

CONFRONTING THE COLD WAR LEGACY:  
THE FORGOTTEN HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN COLONY IN ST PETERSBURG  
A CASE STUDY OF RECONCILIATION

BY  
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## Abstract

This dissertation surveys three decades of the history and dynamics of Russian–American relations, demonstrating that their conduct has never been exclusively confined to governmental operatives and foreign policymakers. The focus of the research is a diverse group of American nationals residing in St. Petersburg–Petrograd, Russia, between 1890 and 1920.

Tracing networks of connections which led Americans to Russia, it stresses the importance of successfully established American businesses in a pro-Western St. Petersburg, pays tribute to American journalists and social reformers, and features socialist-leaning intellectuals who traveled to Russia during times of revolutionary upheavals, becoming chroniclers, witnesses, and, in some instances, participants in events that challenged the course of world history. It also examines American religious missions to Russia and ardent sympathizers, who managed much-appreciated relief activities there. Emphasizing the significance of cultural influences and interdependencies, the research introduces those American nationals who found in the former Russian capital a unique opportunity to express themselves artistically through American cultural idioms, or enhance their knowledge of the Russian language, literature, and history.

The study examines the extensive archival materials which reveal broad venues of public diplomacy, as well as economic and cultural interaction, reconstructing a collective narrative of the American colony in the city. It also introduces an array of Russian-language sources little-known to Western readers and scholars, and surveys publications brought to the attention of English-speaking historians, yet left untranslated. Primary sources from both countries, some examined for the first time, and the observations of a host of scholars who have preceded me, are central to the project. Although the history of Russian-American relations has been a well-explored topic, a comprehensive analysis of the contributions of the American colony to the social, economic, and cultural development of the second principal city of Russia is long overdue.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to sincerely thank everyone who expressed interest in my research and offered much-needed guidance and assistance in the course of a challenging journey through graduate school to my doctoral degree. I deeply appreciate the profound contribution made on my behalf by the members of my committee, including Professor Norman Saul, Professor David Katzman, Professor William Tuttle, Professor Timothy Miller, and Professor Mohamed El-Hodiri. I would especially like to thank my committee for sharing the knowledge and wisdom of dedicated scholars and providing ongoing encouragement, and direction throughout the past seven plus years. In particular, Professor Saul navigated me through the historiography of the era, and Professor Katzman made an enormous contribution to the organization, tenor, and flow of the final document, with his scrupulous editing. Professor Tuttle made certain that I would have all my ‘ducks’ aligned, in order to graduate.

I would also like to acknowledge those who welcomed me at the University of Kansas, and enhanced my ambition to serve as a mediator between cultures and countries while completing my studies. I thank Hodgie Bricke, Assistant Vice Provost, International Programs, who welcomed me to the Midwest, upon my first trip to KU and has remained a friend and associate ever since. I thank the entire faculty and staff of the American Studies Program, the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, the Centre for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies, and the Humanities and Western Civilization Program, and Communication Studies. I also thank Diana Carlin, of the Communication Studies Department, formerly Dean of the Graduate School and International Programs of the University of Kansas, whose efforts on my behalf, in concert with U.S. Senator from Kansas Sam Brownback, allowed me entry to the United States in August, 2002, making possible everything thereafter.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Graduate School for their support with a Graduate Summer Research Fellowship. A research grant from the Summer Research Laboratory at the University of Illinois was also indispensable. I was privileged to do my research in some of the most notable depositories in the United States, including the Library of Congress, and would like to acknowledge their curators and staff librarians for being responsive to all my difficult questions and meeting my most challenging needs. I would like to especially thank Edward Kasinec, a former chief of the Slavic and Baltic Division of the New York Public Library, and Tanya Chebotarev, curator of the Bakhmeteff Archive of Russian and East European History and Culture at Columbia University in New York.

I must thank my daughter Alexandra and husband Mark, for their patience and fortitude as they have stood alongside me through these years of academic work.

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Finally, I thank my parents, Alexander Ginzburg and Nadezhda Kulikova. They sparked my curiosity in the world beyond my ‘habitat,’ even when the inquiry could be pursued only in an imagination fostered by fictionalized sketches, scholarly discourses, and Soviet caricatures, accompanied by the sounds of estranged music from overseas, smuggled into our lives from the cultural black market. They also passed along their love for the mystery of the *mirage city*, the ‘dot on the map,’ that I proclaimed as the principal milieu of my narrative for this dissertation.

## **A Note on Transliteration**

In general, the Library of Congress transliteration system from the Cyrillic alphabet to the Latin English has been followed. However, for such well-known names as Kerensky or Gorky more commonly used endings “- ky” instead of the “- kii” are preferred. In many instances the deviation from transliteration rules is dictated by the necessity to preserve the spelling in primary sources. For example, the names of Charles Crane’s Russian acquaintances Iakov Ivanovich Rostovtsoff or Peter Siemonoff appear exactly as they are written in his letters instead of Library of Congress Rostovtsev and Semenov. The relevant explanation has been provided in such cases. Such words as tsar/czar appear in their both versions, as they are used interchangeably in book and article titles and quotes.

I dedicate my research  
to a growing comity and trust  
between these two great nations,  
which have within their collective power  
the opportunity to lead the way  
to a more peaceful and prosperous world.

## Table of Contents

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>Preface</b> .....  | 8   |
| <b>Methodology</b> .....  | 21  |
| <b>Introduction</b>   |     |
| <i>Russia: an American Problem or an American Venue</i> .....   | 31  |
| <b>Chapter I / East Meets West</b>  |     |
| <i>The City of Clerks and Foreigners: Foreign<br/>Communities in Multinational St.<br/>Petersburg</i> .....   | 36  |
| <b>Chapter II / Innocents Abroad</b>  |     |
| <b>Part 1</b>   |     |
| <i>A Brief History of American Expatriates<br/>and the American Diaspora in Europe</i> .....  | 62  |
| <b>Part 2</b>   |     |
| <i>Discovering Russia Americans in St. Petersburg<br/>Chronicles of the American Presence<br/>in the Northern Capital: Cultural and Social Qualities of<br/>the American Colony in St. Petersburg</i> ..... | 74  |
| <b>Chapter III / American Business Interests in Investments in Russia<br/>(1890s- 1920s)</b>  |     |
| <i>American Capital in Russian Capital: American Banks,<br/>Insurance Companies, and enterprise in St. Petersburg</i> .....   | 134 |
| <b>Chapter IV / Ardent Sympathizers (1890-1930)</b>   |     |
| <b>Part 1</b>   |     |
| <i>American Missionaries and Confessors, Religious Societies,<br/>Relief Organizations and Philanthropists in Their Survey of<br/>“the Most Dramatic” Russian City</i> .....                                | 199 |
| <b>Part 2</b>   |     |
| <i>American Liberals and the Russian Revolutions</i> .....  | 285 |
| <b>Chapter V / Ragtime St. Petersburg</b>   |     |
| <i>St. Petersburg Venues for American Popular Culture<br/>and Traditional Russian Amusements</i> .....  | 307 |
| <b>Chapter VI / Study Abroad</b>  |     |
| <i>American Students and Scholars in Russia</i> .....   | 342 |
| <b>Conclusion</b> .....   | 374 |
| <b>Bibliography</b> .....   | 384 |

## Preface

Alexis De Tocqueville, an early observer of a young America, also made reference to the eastern empire of Russia, writing in 1839 that “...the world learned of their existence and their greatness at almost the same time... Their starting point is different and their courses are not the same; yet each of them seems marked out by the will of Heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe.”<sup>1</sup>

That prophecy emerged as fact, in the twentieth century, especially in the Cold War contest that dominated the post-WWII era. As a native of the Soviet Union and Russia, I witnessed first-hand, the state-sponsored, ideology-driven anti-Americanism of my youth in the 1970s and ‘80s. Although nourished primarily by disgruntled nationalists and gullible and ignorant victims of Soviet propaganda, the decades of anti-American xenophobia had a perceptible effect upon Russian intellectuals. Despite anti-American propaganda organized by the government and supported by the nation’s educational establishment, the media, and other major agents of socialization, attitudes towards the United States among intellectuals were contradictory, intricate, naïve, and ambiguous. Access to American historical and cultural idioms

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<sup>1</sup>Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Henry Reeve. Vol. II (New York: D. Appleton Company, 1904), 483. It is worth mentioning that most of Russian perspectives of America were drawn from Western European observers, such as this French aristocrat, historian, and sociologist. De Tocqueville was well known and read by distinguished literary figures in Russia including Alexandr Radischev, who, inspired by the history of the American Revolution, penned his ode “Vol’nost” (Liberty), exiled Decembrists N.A. Bestuzhev and M.A. Fonvizin who translated selected chapters from De Tocqueville, and Alexandr Herzen, who, upon reading De Tocqueville, expressed disillusionment with the social and political constitution of the American republic, that he previously had praised and idealized. Further analysis of Russian perspectives of America formed under the influence of De Tocqueville’s writings can be found in Eduard A. Ivanian, *Kogda govoriat muzy. Istorii Rosiisko-Amerikanskikh kul’turnykh svyazei* (Moskva: Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniia, 2007), 12, 20, 23, 27, 32.

was limited.<sup>2</sup> There was little or no opportunity to travel to the United States to observe and comprehend the range of controversies and dilemmas there. The notion of America had attained such a degree of pure abstraction that the entire edifice of anti-American policies had an enormous inverse effect on Russian intelligentsia, leading many to excessively idealize and romanticize the United States.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, by relocating to America, taking up residence in the heartland for the past seven years, I have found in the West no less than in the former Soviet empire elements of exclusion, marginalization, uniformity and pliability of public opinion, intolerance towards

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<sup>2</sup> Even after a U.S. – Soviet accord on exchanges, known as “Agreement between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Exchanges in the Cultural, Technical, and Educational Fields,” was signed in 1958, many genres of the American culture were still looked at by the Soviet cultural gatekeepers with suspicion. Thus, for example, in the fall of 1959 the selection committee that consisted of the top officials from the Soviet ministry of culture administered an audition of the best American artists that aspired to visit the Soviet Union with their program. Curiously, Duke Ellington’s orchestra was rejected due to the ‘decadent and bourgeois’ character of jazz music defined as such decades earlier. It would take a few years before Benny Goodman’s jazz orchestra toured Soviet Russia in 1962. But the cultural agreement was in effect and the desire of both nations to continue cultural exchange was irreversible. In 1968 the people in the Soviet Union enjoyed Earl Hines’ orchestra, and in 1971 *Pravda* finally praised “particular lightness and ease” with which Ellington and his orchestra performed on stage. Ellington was privileged by the Soviet authorities to conduct the State radio orchestra. For more on the cultural exchanges between the United States and the Soviet Union after 1958 see Ivanian, *Kogda govoriat Muzy*, 340-390.

<sup>3</sup> A famous Soviet dissident Vasilii Aksenov recalls the pro-American sentiments expressed by the Soviet youth in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and explains that since the real United States was inaccessible, America was imagined as “hyperreality,” with all imaginary attributes such as consumer goods or unrestrained sexual liberation and even perversion, which was especially attractive in the atmosphere of gloomy Soviet puritanism. See Vasilii Aksenov, *In Search of Melancholy Baby: a Russian in America*, trans. Michael Henry Heim and Antonina W. Bouis (New York: Vintage Books, 1989). Natives from other countries of the Soviet block also noted “hungry Russian’s visions of the West” and assumed that markets have always been “primarily psychic: the meta-blue jeans arrive ahead of the real ones.” Andrei Codrescu, *The Disappearance of the Outside: A Manifesto for Escape* (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1990), 195. People would collect ‘foreign objects,’ ANYTHING from the West, “from a pencil to notebook to a dress, from chewing gum to a candy wrapper.” Slavenka Drakulic, *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 181.

dissent, and unorthodox perspectives and cultural forms.<sup>4</sup> Correspondingly, Russia has often been portrayed in America as a remote and alienated place, viewed with suspicion, amusement, and fear. It has been perceived as a Eurasian cultural outsider that bears the potential of disrupting long-accepted balances of power.<sup>5</sup> Thus, some of the intense interactions and unavoidable interdependencies between Russia and its western neighbors have been unjustly underestimated or forgotten on both sides of the Atlantic. Even the causes of counterpoint and

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<sup>4</sup> There had been many examples of such intolerance and persecution of political expression in the United States long before the notion of homeland security came into being. Campaigns of political persecution after the turn of the twentieth century include the infamous Red Scare, inspired by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, deportation of progressive thinkers Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, the controversy surrounding Paxton Hibben, an American “aristocrat” who expressed his sympathy and loyalty to socialist John Reed and managed independent famine relief activities in Russia in 1920s, and the bitter official hostility towards Albert Rhys Williams upon his return to the United States after a trip to Russia, where he witnessed first hand the Bolshevik revolution. The Red Scare poisoned the political climate from the beginning, as the government launched investigations against such advocates of friendly American relations with Soviet authorities as Williams, journalists Isaac Don Levine, and Red Cross representative Raymond Robins, among others. And yet, in spite of governmental persecution of those who sought to inform the public about the situation in Russia, many Americans wrote brilliantly, with “graphic description” of the events in that country creating informative and “moving” narratives. It is thus not surprising that when Reed’s classic on-the-spot account of the revolution, *Ten Days That Shook the World* was published in March 1919, it became an instant best-seller. Being a foreign correspondent in revolutionary Petrograd required “bravado, fearlessness, and literary talent in equal measure,” wrote Reed’s critic Robert A. Rosenstone. Reed’s talent, according to reviewers, “was enormous enough to raise reporting to the level of an art.” Notable was Reed’s “enduring interest” in the subject which attracted him, “a model for how Socialism could come to power.” For further reflections on why Reed’s book became an instant popular success under the circumstances see Robert A. Rosenstone’s *The Collected Works of John Reed* (New York: Modern Library, 1995), vii.

<sup>5</sup> Western perceptions of Russia in historic perspective were summarized by Anthony Cross in the *Introduction to By the Banks of the Neva: Chapters from the Lives and Careers of the British in Eighteenth – Century Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 2. Of course not everyone would blame Russia alone for escalating the Cold War. Such prominent figures as the financier Cyrus Easton who was famous for his criticism of the United States foreign and military policies during the Cold War or a prominent pianist Van Cliburn who was honored with the Russian Order of Friendship for his contribution in strengthening the peace and friendly relations between the two states could be mentioned as memorable exceptions.

confrontation that erected long-term barriers between Russia and the West over the course of centuries have been either misunderstood or misinterpreted.<sup>6</sup>

Yet thanks to unprecedented political changes in my native land, and the relative improvement in relations between the United States and Russia, it is now possible to reevaluate the history and dynamics of the relationship between these two nuclear giants. I have thus dedicated my academic career to contributing to more trusted relations between the peoples of Russia and the United States, stressing the importance of historical ties that have been overshadowed by ideological disagreement, and political and military posturing.

Unfortunately, the latter shaped the Cold War and had been situated as a core of power – knowledge relations that framed “well established” intellectual regimes within the American Studies discipline. Although the contradictions that prevailed in the history of both nations over the course of the twentieth century distorted or in some cases silenced the legacy of Russian influences within the historical and cultural context of Western political and social development, many American scholars, historians, politicians, public figures, and leaders of non-governmental organizations have pointed out the importance of Russia in world history, attempting to persuade the world community that “Russia is necessary to the economic existence of Europe, and the interest of the United States is almost equally involved.”<sup>7</sup> For decades, the history of Russian-American encounters had been excessively infused with the official ideologies of both nations. This project challenges the determination of Cold War leaders “to withhold the past,” proving that relations between these two countries have never been confined to Russophobia or anti-

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<sup>6</sup> A revisionist approach to understanding the origins of the Cold War has been analyzed in details by Charles S. Maier in “Revisionism and the Interpretation of Cold War Origins,” *Perspectives in American History* IV, (1970) : 313- 347.

<sup>7</sup> John Spargo, *Russia as an American Problem* (New York: Harper, 1920), 14.

Americanism, in spite of the larger government-sponsored confrontation.<sup>8</sup> It reveals the contributions of those American expatriates and sojourners who questioned a common Western perception of Russia laden with an air of superiority and growing mistrust.

This dissertation offers an alternative interpretation of historic events and personas. It reveals the efforts and motivations of Americans who supported advancement of the interests of American business and industry, not always and necessarily at Russia's expense. It reintroduces the most prominent participants from this critical era,<sup>9</sup> in an infinite variety of cultural, ideological and political interactions that characterize Russian-American history, breaking through the ideology of reciprocal exclusion that has pervaded the relationship between Russia and the West for centuries. The research analyzes to what extent American individuals and organizations contributed to the social, economic, and cultural development of late imperial Russia, demonstrating the complex interaction between diplomacy, business enterprise, philanthropy, and artistic expression. This project reveals the legacy of those Americans who participated in Russian economic, social, political, and cultural life, or studied Russian language literature, and history, perceiving Russia as "the new Euro-Asiatic, continental-spanning America."<sup>10</sup> It reflects upon the points of view of those Americans who recognized Russian potential early on and considered the country to be a potential American ally. My thesis emphasizes the sentiments of such Russophiles as Charles Crane, who referred to Russia as

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<sup>8</sup> It should be noted, however, that among American historians there were such revisionists as William Appleman Williams, the author of *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1962) who, although strongly criticized the Soviet Union, considered the United States no less accountable for escalating the Cold War confrontation and who inspired the whole generation of historians to revisit the Cold War postulates.

<sup>9</sup> This research features such prominent advocates of positive and constructive Russian-American relations as George Kennan, Isabel Hapgood, Paxton Hibben, Raymond Robbins, and many others.

<sup>10</sup> Norman E. Saul, "The American Colony in St. Petersburg" (paper presented at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Central Slavic Conference, Lawrence, KS, April 3-5, 2003).

America's friend, which he thought would remain the case, as long as the United States would so allow. Following Crane's advice to pay less attention to those who have been "busy trying to sow the seeds of dissension"<sup>11</sup> between the two nations, I aspire to contribute to further elimination of an unreasonable American prejudice against Russia. Thus, the dissertation investigates the deeds of such activists as John R. Mott, a leader of the Student Volunteer Movement and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), who, in agreement with Theodore Roosevelt, considered Russia more "an American venue" than an American problem, stating in 1918 that "no country held the fate of the coming years more than Russia, since it was 'located in the belt of power' and on the frontier between East and West."<sup>12</sup> It also reflects upon the opinion of those who considered the mutual empathies of Russia and America, emphasizing "that notwithstanding the existing differences in the political organization and social culture of the two countries, the natural riches which give Russia a foremost place in the world's productions and the highly developed sides of Russian spiritual culture as realized in literature, art and music must prove a source both of interest and of learning to the American people."<sup>13</sup>

After the Bolshevik Revolution, even as U.S. policy denied recognition to Russia's new Soviet regime, there were still voices that advocated for an alternative approach to the Russian

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<sup>11</sup> Charles Crane, "Russia's Position in the Far East," *New York Times*, 2 August 1903, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Davis S. Foglesong, "Redeeming Russia? American Missionaries and Tsarist Russia, 1886 – 1917," *Religion, State and Society* 25, (1997): 356. The author refers to the article by John R. Mott "An Unprecedented World Situation," 89 – 90, reiterated in "A View of the Situation in Russia," *The Missionary Review of the World* (March 1918):172.

<sup>13</sup> "The Society for Promoting Mutual Friendly Relations between Russia and America." A letter of invitation from the Society to George Kennan, Petrograd, 5 April 1915. George Kennan Papers, 1856-1987. Box 1, series I. Correspondence, 1903-1916, folder 1.5. Manuscripts & Archives Division, hereafter cited as (MAD), New York Public Library, hereafter cited as (NYPL).

‘problem,’<sup>14</sup> declaring that it was “impossible for an intelligent and well informed American to regard the condition of a great nation like Russia with indifference.”<sup>15</sup> I consider my research as a survey of the lives and activities of those involved ‘intelligent’ Americans who have participated in the discovery of Russia and its principal city of St. Petersburg, and who regarded their efforts as a challenge, bringing the knowledge of Russia’s ancient culture to the West, while dispelling established generalizations and preconceived ideas.

Arguing that it was challenging “to generalize with a nation composed [of] so many different races scattered over such a tremendous expanse of territory,” many of those Americans who established personal contacts with Russian nationals concluded that in contrast to what they heard about the people back home, Russians appeared to be “good-natured, with a ready sense of humor, generous to a fault, extremely tolerant, patient, unhurried, and impractical.”<sup>16</sup> This narrative will highlight and analyze such accounts as that left by a clerk of the Petrograd branch of the National City Bank of New York, Leighton Rogers, who wrote that Russian people loved

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<sup>14</sup> In May 1918, William Christian Bullitt in a letter to Edward Mandell House referred to Russia as an American problem, a problem not only for the State Department, but for the War Department, the Department of Commerce, the Shipping Board, the War Trade Board and the War Industries Board. Moreover, he called it “a problem of huge complexity.” Bullitt advocated for creation of a special Russian Board consisted of representatives of the Departments, and a special commission in Russia to carry out the orders of the Chairman of the Russian Board in Washington. Such an action, according to Bullitt would end “indecision” that he considered being the keynote of the American Russian policy at the time. Having failed to convince Wilson to establish relationship with the government of Bolsheviki, Bullitt resigned from Wilson’s staff. Arthur S. Link, ed. *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 48 May 13-July 17, 1918 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 144-145.

<sup>15</sup> William Thomas Allison, *American Diplomats in Russia. Case Studies in Orphan Diplomacy, 1916 – 1919*, (Westport: Praeger, 1997), 11–12.

<sup>16</sup> Leighton W. Rogers, *Wine of Fury* (New York: Knopf, 1924), 35.

“conversation and abstract speculation,”<sup>17</sup> that they were “little-concerned of what others may think or say about them...,” and were overall “charming companions and hosts...”<sup>18</sup>

I reveal ‘confessions’ such as Rogers’ fictionalized account of his experience in Russia. I illustrate to what extent Russian sojourns influenced, enriched, and sometimes radically changed the world views and opinions of American travelers. Using diverse archival materials, I shift the focus from surveying factual data to the analysis of more abstract and subjective personal sentiments and observations of featured characters. In so doing, I reveal how Americans reflected critically upon assumptions, implications, and inferences not only about the host country, but also about American society, its mores and values, that otherwise, being cultural insiders, they often took for granted or simply failed to notice. Thus, for example, in a recent analysis of Americans’ presence, influence, and “struggle” for Russia, David S. Foglesong explains that the increased interest and immediate American involvement in Russian affairs had significant implications for Americans’ views of themselves, especially in the light of America’s own persistent problems “that sapped the vitality and belied the idealistic promise of the United States, including declining religious faith, demoralizing materialism, dishonorable treatment of Native Americans, and the disenfranchisement and lynching of African Americans.”<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, residing in Russia for prolonged periods of time, while becoming involved intimately

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<sup>17</sup> In other words, “they are more interested in process than in results,” concluded the National City Bank young clerk who was sent to Russia to assist with the establishment of a Russian branch of the Wall Street financial giant. See *ibid.* Rogers continued this analysis of features of the Russian character in his book, letting his personage Peter Radkin describe Russians in a following way: “they themselves talk for hours. Their talk is the technical indulgence of artists with no spur to action in it.” *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>18</sup> Leighton W. Rogers, “Czar, Revolution, Bolsheviks,” Greenwich, Connecticut, 16. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers, 1912-1982. Box 3, folder 7, Manuscript Division, hereafter cited as (MD), Library of Congress, hereafter cited as (LC), Washington, DC.

<sup>19</sup> David S. Foglesong, *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire”* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 11.

with natives, through work and social events, many Americans liberated themselves from their most notorious preconceived notions, prejudices, and misconceptions.

I consider such stories as that of Rogers, a recent graduate of prestigious Dartmouth College in New England, and a promising young clerk from Wall Street, who found himself thousands of miles from home, living and working among those “strange people,” hoping to further understand how American interests and awareness “grew eastwardly in the discovery of other cultures, as well as westwardly in the discovery of their own domestic possibilities.”<sup>20</sup> Reading through Rogers’ detailed diary, a source for his novel, I analyze how this young, dedicated American, “a stranger, in a strange land,” while being involved in “a strange convolutions of circumstances,” immersed himself in “strange ideas” and became acquainted with “the new, heretofore unknown self.” The body of the dissertation reveals the process through which that “new self” arrived at unpredictable conclusions, ultimately admitting that while America had taught him [Rogers] “how to make a living,” it was Russia that taught him how to live.<sup>21</sup>

Another example of the same process is the revelation of young American physician Rosalie Morton, only twenty three and on the cusp of an astounding life, when she first went to Russia. She frequented drawing rooms of the aristocracy, and the dens of thieves there. She also

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<sup>20</sup>Anna M. Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917: A Study of the American Travelers in Russia from the American Revolution to the Russian Revolution* (New York: Comet Press, 1938), xiii.

<sup>21</sup> Rogers, *Wine of Fury*, 35, 265. The author repeatedly comes back to that comparison of features of national characters of Russian and Americans, underlining the traditional work ethics that Americans brought with them into the realm of Russian abstraction and spirituality. Thus, while having the “first glimpse of the religious fervor with which Americans worshipped their great god Business,” one of the heroines, a Russian acquaintance of the fictionalized head of the City bank branch in St. Petersburg, wandered: “You really enjoy this as much as you appear to?” And the answer was: “Yes, ... it’s a great thing – work. Keeps us occupied, saves us from too much introspection --” The Russian than thought of “the casual interest most Russians had in work of the same nature. With them it assumed a secondary importance to the pleasures of life.” See Rogers, *Wine of Fury*, 73.

called upon Tolstoy, whom she considered a prophet who, if he were to have visited the United States, might have been able to show Americans “the immensity of our opportunities.” Morton absorbed the “value and much of dynamite, which only Russians with their dramatic identity and their belief in fatalities would dare to carry out.” It was that journey through a “social laboratory,” as she referred to Russia, that contributed to her success in becoming a surgeon. Years later, when Morton became the first woman to practice surgery in Washington DC, and one of the most eminent surgeons in America, she recalled the “long-ago Christmas vacation” that raised questions she “was trying to answer for the rest of her life.”<sup>22</sup> Thus, the task of this research is to explore “the Americans’ background and characteristic viewpoints unveiled in their contact with such a different culture as that of Russia.”<sup>23</sup>

The project also emphasizes that the American presence in Russia and St. Petersburg shaped the changing views of Russians about Americans and the Western world, arguing that Americans who came to live in Russia managed to reassure natives that they were not necessarily “insensible, hard-hearted people pursuing exclusively financial interests and chasing quick and easy material profit.”<sup>24</sup> I analyze Russian reactions to the American presence and influence, such as praise for Americans in a former political exile’s address to George Kennan. The letter stated that Kennan was the first real American he and his friends met and that their acquaintance broke “incongruous stereotypes and preconceived notions.” It also acknowledged

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<sup>22</sup> Rosalie Slaughter Morton, *A Woman Surgeon: The Life and Work of Rosalie Slaughter Morton* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1937), 84. Although some of the characters featured in my research, including Morton, spent only short period of time in Russia, their contribution to raising awareness about the country back home, as well as irreversible influence Russia had on their own life and fate are considerable and worth mentioning in the research.

<sup>23</sup> Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917*, 1.

<sup>24</sup> Egor Lazarev to George Kennan, San Francisco, 19 September 1890. George Kennan Papers. Box 2, series I. Correspondence, 1866- 1924. Folder Egor Lazarev, 1890-1892, 1917, 2.2. MAD, NYPL.

that “nothing could be more useful for the progress and humanity than the opportunity for people of various nations to get to know each other better and to have a chance to communicate.”<sup>25</sup>

That, according to yet another message to Kennan from a Russian exile, “would stop the existing hatred and hostility between peoples and nations which,” from the point of view of the author, “is rather the result of unawareness than of natural or innate feelings.”<sup>26</sup>

In my research I use such illustrative material as the letters of political exile Egor Lazarev, who escaped from Siberia via Japan to the United States. Lazarev wrote that thanks to people like George Kennan, and, most importantly, due to their efforts to disperse knowledge about Russia and educate their compatriots about its culture and politics, people in both countries still maintain their “faith in their own struggle, in their convictions, their faith in the power of humanism and reason, faith in the nations united around noble ideas and missions, knowledge, and mutual aid.”<sup>27</sup>

By reexamining the relationships between the two countries beyond governmental relations and pursuits of policymakers,<sup>28</sup> I hope to challenge conventional historical narratives and to revise some American studies scholarship, a discipline that was influenced by the ideological

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ivan Belokonsky (former political exile) to George Kennan, Orel, n.d. George Kennan Papers. Box 1, series I. Correspondence, 1885-1888, folder 1.2. MAD, NYPL.

Kennan collection contains dozens of letters from Russian correspondents of various backgrounds, from the exiles to reputable editors, who expressed their support and acknowledgement of his “great service to Russia.” See for example the letter from Vasiliy Vodovozov, who wrote Kennan with a request to allow him to translate Kennan’s book about the Russian political exiles and who stated his sincere gratitude for Kennan’s work towards liberation movement in Russia. V. Vodovozov to Kennan, St. Petersburg, 16 April 1906. Kennan Papers. Box 1, series I. Correspondence, 1866-1924. Folder 1903-1916, 1.5. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>27</sup> Lazarev to George Kennan, San Francisco, 19 September 1890.

<sup>28</sup> For much of the period when official relations between the two countries did not even exist, the history comprised an extensive account of personal contacts, public diplomacy, and good will. See Norman E. Saul, *Friends or Foes? The United States and Soviet Russia, 1921 – 1941* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), xi.

confrontation of the Cold War.<sup>29</sup> My goal is to explore the premise that even in the most difficult times, relations between these two nations transcended public diplomacy and were more extensive, significant, and congenial than the Cold War legacy suggests.<sup>30</sup>

My research revisits three decades of the history of American involvement and participation in Russian life surrounding the turn of the twentieth century, an era of widespread warfare and social upheaval. It focuses upon a diverse group of American nationals residing in a turbulent St. Petersburg between 1890 and 1920. I define my task as an attempt to reconstruct the American awareness of Russia of that era, and to unveil the dreams, expectations, and realities

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<sup>29</sup> As mentioned above, such efforts were made by a revisionist historian William Appleman Williams, the pleiad of such historians, inspired by him as Lloyd C. Gardner, William McNeill, Walter LaFeber, and recently by Edward Said.

<sup>30</sup> After the 1917 Revolution several organizations were formed to promote cultural interchange between the Soviet Union and the United States. These organizations enhanced popular understanding of and sympathy for the Soviet Union and intended to influence official U.S. policy favorably toward the Soviet state. The Friends of the Soviet Russia was one of the first and most well known. The group was succeeded by the National Council on Soviet Relation chaired by Corliss Lamont, who at times was a leading proponent of civil rights, and a director of the American Civil Liberties Committee. Although the group was placed on Attorney General List of subversive organizations during the Truman administration, it survived the Cold War atmosphere of the 1950s and 1960s. After the Soviet Union break up, none of the Friendship Societies previously affiliated with the Council remained active in any of the former republics. Instead, there appeared a number of other grassroots U.S. -- based organizations dedicated to exercising public diplomacy. Many of them are mentioned in M. Holt Ruffin, Joan McCarter, and Richard Upjohn, eds. *A Guide to Grassroots Organization and Internet Resources in the Newly Independent States* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, Center for Civil Society International, 1996). On the history of Russian-American relations, the best source is the work in four volumes by Norman E. Saul. In *Distant Friends: The United States and Russia, 1763 – 1867* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991), *Concord and Conflict: The United States and Russia. 1867-1914* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1996), *War and Revolution: The United States and Russia 1917 – 1921* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001), and the most recent *Friends or Foes: The United States and Soviet Russia, 1921 – 1941* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), Saul provides a comprehensive historic account, summary, and reference to other detailed works on the subject. The history and activity of The Friends of the Soviet Russia and of The National Council on Soviet Relations has been documented in Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Buhle, Dan Georgakas, eds. *Encyclopedia of the American Left*. 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 36.

that shaped the lives of those Americans who journeyed across the sea, either to mediate national, political, economic, religious and cultural interests, or in search of yet another “New World,” stretching along the Neva embankments of “one of the strangest, loveliest, most terrible, and most dramatic of the world’s great urban centers.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> George F. Kennan, *Soviet – American Relations. Russia Leaves the War. The Americans in Petrograd and the Bolshevik Revolution* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), 4.

## Methodology

In a recent article entitled *What is American Studies For? Some Practical Perspectives*, James Farrell suggests that among all other American studies practices, an international perspective is becoming more central to understanding the history and culture of the United States. He argues that a comparative, global outlook produces a perspective of America in the context of American world influences, and explores international, comparative approaches to the United States and its ideological, political, economic, and military relations with the rest of the world, past and present.<sup>1</sup>

It is this comparative global outlook which has become the primary method of revealing “one more America,” as well as another “American persona,” perceived “from the outside.”<sup>2</sup> Understanding the comments and observations of Americans who travelled abroad is therefore instrumental for analyzing America’s own political, social, and economic development.<sup>3</sup>

Addressing the history of American influences in Russia, revealing examples of “Americanization” of Russian society many decades before anyone thought of the United States as “the sole remaining superpower,” I stress Bernard Mergen’s argument of the importance of the subject of Americanization to the creation and further development of American studies. Mergen gives several examples of the process of globalizing American studies, and argues that it begins with “the first letters of Columbus, reaches maturity in Alexis de Tocqueville’s

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<sup>1</sup> James J. Farrell, “What American Studies For? Some Practical Perspectives,” *American Studies* 40, (Summer 1999): 185-186.

<sup>2</sup> Alice Kessler-Harris, “Cultural Locations,” *American Quarterly* 44, (Sept.1992):303.

<sup>3</sup> Among other scholars, Anne Babey, adopted a similar approach in her study of American sojourners in Russia published as *Americans in Russia 1776 – 1917: A Study of the American Travelers in Russia from the American Revolution to the Russian Revolution* (New York: The Comet Press, 1938).

*Democracy in America*, and continues in debates over ‘Americanization’ of other nations.”<sup>4</sup> My task, therefore, is to situate American experience and influences within the Russian historical and cultural context, and to look at St. Petersburg as “a cross section of American liberal, democratic, business, and cultural values.”<sup>5</sup> The comparative/ global approach is intertwined in my research with historical perspective, a method that Paul Lauter considers critical within as highly an interdisciplinary field as American studies.

In order to survey the American contribution to the development of Russian political and cultural history, I take into account the impact of the progressive spirit of Americans in the Russian capital.<sup>6</sup> As American influences “invaded the most staunch ministries and ecclesiastical circles,”<sup>7</sup> it is important to analyze the continuous integration of American ideas within the social and cultural milieu of St. Petersburg, that, from its very beginning, has been the country’s cultural and intellectual capital, home to a major university, the Academy of Science, the largest industrial enterprises, and most important sea port. Some political groups were so infatuated with America, and its ideas about unrestricted political life and social and economic experimentation, that their members dubbed themselves “*Americantsy (Americans)*.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Bernard Mergen, “Can American Studies be Globalized?” *American Studies* 41, (Summer-Fall, 2000): 305.

<sup>5</sup> Norman E. Saul, “The American Colony in St. Petersburg” (paper presented at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Central Slavic Conference, Lawrence, KS, April 3-5, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> Even the last Russian Tsar was not a stranger either to Americans or to American affairs. One of his first acts was the appointment of Michail Khilkov, who had spent several years in the United States, and learned about running trains and railroads, an experience that served him well when he became the minister of transportation. “As a result of these exposures to America, his home and office in St. Petersburg would always be open to visiting Americans for the ten years of his tenure.” Norman E. Saul, *Concord and Conflict: The United States and Russia. 1867-1914* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1996), 403.

<sup>7</sup> Saul, “The American Colony in St. Petersburg.”

<sup>8</sup> About the earlier influences and the infatuation with the New World of Russian intellectuals see Norman E. Saul’s *Distant Friends. The United States and Russia, 1763 – 1867* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991) as well

Even in the early twentieth century, when Russian impressions of America centered more on technological achievements and increasing *material* wealth, the “nation’s corps of liberals eyed American freedoms with interest reminiscent of the Decembrists.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, for example, the historical analysis of the social turmoil of the Russian Revolution of 1917 can not be complete without reference to the ideological evolution of the new leaders of the Russian state and the discursive formation of history and politics in revolutionary Petrograd. After the revolution drove Nicholas II from the throne, the head of the new Provisional Government, Prince Georgii Lvov, declared that Russia had matched America’s level of freedom in a single leap.<sup>10</sup> Shortly after the United States became the first nation to formally recognize the Provisional Government, its new foreign minister, Paul (Pavel) Miliukov, responded to the Americans: “the ideals which are represented by the Provisional Government are the same as underline the existence of your own country.”<sup>11</sup> American influences were reflected in the new Provisional Government’s program that embodied its leader’s reference to American values: “for decades of darkness and oppression, America has been our ideal of freedom and intellectual and material development; rather, not our ideal, for we had considered it unattainable, but a remote fairy tale of happiness.”<sup>12</sup> These attitudes made Americans assume that as representatives of “a wealthy modern country that Russians admired,” they had special opportunities and responsibilities in

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as his article “Through Curious and Foreign Eyes: Grigorii Matchtet Chronicles the Kansas Frontier, 1872 – 1873,” *Kansas History*, 17 (Summer 1994): 76 – 90.

<sup>9</sup> Allan M. Ball, *Imagining America: Influence and Images in Twentieth-Century Russia* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 272.

<sup>10</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Frederick L Schuman, *American Policy toward Russia since 1917: a study of diplomatic history, international law and public opinion* (New York: International Publishers, 1928), 45.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Allan Ball, *Imagining America*, 272. Saul also suggests that more work needs to be done on the history of financial and moral support for the liberal causes of the Miliukov-Guchkov Progressive Block of the Third and Fourth Dumas and the resulting February Revolution of 1917. See Saul, “The American Colony in St. Petersburg.”

Russia. This was the vision of the late American ambassador David Francis, who, as Harper Barnes put it, saw Russia in the late winter and spring of 1917 “through the lens of the American summer of 1776.”<sup>13</sup> In an impassioned draft of a cable to Washington the ambassador exaltedly stated that “No people so circumstanced have ever made greater sacrifices for freedom.... Our form of government is their model.”<sup>14</sup> To Francis, Lvov seemed quite Jeffersonian; as a liberal aristocrat, he perceived Russians as “a democratic soul” and praised “the great heart of the Russian people,” considering them “the foundation of our freedom, justice, and truth.”<sup>15</sup>

It is also important to consider certain aspects of American thinking that the returned political exiles, Russian-American repatriates, brought with them when they rushed back to their liberated motherland, inspired by the news of Romanov’s abdication. As Albert Rhys Williams observed in *Journey into Revolution: Petrograd, 1917-1918*, in America, most of them were involved in “a growing, healthy socialist movement.” They perceived the revolutionary events in Russia as an indication that socialism ceased being “an idle dream,” now promising to become “an accomplished fact.” Heading to Russia, many of them, especially those who were either the followers of Daniel de Leon, or early exponents of Marxism and advocates for industrial as opposed to craft unionism in the United States, visualized a society organized as an industrial state with representatives in the government chosen by industries, not regions, and accountable

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<sup>13</sup> Harper Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano: The Life and Times of David Rowland Francis* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press and The Francis Press, 2001), 235.

<sup>14</sup> David Francis to Robert Lansing, March 1917. David Rowland Francis Papers, 1868-1919, hereafter cited as (DRFP). Record Series # 02/P0274, Box 397, A-22a, Missouri Historical Society, hereafter cited as (MoHS).

<sup>15</sup> See Orlando Figes, *A People’s Tragedy: A History of the Russian Revolution* (New York: Viking, 1996), 352-353.

to the workers in those industries.<sup>16</sup> According to Williams, American-trained socialists brought to Russia “speed and method,” being “prodigies of efficiency and energy.”<sup>17</sup>

Since my primary goal is to write a historical account, I have been influenced by Paul Veyene’s *Writing History: Essay on Epistemology*. If, as Veyene suggests, history is a true Novel, then my primary task is to define the characters in my narrative. Veyene considers history as a story of true events in which people are actors. In my attempts to look back in time and explore or historicize the American presence in, influence upon, and reaction to St. Petersburg, I consider not only the members of the American colony there, but also the city itself, with its people, and its social, political, and cultural institutions as a principal “actor.” In order to accomplish my task and present the city as a principal character, I stress the importance of the city for Russian-American relations. I approach St. Petersburg as the indispensable geographical locale of the American colony, and the principal focus of this research “from all possible directions.” Furthermore, according to Veyene, history is an account of events; “all else flows from that.” For most of the characters populating my research, the account unfolds “on the edge of Asia, in that mystic land of white nights in summer and long black days in winter,” where the events that constitute that account or history “only heretofore dreamed or vaguely planned for future ages came to be.”<sup>18</sup> I situate my research within the events that connect or separate the two countries, bringing hundreds of Americans to live and work in the northern capital of Russia. Considering the city as one of the principal attractions and concerns in the life of the American colony, I have set a substantial portion of my narrative within the context of eloquent portraits and picturesque images of a city that “is simultaneously anchored by the stone and lifted by the

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<sup>16</sup> Albert Rhys Williams, *Journey into Revolution: Petrograd, 1917-1918* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969), 46.

<sup>17</sup> Albert Rhys Williams, *Through the Russian Revolution* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), 22.

<sup>18</sup> Louise Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia* (New York: Arno Press, 1970), ix.

stucco, a slightly unsettling, almost vertiginous contradiction” that can lead to “the maniac gaiety of the White Nights celebrations and, in the seemingly eternal dark and cold of winter, to the jittery depression and sense of longing that marks the work of its most famous writers....”<sup>19</sup>

Focusing on the lives of Americans residing in the former Russian capital, before and during the European carnage, and subsequent civil war, I explore the history of Russian–American relations, and numerous efforts of American individuals and enterprises to situate American influences and values within the Russian historical and cultural terrain. I contextualize the American presence within the atmosphere of the metropolis where those influences were especially strong.

Other “actors” in the drama are Americans. I survey the lives and careers of many Americans in St. Petersburg as part of a much larger picture of the American presence in Russia. In my research I have posed the following questions: Who were those Americans who had been attracted by the city’s “imperial scale and the long perspective” that “made a perfect stage set for larger-than-life events that were imaginary, real, and in between?”<sup>20</sup> What were the attitudes of the locals to the American community in St. Petersburg? How has Russia’s double nature reshaped, if it has, national American traits? Were the Americans who resided in Russia viewed there as representatives of their national population, in general, or did they stand out from the majority of their compatriots – and how?<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 190.

<sup>20</sup> Ian Frazier, “Invented City,” in *New Yorker*, 28 July 28, 2003, 38.

<sup>21</sup> The list of questions could be continued. Many scholars who dedicated their research to Americans in Russia, both in the past and in the present, would post similar questions with some variations. Thus for example, Anna Babey asked: “What impelled travelers from democratic and relatively isolated America to visit distant and despotic Russia? What was there about Russia that attracted some of the outstanding representatives of our democratic tradition and some of our most ardent patriots, leading political figures, enterprising business men and capitalists, as

The areas of inquiry exploring the history of Americans in the former Russian capital are broad and include a variety of motivations such as business possibilities, as well as scientific, journalistic, historical, sociological, and political inquiries. The chapters of this survey are organized along thematic lines. They include a brief survey of American sojourners abroad and in Russia, which is followed by a more specific outline of the American presence in St. Petersburg. The narrative stresses the importance of the development of diplomatic relations between the two countries and focuses upon the official U.S. diplomatic missions and their facilities, as the locus of the American community in the city. It continues with the survey of business relations between Russia and the United States and provides information about many American financial and industrial enterprises that opened branches there. In particular, I offer a case study of the Russian branch of the National City Bank of New York, one of the largest and most influential American banks in pre-revolutionary Petrograd. This analysis is based on bank documentation, such as “branch committee”<sup>22</sup> meeting minutes from the Vanderlip collection at Columbia University. I also use Stanislav Tkachenko’s findings from the St. Petersburg archives of a chief executive of the Petrograd branch of the National City Bank.

