers and the Intelligentsia. To facilitate open and thoughtful discussion, all *doklady* were now distributed in advance in Russian. Authors were

allotted only ten-minutes to present their essential theses. These were followed by longer presentation of formal commentaries by designated discussants, open discussion, and detailed responses from the *dokladchiki*. This procedure proved very successful in stimulating informed discussion. It became the norm (“*reglament*”) for all future colloquia.

The highlight of the first series of *doklady* in 1995 was undoubtedly the presentation of Iu. I. Kir’ianov, who for many years had struggled without great success to challenge the dominant materialist paradigm in Soviet social history and its static picture of “consciousness” with a notion of the subtleties of psychology, morality, identity, and socio-political awareness. As P. V. Volobuev and other senior labor historians later reminded us poignantly, Kir’ianov suffered for his originality. Now, he went further and invoked the French *Annales* School’s notion of “*mentalité*” (*менталитет*). The deliberate use of this newer European term signified the strong desire on the part of many participants at the colloquium to explore once-restricted terrains.

Kir’ianov’s approach was reflected in the imaginative presentations of N. V. Mikhailov on the collectivist psychology that characterized many workers, arguing (and thereby provoking intense discussion) that it was largely shaped by peasant cultural and institutional traditions: “workers as well as peasants, retaining a collective character, felt themselves part of a ‘family of workers’ and preferred collective forms of participation to individual ones”<sup>10</sup>. Elaborating on this theme, the Moscow anthropologist N. S. Polishchuk described the collective rituals that were part of the everyday life of Russian industrial workers before 1917, leading to a discussion of the value of terms like “working class” and “workers’ intelligentsia” itself. The value of these concepts was part of the focus as well of papers by A. S. Kasimov, D. Pearl, and M. Hildemeier, among others. Towards the end of the colloquium, the definition and boundaries of “intelligentsia” itself, one of the most important cultural and political “keywords” in modern Russian history, were implicitly expanded upon by T. M. Kitanina, who addressed the attention paid to workers by members of the Russian Technical Society, which joined in its ranks leading members of the industrial and intelligentsia bourgeoisie, and opened new perspectives for resolving their mutual and urgent tasks<sup>11</sup>; and S. I. Potolov, who took a fresh look at Georgii Gapon’s Assembly of Russian Factory Workers in his report “Petersburg Workers and the Intelligentsia on the Eve of the Revolution of 1905–07”<sup>12</sup>. Mark D. Steinberg also confronted directly the concept of personality (*личность*) and its reflection in the milieu of the worker-intelligentsia, a question which the colloquium would again engage in 2010<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Рабочие и интеллигенция России в эпоху реформ и революций 1861 — фев. 1917 / Отв. ред. С.И. Потолов. СПб., 1997. С. 163.

<sup>11</sup> Там же. С. 499–500.

<sup>12</sup> Там же. С. 530–541.

<sup>13</sup> Человек и личность в истории России, конец XIX — XX век / Н.В. Михайлов, Й. Хельбек (отв. ред.). СПб., 2013.

Already by 1995, colloquium participants were no longer inclined to think of Russian historiography “in crisis”. On the contrary, what was extremely important and extremely interesting was that in the course of discussion colleagues from abroad revealed for us those aspects of the problem of the mutual relationship between workers and the Russian intelligentsia at the turn of the century on which Russian researchers had devoted insufficient attention before 1995. The work of the colloquium thus clearly demonstrated that its *problematika* evoked lively interest not only among professional historians, but also among representatives of civil society. Fittingly, it concluded with a lively, even contentious, summary session, beginning with reports by P. V. Volobuev and L. S. Haimson. In a spirited “back and forth”, as one says in English, several speakers raised questions about the uses of language itself, the problems of representation vs. actuality, and the way historians themselves tended to name the issues and subjects they study to facilitate their analyses without sufficient attention to the reductionist qualities of generalization and categorization. It was pointed out that “*rabochii klass*” and “*intelligentsia*” themselves sometimes reflected this, leading some participants to reflect that that controversy itself had helped bring together younger and older scholars both from Russia and abroad in ways that genuinely advanced the field of labor history as a whole. In any event, the constructive intensity of the discussions clearly strengthened the foundation for continuing mutual discussion and productive interaction<sup>14</sup>. In addition to the full Russian publication, a large sample of conference reports was subsequently published in English as well by the University of California Press<sup>15</sup>.

