

Nikolai Nikolaevich Bolkhovitinov, 1930–2008

In October 2008, the international community of Russian and American historians lost one of its most outstanding members, Nikolai Nikolaevich Bolkhovitinov, member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, director of the Center for North American Studies at the Institute of World History of the Russian Academy of Science, and, since 2006, honorary foreign member of the American Historical Association.

Nikolai Nikolaevich was born in Moscow on 26 October 1930 into the family of a famous Soviet scientist, who had been removed from his family by Iosif Stalin's police. Two years later his father was released and allowed to return home. Nikolai Nikolaevich was deeply attached to his father and shared his respect for personal dignity and his idealization of the United States as a free democratic country. In 1948, when Nikolai Nikolaevich entered the Moscow Institute of International Relations, he decided to study the history of the United States, as a way of honoring his father's values. In 1959 he received his doctorate in U.S. history from the Moscow Pedagogical Institute, where he had studied under the prominent Soviet Americanist A. V. Efimov. Ideological restrictions had forced Nikolai Nikolaevich to change his focus from contemporary U.S. history to nineteenth-century diplomatic history, and his *kandidatskaia* dissertation concerned the origin and character of the Monroe Doctrine. While writing this dissertation, Nikolai Nikolaevich discovered new archival documents about imperial Russian diplomacy that became the basis for his *doktorskaia* dissertation (1965) and a series of fundamental studies on Russian-American relations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. When he became a full professor of history at the age of 35, Nikolai Nikolaevich was the youngest full professor in the Soviet academic world. In addition, as a research fellow, he played an important role in the scholarly activities of the Institute of World History in Moscow. All his major books were translated into many languages; he was appointed to the editorial boards of many prestigious international journals in history; and he was appointed director of the Center for North American Studies in Moscow, which became an important training ground for many historians, including myself.

Nikolai Nikolaevich was a unique figure in Soviet American studies. Many Soviet Americanists, especially those who often went abroad, were either KGB agents or secret police informants. Historians who consented to collaborate with the KGB were not only allowed to visit western countries but also able to advance their professional careers. Nikolai Nikolaevich chose a different path and rejected any kind of cooperation with the KGB. During the difficult years of the Cold War, Nikolai Nikolaevich insisted on organizing, for the Public Historical Library in Moscow, the first collection on American history in the USSR. Thanks to his connections in the United States, this library received all the major American historical journals, including *Slavic Review*. Nikolai Nikolaevich became a founding father of the Soviet school of American Studies, whose graduates now work all over the world. It is difficult to imagine a development involving Soviet (or post-Soviet) historiography of the United States that did not benefit from his influence and ideas. After 1988, under Nikolai Nikolaevich's leadership, the Soviet periodical *Amerikanskii ezhegodnik* became the most serious and prestigious serial publication on U.S. and Canadian history in Europe.

As a graduate student in the 1980s, I was struck by the fact that Nikolai Nikolaevich received more mail from his American colleagues than any of his colleagues in the sector of the United States and Canada. His popularity with his American colleagues was the result of two very important factors. The first was Nikolai Nikolaevich's pioneering role in a study of American-Russian relations and the history of Russian America. He was the first historian to undertake serious archival research on American-Russian relations during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and to publish books laying a foundation for the new fields of the historiography of international politics and diplomacy of the modern era. The second was his efforts to help American scholars researching or teaching in Moscow. Nikolai Nikolaevich shared his knowledge with those scholars and provided them with

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assistance and guidance, not only in finding the appropriate Soviet archival collections and libraries, but also in finding accommodations and by organizing dinners in his hospitable home. During very difficult times in the 1970s and 1980s, when honest historians like Nikolai Nikolaevich worked to resist KGB pressure, many American historians benefited from his support and assistance in Moscow. Even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Nikolai Nikolaevich remained an active member of the international community of historians in post-Soviet Russia, helping young American historians with archival research.

Nikolai Nikolaevich also initiated the U.S.-Soviet project to publish the most important archival documents on Russian-American relations in Soviet and American archives and played a major role in compiling and preparing the collection for publication. The result of his efforts was *The United States and Russia: The Beginning of Relations, 1765–1815: Collection of Documents* (1980), which he coedited with N. N. Bashkina, J. H. Brown, and others. In Moscow in 1991 and 1999, Nikolai Nikolaevich organized two large international conferences on the history of early America. In the 1990s, he supervised, directed, edited, and contributed to the three-volume project on the history of the Russian colonies in America, which became a pioneering study of early America and the role Russian colonists played in settling North America.

In 2000, Nikolai Nikolaevich began his new research project on the Russian historian-emigrants such as Michael Karpovich and others who contributed to the study of Russian history in the United States. His unfortunate death from a massive heart attack on 1 October 2008 prevented him from finishing this project. Luckily, though, his major project, a serious and respectful Russian-American scholarly dialogue, still exists, and we all participate in and benefit from it.

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Marc Raeff, 1923–2008

On 20 September 2008, Marc Raeff—the universally recognized doyen of imperial Russian history—succumbed to the effects of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. Marc had a profound impact on Russian historiography, especially in the west, with a series of pathbreaking studies, exploratory articles, and penetrating reviews. A polyglot, he read widely and intensively, demonstrated extraordinary erudition, and he taught Russian historians to frame their research in a broader comparative framework.

Born in Moscow in on 28 July 1923, he spent the interwar years in western Europe, first in Czechoslovakia, later moving to Berlin and then Paris. It was in this environment that he added to his native Russian a mastery of German and French, the same facility he later acquired in English. Relocating to the United States in 1941, he studied briefly at the City College of New York and then served in the U.S. Army, eventually participating in the wartime “area studies” that the American government had organized for postwar occupation. After the war he matriculated in graduate school at Harvard University, without an undergraduate degree (having been advised that, if one asked for something really extraordinary, it was more likely to be approved). He participated in the famous seminar led by Michael Karpovich and belonged to the renowned cohort that shaped the emerging new field of Russian studies. Marc first taught at Clark University (1949–61) and then moved to Columbia University, where he taught until his retirement in 1988.

By far the bulk of his scholarship concerned Russia, and he placed a particular emphasis on institutions and law. Curiously, he did not publish his doctoral dissertation (defended at Harvard in 1950 as “The Peasant Commune in the Political Thinking of Russian Publicists: *Laissez-faire* Liberalism in the Reign of Alexander II”); only a couple of segments would subsequently appear as articles in academic journals. Instead, Marc turned to his primary interest—law and institutions, reflecting his abiding interest in their importance to Russian historical development. The result was his seminal monograph, *Michael Speransky: Statesman of Imperial Russia, 1772–1839* (1957), a superb analysis of governance, poli-