Other areas of inquiry include Russian studies, philanthropy, religious missionaries, and cultural interactions. This analysis of a broad range of bilateral interactions, diplomatic history, and the impact of ever-increasing Russian-American business partnerships provided an impetus

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well distinguished historians and scholars? What aroused their curiosity and what were their impressions in that strange country?” Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917*, 1.

<sup>22</sup> This was the name of a special committee that was set by the bank management for regular briefings during which the bankers read out cablegrams and other messages coming in from all corners of the globe. Thus, the committee minutes provided detailed information about everything that was happening in Petrograd, from the search of an appropriate building for the branch office to the updates of new appointments, currency exchange rates, deeds and bank operations, and the accounts on rapidly changing and challenging political situations.

to identify a group of Americans residing in the city as a “colony,” with all its implied social, economic, political, and cultural associations.

I analyze a great variety of archival material related to the American diplomatic mission in Russia<sup>23</sup> as well as the accounts left by entertainers, artists, scholars, and writers who were reflective and articulate commentators as to their experiences and impressions. Thus, for example, I use a recently published book by Ol’ga Molkina, a granddaughter of one of nearly eight hundred children rescued by the American Red Cross in 1919, who participated in a remarkable journey around the world, described by Jane Swan in *The Lost Children: A Russian Odyssey*. A citizen of St. Petersburg, Molkina researched the details of her grandparents’ “fairy tale odyssey,” revealing a family heritage that was tightly intertwined with the tragic history of her native city and the work of an American organization that was not indifferent to the fate of her long-suffering country. This new book, with a host of unpublished materials from the author’s family archives, is an example of a larger array of Russian-language sources not well known to Western readers, researchers and scholars. I survey editions that have been brought to

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<sup>23</sup> See Norman E. Saul, *War and Revolution: The United States and Russia 1917 – 1921* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001). Saul cites the official State Department records, Record Group 84 (Records of Diplomatic Posts 1788-1962 and Records of Consular Posts 1790-1963). Some of the personal papers and correspondence related to diplomats’ experiences in St. Petersburg/Petrograd have been published. For example the American ambassador George Thomas Marye as well as David R. Francis published their own notes in *Nearing the End in Imperial Russia* (Philadelphia: Dorrance, 1929) and *Russia from American Embassy* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1921). Another example is the publication of the extensive correspondence of the witness of the Russian Revolution, Francis’ valet Philip Jordan in *Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society* 14, (January 1958): 139-166 or the recent publication of the diary and letters of a counselor to the American embassy in St. Petersburg J. Butler Wright, edited by William Thomas Allison. See J. Butler Wright, *Witness to Revolution: The Russian Revolution Diary and Letters of Butler Wright* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002).

the attention of English-speaking historians,<sup>24</sup> not yet translated into English. Thus, I explore a unique account of the American experience in St. Petersburg published to celebrate the memorable visit of the Fox Naval mission in 1866. The edition contains transcripts of speeches delivered in honor of American guests, the details of their itineraries, and lists of social events and receptions staged in their honor.<sup>25</sup> Also referenced was an article from the latest issue of the *New-York Herald*, available along side a number of American newspapers circulating in St. Petersburg, describing the American vessel *Miantonomoh*'s characteristic steadiness in times of heavy storms and gales. The book is also a source of literary and poetic dedications to the event.

Another invaluable publication is a volume celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Russian-American diplomatic relations, entitled *Sankt-Peterburg–SSHA: 200 let Rossiisko-Americanskikh Diplomaticheskikh Otnoshenii (St Petersburg-U.S.A.: 200 years of Russian-American Diplomacy)*.<sup>26</sup> This essay collection reveals numerous details about the American presence in the northern capital. One chapter, devoted to diplomatic geography by V.V. Noskov, “brings up an important but practically unexplored topic in the history of international relations -- the everyday life of foreign diplomats.”<sup>27</sup> In another essay, L.A. Fedorovskaya surveys St. Petersburg theatres that incorporated elements of various events from the history and mythology of the discovery, exploration and development of North America and the American republic. S.A. Khodakovskaya and V.M. Ushakova survey the collection of the State Museum of Political History of Russia,

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<sup>24</sup> An extensive bibliography on Russian-American relations in all spheres was published in the framework of a joint project launched by the Library of Congress and the Russian National Library: “Meeting of Frontiers.” The bibliography could be accessed at <http://memory.loc.gov/intldl/mtfhtml/mfrelmat/mfrmbib.html#percep>

<sup>25</sup> See for example *Amerikantsy v Peterburge: Druzheskii soiuz Rossii i Ameriki* (Sankt Peterburg, 1866).

<sup>26</sup> *Sankt-Peterburg–SSHA: 200 let Rossiisko-Americanskikh Diplomaticheskikh Otnoshenii* (St. Peterburg: Evropeiskii dom, 2009). This book was endorsed by the American Consul General in St. Petersburg at the time Mary Kruger.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-104.

which contains more than 2000 items related to the origins and development of revolutionary and democratic movements in the United States, the influence of these events upon international politics, the political situation in Russia, and the relations between the two nations.<sup>28</sup> Finally, it is worth mentioning an important book, little-known in the West, on the work of the Petrograd branch of the National City Bank of New York, during the period of war and revolution. The volume was published in St. Petersburg, where its author rediscovered archival materials left behind by bank executives upon their departure from the city. While Tkachenko lists Western researchers who chronicle the history and influence of Citigroup throughout its almost century-long operation, few touch upon the important though brief Russian experience of this prominent American financial institution.<sup>29</sup>

This survey of the American presence in St. Petersburg, and its manifestation within the political, economic, and cultural milieu of the former capital of the vast tsarist empire, will inevitably call attention to other senses of time, space, and place, and to the regional, national, and international institutions in which they were embedded.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 119-131, 151-169.

<sup>29</sup> Stanislav L. Tkachenko, *Amerikanskii bankovskii kapital v Rosii v godi Pervoi mirovoi voini: Deyatel'nost' "National City Bank of New York"* (Peterburg: Sankt-Peterburgskii Gosudarstvennii Universitet, 1998).

## Introduction

### *Russia: An American Problem or an American Venue?*

From the first encounters in the mid-eighteenth century, to the rise of the Soviet state in the 1920s, the on-going historic ties between Russia and America were manifested in the political, economic and cultural life of the Russian capital, later the second major city of the nation. The history of Russian-American relations provides the essential context for the American expatriate community in this three-century-old city on the Gulf of Finland, and has always been inseparably linked with the American presence there. The American experience in St. Petersburg reflected numerous attempts to persuade populations of both countries that the interdependence of Russia and America has always been strong and could not be ignored. In the words of the first United States Secretary of Commerce, who was also the President of the American–Russian Chamber of Commerce, William C. Redfield, there has always been

too much of Russia and there [have been] too many of the Russians to make it sensible to ignore it or them. That great people form too large a factor in human life to make indifference either sane or safe. Their influence for good or ill is too great to make possible to regard them as something apart with which we have little to do. We are influenced by a common humanity – the necessity of dwelling on the same earth forces a recognition that we have a deep abiding interest in the fortunes, the failures, the successes, the power for good or bad which lies of necessity in the hands of so large a fraction of the human race.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> William C. Redfield, “The Interdependence of Russia and America,” paper delivered at the group session on American Trade with Russia at Seventh National Foreign Trade Convention, San – Francisco, California, 13 May 1920, 3. Commerce and Business Administration, Economics, Simon Litman Papers, 1865 – 1965. Clippings on Soviet Russia, 1918 – 1931, Series 9/5/29 Box No. 11, The University of Illinois Archives, hereafter cited as (UIA), Champaign – Urbana. Redfield was an advocate of aid to Russia after the Bolshhevik revolution. It should be

Such expressions of Russophilia proved that from the early days of American statehood, relations with Russia were characterized by increasing trade and “natural curiosity about the outside world that people of both countries were developing.” Over time the two peoples gradually but inevitably were drawing closer together. Upon returning from their travels, many Americans became passionately devoted to sharing what they saw and experienced in “a remarkable country, among a strange and interesting people,” offering their stories and narratives, with the goal of “giving the reader a clear idea of Russia, her people, their customs, the oppressions they bear and the pleasures they indulge in....”<sup>2</sup>

Some Americans, such as a step daughter of a head of an American bank in St. Petersburg, Lascelle de Basily Meserve, believed that there was magic in the word “Russia” itself. She wrote that for a bewildered foreigner Russia was not merely a country, but a world of its own. It might first feel like a blow on a head, but when one eventually recovered, the irresistible charm of that strange land swept over a visitor like a torrent:

The brilliance, grace and erudition of the nobility, the endearing gentleness and simplicity of the people, the kindness and generosity of all, the lavishness of their fetes, the perfection of their music and ballet, the darkness of winter days, the whiteness of summer nights, soon wove a magic spell which held the stranger

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noticed that President Wilson sought his advice and consultancy contemplating on plans to aid Russia, sending there a mission via Siberia in 1918. President considered the helpfulness as a sole aim of such a mission that would make it possible to “discuss and arrange with Russian representatives a plan of co-operation designed to set that perturbed country on its feet.” Arthur S. Link, ed. *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 48 May 13- July 17, 1918 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 303, 432-433. Redfield was one of those who would advocate for aiding Russia on purely civil and nonmilitary basis in order “to leave no opportunity for German propagandists to mislead the Russian masses into the misconception that the United States was seeking advantages for itself.” “Help to Russia Waits,” in *Washington Post*, 28 June 1918.

<sup>2</sup> Perry S. Heath, *A Hoosier in Russia: The Only White Tsar – His Imperialism, Country, and People* (New York: The Lorbom Publishing Company, 1888), 1.

enthralled. Even after leaving Russia, neither time nor distance could diminish the enchantment, and he always remembered the Giant of the North with tenderness and regret.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, it is impossible to underestimate the so-called “Great Powers Struggle,” ignoring a widespread Russophobia that often explained the West’s tendency to perceive Russia with increasing fear of its “growing military might and its territorial expansions”<sup>4</sup> on one hand and its weakness and vulnerability on the other.<sup>5</sup>

Mutual distrust between the two states in the nineteenth century turned into outright conflict following the Bolshevik revolution, continuing throughout most of the remainder of the twentieth century, as an “infinite variety in cultural, ideological and political counterpoint and confrontation, with the pendulum swinging violently from Russian Fever to Red Menace, from ally to foe.”<sup>6</sup> Such political and ideological misunderstanding produced distorted interpretations of the history of Russian-American relations for much of last century.

Since the end of the Cold War, and the fall of the Soviet Union, scholars in Russia and the United States have begun to reexamine and revisit many aspects of the history of Russian-American interactions. As new resources and publications become available, researchers find new venues and approaches to study what has been the most important state-to-state relationship in recent global history.

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<sup>3</sup> Lascelle de Basily Meserve, *Memoirs of a Lost World* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1975), 57.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva: Chapters from the Lives and Careers of the British in Eighteenth – Century Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 2.

<sup>5</sup> At the time of Russian Revolutions the West was quite divided about policy toward Russia. While there was an intention to preserve the integrity of Russia, regardless of the country’s government, by keeping it intact and sending relief, expressed by some in the United States, France, Britain, and Japan were more inclined toward partition with spheres of influence, e.g. France over Ukraine, Britain – Baltic states and Caucasus, Japan – Siberia.

<sup>6</sup> Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva*, 2.

To stress the importance and uniqueness of historical ties between these two countries, either forgotten or underestimated through decades of political and ideological discord, I have built a narrative around the diverse groups of American nationals who resided in St. Petersburg and later Petrograd, at the turn of the twentieth century, an era of widespread social upheaval and warfare. I analyze how they gained a deepening attachment to and respect for the city and its inhabitants, while developing interest in Russian history and social order, its business opportunities, and rich cultural traditions. This study reflects my search for the voices of those Americans who experienced life in the Russian capital first hand. It analyses the accounts and historiography of their involvement in history-making events, motivated by their intentions of fostering an understanding of Russia's ancient culture in the West, while dispelling notions of Russia as a backward and hostile place. My goal is to further explore a broad spectrum of public diplomacy and cultural influences, demonstrating how during the most difficult times, relations between Russia and the United States developed beyond the reach of governmental institutions.

I believe that my analysis provides evidence of an affirmative unity between the two nations, and facilitates further reconciliation, while challenging the new wave of anti-American sentiment on the rise in Russia. My hope is that modern scholars in history, sociology, American Studies, political science, international relations, and Russian studies might consider the experiences, opinions, and observations of those American expatriates of a century ago, in averting further misunderstandings inherited from the Cold War era. I also intend to interpret and contextualize those experiences for a new generation of Americans beginning to explore new economic, political, and cultural opportunities in the second principal city of the Russian

Federation,<sup>7</sup> in the hope that my research can transcend historical and cultural boundaries imposed upon social and political space, and serve as a means of further mediation and reconciliation between peoples and nations.

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<sup>7</sup> “For the last 20 years America and Americans have established a firm foothold in St. Petersburg and across the rest of Russia.” On the 23 March 2004, *The St. Petersburg Times* published an article about John Varoli and his research. A former staffer of *The St. Petersburg Times* and a contributor to *The New York Times*, Varoli became interested in the history of Americans in St. Petersburg. Varoli proposed that although “the excitement Americans and Russians have shown for each other in recent years is as if they had discovered each other for the first time...U.S.-Russian relations were just as warm long ago and that St. Petersburg was one of the first Russian cities to experience them.” For more details about John Varoli and his research see Irina Titova’s “History Shows America Also Went East,” *The St. Petersburg Times*, 23 March 2004.

## CHAPTER I

### *East Meets West*

#### *The City of Clerks and Foreigners: Foreign Communities in Multinational St. Petersburg*

St. Petersburg has always symbolized the dynamics of western life style and social development. It was in St. Petersburg, the city of “clerks and foreigners,” an alien city, built and served mainly by foreigners (French, Italians, English architects, German doctors and teachers, Finish milkmaids, French governesses, and Tartar waiters, Dutch, German and British clockmakers, shipbuilders, riggers, smiths, engineers, etc), where “the drama of Westernization of Russia’s destiny was played out.”<sup>1</sup>

In “St. Petersburg and Geographies of Modernity in Eighteenth-Century Russia,” Denis J.B. Shaw, a scholar in Russian cultural geography, analyzes how the image of St. Petersburg, as well as its reality, impinged on the Russian consciousness and mentality of its alien residents. Shaw summarizes the process and concludes that St. Petersburg presented itself as a European city, “new and strange no doubt to the majority of Russians who beheld it,” but, as its creator hoped, “familiar and reassuring to the many foreigners he recruited or invited to live there, a symbol of what he wished Russia to become.”<sup>2</sup> And yet Shaw acknowledges that like any new city, St. Petersburg “could not hide its heritage.” Though remaining attractive to foreigners,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Boris Ometev and John Stuart, *St. Petersburg. Portrait of the Imperial City* (New York: Vendome Press, 1990). 9.

<sup>2</sup> Denis J.B. Shaw, “St Petersburg and Geographies of Modernity in Eighteenth-Century Russia,” in *St. Petersburg, 1703 – 1825*, ed. Anthony Cross (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 11.

<sup>3</sup> In April 2003 to commemorate the tercentenary of St. Petersburg, that in Pushkin’s famous phrase became “the window to Europe,” the Kenneth Spencer Research Library in Lawrence Kansas held an exhibition “Frosted Windows: 300 Years of St. Petersburg Through Western Eyes.” The exhibition itself as well as its printed catalogue became an excellent source of materials on “what Westerners have seen as they have looked in, from the other side

open to Western ways and customs, and embedded to an extent in western philosophical and ethical culture, St. Petersburg still was a principally Russian city, and the center of Russian custom and attitudes. Thus, the author reminds us that “after all, the majority of its inhabitants were Russian with Russian ways.”<sup>4</sup> Other scholars supported this notion, and stated that although it was considered to have become “another face of Russia [besides] Moscow,” it had never been “less Russian.”<sup>5</sup> The city became a symbol of Russian predestination, to be situated on the fault line of history between two ‘tectonic plates’ of Western and Eastern cultural and social realms, expanding beyond the contours of its conventional image as either the Imperial capital<sup>6</sup> or the cradle of Bolshevik revolution. The significance of the city belonging to both worlds was eloquently reflected in a novel written by an American who lived there, while working as an employee of a newly opened branch of the National City Bank of New York, where he began an appointment in the summer of 1916, a season that turned existing boundaries and distinctions into vague, nearly invisible elements of contemplation: “the sun had succumbed to the insistent clouds. Suddenly it lit up the ragged border of a rift like a flaming edge of paper.

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of Peter’s “window to Europe.” See *Frosted Windows: 300 years of St.Petersburg. Through Western Eyes* (Lawrence: Kenneth Spencer Research Library, 2003).

Another valuable source that brings together accounts of foreigners’ journeys to Russia published in English before the October Revolution, 1917 is the IDC Publishes’ bibliography “Russia through the Eyes of Foreigners.” I’m particularly interested in the accounts that provide an insight into life and conditions of St. Petersburg. Among others it is worth mentioning, for example, writings by an American author, Isabel Florence Hapgood, who published her traveling accounts to Russia in *Russian Rambles*. Her notes and description of the traditions, people, and places in Russia include a chapter devoted to the life of the main street of St. Petersburg Nevsky Prospekt. See Isabel Florence Hapgood, *Russian Rambles* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1895).

<sup>4</sup> Shaw, “St Petersburg and Geographies of Modernity in Eighteenth-Century Russia,” 11.

<sup>5</sup> Nikolai Berdiaev, *The Russian Idea*, trans. R.M. French (London: G, Bles, Centenary Press, 1947), 71.

<sup>6</sup> St. Petersburg became the capital of Russia in 1712 and remained the capital and the seat of the powerful Romanov dynasty until the dramatic revolutionary events.

As suddenly it vanished, leaving the swift and early afternoon darkness to settle over the city and reduce its western activity to the somnolent indifference of the east.”<sup>7</sup>

Foreigners began arriving in St. Petersburg from the city’s founding, throughout the first half of the eighteenth century. Among early evidence of their presence in the new capital was material assembled for the *Book of City Inhabitants* compiled and maintained under a provision of the Charter to the Towns, established by Catherine the Great on April 21, 1785. The information intended to be incorporated in the volume, never completed, included many prominent foreigners.<sup>8</sup> George E. Munro, who studied and analyzed the ‘Book’ mentions well-known physician Baron Georg Thomas von Asch,<sup>9</sup> the French goldsmith Jean Ador, the German merchant Fedor Amburger, the English merchant Thomas Bonar, Dutch merchant Login Boehlingk, and the English clockmaker John Bottom (Ivan Botom).<sup>10</sup> Maria Di Salvo, a leading Italian scholar of Russia, and specialist in the history of Italian-Russian relations, analyzes Italian immigration, as well as professional interests of those who sought their fortune at the Russian Court, throughout the eighteenth century. Di Salvo writes that “many of them were actors,

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<sup>7</sup> Leighton Rogers, *Wine of Fury* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1924), 8.

<sup>8</sup> George E. Munro reconstructs the process and writes that although “most of the names on the manuscript are Russian, but by no means all.” He names some prominent foreigners just to mention a few “among the many foreigners, mostly merchants and tradesmen, whose names appear on the lists.” George E. Munro, “Compiling and Maintaining St. Petersburg’s ‘Book of City Inhabitants’: The ‘Real’ City Inhabitants,” in *St. Petersburg, 1703 – 1825*, ed. Anthony Cross (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 85.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* Munro gives more details in the footnotes, explaining that Thomas’ father was originally from Breslau and that he received his medical education at Tubingen and Gottingen, and later proceeded with his career as a doctor in the Russian army. See Munro, “Compiling and Maintaining St. Petersburg’s ‘Book of City Inhabitants’,” 98. For more details on that prominent foreigner who resided in St. Petersburg and was registered in ‘The Book of Inhabitants’ see John T. Alexander, *Bubonic Plague in Early Modern Russia: Public Health and Urban Disaster* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1980).

<sup>10</sup> Munro, “Compiling and Maintaining St. Petersburg’s ‘Book of City Inhabitants’,” 85. The latter is also mentioned in Anthony Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva: Chapters from the Lives and Careers of the British in Eighteenth – Century Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 231.

musicians and architects who were to spend much of their life in St Petersburg.”<sup>11</sup> With the emergence of a westernized elite and the development of new forms of sociability, widely featured in the reports of foreign visitors,<sup>12</sup> St. Petersburg became a city in which “foreigners felt at home” and found that “the certain aspects of life were familiar to them.”<sup>13</sup> Thus, the new Russian capital would become gradually intertwined with a European urban context, perceived by foreigners as a Russian “window on a world that was worth exploring more closely.”<sup>14</sup> Di Salvo refers to accounts left by Giambattista Venuti, who arrived in Russia in 1727 with the Duke de Liria, and to *Letters from Russia (Viaggi di Russia)* published in 1760 by foreign entrepreneur Francesco Algarotti. Understanding European interest in St. Petersburg, Algarotti correctly suggested that ‘many foreigners, especially English, when attracted by magnificent and pompous shows that cannot be seen anywhere else, would certainly wish to visit, if they were comfortably accommodated and well received by the Court. Thus, Algarotti made “an original and (very modern) proposal: to stage troop parades, naval battles and combat with wild animals, like those that were popular in Ancient Rome.”<sup>15</sup> Di Salvo also refers to the abbé Giovanni Battista Casti, who served as a court poet between 1777 and 1779, writing librettos and panegyrics lauding the Empress, and composing a satirical poem about Catherine called *The*

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<sup>11</sup> Maria Di Salvo, “A Venice of the North? Italian Views of St Petersburg,” in *St. Petersburg, 1703 – 1825*, ed. Anthony Cross (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 75.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* One of the early American observers Nancy Prince, whose husband served at the court mentioned in her memoirs the great number of “foreign employees, especially soldiers, doctors, technicians of all sorts” and simply visitors. See Nancy Prince, *A Black Woman’s Odyssey Through Russia and Jamaica: the narrative of Nancy Prince. Introduction by Ronald G. Walters* (New York: M. Wiener, 1990).

<sup>14</sup> Maria Di Salvo, “A Venice of the North?,” 78.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

*Tartar Poem (Il Poema tartaro)* that was published in 1786.<sup>16</sup> “Casti had a considerable circle of acquaintances in the capital and knew many intrigues going on in the social world.”<sup>17</sup>

Thus, from the beginning, the new Russian capital also attracted travelers who visited the country “out of pure curiosity,” especially during Catherine’s reign, when it formed part of the ‘northern tour,’ offering “new and exciting variations on the traditional Grand Tour.” A prominent visitor of the era was Giacomo Casanova, who travelled to St. Petersburg in 1765 and recalled in his *Memoirs* “his conversations and amusements with Russians.”<sup>18</sup>

Other scholars, such as Denis Shaw, point out that the social structure and customs of St. Petersburg allowed foreigners to mingle relatively easily with Russians, emphasizing that the process was encouraged by St Petersburg’s location, with “its burgeoning foreign trade and by the increasing number of foreigners now being employed in the city.”<sup>19</sup> It is difficult to identify the social status of foreigners in St. Petersburg, as unlike in Moscow, where most congregated in separate enclaves and were involved in handicrafts, in the new capital immigrants and expatriates lived among the natives and served in various capacities and occupations.<sup>20</sup>

Among other foreign pioneers residing and working in the city, Shaw names famed Scottish mathematician Henry Farquharson, who along with other foreign specialists, introduced European methods of surveying and mapmaking at the Naval Academy opened in 1715, and pioneering Swiss mathematician and physicist Leonhard Euler, affiliated with the Academy of Sciences opened after Peter the Great’s death in 1725, as well as a brother of the celebrated

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 75. Di Salvo refers to the letter from St Petersburg to J. Kaunitz (31 May 1776), published in G. B. Casti, *Epistolario*, ed. A. Fallico (Viterbo, 1984), 95 – 101.

<sup>17</sup> Maria Di Salvo, “A Venice of the North?,” 79.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Denis J.B. Shaw, “St Petersburg and Geographies of Modernity in Eighteenth-Century Russia,” 12.

<sup>20</sup> See more on the evolution and growth of the foreign population in St. Petersburg in James H. Bater, *St. Petersburg: Industrialization and Change* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1976).

French geographer and cartographer Guillaume Delisle, J.N. Delisle, who had been appointed to the chair of astronomy and oversaw cartography in the Academy.<sup>21</sup> The Academy of Science became a venue where, in Shaw's words, "the latest scientific ideas and practices could be exchanged, argued over and developed by the (initially) completely foreign members, their adjuncts and students."<sup>22</sup>

Foreign architects had long practiced in Russia, but it was the creation of St. Petersburg that "led to a spectacular increase in the number of architects and other artists seeking employment in Russia."<sup>23</sup> The new capital would become a place where "Renaissance and Baroque notions of urban grandeur, order and elegance could be fully realized in Russia, and where Renaissance ideas of perspective, geometrical form and symmetry could properly be applied in the city's planning and architecture, particularly through the employment of foreign architects, sculptors and other specialists."<sup>24</sup>

The first and the most prominent Swiss/Italian architect Domenico Trezzini came to Russia in 1703 and spent the next three decades contributing to the city's famous style and design. Another foreign artist to contribute to the creation of the 'Venice of the North' was a pupil of the famous French architect le Notre, designer of Versailles, Jean Baptiste Alexandre Le Blond, who "is generally considered the [ablest] of the architects to have worked under Peter I."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Maria Di Salvo, "A Venice of the North?," 79.

<sup>22</sup> Shaw, "St Petersburg and Geographies of Modernity in Eighteenth-Century Russia," 17.

<sup>23</sup> Cross, ed. *St. Petersburg 1703-1825* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 6.

<sup>24</sup> Shaw, "St Petersburg and Geographies of Modernity in Eighteenth-Century Russia," 10.

<sup>25</sup> James Cracraft, *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Architecture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 158. Di Salvo also mentions the architect Giacomo Quarenghi, who maintained a genuine correspondence (Maria Di Salvo, "A Venice of the North?," 75). Di Salvo refers to other sources of personal correspondence, such as Pietro Gonzaga's with Francesco Fontanesi (Maria Di Salvo, "A Venice of the North?," 75). The author quoted the letter

Other foreigners who succeeded in St. Petersburg were a host of Dutch cartographers in the service of Peter the Great. Abraham Maas produced one of the earliest plans and charts of the city commissioned by yet another foreigner, Lord George Forbes Earl of Granard, whose mission to Russia “guided the course of Anglo-Russian relations during his year of residence in the Russian capital.”<sup>26</sup>

Among other celebrated foreigners with business in St. Petersburg or employed by Russian authorities in the early history of the city were such famous English shipbuilders as Richard Cozens and Joseph Nye and English merchants Timothy Raikes, Thomas Warre, and Henry Hodgkin.<sup>27</sup> Anthony Cross, who studied the British residents in St. Petersburg, writes that the famous English Embankment, comprised of large and comfortable residences, became known as the “English Line” by the end of the eighteenth century, “because the whole row was

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found in *Notizie biografiche in continuazione della Biblioteca Modonese di Girolamo Tiraboschi, I* (Modena, 1833, reprint Bologna, Forni editore, 1972), 477-8), by an unidentified visitor, who left his account about the mission sent in 1783-84 by the Cardinal Archetti, “to discuss with Catherine the situation and rights of those Catholic White Russians, who had become subject to the Russian empire after the first partition of Poland. (See Maria Di Salvo, “A Venice of the North?,” 77). Another letter, found in the Biblioteca Corsini in Rome, was not widely known, mostly because it had existed only in Italian. That account consisted of a detailed map of the town, and the description of the various amusements, “including clubs and theatres, the cost of tickets and the money earned by singers and dancers.” The unidentified author “informed of public transport, lighting, and the role of the police.” The author of that ancient letter was obviously interested in “the social and administrative organization of the capital and the impression his report conveys is of town swarming with people, colorfully dressed and rushing about on duty.” See Maria Di Salvo, “Scene di vita Pietroburghese colte da un visitatore italiano (1783-1784),” *Europa Orientalis*, XVI/1 (1997) 151-78.

<sup>26</sup> Michael J. Bitter, “St. Petersburg during the Reign of Anna Ivanovna: The Forbes/Maas Chart and the Evolution of the Early Mapping of the City,” in *St. Petersburg, 170 – 1825*, ed. Anthony Cross (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 30-49.

<sup>27</sup> Anthony Cross, “The English Embankment,” in *St. Petersburg, 1703 – 1825*, ed. Anthony Cross (*St. Petersburg, 1703 – 1825*), 53-65. The author refers to the traveling notes of Archdeacon Coxe. See William Coxe, *Travels into Poland, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., II (London: T. Cadell, 1802), 4.

principally occupied by English merchants.”<sup>28</sup> Among others, residing in the proximity of the English Line, were merchants Henry Sanders, William Vigor and William Riches, and the watchmaker Joseph Smith.<sup>29</sup> Among the Embankment habitués were such prominent merchants as William Porter, Baron Richard Sutherland, Godfrey Thornton and John Cayley, British Consul-General and Agent of the Russia Company, as well as doctor John Rogerson, Catherine the Great’s physician, and doctor James Wylie, the personal physician of Paul I and Alexander I.<sup>30</sup>

In *By the Banks of the Neva*, Anthony Cross refers to Admiralty Island, which developed as a foreigners’ quarter, “a far more temporary and haphazard area than its Moscow counterpart.”<sup>31</sup> Prince Menshikov ordered the construction of a large lodging-house where foreign workmen could live, while enjoying a nearby tavern where they passed their dreary nights.<sup>32</sup> Another settlement of foreigners in the new city was along the waterfront to the west of the Admiralty, where as early as in the first third of the eighteenth century “houses were built

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* The name of the Embankment, known in the Soviet period as the Embankment of the Red Fleet, lives on, restored for the visit of Queen Elizabeth II in 1994.

<sup>29</sup> Cross, “The English Embankment,” 66.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 66, 68 and Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva*, 84-8.

<sup>31</sup> Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva*, 10. In Moscow, foreigners lived in a quarter, known as *sloboda*. It was known as *Kukuy Sloboda* (German) and was populated with foreigners who were dubbed “Germans” by Russians regardless of their national origin. Later they relocated to *Novonemetskaya Sloboda* (New German), where Orthodox clergy forced Catholic and Protestant foreigners residing in the city. Even foreign officers of Russian army had to dwell within the quarter.

<sup>32</sup> In his article “The English Embankment” Cross refers to the descriptions of the early foreign travelers to St. Petersburg and cites Friedrich Christian Weber, who was the Hanoverian resident in the Russian capital between 1714 and 1719 and to a French traveler Aubry de la Motraye who visited St. Petersburg a year after Peter the Great’s death. Both mentioned Prince Menshikov’s Inn where, according to the observers, lived “German and French manufacturers, and artificers, particularly the handicraftsmen.” Quoted in Cross, “The English Embankment,” 54.

both in wood and stone for members of the Russian aristocracy and for important foreigners.”<sup>33</sup> Cross refers to the pages of the *St Petersburg News (Sanktpeterburgskie vedomosti)*, where English inns and shops were advertised.<sup>34</sup> As a result of an important provision of the Anglo-Russian Commercial Treaty of 1734, that stressed the English Russia Company’s power and influence in St. Petersburg, British merchants<sup>35</sup> “were spared the imposition of having soldiers billeted in the homes they rented.” Consequently, Russian homeowners were more than willing to have them as tenants.<sup>36</sup> After 1759, when foreign merchants were allowed to buy houses in their own names, many purchased plots on Vasilii Island, where they built stone and wooden houses.<sup>37</sup> Cross describes wealthy British families that were able to purchase some of the most elegant three-story stone houses erected in the 1760s and 1770s, to the west of the Admiralty, where prominent British and American ambassadors also rented houses. Originally, access to the dwellings was from the rear, through courtyards lined with buildings and outhouses. This back street ran parallel to the English Quay along the Neva, built up with more modest houses occupied by British and German tradesmen and craftsmen and their shops.<sup>38</sup> Thus, the heart of British community, for example, had its own inn, a coffee house, a subscription library, and a church.

Churches of all denominations had served for some time as a quintessential example of St. Petersburg’s role in opening up Russia to external cultural influences, and connecting it with

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. As an example Cross quotes *Sanktpeterburgskie vedomosti*, 8 October 1790, 1321.

<sup>35</sup> It is worth mentioning that the presence of such a number of merchants was justified by the fact that Russia was a leading exporter of iron, hemp, sailcloth, etc., with a very small, virtually non-existent commercial fleet.

<sup>36</sup> Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva*, 11.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. Cross refers mostly to British merchants, however. Yet, there is no reason why people of other nationalities would not be able to do the same.

<sup>38</sup> See Ibid.

the world. In order to attract foreigners and welcome them, a number of Russian rulers offered unprecedented religious and other liberties “with subventions by the state toward the cost of establishing places of worship, perpetual exemption from all compulsory military duty, exemption from all forms of taxation for a long period, local autonomy, and a fairly liberal measure of self-government.”<sup>39</sup>

It was not surprising, according to British-born American socialist writer Spargo, that at the time of Catherine II’s death in 1796, “a very large percentage of the existing industries were owned by foreigners -- Germans, English, French, Swedes, Italians, and Bulgarians.” More precisely, in St. Petersburg, “twenty-two percent of the factories belonged to foreigners.”<sup>40</sup>

Eventually, foreigners established commercial organizations, such as a guild for merchants,<sup>41</sup> the British Factory, and the American Chamber of Commerce, with headquarters in St. Petersburg. Many also signed up for service in the Russian army and navy. And though such active participation of foreign individuals and organizations in the life and economy of the Russian capital would not completely eradicate the notion of the country’s backwardness, the expanding contacts originated and further developed in the northern capital were to aid greatly in opening Russia to the rest of the world.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> John Spargo for example refers to such measures passed during the reign of Catherine the Great, who was determined to introduce Russia to Western European economic and cultural space. John Spargo, *Russia as an American Problem* (New York: Harper, 1920), 78.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* A report issued by National City Bank of New York in 1916 also emphasizes Russia’s spared taxation, pronouncing that “considering in relation to its undeveloped nature of all resources, Russia’s debt and current taxation, including the additional burden of the war, is the lowest of the belligerent countries.” See National City Bank of New York, *Russia and the Imperial Russian Government* (New York: The National City Bank of New York, 1916), 4.

<sup>41</sup> In the early XIX century, it had roughly 3, 000 members. See Bater, *St. Petersburg*, 77.

<sup>42</sup> Many foreigners residing in St. Petersburg not only introduced progressive ideas, thus contributing to Russian social, economic, and cultural development, but also raised their compatriots’ awareness about the country in their

The manner in which the social and spatial elements of St Petersburg's culture and economy became interlinked inspired a growing interest of social scientists, historians, and cultural geographers. Denis J.B. Shaw introduced the assumption that by choosing to build "a new center on a *tabula rasa* at the periphery of his realm, far from the inertial influence of the old capital (where resistance to change was likely to be the greatest)," Peter the Great regarded the new city as a 'space of modernity,' a place where his reforms "could seemingly be realized."<sup>43</sup> The author focuses his essay on Peter's well-known concern that the city's development never wavered and upon the fact that the tsar "exercised the most detailed scrutiny over every aspect of its life and growth," considering it "the centerpiece of his policies to transform Russia." Shaw also refers to scholar Anthony Giddens, who defined such a transformation as the exercise of surveillance, which was in Giddens' view, "a key to the power

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multiple reports, memoirs, diaries, and scholarly publications. For example, when coming to Russia many Americans not only brought democratic perspectives but also conveyed to their countrymen knowledge about social changes and even revolutionary movements in Russia. See for example the report of Poultney Bigelow on nihilism or Heath's reflections on dissent in Russia in the 1880s – 1890s. Poultney Bigelow papers, 1855-1954. Box 47. Materials relating to Russia, Spain, and the Spanish-American War, and Italy. Manuscripts and Archives Division, hereafter cited as (MAD), New York Public Library, hereafter cited as (NYPL). Perry S. Heath, *A Hoosier in Russia: The Only White Tsar – His Imperialism, Country, and People* (New York: The Lorborn Publishing Company, 1888). Another example is the work of George Kennan who, though discouraged in his efforts to "break through indifference so profound and to enlighten ignorance so dense" when writing about Russian affairs, yet hoped that "future generations will recognize the fact that there is now [1888] being made in Russia one of the most gallant and desperate fights for liberty that has ever been recorded in history -- a fight more full of individual heroism, fortitude, self-sacrifice and indomitable courage than any popular struggle of which we have knowledge. And yet we Americans to whom the fighters for freedom in Russia have every right to look for encouragement and sympathy are so indifferent...." Kennan to W.D. Foulke, 4 February 1888, Washington. George Kennan Papers. Box. 1, series I. Correspondence, 1885-1888, folder 1.2. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>43</sup> Shaw, "St Petersburg and Geographies of Modernity in Eighteenth-Century Russia," 7.

of the modern state.”<sup>44</sup> According to Shaw, in addition to these policies related to modernity, “there were others which seemed designed to encourage modernity in the attitudes and outlook of the city’s growing population.”<sup>45</sup> As Anthony Cross observed in *By the Banks of the Neva*, St. Petersburg was an essential part of “a wider preoccupation with Europe, with Russia’s place within it and with Russia’s demand upon it.” It was, as Cross defines it, a part of a ‘Great Experiment’ of trying to bring Russia into Europe and of using Europe, for a limited period, as mentor and training ground to achieve that goal.” The new capital became the manifestation of Russia’s entry into European political and cultural space and the adaptation of western models by the Russian empire. It was also a response to Western views of Russia laden “with varying degrees of condescension, superiority, amusement, and growing fear.”<sup>46</sup> These perceptions echo with the assessments of those scholars who underlined the overall regularity and predictability of the city’s plan, as well as the architecture of its individual buildings, that were intended to demonstrate “the triumph of the notions of rationality and science which had so impressed Peter on his visits to Europe.” There was also the belief that “those same straight streets and the grand architecture would somehow change Russians themselves, as though their development had previously been cramped and inhibited by Moscow’s meandering lanes, cupolas, and lack of sweeping vistas.”<sup>47</sup>

Shaw does not limit the facet of modernity to the spatial and architectural environment however; he also notes the city’s institutional structure, underlining the importance of the systematic resettlement of a number of governmental, educational and scientific institutions that

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<sup>44</sup> See Anthony Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism, II, The Nation State and Violence* (London: Polity, 1985), 9.

<sup>45</sup> Shaw, “St Petersburg and Geographies of Modernity in Eighteenth-Century Russia,” 9.

<sup>46</sup> Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva*, 1.

<sup>47</sup> Shaw, “St Petersburg and Geographies of Modernity in Eighteenth-Century Russia,” 10.

began to relocate from Moscow, serving to underscore St. Petersburg's secular character. Shaw mentions such institutions as "the famed Naval Academy (opened in 1715 when the higher classes of the Moscow School of Mathematics and Navigation moved to the new capital), the higher engineering school (which moved from Moscow in 1719), the St. Petersburg medical school (1716), and facilities for training of entrants to the civil service."<sup>48</sup> The Academy of Sciences (1725) followed, accompanied by a Gymnasium, and a university allied with the *Kunstkamera*, Peter's museum, which also became a center for higher learning, sprouting a library. Shaw adds military hospitals, a botanical garden, the city's first typography and newspaper, the *Vedomosty*, in 1711, which continued to publish "books, calendars and similar matter, part of which was of a secular kind." Thus, Shaw explains that these were "the first glimmerings of a secular high culture. Although discernible in Peter's days, they would make St. Petersburg a site for poetry, literature, theatre, and music 'of non-traditional type' later in the century "providing a context in which many aspects of modernity could eventually become rooted."<sup>49</sup>

For those, however, who would conceive of authentic Russian culture as embedded exclusively in Orthodox Christianity and traditional peasantry, St. Petersburg offered another perspective. For them St. Petersburg was an alienated and foreign settlement that they would strenuously deny as a place where Moscow's religious and traditional orientation would dissipate in the pale northern fog or be swallowed by the irrational brutality of the Baltic floods, turning into a "chimerical" anti-ethnos. Thus, from the very beginning of the city's history, it had become a stage for the debate about the vicissitudes that manipulated the historical consciousness of the nation. In the course of time the historic argument about the place of Russia

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

in “ethnogenes” and the role of the Russian nation in the world “biosphere,” as well as about St. Petersburg’s landscape and its influence upon the fate and history of the Russian state would ultimately crystallize in two major rival theories. One would be authored by fervent Westerner and renowned scholar of Slavic Studies Dmitrii Likhachev, and the other by an adherent of neo-Eurasianism, historian and anthropologist Lev Gumilev, who claimed that the “genetic and historic [collective] memory” that supports and reinforces ethnic “stereotypes of behavior”<sup>50</sup> would fade away in the alien imposition of Peter’s pseudomorphic creation.<sup>51</sup>

For Slavophiles, St. Petersburg seemed too close to Europe, particularly to the Protestant nations of the Baltic and the north, with its repulsive “secular” appearance. It would indeed become very different from that of the old capital, especially because of its maritime and riverine setting, and “its relative freedom from a townscape and ethos entirely dominated by religion.”<sup>52</sup> Built primarily to serve as one of the major Russian ports, a center of industry and culture, with its diverse ethnic and national diversity in the population,<sup>53</sup> the city “boasted such a rich mixture

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<sup>50</sup> See Lev Nikolaevich Gumilev, *Etnogenez i Biosfera Zemli* (Leningrad, Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo universiteta, 1989), 15, 25. (Ethno genesis and biosphere of Earth).

<sup>51</sup> The rule of Peter the Great marked the end of Old Russia and the emergence of the Russian empire as a world power. The city stands “as a monument to imperial will, with all the ambivalence that notion must carry.” Maria Carlson, Richard W. Clement, “Foreword,” *Frosted Windows: 300 years of St. Petersburg. Through Western Eyes*. Another relatively recent historic account, that stressed the importance of St. Petersburg for the broader and deeper contact with the West, is W. Bruce Lincoln’s *Sunlight at Midnight: St. Petersburg and the Rise of the Modern Russia* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

<sup>52</sup> Shaw, “St. Petersburg and Geographies of Modernity in Eighteenth-Century Russia,” 12.

<sup>53</sup> In 2002 a long-expected comprehensive volume on multicultural and multinational nature and history of this Russian city was finally published. The recent volume is an encyclopedic survey that is devoted to the ethno – social structure of St. Petersburg. Izabella Shangina, the author of the introduction and the principle editor of the volume *Multinational St. Petersburg: History, Religions, Nations*, claims that the relationship between more than 120 different nationalities and dozens of religions in St. Petersburg caused a unique social milieu, characterized by the particular Petersburg mentality. Shangina also emphasizes in her volume that the majority of the population of the

of races and nationalities,” that visitors were amazed at “the variety of languages spoken in its salons and places of business.”<sup>54</sup> With that admixture and intermingling of peoples, activities and cultures, the city’s potential as a catalyst for social change would become clear.<sup>55</sup>

“No other city in Europe” attracted as much attention to a demographic diversity that would be captured as the first impression by its numerous guests and sojourns:

the streets of the city are ever thronged with natives and visitors; and it would be difficult to find in any portion of the globe a more cosmopolitan people than one encounters upon the streets here. There is a predominance of Germans after natives; and then in proportion are Swedes, Norwegians, and French. Turks, Slavs, Jews and Cossaks, are regarded a part of the natives, and are never referred to as foreigners....<sup>56</sup>

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city have always remained their “Petersburg face” that stands out with its indifference to nationality or ethnicity, that Peterburgers were religiously tolerant and naturally benevolent. That unique Petersburg outlook and attitudes were noted by many visitors to the city. Thus, for example, in the middle of the nineteenth century a French writer Theophile Gautier mentioned that St. Petersburg embodied the ideal of religious and national tolerance. The city’s distinctive social mix was also notable. See Izabella Iosifovna Shangina, ed., *Mnogonatsionalnyi Peterburg: istoriia, religii, narody* (Sankt-Peterburg: Iskusstvo-SPb, 2002). And yet, it must be noted that although Shangina’s book reveals in all the details multicultural and multinational social structure of the city, and includes chapters on Finns, Swedish and Polish residents, Germans, Lithuanians, Jews, Tatars, etc, it does not offer even a glimpse on American St. Petersburg. Even in the chapter on Protestantism, there is no reference to American missionaries, in spite of the fact that they were very active in the city and famous for their charitable institutions and practices.