In retrospect, the 1995 colloquium represented an important new level of constructive, contentious, but also always collegial interaction among and between Russian and non-Russian scholars of different scholarly generations with diverse and sometimes quite different training, professional experience, and historical conceptualizations. When one participant worried aloud toward the end of the sessions that disagreements among Russian scholars themselves had at times been “unseemly”, like the display of dirty linen, another responded to the contrary. Open disagreement between colloquia participants signified a new level of mutual collegiality and respect; in years past, younger Russian scholars would not have dared to challenge publicly the views of their mentors, while younger non-Russian historians would have been equally reluctant to challenge directly the views of their Russian colleagues, lest they take offense. It was also clear that what had often been formal moments of social interaction during previous colloquia — lunches, coffee breaks, and the concluding forshet — had now become important places for continued lively discussion. Here the formal rules of participation which governed presentations, commentaries, and

<sup>14</sup> Report on the International Colloquium on Workers and the Intelligentsia in Russia in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries // International Labor and Working Class History. 1996. N 49. P. 184–185.

<sup>15</sup> Workers and Intelligentsia in Late Imperial Russia: Realities, Representations, Reflections / Ed. by R. Zelnik. Berkeley, CA, 1999.

questions, gave way to direct and sometimes quite lengthy exchanges. The Institute of History in St. Petersburg had succeeded in extending the kinds of informal exchange that often took place in its hallways and that were long a vital if informal element of the Institute's intellectual sociability.

In June of 1998 and 2001 the Institute hosted the fourth and fifth International History Colloquia at the new European University at St. Petersburg, continuing what was now recognized as an important "tradition" in the Institute's scholarly life. The focus in 1998 was a reexamination of the Russia's experience in the First World War; in 2001, participants took up the complicated relationship between scholars, scholarship, and the exercise of authority and power. As with previous colloquia, both gatherings again resulted in comprehensive publications that included reports and discussion, each more than 500 pages in length<sup>16</sup>. Z. Galili, R. Zelnik, B. Kolonitskii, V. Cherniaev, D. Orlovsky, S. Potolov, N. Mikhailov and F. Wcislo joined N. Smirnov on the colloquia publications editorial board.

Chaired by two of the authors of this paper, N. Smirnov and W. Rosenberg, the colloquium on the First World War addressed what its organizers regarded as a profound lack of attention within Russia and abroad to Russia's own experience in this singular event of the XX century. While the attention of Western historians had focused overwhelmingly on Germany and the effects of the war on post-war Europe, historians of Russia and the Soviet Union had turned their attention to its immediate and longer term effects on revolution and the formation of Soviet state and society. As the American historian D. Orlovsky pointed out at the conference, there was not a single word about Russia in major Western syntheses by P. Fussell, G. Mosse, M. Ekstein, or J. Winter, while "in Russia... the Great War was immersed in silence. With the exception of work on military operations and other work on military and diplomatic history, the Great War itself was a large 'white spot'..."<sup>17</sup>

The colloquium addressed this *beloe piatno* with 27 *doklady* grouped around six interrelated themes: theory, conceptualization and methodology; war and society; politics; culture and political culture; empire and national movements; and economics in the broad sense of the term (including political economy). In conceptualizing the war period in broad socio-political and socio-economic terms, the colloquium attempted to avoid the tendency to see the war in terms of its linkage to revolution on the one hand, and in terms of military action and engagement on the other. These two dimensions of the period were never out of sight. Rather, they were addressed in terms of the war's effect on, and relation to, its broader social, economic, political, and cultural effects between 1914 and 1917. For example, several papers broadened the question of Russia's "enemy" in World War I to an understanding of Russia's own self-definition and redefinition, as evidenced symbolically by uniforms, hymns,

<sup>16</sup> Россия и Первая мировая война / Отв. ред. Н.Н. Смирнов. СПб.: Дм. Буланин, 1999; Власть и наука, ученые и власть: 1880-е — начало 1920-х годов / Отв. ред. Н.Н. Смирнов. СПб.: Дм. Буланин, 2003.

<sup>17</sup> Россия и Первая мировая война. С. 49, 56 (сноска 1).

banners, reading material, and categories of official classification, including which nationality groups within the empire should not be allowed to bear arms. Other papers, especially those by D. Orlovsky, V. D'iachkov, and L. Protasov took up the complicated issues of indoctrination, social consciousness, and historical memory of the war itself, which shaped understanding under the Soviet regime. Kirianov's exploration of parties on the right, emphasizing their weakness, was also an exploration of conservative *mentalité*, taking up a theme he had introduced in the earlier colloquia. And B. V. Anan'ich's essay on the Russian bourgeoisie and the issue of state monopolies went well beyond the historiography on this topic during the Soviet period, offering a stimulating exploration of the notion of "cultural capitalism" and provoking very interesting discussion. The questions of mobilization and population policies were also seen as fundamental to the experience of war in Russia. P. Holquist, A. N. Kurtsev, and P. Gatrell each neatly situated this experience within a boarder analytical and geographical context, and each prompted colloquium participants to think carefully about the ways the war destabilized familiar social categories.

The discussion of politics allowed a comparable breadth. While focusing specifically on the court and high politics, *doklady* by R. Sh. Ganelin, M. F. Florinskii, and I. V. Lukoianov alerted participants to the ways in which even "autonomous" politics carries the substantive freight of legitimacy, and hence connects to broader politics of social consciousness and political culture. It was thus possible through their stimulating reports to consider further the very notion of the state itself in the last years of imperial Russia, particularly as it related to the separate forms and concepts of government. J. Sanborn's notable contribution took the discussion further by examining the realms of local politics in these terms, raising questions not only about the differences within the empire of politics and styles of local control, but the complex relationship between attitudes about the war and attitudes about the state itself. The final colloquium sessions on the troublesome issues of social culture and political culture, and on empire, national movements and the economy similarly pressed conceptual boundaries. Here, the work of N. N. Smirnov and S. Morrissey connected patriotism and radicalism, while B. I. Kolonitskii took a close look at the political use of "anglophobia". V. P. Buldakov's rethinking of the "crisis of empire" in socio-cultural terms, M. von Hagen's analysis of ethnic self-conscious, and S. M. Iskhakov's review of Moslem perspectives again approached the experience of war in terms of the complex subjectivities of identity as well as the easier institutions of national classification. In the "open tribune" that closed the colloquium, 27 people offered their summary thoughts and observations<sup>18</sup>. Their comments take up 40 pages of the published volume.

<sup>18</sup> В. Ю. Черняев, Х. Ян, В. И. Мусаев, Дж. Санборн, Ю. И. Кирьянов, Р. Зелник, Т. М. Китанина, Б. Бонвеч, А. Н. Курцев, В. В. Лапин, А. Ф. Ворончихин, А. П. Марков, Р. Ш. Ганелин, С. И. Потолов, З. Галили, Е. Ю. Дубровская, Л. А. Булгакова, С. В. Куликов, А. В. Островский, И. Н. Олегина, И. В. Лукоянов, А. Л. Дмитриев, Б. Б. Дубенцов, Б. И. Колоницкий, У. Розенберг, Н. Н. Смирнов.

The fifth international history colloquium in June 2001 took participants in a very different direction, reflecting in part the mutual interests of both younger and more senior scholars to explore carefully the relationship between scholars and scholarship on state power in late imperial and early Soviet Russia. The Organizing Committee for this gathering, chaired by D. Orlovsky and N. N. Smirnov, included V. V. Lapin, B. I. Kolonitskii and F. Wcislo, along with S. Potolov, V. Cherniaev, and N. Mikhailov. It assembled an imaginative group of 24 papers carefully linked to six important themes that had never received systematic treatment in either Russian or Western historiography, but which had undoubtedly also been at the center of attention in contemporary Russian society, and which, unfortunately, were again testifying to the contradictory relationships between political authorities and scholarship as well as scholars and power.