<sup>54</sup> Lincoln, *Sunlight at Midnight*, 43-44.

<sup>55</sup> Shaw, “St Petersburg and Geographies of Modernity in Eighteenth-Century Russia,” 13. Besides mentioned above editions revealing histories of foreign communities in St. Petersburg it is also worth mentioning such examples as E. Piotrovskaiia and G. Knappe, ed., *300 let vmeste--Sankt-Peterburg i nemtsy v techenie trekh stoletii/ 300 Jahre St. Petersburg und die Deutschen* (Sankt-Peterburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 2002), Aleksandr Kobak, Boris Ostanin, Jangfeldt, Bengt, et al, ed., *Shvedy na beregakh Nevy: sbornik statei* (Stokgolm: Shvedskii in-t, 1998), and others.

<sup>56</sup> Heath, *A Hoosier in Russia: The Only White Tsar – His Imperialism, Country, and People*, 25.

St. Petersburg has continuously caught scholars' imagination beyond its borders. Prominent scholar of Russian history W. Bruce Lincoln declared that in order to be the subject of history, "a city has to have a soul, and the soul of St. Petersburg is as complex as the contrasts that shape its character." In spite of numerous efforts, no one, according to Lincoln, "ever managed to extract St. Petersburg's soul directly from the surreal, romantic, symbolist, and realist elements" and natural phenomena. Lincoln argues that it is "the collective spirit of all the human souls that built Peter's city – loved it, hated it, lived in it, and died for it -- in the course of three hundred years."<sup>57</sup>

Americans residing in the city also became part of its "collective spirit," and felt the city touch their lives and affairs, while experiencing "the endless rhythm..., the long winters of snow and darkness; the protracted in-between seasons of grey skies, slush, and a pervasive dampness; the white nights of the summer solstice, with their unbelievable eerie poetry...."<sup>58</sup>

Even in times of upheaval, in the spring and summer of 1917, between two revolutions, Americans who reported on the political situation or were commissioned to carry out relief activities could not resist writing about the city and its people. In his diary, American embassy counselor J. Butler Wright wrote that the city's citizens were "as fickle as children."<sup>59</sup> Even when he would swing from optimism one day and despair the next, he still would find "some

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<sup>57</sup> Lincoln, *Sunlight at Midnight*, 4. Anthony Cross also writes about the city's mysterious 'soul' with which it has been endowed. See for example Cross, ed., *St. Petersburg, 1703-1825*, 2.

<sup>58</sup> George F. Kennan, *Soviet – American Relations. Russia Leaves the War. The Americans in Petrograd and the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 195), 3.

<sup>59</sup> Another westerner who happened to tour the city at the end of the twentieth century also mentioned "fickleness" when describing St. Petersburgers. See John Nicolson, *The Other St. Petersburg* (St. Petersburg: [s.n.], 1994), 5.

well-deserved delight in his life in Petrograd.”<sup>60</sup> On 27 May 1917, the city’s birthday, when St. Petersburg is “bathed in sunlight at midnight,” Wright wrote:

The “white nights” are now here and their singular beauty tempted us out for a long drive to the islands on the Neva at 9:00PM. Returning it was so brilliant at 10:05 PM that typed print could be easily read. There is no exaggeration in the statement that with all its difficulties and problems and extremes of cold and heat, the memory of the view of the Neva and the Peter and Paul fortress in this strange unearthly radiance will remain with one always.<sup>61</sup>

YMCA veteran Donald A. Lowrie, in charge of relief operation for the war prisoners in Petrograd in the spring of 1918, was pessimistic about the affairs in the city, writing that “life here is rather difficult now: food is very scarce and the situation seems to be getting worse, instead of better.”<sup>62</sup> And yet, he could not help being fascinated with the city even then, writing:

there is no city I ever visited which I like as well as this.... Petrograd has a charm all its own, and no one can live here long and not feel its attraction. For one thing, it is so big. The streets are so big and so unusually wide, and the great buildings that hedge them in are built on such a monumental scale that you are almost spoiled for any less pretentious place. And then the canals, with the infinite variety of picture effects they make possible, added to the wonderful lights and shadows of this northern clime create an atmosphere of romance that is like a fairy tale. No other city I ever lived in impressed me with this sense of waiting just on the edge of some

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<sup>60</sup> J. Butler Wright, *Witness to Revolution. The Russian Revolution Diary and Letters of Butler Wright*, ed. William Thomas Allison (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2002), 83 – 84.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>62</sup> Lawrie to an Austrian officer, addressed to as “Prince of Pilsen,” imprisoned in Tomsk. Petrograd, 5 May 1918. Donald A. Lowrie Papers, 1911, 1916 – 1929, 1946 – 1965, Correspondence, 16 June 1911 – December 1920. Series No. 15/35/53, box. 1. Russian and East European Center. Liberal Arts and Sciences. The University of Illinois Archives, hereafter cited as (UIA), Champaign – Urbana.

delightful adventure. You pass along the street, and have the feeling that the very next person you meet might say a word and plunge you into the midst of some situation as romantic as any legend...it is only once in a life-time, perhaps, that the word is spoken and the veil drawn to let us glimpse some jewel of romance as unsuspected as a falling star. But Petrograd makes you feel that, more intensely, for some reason, and you walk along the sapphire Neva, or beneath the gigantic colonnades of a cathedral, with your heart on tiptoe, anticipating the great adventure.<sup>63</sup>

Another rhapsodic account was left by Lowrie after he witnessed an Easter celebration in the same year, when the churches in the city were still crowded. The YMCA officer attended all-night Easter services that he described in details in letters to his parents:

It is a great service, literary, and you come home in the glowing dawn of four o'clock in Petrograd, with all the bells in the countless belfries of the capital making the air fairly throb with sound. All this week, the churches are open, and especially the bell towers, to any who wish to add to the general rejoicing. I climbed the tortuous steps of the belfries of St. Isaac's, this afternoon and helped swing the tongues of great bells....<sup>64</sup>

The magnificent, colossal and controversial building of St. Isaac's inspired many Americans, who captured their impressions and associations with the principal cathedral of the Russian Orthodox Church in their works. Leighton Rogers incorporated the cathedral in his dramatic narrative about an American banker who was seized by the sublimity of the city view from the gallery around the dome of the church:

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<sup>63</sup> Lowrie to his parents, Petrograd, 12 May 1918. Lowrie Papers. Correspondence, 16 June 1911 – December, 1920, Series No. 15/35/53, box. 1. (UIA)

<sup>64</sup> Lowrie to his parents, Petrograd, 5 May 1918. Lowrie Papers. Correspondence, 16 June 1911 – December 1920, Series No. 15/35/53, box. 1. (UIA)

Together and in silence they climbed the innumerable stairs until they at last emerged on to the platform to find the silent city spread out around them. The lowering haze obscured its limits and softened every outline. Through its shifting opalescent depths the spires and domes loomed and faded like the alluring uncertainties of a mirage; and when occasionally to the earth it erased the straight lines of broad streets and squares and the winding white ribbon of the Neva. At their feet the square and the garden before the cathedral were obliterated by a close-packed, mottled mass of humanity; over which the bronze horse of the Peter the great monument seemed to be leaping – a mass standing in awe before the glittering procession which wound about the grim granite structure.<sup>65</sup>

Rogers would allude to St. Isaac's, to that "most dismal of human desecrations - a deserted shrine," as an indicator of the stunning sociocultural conditions in Russia, to which he became an involuntary witness.

Some Americans were comparing St. Petersburg with various cities back home, analyzing and reflecting upon aspects of American life to which they had never given a thought before they found themselves in a foreign land. Describing the first impressions of his Russian appointment in a letter to close friends, Leighton Rogers noted that from a distance one sees one's country in an entirely different light, comparing St. Petersburg with cities in America:

Credit must be given to Russians for knowing how to lay out their streets and squares; instead of a street ending in a bunch of dirty docks and coal yards as at home, they open into squares decorated with monuments, or end with some great public building like a theatre or cathedral.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Rogers, *Wine of Fury*, 93.

<sup>66</sup> Leighton W. Rogers to Roger Brown, and friends. 23 November 1916, Petrograd, Russia. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers, 1912-1982. Box 1, folder 2, Manuscript Division, hereafter cited as (MD), Library of Congress, hereafter cited as (LC), Washington, DC.

Initially Rogers had difficulty making the adjustment from “the positive, abrupt, mechanical brightness of New York to Petrograd’s haze and distance.” Soon, however, he fell in love with “indefiniteness that suggests much with little – the essence of art,” “the broad, bleak squares... the worn color of the buildings like old masters, the glittering colored domes and spires against the tinted clouds; and the Neva with the haze arising from its surface, muddy, impatient, lined with giant wood barges... spanned by bridges which become strings of light-beads at night; and the noises, the clatter of iron-shod carts and trucks over the cobbles, the swish of the wind, and the tinkling of many, many bells of all sizes and tones, forming a background for the compelling boom of the great bell of St. Isaac which seems to sound from nowhere and envelope everything.”<sup>67</sup>

It was this mysterious St. Petersburg aura that prodded the young American bank clerk to begin analyzing the gamut of Russian social strata, enveloping himself in the Russian mind-set, in all phases of life, engendering revelation that later would distinct his fictionalized account of the revolutionary events in Russia, *Wine of Fury*. Thus, crossing the Nikolaevsky Bridge one afternoon, he experienced an impression which persisted in spite of reason:

A sky of curled clouds hurrying nowhere, now and then rimmed with blood-red sun-fire burning in the west; a wild wind moaning up the Neva blowing far and wide the fountains of sparks from fleeing tugs and whistling derision at the veering jackdaws; a hairy peasant dragging his laden sledge over the slimy wooden paving blocks, the hiss of flying silt as a luxurious motorcar sped past, bright with lights, heavy with ease – what psychological alchemy brought from

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<sup>67</sup> Leighton W. Rogers, “Diary,” November, 1916, Petrograd, Russia. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers. Box 1, folder 3, MD, LC.

all this a disturbing uncertainty, a feeling of sullen unrest? <sup>68</sup>

Another observer, a step daughter of the vice-president of a European branch of the National City Bank described with excitement the infinite charm that prevailed during her stay in the northern capital:

...streets covered with deep snow in winter, sledges silently gliding over the white surface, shop windows filled with the fresh flowers, opera, ballet, people, all were source of wonder. We drove through the city and on the great granite quays of the Neva lined with palaces where the immense red mass of the Winter Palace rose; down the Nevsky Prospekt to the Alexander Nevsky Monastery, and across the Neva to the Islands, the fashionable promenade facing the Gulf of Finland. <sup>69</sup>

To some of those visitors, who came to Petrograd during or between the revolutions in 1917 to witness and even participate in the momentous events, the Imperial city generated a sensation of being subdued and downcast, and weary and worn by the weight of historicity. Thus, when exposed to Petersburg's splendid sumptuousness, Albert Rhys Williams exclaimed "Thank God, we have not got so much of this at home. If art and beauty and loveliness must thrive on foundation of strife and bitterness, and penury and hate, then we better smash the whole thing to pieces...." <sup>70</sup> Upon becoming the center of revolutionary action, Petrograd, according to Williams, liberated itself from the weight and embodied irony of history. Such historic irony was also discussed in Louise Bryant's *Six Red Months in Russia*. She noted that the city "built by the

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<sup>68</sup> Leighton W. Rogers, "Czar, Revolution, Bolsheviks," Greenwich, Connecticut. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers. Box 3, folder 7, MD, LC.

<sup>69</sup> Lascelle de Basily Meserve, *Memoirs of a Lost World* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1975), 54.

<sup>70</sup> Quoted in Joshua Kunitz, "Biographical Sketch" in Albert Rhys Williams, *Through the Russian Revolution* (New York: Monthly Review Press), 1967, lxvii.

cruel willfulness of an autocrat, over the bodies of thousands of slaves, against the unanimous will of all grades of society” would become *Red Petrograd*, which was ironic and even paradoxical. One of her observations is particularly symbolic. “In Petrograd were flags – all red. Even the statue of Catherine the Great in the little square before the Alexandrinsky Theatre did not escape. There stood Catherine with all her favorite courtiers sitting at her feet and on Catherine’s scepter waved a red flag!”<sup>71</sup>

Other visitors noted “the reverse side of the fabric which clothed St. Petersburg in so much beauty.” They were appalled by a sharp contrast between Nevsky, the avenue lit up with electric lights “that would glitter by night like a necklace of diamonds on the bosom of the river” and Stolyarnii Pereulok, where “gaunt wooden buildings, with small closed windows, were held upright by arcades of rusty iron that threatened to tumble into ruins.” A Virginia surgeon, Rosalie Morton, spending Christmas, 1899 in St. Petersburg, with an impulse to help the underprivileged, observed not only “pulsating, life, jubilant, infectious, soaring,” but also became interested in witnessing the bustling life of “tattered beggars, clutching their scant rags about them against the biting cold, their begging arms stretched in mute appeal.”<sup>72</sup> Morton revealed for her readers another contrasting reality of St. Petersburg, the city of “enchanted joy” and land of “half the desolation of the world,” and place of “sodden misery.”<sup>73</sup> Upon

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<sup>71</sup> Louise Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia* (New York: Arno Press, 1970), 45.

<sup>72</sup> Rosalie Slaughter Morton, *A Woman Surgeon: The Life and Work of Rosalie Slaughter Morton* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1937), 73.

<sup>73</sup> Morton was one of many observers who revealed to the American readers yet another Petersburg-Petrograd. A group of American intellectuals who were interested and captivated by the social development in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century would repeatedly explore “how the other half lives.” Thus for example Leroy Scott described his journey with one of the revolutionary women to the working-class neighborhood where his companion, a young educated woman of noble origin, who was wearing a shawl to make her look like a working woman, was heading to teach groups of workmen and soldiers. They walked for an hour along the Neva River,

investigating the conditions of profound poverty and “futile suffering” in the city, Morton foresaw the changes her compatriots would witness decades later. She would come face to face with a ‘Red’ St. Petersburg that excited her followers, with “garments dyed in blood,” while the “fires of hate or revenge were being laid and readied for igniting.” Morton referred to her conversation with St. Petersburg’s destitute, who assured her that “a revolution is coming which was on its way for three hundred years. It will be terrible in its victories, and in its mistakes, but out of it will come the resurrection of those who have died in Siberia and of us, who are starving, freezing and hushed.”<sup>74</sup> “Silent and depressed” after having visited the slums of the city that she only had previously heard of from Dostoyevsky’s novels, the American doctor contemplated:

...of the Neva River and of the sparkling Nevsky Prospekt; such was the social system of Imperial Russia – a beautiful crust of glistening ice supported by a turgid torrent underneath. And heedless wealth sped gracefully back and forth over it. Yet little did I dream how soon the flood would swell its hidden power in a change of wind and season to smash the glittering crust of ice.<sup>75</sup>

The city had been haunted with paradoxes from its creation, perhaps wrapped in them. Heated arguments about its nature and the identity of its residents never abated. Paradoxically, however, this city that I’ve chosen as a setting for an unfolding history of American expatriates was perceived by some of them as the “Russian New World,” where, as with other foreigners, they experienced a variety of merging ethnic groups that generated a so-called “super ethnos,” a

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and then “through dark, narrow streets, whose broken sidewalks kept us always stumbling, then into a black courtyard and up a broken stairway.... into a room lighted by a little tin lamp on a bare table.” Leroy Scott, “The Women of the Russian Revolution,” *Outlook*, XC, 1908, 923.

<sup>74</sup> Morton, *A Woman Surgeon*, 75 -76.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

distinct, complex and viable group of citizens known as Peterburgers.<sup>76</sup> Challenging Gumilev's theory that St. Petersburg lacked Slavo - Asiatic passionaries that would convert it into a Russian city with a capital "R", I suggest that in the course of three hundred years, St. Petersburg has been continuously charged with the passions of its creator, radiating that incitement, and continuing to attract outsiders, who, in turn, contributed to Petersburg's ethnic and cultural diversity, and laid into its foundation the blessings of the history-making Russian tsar.<sup>77</sup>

As demonstrated by the aforementioned examples, American nationals residing in St. Petersburg were active participants in the city's poetic, illusive milieu, and later, its thrilling social drama. Yet very little attention "has been devoted to the city's 'American character,'" in

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<sup>76</sup> It is interesting that the meaning of St. Petersburg, its fate, destiny, and tremendous influence on human (Did anyone tell you that this city is infectious?) still occupies the imagination of numerous foreign visitors. Thus, in 1994, a British national John Nicolson, expressed an interesting perspective of St. Petersburg as not being a city at all but rather "a state of mind," "a disease, unbalanced, potentially highly dangerous state of mind." This same author also suggested that St. Petersburgers are people "of muddled nationality. They live within the physical boundaries of Russia. They have Russian blood in their veins. They speak a language which is practically indistinguishable from that spoken in Moscow or Volgograd. And yet Russian they are not. Somehow, without crossing any borders, they have left their motherland - but without arriving anywhere else, without becoming citizens of any other country. They are internal emigrants, émigrés, jamais arrives; a strange, displaced, stranded people tied to a city which they love, but in which they can never be at home." See Nicolson, *The Other St. Petersburg*, 5.

<sup>77</sup> Although I consider Gumilev's approach reasonably pertinent for ascertaining the emergence of such a distinct and viable group as Peterburgers, I have to note that the historian himself denied the importance of Peter's reforms. See his book *Ot Rusi do Rossii* (Sankt-Peterburg: Iuna, 1992), 108 – 109, 246.

<sup>78</sup> Even though the bibliography of the city is immense and contains histories of French, Dutch, Swedish, German, and English nationals, as well as of the great variety of different ethnic groups of the Russian nationals who resided in the former capital, Americans are still mostly left out. The American colony has not been mentioned, described or analyzed until the contributors to the mentioned above most recent publication of 2009 *Peterburg – SSHA: 200 let Rossiisko-Americanskikh Diplomaticheskikh Otnoshenii* have finally made serious efforts to resolve such an injustice and let Americans occupy their place in the hall of fame of numerous foreign communities that contributed to the establishment, development, and growth of the city. See *Peterburg – SSHA: 200 let Rossiisko-Americanskikh Diplomaticheskikh Otnoshenii* (Sankt Petersburg: Evropeiskii dom, 2009).

spite of the fact that their presence in the Russian capital was more than visible, and that members of the colony contributed no less than other nationalities to the life of the city, while leaving numerous accounts of their experiences there. This American legacy can be interpreted as another valuable perspective on St. Petersburg and its significance in world history, through a comprehensive analysis of such archival materials as personal correspondence, diplomatic dispatches, and Russian and American press publications which reveal the extent and importance of the colony's contribution. My research attempts to reconstruct the collective narrative of the American colony in St. Petersburg, and recall the deep sentiments and attachments its members discovered there. My survey includes numerous individuals and personal histories that constituted a community whose size, way of life, cultural and economic importance for both countries has been seriously underestimated. Similar to Anthony Cross, who encountered difficulties tracing many of the British personalia of the city, I consider the impulse to reconstruct a history of the American community in St. Petersburg as "archeological rather than antiquarian."<sup>79</sup> Thus my self-appointed task is to write yet another chapter in the international history of St. Petersburg, revealing a more intimate portrait of the sizeable colony of American citizens who were engaged in economic, cultural, and political pursuits, contributing to the city's cosmopolitan environment and multinational urban development.

As "the most abstract and premeditated city on earth,"<sup>80</sup> St. Petersburg increasingly assumes the aspect of an illusion, of a vanishing sensation which will disperse one day like a fog, leaving, as Dostoyevsky described in *Raw Youth*, only the Finnish swamp at the center of which

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<sup>79</sup> Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva*, 8.

<sup>80</sup> For this particular image see Fyodor Dostoyevsky's "Notes from Underground," *The Best Short Stories of Fyodor Dostoyevsky*, trans. David Magarshack (New York: Random House, 2001), 99.

rears the Bronze Horseman on its base.<sup>81</sup> For many Americans, who “dreamed of a wonderful city, of a place that might nurture and save democracy,” that turned out to be a mirage as well.<sup>82</sup> Yet they worked to justify and preserve the historical legacy of a city that embodied “a potentially just and progressive quasi-socialist and democratic future for Russia.”<sup>83</sup> The following chapter chronicles the history of these efforts.

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<sup>81</sup> See Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *Raw Youth (Adolescent). Part 1, chapter VIII, trans.* Constance Garnet (London: William Heinemann, 1916), 132. “What if this fog should part and float away, would not all this rotten and slimy town go with it, rise up with the fog, and vanish like smoke, and the old Finnish marsh be left as before, and in the midst of it, perhaps, to complete the picture, a bronze horseman on a panting, overdriven steed.”

<sup>82</sup> After the Bolshevik Revolution, the substantial American colony in Petersburg-Petrograd ceased to exist. Its end in 1918, in the words of Professor Saul, “symbolized the fading dream of an imperial city that might have been transformed into a democratic capital of a great country.” Norman E. Saul, “The American Colony in St. Petersburg” (paper presented at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Central Slavic Conference, Lawrence, KS, April 3-5, 2003).

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER II

### *Part I*

### *Innocents Abroad*

#### *A Brief History of American Expatriates and the American Diaspora in Europe*

*The usual prescription for ailments which nineteenth-century doctors could not diagnose was a trip abroad.*

Ernest Earnest  
*Expatriates and Patriots*

American literary critic and modernist Leslie Fiedler observed that Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad* launched a literary career marked by "an almost obsessive concern with Europe and the quest for American identity."<sup>1</sup> Fiedler claims, however, that for many years, this identity had been "oddly parochialized" by being entrusted to the small group of White Anglo-Saxon Protestants "from a few Atlantic seaboard cities," who for decades remained "the sole public spokesmen of the United States."<sup>2</sup> Fiedler identifies that group as one which first undertook an "archetypal voyage to Europe (Dr. Franklin, in his disguise as a good, gray Quaker,<sup>3</sup> being the mythological forerunner), defining it in letters, articles, and books as

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<sup>1</sup>Leslie A. Fiedler, "Afterword6" in Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad or the New Pilgrims Progress* (New York: The New American Library, 1966), 477.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 479.

<sup>3</sup> It is interesting that similar 'disguise' took place during the famous tour of northern Europe by Peter the Great. Thus, while visiting London in 1698 Peter, traveling under the name Peter Mikhailov, was reputed to have acquired knowledge of Freemasonry from Sir Christopher Wren and when later he founded a lodge in Moscow he served there not as a Master but as Junior Warden. Shipyards of Amsterdam were like magnets "drawing the tsar to the West," as well as the places where he "drank deeply with numerous sea captains." Anthony Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva: Chapters from the Lives and Careers of the British in Eighteenth – Century Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 28, 160.

simultaneously a Descent into Hell and an Ascent to Olympus.”<sup>4</sup> Author Ernest Earnest mentioned in his monograph *Expatriates and Patriots* that as early as the 1760s the American expatriate was distinguished from a transplanted Englishman, further set apart by a political system “which was suspect in the eyes of most Europeans.”<sup>5</sup> Earnest also wrote that the American in Europe was an early aspect of New World cultural history and that this “distinctly new breed” was typified in both England and France by Benjamin Franklin.<sup>6</sup>

As Fiedler points out, before the nineteenth century was over “the Puritan aristocrat abroad [was] giving way to the Puritan plebeian on tour,” a kind of American consumer “for whom Europe is just one more item on the menu of mass culture.” Two major American talents “had begun to wrestle with the problem.” Both Samuel Clemens and Henry James obsessively viewed Europe as “an enigma” that was continuously attacked and criticized as “old, *i.e.*, worn out, shabby, dirty, decaying, down at the heels.”<sup>7</sup> An American from the west, who was defined by the authors as a “pristine Protestant and incorruptible democrat,” tried “to come to terms with a Europe seen as essentially aristocratic and Roman Catholic.” More than a decade before Twain’s *Innocents Abroad*, Herman Melville “finds himself impelled to define the essential nature of the ‘backwoodsman’ in his novel *The Confidence Man*. Fiedler argues that Melville portrays precisely the kind of man “through whose mask Twain has chosen to comment on Europe” whenever he returned to the themes of *The Innocents Abroad*. Both Clemens and James refer to the ‘Westerner’s vision’ that’s reflected though *The Innocents Abroad*, yet “sentimental-hypocritical politics and morality” in respect to “culture rather than nature,” and “Europe rather

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<sup>4</sup> Fiedler, “Afterword,” 479.

<sup>5</sup> Ernest Earnest, *Expatriates and Patriots: American Artists, Scholars, and Writers in Europe* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1968), viii.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Fiedler, “Afterword,” 489 – 490.

than the wilderness.”<sup>8</sup> Their descendants, however, gradually abandoned the negative vestiges of Protestantism and “shirt-sleeve democracy” in favor of the Old World “culture-religion and whatever fashionable cults were best adapted to it.” Yet, according to Fiedler, so drastic an accommodation was achieved, only “at the risk of expatriation and apostasy, which is to say, the surrender of essential ‘Americanism,’ as defined in the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant tradition.”<sup>9</sup> Regardless of how “boastful or apologetic” Americans were about their land, while staying overseas they learned to view their own country “with fresh eyes.”<sup>10</sup> Finding themselves uncomfortable in a “raw and expanding nation,” many representatives of the nineteenth century Federalist gentry went abroad, comprising the first waves of expatriates. Those who spent time abroad seemed to their compatriots to be “dangerously Europeanized” and met criticism “of alleged un-American tendencies.”<sup>11</sup> Earnest considers one such group of Europeanized Americans as extremely important in the history of American scholarship, education, and literature. This group of Brahmins included such scholars as George Ticknor, George Bancroft, Joseph Green Cogswell, Edward Everett – the first American to receive a PhD, poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and others. Many of them became acquainted with such famous Europeans as Lafayette, Goethe, Byron, Scott, Mme de Stael, and Bismarck. Earnest wrote that despite their enthusiasm for English literature and culture, they “studied and traveled chiefly on the Continent, especially in Germany.” They also enjoyed France, where the intellectual life “was far different from that of Calvinistic America.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 488-489, 482- 487.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 480.

<sup>10</sup> Earnest, *Expatriates and Patriots*, ix.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 4

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

Even those who traveled to less traditional destinations found out how much the world had to offer. Early Yale PhD Eugene Schuyler is considered the first American historian of Russia. He was an outspoken writer, a gifted linguist, and a leading authority on Russian Central Asia in the 1870s.<sup>13</sup> Leighton Rogers, an early-twentieth-century Dartmouth College graduate who found himself in St. Petersburg early in his career confessed that:

For some unknown reason I find myself suddenly struck with ambition, an ambition to absorb a little education while over here. During my four years at College I was so well protected from learning anything by having the opinions of mediocre instructors substituted for my own ideas that I find now that I have no education at all. So, I have taken up the study of the Russian and French languages and hope to have a speaking knowledge of the two when I return.... there are four fine theatres, and one night each week finds us at one of them. Just at present we are more partial to the opera, it being very fine here.... So far we have heard nearly all the operas ever given in America and many more besides, including Russian operas, which are very interesting with their melancholy music, predominance of men's voices, exceptional ballet, and gorgeous scenery and costumes.... Going to the opera once a week for three years ought to afford a pretty good musical education....<sup>14</sup>

To some extent, expatriation, whether brief or extended, became almost an “indictment of American Civilization.” According to Earnest, among Americans who lived at least part of their lives in Europe, many claimed that American national life “was too thin to nourish writers and artists.” The author also summarizes a theory that was especially popular among critics between

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<sup>13</sup> See Eugene Schuyler, *Turkestan: Notes of a Journey in Russian Turkestan, Kokand, Bukhara, and Kuldia*. Edited with an introduction by Geoffrey Wheeler. Abridged by K.E. West (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1966).

<sup>14</sup> Leighton W. Rogers to Roger Brown, and friends. 23 November 1916, Petrograd, Russia. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers, 1912-1982. Box 1, folder 2, Manuscript Division, hereafter cited as (MD), Library of Congress, hereafter cited as (LC), Washington, DC.

1910 and 1930, pointing out that “because of Puritanism and commercialism the United States has been actively hostile to the artist and the intellectual.”<sup>15</sup> At the same time, a large proportion of Americans abroad were businessmen. Earnest explains that until after the Civil War “the expatriate as dilettante and *flaneur*” was rare. Instead, economics and making a living shaped the American expatriate experience throughout the nineteenth century. As an example, Earnest describes Washington Irving’s European sojourn, in contrast to later expatriates such as Henry James, Edith Wharton, Gertrude Stein, and T.S. Eliot.<sup>16</sup> Earnest writes that Irving’s “un-American tendency toward literature” was counteracted when his four older brothers took him into the business as an “inactive partner and agent at large.” Thus, Irving’s two years in business in England and his later service as a diplomat in Britain and Spain was not an exception to the pattern of the American expatriate.<sup>17</sup> Many artists, especially sculptors, also found it more profitable to work overseas, and many writers and intellectuals held diplomatic posts abroad.<sup>18</sup> In other words, “for most of these men their expatriation was partly a matter of business, partly of choice and temperament.”<sup>19</sup> Similarly, business assignments brought many Americans to Russia, where they then became interested in its culture and history, becoming ardent advocates and interpreters of Russia and Russian affairs. Thus, among the first entrepreneurs traveling to Russia were brothers John and William Lewis, who first came to the capital in 1810 and 1814 respectively. William became fluent in Russian and assisted his brother’s business in St. Petersburg where John owned an export-import company, and later in Moscow and Tver. John

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<sup>15</sup> Earnest, *Expatriates and Patriots*, vii.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Among others, Earnest mentions Irving, Hawthorne, Lowell, Motley, and Bancroft. Earnest, *Expatriates and Patriots*, 17.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

Lewis remained in Russia for over thirty years, joined in 1830 by Boston merchant William Ropes.

Among other famous expatriates that traveled abroad for business enterprise was George Kennan, who went to Russia in 1865 with a Western Union Telegraph surveying team, without either knowledge of the language, culture or history. He later became an authority on Russia and devoted his life to “liberating the Russian people from the yoke of modern despotism.”<sup>20</sup> In a letter from Siberia, dated June, 1866, Kennan mentions a Mr. Dobbs, another young American engaged in business, who was subsequently acquainted with the Russian language and culture.<sup>21</sup> Prominent Russophile Charles Crane, in his turn, saw opportunity in the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railroad while visiting the country between 1887 and 1889. He later supervised a joint partnership contract with Westinghouse, to produce air-brakes for locomotives and rail cars.<sup>22</sup> Thomas and William E. Smith, the descendents of notable Samuel Smith, who had helped to build St. Petersburg-Moscow railroad in the 1840s, would also be involved in business in Russia, with support from Crane, and would travel and live there intermittingly throughout the Russian Revolution and civil war.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> M. Kayalov to George Kennan, Paris, 19 March 1890. George Kennan Papers, 1856-1987. Box 1, series I. Correspondence, 1889-1891, folder 1.3, Manuscripts & Archives Division, hereafter cited as (MAD), New York Public Library, hereafter cited as (NYPL).

<sup>21</sup> George Kennan to Col. A. Stager, North East Siberia, 2 June, 1866. George Kennan Papers. Box 1, series I. Correspondence, 1866-1870, 1881-1883, folder 1.1. See also Frederick F. Travis, *George Kennan and the the American-Russian Relationship, 1865-1924* (Athens: Ohio University Press), 1990.

<sup>22</sup> Norman E. Saul, “Charles R. Crane, American Industrialist, Globalist, a Founder of Russian Studies in America” (paper presented at several forums, including the 40<sup>th</sup> AAASS annual convention, Philadelphia, November 20-23, 2008). In *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution*, Christopher Lasch also gives the detailed account of the dates of Crane’s visits to Russia specifying his visits in 1891, 1894, 96, 1900, 1904, and in 1917. Christopher Lasch, *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 4

<sup>23</sup> Norman E. Saul, “Charles R. Crane, American Industrialist, Globalist, a Founder of Russian Studies in America.”

For a brief overview of the history of American expatriates provided in this chapter it is important to analyze what their experience and reactions revealed about both American and European culture as well as peculiarities of social life on both continents.<sup>24</sup> According to Earnest, the most suitable commentators for this purpose are artists, scholars, and writers, since “they are people who most often examined the conflicting values of the civilizations on both sides of the Atlantic” and “have had great influence upon American manners, taste, ideas, and values.”<sup>25</sup> Some accounts of Americans residing in Europe illustrate their feelings and perceptions regarding the old world aristocracy. As Anna Babey summarized in her research, in the 1860s

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<sup>24</sup> The impressions of Americans traveling abroad have finally been made, in the words of Anna M. Babey, the subject of scholarly investigation “worthy of serious study. See Anna M. Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917: A Study of the American Travelers in Russia from the American Revolution to the Russian Revolution* (New York: Comet Press, 1938), xiii. The author writes that the important result of that interest has been the bibliographies of travelers and observers, which were especially prepared for *The Cambridge History of American Literature* in order to meet the need for a systematic bibliography of American travel literature. Among others Babey mentions “the rather slight number of nine titles of books by American travelers to Russia” that were listed in that edition. See *ibid.* According to Babey, scholars would indeed analyze the multiple American accounts and reflections on their traveling to England, Germany, France, Italy, among other countries. In spite of the fact that “in search of new sights” Americans finally became very much drawn to “attractions Russia promised to offer,” Russia, as viewed, understood and perceived by the American visitors and long-term residents had not been made a subject of scholarly investigation for much later. Babey’s dissertation published in 1938, was one of the first attempts to study and analyze the accounts left by the Americans “who traveled to the land of the Czars” and to enhance further understanding of how Americans became conscious of the history and culture of Russia. See Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917*, xiii. In order to indicate changes in American perspectives, attitudes, and interests in Russia, she divides her inquiry into three parts: from the American Revolution to the American Civil War, when “few travelers from agricultural and democratic America” left any cursory observations on Russian life, followed by the period after the American Civil War, when “the Republic entered upon a period of rapid industrial development,” and when visitors to Russia demonstrated “an alert curiosity” about that country, and concluded by the analysis of American presence in Russia after the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, when “America’s own maturity, her settlement of the Western states, and her interest in imperialism,” resulted in frequent “sociological and economic criticism” of Russia expressed by American visitors who traveled there “to examine Russian problems,” and survey its political and social institutions. See Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917*, 2.

<sup>25</sup> Earnest, *Expatriates and Patriots*, viii.

and '70s, Americans actively searched for novelties of social life. Travelers were captivated by the 'high-society' circles of European capitals including St. Petersburg, where they could enjoy balls, operas, dinners, and other social events with nobility.<sup>26</sup> Princess Julia Cantacuzène-Speransky, granddaughter of former president Ulysses S. Grant and daughter of Frederick Grant, an American diplomat in Vienna, recalled how her father and mother led lives similar to European nobility. Her father hunted with the Austrian emperor and princes, while her mother hosted the most renowned European aristocrats at her salon in Vienna.<sup>27</sup> Princess Cantacuzène-Speransky formed the highest opinions of European aristocrats and statesmen and "never had a feeling that any of the old customs were disagreeably strange. They had too much of historic interest and artistic value." She wrote that "in Austria nobility was not a matter of mere palaces and jewels, riches and power, but also a matter of bravery, honesty... [it] might be said that, though their ideals were not ours, a good deal was to be said about the beauty of lives and traditions under such a monarchy." She concluded in her memoirs that "even if one loves the new world better, it is no reason to accuse the old of all the vices."<sup>28</sup> Consequently, she was so comfortable in aristocratic circles in Europe that she married a representative of an ancient noble family of Russia.

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<sup>26</sup> As an example of such account see Nathan Appleton, *Russian Life and Society as Seen in 1866-67 by Appleton and Longfellow, Two Young Travelers from the United States of America, Who Had Been Officers in the Union Army, And A Journey to Russia with General Banks in 1869, With Sketches of Alexander the Second and Abraham Lincoln and Emancipation in the Empire of Russia and the Republic of the United States of America*. Prepared by Brevet Captain Nathan Appleton (Boston: Press of Murray and Emery Co., 1904).

<sup>27</sup> Julia Cantacuzène Countess Speransky, Neé Grant, *My Life Here and There* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921), 60–87.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 98, 86.

A compatriot of a similar fate,<sup>29</sup> Lascelle de Basily Meserve, also expressed favorable impressions about the Russian nobility: "...the Russian upper classes were highly educated, with great charm of manner. An ease, an elegance and amiability prevailed which I have not seen elsewhere. Life was exhilarating."<sup>30</sup> She described in her memoirs their nocturnal habits, writing that

They seemed to revive when night fell, and their parties, always animated and delightful, seldom ended before dawn. Fashionable society rarely slept at night and did not consider the nocturnal hours made for that purpose. Sleep for them was a matter to be liquidated between early morning and noon, but night was a God-given space of time which they snatched from eternity for relaxation and pleasure.<sup>31</sup>

The old world of Irving, Longfellow, Hawthorn and Melville, as representatives of the United States overseas was challenged by the experiences of American travelers of non-European descent.<sup>32</sup> It is essential to emphasize the stories of those American expatriates who regarded foreign lands as places that "offered them a chance to gain a good and prosperous life that was singularly devoid of discrimination and humiliation because of their color."<sup>33</sup> African

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<sup>29</sup> Similar to Julia Grant, Lascelle Meserve was born in the United States and her honorable grandfather Henry Gordon Struve was "a stately man with a noble head and intellectual brow." President Grant appointed him a territorial secretary and later Struve became a mayor of Seattle. Lascelle also married a representative of a noble Russian family, a highly placed member of the Russian Foreign Service Nikolai De Basily. See Lascelle de Basily Meserve, *Memoirs of a Lost World* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1975).

<sup>30</sup> De Basily Meserve, *Memoirs of a Lost World*, 56.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>32</sup> See Fiedler, "Afterword," 480.

<sup>33</sup> Allison Blakely, *Russia and the Negro: Blacks in Russian history and thought* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1986), xii. Blakely's chronicles of African American experiences are based on both primary sources, such as biographies, published and unpublished personal letters, and secondary sources.

Americans' foreign "odysseys," beginning with the accounts of such nineteenth century travelers as Nancy Prince, who joined her husband abroad, are followed by the stories of servants and other household members who traveled with diplomats and businessmen. Later came African American musicians and entertainers who "choose to pursue their careers overseas and consequently tended to be overlooked by researchers and historians at home."<sup>34</sup> Analyzing the itineraries of various troupes and musicians invited to perform in Europe by foreign impresarios at the turn of the twentieth century, including those who decided to stay there through the 1930s, German researcher Rainer Lotz, among others, wrote about Pete Hampton and Laura Bowman, who toured Europe extensively between 1903 and 1914 as African American pioneers of the unfolding sound recording industry. He describes the European tour of the African American vaudeville troupe directed by William Newmaeyer Spiller, who performed "jazz, ragtime, and classical music (on the same program!)," and singer Arabella Fields who, in spite of her presence overseas over decades, had remained an enigmatic persona, known at different times and places as "an African, an Indian, a Red Indian, an American, a South-American, an Australian, [and] a German-African!"<sup>35</sup> As an example of early African American artists in the Old World, Lotz discusses in particular the group "Four Black Diamonds." The author attempts to "sort out the snippets of information" about the group nearly unknown in the United States. He reveals the story of African American singer Coretta (Alfred) Arle-Tietz, who came to Europe with the "Louisiana Troupes," studied music in St. Petersburg and Moscow Conservatory, and played "a

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<sup>34</sup> Rainer E. Lotz, *Black People: Entertainers of African Descent in Europe, and Germany* (Bonn: Birgit Lotz Verlag, 1997), 65. In his research Lotz acknowledges the African American contribution to European culture and illustrates how "African American idioms were spread across Europe by African Americans themselves." Lotz, *Black People*, 65.

<sup>35</sup> Lotz, *Black People*, 125, 225.

well remembered role” in introducing jazz to the Soviet Union.<sup>36</sup> Lotz also pays tribute to Belle Davis, an African American song and dance artist, entertainer, choreographer, and director. He noted that in spite of Davis’ extraordinary achievements there is very little written about her. Meanwhile, she toured Europe extensively between 1901 and 1929, pioneered in the recording of American music, and performed in front of movie cameras at least twice. Lotz concludes that Belle Davis shares the fate of many American performers, who became famous abroad and forgotten at home. As an example, the author refers to Eileen Southern’s exhaustive *Biographical Dictionary of African and Afro-American Musicians* that omits her.<sup>37</sup>

Another group of African Americans that followed turn-of-the-century performance artists abroad consisted of social critics and rebels, many of whom were either dedicated socialists or naturally gravitated to working-class politics and socialist ideals that were congruous with highly developed egalitarian principals. Many of them perceived socialist revolution as the solution for racism. As W.E.B. Du Bois phrased it, “on the Negroes this double experience of deliberate and devilish persecution from their own countrymen, coupled with a taste of real democracy and world-old culture, was revolutionizing...”<sup>38</sup>

Summarizing the overseas experiences of Americans of non-European descent who found themselves in Europe in the era of the Great War and later, when many visited and took up residence in the fledging Soviet Republic, I extract excerpts about their journeys to Russia, revealing how African Americans joined their compatriots, making unique contributions in shaping Russian perceptions of America, whether they were sailors, musicians, performers,

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

<sup>37</sup> See Eileen Southern, *Biographical Dictionary of Afro-American and African Musicians* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982).

<sup>38</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, “An Essay toward a History of the Black Man in the Great War,” reprinted in Julius Lester, ed., *The Seventh Son: The Thought and Writings of W.E.B. Du Bois* (New York: Random House, 1971), vol. 2, 130-31.

servants of American diplomats and businessmen, or social idealists, who dreamt of ending the humiliating and unjust regime of racism back home.

## Chapter II

### *Part II*

### ***Discovering Russia: Americans in St. Petersburg***

### ***Chronicles of the American Presence in the Northern Capital: Cultural and Social Qualities of the American Colony in St. Petersburg***

*“... that would be my hope for all of us, that wherever we are, there shall be that little bit of America. It’s an inspiration.”*

Leighton W. Rogers  
The National City Bank of New York, Petrograd, Russia, November 23, 1916

The first Americans in the newly-built eighteenth-century Russian capital were involved in business or diplomatic missions. The commercial shipping expansion that followed the Seven Years War in the 1760s marked “the appearance of New England vessels in Russia’s chief Baltic port, bringing ‘colonial goods’ from West Indies in return for ‘naval stores, such as rough linen sailcloth, semi-finished rope from hemp, and iron for anchors, chains, and nails – all essential to supporting the rising American trans-Atlantic trade.”<sup>39</sup> Among other early visitors was John Ledyard of Connecticut, in the summer of 1787. Ledyard came to explore the North Pacific for both “reasons of commerce and curiosity.” Though he failed to secure any financial support to explore the American North Pacific region, he is credited with being “the first ‘American’ to travel deep into the Russian hinterland.”<sup>40</sup>

The history of distinguished Americans in Russia continues with American Revolutionary War hero John Paul Jones. He came to Russia in 1788 seeking to continue his

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<sup>39</sup> Saul, “The American Colony in St. Petersburg.”