The first was the direct effect of scholars in power on the imperial Russian bureaucracy. Among the scholars discussed were such well known scholars as D. I. Mendeleev, V. V. Barthold, and Prince B. B. Golitsyn, but lesser known scholars were referenced as well. B. V. Anan'ich, for example, opened the discussion with a detailed examination of the scholarly achievements and political failures of N. Kh. Bunge and I. A. Vyshnegradskii on Russian economic policies and development under Alexander III. Both were noted scholars. Bunge served as professor and rector of the University of St. Vladimir in Kiev, and was the author of a number of volumes on history of finance, monetary exchange, trade, and credit. Vyshnegradskii, a professor of mechanical engineering who became Director of St. Petersburg Technological Institute was the author of numerous works in the area of mechanics and machine building. In B. V. Anan'ich's stimulating exploration, the scholarly expertise of both men did little to affect their success in implementing state economic policy, a factor that prompted both Alexander III and Nicholas II to turn to the practical experience of S. Witte<sup>19</sup>.

The other side of the relationship between scholarship and power was then explored by A. Kozhevnikov, M. Mesnule, A. L. Litvin, and A. Stanziani with doklady on the influence of power on scholarship. Of particular interest here were the questions of "professional ethics", economics and statistics between politics and technocracy, and the special situation of regional scholars like those explored by A. L. Litvin at Kazan University. A clear theme here was the constant risks of politicizing scholarship to meet regime needs. As S. Finkel, L. A. Bulgakova, A. P. Kupaigorodskaiia and A. E. Ivanov described in some detail, these pressures became acute during the First World War and especially the period 1917–1922. The doklad of Stuart Finkel in particular took the question through the organization of the professoriate and the university reforms of the early Soviet years. In addition, the colloquium addressed the problem of the influence of politics and ideology on scholarship, scholars, and political organizations, and in the last session, the complicated issue of the relationship

<sup>19</sup> *Ананьич Б. В.* Власть, предпринимательство и наука в России в конце XIX — начале XX века: К истории развития производительных сил // *Власть и наука*. С. 13–25.

between the languages of science and the languages of politics. Yet this in turn raised fundamental questions about the nature of science itself. As Laura Engelstein said in discussion, she was “struck by the theme of the dissemination of science in society”. In her view, “if one might say that science was itself part of culture in general, and then it was essentially a cultural phenomenon in and of itself. But one cannot say that any form of culture is a part of science. Otherwise, I would want to ask ‘what, then, is science?’”<sup>20</sup>. Not surprisingly, this (and other interventions) sparked lively discussion, a common characteristic of colloquia gatherings.

In June 2004, with the support of RGNE, the Likhachev Foundation, the European University at St. Petersburg, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the University of Illinois, the International History Colloquium took up the interesting set of problems associated with the culture of cities of the Russian empire at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. As was now the rule, all 23 *doklady* (14 presented by Russian scholars, 9 by non-Russians) were circulated in advance so that most of the colloquia time could be taken up by commentaries and discussion. Again, the organizing committee brought together scholars representing different methodologies and conceptual approaches, as well as different generations. It selected as *dokladchiki* those who best offered a fresh approach to issues of urban society and city life that might otherwise have seemed familiar. Of importance even today among the themes touched on in the reports were those on the problems of developing civil society, the relationships between social and personal urban life, the “imperial presence” in various Russian cities and its resistance, and the questions of urban poverty and criminality.

In this respect as well in terms of the quality of the research it reflected, the opening paper written jointly by B. Anan’ich and A. Kobak set the tone. On the “Garden-City in Russia at the Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century”, Anan’ich and Kobak traced the idea of the “garden-city” from the theories of the English sociologist Ebenezer Howard as they developed in the 1890s through their dissemination in Russia with the translation of his study *The City of the Future* in 1913, the organization of the International Union of Garden-Cities and City Planning in 1913–14, and the spread of interest in creating “livable garden cities” in the first years of the Soviet regime, centered in part on the New Moscow project. While towards the end of the 1920s the attitude of the Soviet government to Howard’s ideas changed, after World War II the conception of a “garden-city” again took hold, finding particular reflection in the new Academic city of Novosibirsk.