<sup>40</sup> Norman E. Saul, *Distant Friends: The United States and Russia, 1763 – 1897* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1991), 21.

naval exploits, following the Continental Congress' decision to "decommission what navy still existed after 1783."<sup>41</sup> Such an opportunity occurred with the beginning of hostilities between Russia and Turkey in 1787. The policy of recruiting foreign, predominately British officers "of experience and caliber" brought many of them to the Russian navy.<sup>42</sup> Yet Tsarina Catherine the Great extended an invitation to Jones, who was obviously anti-British, due to his reputation as "an accomplished sea fighter," and to lessen her dependence upon the English.<sup>43</sup>

At the time, neither captains nor crews nor any given individuals formed a permanent colony in the capital. But soon, a colony began to develop, due to the strong traditions and distinguished character of American diplomatic missions that settled in St. Petersburg, while executing ambassadorial functions, promoting American political culture, and spreading American influences through various activities and involvement in the social, economic and cultural life of the city.

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>42</sup> Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva*, 184. For more details about the British national in the Russian navy see Chapter 5 in his book. It is called "'Sur le pied Anglais': Shipbuilders and officers in the Russian Navy," 159 – 223.

<sup>43</sup> See Saul, *Distant Friends*, 23. In 2003, a special John Paul Jones Society Charity Fund was established in order to commemorate Jones' legacy in St. Petersburg and in Kronstadt, the navy island-city in the Gulf of Finland. The result of the work of the fund was a plaque at the corner of Gorokhovaya street on the building where Jones lived while residing in St. Petersburg, as well as a stone set in the Summer garden in Kronstadt, where the board plan to erect a monument to the hero of the American revolution and a rear-admiral of the Russian fleet. See multiple publications about the event in Russian and Foreign Press, in *Pravda*, *Fontanka*, *Liberty Life*, *Voice of America*, etc. One of the English language articles illustrating revived interest to Jones was in the *St. Petersburg Times*. "In recent years, Jones has emerged as a symbol of U.S.-Russian relations. On 4 July 2003, during the city's 300th anniversary celebrations, the U.S. S. Nicholas paid a visit to St. Petersburg where a ceremony on board paid tribute to Jones a symbol of cooperation between the American and Russian navies. Two days later - Jones' birthday - American and Russian naval officers along with American General Consul Morris Hughes unveiled a memorial plaque to Jones on Gorokhovaya Ulitsa, near the Admiralty, on the building where he lived." Chris Condlin, "U.S. Hero Jones Served in Russian Navy," *St. Petersburg Times*, Friday, 2 July 2004.

The idea for an American mission to Russia originated in Europe in 1781, when the Continental Congress deputized John Adams' protégé, secretary Francis Dana, to go to St. Petersburg to pay the Russian monarch a first official state visit, and thank Catherine for her anti-British armed neutrality.<sup>44</sup> The delegation stayed in the city for several months, attempting to establish diplomatic relations. Its efforts came to nothing mostly because of "French obstructions and Catherine's reluctance to alienate the British further."<sup>45</sup> Although that first official visit proved unsuccessful, it did become significant in the history of the city's American colony. Dana was accompanied by Adams' fourteen-year-old son John Quincy, who would return to St. Petersburg in 1809 as President James Madison's Minister Plenipotentiary. Anna Babey points out the importance of the fact that the place of Adams' "political initiation" was St. Petersburg, where he "was introduced to the world of public service which absorbed him for so many years and which was reflected in his career as diplomat, statesman, and president of the United States." Thus John Quincy Adams is considered to be "the real founder of the 'American colony'." He came to the city with an extended family, several apprentice secretaries, and African American servants, a tradition that would be followed by his successors. Adams' diary reveals that the future president could claim to know the city more thoroughly than anyone, then or later – because of his dedication to daily systematic walks throughout the city.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> See Saul, *Distant Friends*, 16.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* Even though, as Babey points out in her research, Dana's mission proved to be abortive, that Harvard graduate and trained lawyer early recognized that "commercial ties afforded the surest bases of common interest" between the two countries. See Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917*, 3.

<sup>46</sup> See Charles Francis Adams, ed., *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, Comprising Portions of His Diary from 1795 to 1848* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1874), II: 3-8 *et passim*. It is worth mentioning that Adam's son Charles Francis was with the family in Russia.

Even though the United States sent no representative with a rank of ambassador to Russia until 1898,<sup>47</sup> the growing diplomatic presence of American envoys in the Russian capital was significant. Most of Adams' successors established fairly "regular and permanent residence" in the city. Among many consuls, ministers and commissions agents, there was quite a number of "American internationalists who were comfortable and well known in foreign circles."<sup>48</sup> It is important to take into account the "metamorphic stages" of the U.S. diplomatic services in Russia and the country's representation abroad in general. Most of the diplomats who resided in St. Petersburg in the nineteenth century "enjoyed independent wealth" and "could afford to maintain their comfortable life-style" in Russia, despite "the low expense accounts provided by the Department."<sup>49</sup>

One such wealthy South Carolina planter, Henry Middleton, a minister in Russia through the 1820s, played a significant role in the development of the American colony in St. Petersburg. Middleton had the longest tenure of any American as a diplomatic mission head in Russia, while making the American presence more visible and raising the status of the American corps to the level of other European missions. Like his predecessors, Middleton settled in St. Petersburg with his family and a full staff of servants. The Middletons occupied the apartments of the wife of Alexander Golitzyn, the founder of the Russian Bible Society and an influential conservative minister of education during these years. The details of the active social life and involvement of Middleton's mission in the cultural and social milieu of the Russian capital, as well as his

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<sup>47</sup> The first American minister plenipotentiary, who was promoted to ambassador in 1898, was Ethan Allen Hitchcock from Alabama. He served in St. Petersburg between 1897-1890 when he was recalled to join McKinley's cabinet as secretary of the interior.

<sup>48</sup> Saul, *Distant Friends*, 94.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas William Allison, *American Diplomats in Russia: Case Studies in Orphan Diplomacy, 1916 – 1919* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1997), 3.

political achievements and success in developing commercial and industrial agreements with Russia have been of special interest to researchers.<sup>50</sup>

Among Middleton's diplomatic successors were future president James Buchanan and flamboyant Kentucky abolitionist Cassius Clay, President Lincoln's diplomat in St. Petersburg during the American Civil War, who amused the Russian court with his turkey-trot dancing, bourbon-drinking, and affairs with ballerinas.<sup>51</sup> He became an ardent and fervent Russophile through his residency in Russia (1863-1869), and had the reputation of "vying with everyone in the Russian capital in hospitality."<sup>52</sup> In his memoirs Clay praised Russian aristocracy, saying that "men and women are models of form and refinement." At the same time he explained his enduring social success writing that "he broke through all etiquette" so far as to be affable to all classes alike.<sup>53</sup> Clay kept busy with public affairs and played a key role in purchasing Alaska in 1867.<sup>54</sup> Being "the life and soul" of the American colony, Clay was also responsive to the increasing number of visiting Americans in St. Petersburg. One such distinguished traveler was Thomas Morris Chester, who toured Europe to raise money for the Garnet Equal Rights League, an African American civil rights society. Another prominent American visitor that Clay hosted in 1866 was Assistant Secretary of the Navy Gustavus V. Fox, who headed the American naval mission. Russian press announced that the American congress sent the delegation to the emperor

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<sup>50</sup> See for example Harold E. Berquist, Jr., "Russian – American Relations, 1820 – 1830: The Diplomacy of Henry Middleton, American Minister at St. Petersburg" (PhD diss., Boston University, 1970).

<sup>51</sup> Saul, *Americans in St. Petersburg*, 4.

<sup>52</sup> Norman E. Saul, *Concord and Conflict: The United States and Russia, 1867 – 1914* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1996), 17.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* Saul refers to Clay's later memoirs *The Life of Cassius Marcellus Clay: Memoirs, Writings, and Speeches* (Cincinnati: J. Fletcher Brennan Brennan, 1886), 295.

<sup>54</sup> See Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 13 – 20; and Nikolai Bolkhovitinov, *Russko – Americanskiye Otnoshenia I Proizhoda Aliaski, 1834 – 1867 (Russian - American Relations and the Sale of Alaska, 1834 – 1867)* (Moskva: Nauka, 1990).

upon occasion of his escaping an assassination attempt. Fox's mission was the first of its kind in expressing friendship and mutual respect.<sup>55</sup> It was reported that capital officials had been preparing for the Fox mission long in advance, and gave it a very hearty and enthusiastic welcome.<sup>56</sup> Reflecting upon the atmosphere in the city during the visit, the brochure "Americans in Russia," published especially for the occasion, pronounced:

Russians and Americans are friends; they are the most affectionate, sincere, and cordial of friends! There is no doubt about it! Our friendship was enhanced by a very special rapturous and hearty welcome extended to the American envoy, Captain Fox, and his fellow countrymen, by the Russian people. The continuous celebrations in honor of our guests attract crowds of people who are waiting to greet the delegation with thunderous hurray every time the Americans come out for their scheduled meetings and receptions.

The special boats that are sailing from several piers in St. Petersburg to Kronstadt are crowded, as the public is invited to visit and contemplate the splendid ships of the American squadron.

In St. Petersburg drawing rooms, salons, shops and stores, street corners, and the court yards, people are inevitably talking about the American guests and of amiable relations between the two countries.<sup>57</sup>

The crowds of people sailing to Kronstadt, in the Gulf of Finland, to see the new American Monitor-class vessel, the *Miantonomoh*, were accompanied by an older team frigate, the *Augusta*. A detailed description of *Miantonomoh*'s unique design and qualifications was

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<sup>55</sup> Amerikantsy v Peterburge: Druzheskii soiuz Rossii i Ameriki. St. Petersburg, 1866, 5.

<sup>56</sup> Amerikantsy v Rossii I Russkie v Amerikie. St. Petersburg, 1866, 14.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 3. Translation by Lyubov Ginzburg.

made available to the mesmerized public. The qualities of a “floating fortress” were appreciated by the Emperor himself during his visit on board the craft in late July.<sup>58</sup>

Alexander II received Fox at his Peterhoff summer palace. In an address to the emperor Captain Fox assured the Russians that the entire American nation was sending their regards to the Russian people. “My voice,” declared the naval officer, “is the voice of my people, its united heart pronounces the words coming from the millions.”<sup>59</sup> The author of the brochure was so confident that the friendship between Russia and the United States would endure that he predicted: “if the political balance is not a myth that its fulcrum will be inevitably between Russia and America.”<sup>60</sup>

Among other special events was the launching of a ship christened *Fox*, by a granddaughter of former president Martin Van Buren, who had traveled to St. Petersburg to participate in the festivities.<sup>61</sup>

Guests were honored all over the city during numerous dinners and receptions. The first dinner, attended by three hundred people, took place in Merchants Assembly, a splendid building near Kazansky Cathedral.<sup>62</sup> Gorchakov hosted another memorable gathering at the English Club for 250 guests. Fox was made an honorary member of the Merchant Society and, most importantly, an honorary citizen of the capital city of St Petersburg, a title only bestowed upon distinguished visitors.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> *Amerikantsy v Peterburge*, 11, 13-16.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 8. Translation by Lyubov Ginzburg. The report of the ceremony was the first transmission on the new Atlantic cable from Russia. See Saul, *Distant Friends*, 373.

<sup>60</sup> *Amerikantsy v Peterburge*, 6. Translation by Lyubov Ginzburg

<sup>61</sup> Saul, *Distant Friends*, 373.

<sup>62</sup> *Amerikantsy v Rossii i Russkie v Amerikie*, 19.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 18, 19-22.

When the delegation was visiting the Pavlovsk gardens, welcoming bands played popular American songs, sent to the musicians in advance by Cassius Clay, including “Miantonomoh Gallop,” composed for the occasion by Heinrich Furstnow, musical director of Pavlovsk.<sup>64</sup>

Another major American entourage at the time was a naval squadron of four ships under the command of Admiral David Farragut. The squadron spent three weeks anchored at Kronstadt in August, 1867. “Farragut and his officers were lavishly entertained” by Naval Minister Grand Duke Constantine, by Admiral Stepan Lesovskii, who had commanded the Russian squadron to New York in 1863, and by Cassius Clay himself.<sup>65</sup> These visits were followed by journeys of two Civil War heroes, William Tecumseh Sherman, accompanied by a group of aids in 1872, and Ulysses S. Grant in 1879, who was undertaking a “post-presidential tour.” Both guests were welcomed by the growing American commercial and diplomatic community.<sup>66</sup>

Further diplomatic missions to the Russian capital included “a mixed lot” of backgrounds and temperaments of American diplomats who lived in St. Petersburg in the second half of the nineteenth century. Most of the envoys had family members with them who often recorded accounts reflecting upon the life of the American colony and their own experiences. Mary Stoughton, wife of Edwin Wallace Stoughton, minister to Russia in 1878 and 1879, kept a diary in which she described visits to the Winter Palace, boat rides to Peterhoff, visits to Pavlovsk and other destinations on the outskirts of the city, and splendid receptions and balls for the crown princes and other members and affiliates of the Russian court. One entry was devoted to her

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 372.

<sup>65</sup> Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 18.

<sup>66</sup> Saul, “The American Colony in St Petersburg.”

excursion to the Imperial Porcelain Factory that she and her American friends “had pleasure” visiting.<sup>67</sup>

The wife of George Van Ness Lothrop, a former chief minister and successful lawyer and entrepreneur from Michigan, left a detailed account of their experiences in St. Petersburg. The Lothrop's lived in the city between 1885 and 1888, moving often. Lothrop's wife Almira provided detailed descriptions of every house they lived in. The family was famous in St. Petersburg for their hospitality and lavish balls for the youth from diplomatic services. On New Year's Eve in 1888 the Lothrop's gave a magnificent ball attended by diplomats and Russian dignitaries. The St. Petersburg press covered the affair in detail, offering rapturous praise of the reception. Those affairs, however, did not pass without consequence, as the Lothrop's eldest daughter Emily Ann met and married Baron von Goiningen-Gune and settled in Russia at such an event.<sup>68</sup> As with many other Americans who settled in St. Petersburg, Emily Ann became an active member of the American colony. By the beginning of the twentieth century she and her Russian husband had become friends with the Countess Kleinmichel, nee Keller, whose house was rented out as the American Embassy. Known among members of the American colony as “the Kleinmichel's palace,” the embassy became a “political salon” ran by a “patrician of the progressive era,” Ambassador George von Lengerke Meyer. He arrived in St. Petersburg in 1905 during the Russo-Japanese war and opened the doors of his house in Sergeevskaya Street to many diplomats from various countries.<sup>69</sup> Among others habitués of Meyer's salon was

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<sup>67</sup> See Diary of Mary Stoughton, 1878-1879, vol. 2, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>68</sup> V.V. Noskov, “Diplomaticheskaya geographia: adresa amerikanskikh diplomatov v Sankt-Peterburge” in *Sankt-Peterburg – SSHA: 200 let Rossiisko-Amerikanskikh Diplomaticheskikh Otnoshenii* (St. Peterburg: Evropeiskii dom, 2009), 53.

<sup>69</sup> Mark Antony De Wolf Howe, *George von Lengerke Meyer: His Life and Public Services* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1919), 137-351.

Secretary of the American Mission Verts and his wife – a sister of former ambassador Charlemagne Tower, who served in St. Petersburg between 1899 and 1902, Baron Ramsai, who was married to Fanny Whitehouse, a sister of yet another American diplomat, and a military attaché, General Judson.<sup>70</sup>

As Americans traveled a great distance to St. Petersburg, “it was not easy to dash home for family or business purpose.” Most stayed in the Russian capital “through all the seasons.”<sup>71</sup> They followed the Russian custom of summer dachas, forming more Russian bonds and studying the language. Similar to the Adams, Stoughtons and Lothrop, many often brought relatives and servants. Thus, Boston merchant William Ropes brought his extended family and “stabilized and expanded the American colony for three generations, into the twentieth century.”<sup>72</sup> When George Washington Whistler surveyed the first Russian long-distance railroad between St. Petersburg and Moscow, he came with his family that included his son, the future artist James Abbott McNeil Whistler, and daughter Deborah, the darling of the colony’s social life in Petersburg who impressed everyone with her singing and piano, “often accompanied by her father on the ‘pipes.’”<sup>73</sup>

Major General Alexander McDowell McCook, “an Ohio-born Civil War hero and commandant of Fort Leavenworth” who was designated by the Cleveland administration as its

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<sup>70</sup> Madam Kleinmichel recalls all these names of her American friends and acquaintances in her memoirs *Iz potonuvshogo mira*. See M.E., Kleinmichel, *Memuary* (Berlin: n.d.), 24, 115, 218, 283.

<sup>71</sup> Saul, “The American Colony in St. Petersburg.”

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>73</sup> Saul, *Distant Friends*, 141- 44. Whistler’s wife Anna McNeil Whistler also kept a comprehensive diary and was writing detailed letters about the family’s life in the Russian capital. Her diary is in the Manuscripts and Archives Division of the New York Public Library, James McNeill Whistler papers, 1830-1894. See also Albert Parry, *Whistler’s Father* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, [c1939]) and Elizabeth Mumford, *Whistler’s Mother: the Life of Anna McNeill Whistler* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1939).

official representative and sent to serve in Russia at the time of the last Russian coronation, also brought with him his wife and daughter, and his brother John, with his wife and daughter.<sup>74</sup> This custom continued after the turn of the twentieth century, as most Americans traveled to St. Petersburg with their households. Wives of YMCA officers, assigned to St. Petersburg, when possible, would join their husbands there. Such was the case with Ethel Hollinger, wife of the secretary of the Russian YMCA program known in Petersburg-Petrograd as Mayak, Katherine Long, wife of the Mayak physical education director, and Mrs. Emily Heald, who lived in Petrograd from mid-1917 to mid-1918, when the February Revolution and America's entry into the Great War shifted her husband's work away from the prisoners-of-war field.<sup>75</sup> American Slavophil Isabel Hapgood resided in St. Petersburg for prolonged periods, often accompanied by her mother.<sup>76</sup> The pastor of the Methodist–Episcopal Church, known as the American Church, also came with his family, which included his sister Otilie Simons and their mother, who joined them in the fall of 1912, dying a year later.<sup>77</sup> Helen Fessenden Meserve, the spouse of the head of the National City Bank of New York, like many women accompanying their husbands serving various missions in the Russian capital, was active in the American colony. She managed relief activities as president and chairperson of the executive committee of the American Refuge for Refugees during WWI.

When American counselor Fred Dearing left Petrograd for an extended leave in October, 1916, Ambassador David Francis would not cease his “frantic pleas for help,” until 18

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<sup>74</sup> See Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 405.

<sup>75</sup> Edward Heald, ed. by James B. Gidney, *Witness to Revolution: Letters from Russia 1916-1919* (Kent, The Kent State University Press, 1972), ix.

<sup>76</sup> See for example invitations addressed to Ms. Hapgood and her mother by St. Petersburg friends and acquaintances for a visit. One example is such an invitation from a poet Yakov Polonsky, dated 1882. Polonsky to Hapgood, St. Petersburg, 17 May 1889. Isabel F. Hapgood Papers, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>77</sup> The Simons buried her in St Petersburg in Protestant Smolensky Cemetery.

November, when J. Butler Wright arrived to take over the vacancy. The thirty-nine-year-old Princeton graduate, a former banker, broker, and rancher came to St. Petersburg with his wife and thirteen-year-old son,<sup>78</sup> “a bright boy who had grown up in Europe and already was fluent in French and German.”<sup>79</sup> Wright’s son quickly learned Russian, becoming a friend of Philip Jordan, Francis’ long-term companion, devoted friend, and irreplaceable servant.

Philip Jordan was among a long line of assistants, secretaries, and servants of American business executives, diplomats, and relief workers in St. Petersburg. Jordan, an African American, acquired a unique experience “roaming the streets and haggled at the markets, mixing in with the multicultural, polyglot crowd...”<sup>80</sup> The chronicles of American St. Petersburg would be incomplete without Jordan’s account of his experiences as a servant in revolutionary Petrograd.<sup>81</sup> During the revolutionary turmoil, when food and other necessities became scarce, the American Embassy depended more and more on of Jordan’s wit, his knowledge of the city, and ability to provide for the ambassador and his staff. In a letter to Senator William J. Stone of Missouri, Francis acknowledged Jordan’s excellent service and ability to “freely roam the city,

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<sup>78</sup> Another American who spent his childhood in St. Petersburg was Ernest C. Ropes, whose father William Hall Ropes headed the American trading firm of W. Ropes & Co. After WWI Ernest Ropes became a YMCA representative working in Murmansk and Arkhangel’sk with prisoners of war. His book-length manuscript entitled “The Russia I have known” is in Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Columbia University.

<sup>79</sup> Harper Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano: The Life and Times of David Rowland Francis* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press and the Francis Press, 2001), 210. After the Bolshevik Revolution, however, the family was sent home and J. Butler Wright himself wanted to leave the devastated city even though “patriotically,” as he expressed himself, “I think we should stay as long as possible.” Barnes refers to Wright’s diary record from January, 39, 1918. See Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 302.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>81</sup> See Jamie Cockfield, H. Ed., *Dollars and Diplomacy: Ambassador David Francis and the Fall of Tsarism, 1916-1917* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1981), 22. In his earlier article, the author points out that “Jordan was only one of two blacks known to have been an eye-witness observer of the Russian Revolution of 1917 (the American embassy also employed a black Trinidadian cook)...” Jamie H. Cockfield, “Philip Jordan and the October Revolution,” *History Today*, 28:4 (April 1978): 228.

blending in with the mobs of angry, hungry people,” writing that “the colored valet or ‘body servant’ whom I tried to transfer to you when you succeeded me as a governor and who has been living with me continuously since 1902, is living here with me – in fact, I don’t know how I could get along without him. He is loyal and honest and efficient and intelligent withal.”<sup>82</sup>

Significantly, Jordan was granted special permission to take photographs throughout the capital. He became very adept with a camera and left a unique collection of photos revealing Petrograd through the lens of the American ambassador’s “body servant.”<sup>83</sup>

Jordan’s challenging, “unique, and richly detailed” descriptions of what was transpiring in the streets of revolutionary Petrograd, and within the American embassy, reveal much about the American colony. He recorded social and cultural events, unique American celebrations such as Thanksgiving, the Fourth of July, and other important occasions essential for the thriving American community in the city, for which Jordan’s letters reveal detailed descriptions. In a letter addressed to Mrs. Francis’ cousin, Miss Annie Pulliam, dated 30 November 1917, he noted

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<sup>82</sup> David Francis to Senator William J. Stone, 13/26 February 1917. David Rowland Francis Papers, 1868-1919, hereafter cited as (DRFP). Record Series # 02/P0274, Box 397, A-22a. Missouri Historical Society, hereafter cited as (MoHS), St. Louis.

<sup>83</sup> The permission was granted by request submitted to Petrograd Chief of Police. The letter from the American Embassy assured the authorities that the barriers of that permission will not abuse the privileges if granted “and will not violate the regulations concerning sending out of Russia or to anyone hostile to the country photographs of whatever may be interdicted.” Arthur Dailey, 30 June /13 July 1916. The request was submitted on behalf of two Americans, one was Philip Jordan, and the other one the Reverend Doctor Fred Porter Haggard, the national YMCA secretary for Russia, secretary of the Layman’s Missionary Movement, who was in charge of relief work on behalf of German, Austrian, and Hungarian prisoners of war. DRFP, Record Series # 02/P0274, Box 397, A-22a. MoHS. Yet, the most “poignant pictures” of the city in its “death throes” as an imperial capital were taken by a Kansas native from Topeka, Donald Thompson.

“yesterday the ambassador gave a tea to about 250 Americans and I had so much to do that today I’m just about all in.”<sup>84</sup>

Other American participants also documented special occasions in their accounts.

National City Bank of New York employee Leighton W. Rogers described the 1916

Thanksgiving celebration in his diary:

It has been a good day. This afternoon we attended a reception for Americans at the Embassy where ‘a good time was held by all.’ The Ambassador did the thing up in fine style with a dance, after the receptions, serving with the refreshments a regular southern punch which was a knockout. Our gang nearly wore a circle in the carpet around the bowl. Then, this evening Mr. Meserve gave Thanksgiving Dinner for the bank staff, a dinner, which was a huge success. Altogether, in spite of the fact that we are strangers in a strange land, it has been an enjoyable day.<sup>85</sup>

An account of Thanksgiving Day, 1899, from Herbert J. Hagerman’s *Letters of a Young Diplomat*, refers to American minister Charlemagne Tower inviting 2000 guests to his rented palace.<sup>86</sup> At a grandiose American gathering to celebrate Christmas organized by the National City Bank for the American community in Petrograd in December, 1917, one of the participants announced that:

The American colony is to blow itself to a party on Christmas night. It is to take place in the bank building, which is better adapted to such affairs than to business,

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<sup>84</sup> Mrs. Clinton A Bliss, Ed., “Philip Jordan’s Letters From Russia, 1917–1919,” *Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society* 14, (January 1958):145-146.

<sup>85</sup> Leighton W. Rogers, “Diary,” November, 1916, Petrograd, Russia. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers. Box 1, folder 3, MD, LC.

<sup>86</sup> See Herbert J. Hagerman, *Letters of a Young Diplomat* (Santa Fe: Rydal Press, 1937), 142.

and from what I can gather it will be a large evening.<sup>87</sup>

The bank was hardly recognizable. All business rooms were used for the buffet supper, with the counters coming in handy; and as a bar they would have been perfect had we only had a brass rail. The reception room was beautifully decorated with flags, the good old Stars and Stripes being much in evidence, along with greenery... a balalaika orchestra, a grand piano, and a gramophone furnished the necessary music, and one of the guests, an opera-singer – a real one – gave added pleasure with some fine singing between the halves. She brought everyone upright with a great rendering in English of “The Star Spangled Banner.”<sup>88</sup>

It is also interesting to read cross-references to such events in the correspondence and diaries of various Americans. Appreciating Jordan’s efforts, David Francis describes a Fourth of July celebration in a letter to his son Perry: “the July Fourth reception yesterday was a great success, I engaged a first class orchestra of nine pieces and thanks to Phil we had a delicious punch in addition to the tea served from the samovar which we had recently bought.”<sup>89</sup> The counselor to the American embassy in Petrograd also mentions Philip Jordan in his diaries as “invaluable,” and that he appreciates his help with household matters.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Leighton W. Rogers, “Czar, Revolution, Bolsheviks,” Greenwich, Connecticut, 269. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers. Box 3, folder 7, MD, LC.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.* Barnes also refers to those events, mentioning Jordan’s ability to secure such rare treats as “white flour and sugar, or white bread, cakes, and pies.” See Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 287. Barnes describes the Christmas 1917 reception held in the apartment of Fred Corse of New York Life. On another occasion Barnes mentions a reception for two hundred people, a farewell party for the military attaché General Judson. The reception took place in the embassy and was guarded by Bolshevik guards. See Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 301, and David, R. Francis, *Russia from the American Embassy, April, 1916 – November 1918* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1921), 208.

<sup>89</sup> David R. Francis to Perry Francis, 16 July 1917, DRFP, Record Series # 02/P0274, Box 397, A-22a. MoHS.

<sup>90</sup> See J. Butler Wright, *Witness to Revolution: The Russian Revolution Diary and Letters of Butler Wright*, ed. by William Thomas Allison (Westport: Praeger, 2002), 4.

The intense social life of the American community in the Russian capital always attracted travelers. While in Siberia on assignment with the Western Union telegraph company, George Kennan wrote to relatives at home that he hoped to visit St. Petersburg on his way back to the United States, completing his travels, while keeping his restless spirit content. He planned to devote his time there “principally to visiting his friends, becoming civilized, and enjoying once more the amenities of social life.”<sup>91</sup>

Before the end of the nineteenth century, however, American visitors were nearly invisible in multinational Russian cities. One American, upon his arrival, observed that he encountered “the most motley crowd of Turks, Germans, Norwegians, Jews, Russians, Austrians, Frenchmen, Greeks, Persians, Slavs, and representatives of every nationality, except Americans....”<sup>92</sup> But that situation was gradually changing at the turn of the twentieth century, when American diplomats had to contend with a greater assortment of tourists, businessmen, and journalists. That growing community of Americans had advantages over an earlier generation, in size, wealth, prestige, and level of interaction with the Russian middle class. Official contacts were also becoming more frequent, evidenced by the visit of the U.S. Atlantic fleet in 1911. That event was memorable thanks to a baseball game between the crews of the battleship *New Hampshire* and the *Kansas*, on the St. Petersburg polo grounds, where the *Kansas* team won.

Thus, besides the normal functions of a consulate in a leading political and economic center, the American consuls in St. Petersburg oversaw the performance of other consuls and tried to keep track of Americans all over the vast empire. One such traveler was Perry Heath, the

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<sup>91</sup> Kennan to his cousin Emma, barge “Onward” at Sea off Yamsk Bay, 21 August, 1867. George Kennan Papers. Box. 1, series I. Correspondence, 1866-1870, 1881-1883, folder 1.1, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>92</sup> Perry S. Heath, *A Hoosier in Russia: The Only White Tsar – His Imperialism, Country, and People* (New York: The Lorbom publishing company, 1888), 10.

author of *A Hoosier in Russia: The Only White Tsar – his Imperialism, Country, and People*, a publication that includes a detailed description of life, customs, morals and manners of the Russian capital as seen through American eyes in the late 1880s. Another interesting account was left by journalist Poultney Bigelow, who traveled to Russia in 1891, accompanied by the famous illustrator Frederic Remington. The men planned an unusual adventure, bringing with them “at considerable cost,” ‘cruising canoes,’ and proposed “sailing from St. Petersburg the whole length of the Baltic, making notes and sketches.”<sup>93</sup>

While waiting for official permission to further their aims, they lived in the capital where, even though it seemed to be more expensive than they expected, they socialized with “princesses, counts, colonels, ambassadors, adjutants, and aids-de-camp” who furnished them with “caviar, champagne, and lordly hospitality.” Among other experiences, however, Bigelow described the unpleasant surveillance by the secret police that followed them around the city. Bigelow’s further investigation of the special services, as well as the history of flourishing dissent in Russia prompted him to write an account he entitled “Who is this Mr. Nihilist.”<sup>94</sup>

A notable presence in St. Petersburg was Charles R. Crane, an American businessman, internationalist, politician, world traveler and philanthropist, whose first extended travel to Russia was appended to an 1887 European tour. His interest in Russia, its culture and people, as well as pursuit of business interests, gave him an impetus to return repeatedly, gaining him a reputation as a Slavophile, and a founder of Russian studies in the United States. According to Christopher Lasch, Crane was drawn to Russia by what he regarded “as the grace and serenity of

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<sup>93</sup> Poultney Bigelow, “Why We Left Russia,” *Harper’s New Magazine*, 301–302. Undated clipping. Poultney Bigelow papers, 1855-1954. Box 47, Materials relating to Russia, Spain, and the Spanish-American War, and Italy. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

Russian life.”<sup>95</sup> As with his famous predecessor George Kennan, while staying in St. Petersburg Crane enjoyed “the amenities of social life.” There was an abundance of it in the capital. During one trip, Crane became acquainted with the extended family of old friend Count Iakov Ivanovich Rostovtsoff.<sup>96</sup> The American attended “a musical” given by Rostovtsoff’s cousin, who impressed Crane by her ability to not only “play unusually well,” speak “five languages, all perfectly well” switching “from one to another without the slightest hesitation.”<sup>97</sup> Crane was introduced to Prince Gregory Galitsin,<sup>98</sup> a member of the distinguished family of Vladimir Dolgoruky, who introduced him to important officials such as Peter Siemonoff, from the ministry of war, and a close associate of Rostovtsoff. As Crane concluded in one of his letters, “in St. Petersbrug I had no end of a good time in every way and everyone was exceedingly nice to me.”<sup>99</sup> Among other things, Crane enjoyed Russian food. In his letters home he attached quite a few recipes, adding that

there are several things about Russian cooking that are very good. They make the best soups and the best bread in the world. One soup that one sees very often is

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<sup>95</sup>Lasch, *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution*, 4

<sup>96</sup> The correct transliteration of the Count’s name - consistent with the Library of Congress transliteration-- would be Rostovtsev. However, I have chosen the spelling as it appears in Crane’s letters. The names of Prince Gregory Galitsin, Vladimir Dolgoruky, and a ministry of war’s affiliate Peter Siemonoff, Procurator General of the Holy Synod, K.P. Pobedonostzeff, and the Minister of Foreign affairs Muraviev are also transliterated here as in Crane’s letters.

<sup>97</sup> Charles R. Crane, hereafter cited as (CRC) to Cornelia S. Crane, hereafter cited as (CSC), St. Petersburg, 7 May 1894. Charles Richard Crane (CRC) Papers, 1869-1967. Box 1. Bakhmeteff Archive, hereafter cited as (BA), Rare Book and Manuscript Library, hereafter cited as (RBML). Columbia University, hereafter cited as (CU), New York.

<sup>98</sup> Crane describes his acquaintance as “the most extraordinary man I have ever seen.” Galitsin impressed Crane very much and he wrote about the Count “although nearly sixty he is still exceedingly handsome and a man of marvelous energy.” Galitsin was a Governor of the Ural and Ural Cossacks and “has gone all over Asiatic Russia and western China on horseback.” CRC to CS, St. Petersburg, 3/15 May 1894. Box 1. CRC Papers. BA, RBML, CU.

<sup>99</sup> CRC to CSC, Moscow, 29 May 1894. Box 1. CRC Papers. BA, RBML, CU.

called Borgh or Borjh and has for a basic beets. Indeed I had at Mr. Siemonoff's once a very good clear beet soup. As a rule they put more or less fish in their soups. Mrs. Siemenoff makes excellent kvass. They take all the poison out of the cucumber by letting it stand for a while in brine and it then tastes quite fresh.<sup>100</sup>

Crane also met the proprietor of "the largest vineyards in Russia." That was apropos for his birthday celebration, during which "there was practically no end to the amount of wine that was brought out and all of wonderful quality." Addressing the members of his family Crane hoped that they "ought to gain in weight and strength very perceptibly after the amount of health that was drunk for them."<sup>101</sup> Though highly enjoyable, at times the bursting social life of the capital seemed a bit overwhelming and Crane would note in one letter that "I should be feeling very well if I were not being feted too much. Count Rostovtsoff's friends in the Barracks – his military friends – were especially pressing in their devotion the other evening and mixed a wonderful hot punch-brewed on the table-called Jonka and all insisted on drinking bruderschaft with me."<sup>102</sup> Russians treated Crane not only with "boisterous revelries," but they also served as his "primary sources" while he became acquainted with Russia, its soul, its national character, and its dramatic history. He acknowledged in his correspondence that he was "having a most interesting time" there; "indeed, so interesting a time, that it is exceedingly difficult to get away."

Regarding his long and informative conversations with Peter Siemonoff, Crane wrote that when they spent time after dinner hours in his friend's library, Siemenoff would give Crane "a most interesting account of the most critical time in the history of [the] Emancipation Commission" that followed the death of Count Rostovtsoff, who was the president of the

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<sup>100</sup> CRC to CSC, Kazan, 5 June 1894. Box 1. CRC Papers. BA, RBML, CU.

<sup>101</sup> CRC to CSC, St. Petersburg, 8 August 1896. Box 1. CRC Papers. BA, RBML, CU.

<sup>102</sup> CRC to CSC, St. Petersburg, 7 May 1894. Box 1. CRC Papers. BA, RBML, CU.

Emancipation Committee and who for some days before his death “prepared his will regarding the process of Emancipation” and who died “in the arms of the Emperor” Alexander II.<sup>103</sup>

Thanks to Crane’s connections, his experience with the Russian bureaucracy was more positive than Bigelow’s and his companion. Though American minister Andrew White was pessimistic about obtaining the necessary papers for Crane’s travels to central Asia, he managed to get “a permit from the minister of war, a general letter of recommendation from the Geographical Society, and a number of letters of introduction to various governors in central Asia, and to the Russian Consul at Kashgar.”<sup>104</sup> Crane documented his trip to central Asia with extensive photographs that he presented to the Imperial Russian Geographical Society, and was awarded an honorary foreign membership at the age of thirty-two. Crane visited St. Petersburg with William Rainey Harper, the president of the University of Chicago, in 1900. The Americans<sup>105</sup> came to negotiate the presentation of lectures on Russian history and were busy visiting their acquaintances from the Columbia Exposition in Chicago, in 1893, including their old friend Prince Sergei Volkonsky, who gave several lectures on Russia in Chicago, at Steinway Hall.<sup>106</sup> As during previous visits, both men were very busy; it was noted that “the invitations have been pouring in and we have met many nice people.”<sup>107</sup> Among them were the pastor of the Congregational Anglo-American Church in St. Petersburg, Alexander Francis, Ambassador and Mrs. Tower, Count Rostovtsoff, Prince Argutinski, Mr. Batiushkov, and Prince Ouktomski, who

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<sup>103</sup> CRC to CSC, St. Petersburg, 3/15 May 1894. Box 1. CRC Papers. BA, RBML, CU.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Crane and Harper were accompanied by Martin Ryerson and Charles Hutchinson and their wives.

<sup>106</sup> CRC to Frances Crane, St. Petersburg, 10 May 1900. Box 1. CRC Papers. BA, RBML, CU.

<sup>107</sup> CRC to CSC, St. Petersburg, 16 May 1900. Box 1. CRC Papers. BA, RBML, CU.

was the editor of *Vedomosti*, “who accompanied the Emperor around the world when the Emperor was Tsarevich.”<sup>108</sup>

In St. Petersburg, Crane and Harper became frequent habitués of the literary salon of Madam Varvara Ikskull, famous for her involvement in “valuable public work, especially for women.” There they reacquainted themselves with Russian writer Vladimir Korolenko, who was also visiting the capital. They conducted an interview with famous Russian statesman K.P. Pobedonostzeff, Procurator General of the Holy Synod, and another with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Muraviev.<sup>109</sup> They dined with a Senator Sherbatov, and attended his habitual Sunday breakfast open house, also attended by promising young artists and writers.<sup>110</sup> Crane and Harper stayed in St. Petersburg longer than they expected, as Count Muraviev arranged for them to be received by the emperor.<sup>111</sup> Their extend stay was rewarded by the promised audience. The emperor invited the Americans to the Tsarskoye Selo, south of the city, on a Saturday, which he usually reserved to himself. Two other Americans, Mr. Martin Ryerson, and Mr. Charles Hutchinson, were also given an audience with the tsar. All of them attended the court in “evening dress, with white ties and gloves:”

As we entered the Emperor rose from his table and walked towards us, greeting us with a cordial hand-shake and asking of each one his name... Then he said, with a smile, “I suppose you are writing a book on Russia?” I [Crane] answered that I thought one felt more able to write a book after one’s first visit to Russia than after one’s fifth visit. He smiled again at that

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<sup>108</sup> CRC to CSC, St. Petersburg, 24 May 1900. Box 1. CRC Papers. BA, RBML, CU.

<sup>109</sup> CRC to CSC, St. Petersburg, 16 May 1900. Box 1. CRC Papers. BA, RBML, CU.

<sup>110</sup> CRC to CSC, St. Petersburg, 24 May, 1900. Box 1. CRC Papers. BA, RBML, CU.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

and said, “I imagine that is true.”<sup>112</sup>

Crane returned to Petersburg-Petrograd on many occasions. As a member of the Root Mission, he found himself in the city in a time of wars and revolutions that defined the beginning of the twentieth century. Many American nationals felt the necessity to resist exceptionalist assumptions and U.S. ideology embedded in Washington’s approach to Russian policy. With little encouragement and support at home, Americans in Russia tried to consolidate their efforts to cope with the dangers and uncertainties of the war, and to comprehend social and political changes unfolding in the troubled city, facing increasing demands for the protection of U.S. citizens and interests, often acting independently from the government.

Thomas William Allison, the author of a book devoted to a group of American diplomats “caught in the chaos of war and revolution,” tells the story of “their trials and tribulations.” In exploring the lives of Americans in Russia during the period that W. Bruce Lincoln called a “Passage through Armageddon,” Allison highlights their role in policymaking and describes how the American government ignored its diplomats in the field and was not responsive to their “observations, ideas, policy suggestions, and initiatives.”<sup>113</sup> David W. McFadden takes a similar approach and writes that the encounters between early Soviet and American military, economic, and political envoys with varying degrees of support from their governments “constituted the constantly changing reality of the earliest relationship between Americans and Bolsheviks.”<sup>114</sup> Allison even calls American diplomats “orphans, forgotten in a far-off orphanage called Russia,

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<sup>112</sup> CRC to CSC, Berlin, 28 May 1900. Box 1. CRC Papers. BA, RBML, CU.

<sup>113</sup> Allison, *American Diplomats in Russia*, ix.

<sup>114</sup> McFadden, *Alternative Paths: Soviets and Americans, 1917-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 4.

under extreme conditions.”<sup>115</sup> Woodrow Wilson’s administration disregarded formal diplomatic channels, a feature that Allison calls “a lackadaisical inefficient policymaking process.” Allison considered it a mistake to send to Russia a special mission – the Root Mission -- as it consequently failed to anticipate the danger of growing Bolshevik power<sup>116</sup> and “pooh-poohed the idea” that the soviet was of more importance than the government itself.<sup>117</sup> Among the members of the mission, only Charles Edward Russell was aware of the widening chasm between the soviet and the Provisional Government. But he was “too much of a socialist” to be “welcomed by the folk with whom Root hobnobbed.”<sup>118</sup> Thus, Russell would become one of the many American liberals who would be attracted by the historic events unfolding in the Russian capital seeking the opportunity to travel there and to witness the history making first hand. Christopher Lasch, in his *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution*, refers to the publication in the New York *World* that characterized Russell as the only member of the mission

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<sup>115</sup> Allison, *American Diplomats in Russia*, ix. Other authors, for example David W. McFadden, also pointed out that “the diverse dimensions of conflict, and efforts to resolve differences... far from being a clear and unambiguous policy on either side...” He concluded that the first years of relationship between the Soviet Russia and the United States “comprised a series of experimental attempts to come to terms with each other” and that “a wide variety of people in both countries groped for means and ways to work out some relationship with each other, exploring opportunities in a bewildering array of on-the-spot diplomatic encounters.” See McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 3.

<sup>116</sup> Allison, *American Diplomats in Russia*, 5.

<sup>117</sup> Lasch, *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution*, 43.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. Lasch quotes a letter written by Algernon Lee to Morris Hillquit, 17 December 1918. The correspondence is in State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Neil V. Salzman also refers to Root’s inability to grasp the situation when he compared his input with the one made by William Thompson who was the head of the American Red Cross Committee. Raymond Robins would recollect that “the Root Commission did not get over with the Russian people. We will have to try and serve them well enough to make up for their failure.” Salzman also refers to Alexander Gumberg who was interpreting for the Red Cross and wrote “it was a curious thing that Root – the politician, the diplomat, the statesman – saw nothing in Russia, and Thompson, the Wall Street promoter, who knew nothing of public or international affairs, saw the whole picture.” Neil V. Salzman, *Reform & Revolution: The Life and Times of Raymond Robins* (Kent: The Kent State University, 1991), 182.

“who seemed to understand the mass-movement of the Russian population,” but who was, at the same time, regarded in the mission as “a well-meaning crank.”<sup>119</sup> Russell would be leaning towards those American liberals who, regardless of all their differences, were trying to work out the solution, “to the problem raised by revolution within the context of certain assumptions which conservatives did not share.” After the October revolution there was still misunderstanding between most liberal intellectuals who happened to witness the event first hand and “looked with horror on the suggestion that Bolshevism be crushed by force, and the advocates of intervention back home, such as Henry Cabot, and William Howard Taft in America and Winston Churchill and others in England.<sup>120</sup> A good example of indifference or even reluctance of the government to pay attention to a first-hand account of an “observer, participant, and analyzer” of the Russian affairs was a war secretary of YMCA Russell McCulloch Story’s attempt to perform as “non – interventionist.”<sup>121</sup> On his return to the United States he declared that

No indeed, and probably nothing would be gained in the long run from such procedure. It would merely be using force against force and such a method would

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid. Lasch refers to the publication by Arno Dosch-Flerot in New York *World*, 22 February 1918. Lasch also refers to the unpublished PhD dissertation by Ray W. McDuffee who explored the State Department documents dealing with the Russian Revolutions. According to that research ambassador Francis made it very clear to the State Department that Russell’s usefulness in Russia had reached its end. Francis warned the State Department that Russell would “make trouble” if he stayed in Petrograd. See Lasch, *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution*, 44. See also Ray W. McDuffee, “The State Department and the Russian Revolutions, March – November, 1917” (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 1954), 58-59.

<sup>120</sup> Lasch, *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution*, xii.

<sup>121</sup> Among other ardent opponents of intervention was Louise Bryant who wrote: “Everything considered, there is just as much reason to believe that the Soviet Republic of Russia will stand as that it will fall. The most significant fact that it will not fall from *inside* pressure. Only *outside*, foreign, hostile intervention can destroy it.” See Louise Bryant, *Six Red Month in Russia* (New York: Arno Press, 1970), xi.

never bring order out of the Russian chaos. Russia must settle this for herself; she must decide what kind of an internal regime she wants. Personally, I'm not in favor of raising the blockade against the bolsheviki at this time, nor until they are willing and able to recognize the binding character of international obligations, and the sanctity of treaties.<sup>122</sup>

Story was echoed by Louise Bryant. She published her report of the revolutionary events, urging Americans back home not to pay heed to those who witnessed first hand the political changes and “somehow make an honest effort to understand what is happening in Russia.”<sup>123</sup> The American journalist noted that in the United States people were “so confused in this country by a mysterious yet effective and systematic discrediting of everything that has to do with the political party known as Bolsheviki, that we are quite apt to make unintelligent comments of this kind.”<sup>124</sup> Thus, Bryant took up the wish of a Russian revolutionary heroine Maria Spiridonova, who asked the journalist to “try to make them understand in great America how hard we over here are striving to maintain our ideals.”<sup>125</sup> Similar to many other Americans who discovered in Russia yet another “New World,” Louise Bryant confessed that she was putting together her account with “a good deal of awe,” feeling that while she set on for her journey and assignment “to gather pebbles,” she ended up “finding pearls....”<sup>126</sup> She would advocate friendly relations with Russia hoping that “we will not fall into Germany’s trap,” and “will offer aid to Russia and

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<sup>122</sup> “Returned Y.M. Worker Tells of War Horrors in Russia,” *Champaign Sunday News*, (September 7, 1919):6.

<sup>123</sup> Bryant, *Six Red Month in Russia*, xi.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 161-162.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, xi.

assume toward her a large tolerance and we will officially recognize *whatever government* there is -- without regard to its political views or our own prejudices in the matter.”<sup>127</sup>

An interesting view of the events was documented by Charles Crane, who thought of the February revolution as “purely Russian,” and “characteristic,” describing the government as a “peaceful anarchy.” Crane wrote to his son from Petrograd that there was “no method of enforcing of its decrees excepting by persuasion and constitution,” but that nevertheless “it is a very orderly government, and without the use of force through soldiers or policemen, and the jail doors wide open, it is perfectly safe to wonder around the streets anywhere at any hour of the day or night.” Crane was impressed because throughout the country people “recognize their individual responsibility and carry out in a simple way work formerly done by officials.” He concluded his observation declaring that “people seem to be able to get along without any of the old symbols such as the Emperor, the flag, the national hymn, and even the cross on Saint Sofia.” Everyone, according to Crane, was “well, kind and sympathetic, and all Russian friends...send affectionate family greetings.”<sup>128</sup>

Many Americans expressed such optimism as they witnessed and in many cases shared the spirit of “rejoicing, good feeling and universal brotherhood which immediately followed the

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<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

<sup>128</sup> Charles Crane to Richard Crane, Petrograd, 4 May 1917. Dispatch to the State Department in Washington, no. 1349. George Kennan Papers. Box 1, series I. Correspondence, 1917–1920, folder 1.6. MAD, NYPL. It is worth mentioning that Crane was a close friend with Paul Miliukov, the first head of the Provisional Government. After Miliukov’s resignation Crane’s optimism faded and he became quite pessimistic about Russia and its future. In the period between February/March and October revolutions in 1917, he tried to persuade Wilson administration to get aid to Russia as soon as possible.

overthrow of the autocracy”<sup>129</sup> in the spring of 1917. Others, like George Kennan, did not share the sentiments because, as Kennan explained in his letter, he knew “Russian history and Russian psychology” too well. Even though Kennan devoted his life to expose and denounce the tyranny and arbitrary atrocities of the tsarist system, he did not expect that “period of rejoicing and good fellowship to last long.” Being an expert on Russia, he explained that there are

more elements of discord than in most countries, because the social classes are very sharply differentiated; each in the past has been unjust to the other; their present interests conflict; and last, but by no means least, the country is full of idealists, theorists, pacifists, socialists, and half-baked reformers, who all think that the nation can be saved and made prosperous and happy only through the adoption of their more or less visionary and impracticable schemes.<sup>130</sup>

Under such conditions, Kennan, being a “sober and rational observer” could not expect “the establishment at once of a stable and permanent government.” And yet, Kennan ruled out in his analysis any possibility for Russia “to be autocratically governed again.”<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> In this particular case Kennan is warning Fairchild not to be too optimistic in regards to events unfolding in Russia. See Kennan to Fairchild, New York, 22 May 1917. George Kennan Papers. Box. 1, series I. Correspondence, 1917 - 1920, folder 1.6. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid. Kennan was not the only one who saw a deep-rooted discord that had been tearing the country for centuries. As early as in 1902 William S. Edwards, a prominent lawyer and a businessman from West Virginia, who spent his honeymoon in Russia a year before, spoke of an inevitable revolution. He wrote that “a discontent so deep-rooted and so intense that when the inevitable hour strikes, as strike it must, the world will then behold in Russia... a squaring of ten centuries’ accounts, more fraught with human anguish and human joy than ever dreamed by Marat and a Robespierre...” See William Seymour Edwards, *Through Scandinavia to Moscow* (Cincinnati, The R. Clarke Co., 1906).

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. See also Kennan’s many publications concerning the topic, such as for example “Russia’s Dual Government,” *Outlook* (23 May 1917), or “The Menace of the Russian Workmen’s’ Council” that followed a week later. He warns Fairchild to not “put too much confidence in what Crane says.” Ibid. Kennan claims that Crane does not know Russian psychology well enough to be captured by such an illusion as “peaceful anarchy.”

After the Bolshevik Revolution, Kennan questioned the Soviet policy. He did not denounced socialists, among whom he had quite a few friends, but he would argue that the Bolsheviks discredited the term “Socialist” by coupling it with “Anarchist,” who, according to the writer “dishonored the Russian Revolution by turning it into a campaign against all civilized order, and who have brought even the wage-earners of the proletariat to the brink of economic ruin.”<sup>132</sup> The researcher based his observations on a careful analysis of the Soviet documents, such as Russian Socialist Federated Social Republic Constitution, that was publicized in January 1918 and published in the “Izvestia of the All-Russian General Executive Committee.” Kennan justified the necessity to study such documents at a time of “continued spread of Bolshevism and the increasing interest in it by workmen.” First of all Kennan noticed that

while great stress is laid upon the rights of the laboring people, and various devices are brought in play to subserve these rights, that in the end the Central Executive Committee retains the supreme legislative executive and controlling power and reserves the right to enact all measures and proposals and issues it’s own decrees. In other words, in the hands of a few people located now in Moscow, is placed all of the power – “the Philosophy of Force,” as it has been termed, has come to its full development in Russia.<sup>133</sup>

The other reason that kept Kennan from being as optimistic as some of his compatriots, witnessing revolutions first hand, was the financial policy of the Soviets. He would claim that it “leaves much to the imagination, as to where the money is coming from to work out all of the

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<sup>132</sup> Kennan to L. Horowitz, November 1917. George Kennan Papers. Box. 1, series I. Correspondence, 1917 - 1920, folder 1.6. MAD, NYPL. In his letter Kennan refers to his publication in *The Outlook* dated 21 November 1917.

<sup>133</sup> “Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic (RSFSR) Constitution,” ca. 1919. George Kennan Papers. Box. 3, series II. Research and Publications on Russia and the Siberian Exile System, 1856 – ca. 1919, n.d., 3.8. MAD, NYPL.

Utopian measures provided for in the constitution.” Kennan suggested that the “logical method of rendering the Bolsheviks harmless” in the United States was “an educational campaign conducted through the medium of intelligent propaganda” which was supposed to “point out to the thinking workmen the absurdity of the Bolshevik constitution and render him immune to their influence.”<sup>134</sup>

North Winship was one more American official who did not share the initial enthusiastic assessments of the Russian affairs expressed by Crane and Ambassador Francis, who believed that the February revolution was good for the Russian war effort.<sup>135</sup> A U.S. consul at Petrograd since 1914, Winship, who was based in the Singer building on Nevsky Prospekt, warned the secretary of state that during the revolution there had been “immediate danger of civil war in Petrograd between the Duma and the council of Workmen’s and Soldiers Deputies” and that continuing shortage of food would “cause further serious disorders capable of developing into new revolutionary movements with greater socialistic tendencies than before.”<sup>136</sup>

Many members of the American diplomatic corps who resided in St. Petersburg during the times of social turmoil not only chronicled events, but also analyzed the American response, and noted the dynamics of relations between the United States and the Soviets, especially in the early days of the new Socialist Republic.<sup>137</sup> Many of these documents remain invaluable

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 237.

<sup>136</sup> Consul Winship to Robert Lansing, March 20, 1917. Cited in Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 237.

<sup>137</sup>The early history of American-Soviet relations is documented in extensive archival materials, including diplomatic dispatches, the Department of State Central Files, Military Intelligence Archives, consular and legation/embassy post records, (in my research I use dispatches that I found in David Francis Papers, MoHS), extensive correspondence, both personal and official (Francis’ letters to his wife and son, is a good example of the personal correspondence, the ambassador’ letters to the Secretary of State Robert Lansing, on the other hand, would present a great source of official correspondence), memoirs, both published and unpublished (for example, Philip Jordan’s

resources for reconstructing diplomatic history, and rescuing from obscurity unjustly dissembled facts and events that have thus far failed to appear in the mainstream of historical records.

An example of such an account, one not widely used and known is the Francis Riggs collection in Bakhmeteff Archive at Columbia University. Captain Francis Riggs was the military attaché and served in the American diplomatic corps between 1917 and 1919. He was a careful observer of the revolutionary events and the social changes in Russia and provided detailed accounts on various Russian political and military organizations that flooded Petrograd as the result of the two 1917 revolutions. Among others, he would distinguish non-Bolshevik political groups such as constitutional monarchists and pro-ally counter revolutionists operating in both capitals. Informing American officials both in Russia and back in the United States about the political mood and moves in revolutionary Petrograd, Riggs observed that counter-revolutionists “expect the Bolsheviks to be overthrown by the unorganized people,” so that they would then step to restore order “after their own manner of thinking.” Riggs also predicted a conflict between monarchists and liberals.<sup>138</sup> In his archive there is a very detailed scheme that explained the structure of the Commissariat of War, the emerging red army and red guards, *dépêche* documenting Trotsky’s efforts to oppose German peace terms.<sup>139</sup> In March 1918 Riggs

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memoirs and Francis’ diaries and his reports on the events published in *Russia from the American Embassy*, 1921. Another example is the diary and the letters of J. Butler Wright, the counselor to the American embassy, published recently in *Witness to Revolution: The Russian Revolution Diary and Letters of Butler Wright*, ed. by William Thomas Allison. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002), newspaper and journal articles.

<sup>138</sup> See Francis Rigg’s “Notes on Russian Organization,” American Military Mission in Petrograd, 31 December 1917, and “Notes on Militant Non-Bolshevik Political Groups,” Moscow, 30 May 1918. *E. Francis Riggs Papers*, 1917-1919. BA, RBML, CU.

<sup>139</sup> Francis Riggs, “Military Note.” Vologda, 28 January 1918. *E. Francis Riggs Papers*. BA, RBML, CU. Thus, Riggs undertook the task of explaining all the peculiarities and differences between all warring factions, the task that Louise Bryant considered extremely important to proceed with if “America and Russia are ever going to enjoy the natural friendship that they ought to enjoy.” Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia*, 180.

reported that in efforts to form a red army, the Bolshevik government was anxious to have one or more American officers, particularly military attaché in Petrograd.<sup>140</sup> Riggs pointed out in his military notes that Russians repeatedly discussed the availability of American aid to the fledging red army.<sup>141</sup> Thus, in one document he recorded a meeting between Colonel William Ruggles and General Bontch-Bruevitch, serving as a head of the special staff. During the meeting that took place on the 8 March 1918, Americans and Russians discussed “a possible American support to the Russian Army.” Among other issues captain Riggs suggested that they should consider various questions besides “the ones of materiel.” Under “various questions” he meant “supplies, officers for liaison, possibly troops, railway matters, etc.”<sup>142</sup> Like many other Americans ‘in the field,’ Riggs was very cautious about the policy of intervention. Reporting on the meeting of the French military attaché Captain Sadoul with the acting minister of Foreign affairs Chicherin, Riggs observed that his French colleague had as “hard task” as himself of convincing General Staff of their own countries “of the advisability of not going in for a policy of occupation,” and that they “must have the assistance of the Commissaries in order to send such news in cables,” so that foreign General Staff would see that “the game was not yet up in Russia.”<sup>143</sup> He suggested that the allies should negotiate with Bolsheviks the presence of allied

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<sup>140</sup> Francis Riggs, “Military Note.” Petrograd, 5 March 1918. *E. Francis Riggs Papers*. BA, RBML, CU. Very similar note was published in Louise Bryant’s account *Six Red Month in Russia* where she described Trotsky’s intention to accept the services of American officers in training the emerging Red Army. She refers to his conviction that there is no “reason why Russia and America should not ride in the same car for a way as long as they are following the same road...” See Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia*, 142.

<sup>141</sup> McFadden also mentions “specific discussions concerning possible military collaboration” as the first effort at a Bolshevik-American *modus operandi*, that occurred immediately after 7 November 1917. See McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 4.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Riggs, “Military note.” Petrograd, 10 March 1918. *E. Francis Riggs Papers*. BA, RBML, CU. Summarizing the outcome of those early talks that paved the way for month of other direct discussions never sanctioned by U.S. War

military forces and maintain contact with Russian General Staff and Commissariat of War. Riggs also recommended to “establish technical and commercial contact” and to clarify what “allied interests in Russia are and what our policy is to be.”<sup>144</sup> His next report dated 25 September 1918, was grimmer. By the time the report was put together, he was convinced that even though the Bolshevik’ party came into power with a campaign slogan “Peace, Bread, and Land,” they failed to keep their promises as the socialist experiment brought, in Riggs words, “an economic collapse.”<sup>145</sup>

Many secondary sources also serve as extended and comprehensive repositories of names, dates, places, and events that are useful for American chronicles of the former Russian capital in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Although in the course of time the diplomatic contingent has been covered in historiography more extensively than any other group of Americans residing in St. Petersburg/Petrograd,<sup>146</sup> not everything has been fully discovered and awaits further research. One relatively new publication on the topic is *Standing on a Volcano: the Life and Times of David Rowland Francis*. Based mostly on the archival materials from the Francis collection in the Missouri Historical Society, Harper Barnes’ book provides a detailed description of Francis’ tenure as the American ambassador to Russia. The author describes Francis’ trip to Russia and answers some questions that are essential for writing the

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Department and later halted by the U.S. State Department, McFadden writes that “they saved military supplies for the Allies, kept German troops on the Russian front for several more weeks, and negotiated American military and engineering assistance for the new Red Army and the Soviet rail network.” See McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 4.

<sup>144</sup> Riggs, “Military note: The Russian Situation,” 25 April 1918. *E. Francis Riggs Papers*. BA, RBML, CU.

<sup>145</sup> Riggs, “Notes on Russia.” 25 September 1918. *E. Francis Riggs Papers*. BA, RBML, CU.

<sup>146</sup> See for example Norman E. Saul’s *War and Revolution: The United States and Russia, 1914 – 1921* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2001), William Allison’s *American Diplomats in Russia*, and J. Butler Wright’s *Witness to Revolution*, Jamie H. Cockfield’s *Dollars and Diplomacy: Ambassador David Francis and the Fall of Tsarism, 1916-191* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1981), David Francis’ *Russia from American Embassy*, to name a few that are dedicated to the period of the Great War and Revolutions.

history of the American colony in the city. Thus, for example, referring to the Francis' memoirs Barnes describes the contingent of Americans who sailed to Russia on board the small Swedish steamship *Oscar II* that brought the new ambassador to Europe: "there were basically three groups on the *Oscar*: American businessmen interested in munitions contracts with Russia who hoped to cultivate the friendship of the new American ambassador; YMCA workers going to Russia to do relief work among German prisoners; and spies...."<sup>147</sup>

Barnes gives a detailed account about the group of American citizens residing in Petrograd at the time the newly appointed ambassador arrived, identifying such a distinguished personality as Frederic Corse, the head of the New York Life Insurance Company in Petrograd and the dean of the American colony in Russian capital.<sup>148</sup> The American community that Francis encountered reflected the changes in the United States diplomatic representation abroad as a result of industrialization and expansion of business. In order to provide an adequate analysis of the life, work and St. Petersburg experience of the last American ambassador in pre-Revolutionary Russia, Barnes emphasized that Francis was a successful businessman and politician who gained a reputation for his sense of civic duty and ability to juggle the competing demands of special interest groups. Recognized and respected by the business community in both countries, the ambassador put "his own twist" on the policies that the diplomatic corps carried out in the field in order to suit business agendas much more than his predecessors.

Thus Francis made a point of frequently dining with American businessmen, including, fairly often, executives of the National City Bank. Because Russia excited the American ambassador's "commercial instincts," during his tenure he continued to mix commerce and

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<sup>147</sup> Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 185.

<sup>148</sup> For this description Barnes refers to "Who is Who in Petrograd," notes by Francis, 15 September 1916, the document that I found in Francis' Papers in MoHS, and that is irreplaceable in my research work.

diplomacy. Yet, having been for most of his adult life devoted to public service, he did not necessarily do it for personal profit. Among other important assignments, he was in charge of hosting the Stevens Railway Mission, sent by the United States Government “to help improve the flow of Russian rail transportation, both for the war and for the commercial cornucopia Francis believed would flow once peace came.”<sup>149</sup>

The Russia David Francis entered in the spring of 1916, in Barnes words, was becoming “a vast keg of powder,” and Petrograd “was the fuse.” A year later in Petrograd the ambassador would recognize the Provisional Government in the name of the United States, and would receive enthusiastic ovations when he would speak to large gatherings of Russians when the United States entered the war. On another occasion Francis greeted from the embassy’s second-floor balcony a “nervously anticipated demonstration,” that took place in front of the building.<sup>150</sup> Francis’ diplomatic skills and his eloquence was acknowledged in *New York Times* which reported:

Since the revolution our Ambassador Francis has come into the highest usefulness. Autocracy somewhat cramped the style of this old-style Missouri Democrat, but under the new regime ha has become a real power. His oratory is a rare treat to the Petrograd population, who gather in great numbers to listen to him and though not understanding his words, greatly enjoyed his earnest delivery.<sup>151</sup>

Throughout November and early December 1917, Francis authorized unofficial contacts with Bolsheviks, “a fact obscured or lost in most histories of the period.” Those contacts were mostly through Red Cross representative Raymond Robins and occasionally, though sometimes

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<sup>149</sup> Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 246.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 206, 240.

<sup>151</sup> *New York Times*, June 30, 1917.

indirectly, through the military attaché, General William V. Judson, who was responsible for the security of American citizens residing in Petrograd.<sup>152</sup> Barnes argues that the latter recommended both to Washington and to Francis that the United States “enter into helpful, sympathetic and friendly relations” with the Bolsheviks to prevent the country from falling into German hands.<sup>153</sup>

Summarizing Francis’ legacy, his biographer concludes that even though the ambassador was often criticized for his open hostility towards Bolshevism making it impossible for Americans to deal with the new government in a practical way, in reality he did try repeatedly to establish contacts with the Soviets even more than any other experienced allied diplomats. Although the ambassador did not receive clear instructions about the policies from home, he managed, as Barnes explained, to quickly regain “his footing and moved ahead on his own to do what he thought was right.”<sup>154</sup> Up until inevitable exodus from the former Russian capital, during the hard times of 1918, the American Embassy, situated in a long, two-story, ornately facaded, late-nineteen-century building at 34 Furstatskaya Street in a fashionable district where many foreign diplomats and Russian officials lived,<sup>155</sup> remained “the citadel of strong warm comfort”<sup>156</sup> for many Americans in Petrograd.

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<sup>152</sup> Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 273.

<sup>153</sup> See William, V. Judson, *Russia in War and Revolution: General William V Judson’s Accounts from Petrograd, 1917 -1918*, ed. by Neil Salzman (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1998), 191 -192. See also Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 287 and McFadden’s *Alternative Paths* where the author explains that Robins negotiated with Lenin and Trotsky “purchase agreements on behalf of the U.S. War Department for Russia’ remaining supplies of strategic platinum, thus denying them to the German war effort.” McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 4.

<sup>154</sup> Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 288.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

<sup>156</sup> Julia Cantacuzène Countess Speransky, Neé Grant, *Revolutionary Days: Recollections of Romanoffs and Bolsheviks, 1914-1917* (Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1919), 270.

It was one of the first stops of newly arrived John Reed and Louise Bryant when they came to Russia to witness history.<sup>157</sup> They joined one more group of Americans who rushed to Petrograd during and right after both the February and October revolutions. The city, that, in the words of Albert Rhys Williams, became the heart of the workingmen rebellion, which attracted a number of American socialist leaning intellectuals who demonstrated profound sympathy to the new social order that was conceived in Russia. Among others it is worth mentioning Reed, Bryant, Albert Rhys Williams, Charles Edward Russell, Raymond Robins, Bessie Beatty and Lincoln Steffens, and others; they authored favorable sentiments towards “awakened” masses, acknowledging that “something strange and foreboding had occurred” in Russia, something that was “only heretofore dreamed or vaguely planned for future ages.”<sup>158</sup>

On the first morning of 1918 the American embassy became a place for a fateful meeting of America’s top representatives in Russia “official, quasi-official, and unofficial” who gathered over “one of Philip Jordan’s famous breakfasts” to discuss “what to do if fighting should resume on the Eastern Front” and how to proceed under the circumstances when the Germans reportedly were within two hundred miles from Petrograd. In *One Hundred Red Days*, Edgar G. Sisson, who was sent to Petrograd in November 1917 to head the Petrograd office of Creel’s Committee

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<sup>157</sup> Bryant and Reed’s arrival in Petrograd had been documented in the last Russian ambassador’s book *Russia from the American Embassy*, 167. “On September 13, an attractive if somewhat disheveled young American couple arrived at the embassy with a letter of introduction from what Francis described “as a prominent federal official from New York.” Barnes also mentions that the meeting happened in the embassy, but regrets that there is no record of how the meeting with John Reed and Louise Bryant went. Yet, he writes that shortly afterward Reed’s wallet showed up at the American Embassy, and it contained notes that convinced Francis that Reed was a dangerous Red. I found a curious document in MoHS, in which the Military attaché informs the ambassador about hiring an unidentified individual “to investigate Mr. Reed’s record.” “Memorandum for the Ambassador.” 6 October 1917. American Embassy in Petrograd. Received 9 October 1917. DRF, Record Series # 02/P0274, Box 397, A-22a. MoHs.

<sup>158</sup> Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia*, x.

on Public Information, recalls that neither the ambassador who “was for staying and sitting under the flag,” nor Philip Jordan, who pronounced that “we are having so many revolutions here now that it is too interesting for us to think of leaving,”<sup>159</sup> intended to leave Petrograd. However, the rest of the group tried to convince the top diplomat that the useful place for him would be wherever the Bolsheviks picked a new capital, if they lasted long enough to make a choice. The rest of the diplomatic corps decided “to fend for ourselves” and “resolved that under no circumstances would we leave Russia.”<sup>160</sup> After the British ambassador was recalled on 6 January, Francis remained the ambassador with the longest tenure in the capital, dean of the Petrograd diplomatic corps,<sup>161</sup> that was the largest in Petrograd, and the head of the “best informed embassy” here.<sup>162</sup> The ambassador expressed a lot of appreciation and compassion towards the country he spent two years in, writing that he would not like “to abandon the Russian people, for whom I felt deep sympathy and whom I had assured repeatedly of America’s unselfish interest in their welfare.”<sup>163</sup> However, as communication between Petrograd and Washington became extremely difficult, the isolation of Petrograd increased. The conditions deteriorated and food would become more and more challenging to secure. Finally, Francis decided to leave Petrograd but planned on staying in Russia. Barnes explains that his eye fell on Vologda, “a small inland city of about fifty thousand people that was at the juncture of major north-south and east-west railroad lines.”<sup>164</sup> Thus, on Sunday, 24 February, most of the embassy

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<sup>159</sup> Edgar G. Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days: A Personal Chronicle of the Bolshevik Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931), 190-191.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 293.

<sup>162</sup> Barnes refers to a note in the margin of Francis report to Robert Lansing, March 17, 1918, NA. See Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 306.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>164</sup> Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 305.

staff left for Vologda. The move was administered by the embassy secretary James G. Bailey. The majority of the personnel would continue to travel from Vologda to Vladivostok and sail back to the United States. Before turning the embassy over to the neutral Norwegians, the ambassador and the few remaining Americans burned top secret and confidential papers for the past ten years in the courtyard of the embassy.<sup>165</sup> Their departure is described in details in George F. Kennan's *Soviet – American Relations: Russia Leaves the War* and in Barnes' biography:

On February 26, Francis, Counselor J. Butler Write, Second Secretary Norman Armour, Military Attaché Colonel James A. Ruggles, Ruggles' aids, Captain Francis Riggs, and Eugene Prince, Private Secretary Earl Johnson, four marine guards, and Philip Jordan were taken with their baggage by sleigh to the Nikolai Station, where five months before Jordan and Francis had seen Bolshevik soldiers digging trenches in Nevsky Prospekt. The diplomats had been allotted a special train. Accompanying the Americans were chiefs of mission representing Japan, China, Siam, and Brazil, as well as a few people from the American Red Cross Mission.<sup>166</sup>

The move, in Barnes' words, "ended 108 unbroken years of American diplomatic representation in the capital of Russia that went back to the days of John Quincy Adams."<sup>167</sup> It also put an end to the socially and culturally vibrant and economically viable American colony that a few months before Francis and his staff left the city numbered more than 250 people.

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<sup>165</sup> Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 438.

<sup>166</sup> Barnes refers to Francis report to Robert Lansing, March 17, 1918. See Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 307. The episode is also referred to in George F. Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 439-40.

<sup>167</sup> Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 308.

The tale of the rest of the colony that ceased to exist with the exodus of most of its members in the course of 1918 turned into an endless tapestry of accounts, narratives and memoirs. Americans left Petrograd in many different ways. When the Petrograd branch of the National City Bank was eventually forced to close at the end of November of 1918, the Meserve family boarded the Trans-Siberian Express traveling with three officers of the American Red Cross mission. After crossing the Russian border they continued to Harbin. From there they went by train to Korea, then the family took a Japanese ship from Yokohama across the Pacific.<sup>168</sup> The Meserves were among the many who fled Russia going east. One of them was Isabel Hapgood, who was still in Petrograd in 1917 until the conditions made it impossible for her to stay on. She finally left Petrograd and went to Vladivostok and later to the United States. The details of her traveling out from the revolutionary Petrograd could be found in her notes jotted on one of the telegrams received from Princess Narishkin.<sup>169</sup> The route would become a common exit from Russia for so many of her compatriots and long-term members the American colony in its turmoil capital.

Others would go west or South to Constantinople. For example, Rogers, a bank clerk, was one of those who had to be “inventive” in order to leave revolutionary Petrograd. He had to ride a freight train for ten days to Murmansk, 300 miles north of the Arctic Circle. After that he “lived in the car for three weeks and then got a berth on the small British steamer which

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<sup>168</sup> De Basily Meserve, *Memoirs of a Lost World*, 105, 106, 107. Two years later Fessenden Meserve went to Paris to resume his duties as vice president of the National City Bank in Europe. He died in the United States in 1941. *Ibid.*, 109, 255.

<sup>169</sup> Narishkin to Hapgood, telegram, Tsarskoye Selo, May 1917. Hapgood, Isabel F. Collection, Manuscript & Archives Division, box 3, MAD, NYPL. Ledkovsky also refers to Hapgood’s departure from Russia via Vladivostok, See Marina Ledkovsky, “A Linguistic Bridge to Orthodoxy: In Memoriam Isabel Florence Hapgood.” A lecture delivered at the Twelfth Annual Russian Orthodox Musicians Conference, 7-11 October, 1998, Washington, DC <<http://anglicanhistory.org/women/hapgood/ledkovsky.pdf>> (21 January, 2009).

eventually landed [him] in England, where [he] proceeded with the American Expeditionary Forces of the United States Army.”<sup>170</sup> Alexander Tarsaidze mentions the Baltic Port of Libau in which a number of African Americans were seen among émigrés fleeing Russia after the revolution. He writes that “among them appeared several Negroes who were Russian subjects yet descendants of American Negroes, and with odd names such as Misha Smith, Tania Johnson, and Sasha Bruce.”<sup>171</sup>

Many Americans, especially those, who were involved in business or the entertainment industry, had to leave fortunes behind. Thus, for example, a famous African American jockey Jimmy Winkfield, who at the peak of his career in 1916 reportedly earned more than a \$ 100,000 a year, had to give up \$ 50,000 and 4,000 shares of Russian railroad stock.<sup>172</sup> Another example was the story of a Chicago singer Ollie Burgoyne, who was touring Russia with The Louisiana Amazon Guards, and stayed behind opening her own store that she had to abandon in the course of the Great War.<sup>173</sup> Even those businesses that had well-established bases in Russia eventually had to close their operations. Thus, for example, Singer experienced considerable losses during the war and in the course of 1917 in particular. By the end of that year the company even managed to ease some of the problems they sustained at the beginning of the war, but since the revolution the conditions “have become so extraordinary that it is no longer possible to carry on commercial business in Russia.”<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>170</sup>Papers of Leighton W. Rogers. Autobiographical Sketch. Box 1, folder 1, MD, LC.

<sup>171</sup> Alexander, Tarsaidze, *Czars and Presidents* (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1958), 177.

<sup>172</sup>“The Saga of Jimmy Winkfield” in *Ebony*, June 1974, 64 – 70.

<sup>173</sup> John, O. Perpener, *African American Concert Dance: The Harlem Renaissance and Beyond* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 74.

<sup>174</sup> Douglas Alexander (New York) to Robert Lansing, 3 October 1917. Cited in Saul, *War and Revolution*, 179. The actual take over of the operations by the Soviet Government took place in 1924. See *ibid.* It is still worth mentioning that after the Bolsheviks took over the American businesses in St Petersburg had such an advocate as Raymond

When a few years later, in 1921, responding to the devastating famine, Americans returned to Russia, and to Petrograd, they found some of their compatriots still residing there, some of them though stranded not being able to provide for themselves or secure “the very necessities of life.”<sup>175</sup> Among others, who continued their duties in spite of enormous hardships were the members of the YMCA who persisted with their work throughout 1918 “proceeding as usual, with fair attendance.”<sup>176</sup> The American Methodist Episcopal Church also was the last one to close its operations. Its pastor Reverend George Simons, who stayed in Petrograd after Francis and his people left, estimated that there were still “around 30 American Nationals resided in the city.” Simons appealed to his compatriots remaining in Petrograd urging them to be “mutually helpful.” He announced that the American church will gladly continue to tender its services to all Americans “irrespective of race, color, or creed.”<sup>177</sup>

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Robins who persuaded with Lenin to exempt International Harvester, Singer, Westinghouse Brake Company, and the National City Bank from the provisions of the new Soviet decree nationalizing all industry. For more detailed story about the fate of those enterprises refer to David W. McFadden’s *Alternative Paths* and Katherine A.S. Siegel, “International Harvester and the Bolshevik Revolution,” unpublished paper, Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, June 1992.

<sup>175</sup> See Lowrie to Mutter, Riga, 12 June 1921. Donald A. Lowrie Papers, 1911, 1916 – 1929, 1946 – 1965, series no. 15/35/53, box. 1. University Archives, Liberal Arts and Sciences, Russian and East European Center, Correspondence, box. 1. The University of Illinois Archives, hereafter cited as (UIA), Champaign – Urbana. Even though Lowrie does not mention the name of that “last American” stranded in famine stricken Petrograd, we could assume that he meant Zenaida Ragozin, a Russian and a long-time American resident. After having lived in the United States for more than thirty years, she found herself back in Petrograd around 1900, where she became an active member of the American colony. She never left the city again, and was most likely referred to as “the last American” remaining there. Saul mentions that in the spring 1918 the last remnants of the American Petersburg colony met for a gala celebration of Ragozin 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

<sup>176</sup> Lowrie to Brackett, 15 May 1918, Donald A. Lowrie Papers, series no. 15/35/53, box. 1, UIA.

<sup>177</sup> Greetings to American Nationals in Petrograd by G. A. Simons., 22 March 1918. DRFP, Record Series # 02/P0274, Box 397, A-22a, MoHS.

The letter addressed to a group of the pastor's fellow countrymen reveals one more important feature of American colony -- its diversity, its interdenominational, multiracial, and multicultural aspect. The composition of the American community in St Petersburg was anything but homogeneous. Among those who toured Russia or became long-term residents in its capital, were quite a few Americans of African descent. Among early-nineteenth-century African American visitors to St Petersburg there many seamen, who usually made more than one journey there. Allison Blakely writes that it was not uncommon to see Blacks in the large port cities like St. Petersburg. One contemporary American observer in the mid-nineteenth century remarked that many Russians believed that the Negroes they saw were typical Americans; they thought that all the English-speaking white men were British.<sup>178</sup> A survey of United States customs bureau shipping records for the ports of Baltimore, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia shows that out of 132 ships bound for Russia between 1798 and 1880, nearly every ship had at least one Negro crewman. The records examined show Negro seamen sailing to Archangel in the north and Nikolaev in the south, in addition to Kronstadt and St. Petersburg. Many Blacks had to spend at least a winter in Russia because for ships that arrived later in the year it was too late to leave

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<sup>178</sup> John D. Maxwell, *The Tsar, His Court and People - Including a Tour to Norway and Sweden* (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1848), 207-208. Researchers Blakely and Curtiss refer to Maxwell's recollections of the misconceptions that the Minister's secretary experienced in St Petersburg in 1840s. See Blakely, *Russia and the Negro* and Mina Curtiss, "Some American Negroes in Russia in the Nineteenth Century," *The Massachusetts Review* ix, no. 2 (Spring 1968):268-296. Even as late as in the beginning of the twentieth century, some American observers were appalled of how little Russians know about the United States and how some stereotypes being formed. Thus, for example, an employer of the National City Bank branch in St. Petersburg Leighton W. Rogers writes that "it is often disconcerting to be among people who know so little about the United States. They are hospitable, generous, amiable, and most courteous – naturally so; but it is obvious that they regard us as curiosities. They seem to be surprised to find that we are white not red, and you can almost see them trying to discover where we have canceled our feathers and tomahawks." See Leighton W. Rogers, "Czar, Revolution, Bolsheviks," 11. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers, MD, LC.

before ports became frozen. One Black seaman who recounted such a layover was Matthew Henson, later famous as the first Negro to reach the North Pole in Robert Peary's expedition of 1909. He had made two trips to Russia as a cabin boy in the 1880s.<sup>179</sup>

Another seaman who settled in Russia for many years was a founder of the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge, Nero Prince. One of the leading Masons to settle in Russia and, according to Blakely, he was certainly a possible link between the Tsar's court and some Negro circles in America.<sup>180</sup> Nero's second wife's recollections of their sojourn in Russia are some of the most revealing accounts of the life of a Black family in Russia in the first half of the nineteenth century. Nancy Prince describes the nine years that she spent in St. Petersburg between 1824 and 1833.<sup>181</sup> According to the narrative, her husband remained in St. Petersburg working for a noble lady of the court, Princess Purtosoff, and finally for the tsar, after a 1812 voyage. When Prince returned to Russia in 1824 with his new bride, she was presented at court to Alexander I and the tsarina, and was given a gold watch as a wedding gift. Nancy Prince recalled:

The Emperor Alexander stood on his throne, in his royal apparel. The throne is circular, elevated two steps from the floor, and covered with scarlet velvet, tasseled with gold; as I entered, the Emperor stepped forward with great politeness and condescension, and welcomed me, and asked several questions; he then accompanied us to the Empress Elizabeth; she stood in her dignity, and received me in the same manner as the Emperor did. They presented me with a watch. It was customary in those days, when any married, belonging to the court, to present them with gifts, according to their standard; there was no prejudice against color; there were all casts

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<sup>179</sup>Henson, *Matthew A Negro Explorer at the North Pole* (New York: Arno Press, 1912), 3. Robinson, Bradley Dark Companion (New York: R. M. McBride & Co., 1947), 37-38.

<sup>180</sup> Blakely, *Russia and the Negro*, 16.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

and people of all nations each in their place.<sup>182</sup>

In St. Petersburg the Princes first lodged with an American, Mrs. Robinson (formerly Patience Mott of Providence, Rhode Island), who came to Russia in 1813 with the Gabriels. Like other Black people, the Princes lived outside of the palace and had house servants of their own. Nancy Prince established a sewing shop, employing a journeyman and apprentices,<sup>183</sup> and was active in the interdenominational Russian Bible Society, that was founded in 1813 with its members distributing thousands of Bibles in St. Petersburg. She also helped to establish an orphanage in the city. She expressed her satisfaction with life in Russia, where, as she recollected in her memoirs, the color of one's skin did not prohibit access to any place or station that a person may be capable of occupying. Within six month Nancy Prince had learned the "common language" and even took children to board. Prince's business of making baby linens and children's garments was so successful that the empress herself "inquired of me respecting my business, and gave me much encouragement by purchasing of me garments for herself children,

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<sup>182</sup> Nancy Prince, *A Black Woman's Odyssey through Russia and Jamaica: the Narrative of Nancy Prince*. Introduction by Ronald G. Walters (New York: M. Wiener Pub.: Distributed to the book trade by the Talman Co., 1990), 17. Nancy Prince left descriptions of a number of important events in Russian history which occurred during her years there, including the St. Petersburg flood of 1824, and the Decembrists uprising of 1825. Before she left Russia in late 1833, she had also witnessed and described the great cholera epidemic of 1831. See *Ibid.* Among all the varied descriptions of life in Saint Petersburg during the reigns of Alexander I and his brother Nicholas I, scholars consider Nancy Prince's account to be unique. As Mina Curtiss write in her article, Prince "came from a social level rarely literate, but she managed to express herself in a style that combines elements from the chromolithographs of the mid nineteenth century, when her book was published with the primitivism of the Grandma Moses depicting historical scenes." Curtiss, "Some American Negroes in Russia in the Nineteenth Century," 272.

<sup>183</sup>This tradition was continued by Olga Bourgogne, an African American actress, singer, and dancer who owned a lingerie shop in St. Petersburg and eventually employed twenty - seven workers in the early 1900s.

handsomely wrought in French and English styles, and many of the nobility followed her example.”<sup>184</sup>

African American sailors were among the crew members on liberty in the city when the *Miantonomoh* moored in Kronstadt pier during the visit of the Fox mission.<sup>185</sup> Alexander Murray, a servant of the commander of *Miantonomoh*, received special attention while accompanying the commander on numerous occasions and attending receptions to honor the American guests.<sup>186</sup> Many of the *Miantonomoh*'s African American sailors spoke French and German, as very few Russian visitors could speak English.<sup>187</sup>

Allison Blakely explains that even though “there was no significant practice of Negro slavery in Russia,” the royalty and many of the wealthy nobility acquired a number of Negro servants to embellish their court and households “in the manner that was fashionable in the rest of Europe” in the eighteenth century. Until the nineteenth century these servants were usually brought as slaves from Constantinople, Tripoli, or Amsterdam. Upon arrival in Russia though, they were granted personal freedom in exchange for a lifetime service obligation.<sup>188</sup> What is particularly relevant about the origins of those black people living in Russia, and especially in the capital in the nineteenth century, Blakely writes, was many came from the Americas. Some African Americans discovered new opportunities for themselves in Russia. Thus, Blakely names an African American Nelson who accompanied the John Quincy Adams family to St. Petersburg in 1809 and stayed in the Russian capital afterwards joining the tsar's service. About a year after

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<sup>184</sup> Prince, *A Black Woman's Odyssey*, 32.

<sup>185</sup> *Amerikantsy v Peterburge: Druzheskii soiuz Rossii i Ameriki*, 15.

<sup>186</sup> Saul, *Distant Friends*, 374.

<sup>187</sup> *Amerikantsy v Peterburge: Druzheskii soiuz Rossii i Ameriki*, 16.

<sup>188</sup> Blakely, *Russia and the Negro*, 14-15.

Adams had arrived in Petersburg he wrote to his mother Abigail Adams about Nelson's new engagement:

Nelson left us about four months ago to enter the service of His Imperial Majesty who had a dozen menial attendants of that color and who when vacancies happen in the number by death (there are as you will readily suppose none by resignation) finds it not altogether easy to supply the places. I had not been here very long before Nelson found out that it would be possible for him to obtain this situation, if he could have my consent.... As it was making him a fortune for his life, and as I had neither the inclination, nor in my own mind the right to keep him against his will, .... I gave him his discharge, and the recommendation to the Grand Marshall, who immediately engaged him as an attendant at the Imperial table. He comes now and then to see us in his splendid Moorish dress, and is highly satisfied with his new service, of which he finds nothing irksome but the various masters of genteel accomplishments which have been given him to complete his education.<sup>189</sup>

Curtiss writes that Nelson was consequently baptized into the Roman Catholic Church, which, according to the author, was a surprising example of "religious freedom for a servant in the employ of the Greek Orthodox Autocrat."<sup>190</sup>

In 1811, a year later after Nelson entered the service at the tsar's court, together with his former master John Quincy Adams, they appeared to be very helpful for their fellow country man<sup>191</sup> Claud Gabriel when the latter deserted an American vessel anchored in St Petersburg port

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<sup>189</sup> Quoted from *Letters of John Quincy Adams to His Son on the Bible and its Teaching* in Curtiss, "Some American Negroes in Russia in the Nineteenth Century," 270.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Claude was not a naturalized American citizen. In his letter to William Jones, Adams mentions that even though Claude was not an American citizen, he had lived in the United States for more than ten years and considers himself a free man. See reference in Curtiss' article. See Curtiss, "Some American Negroes in Russia in the Nineteenth Century," 270 and 271.

to join the tsar's staff.<sup>192</sup> Originally known as Claud Gabriel, he was a native of Martinique and had spent over ten years in the United States. Gabriel had worked for William Jones, speaker of the Rhode Island House of Representatives. When Gabriel escaped the ship to enter the Emperor's service, he was so welcome that the tsar himself offered both to indemnify the owners of the American vessel and to pay the expenses of transporting Claud's wife, Prudence and their children to St Petersburg. In a reply to a letter from Mr. Jones on this subject, Adams wrote in July, 1811:

From the tenor of your letter I'm led to believe that you consider the man as being detained against his will, which is far from being the case. He is perfectly well satisfied with his condition here, which is very advantageous one, and exceedingly disappointed at his wife's refusal to come with his children to join him here. He has obtained permission from His Majesty to go himself to the United States, with a view to return with them, which he hopes the health of his wife and the security which she and his family will derive from being with him will enable him to accomplish....<sup>193</sup>

On another occasion, the American minister to Russia in 1894, Andrew Dickson White, a distinguished historian, who later became the first president of Cornell University, "was surprised to discover that one of these Negroes, all of whom he was told were Nubians, was from Tennessee."<sup>194</sup> Curtiss identifies him as Jim Hercules, a personal servant to Alexander the III. The Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna recollected that Hercules had served her father, the tsar,

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<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 270-271. The incident is also described in *The Diary of John Quincy Adams*, ed. Allan Nevins, (New York: Scribner, 1929), 96, and in Blakely, *Russia and the Negro*, 16. Blakely though calls him Alexander Gabriel.