The breadth of this opening paper provided a context for a number of additional reports: the effect of urban life on thousands of peasant women who left their villages at the turn of the century for large urban centers (Barbara Engel); the social dynamics of the post-imperial city through the prism of ethnic criminality (I. G. Gerasimov); city as Babylon (K. Clark); and an examination of the population and spa-

<sup>20</sup> Там же. С. 492.

tiality of Russian provincial cities (A. N. Zorin), among others. Cultural issues also received careful attention, especially in the *doklady* of S. M. Iskhakov (“Urban Centers of Muslim Culture in Imperial Russia”); I. G. Kosikhina (“Socio-cultural Organization in a Provincial City”); S. A. Mezin (“Old Saratov in the Recollections of Cultural Figures”); and L. McReynolds (“Murder in the City: Narratives of Urbanism”). One of the most original presentations, anticipating his book published shortly afterwards, was co-organizer M. Steinberg’s rich *doklad* on St. Petersburg in the last decades of the old regime: “‘Black Masks’: Spectacle, Imagery, and Identity on Urban Streets”<sup>21</sup>.

In June 2007 and 2010 the colloquia turned to more neglected themes in the historiography of late imperial and early Soviet Russia. In 2007, 25 scholars presented reports on “historical memory and society in Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union”; three years later, the focus was on “‘Chelovek i Lichnost’ in the History of Russia”. Both colloquia covered the period from the end of the XIX century through much of the Soviet period.

The 2007 colloquium attempted to bridge the huge gap that existed in Russian historiography concerning historical memory, and in particular, what within Russian history constituted subjects of memory and how they had been concealed both from researchers as well as from those interested in the histories of the Russian and Soviet states: memory of the World War I, the autocracy, development of culture — the whole complex, in other words, of these and other problems which were raised in the course of the colloquium, including the problem of meaning of “memory” itself, both as a social phenomenon and in the “historical” sense. Twenty five *doklady* by historians from Russia, the USA, Finland, Germany, Canada, Great Britain, Ukraine, Switzerland, Italy, and France engaged in numerous mutually valuable discussions. It is not too much to say that the larger number of the problems discussed were raised precisely here at the international scholarly colloquia of the St. Petersburg Institute of History for the first time.

In planning the colloquium on “social memory”, B. Kolonitskii and L. Engelstein, the co-organizers, worked with their colleagues to attract new work on a subject that, despite its lack of definitional clarity, had produced far more explorations by non-Russian scholars than by their Russian colleagues. Part of the reason for this may well have been the fraught nature of “memory” itself before 1991, when, as more than one conference participant noted, remembering itself could be regarded as an anti-Soviet act. Part of the reason as well however, had to do with the imprecision of the concept itself. “Historical memory” (or “social memory” as it is more often referred to in Western writing) is not, after all, memory in the literal sense. The term “social memory” refers to common understanding about the past that are formed when shared discourses, institutions, and broader socio-cultural practices appropriate particular historical narratives to define the socially constitutive nature

<sup>21</sup> See Steinberg M. Petersburg *Fin de Siècle*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2011.

of historical events — that is, experiences represented as core elements of collectively recognizable past that are believable because they are “remembered”. The “historical” experience lived by individuals is here written large. It is given particular kinds of meaning in terms of the ways it shapes collectivity’s understanding of that has historically been “shared”, even if this history was not, in fact, actually experienced in common ways. In the process, the subject of individual memory becomes a social object. The individual “telling” becomes the social “told”. Social memory in this sense it is not some magically constructed body of ideas or images, but a socio-cultural artifact in and of itself, the “reality” of the past that is socially and culturally articulated and maintained.