<sup>193</sup> Curtiss refers to Adams' letter written in 1812 and reports that Gabriel went to the United States and returned to the Tsar's court in St Petersburg with his wife and children. See Curtiss, "Some American Negroes in Russia in the Nineteenth Century," 270 -271.

<sup>194</sup> Blakely, *Russia and the Negro*, 16. Blakely and Curtiss, both refer to *Autobiography of Andrew Dickson White* (New York: Century Co., 1905), vol. 2, 113.

and that "... he was bound to the family only by loyalty.... He took his vacations in America, and brought back jars of guava jelly as presents for the children."<sup>195</sup>

It is noticeable that African Americans could be found at the tsar's service throughout the nineteenth century and even as late as 1916. Some of them, whose origins were unknown, were believed to be the children of the previous generation of the court servants.<sup>196</sup>

The stories of African American ship defectors, according to both scholars, illustrate how people of African descent were drawn to opportunities in Russia and reveal "the contrast between the treatment of a Negro in the so-called land of the free and in the autocracy of serfdom,"<sup>197</sup>

There is too little or sketchy information available on later African American immigrants or visitors in St. Petersburg<sup>198</sup> to offer a full accounts on African Americans who traveled to St Petersburg. Nonetheless there are still records of some athletes, fund raisers, musicians, actors and teachers who lived and worked there. Thus, a notable American, T. Morris Chester, as mentioned above, set out to visit the tsar in January, 1868 "to escape an unhappy experience in

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<sup>195</sup> Curtiss, "Some American Negroes in Russia in the Nineteenth Century," 278.

<sup>196</sup> Blakely, *Russia and the Negro*, 19.

<sup>197</sup> Curtiss, "Some American Negroes in Russia in the Nineteenth Century," 272 and Blakely, *Russia and the Negro*, 16. And yet, the discourse was much more complicated. Both, Russian nobility and WASP Americans would compare the treatment of people of African descents back in the United States and serfs in Russia. Thus, for example Curtiss refers to Maxwell's dialogue with one of the representatives of Russian nobility who inquires about African Americans talking to the Minister Colonel Todd's secretary. The latter used such a comparison in order to explain the history of African Americans in the U.S.: "the serfs in the United States were black." The prince's response was that it had been "a capital arrangement, and that Russia and America were, after all, the only two empires of any extent of consequence in the world." See the reference in Curtiss, "Some American Negroes in Russia in the Nineteenth Century," 280.

<sup>198</sup> As an example Blakely quotes an unclear and sporadic notice published in a black newspaper *Peoples Advocate*, 24 February 1877: "The Russian Fleet are shipping Negroes, applications for passports have been made for about twenty."

Liberia” and to raise funds for the Garnet league. He was received by Alexander the II, and the American minister to Russia, former abolitionist Cassius Clay, who expressed great pleasure, in his diplomatic correspondence, describing how Chester accompanied the tsar on horseback for a grand review of forty thousand troops. Chester spent the winter in Russia before traveling on.<sup>199</sup> He initially approached Russian society through a public lecture, which he delivered soon after his arrival in St. Petersburg. The lecture was announced in early December 1866. In February 1867, he published an appeal for donations in the liberal daily newspaper *Golos*.<sup>200</sup>

Another remarkable story was that of a famous African American jockey Jimmy Winkfield, who won the Kentucky Derby in 1901 and 1902 before moving to Russia in 1904 to ride for a wealthy nobleman. Back in the United States Winkfield had “witnessed lynching, felt the constraints of Jim Crow laws,”<sup>201</sup> but upon relocation to Russia he became enormously successful and a very wealthy man. He married a Russian noblewoman and they had a son. Unfortunately Winkfield had to leave his wealth behind upon fleeing from Russia in 1919 after the revolution. As the author of an epic story about the most famous Lexington, Kentuckian Joe Drape put in his interview to the *Kansas City Star*, “Jimmy Winkfield lived a life that transcended sports or horses.” Drape calls Russian press as well as social conditions “colorblind” and reported that Winkfield “married a white woman, waltzed with the dukes and duchesses, and really fell so in love with the empire that until the day he died, he considered it home.”<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Blakely, *Russia and the Negro*, 41 and Allison Blakely, "T Morris Chester," in *Dictionary of American Negro Biography*, ed. Rayford W. Logan and Michael R. Winston (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982), 107.

<sup>200</sup> See *Golos*, 4 February 1867.

<sup>201</sup> Tom Eblen, “Black Maestro Chronicles Jockey’s Epic Adventures. Interview with Joe Drape,” *The Kansas City Star*, 21 May 2006, H7.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.* Drape explains that the biggest challenge he faced while undertaking the research about Winkfield was to “accumulate firsthand accounts” of his life: “African-Americans were invisible in the United States” and it was not until the author “tapped into Russia” when he managed to get “a full sense of the man.” Drape writes that Winkfield

Another African-American who lived through both February and October revolutions, as mentioned above, was Philip Jordan. The editor of the published collection of Francis's correspondence, even though only its small portion, Jamie H. Cockfield, assumes that there were several African-Americans in St. Petersburg at the turn of the twentieth century, including Francis's cook from the Caribbean. However, it was only Philip Jordan, who "slipping in and out of crowds" would become an observer of "mood of the people" and the events, and who would keep the ambassador informed about the latest developments.<sup>203</sup> Moreover in his letters home Jordan expressed his deep appreciation for the opportunity to travel, to see foreign lands and to become intimately acquainted with Russia and its capital Petrograd. In one of his numerous letters to Jane Francis he notes: "I don't care how long he [the ambassador] remains over here because I like it very much. I have not had one lonesome day since we have been in Russia. So much to do and see that you do not have time to get lonesome...."<sup>204</sup>

It is noticeable that the typescript of David R. Francis book *Russia from American Embassy* includes a chapter based on the Jordan letters: "Diplomatic Life in Russia—A Valet's View Point."<sup>205</sup> However, that chapter was omitted from the published text. Several quotations from the Jordan manuscripts appear in the text of George F. Kennan's *American Soviet Relations. Russia Leaves the War*. As Clinton A. Bliss put it in her publication, "no books, or recollections, or treatises on the evolution or revolution can match for color or charm the

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became "Michael Jordan of the empire marveled at in the sports pages and chronicled in the gossip columns." See Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> See Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 271.

<sup>204</sup> Philip Jordan to Jane Francis, 19 March 1918. DRFP, Record Series # 02/P0274, Box 397, A-22a. MoHS.

<sup>205</sup> This fact proves David Francis' respect and trust that he always displayed regarding Jordan. As Barnes put it in his book, Francis and Jordan were true friends and the ambassador "trusted Jordan more than any other man in treacherous revolutionary Petrograd." Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, ix.

ingenuous, gregarious letters which Phil Jordan wrote to the folks at home.”<sup>206</sup> Philip Jordan’s correspondence, addressed mainly to the Francis family back in St. Louis, Missouri, is considered to be “the only record of events written by a westerner of a working-class origin.”<sup>207</sup>

The revolutionary events and the aftermath would attract to the land of commissars yet another group of African Americans, with the most renowned black intellectuals of the early twentieth century - Claude McKay, Harry Haywood, and later W.E.B. Du Bois and Langston Hughes - among them.<sup>208</sup>

The trans-Atlantic odyssey of Claude McKay (1889 - 1948), a West-Indian-born poet, novelist, and publicists, a leading force in the New Negro Renaissance and Black liberation movement, and a fighter for social justice and human rights is worth mentioning in regards to his sojourn in Russia. Claude McKay has been known as one of those cultural and social ambassadors, who managed to interlace his cosmopolitan identity into the complex motley of the European nation states. In the fall 1919, after spending seven years in the United States McKay went to England where he came in contact with a club for “colored soldiers” and got acquainted

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<sup>206</sup> Mrs. Clinton A. Bliss, Ed., “Philip Jordan’s Letters from Russia, 1917 –1919,” *Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society* 14 (January 1958), 140.

<sup>207</sup> Cockfield, “Philip Jordan and the October Revolution,” 228. Prior to working for David Francis, Jordan had worked as a Pullman attendant.

<sup>208</sup> Among other recent publications in this regard, it is worth mentioning Joy Gleason Carew’s *Blacks, Reds, and Russians: Sojourners in Search of the Soviet Promise* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2008) and Kate Baldwin’s *Beyond the Color Line and the Iron Curtain: Reading Encounters between Black and Red, 1922-1963* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), in which she masterly analyzes mutually beneficial relationships between the Soviet Union and the makers of the Black history in the United States. But even that detailed account is not flawless. Although Baldwin wrote a very comprehensive history of the development of African American intellectual history and its Russian influences, she failed to acknowledge such important factors as, for example, McKay’s Caribbean background and the importance of his Soviet experience in the development of the author’s West Indian consciousness.” See the analysis of the book in Tatiana Tagirova-Vinogradova, “Claude McKay’s Liberating Narrative: Russian and Anglophone Caribbean Literary Connections,” (PhD diss., University of Puerto Rico, 2006), 4.

with soldiers from the West Indies. Attending the International club McKay got to know Polish, Russian, and German Jews, Czechs, Italians and Irish nationalists.

It was during his stay in England in 1919 – 1921 when McKay expressed a conviction that socialism could bridge the gap between black and white workers.<sup>209</sup> In “Socialism and the Negro,” 13 January 1920 article first published in *Worker’s Dreadnought* McKay reveals his inclinations as both an international socialist and a supporter of Garvey’s Black Nationalism, thus becoming one of the first Black radicals to argue for the interdependence of socialism and Black Nationalism.<sup>210</sup> Upon returning to the United States in 1921 McKay resumed his association with *The Liberator*, one of the most radical magazines in the United States, and continued to contribute to the publication that was “far ahead of most white magazines in recognizing the importance of the challenge African American history posed to the myths of white America.”<sup>211</sup> After the publication of *Harlem Shadows*, a book in which McKay expressed his anger and alienation experienced in an “unfair world,” he decided to visit the Soviet Union and to see the results of the 1917 uprising. Russia “signaled” and he responded with the search for new understanding and knowledge. In *A Long Way from Home*, McKay explained his decision as the desire to

Go and see.... Escape from the pit of sex and poverty, from domestic death, from the cul-de-sac of self-pity, from the hot syncopated fascination of Harlem, from the suffocating ghetto of color consciousness. Go, better than stand still, keep going.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>210</sup> Wayne Cooper and Robert C. Reiders, “A Black Home,” *Race* 9 (1967):80.

<sup>211</sup> George Hutchinson, *The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White* (Cambridge: Belknap press of Harvard UP, 1995), 250.

<sup>212</sup> McKay, *A Long Way from Home*, New Brunswick (N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 150.

Originally McKay was invited to visit Russia in 1920 when John Reed wanted the poet to testify at the second Comintern congress about “the Negro question.” But McKay felt still “unqualified for the mission.” In 1922, the poet “raised the fare” by “selling copies of his works with autographed photos.”<sup>213</sup> According to Cooper, in 1922 McKay left for Russia in the hope that he would find evidence that “the equality, justice, freedom, and humane treatment of his fellow men he had envisioned under socialism was actually taking place.”<sup>214</sup> McKay’s sojourn in Russia has been so far the most documented visit of its kind.<sup>215</sup> By the time he found himself in Russia in 1922 he was not a member of any official Communist Party delegation that traveled to Moscow invited by the Soviet authorities to participate in the Third International. Though he traveled to Russia on his own, the writer “shared a belief in international communism and an enthusiasm for the accomplishments of the Russian Revolution.”<sup>216</sup> His right to attend the Comintern congress was challenged by the American communists who tried to prevent him from participating in the conference. Despite their efforts to block the poet from representing people of color at the congress, McKay became “a special delegate” with the help of Sen Katayama, the leading Japanese communist, and delivered his speech “about the potential role of blacks in the international communist movement.”<sup>217</sup>

In his article “Soviet Russia and the Negro” McKay describes his triumphant 1922 – 1923 experience in the Soviet Union, where he found the acceptance and appreciation that he

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<sup>213</sup> Blakely, *Russia and the Negro*, 82-83.

<sup>214</sup> Wayne F. Cooper, *Claude McKay: Rebel Sojourner in the Harlem Renaissance* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1987), 170.

<sup>215</sup> Blakely, *Russia and the Negro*, 82.

<sup>216</sup> Cooper, *Claude McKay*, 170

<sup>217</sup> Tagirova, “Claude McKay’s Liberating Narrative,” 42.

could not find elsewhere.<sup>218</sup> He also recollects the friendly attitudes of Soviet people to him writing that never before had he experienced such an instinctive sentiment of affectionate feeling compelling him to the bosom of any people, white, or colored. McKay added that his response was so sincere as the mass feeling was spontaneous.<sup>219</sup>

The cradle of the Revolution, Petrograd, especially captured the poet's heart:

Petrograd was magnificent in red flags and streamers. Red flags flattered against the snow from all the great granite buildings. Railroad trains, street cars, factories, stores, hotels, schools – all wore decorations. It was a festive month of celebration in which I, as a member of the Negro race, was a very active participant. I was received as though the people had been appraised of, and were prepared for, my coming.<sup>220</sup>

The poet's itinerary included a series of inspection tours of units of the Red Army.

Blakely writes that the military equipment that McKay saw in Russia ranged from submarines to airplanes. He even took a brief flight from Petrograd to Kronshtadt.

It is also worth mentioning McKay's infatuation with Russian culture. Analyzing the writer's Russian sojourn, it is important to take into account both the influence of the enriched Russian literary tradition on McKay's work and on his life, as well as "his contribution to Soviet understanding of the black race."<sup>221</sup> Tagirova points out "cross-racial, cross-national, and cross-cultural alliance"<sup>222</sup> between Russian and Anglophone Caribbean literary types and suggests that McKay influenced some of the twentieth-century Russian writers that he met during his trip to

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<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>219</sup> McKay, *A Long Way From Home*, 167.

<sup>220</sup> McKay, Claude, "Soviet Russia and the Negro," pt. 1, *The Crisis*, December 1923, 65.

<sup>221</sup> Tagirova, "Claude McKay's Liberating Narrative," vi. The dissertation is devoted to the analysis of Russian and Caribbean connections in McKay literary heritage.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, vii.

the Soviet Union. The poet was introduced to the leading Soviet artists and writers, including Vladimir Mayakovsky and Yevgeny Zamyatin. The meeting with the latter is well documented by most of the scholars of McKay. According to Tagirova, while in Russia, McKay established “affirmative interaction with Russian people, politics and culture.”<sup>223</sup> Contributing to their awareness about the situation with ethnic minorities in the United States, McKay authored two important publications in Russia, *The Negroes in America* (1923) and *Trials by Lynching: Stories about Negro Life in North America* (1925). The books were originally published only in Russian language and were not released in English for more than fifty years.<sup>224</sup> When they were finally printed in English, the publishers did not use McKay’s original text, but a new translation from the Russian language. The publication of these books was commissioned by the State Publishing House which expected McKay to elucidate for the Soviet Readers the Negro question as “one of the chief problems of the class struggle in America,” with the emphasis on “the affinity between black and white workers internationally and characterized women’s liberation as inseparable from Negro liberation.”<sup>225</sup>

Later in the 1930s, in search of the land, where, in the words of Langston Hughes, “there was no Jim Crow,” African Americans came mostly to Moscow, which was the capital of the Soviet State since 1918. When Hughes reached the Soviet Union he experienced such an excitement that it surpassed even the one that he felt at the moment of his first visit to Manhattan

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<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>224</sup> McKay’s book *The Negroes in America* was reprinted in Port Washington, NY by Kennikat Press only in 1979! See McKay, Claude, *The Negroes in America*, trans. Robert J. Winter, ed. Alan L McCleod (1923; reprint, Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1979).

<sup>225</sup> Blakely, *Russia and the Negro*, 84. Other materials that comprise the Soviet archive of black America include many texts written in Russian. For example there are Russian translations of speeches and articles written by McKay while in the Soviet Union for which the original English version has been lost; media coverage of Du Bois in such periodicals as *Pravda and Ogonyok*, etc. See Baldwin, *Beyond the Color Line and the Iron Curtain*, 5.

in 1921.<sup>226</sup> There, as Hughes recollects, they were among “the permanent foreign working residents.” And even though Hughes estimated that there were “two dozens Negroes” around the city, there was no “Negro colony.” Hughes explained that colored people mixed so thoroughly in the life of the big capital, that

you can not find them merely by seeking out their color. Like the Indians, and Uzbeks, and Chinese, the Negro workers are so well absorbed by Soviet life that most of them seldom remember that they are Negroes in the old oppressive sense that Black people are always forced to be conscious of in America or the British colonies. In Moscow there are no color bars, and the very nature of the Soviet system can never admit any sort of discriminatory racial separation....<sup>227</sup>

Hughes left an impressive account of those African Americans whom he met in Moscow and Central Asia during his tour around the country in the 1930s, when he came as a consultant for the ill-fated film *Black and White*. The project was arranged under the auspices of the Meshrabpom Film Company and organized by the politically active Otto Huiswood, who was a communist party (CPUSA) delegate and participant in shaping Comintern policy on the “Negro question.” Hughes and a group of twenty-two enterprising young students, journalists, social

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<sup>226</sup> Arnold Rampersad, *The Life of Langston Hughes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 244. The group that came to Russia to work on the film *Black and White*, based on the poem by Mayakovsky and later translated into English by Hughes, had just enough time for a tour of Leningrad, “the storied St. Petersburg of Pushkin and Turgenev, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy.” They visited “the censorious Museum of Religion and Atheism,” passed by Montferrand’s mighty St. Isaac’s Cathedral (celebrated subversively by Claude McKay in a stirring sonnet: “Bow down my soul in worship very low/ And in the holy silences be lost”), crossed the many bridges and canals that gave the city its expansive Venetian air, admired the grey and pink granite embankments of the Neva River, and walked reverentially in the square fronting the Winter Palace, on which the cruiser *Aurora* had fired to begin the October revolution.” See Rampersad, *The Life of Langston Hughes*, 244-245.

<sup>227</sup> Hughes, Langston “Negroes in MOSCOW: In a Land Where there is no Jim Crow,” in *International Literature, Organ of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers*, n 4, 1933, 78.

workers, writers and actors encountered the family of Oliver John Golden, an African-American agronomist from Mississippi who resettled in the Soviet Union with his wife Bertha Bialek, a Polish Jew who originally hailed from Brooklyn, and worked in Central Asia, in the Uzbek town of Yangiyul....”<sup>228</sup>

Other stories, even though shifting beyond the research space of Petrograd/ Leningrad also reveal a significant presence and influence of African American expatriates who continued Russian-American ties even when there was no official diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Thus among others, Hughes mentioned Lovett Forte Whiteman of Chicago, who came to Russia with Haywood as a scholarship student at the Comintern’s Communist University of the Toilers of the East and worked as a teacher at a school for children of English-speaking parents there. His field was chemistry, physics, and biology. He had lived in Moscow for more than five years, was married and intended to become a permanent resident.<sup>229</sup>

Of those African-Americans who came with the Meschrabpom Film group in 1932, some, like Wayland Rudd, Homer Smith, and Lloyd Patterson, remained in Russia. Hughes writes about Rudd, and notes that the actor became a member of the famous Meyerhold Theatre. He acted in a small role in Russian in one of the new productions, and at the same time took full

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<sup>228</sup>Their granddaughter Yelena Hanga published the story of her family, revealing that her father was Abdullah Kassim Hanga, a Zanzibari who became vice-president of the Zanzibar Revolutionary Government in January, 1964, and describes how after Oliver Golden’s death in the Uzbek capital of Tashkent, the Goldenes were left to reflect on the “intergenerational and diasporic questions of race, authenticity, self-definition, family and negotiations on tradition, modernity and creolization. See Ali Nassor, “Black Russians Historical Links between Africa, America and Russia Were Unraveled at an Academic Conference Last Month in St. Petersburg,” *St. Petersburg Times* (October 12 2007). Hanga herself became a very well known journalist in the Soviet Union.

<sup>229</sup> See Hughes, “Negroes in Moscow,” 78.

advantage of the opportunities which the theater offered for the study of singing, dancing, fencing, and allied theatrical arts.

Hughes recollects meeting Roland Hayes, the singer, who was invited to perform in the largest Soviet cities. Russian audience greeted him in the Big Hall of the Conservatory in Moscow, where he left a most favorable impression on the crowds of music-lovers.<sup>230</sup>

Another African-American whom Hughes mentioned in his memoirs was Homer Smith. A former postal employee from Minneapolis, he worked in Moscow as a special consultant in the rationalization of the Soviet postal system. He was credited with the planning and supervision of Moscow's first special delivery service, which had been recently introduced. In 1964 Smith published his memoirs, *Black Man in Red Russia*.

The youngest member of the film group, Lloyd Patterson, came to the Soviet Union directly after graduation from Hampton Institute in Virginia. He was an accomplished painter employed in Moscow to work on the interior at the deluxe tourist hotel Metropol.<sup>231</sup> He married a well-known Russian artist and they bore a son, Jim Patterson, who became a favorite of the Russian public when he starred in the famous film "Tsirk" (Circus) by director Grigori Alexandrov. Jim Patterson played the role of the Negro son of white American actress Marion Dixon (played by Lyubov Orlova), who fled prosecution in the United States for a "racial crime." The child grew up in the Soviet Union, became a poet and published several collections of his works. As Hughes' biographer Arnold Rampersad put it, when the poet visited the

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<sup>230</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>231</sup> See *ibid.*

fledging Soviet Union there was no place for political indecisiveness, he endorsed it as “the greatest antagonist of capitalism and racism.”<sup>232</sup>

With this relatively brief reference to the names and achievements of distinguished African Americans who traveled, lived, and worked in St Petersburg/ Petrograd/ Leningrad, and later in Moscow and other parts of Russia, I intend to continue that important trend in American studies scholarship as well as in the history of Russian-American relations that was initiated by such scholars as Alison Blakely, Clarence L Holte, Rainer Lotz, and, more recently, by Kate Baldwin and Tatiana A. Tagirova Vinogradova. Revealing the significance of the African American component of the American community in St. Petersburg, and emphasizing their presence in all spheres of the life of the city with “a rich mixture of races and nationalities,” I stress that the colony was more integrated than any such community of ethnic and social groups and individuals would have been on the American continent. Was it the status, success, or intentions of African Americans to exhaust their full potential in engaging city, that their compatriots respected and acknowledged? Or was it the common national background that, when taken beyond the national borders gained immunity from the social forces of racial segregation? An additional unifying factor was very likely the city itself, with its unique social milieu and mentality of its population, which has always been indifferent to ethnicity or nationality, and openly benevolent to strangers. Moreover, the cultural and ethnic diversity of the American colony in St. Petersburg was mutually beneficial for both parties. The interaction raised the

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<sup>232</sup> Rampersad, *The Life of Langston Hughes*, 244. Hughes was fascinated with Moscow where even though certain foods were expensive and in short supply, there was no sign of malnutrition and hunger; where dress was often shabby, but nobody seemed to envy the Americans their New York finery. Hughes recalls how he was thrilled when he saw “workers thronged the concert halls, theatres, and museums,” and how, “unlike their sisters in the United States, Soviet women worked alongside men in transportation, construction, and medicine. Everything in Moscow seemed to contrast with the disastrous Depression at home.” *Ibid.*, 246.

natives' awareness of the United States, while aiding the members of American colony in isolating and examining the wide range of questions which had long eluded them back home.

Paying tribute to African Americans who formed a portion of the American colony in the city of St. Petersburg in the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, I adhere to the initiative undertaken by the Russian Academy of Science that has finally acknowledged the urgent need to properly historicize the existing accounts revealing African Americans' presence in Russia, their lives and work there, and their profound influence on the development of Russian-American relations.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> St. Petersburg was chosen to host scholars from the U.S., Russia, Africa, and Europe in October 2007 to reevaluate the legacy of African-Americans in pre-Revolutionary, Soviet and post-communist Russia See the report by Nassor Ali in his article "Black Russians: Historical Links between Africa, America and Russia Unraveled at an Academic Conference Last Month in St Petersburg" in *St Petersburg Times*, 12 October 2007.

### Chapter III

#### American Business Interests and Investments in Russia (1890s – 1930s)

##### *American Capital in Russian Capital: American banks, insurance companies, and enterprise in St Petersburg*

From its founding St. Petersburg was destined to become a center of finance and commerce. At the same time, the West, in Cross' words, "was cynically prepared to exploit" Russia to its advantage, viewing it "as a vast and highly desirable export/import market."<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, in the foreign communities in Russia in general and in St. Petersburg in particular, the key figures were merchants.<sup>2</sup> In his study of the British colony in St. Petersburg, Cross concluded that many foreign nationals came to Russia "to find employment, to make their fortunes, and to practice and /or teach a whole range of skills."<sup>3</sup> They were attracted by entrepreneurial opportunities unfolding in the city with its confluence of " ideas, technological know-how and information, and the interflow of people embodying those ideas, teaching or acquiring skills, working, learning and observing."<sup>4</sup>

Americans were not an exception. By the late nineteenth century when "the ease and economy of trans-Atlantic travel, as well as general prosperity, brought more of them to

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<sup>1</sup>Anthony Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva: Chapters from the Lives and Careers of the British in Eighteenth – Century Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 2.

<sup>2</sup> According to Cross, a British merchant "with his often large family and conspicuous lifestyles was a dominant figure in the St. Petersburg community." Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva*, 2-3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3. Cross expounds on the experience of British merchants and includes in his narrative "a detailed study of the composition and increasingly rich and varied life of the British community, its clubs, institutions, and entertainments."

Europe,”<sup>5</sup> Russia was no longer so distant. By 1914 its trade began to flourish, especially with Great Britain, France, Germany, and the United States.<sup>6</sup> Two major obstacles that could slow down prolific trade and further American business operations in Russia seemed to have lesser effect. One was the cancellation of the commercial treaty of 1832<sup>7</sup> in 1911. Although companies “were pressuring the federal government for a new trade treaty that would make it easier and more profitable for them distribute their products to the Russian Market,”<sup>8</sup> it was not signed because of unprecedented pressure from the Jewish American leaders who were “outraged at any

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<sup>5</sup> For example Fred Carstensen, who focuses his research on the fate of American enterprises in foreign markets, writes that among others, sewing machine companies considered foreign markets as early as in the 1850-s. Similar to International Harvester, they were “expected to create unprecedented opportunities to develop foreign markets.” See Fred V. Carstensen, *American Enterprise in Foreign Markets: Studies of Singer and International Harvester in Imperial Russia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 132.

<sup>6</sup> Yet, Saul defines the 1890s and the first decade of the twentieth century as the period of transition in American-Russian business relations. He refers to George S. Queen’s PhD research *The United States and the Material Advance in Russia, 1881 – 1905*, and concludes that “direct trade continued to decline in proportion to the totals of each country, both in imports and exports... only cotton remained significant among the featured items of Russian imports from the United States for most of the century.” See Norman E. Saul, *Concord and Conflict: The United States and Russia, 1867 – 1914* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1996), 409.

<sup>7</sup> Under the treaty, the United States citizens in the Russian empire would “... enjoy the same security and protection as natives of the country wherein they reside, on conditions of their submitting to the laws and ordinance there prevailing.” William M. Malloy, *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols and Agreements between the United States and Other Powers: 1776-1909* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. print off., 1910), 2:1514, 1519. As Ann E. Healy explains in her article “Tsarist Anti-Semitism and Russian American Relations,” American Jews were thus under the same legal restrictions as local Jews – unless, “as with its own Jewish subjects, the government chose to make exceptions.” See Ann E. Healy’s article in *Slavic Review* 42, 3 (Fall 1983): 413. Exceptions were made, as Healy points out, for certain privileged categories of foreign Jews – “bankers, chiefs of important commercial houses and their employees.” *Ibid.*, 415.

<sup>8</sup> Harper Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano The Life and Times of David Rowland Francis* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, The Francis Press, 2001), 183.

suggestion of a new treaty that would permit the continuing discrimination against Jews travelling [to Russia] on American passports.”<sup>9</sup>

The so - called Jewish controversy constituted the other difficulty. Russia’s openly anti-Semitic policy provoked Jewish leaders in the United States to seek economic sanctions to end the mistreatment of Jews in Russia.<sup>10</sup>

Neither of these two factors, however, according to George F. Kennan, had “appreciable effect” on trade between the two countries at the time. Once armed conflict descended upon

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid. Ann Healy, in her turn, considers the formation of the American Jewish Committee in 1906, even of more lasting significance than Congressional resolutions or open meetings. Its founders were mainly wealthy descendants of mid-nineteenth-century German-Jewish immigrants, “public-minded men of stature who rightly anticipated that attention would be paid to their counsels in the White House.” Their ranks, according to Healy, included financier Jacob Schiff, dominant partner of Kuhn, Loeb and Co., and Oscar Straus, sometime diplomat, presidential cabinet member, and businessman. Healy refers to Adolf S. Oschs, who had purchased the *New York Times* in 1896, and Cyrus L. Sulzberger, a publisher and a member of the first executive committee of the American Jewish Committee, as to “influential in enlisting public support.” With the respected lawyer Louis Marshall, as a main force in “shaping the group,” and some fifty lay and rabbinical leaders from throughout the nation, the Committee became a “small, elite pressure group” that was outreaching out to other larger Jewish organizations. Their goals, as Healy concludes, were not modest: to prevent “infraction of the civil and religious rights” of world Jewry and to “take appropriate remedial action” when those rights were restricted; Healy, “Anti-Semitism and Russian-American Relations,” 417. Healy quotes from *Proceedings of the Fifth Anniversary Observance of the American Jewish Committee* (New York: 1958), xi. Among other “remedial actions” the committee considered the drive to abrogate the 1832 treaty unless the tsarist government “ceases stomping on the American passport.” American Jewish Committee, *First Annual Report*, 1911, 20-21. Quoted in Healy, “Tsarist Anti-Semitism and Russian-American Relations,” 417. In January 1911 Marshall delivered his famous speech “Russia and the American Passport” at a meeting of the Council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. As Healy reports, “in emotional tones he urged the nation not to rate trade volume over dignity, the dollar over man.” Ibid., 419. In addition, the Central Conference of American Rabbis sent a wire to the State Department urging immediate abrogation unless Russia granted all Americans equal rights. When the House unanimously adopted the proposal to abrogate the Treaty in December 1911, Russians found it “incomprehensible” that the United States would “deliberately consider the sacrifice of a present and prospective market of millions of dollars.” Quoted in Healy, “Tsarist Anti-Semitism and Russian-American Relations,” 422.

<sup>10</sup> It should be noticed that after the “amazingly successful abrogation drive,” and cancellation of the 1832 Treaty, “the two countries never reached agreement on a replacement treaty despite regular discussions.” Healy, “Tsarist Anti-Semitism and Russian-American Relations,” 424.

Europe, the United States found itself, although lacking any formal commercial treaty arrangements with Russia, more deeply engaged than ever, economically and financially, in the Russian scene.”<sup>11</sup>

Operating businesses in Russia and facing Russian legal, political, and economic environments, that were far from stable, many prominent and influential American politicians and businessmen remained unresponsive to the plea of the American Jewish community.<sup>12</sup> Seeking to advocate further cooperation with Russia, Ambassador David Francis, who expressed increasing interest in the country’s economic potential as an American partner, shortly after accepting the post, blamed American Jews for complicating his own mission to negotiate the treaty and suggested that in the United States “anti-Semitism was casually accepted in the

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<sup>11</sup> George F. Kennan, *Soviet – American Relations. Russia Leaves the War. The Americans in Petrograd and the Bolshevik Revolution* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), 32. Healy expresses a very similar point of view writing that “the lack of a new treaty notwithstanding, the exigencies of WWI resulted in widespread expansion of American trade with Russia. The total rose from a prewar maximum of about \$40,000,000 of direct exports to almost \$ 500,000,000 in 1916. As for the even larger postwar markets envisioned by Wilson’s wartime ambassador in Petrograd, that dream vanished with the Bolshevik Revolution. So did the passport question, along with all hope for a renewed Russian-American commercial agreement.” Healy, “Tsarist Anti-Semitism and Russian-American Relations,” 424-425.

<sup>12</sup> The major force behind it was the American Jewish Committee. Two American Jewish Committee ‘watchdogs’ Jacob Schiff and Louis Marshall remained determined to ensure that their victory “would not be lost through quiet diplomacy.” Neither of President Wilson’s two envoys to the Russian empire, California banker-lawyer George T. Marye, or his successor in the spring 1916, former governor of Missouri David R. Francis, who sought a new treaty, succeeded. Among other politicians who tried to avoid abrogation of the Treaty of 1832 was Elihu Root, Roosevelt’s second Secretary of State. He believed that the pressure on Russia would antagonize the tsar’s government, thus “aggravating the dangers of the unfortunate people.” Pressured by the American Jewish Committee, Root considered “complete revision and amendment” of the 1832 Treaty, and thought that the revised version would be preferable to outright termination. Healy, “Tsarist Anti-Semitism and Russian-American Relations,” 417 - 418. Another politician who “bluntly denied that the treaty abrogation was the logical means of securing equal treatment for American citizens” was President Taft. Moreover, he warned Jewish leaders, that “it would be harmful to the United States interests, especially to the growing trade between the two nations.” *Ibid.*, 419.

Protestant-dominated upper levels” even under “a liberal Democratic president elected with considerable Jewish support.”<sup>13</sup>

Francis did not consider the conditions pronounced by American Jews as sound enough to sacrifice the commercial treaty with a country that “has been liberalized very materially during the past five years” and where “the process is still going on at a rapid rate.”<sup>14</sup> In a letter to an old time friend, the businessman and diplomat Oscar Straus, who thought that the United States should not have a treaty with a country that discriminated against Jews, including those who travel to Russia as American citizens, Francis noted that even

if Russia... should enact laws permitting the Jews to live beyond what is known as the pale to which they are presently confined, and granting them greater privileges in the professions and in the high schools... that would not satisfy the radical Jews whose hatred of Russia is deep-rooted, nor would it be acceptable to the Republicans.<sup>15</sup>

Many other Americans, who had been engaged with Russia for a prolonged period, both in business operations and other spheres, also remained skeptical about the issue. Among others, who either doubted or tried to diminish the scale of the prosecution of Jews in Russia were Kennan, Charles Crane, and Samuel Harper. The latter, for example, decided that the stories of pogroms in Russia were invented by German propagandists.<sup>16</sup> In “The Ritual Murder Myth in

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<sup>13</sup> Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 202.

<sup>14</sup> Francis to Paul Broun, 16 April 1916, David Rowland Francis Papers, 1868-1919. David R. Francis Papers, hereafter cited as (DRFP) Record Series # 02/P0274, Box 397, A-22a. Missouri Historical Society, hereafter cited as (MoHS), St. Louis, Missouri.

<sup>15</sup> Cited in Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 188.

<sup>16</sup> See Christopher Lasch, *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 5. The author refers to the excerpts from Harper-Crane correspondence and quotes Harpers letter to Crane from June, 21, 1916.

Russia,” Kennan described the efforts of several Russian rulers<sup>17</sup> to put an end to any precedents of false accusations based on prejudices against Jews in the course of the four-hundred-year history of the ritual murder myth. Although confirming Nicholas II’s alliance with pogrom-rioters, Kennan reminded readers of the *Independent* that the notorious 1913 case known as “Beilis affair,” caused vigorous protests and emotional pleas “from the best men of his empire and even from dignitaries of his own church.”<sup>18</sup> Beilis was acquitted, thus bringing to naught the number of legal convictions of Jews in Russia on the charge of ritual murder, since the Romanovs came to the throne.<sup>19</sup> Crane, in his turn expressed his anti-Semitic sentiments that, according to Lasch, “rested on Midwestern progressive’s distrust of the Jewish banker.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Kennan refers to the order of the Grand Duke of Lithuania that put an end to ritual murder accusations in Lithuania in the XVII century and to the decree of Alexander I, 6 March 1817, that was ratified in “order to put an end to the superstition.” George Kennan, “The Ritual Murder Myth in Russia,” *Independent* LXXVI, 13 November 1913, 300-301.

<sup>18</sup> In “The Ritual Murder Myth in Russia” Kennan cites his good friend Vladimir Korolenko, who was one of “the best men,” a group of such writers, scholars, statesmen, and clergy as Maxim Gorky, Aleksandr Blok, Aleksandr Kuprin, Vladimir Vernadsky, Paul Miliukov, professor Vladimir Bekhterev, seminary professor Aleksandr A. Glagolev, Rabbi Mazeh of Moscow, as well as the most renowned lawyers from Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Kiev, including a prominent defense attorney Oskar Osipovitch Grusenbergh, and Aleksandr Zarudnii, who would become a Minister of Justice in Kerensky’s Provisional Government. Korolenko authored an address “To the Russian Public” endorsed by two hundred representatives of the Russian intelligentsia and leading cultural figures, who expressed their disgust for the unfolding anti-Semitic trial and offered their support to the victim of defamation, arrogance, and hatred. The address was published and received responses and letters of support from thousands of people all over the empire with requests to attach to it their signatures. For more information about the “Beilis affair” see *The Beilis Transcripts: the anti-Semitic trial that shook the world*, trans. and ed. Ezekiel Leikin (Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 1993), Mendel Beilis, *The Story of my Sufferings*, trans. Harrison Goldberg, with introduction by Herman Bernstein and Arnold D. Margolin (New York: Mendel Beilis Publishing Co., Inc., 1926).

<sup>19</sup> George Kennan, “The Ritual Murder Myth in Russia,” 301.

<sup>20</sup> Lasch would mention Jacob Schiff as the most frequent object of Crane’s suspicion. On the other hand, the historian acknowledges that Crane was a firm supporter of the Zionist movement and “was on the closest terms with Jews untainted by association with Wall Street, with Brandeis, whose appointment to the Supreme Court Crane strongly commended, and with Lillian D. Wald, whom he once referred to as “the finest flower of the Jewish race.”

Even though very few American companies received substantial governmental favors or inducements to develop their Russian subsidiaries, “an indifference or insensitivity of Russian officialdom to generate economic development”<sup>21</sup> became almost irrelevant with fewer American entrepreneurs inclining to attach to the commercial treaty instrument as an incentive to trade and cooperation. What was really reassuring for American enterprises, as Carstensen noted, was that almost none of them experienced either “official venality or private dishonesty.”<sup>22</sup>

Thus, as David Fogleson concluded in his recent book, in the second half of the nineteenth century, “the stream of American goods and ideas flowing into Russia has risen to become a flood.”<sup>23</sup>

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Crane supported Norman Hapgood, who helped to expose Henry Ford’s anti-Semitism, and took over *Harper’s Weekly* after Crane had relinquished control of it in 1913.” Lasch, *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution*, 5. And yet, there were those prominent Americans who reacted “with special sensitivity” to the Jewish problem, especially when in 1892 Tsarist consuls in the United States refused to issue visas to American Jews who wanted to travel in Russia. Most notably there were Andrew Dickson White and Rodes Breckinridge. See James F. Willis, “An Arkansan in St. Petersburg,” *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 38, 1(Spring 1979): 3.

<sup>21</sup> Carstensen, *American Enterprise in Foreign Markets*, 7.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* Moreover, some observers point out that it was profitable to undertake commercial operations in Russia, because Russian collectors and taxation officers are not quite prompt in imposing proper taxes on foreign business. Thus “Americans and Englishmen engage in nothing unless there are enormous profits in it. The unprofitable business is left for natives, who do not understand our trade. I know a large manufacturer here who came from Massachusetts, whose works have been burned out almost annually, and who makes loads of money; but the tax collectors don’t know it, because they are ignorant of his affairs. They cannot comprehend a large business.” See Perry S. Heath, *A Hoosier in Russia: The Only White Tsar – His Imperialism, Country, and People* (New York: The Lorbom publishing company, 1888), 55. The National City Bank report also states that the progressive income tax became operative only in 1917. Before that the direct taxes were derived primarily from industries and land. See National City Bank of New York, *Russia and the Imperial Russian Government* (New York: The National City Bank of New York, 1916), 15.

<sup>23</sup> David S. Foglesong, *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire”: The Crusade for a “Free Russia” since 1881* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 5.

Recognizing Russia's "almost unlimited opportunities for industrial development,"<sup>24</sup> especially in the nine years which intervened between the Treaty of Portsmouth and the outbreak of the Great War, the American ambassador acknowledged that "the interest of the people of the United States in Russia, in her people and in the immense resources of that country is increasing from day to day...."<sup>25</sup> After serving in Russia for at least four months, Francis decided that he would like to "to remain in this country for a few years, as it is an unequalled field for great enterprises such as the building of railroads, construction of canals, and the development of ore deposits, base and precious."<sup>26</sup> He repeated his intentions in a letter to his son Perry, sharing with him some reflections on Russian economic potential and admitting that they

may be affected by the convictions I'm acquiring concerning the possibilities of this country. The resources of Russia are so enormous and the opportunities for development so numerous and apparent that I now feel inclined to remain here after my official duties are completed for a few years anyway....<sup>27</sup>

Francis introduced his views and perspectives of Russia to business and financial circles in the United States, where he once was a mayor of Saint Louis and the Governor of Missouri. As a past president of the St. Louis Merchant's Exchange and being well connected with Wall

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<sup>24</sup> John Spargo, *Russia as an American Problem* (York: Harper, 1920), 114.

<sup>25</sup> Francis to Charles A. Selden, 25 April 1916. DRFP, Record Series # 02/P0274, Box 397, A-22a. MoHS. His views were echoed by an American industrial magnate William Boyce Thompson, who declared in a *Wall Street Journal* interview in January 1918 that "the possibilities of Russia's industrial future would probably outstrip the imagination." *Russia as a Democracy: Why and How We Should Help. Views of Colonel William Thompson, an American Business Man Who Spent Four Months in Russia* (New York: The Evening Post Job Printing Office, Inc., 1918), 20.

<sup>26</sup> Francis to Darwin P. Kingsley, 10 July 1916. DRFP, Record Series # 02/P0274, Box 397, A-22a, MoHS.

<sup>27</sup> Francis to Perry Francis, July 1916. DRFP, Record Series # 02/P0274, Box 397, A-22a. MoHS.