The 25 *doklady* presented at this colloquium addressed this issue in a variety of ways. Some *dokladchiki*, like E. V. Anisimov, P.N. Bazanov, and V. V. Lapin looked closely at the ways individual figures or events were recalled and recounted in subsequent historical writing, formal literature, and by films. S. V. Bepalov explored the image of the tsar-emancipator Alexander II in the political struggle at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. C. Kelly explored the theme “children and the private past in Russia and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century”. Others, including, K. Jobst, H. Coleman, O. Turii, and O. Figes addressed more directly the problematic nature of Russian and Soviet social memory production. Using the terminology of the famous French historical sociologist P. Nora, Jobst, for example, explored the Crimea as a “lieu de memoire”; Coleman explored the relationship between orthodoxy, “little Russian” identity, and historical memory in 19<sup>th</sup> century Kiev; and Figes took up the question of private life, oral family narratives, and memory under Stalin. In the case of “historical memory” the gathering heard a path breaking paper by the renowned literary scholar I. Paperno that reached to the 1990s.

Still others giving papers in 2007 took up directly the nature and usefulness of the concept of historical memory itself. I. M. Savel’eva, for example, offered a stimulating (and provocative) paper on “The Concept ‘Historical Memory’: Sources and Results”, while W. Rosenberg asked rhetorically “Is Social Memory a ‘Useful Category of Historical Analysis’”, referring to Joan Scott’s famous question about gender. The concluding discussion at this colloquium was one of the liveliest in the entire series, with as many scholars expressing their uncertainty about the usefulness of “memory studies” as those who insisted that fundamental historical questions and events, including perhaps especially the revolutionary moments of 1917–18 and 1988–91, could not be fully understood without taking their social (or historical) memory elements into account.

It was largely for this reason that the 2010 colloquium took up the issues of history and subjectivity in the history of Russia at the turn of the 20th century under the title “Individual and Self”<sup>22</sup>. The organizational committee, chaired

<sup>22</sup> Человек и личность в истории России. Конец XIX — XX век. СПб.: Нестор-История, 2013.

by N. Mikhailov and J. Hellbeck, was quite aware, however, of the problems that a focus on “subjectivity” itself might present, both methodologically and in terms of the state of contemporary historical interest. The intention instead, in the words of N. V. Mikhailov, was to select a topic that engaged the growing interest among contemporary historians in the study of the “individual” as a changing historical entity. The Organizing Committee now received some 200 applications, 31 of which were presented at the colloquium as papers — 15 from Russian scholars, 16 from non-Russians. In contrast to earlier colloquia, and evidencing the importance of the seminar in promoting new and imaginative historical scholarship in Russia as well as abroad, a significant number of doklady were based on interdisciplinary approaches and concepts, incorporating the achievements of various humanities fields: philosophy, sociology, political science, cultural studies, psychology, philology, and art history, along with history more formally. The Organizing Committee succeeded in avoiding the risks involved in focusing on the general problem of subjectivities itself by insisting the problem be addressed in term of the influence of particular subjective states on particular historical processes and moments. Applications focusing on subjectivity itself were rejected.

The papers chosen for presentation at the colloquium were thus focused together on a series of fundamental theoretical problems Russian and Soviet history: how the state and society formulated and promoted particular conditions of individual and self from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; how these representations and practices influenced the self definitions and behavior of ordinary people and social groups; how individual self definition related to the various political tensions characterizing Russian and Soviet history in this period; and what methodologies and approaches were best suited to the study of individual and self — *человек и личность* — within the Russian historical context<sup>23</sup>. These issues were then explored in terms of the concepts themselves of the individual and self in Russian history (G. Pomerants, N. Plotnikov, A. Seniavskii, and R. Goldt); political revolutions and individual self-definition in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (A. Plunov, K. Morozov, E. Levkieskaia, V. Buldakov, and M. Ferretti); the social contexts of subjectivity in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (B. Engel, M. Steinberg, B. Kolonitskii, O. Usenko, and O. Velikanova); self definition in the face of an other (L. Manchester, N. Timofeeva, A. Chistikov, and D. Fainberg); constructing the human soul in the Stalin period (Y. Cohen, G. Orlova, A. Shcherbenok, F. Thun-Hohenstein, and A. Eremeeva); selfhood and war in 1914–1918 and 1941–1945 (A. Sumpf, E. Van Buskirk, A. Peri, and P. Barskova); and finally, the revival and decline of the socialist personality from the thaw to *perestroika* and beyond (M. Rozhanskii, A. Pinsky, N. Mitrokhin, and S. Pankratov).