Street, Francis managed to stimulate American interest in further developing partnerships with Russia. In a letter written by Robert C. Barnett, an associate engineer of Waddell & Son consulting engineers in Kansas City, Missouri, the author asked about opportunities for him in Russia as he recognized that “there would be practically no large new bridgework in this country [the United States].” Introducing himself and his work to the American ambassador, Barnett wrote that “for many years I have recognized the fact that as a consulting engineer and bridge expert I could be of great service to the Russian government.”<sup>28</sup> In another letter addressed to C. T. Malcolmson, Esq., in Chicago, Illinois, Francis discusses the opportunity of sales and production of briquettes in Russia. He writes that

in Petrograd where we have nine or ten months of winter, and never over sixty days in a year when fires are not required, I have not seen a coal fire since arriving. The city with its population of two millions... is heated only with wood which is brought down the Neva in barges ...there is no country that that offers better prospects for the sale of briquettes than Russia.<sup>29</sup>

Barnes writes that Francis “never stopped thinking about trade between the two countries, and sometimes that obsession spilled over, as it would with Francis, into pure business.”<sup>30</sup> While facilitating the National City Bank’s \$50 million loan to the Russian Government in 1916, Francis argued that it would be a step toward closer commercial relations between Russia and the United States. When the loan went through Francis wrote the president of the New York Life

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<sup>28</sup> Robert C. Barnett to Francis. 12 June 1916. DRFP, Record Series # 02/P0274, Box 397, A-22a. MoHS.

<sup>29</sup> Francis to C. T. Malcolmson, Esq. 6 July 1916. DRFP, Record Series # 02/P0274, Box 397, A-22a. MoHS.

<sup>30</sup> Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 205.

Insurance Company that he thought of it as being “absolutely good” and promising “good profit.” “So much,” Francis believed that he himself “made personal subscriptions.”<sup>31</sup>

Before funding the Russian loan, however, the National City Bank analysts released a comprehensive study of the economic situation in the country and provided the information on the latest steps undertaken by the Russian imperial government towards further development of its industry and agriculture, acknowledging the governmental efforts to gradually make “effective broad and comprehensive plans for the utilization of the enormous undeveloped resources of the empire.” The Russian government, according to the authors of the pamphlet, was planning the “purchase of agricultural implements, electrical apparatus, mining, crushing, milling, sampling, and concentrating machinery,” and promoting the establishment of grain elevators throughout the South-East provinces. Most importantly, as, the National City Bank report indicates, “The Imperial Ukas [order] of 9 November 1906, made individual ownership of land by peasants possible.” That led to the increased productivity of land tilled in small parcels by owners, and required modern fertilizing and crop rotation, which in its turn would lead to the necessity of loans upon crops and for agricultural improvements, some of which were provided by the state.<sup>32</sup> Before the beginning of their operations in St. Petersburg in January 1917, bank analysts explored potential resources for further development and trade possibilities that would be attractive to the banking industry, encouraging them to take all advantages from operating directly in the Russian capital. They concluded that Siberia alone had “sufficient resources, if properly developed, to feed and clothe a population equal to that of all Europe.” They also noted

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<sup>31</sup> Francis to Darwin Kingsley, 10 July 1916. Cited in Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 205.

<sup>32</sup> National City Bank of New York, *Russia and the Imperial Russian Government*, 4.

that “great deposits of iron ore, coal, copper, silver, graphite, marble and semi-precious stones<sup>33</sup> are being uncovered in the Urals, the Altai and other districts as a result of modern research methods.” The brochure described as a particularly attractive feature to investors the plentiful supplies of “salmon, sturgeon, porpoise, herring and other fish,” with the additional opportunity to establish the production of “tin-plate and can-making machinery.”<sup>34</sup> Of no less importance, according to the authors of the report, was that Russia exported horses to the European countries for their agricultural needs, and met their demand in raw hides, supplying the Europeans with 90 million pounds of that product in 1913. Although the bank’s experts acknowledged Russia’s fame as “the granary of the world,” they also emphasized the importance of Russia as a country that produces coal, iron, steel, copper, platinum, gold and petroleum, ranking only second after the United States in the output of the latter. They thus drew readers’ attention to manufacturing in Russia and its growing importance, noting that many branches of industry were being stimulated by the absence of German and other competition. The bank was especially interested in new factories established for the manufacture of cotton goods, autos, electrical apparatus and various articles that were formerly imported.<sup>35</sup> That Russia has a larger forest area than any other

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<sup>33</sup> Apparently, Americans were involved with the precious and semi-precious stone trade. Thus, for example, in one of his letters, Crane reports that he encountered in Moscow with two “Siberians,” one of which was Mr. Hiller, Tiffany’s Russian buyer. Hiller spent years in Western Siberia and “was bought by Mr. Emery who has since made an immense fortune and has stores not only all the way up the great Amour but connections all over the world.” Charles R. Crane hereafter cited as (CRC) to Cornelia S. Crane hereafter cited as (CSC), Moscow, 29 May 1894. Box 1. Charles Richard Crane Papers, hereafter cited as (CRC), 1869-1967. Bakhmeteff Archive, hereafter cited as (BA), Rare Book and Manuscript Library, hereafter cited as (RBML), Columbia University hereafter cited as (CU), New York.

<sup>34</sup> National City Bank of New York, *Russia and the Imperial Russian Government*, 4.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

country, allowed the authors of the report to pronounce the possibility for Russia “to take the leading place in the world’s timber market.”<sup>36</sup>

Promoting Russia as a potential American partner the National City Bank analysts especially emphasized in their publication that “the exports to the United States have increased from very little in 1900 to \$26 million in 1913, due to the growing demand for Russian furs, hides and skins, coarse wool for carpets, flax, hemp, drug products, etc.”<sup>37</sup> American exports to Russia, which had been running at the modest rate of about \$35 million a year, began to increase rapidly with the outbreak of war, due to the Russian purchases of war supplies in the United States, and rose in the fiscal year ending in the summer of 1917 to \$558.9 million.”<sup>38</sup> The City Bank report it also mentioned that most of Russian purchases of the time were “machinery, metals, steel, cotton, locomotives, rails, cars and other railway and industrial materials...”<sup>39</sup>

Among those who actively promoted economic cooperation between Russia and the United States was U.S. Commercial Attaché Henry D. Baker. Addressing American business people and firms in Petrograd in 1916, he declared that “the times seems now at hand when

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* Individuals and professionals took a lot of interest in exploring opportunities of trading with Russia. Thus, for example, an American engineer Alexander Ford, published articles on Russia’s industrial expansion as early as in the 1890s, after traveling all around the country. Among his other titles it is worth mentioning “Russia’s Field for Anglo-Saxon Enterprise in Asia,” *The Engineering Magazine*, New York, XIX (1900):354-68, “Engineering Opportunities in the Russian Empire,” *The Engineering Magazine*, New York, XXI (1901):29-42, “Russia as a Market for Machinery and Machine Tools,” *The Engineering Magazine*, New York, XXI (1901):493-507.

<sup>37</sup> National City Bank of New York, *Russia and the Imperial Russian Government*, 9.

<sup>38</sup> Kennan, *Soviet–American Relations: Russia Leaves the War*, 32. Barnes also gives this exact number writing that despite the lack of treaty, trade between the two countries had grown prodigiously during WWI, much of it through intermediaries of two of Russia’s traditional trading partners, England and France. “Russia needed arms, agricultural machinery, cotton, and food; businessmen in neutral America happily supplied them. Trade between the two countries almost doubled in 1915, the first full year of the war. In 1916, it rose to \$310 million, and in 1917 it reached almost \$560 million.” Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 183.

<sup>39</sup> National City Bank of New York, *Russia and the Imperial Russian Government*, 3.

Russia will be ready to promote America to a far more important position in its trade, than it has ever formally held, and it is for America to see that it immediately prepares itself with great diligence and attention, for the splendid opportunity which Russia seems preparing to offer it.”<sup>40</sup>

At the same time he acknowledged that American firms in Russia “give comparatively little work for Government representatives, and much as we would like to help you, thanks to your own enterprise and able efforts to help yourselves and your firms, the opportunity is not often presented for us to render you help.”<sup>41</sup>

And yet, when Baker returned to New York in July of the same year and reported to the officials of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce at the Bankers Club, he stated that among others there were two main reasons that prevent the two great peoples from developing “mutual bonds of sympathy, respect and commercial relations.” The first was transportation. Backer mentioned “abnormally high ocean freights, the scarcity of ships...and the over-strained condition of the Russian railway and river transportation service.”<sup>42</sup> The second major problem was that “of converting the Russian roubles into American dollars without disastrous loss by exchange.”<sup>43</sup> Other authors, such as John Spargo, echoed Baker’s statement, acknowledging

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<sup>40</sup> Henry D Baker. *American –Russian Business Cooperation. Remarks of Henry D. Baker, Commercial Attaché of the United States of America, at testimonial dinner given for him by American business men in Petrograd, 24 May 1916.* DRFP, Record Series # 02/P0274, Box 397, A-22a. MoHS.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> However the executives of the City Bank did not see it exactly in the same light. They would rather acknowledge that “the government is constructing numerous extensions to the existing railway system, and plans to establish upon the 15,000 miles of navigable waterways of Siberia, lines of steamships especially adapted to river transportation. Better roads are being built and it is proposed to establish regular motor services to hitherto inaccessible districts. Hydro-electric developments are under contemplation. Machinery is being purchased to dig ditches, deepen rivers, and to drain fertile river valleys where floods have prevented grain raising.” National City Bank of New York, *Russia and the Imperial Russian Government*, 4.

<sup>43</sup> An Address delivered by Henry D. Baker, former Commercial Attaché at Petrograd at a luncheon tendered him by The American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, at the Bankers Club, New York, 25 July 1916, upon his arrival in

“utter” inadequacy of railways and concluding that by the time the Great War broke out, “of the entire land area of Russia little more than 5 percent was under civilization.”<sup>44</sup> Francis also agreed that no other country, “not even the United States at any period of its history, needed railroads as much as Russia needs them now and will need them at the end of this war.”<sup>45</sup>

Baker further explained that those difficulties could be and were overcome with the support of influential interests in America: “The transportation difficulties to a great extent are being overcome slowly by imported American locomotives and American cars.”<sup>46</sup> The City Bank as well as other financiers studied the question of railroad exploitation in Russia and the possibility of investing in railroad concessions very seriously.<sup>47</sup> The exchange difficulties might

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America from his post. DRFP, Record Series # 02/P0274, Box 397, A-22a. MoHS. According to the City Bank of New York official report that took into account the content of pure gold while calculating the exchange rate, \$1 United States Gold equaled 1.943799 roubles. The rouble thus equaled \$0.5145673. The conversion was made at the approximate mint parity of \$0.515 as the value of the rouble. By 13 June 1916 Russian exchange was quoted at about \$0.30 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, with the range from as low as 29 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub> and up to as high as 32 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>. Baker’s address refers principally to the essential decline of the Russian rouble abroad, that, according to the City Bank officials, constituted 4 percent. However City Bank specialists mentioned the rouble’s relative stable purchasing power within Russia, assessing the country’s internal financial condition as “satisfactory.” See National City Bank of New York, *Russia and the Imperial Russian Government*, 7.

<sup>44</sup> Spargo, *Russia as an American Problem*, 20-21.

<sup>45</sup> Francis to Perry Francis. July 1916. DRFP, Record Series # 02/P0274, Box 397, A-22a. MoHS.

<sup>46</sup> The contribution of Americans to building and improving railways in Russia has been acknowledged by almost every visitor who travelled to Russia, especially by train. Thus, for example at the end of the nineteenth century American traveler Perry S. Heath reflected on Russian railways on his way to Russia from Europe and wrote that they: “were built under contract for the government by Winans, a Baltimorean, who preferred railroad construction to participation in the American Civil War.” See Perry S. Heath, *A Hoosier in Russia: The Only White Tsar – His Imperialism, Country, and People* (New York: The Lorborn publishing company, 1888), 15.

<sup>47</sup> President of the National City Bank Frank Vanderlip would have detailed descriptions of the state and regulations concerning railways in Russia, especially the private ones. He also had a special booklet prepared by the Chancery of the Committee of Ministers for the Universal Exhibition of 1900 in Paris about the great Siberian railway. “The Great Siberian railway” (1900), “Short Memorandum Concerning the Exploitation of Private Railways in Russia,”

also be overcome by the enterprise of two great banks of this city, the National City Bank and the Guaranty Trust Company, which have been negotiating large credits for Russia. The question of exchange rate had been a concern to American business circles for quite a while, as illustrated in a cablegram that the executives on Wall Street sent to the National City Bank of New York Petrograd branch. In the message the president of the bank asked its Russian manager to “advise us fully” in order “to avoid any misunderstanding in regard to dealing in roubles.” Bankers on Wall Street were wondering if they could “buy and sell rouble exchange in the market” as their clients who were selling goods to Russia frequently intended to do against deposits of roubles with the Russian branch expecting that it would be possible in America to buy and pay over proceeds to them at market rates. In case that could be done, the National City Bank president Frank A. Vanderlip was interested in the plausibility for those deposits to be sold out to other parties.<sup>48</sup> Responding to Vanderlip’s cablegram Meserve, who headed the branch in Russia, immediately called at the chancellery of credits and saw Chancellor Conrad de Sahmen. The latter called in Timkowsky “and another high official who had charge of the special exchange department.” The result of their half-hour meeting was the following cable back to New York:

You can buy and sell rouble exchange in the market. Do all you can to prevent selling goods against roubles. Deposits without special conditions can be sold to other parties but when Russian banks transfer any sums from their deposits to credit of foreign firms they must report transaction to Chancellery Credits who investigates such transactions.<sup>49</sup>

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1910. Box F-8. Frank Arthur Vanderlip Papers, hereafter cited as (FAVP) [ca. 1890-1937]. RBML, General Manuscript Collection, hereafter cited as (GMC), CU, New York.

<sup>48</sup> Vanderlip to Meserve. Cablegram. February 1917. FAVP. Part A. RBML, GMC, CU.

<sup>49</sup> Meserve to Vanderlip. Cablegram. 10 – 23 February 1917. FAVP. Part A. RBML, GMC, CU.

Railroad development had long been of interest to American business. It attracted Americans as early as the 1840s, when Russian army engineers invited George Washington Whistler to become the chief surveyor of the first Russian long-distance railroad, the St. Petersburg-Moscow line.<sup>50</sup> A distinct feature of American participation in the railroad construction in St Petersburg was the five railroad bridges across the Obvodnii Kanal, constructed by the American engineer William Gaugh and built under Whistler's management.<sup>51</sup> The railroad project also brought the Winans brothers of Baltimore, who produced cars and locomotives and who later imitated St. Petersburg architecture in their native city, when financing a lavish retirement residence with profits from their Russian enterprise.<sup>52</sup> An American, Samuel Smith was involved in the construction of the St. Petersburg-Moscow Railroad and "stayed behind to operate a dealership in railroad and other equipment in Moscow—also serving as American consul in that city. His sons, Thomas and William, would continue his

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<sup>50</sup> Norman E. Saul, "The American Colony in St. Petersburg" (paper presented at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Central Slavic Conference, Lawrence, KS, April 3-5, 2003). For his excellent service Whistler was awarded with order of St Anne.

<sup>51</sup> All five American bridges are still serving as the railroad crossings. One of them has been recently reconstructed and re-opened and the others are waiting for their turn to be "healed and treated with care." *The Report of George W. Whistler to His Excellency, the Count Kleinmichel on the Gauge of Russian Railways September 9<sup>th</sup>, 1842*, dated St Petersburg, 9 September 1842, typewritten report available in the New York Public Library. James McNeill Whistler Papers, 1830-1894. Manuscripts and Archive Division, hereafter cited as (MAD), New York Public Library, hereafter cited as (NYPL). Whistler also supervised the construction of the fortifications, the naval arsenal, and the docks at Kronshtadt. He was decorated with the order of St Anne in 1847 and died in St Petersburg in 1849. See Anna M. Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917: A Study of the American Travelers in Russia from the American Revolution to the Russian Revolution* (New York: Comet Press, 1938), 8.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* It is interesting that Winans' activities in St. Petersburg involved a visit of another American native of Philadelphia, a lawyer J.H.B. Lartobe, who spent the winter of 1857-58 in the Russian capital as a counsellor for the Winans interests in St Petersburg. Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917*, 149.

business in Russia through the revolution.”<sup>53</sup> The Russian railroad system was supposed to be rehabilitated under the direction of the American railroad commission, headed by American engineer John Stevens.<sup>54</sup> Considering the rehabilitation of the Russian economy as a principal American challenge, Spargo concluded that the United States was better “able to supply what Russia needs than any other country, and there are reasons of the greatest importance, reasons which transcend all sordid and selfish considerations, why she should do it.”<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, the author believes that rehabilitating “the arterial system of Russia’s body” was necessary for further developing the “enormous volume of trade essential to Russia’s regeneration” and that “the reconstruction becomes a social question affecting the whole nation.”<sup>56</sup>

Many Russians were very well-disposed to American eagerness to promote Russia’s further economic and industrial development. The newly established Society for Promoting Mutual Friendly Relations between Russia and America also emphasized the importance of

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<sup>53</sup> Norman E. Saul, “Charles R. Crane, American Industrialist, Globalist, a Founder of Russian Studies in America” (paper presented at several forums, including the 40<sup>th</sup> AAASS annual convention, Philadelphia, November 20-23, 2008). See also Saul, *Conflict and Concord: The United States and Russia, 1867-1914*, 415, 415 n.411.

<sup>54</sup> The American Railroad Commission, headed by John F Stevens, arrived to Petrograd at the same time as the Root Mission. In a statement made immediately after arrival, Stevens said that “the commission’s aim was to assist the Russian people and government, especially in railroad affairs, by placing at Russia’s disposal America’s technical skill and industrial resources. See “Root and Stevens Reach Petrograd; Diplomatic and Engineering Commission Arrive Almost Simultaneously. Stevens Tells His Plans Will Speed Railroad and War Materials, Iron and Coal from United States,” *New York Times*, 14 June 1917, 1. Unfortunately, the expert body was not able to continue their work rehabilitating adequate system of railroads after Bolsheviks’ seizure of power. See Spargo, *Russia as an American Problem*, 25.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

economic integration for the mutual benefit of both countries.<sup>57</sup> In a letter that the Society addressed to George Kennan in April 1915, it is stated that

The present European war cannot but bring deep changes into the life of nations. New conditions will arise and we shall have to be prepared for them. We have severed our connections with Germany but as we still want goods, capital and skilled labor and a market for our goods we must replace Germany by another country and we think Germany's place could be usefully taken at present by the United States of America and Great Britain. There never has been a better opportunity for this purpose.<sup>58</sup>

Among other Russians who advocated on behalf of foreign investments into the Russian industrial development and trade was economist Professor Ivan H. Ozeroff, a member of the council of state, director of the Russo-Asiatic and central banks and a deputy chairman of the Russian-American Chamber of Commerce (established 1912), directed by the head of the largest private stock holding company in Russia, Frederick Corse. In December 1914 the *New-York World* published Ozeroff's address to the American consul service in which the economist assured the gathering of the necessity to establish an American bank in his country. Ozeroff had long contended for closer and more direct commercial relations between Russia and the United States, and his efforts aroused public interest in the subject. Ozeroff believed that the establishment of closer relations between the United States and Russia presented mutual benefits to both countries. His point of view had been brought to the attention of the ministers in

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<sup>57</sup> The Society was initiated in Petrograd in March 1915 by the former ambassador to the United States and a member of the Russian State Council Baron Roman Rosen.

<sup>58</sup> "The Society for Promoting Mutual Friendly Relations between Russia and America." A letter of invitation from the Society to George Kennan, Petrograd, 5 April 1915. George Kennan Papers. Box. 1, Series I. Correspondence, 1903-1916, folder 1.5. MAD, NYPL.

Petrograd and to leading financiers and business men throughout Russia and overseas.<sup>59</sup>

Vanderlip was apparently familiar with Ozeroff's ideas about the wide scope of opportunities for American capital in Russia, about the economist's belief that the establishment of closer connections between the United States and Russia would be mutually beneficial, and about the need for a branch of an American bank in Russia. Vanderlip was interested in Ozeroff's suggestions that vast capital would be required to create communication facilities, improve waterways, and construct railways. According to Ozeroff, a branch of an American bank such as the National City Bank of New York would be a path to the arena of industrial life in Russia, especially in regard to railway concessions.<sup>60</sup>

Vanderlip kept a number of reports on the history of the Russian economic might, its banking system, and transportation. Thus, one of those summaries that could be found in Vanderlip's archives describes the state of Russia before the Great War:

It was said with, and with some justice, that Russia was the granary of Europe.... the Russian flax and beet sugar industry was also of great importance. As much as 95 per cent of the Manganese ore supply of the world came from Russia and an almost equal amount of the world's supply of platinum.... Russia's railroads, which were constantly expanding, already included nearly 50,000 miles of track in operation; Russian overseas trade was considerable and apparently increasing. Moreover, the country was becoming important in industry and already from its possessions in Central Asia was supplying one of the three or four great cotton crops of the world.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> A copy of the report is being kept in Vanderlip collection. "Opportune Time to Get Germany's Place in Russia." Reprinted article from the "New-York World," 13 December 1914. Box F-8. FAVP. Part F. RBML, GMC, CU.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>61</sup> "Russia" (Banking, transportation, foreign trade), 1922. Box F-8. Box F-8. FAVP. Part F. RBML, GMC, CU.

This increase in direct trade and economic development was supplemented by the flow of American investment to Russia, and by extensive operations by large American concerns and banks.<sup>62</sup> Before Americans began exploration of the Russian financial market, foreign capital, according to Spargo, had entered Russia through loans raised in the bourses and exchanges of European countries by Russian municipal and state authorities, and “by foreign investments in Russian industrial and commercial enterprises.”<sup>63</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century American investments in the Russian economy were relatively insignificant.<sup>64</sup> Americans were

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<sup>62</sup> A bank employee, Leighton Rogers describes the National City Bank as “the largest bank in the United States and one of the largest in the world. “It employs some twelve hundred men, which number will soon leap into as many thousands as soon as its branches are established all over the world. It does more business than all the banks on the Pacific Coast as far inland as the Rocky Mountains, put together, and its daily check cancellations are about eighty millions of dollars!” The president of the bank at the time, the manuscript is dated summer 1916, was Frank Arthur Vanderlip. Leighton W. Rogers, Autobiographical Sketch. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers, 1912- 1982. Box 1, folder 1, Manuscript Division (MN), Library of Congress (LC), Washington, DC. Other financial enterprises known for loaning money to Russia were the New York branch of J.P. Morgan and Company that had loaned Russia \$96 million for war materiel purchasing and Morgan’s powerful London office that loaned Russia \$86 million. Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 183.

<sup>63</sup> Spargo, *Russia as an American Problem*, 133.

<sup>64</sup> To have a broader picture of overall American investments abroad at the turn of the twentieth century see Mira Wilkins, *The Emergence of Multinational Enterprise: American Business Abroad From the Colonial Era to 1914* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970) and her *The Maturing of Multinational Enterprise: American Business Abroad from 1914 to 1970* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974). In both books the author surveys the American business abroad, in particular the process of the entry of U.S. companies into new direct investments outside the United States and the *experiences* of American branches, subsidiaries, and affiliates of those businesses in foreign countries. Her focus is in compliance with the analysis of American business endeavors in Russia provided in this research. The author is appraising the economic, technological, political, military, and social influence of the emerging and rapidly maturing American multinational enterprises, which handled a growing share of the flow of funds and goods across international boundaries, making long term investments in production and personnel in many different nations. Wilkins writes that by 1914, when the European nations, whose stakes in foreign countries were supreme in Canada, Central and South America, and to lesser extent east Suez, were engaged in war, the United States American companies explore these new areas outside Europe for their own new foreign investments. Between 1914 and 1917 Americans responded to conditions created by war and considered investing in

fifth among investing countries, with a modest sum of 118 million roubles.<sup>65</sup> The investments gradually increased and by 1917 Americans had invested in at least 14 enterprises operating in Russia.<sup>66</sup> Entrepreneurs and businessmen considered expanding the nominal capital of their companies in order to avoid paying taxes on profits. The largest was International Harvester, headed by Cyrus H. McCormick, Jr., who had strong ties to J.P. Morgan's financial empire, and affiliated with the National City Bank, serving on its board of directors between 1902 and 1930. McCormick visited St. Petersburg in 1909 and met with the Russian Minister of Finance, Commerce, and Agriculture, explaining to him that his company and its predecessors had been selling in Russia for twenty-eight years through agents and branch houses and that the company had eight of them throughout of the empire. In order to invest and open a plant in Russia McCormick wanted the Russian government to assure his associates in Chicago that their investments would receive such "protection and encouragement which is accorded in other countries where they welcome foreign capital."<sup>67</sup> That enterprise was capitalized with 61 million

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agriculture, processing of agricultural products, mining and processing of ores, oil production, utilities, manufacturing (including oil refining), and distribution. Mira Wilkins, *The Maturing of Multinational Enterprise: American Business Abroad from 1914 to 1970* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974). Electronic resource. NYPL, e-book, ACLS Humanities E-Book: <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?c=acls;cc=acls;rgn=full%20text;idno=heb00844.0001.001;didno=heb00844.0001.001;view=image;seq=20;node=heb00844.0001.001%3A2;page=root;size=s;frm=frameset> (accessed January 24, 2010).

<sup>65</sup> P.V. Ol', *Inostranniye Kapitali v Rossii* (Petograd: 1922), 100, 119. This is equivalent to \$365 million U.S. 2009 dollars.

<sup>66</sup> I.M. Rabinovich, "Proniknoveniye amerikanskogo imperialisma v ekonomiku dorevolutsionnoi Rossii." *Trudi Leningradskogo korablestroitel'nogo instituta*, vipusk XXI. (Leningrad: 1957): 82.

<sup>67</sup> McCormick declared that International Harvester planned to form a company under Russian laws, employ Russian labor, use Russian lumber, iron, and other resources as far as possible, "and in every way possible to conduct the enterprise as a Russian Company." To this the Minister of Finance replied that what was important was that the capital and all the affairs of the company remain in American hands – that is, not pass to western Europeans. Wilkins summarizes that while western European capital was a threat to Russian sovereignty, American capital, small as the entry was, constituted no such threat. Wilkins, *The Emergence of Multinational Enterprise*, 103. By

roubles. The Singer Sewing Machine Company had a nominal capital investment of 50 million roubles.<sup>68</sup> Among other enterprises operating in Russia that were capitalized by growing American investment at the turn of the century were the Otis Elevator Company (.5 million roubles), the Russian Joint Stock Company *Babcock and Wilcox* (.5 million roubles), the Russian-American Technical and Trading Corporation (2.5 million roubles), Corporation J. Block (.8 million roubles), and the Russian-American Technical and Trading Corporation (.8 million roubles). Hiram Bond Everest's Vacuum Oil Company opened a Russian branch of the American enterprise of the same name in Rochester, New York. It had its own factory in St. Petersburg, where lubrication oil was produced, and a wide net of sales offices was established. The company was closely intertwined with Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company.<sup>69</sup> The interests

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1911 International Harvester had five foreign plants – in Canada, Sweden, France, Germany, and Russia. Foreign operations constituted 40 percent the company's entire business. Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> This was a sum of money approximately equivalent to \$7.15 million in the early 1900s (approximately \$155 million U.S. 2009 dollars). To perceive these investments in the context of the estimated United States direct foreign investments around that time see Wilkins, *The Emergence of Multinational Enterprise*, especially table V.2., 110, that illustrates estimates of U.S. direct investments for the years 1897, 1908, and 1914. Thus the book value of American investment in manufacturing in Europe in 1897 was \$35 million, in 1908 – \$100 million, and in 1914 \$200 million. In sales organizations the numbers are \$25 million in 1897, \$30 million in 1908, and \$85 million accordingly. Wilkins, *The Emergence of Multinational Enterprise*, 110. Wilkins concludes that even though the United States were quite interested in foreign investments before the First World War, it was nevertheless a debtor in international accounts, a recipient of more foreign capital than the nation invested abroad. In 1914, its foreign stakes (\$3.5 billion), both in Russia and elsewhere, were small compared with those of the major creditor nation, Great Britain (\$18.3 billion), France (\$8.7 billion), Belgium, the Netherlands (\$5.6 billion), Switzerland (\$5.5 billion), and in absolute terms. And yet, put in the context of the Gross National Product, it comprised 7 percent, as much as in 1966. Wilkins, *The Emergence of Multinational Enterprise*, 201-202. The greatest U.S. direct investments in 1914 were in Canada (\$618 million) and Mexico that ranked second in having U.S. direct investment, estimated at \$587 million the same year. The U.S. direct investment in Europe was \$573 million by 1914 and it was concentrated in selling, assembling, processing (including oil refining and blending plants), and manufacturing, and insurance. Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> The companies finally merged in 1931.

of those shareholders who invested in the industry were represented in New York by the National City Bank.<sup>70</sup> Americans were investing in gold mines, exploration of raw materials, and oil. Often Americans invested under British auspices. Thus, for example, Americans joined the British in their investment in the joint-stock Westinghouse, which began operating in Russia in 1888.<sup>71</sup>

The National City Bank began aggressively expanding into foreign financial markets from the very beginning of the Great War. It was especially interested in broadening its cooperation with Russia and had many supporters of their policy in there.<sup>72</sup> Shortly after the

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<sup>70</sup> Stanislav, L. Tkachenko, *Amerikanskii bankovski kapital v Rosii v godi Pervoi mirovoi voini: Deyatel'nost' "National City Bank of New York"* (Peterburg: Sankt-Peterburgskii Gosudarstvennii Universitet, 1998), 14.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* In 1881 Westinghouse incorporated a wholly owned subsidiary, The Westinghouse Brake Company, Ltd., in England to manufacture brakes for sale in Britain. In the next two decades companies in Germany and Russia were formed to manufacture for each host country's consumption. See Wilkins, *The Emergence of Multinational Enterprise*, 59. Thus, American business expansion eastwards was not put off for too long. As Wilkins mentions in her book, even though U.S. industrial concerns had opened "branch" factories in Europe as early as in the 1850s, it was only in the 1880s and 1890s when there began on a substantial scale the emergence of modern multinational enterprises which interrelated marketing and manufacturing facilities in several nations, including Russia. Singer is one of the best examples of such an enterprise. It was technologically advanced U.S. corporation that had invested to sell abroad, opened sales outlets, and built its own manufacturing plant. Wilkins summarizes that overall book value of U.S. direct foreign investment by 1914 was \$2.65 billion, a sum equal to slightly over 7 percent of existing GNP. Most of the companies that operated in Russia had branches and subsidiaries in European countries as well. Thus, among others Wilkins mentions Singer, International Harvester, Standard Oil, Otis Elevator, Vacuum Oil, Westinghouse Electric, Eastman Kodak (which by January 1916 had \$4 million invested in British, French, Russian, and Italian war loans and treasury bills), as well as the major U.S. life insurance firms. To compare the investments of American enterprise in Russia and elsewhere, I consider some data from Wilkins' research. Thus, for example, in 1916 the new Kennecott Copper Company – controlled by the Guggenheims – purchased most of the stock of the American-owned Braden Copper Company in Chile (the cost of the property was estimated at \$57 million). Wilkins, *The Maturing of Multinational Enterprise*. Electronic resource.

<sup>72</sup> The publication of Russian-American Chamber of Commerce continually wrote about the necessity to infuse Russian financial markets with American capital. See for example *Vestnik Russko-Amerikanskoi torgovoi palati*, 1915, № 1, 4, 10. The most outspoken advocate of Russian-American economic involvement was its ideologue Professor Ivan H. Ozeroff. Some scholars accentuate the fact that the Russian Finance Minister P.L. Bark was very

outbreak of war in 1914, the Russian government sent purchasing agents to the United States and established a Russian purchasing commission. The Imperial Ministry of Finance appointed the National City Bank of New York as the commission's fiscal agent in the United States to facilitate purchasing. The Russian government agreed with the bank that the operations could be advanced if it had a branch in Petrograd. The branch would manage loans granted to the imperial government, mediate trade between the two countries, and overlook the work of its subsidiary, the American International Corporation, established by the National City Bank.<sup>73</sup>

Frank Vanderlip had long considered Russia a fertile field for development and in 1916 he opened a branch where the bank could serve such major customers as International Harvester and Standard Oil that had been in Russia since the early 1900s.<sup>74</sup> Vanderlip also had interests in the development of Russia's natural resources and agriculture.<sup>75</sup>

The loans and the opening of the branch were negotiated with the imperial government by Fessenden Meserve, a notable American banker.<sup>76</sup> At some point in his career, as his step

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active in advocating the establishment of American bank branch in the capital. He brought the matter for consideration to the Council of Ministers. See A. L. Sidorov, *Finansovoye polozheniye Rossii v godi Pervoi mirovoi voini* (Moscow: 1960).

<sup>73</sup> Tkachenko, *Amerikanskiy bankovski kapital v Rosii v godi Pervoi mirovoi voini*, 5.

<sup>74</sup> Harold van B. Cleveland, Huertas, Thomas, F. *Citibank: 1812-1970* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 99. Cleveland, the author of the most comprehensive history of the Citigroup, provides some chronology in his footnotes of those enterprises that started their operations in Russia prior to 1900. He writes that the New York Life Insurance Company started its operations in Russia in 1885, and International Harvester in 1898. They were followed by Vacuum Oil that became interested in Russia before 1900. Cleveland also refers to Mira Wilkins, *The Emergence of Multinational Enterprise: American Business Abroad from the Colonial Era to 1914*. See Cleveland, *Citibank: 1812-1970*, 368.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* Cleveland refers to Vanderlip's article from *Scribner's Magazine* "The American 'Commercial Invasion' of Europe," January 1902, 3-22. In that article Vanderlip wrote: "Russia's need for capital is like the Sahara's thirst for water."

<sup>76</sup> Meserve was almost "hereditary" financier. His father William Pitt Fessenden headed the Congressional Financial Committee and was one of the most eloquent congressional orators. He also was a finance minister in Lincoln

daughter Lascelle Meserve de Basily explains, he was general manager of the Oriental Consolidated Mining Company, a gold concession of fifty square miles in Unsan Province, Northern Korea, which had been granted to an American company by the emperor. It was “a little kingdom” over which Fessenden Meserve “had been called to preside.”<sup>77</sup> Meserve and his family travelled regularly, including a noteworthy trip to Imperial Russia. Meserve returned to banking and became a vice-president of the First National City Bank of New York in Europe. In that capacity he went to Russia to promote further trade and negotiate loans to the Imperial Russian government from 1915 to 1917. According to scholars who traced Meserve’s career, the scale of his Russian mission was so significant that it surpassed everything that he had accomplished previously.<sup>78</sup> One of the first business meetings upon his arrival in Petrograd upon his arrival was with the commercial attaché Baker.<sup>79</sup> The latter was also a relative newcomer in Russia and was very active in many spheres. Before leaving the United States he had addressed members of the Foreign Trade Council in New York, arguing the need for branches of American banks in Russia. He would contend that “American banks in Russia should be organized in such a way that every essential export would be financially supported on equal terms.”<sup>80</sup>

Meserve was accompanied by his wife Helen Struve Meserve, his step daughter Lascelle Meserve de Basily, and his secretary, Rodney Deane. Other bank employees were Enevold O.

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cabinet and was very well connected in financial and industrial circles in the United States. See Tkachenko, *Amerikanskii bankovski kapital v Rosii v godi Pervoi mirovoi voini*, 23. One of the bank clerks Leighton Rogers described him as “a slender blond man of some fifty years, soft voiced, polished – the most striking thing about him at the moment being a red necktie – smoked a cigar.” See Leighton W. Rogers, “Czars, Revolution, Bolsheviks,” Greenwich, Connecticut, 5. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers. Box 3, folder 7, MD, LC.

<sup>77</sup> Lascelle de Basily Meserve, *Memoirs of a Lost World* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1975), 18.

<sup>78</sup> Tkachenko, *Amerikanskii bankovski kapital v Rosii v godi Pervoi mirovoi voini*, 24.

<sup>79</sup> Baker was appointed a first Commercial Attaché in the course of history of Russian-American relations. See Tkachenko, *Amerikanskii bankovski kapital v Rosii v godi Pervoi mirovoi voini*, 26.

<sup>80</sup> *Torgovo-Promyshlennaya Gazeta*, 14 June 1915.

Detlefsen and Robbie Reed Stevens, the branch manager,<sup>81</sup> as well as the American embassy accountant George W. Link and Ambassador Francis' former secretary Arthur T. Dailey.<sup>82</sup> Lascelle remembered that Frank Vanderlip had inspired her stepfather on his mission to Russia and that the banker was set forth "with confidence and interest."<sup>83</sup> In the spring of 1916 Meserve negotiated two loans with the imperial Russian government, collaborating with the Russian Finance Minister Peter Bark, "a very able and charming man."<sup>84</sup> The Meserves settled in the Hotel Europe, where they also held business meetings.

After the loans were made in June 1916, two National City Bank vice presidents, Samuel McRoberts and Charles Rich, arrived in Russia. Lascelle Meserve recalls that the Russian government put a private railway carriage at the disposal of the American bankers, and arranged for them to journey to the Caucasus with an amiable Baltic baron Maydell acting as a guide and host.<sup>85</sup> Besides Meserve and his family, the visiting managers and their host, the party included Mr. and Mrs. Patton of Boston, also a former Russian minister, Mr. Korostovets, and others. In

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<sup>81</sup> A reference to the appointment of Stevens as a bank manager could be found in the minutes of the branch committee under the following entry: "...it was agreed that Mr. R.R. Stevens should be instructed to report at Petrograd, Russia." The following cable was therefore dispatched to Mr. Dunning: "Kindly request Stevens proceed to Petrograd at his convenience. Has been appointed Manager with Meserve as Senior." Stevens arrived in Petrograd on 23 July 1916. That was documented in a cablegram sent by Meserve to New York on the 3 August. National City Bank/ Account Managers/ Papers related to the bank operations/ annual reports. Branch Bank Committee – 29 June and 3 August 1916. FAVP. RBML, GMC, CU.

<sup>82</sup> Barnes writes that those appointments prove strong ties between the National City Bank, the U.S. Government, and David Francis himself. See Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 209.

<sup>83</sup> de Basily Meserve, *Memoirs of a Lost World*, 51.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 70.

all there were about 14 persons.<sup>86</sup> The train went through Tula, Rostov, down to the land of Georgia, and through the Caucasus.

The next task for Meserve was to find the appropriate location for a Petrograd branch of the American bank. He chose the fashionable promenade on the Neva quay lined with handsome buildings and palaces such as the imperial Winter Palace, the Florentine palace of the Grand Duke Vladimir, where his widow, a German Princess lived and ran the salon that formed the nucleus of court society, the Marble Palace, residence of the Grand Duke Constantine, and the British and French Embassies.<sup>87</sup> Meserve's choice reflected the tendency of many American businesses to operate in the most splendid mansions of the capital. The magnificent premises that lined the elegant embankments framing the Neva river implied wealth, power, and influence. It was essential for Americans to present adequately their businesses and enterprises there to successfully "introduce Americanism into Russian business."<sup>88</sup> At the center of commerce, politics, and culture, St. Petersburg offered the best venues for that process.

Meserve sent the bank management in New York detailed reports, reflecting the cost of living in St. Petersburg. Thus, for example in August 1916 a sum of 50.000 roubles was transferred through Russo-Asiatic Bank to Meserve's account. Most of this money was "disbursed" largely by paying years of rent in advance.<sup>89</sup> Several months later another sum of 20.000 roubles was credited to executives to be "used for expenses of the Petrograd branch," and had gone properly into the books by the accountant Enevold Detlefsen.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 64-65.

<sup>88</sup> Leighton Rogers, *Wine of Fury* (New York, London: Alfred Knopf, 1924), 19.

<sup>89</sup> It is worth mentioning that the choice of the building and payment of rent in advance was because the building belonged to Meserve's very close Russian friend Mr. Ratkov Raznov.

<sup>90</sup> Meserve to Vanderlip, Petrograd, 13 – 26 January, 1917. FAVP. RBML, GMC, CU.

A magnificent mansion occupied by the Petrograd branch of the American bank was a former Turkish Embassy. An employee left a detailed account that reveals considerable excitement from having an opportunity to work in a reception hall was “outfitted like a Turkish harem” and hardly made “for a workingman-like atmosphere.”<sup>91</sup>

This is the building formerly occupied by the Turkish Embassy, and, take it from me, it is some tent! Situated just a few buildings beyond the Czar’s Winter Palace, and directly across the street from the Marble Palace, it is one of the finest locations in the city. The Turks must have spent a fortune on it, for the interior decorations are wonderful. Arriving at the bank after a brisk thirty-five minutes’ walk, or at nine-thirty, through the most interesting part of town, we hand out coats, hats, and *sticks* to the liveried attendant at the door, and ascend the marble steps of the great staircase to the bank floor. We slide across the highly polished floor of the reception hall to the grand salon, an enormous balconied ball-room, decorated in the height of Victorian gorgeousness with mural paintings, tapestries, gold-framed mirrors, silken curtains, inlaid floor, and gold and tapestry-covered chairs; through the room that, which is to be the reception room, in what was formerly the state dining-room, with its hand-carved paneling and massive furniture. This room looks somewhat like a bank now with the counter, cages and desks installed.<sup>92</sup>

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E.O. Detlefsen joined the staff of the bank in the summer of 1916.

<sup>91</sup> Leighton W. Rogers, “Czars, Revolution, Bolsheviks,” 6. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers. Box 3, folder 7, MD, LC. Rogers reveals his attitude to Turkish predecessors that occupied the building: “[the building] had once been an embassy, the show place of a minor state which bent the shoulders of its subjects lower to the wheel in order to support it and by lavishness of display and concurrent intrigue gain diplomatic victories it could not attain by prestige or natural right.” See also Rogers, *Wine of Fury*, 33-34.

<sup>92</sup> Rogers to Brown, and friends. 23 November 1916, Petrograd, Russia. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers. Box 1, folder 2, MD, LC. The atmosphere of heavily decorated mansion appears in Rogers’ fictionalized account *Wine of Fury*: “the atmosphere of the great gaily decorated rooms, in spite of their bareness of furniture, did much to raise David from the depression... Rogers, *Wine of Fury*, 34.

The interior was no less important for Meserve than the location. This is how the bank clerk Rogers described the chief's office: as "the Victorian show of the room - the old- rose and blue rug of enormous flower pattern, the walls of old-rose silk tapestry, the large glass-and-gilt chandelier, and the ceiling painted with blue sky and clouds through which tumbled a border of fat, sexless cupids...."<sup>93</sup>

All the appointments were negotiated in New York in the foreign branches coordination office. Leighton W. Roger, a recent graduate and a newly appointed bank clerk left a detailed description of not only how the selection was made, but also who was selected to go to Russia.

According to Rogers' autobiographical sketch,<sup>94</sup> after graduation from Dartmouth College in 1916 and having had three months training in the National City Bank of New York on

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<sup>93</sup> Rogers, *Wine of Fury*, 35.