<sup>23</sup> Там же. С. 9–18.

The keynote address opening the colloquium by G. S. Pomerants from Moscow entitled “My Life and Engagement with 20<sup>th</sup> Century Notions of Selfhood” created a great deal of interest, and set a very high level of discussion that was ably picked up by other presenters throughout the four days of reports and discussion, including those by A. Seniavskii (Moscow) on “Models of Personal Behavior amidst the Transformations of Russian Society in the late 19th and 20th Centuries”, E. Levkieskaia (Moscow) on “The Child and the Revolution: Personality Formation in an Era of Political Crisis”, V. Buldakov (Moscow) on “The Destruction of the Revolutionary Self, 1924–1926”, B. I. Kolonitskii (SPb.) on “Kerensky as a ‘New Man’ and New Politician: Towards the Study of the Genealogy of a Cult of Personality”, and Y. Cohen (Paris), which compared “subjectivity regimes” in the interwar periods in the Soviet Union and France. The period of high Stalinism itself was a focus of a number of reports, as was World War II, the period of stagnation, and the immediate years following the collapse of the Soviet Union. For example, M. Rozhanskii presented a paper on “Practical Idealism: The Euphoria of Collectivism: ‘Shock-Work’ Construction Brigades and their Stories, 1950s–1980s”; A. Pinsky on “The Meaning of Sincerity: Fedor Abramov and the First Thaw”; and F. Thun-Hohenstein (Berlin) on the “Laboratory of Soviet Biography: The ‘Lives of Extraordinary People’ Book Series, 1933–1941”. The section of the colloquium devoted to “Selfhood and War 1914–18, 1941–45” drew broad attention not only from other conference participants but those attending from the broader public as well. All sessions were open, and held again at the European University at St. Petersburg.

From its very beginning in 1990, the International History Colloquium of the St. Petersburg Institute of History has demonstrated that diverse approaches and various ways of thinking about historical problems are not impediments to fruitful collegial cooperation, but enlighten a variety of important subjects in multi-dimension always and allow their deeper understanding among historians and other scholars in Russia as well as abroad. The most recent colloquium in 2013 continued this important interaction, reaffirming its guiding principles both in the doklady that were presented and, equally important, in the rich and lively discussions that surrounded them. Under the guidance now of J. Plamper (Goldsmiths College, University of London) and N. Mikhailov (SPbII RAS), the sessions took up the theme “Little People and Big Wars in the History of Russia, from the Mid-19th to the Mid-20th Centuries”. For the first time in the historiography of Russia, a concentrated effort was to examine the effects of the great wars in Russian history on ordinary soldiers and citizens, as well as to understand these conflicts through their perspectives. More deliberately than previously, perhaps, the organizational committee also selected participants whose doklady also took up themes from previous colloquia, including the question of historical memory (reports of V. V. Lapin on “A Little Person on Board a Big Warship”; M. S. Fedotov, “The Image of the Sailor Peter Koshka in the Cultural

Memory of Pre-revolutionary Russia”, and M. Ferretti, “Two Memories of One War: The Individual and the State on the Great Fatherland War”. Additional panels took up the problems of religious and national self-determination, echoing the issues of individuality (*личность*); propaganda and social moods, which raised questions about the relationship between representations of violence and their factual actualities; and the particular problems of morality and psychology associated with individual understanding and perception of war. A very imaginative report by the young American scholar, B. Schechter (Univ. of California, Berkeley) on “The Bayonet and the Entrenching Tool: People and Things in War, 1941–45” examined the symbolic as well as practical importance of the “little man’s” weapons of war.

Among the other subjects producing especially lively discussion was the very question of what, in fact, constituted a “big war”. Was the question one of physical scale, in which case one would have to include the Napoleonic Wars, technology, (i. e., “modernity” or “modern” wars) which ordinary people could not control, or particular forms and particular qualities of force that “big wars” involved, in which case historians needed to be more concerned with such effects of big wars on ordinary people as concussion, dislocation, self-confidence, fear, and especially their sense of individuality. These questions naturally engaged issues of military anthropology as E. Seniavskaia discussed in her doklad “The Individual at War: The Experience, Establishment, and Development of Military Anthropology”, as well as psychology and military sociology more generally, as V. Cherniaev and E. Sergeev illustrated in their reports on “The Russo-Japanese War through the Eyes of a Young Officer of the Russian Fleet”, and “An Individual in Counter-Intelligence: The Moral-Psychological Particularities Frontline Service in the Years of the First World War”. The last panels of reports also brought these interdisciplinary approaches to bear on the complex issue of “War and Violence”. A. Sumpf reported on Russian wounded during the World War I, and was joined by M. Tserovich, K. Bishel, and I. V. Narskii, whose doklady took up the issue of “life in extremity” by examining perceptions of the Civil War in the Urals as unmitigated cruelty. Using rare material from Siberian regional archives, Narskii affirmed that among the “horrors of life” for contemporaries were the baseless, spontaneous, and inexplicable facts of naked force and bloody violence that in various ways were experience and seen in towns and villages, and with which those living under any variety of regimes ultimately had to come to terms.

To its great credit, the St. Petersburg Institute of History has been, and remains, committed to continuing this important international association despite its heavy organizational and especially financial demands, which has so greatly enriched the historiography of imperial and Soviet Russia abroad as well as in Russia itself. Planning is already underway for the next colloquium in 2017. The Institute and the colloquium organizing committee, chaired this time by B. I. Kolonitskii and D. Orlovsky, hopes the reports and discussion will reflect new thinking and

research on Russia's revolutionary experience in 1917, broadly defined. Our experience over 25 years is firm evidence that historical scholarship advances most strongly and effectively when various approaches, conceptualizations, methodologies, and research itself is subjected to constructive critical review between and among colleagues across national and generational boundaries. Through 9th colloquia involving more than 300 different scholars from more than 10 countries and many regions of the Russian Federation, lasting associations have developed together with deep mutual respect for the variety of methodologies, conceptualizations, and training that make research so interesting to historians and their work so important for society at large. The Institute is justly proud of its contribution to international historical scholarship in these ways.

### **Abstract**

**W. G. Rosenberg, N. V. Mikhailov, N. N. Smirnov. Twenty five years of scholarly collaboration: The International Russian History Colloquium of the St. Petersburg Institute of History, RAS**

Article is devoted to the analysis of twenty-five year history of international scientific Colloquium, the organizers of which is the Saint-Petersburg Institute of History, Russian Academy of Sciences and the international community of Slavists USA, UK, France, Germany and other countries, specializing in the history of Russia / the Soviet Union 19th–20th centuries. The authors conducted a detailed analysis of the nine colloquia 1990–2013 and ensuing discussions here. Emphasizes the importance of publishing the materials of colloquia to stimulate innovative and imaginative historical thinking of researchers from different schools and generations within Russia and foreign countries.

The article highlights three objectives, the achievement of which was dedicated which held colloquia work: to facilitate the development of new approaches in the study of history of Russia through joint discussions and constructive critical analysis; to galvanize support and training a new generation of researchers of Russian history in the country and abroad; to ensure the regularity of the conduct of examinations every three years. The authors state that each of the goals has been embodied in practice.

A significant place in the article is paid to the characteristics of the crisis of the Soviet historical science in the era of perestroika and exiting the post-Soviet Russian history. Discussion of current problems has clearly shown that domestic and foreign science of history evolved in the direction that history is written by Russian specialists and their foreign colleagues, was mutually complement and valuable. Already to the middle of the 90s of the 20th century, stated in the article, the crisis of the historical science was overcome, as discussed in the course of the discussion groups the

problems aroused interest not only among professional historians, but also among representatives of civil society.

9th colloquia, the article says, has engulfed more than 300 scientists from 10 foreign countries and many regions of the Russian Federation, contributed to the development of deep respect for the diversity of methodologies, reflection and learning to do the research of historians important for society in General.

**Key words:** International Russian History Colloquium, Saint-Petersburg Institute of History, history of Russia / the Soviet Union XIX–XX centuries, discussions, critical analysis.

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