<sup>94</sup> Leighton W. Rogers (1893 - 1962) papers are in the Library of Congress. His collection presents a unique account of Rogers' experience and City Bank story in Russia. The collection includes a few book-length drafts of unpublished manuscripts such as "Czar, Revolution, Bolsheviks," a memoir based on his diary and journal of 1916 – 1919. It also has a copy of a printed novel that presents a fictionalized account of an American financier in St. Petersburg during the Russian Revolution. The collection serves as an invaluable source of information not only about the bank, but also about social and occupational groups of American residents in the Russian capital. It presents the chronological records of facts and events with a personal touch of an inquiring mind and curious personality. To some extent, Rogers' experience is saturated with the tendency to provide the unique comparative outlook that has been specified as the methodological means for carrying out the research under consideration. The diary entries, that serve as a foundation for his novel *Wine of Fury*, present comprehensive comparative analysis of things not only observed and experienced in Russia, but also compared with the most essential American cultural and social postulates, the idioms that the author had known and lived with before he was commissioned to work as a clerk in an American financial institution in Petrograd. Therefore, Rogers' writing about Americans living and working in tsarist capital unexpectedly takes unusual shapes and sounds in an unusual modes reflecting acquired reservations not only towards common Western perception of Russia, but also towards such notions as capitalist means of production, pragmatism, rationalism, and even American democracy and its egalitarian institutions. The head of the American bank in the novel David Brand lives and moves in the highest society in Petrograd, getting intimately acquainted with the noblest circle that includes the Countess Borovskaya, an American woman married to a noble Russian Aristocrat (it is very possible that the prototype for this character was Countess Nostitz, also known

Wall Street, he was sent to Petrograd “as one of six Americans, to assist in opening and operating a branch bank.” He defined their mission in eloquent terms, giving the detailed characteristics of each of six men that compiled “the nucleus of the clerical force of the branch,”<sup>95</sup> that were commissioned to go to Russia:

On September 12<sup>th</sup>, I was informed, that in company with five others, I should be sail on the “Oscar II,” old Hen ford’s peace-ship....The five men I’m with are: Steward, from Lake Forest College, somewhere out near Chicago, a funny little cuss with a mania for figures and statistics, whose idea of a good time is to read the report of the United States Steel corporation; Bill Welsh, from the University of Michigan, a second Jack English, who has worked hard all his young life, a good student, and very practical; “Count” Swinnerton, from Harvard, and quite typical as you would say could you see his mustache, goatee, and “so help me God” expression; Babcock, a Columbia Psi U, an intellectual Victorian china doll, unable to give birth to an original thought even with the aid of all the Twilight Sleep powders this side of the meridian of Greenwich; and Fred Sikes, a very likable kid, in spite of the fact that he has been sheltered all his life from the cruel world, especially in his four years of college at the Country Club at Princeton, and the fact that he would rather have a Japanese valet than a wife.<sup>96</sup>

Bank manager Robbie Stevens met the group in Petrograd on the 16 October 1916 and took all six young bank clerks to meet Meserve in his headquarters in the Hotel Europe. Rogers would later recollect his feelings that the head of the branch was annoyed with the newcomers,

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as Lilie Bouton, or the “Countess from Iowa.” She was an American actress whose Russian husband, a former military attaché of the Russian Embassy, did have a Finnish seaside villa, where a lot of American diplomats, business executives, and other expatriates mingled with wealthy Russians. See *Countess from Iowa* by Countess Nostitz (Lilie de Fernandez -Azabal), (New York: Putnam, 1936).

<sup>95</sup> Rogers, Leighton, *Wine of Fury*, 72.

<sup>96</sup> Rogers to Brown, and friends. 23 November 1916, Petrograd, Russia. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers. Box 1, folder 2, MD, LC.

as they were inexperienced and unable to “speak three consecutive words of the language.”<sup>97</sup>

Rogers recollects his first impression of the financier in his novel *Wine of Fury* (1924), a fictionalized account of an American financier in St. Petersburg during the Russian Revolution. In the featured characteristics of the fictional banker it is possible to recognize those of Meserve himself. Rogers described “a practical business man attempting to carry on business as usual with a people who are living over a volcano that is constantly in eruption.”<sup>98</sup> Thus, upset about new contingent of inexperienced employees sent from New York, the banker in the novel contemplates that the managers in New York do not understand all the challenges that the Americans were facing in Russia. Meserve knew that “experienced assistants were available, at a price” and regretted that “those in charge at home did not wish to pay the price.”<sup>99</sup>

In order to open the branch in Russia, the Americans had to undergo the procedure of “localization” of American financial enterprise in the Russian capital. Thus, for example, Rogers points out in his diary that

before we could open our bank it had to be provided with icons – one for each room – and with the regulation pictures of the Czar and Czarina. These pictures have to be hung in a conspicuous place in the entrance hall. Then, having the ‘ikona’, they must be blessed. Hence, today, when we opened, there was quite a ceremony. Priests and a choir came over and officiated at the opening service which lasted about an hour. Each of our icons were blessed as were all those of us who will work in the bank under

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<sup>97</sup> Rogers, *Wine of Fury*, 251.

<sup>98</sup> “Whom the Gods Destroy: *Wine of Fury*. By Leigh Rogers,” *New York Times*, (25 May 1914).

<sup>99</sup> Rogers also believes that the bank executives back in the United States could not comprehensively assess the achievements of the Petrograd branch staff as “they had never worked day after day, night after night, without nourishment of good and sufficient food... had never known nervousness tension of walking bullet-swept streets – they could never comprehend the sheer nervous power required to push the routine under such circumstances.”

Rogers, *Wine of Fury*, 251.

them. This done we were officially a bank and could proceed with our business.”<sup>100</sup>

After they obtained the necessary charter from the tsar, they initially “were successful beyond expectations.” As Rogers described it in his novel: “from the very first day the new bank was assured of success. Meserve “got to work at once, to collect so much business here, so much financial responsibility, that sheer mass of liabilities will compel their [bank management in New York] attention. Frighten them into attention and consideration. Fear, self – interest, expediency, are their chief incentives to action.”<sup>101</sup> In other words, the Russian branch representative’s task was to “steer a clear course through the maze of business and political intrigue.”<sup>102</sup>

The steady flow of business to its doors permitted no doubt.<sup>103</sup> A little over a month after the branch was opened Meserve wrote to New York:

I’m sure it will please you to hear that... we have passed the point which is always so eagerly striven for by all new banks.... The interest we are today receiving from our investments, practically all in Russian Government 5 percent Treasury Bills, (exclusive of the interest on our rs. 5.000.000 Guarantee Fund Bonds) is more than paying all our running expenses, including all our interest charges. In addition to this, we have already signed up additional businesses which should double our present earnings within three months. We are working hard, and I think the position of our Petrograd Branch at the end of this year will be a most pleasant surprise, even to you. I have found out that my experiences here the past year and a half have put me in rather an unusual and favorable position for working up business for our bank and the

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<sup>100</sup> Leighton W. Rogers, “Diary,” December 1916, Petrograd, Russia. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers. Box 1, folder 3, MD, LC. The similar ceremony took place when Singer Sewing Machine Company was opening their headquarters in St. Petersburg. See Carstensen, *American Enterprise in Foreign Market*, 49.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, See also Rogers, *Wine of Fury*, 72.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>103</sup> Rogers, Leighton, *Wine of Fury*, 76.

subsidiary companies allied to our bank, and I'm now devoting practically all of my time to this work.<sup>104</sup>

Meserve advocated opening another branch in Moscow right away. He concluded that a branch in Moscow would help the Petrograd branch in many ways and “would naturally assist our allied companies, and also our New York head office.”<sup>105</sup>

The bank management, however, according to Rogers' observations, would have a hard time making what they considered to be efficient banking methods conform to the Russian law which required many practices that were “unique and cumbersome” to Americans. Among the differences, according to Rogers:

We use a ticket system and loose-leaf books and make the necessary entries after public business hours. Here the customer has to wait while his transaction goes through the entire routine and is finally entered in one central journal – a truly gigantic book, with everything written in ink in longhand. It takes at least forty minutes to cash a check in a Russian bank. You enter a waiting room, divest yourself of your overcoat and rubbers – rubbers are standard equipment in this climate – and present your check. The teller gives you a brass coin with a number on it and you retire to the waiting room. After your check has completed its round of the various departments and books and you have read a couple of newspapers and drunk a glass of tea brought by an attendant, the teller signs out your number. You present your brass coin, and receive your money.<sup>106</sup>

Americans, who valued practicality and materialism, needed to conform to different attitudes of material wealth and money, as their counterparts in Russia considered money and

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<sup>104</sup> Meserve to Vanderlip, Petrograd, 10 – 23 February, 1917. FAVP. Part – A. RBML, GMC, CU.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Rogers, “Czars, Revolution, Bolsheviks,” 10. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers. Box 3, folder 7, MD, LC.

banks as “necessary but rather degrading institutions.”<sup>107</sup> This, according to Rogers, “is embedded in the psychology and philosophy of the people.”<sup>108</sup> “No person of quality,” as Rogers noticed, “will concern himself with money more than he has too.” Working in a bank, he would deal with “servants or at the best a business managers” of accounts holders “to handle” ‘dirty’ money.” Thus, people’s time was not worth much, which is why Russian banks would not hurry with their financial transactions.<sup>109</sup>

An American banker would notice with surprise the striking difference between wealthy men in the United States, who would usually “know to the nickel” how much money they have and where it is, and the Russian rich who “are genuinely vague about these matters.” Thus Rogers would reconstruct a typical conversation with the City Bank of New York client who would choose to come to the bank to discuss financial affairs:

I own a gold mine in the Lena area, and I think I still control a railroad in the south.  
Then – let’s see, do I have that coal company in the Donetz or did I sell those shares

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<sup>107</sup> It was especially true for those Russians who were born into noble and wealthy families. Money and material wealth were inherited, taken for granted and not considered as an indicator of determinations, ambitions, strong will, or personal achievements as it might be for their American self-made counterparts who benefitted from commercial opportunities, free trade and social mobility, pursuing their personal goals and measuring their personal achievements by financial success and further accumulation of material wealth.

<sup>108</sup> This same philosophy defines banking in Russia. When opening the branch in Petrograd Vanderlip noted that banks came into existence in Russia relatively late, only in the middle of the eighteenth century and only through the government’s initiative. Thus, the American banker specified major characteristics of the Russian banking system including the dominant role played by the State and the consequent close connection between the banks and the national credit. He also pointed out the relatively late beginning of private banking and the tendency towards comprehensive regulation of private banking by the state. Vanderlip was aware of “one minister’s” statement saying that “private banks should be regarded ‘as extremely dangerous institutions that ought not to be tolerated at all.’” F-8. FAV P, Part – F. RBML, GMC, CU.

<sup>109</sup> Rogers, “Czars, Revolution, Bolsheviks,” Greenwich, Connecticut, 11. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers. Box 3, folder 7, MD, LC.

last year? That timber concern of mine is still exporting to England, but I do not know how much; and there is a shoe factory in France that's doing pretty well. I can't tell you exactly about these things, though. I'll have to ask my business manager." As long as the manager keeps them supplied with enough cash in hand to enable them to live as they like, they do not worry much about finances.<sup>110</sup>

As revolutionary events were unfolding, the "great New York financial institution" team was more and more engulfed in the political and social turmoil following the dramatic convolutions of circumstances under which they were forced to operate. Some of them, for example Leighton Rogers, would record their "reaction to a strange country and people involved in history-making events." Rogers's unpublished manuscript reflects, in his own words, "the stress of daily working and living" throughout that dramatic period of time.<sup>111</sup> His immediate reaction to the political developments in this manuscript is striking; it describes the events "as they took place, speculations, as they were ventured at the time, and incidents are related within a few hours after the writer extricated himself from them." In short, Rogers writes in the "Foreword," "with its action and rumor, its fact and discussion, its comedy and tragedy, this journal is a virtual account-book" of Russia in the Revolution.<sup>112</sup> Rogers explains that the Russian revolution in March 1917 "did not hamper" the bank business activities much. It had the opposite effect. The most immediate and noticeable result of the political changes, especially of the futile uprising in July, 1917, provided a "deluge" of new business for the bank. It seemed in Rogers' words, as though "nearly everyone of means in Russia would want "to transfer the

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., Foreword.

responsibility for their fortunes to this new American institution of apparently unshakable stability.”<sup>113</sup> Rogers described the burst of business in the pages of his novel:

Within two weeks the final figures on his balance-sheet doubled. Within four weeks he estimated that they would be approaching a total which had been thought only possible after years of effort. The growth became the sensation of financial circles.<sup>114</sup>

The February revolution and the end of the tsarist regime not only fundamentally changed the political situation in Russia, but also signaled to American capital to reinforce their activities there. The Petrograd branch of the National City Bank was in an even more favorable situation than other financial institution, as it appeared that the finance minister of the Provisional Government was their client. On 29 March 1917 the *Kommercheskii Telegraph* reported that Minister Tereshenko was negotiating a huge loan “researching the opportunities on American financial markets.”<sup>115</sup>

The situation proved to be much the same in November, when the Bolsheviks took over:

Panic-stricken, people have brought their money to us. New business has actually beat at our doors for the last two weeks. By the exhausting process of working day and night we have met the emergency and so taken advantage of it that our balance-sheet has reached a figure undreamed of even in our plans as mapped out for the next five years to come.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Rogers, *Wine of Fury*, 189.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>115</sup> *Kommercheskii Telegraf*, 27 March 1917.

<sup>116</sup> Rogers, *Wine of Fury*, 250.

Other accounts also indicate challenges the Petrograd branch was dealing with during the memorable year of 1917. In his cablegram to Vanderlip, Meserve notes that even though “the Petrograd books are not in present possession of the bank,” their “ultimate Russian position is distinctly reassuring.”<sup>117</sup> Just a few days before the tsar abdicated Meserve still had not “changed my views in the slightest as regards the great future for our bank here if we continue to work hard, fair, and intelligently.” “The chief thing,” he would believe, “is to only have men here who sincerely and truly like Russia and the Russians.”<sup>118</sup> His firm faith in ultimate success of the enterprise was expressed in a cablegram sent from Petrograd on 20 June 1917 that informed the chief executives in New York that the total assets in Petrograd that had just passed hundred million roubles.<sup>119</sup> In other words, “the enterprise was now emerging from the shadow of experiment into the light of an established success.” Under the circumstances, the public “flocked to the American bank with money and securities.” Week after week “the totals on the balance-sheet continued their regular deployment across the page. Within less than a year the branch bank had outstripped all other foreign banks in the city, surpassing the newer native institutions. At the same rate of growth it would not be long before it passed more established banks.”<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>117</sup>Meserve to J.H. Fulton, London, date unidentified. Cable sent through International Banking Corporation. FAVP. Part A. RBML, GMC, CU.

<sup>118</sup>Meserve to Vanderlip, Petrograd, 10 – 23 February, 1917. FAVP. Part A. RBML, GMC, CU. Fessenden Meserve himself had become “a true friend of Russia.” In a letter that he sent to New York on 29 August 1918, soon after he returned from Russia, he mentioned that “I was very much pleased this morning when they told me at the Russian Embassy that I had a number of very good friends in the State and Treasury Departments who all said they felt that besides my loyalty to the City Bank I had a sincere sympathy and affection for Russia which was rather rare.” See Meserve to Vanderlip, Washington, 29 August 1918. FAVP. Part – A. RBML, GMC, CU.

<sup>119</sup>Meserve to Vanderlip, Petrograd, 20 June 1917. Cablegram. FAVP. Part – A. RBML, GMC, CU.

<sup>120</sup> Rogers, *Wine of Fury*, 142, 222, 234.

Day by day the line of depositors in the little room before his private office multiplied, and the figures descriptive of his balances deployed out across the balance-sheet.

Their total already stood at double the amount he had expected to achieve in a year.<sup>121</sup>

The largest group of bank clients were foreign nationals. It was, according to Tkachenko, a very influential and powerful group that included diplomats and industrialists. Embassies and individual diplomats trusted their deposits to the National City Bank. Tkachenko reveals that some of the most prominent clients of the Petrograd branch included W.H. Hamilton, G. Batter-Right, and Francis Riggs from the American diplomatic corps, American naval attaché Walter Crosley, the Dutch ambassador, and the second secretary of the Dutch mission, Danish Ambassador Harold Scavenius, a special envoy of the State Department Smith, and British diplomat named Hannion. Non-for profit and non-governmental organizations also became the National City Bank clients. Thus, both Frank Billings and William Boyce Thompson<sup>122</sup> of the American Red Cross, YMCA leader Dr. Archibald Hart, and the officers of that organization Valdo and Spenser. In the late summer of 1917 the renowned British writer Somerset Maugham opened an account at the National City Bank branch in Petrograd, where he was sent by a British intelligence agent Sir William Wiseman under the cover of “gathering materials for stories” “to try to prevent the Bolsheviks from seizing power and yanking Russia out of the war.”<sup>123</sup>

The bank checked its potential borrowers’ credit histories and reputations scrupulously. Clients that met those criteria were first of all business elite. This explains the bank’s decision to

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 153.

<sup>122</sup> Thompson opened an account for \$1 million at National City Bank “to be used for the good of the cause.” Norman E. Saul, *War and Revolution: The United States and Russia 1917 – 1921* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 167n247.

<sup>123</sup> Ted Morgan, *Maugham* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980), 226. The writer’s experience in Russia became the basis for his 1928 book *Ashenden, or, the British Agent* (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran & Company, inc., 1928).

open a branch in Petrograd, the financial and industrial capital of Russia. The presence of a diverse and influential group of international enterprises and individuals, which included a significant number of American entrepreneurs and companies, justified the assumption that beneficial business opportunities lay in Russia, prior to the opening of the branch. By the end of the 1917, most of the largest American enterprises in St. Petersburg operated with the financial backing of the financial giant. National City Bank's clientele included New York merchant and exporter from New York Charles Lewis, G.E. Metcalf from the American Babcock and Wilcox, Japanese national Tesabuto Minagava from Okura and Company, Swedish bank employee Paul Runkrants, W.P. Rosenblat from the Bank of United States, L.K. Hide from the Public National Bank of New York City, G.G. Horn, a member of the American Railroad Commission in Russia S.P. Elliot from V.R. Grace and Company, and Edward Perish, a New York Life Insurance and Trust Company representative's son and many others.<sup>124</sup> Meserve's personal contacts were important in attracting prominent business executives to his financial establishment. American firms and business groups operating in Russia became the core of the clientele of the branch upon its opening on the Palace Embankment. Tkachenko lists some of them and mentions their initial deposits: Studebaker Corporation of America – 25 thousand roubles, International Information Bureau -28.5 thousand roubles, New York Life Insurance Company with 6.9 million roubles in their account in late November 1917; Singer Co. – 1.2 million roubles, and the Jewish

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<sup>124</sup> To reveal the names of the City Bank clients Tkachenko uses the materials from the Bank archives found in Russian State Historical Archives in St. Petersburg. Among other clients he also mentions H.B. Beschov who was affiliated with Danish-Russian Trading Company, E.B. Gustafson from Stockholm based Milton and Co., Biern Lepsen from Norwegian G.S. Martens and Co., G.F. MacEnalti from Preston Steel Car Co. See Tkachenko, *Amerikanskii bankovski kapital v Rosii v godi Pervoi mirovoi voini*, 84-85.

Society – 361 thousand roubles.<sup>125</sup> Upon its opening, the bank in Petrograd received the deposits from the American Consulate (four deposits, 425 thousand roubles each), the American Embassy (three deposits, 2 million roubles each), the American Relief Committee, whose representative was W.B. Thompson, and the American Hospital (their treasurer was Franklin Gaylord) operated by the members of the American colony in Petrograd. The American Consulate staff in Moscow also used the National City Bank. Thus, the Consul General in Moscow Summers was their client. There was a long list of British banks and companies, as well as the British Embassy, which would become depositors in the Petrograd branch. Many other international and Russian companies, trading houses, large banks, as well as embassies would have their accounts at the National City Bank. Thus, Tkachenko mentions financial and business organizations from Russia, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway, etc. One of the bank's first Russian clients, even before the official opening, was M.I. Tereshenko. Among other wealthy and prominent Russians clients were timber dealer M.O. Nasatisin, who had 1 million roubles in his account, M.A. Ginzburg who had two accounts, with 2 million roubles in each, Moscow oil magnate A.A. Benua, who had a 40 thousand rouble account, Minister of Foreign Affairs M. Artsmovich who was a friend of Meserve. Many members of the Russian nobility and even the royalty maintained accounts in the National City Bank. Thus, the Great Prince Boris Vladimirovich, Countess M.S. Benkerdoff, Count B.A. Visil'chikov, Countess A.N.

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<sup>125</sup> Tkachenko also mentions Russian Equipment Company-100 thousand roubles, Walk Over Shoe Company – 435 thousand roubles, V.R. Grace and Co. – 500 thousand roubles, International Banking Corporation - 1 million roubles (that was the initial deposit, by September 1917 this subsidiary of the City Bank had more than 5,1 million roubles on their account), etc. Philadelphia National Bank – 200 thousand roubles, Public National Bank of New York – two accounts, 700 thousand roubles each, West Side National Bank of Chicago – 150 thousand roubles, Farmers Loan and trust Co – 500 thousand roubles, Guarantee Trust Co. – two accounts, 3,5 mln. roubles each, Irving National Bank – 1,6 million roubles, Mechanics and Metals National Bank – 500 thousand roubles, and American Express Co. -1,5 million roubles. See *ibid.*, 85-88.

Volkonskaya, Count Grabbe, Count Dolgorukii, Baron Korf, Count Rostoftsev, and count D.I. Tolstoy were the bank clients. The Queen of Greece Olga Konstantinovna kept in the bank her jewelry that was worth 1.5 million roubles.<sup>126</sup>

Among other operations Tkachenko mentions a loan granted to a Persian bank for financing essential purchases of sugar in the United States. In the summer of 1917 the branch financed the export of a big party of Persian carpets to the United States. One of the best examples of a direct investment in the Russian economy would be the branch participation in the establishment of a joint-stock company San-Galli, Grace and Company that comprised move towards cooperation between Petrograd industrialist San-Galli and the Grace and Company branch in Russia.

Besides financial operations and the efforts to introduce and sustain American capital on the Russian financial market, the National City Bank actively supported various relief initiatives in Russia, aiding victims of the wars and revolutions. Frank Vanderlip became an honorary treasurer of the Russian-American Relief Association, formed in early August 1916 in America under the auspices of Madam Bakhméteff, wife of the Russian ambassador to the United States. This association collected funds to be turned over to the state organizations in Russia, for distribution among needy sufferers of war. The National City Bank acted as a depository for the association. After a successful Russian Bazaar that was held in a New York Armory in December 1916, all the proceedings were forwarded to the City Bank to be used for “the sick and wounded, the widows and orphans, the destitute and refugees alike.”<sup>127</sup> When the branch was opened in Petrograd, the bank became one of the most renowned Western financial organizations involved in charitable activities in Russia in times of trial. Thus, for example, it had active

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<sup>126</sup> Tkachenko, *Amerikanskiĭ bankovskiĭ kapital v Rosii v godi Pervoi mirovoi voĭni*, 84-88.

<sup>127</sup> “Russian-American Relief Association.” No date. Box F-8. FAVP. Part – F. RBML, GMC, CU.

accounts for all the contributions coming in for the American Refuge, and the relief's organization meetings were held in the Bank's reading room.<sup>128</sup>

And yet, it was the consequences of “the Bolshevik theft of the Revolution in November 1917,” that finally stopped the operations of the successful American enterprise. Conditions in revolutionary Petrograd were worsening by the day. Rogers recollects in his novel that the staff worked until late at night, while “the shortage of food and under-nourishment left them thin and pale,” the lack of time for exercise and amusement “robbed them of their enthusiasm and spontaneity.”<sup>129</sup> Eventually National City Bank personnel had to leave Russia.

The Soviets confiscated the bank and held the employees under house arrest for three days as “capitalists.”<sup>130</sup> On the morning of 26 October 1917, Rogers recorded in his diary:

Walking to work this morning I did not realize that a government had fallen and that

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<sup>128</sup> *Semi-Annual Statement of The American Refuge: For Refugee Women and Children from the War Zone* (Petrograd, 1917).

<sup>129</sup> Leighton W. Rogers, “Czars, Revolution, Bolsheviks,” 222. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers. Box 3, folder 7. MD, LC.

<sup>130</sup> Rogers, Autobiographical Sketch. Box 1, folder 1, MD, LC. The newly established Soviet government annulled foreign loans made by the government of the Tsar. However, it was in Rogers' novel where he himself contradicts his own words writing that “some sane heads in the Soviet ranks” realized that “in the future it is inevitable for America and Russia to carry on business and therefore it is advantageous to have a powerful American banking institution represented here.... I have received so much encouragement from them.... The Bolsheviks have even asked me to disregard as far as I can some of the decrees they have issued about the validity of stocks and bonds....” See Rogers, *Wine of Fury*, 288. Tkachenko also writes that the Petrograd branch of the National City Bank was not touched by nationalization, as it did not interfere in the operations of another foreign bank Credit Lyonnais. The author writes that it was the decision of the branch management to cease their operation and that they informed Wall Street of it in January 1918. See Tkachenko, *Amerikanskii bankovski kapital v Rosii v godi Pervoi mirovoi voini*, 6. It is also worth mentioning that the decision to close the Petrograd branch was not immediately supported by everyone in the bank. Moreover, One of its managers R. R. Stevens considered it as a necessity to establish business relations with the Soviet Government. See Ganelin, *Rossiya i SShA. 1914-1917. Ocherki istorii russko-Amerikanskikh otnoshenii* (Leningrad: 1969), 175.

my destiny in this country was to be guided from then on by a government of Anarchists, if that paradox can be.<sup>131</sup>

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On the 12<sup>th</sup> of December – commercial banks including ours can get no cash and consequently can do no business. It has been so since the end of last week, with a spasmodic opening of the doors for an hour or two on one or two days.... All other transactions are impossible. Commercial credits, securities – simply are not.<sup>132</sup>

After fleeing Russia, Rogers spent a few weeks in 1920 speaking “on the subject of menace of Bolshevism before chambers of commerce and Rotary clubs in various New England cities.” He returned to the National City Bank of New York, where he joined the staff of a vice-president handling foreign business and writing for the bank’s series on the economic development of Scandinavian countries. In November 1921 Rogers resigned from the bank and became a Russian specialist for the United States Department of Commerce, in charge of investigating “any rumored business being done in Europe by Soviet Russia.” The headquarters of Russian economic and business affairs in Europe was situated in Berlin, where Rogers was a trade commissioner. His reports went up the line to Herbert Hoover, U.S. secretary of commerce. That circumstance made it possible for Rogers to be appointed later as a commercial attaché at the American Embassy in Warsaw, which was his last official post. While in Warsaw, he completed his novel that was published the same year (1924). Though, according to reviewers, most of the “threads of this tangled web” are created for the sake of the thrill of a romance, out of this fictionalized “entanglement of strife” emerge authentic “strange turns of chance and the impetus of the suddenly realized revolution,” and “the situations of unexpected drama” that Harry

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<sup>131</sup> Leighton W. Rogers, “Czars, Revolution, Bolsheviks,” 171. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers. Box 3, folder 7, MD, LC.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

Fessenden Meserve was involved in. The latter was stranded in revolutionary Petrograd, continuing to “struggle to protect his interests, confronting the extreme left of the Soviets, when all property rights were condemned, in the Soviet court of inquisition and terror.”<sup>133</sup> In other words, Rogers illustrates in his “lost” and forgotten book how, under the dedicated management of Meserve, a team of American bank executives managed a balance between “the rigid circle of their duties and the surrounding circumstances of life.”<sup>134</sup> Rogers expresses much admiration and respect for the head of the branch, writing that “although aware of the fortuitous circumstances which had prompted the sudden confidence in a foreign bank,” those, who understood such things conceded credit to Meserve for his “energetic, untiring exploitation of those circumstances.” Rogers emphasized that anyone with “less determination, less sacrifice, of self, with less courage and energy, would have given up long ago.”<sup>135</sup> Bank archives, the fictionalized story written by the bank clerk, and the memoirs of the stepdaughter of the head of the branch portray the chief banker as being consulted and quoted ubiquitously. “Officials of other banks catered to his requests. Even government treasury officials came to him for counsel. He had become a man of importance, a power in the financial life of the country.”<sup>136</sup> Lascelle recalls

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<sup>133</sup> “Whom the Gods Destroy: *Wine of Fury*. By Leigh Rogers.” *New York Times*, 25 May 1924, BR8.

<sup>134</sup> Rogers, *Wine of Fury*, 191.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 251.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 234-235. According to Lascelle’s memoirs, Meserve became respected within a circle that was much larger than that of businessmen and financiers. He was often surrounded by people of a rank quite higher than even the one around the American ambassador. Among the family’s close friends were gallant Ivan Charlier, Belgian Consul, with his “sterling character and high courage in adversity after the revolution, when he lost all,” Bernard de l’Escaille, the handsome Comte Jacques de Lalaing, another Belgian diplomat, and French ambassador Monsieur Paléologue, who wrote extensive historical memoirs of that time, the brilliant Charles de Chambrun and Francois Gentil from the French Embassy, Russian General Count Gregorii Nostitz and his handsome American wife Lili, with a great fortune and high position, who received in their home on Sergeevskaya. Vice Director of the Diplomatic Chancellery of the Emperor Nicolas de Basily, whom Lascelle married later in Paris. Standing out in Lascelle’s

that her stepfather “was meeting all the principal bankers, Russian and foreign, as well as people in the Finance Ministry.” She wrote that the finance ministry put forth every effort to facilitate his task,” and Meserve “made many friends among the officials.” The finance minister, Peter Bark, remained in her memory as “not only [an] intelligent and agreeable man, but an eager and efficient collaborator,” with whom Meserve enjoyed negotiating.<sup>137</sup>

The history of the Petrograd branch of the National City Bank of New York, one of the Russia’s largest and the most influential American financial institutions, reveals the importance of the city as a financial and political center of pre-revolutionary Russia with the necessary preconditions for its establishment. Unfortunately, tendentious postulates of Soviet historiography tended to avoid a comprehensive analysis of business and economic relations between Russia and leading Western European and North American states, including the diversity and complexity of credit and financial histories and its influence upon international affairs, especially just before and during the Great War. And yet, as Tkachenko urges, it is necessary to critically re-evaluate critically the international business history between Russia and its Western counterparts in order to comprehend and forecast a perspective of twenty-first century Russian social and economic development.<sup>138</sup> Tkachenko suggests that an analysis of the

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memoirs against this background was an Imperial Highness, Grand Duke Boris Vladimirovich, cousin of the Emperor Nicholas II. Another image that she recalled as being close to her stepfather was Duke Alexander of Leuchtenberg. de Basily Meserve, *Memoirs of a Lost World*, 60-61. According to Lascelle, the Meserves spent time in Terijoki, Finland, where they would come out during summer months. Their summer house was a great venue for the reception of prominent guests. Thus, when the United States Mission headed by Elihu Root was visiting Petrograd, and especially when the excitement prevailed in July, “the handsome Foreign Minister of the Provisional Government, brought charming grey-haired Mr. Root” to Meserve’s place in Terijoki to remove him from the city. See *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>138</sup> Tkachenko, *Amerikanskii bankovski kapital v Rosii v godi Pervoi mirovoi voini*, 3. Tkachenko points out that even though the certain detached aspects of the history and importance of the Petrograd branch of the National City

strategy and tactics which exported American capital to Russia during the war presents a case study of the financial enterprise which actively projected American finance into the Russian economy. Moreover, the history of the National City Bank in Petrograd reveals a circle of American financiers who were interested in cooperation with Russia, ready to invest in it during the war, and hoping to continue to do so after the conflict ended. Most importantly, this analysis of the activities of the Petrograd branch illustrates the role and influence of American private capital in alleviating tension between Russian and the United States in foreign policy, economics, and trade in that era.<sup>139</sup>

As stated previously, the American financiers sought the opportunity to open their offices in Russia, to an extent, to be able to serve some of their customers operating there since the late nineteenth century. Among American manufacturers that opened offices or secured agents in Russia after 1890s were National Cash Register, Carnegie Steel, Pratt and Whitney, the Worthington Pumping Engine Company,<sup>140</sup> and Walk Over Shoe Company. Another example would be the experience of St. Louis and Pittsburg glass manufacturer Ethan Allen Hitchcock,

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Bank, its subsidiary American International Corporation, and their cooperation with an array of other American financial institutions, as well as industrial enterprises, had previously been covered in various Russian and Western publications, the holistic and comprehensive scholarly analysis of the topic is presented for the first time in his work. The author names several works in this regard: I.M. Rabinovich, "Proniknoveniye amerikanskogo imperialisma v ekonomiku dorevolutsionnoi Rossii," *Trudi Leningradskogo korablestroitel'nogo institute*, vipusk XXI (Leningrad: 1957); Arkadii L., Sidorov, *Finansovoye polozheniye Rossii v godi Pervoi mirovoi voini* (Moskva: 1960); Selesnyov, G.K. *Ten' dollara nad Rossiyei* (Moskva: 1957); V.V. Lebedev, *Russko-Amerikanskiye ekonomicheskiye otnosheniya. 1900 – 1917* (Moskva, Mezhdunarodniye otnosheniya: 1964); Rafail Sh., Ganelin, *Rossiya i SSHA. 1914-1917. Ocherki istorii russko- Amerikanskikh otnoshenii* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1969); Cleveland, H.v.B., Huertas T.F., *City Bank: 1812 – 1970* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 1985); Wilkins, M., *The Maturing of Multinational Enterprise: American Business Abroad from 1914 to 1970* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974).

<sup>139</sup> Tkachenko, *Amerikanskiy bankovskiy kapital v Rossii v godi Pervoi mirovoi voini*, 10.

<sup>140</sup> Norman E. Saul, *Concord and Conflict: The United States and Russia, 1867 – 1914*, 410.

who had “extensive international background” and who “settled comfortably into St. Petersburg society.”<sup>141</sup> The growth and evolution of America’s earliest multinational commercial and industrial enterprises during their formative years in St. Petersburg also took place at the turn of the century. American corporate life was represented in St. Petersburg by such symbols of America as the Singer Sewing Machine Company, New York Life Insurance,<sup>142</sup> and Westinghouse, which was involved in the process of electrification of the Russian capital, and that later participated in a Westinghouse-Crane joint venture resulting in a new factory in Russia to manufacture air brakes for the Trans-Siberian Railroad.<sup>143</sup>

Fred V. Carstensen, who focuses his research on the successful American business initiatives anchored in St. Petersburg and through the Russian empire, devoted a book to the history of *Aktsionernaya Kompaniia Zinger and International Harvester*, the two largest American commercial industrial enterprises operating in Russia. Though Carstensen suggests that such studies “relate more to the organizational development of the multinational corporation than to Russian economic development,”<sup>144</sup> he still acknowledges that “by providing this perspective on that development, [these studies] help to focus on critical aspects of the process,

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<sup>141</sup> Saul refers to the correspondence of Hitchcock, found in army Attaché George L. Anderson archive, and cites a letter to his mother from 18 December 1897: “They are all extremely kind, I mean the natives and the American Colony are well bonded together.” From Anderson Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

<sup>142</sup> It is worth mentioning one curious fact related to the Russian branch of New York Life in St. Petersburg and to its reputation. In George Kennan’s papers in the NYPL there is a letter addressed to him from former political exile Solomon Lazarevich Chudnovsky who, referring to the existence of the New York Life Insurance branch in St. Petersburg, is asking Kennan to use his connections in New York to negotiate opening one in Irkutsk. He explains that Siberia has a great potential for the insurance business, and that with his skills and alacrity he could become a perfect manager of such an enterprise. Solomon Lazarevich Chudnovsky to George Kennan, Irkutsk, Eastern Siberia, 2 March 1889. George Kennan Papers, 1856-1987. Box. 1, series I. Correspondence, 1889-1891, folder 1.3. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>143</sup> Saul, “Charles R. Crane, American Industrialist, Globalist, a Founder of Russian Studies in America.”

<sup>144</sup> Carstensen, *American Enterprise in Foreign Markets*, 9.

raise new questions for further research, and invite a broad consideration of the complex interactions between foreign enterprise, economic growth, and political process.”<sup>145</sup> The author suggests a close analysis of the role of foreign enterprises in the process of industrialization in Russia, emphasizing certain challenges of “labor and management recruitment, patterns of government interaction with private enterprise, and the quality of the Russian market,” pronouncing Singer’s broad impact, on its employers, on its customers, on the Russian economy, as “strongly developmental.”<sup>146</sup>

In this respect, the establishment of the headquarters for the Singer’s Russian subsidiary is significant, since the building “gave the Singer Company a forceful architectural presence in St. Petersburg that no other European or American enterprise could match, even as a number of banks and commercial establishments struggled to do so.”<sup>147</sup> The first consignment of Singer sewing machines arrived in St Petersburg in the autumn of 1865, when the first central depot for New York’s Singer Company produced equipment opened its doors on Nevsky Prospekt under the directorship of Singer representative Max Fiedler.<sup>148</sup> That event was broadly publicized in the

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>146</sup> Carstensen, *American Enterprise in Foreign Markets*, 96. The author repeatedly emphasizes Singer’s developmental impact, revealing the company’s ability to mobilize an enormous untapped demand among Russians for modern products. Moreover, in its vast number of employees, the company was creating what in time could have become a legitimate Russian middle class.” Ibid., 102-103. Finally, in his case studies, Carstensen illustrates how American enterprises, even though pursuing their narrow objectives of higher profits, accelerated “the evolution of economic systems and draw people directly into the complex of the modern economy,” thus transforming “the attitudes and practices of the Russian farmer, garment market, and family, thereby contributing to the economic development of Russia.” Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> W. Bruce Lincoln, *Sunlight at Midnight. St. Petersburg and the Rise of the Modern Russia* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 162.

<sup>148</sup> “Мануфактурная Компания Singer,” in P.E. Bukharkin, ed., *Tri veka Sankt-Peterburga: eñntñsñiklopediiñañ v trekh tomakh*, tom 2, kn. 1 (Sankt-Peterburg: Filologicheskiiñ fakulñtet Sankt-Peterburgskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 2001), 500.

St. Petersburg press, particularly in such widely read and reputable editions as *Sank Peterburgskiye Vedomosti*, *Golos*, and *Severnaya Pochta*. Singer needed that publicity as it was severely confronted by its American competitors Grover & Baker and Wheeler & Wilson, firms that had a solid presence in the Russian market since the early 1860s. Singer also had to compete with more than two dozens other producers and distributors of sewing and knitting machines from the United States, England, France, and Germany, that reportedly operated in Russia. By the late 1870s Singer sales were growing slowly, but steadily. At the same time, most of its competitors gradually left stage one by one, leaving Singer as the most recognizable brand in the country. By the beginning of the 1880s Singer became the largest manufacturer of sewing machines in the world. Approximately at that time the company began its “full-scale offense” in Russia, especially as the Western and American markets were saturated with Singer products and the firm’s growth was slowing. Attempts to conquer East Asian markets were unsuccessful, while the Russian focus produced results. Because the trade laws of that country had been changed in the late 1890s, it was not remunerative to import essential consignments of equipment produced abroad to be sold there. Singer decided in the summer of 1897 to establish a subsidiary that would build and operate manufacturing facilities for producing and trading sewing machines, typewriters, bicycles, agricultural equipment and implements, etc. It would also manage the sales that had previously belonged to George Neidlinger, a German merchant, a former mechanic from Singer’s New York City Mott Street factory, and later a general agent in Hamburg, who had taken direct control of Russian sales and maintenance in 1877. Along with American Frederick-Gilbert Born and English subject Douglas Alexander, they became the subsidiary’s registered founders.<sup>149</sup> Tsar Nicholas sanctioned the statutes of *Manufakturnaya*

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

Kompania Singer on 25 June 1897.<sup>150</sup> Although Singer's new managing director Albert Flohr "urged the transfer of the central offices to Moscow to be near production and distribution operations,"<sup>151</sup> George Neidlinger, who also became a member of the First Merchant Guild of St Petersburg, thought that the headquarters ought to be in the capital. One factor favoring the decision was that the "reliance on foreigners and members of ethnic minorities" to manage and serve the company was "without parallel in other major Singer subsidiaries," and St. Petersburg, was historically "the city of foreigners." According to Carstensen, both the recruitment and entrepreneurship patterns of Russian operations developed "not out of choice, but out of necessity," reflecting the difficulties of finding people "with sufficient commercial experience and ability." Thus, foreign nationals, who comprised the core of the national headquarters' supervisors and auditors, adhered more to the American "attitude towards work and career patterns." The company hired them as "a critical bridge between American entrepreneurial vigor, administrative creativity" and "the exigencies of a relatively alien Russian environment."<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Carstensen writes that Neidlinger had begun the registration in the fall of 1896, but because Russia did not have open registration of corporations, it had to be approved "by the Ministry of Finance and the State Council and then the Tsar had to add his seal of approval. Finally the new corporation had to await official publication of its statutes before beginning formal operations." The publication came on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July, and immediately thereafter Neidlinger held the first general meeting of shareholders. See Carstensen, *American Enterprise in Foreign Markets*, 39.

<sup>151</sup> Saul, *Concord & Conflict: The United States and Russia 1867 – 1914*, 533.

<sup>152</sup> See Carstensen, *American Enterprise in Foreign Markets*, 81. Carstensen explains that because of very explicit differences in cultural values, such as for example, work ethics, attitude towards material wealth, etc, Singer's approach to recruitment and training was very specific. Thus, considering that Russians lacked "energy and snap" and did not "take much interest or pride in their product," and finding it challenging to recruit capable managers, especially at the level of the central offices, Neidlinger originally brought people from his Hamburg offices. After having tried two Russians who failed to handle it properly, Flohr had to hire a foreign building superintendent for the headquarters on Nevsky Prospekt. Carstensen concludes that altogether, in 1914 there were 125 German and Austrian as well as other foreign nationals working in the Kompaniya Singer. Some of the employees, like the

Although the ultimate goal was to transfer many new skills to Russians, which the company did successfully using Russian labor for production, it still remained dependent on foreign personnel as sales managers. Even though Singer continuously invested in Russians, “endowing them with a broad range of modern industrial, commercial, and managerial skills,”<sup>153</sup> they never exclusively replaced the foreign technical and managerial personnel. Singer continued to recruit foreigners who seemed able to “mediate between American entrepreneurial drive and Russian economic realities.”<sup>154</sup> And yet, as Carstensen concludes, Singer made significant investment in Russian human capital, supporting an industrial workforce “modern in their skills, procedures and discipline.”<sup>155</sup> The company was one of those “termites of western influence” that “had hailed the uplifting, energizing, [and] liberating influence” of its products, techniques, services, management, and American values.<sup>156</sup> The St. Petersburg headquarters oversaw all book and

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director and cashier H. Bertling, became Russian subjects, and some of them were Baltic Germans and Volga Germans. Carstensen, *American Enterprise in Foreign Markets*, 79-80.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 95. Thus, Singer, in Carstensen’s words, proceeded slowly, being careful not to “fall into the trap of accepting existing industrial skills possessed by experienced Russian factory workers and the society’s established work norms.” And though, as Carstensen suggests, Singer appears to be an isolated case in its policies in developing successful Russian production and sales, it nevertheless demonstrates “the potentialities of the Russian worker and thereby provides a benchmark against which to measure the behavior and success of both Russian and other foreign employees.” Carstensen, *American Enterprise in Foreign Markets*, 99.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 228. Carstensen believes that cultural awareness was essential for the business success. He compares Singer with International Harvester, whose management presumed that knowledge of the business was more important than cultural awareness or linguistic skills, a conviction that resulted in insufficient personnel to supervise its Russian manufacturing operations and inability to recognize the policy-formation process inside the Russian government. *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>156</sup> Foglesong, *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire,”* 5. The author uses the term “termites of western influence” citing T. H. von Laue, who claimed in his article “Imperial Russia at the Turn of the Century: The Cultural Slope and the Revolution from without” that the too sudden influx of American enterprises, products, and ideas undermined Russian traditions and institutions. The article is published in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 3, (July 1961):353-67.

record-keeping as well as coordination within the widely-spread commercial network.<sup>157</sup> It received detailed monthly statements from each region of the vast empire, preparing in turn, “summary reports on sales and collections, accompanied by detailed reports on inspections” to be forward regularly to the New York offices.<sup>158</sup> The new 1.5 million rouble headquarters was blessed by the Russian Orthodox priests in December 1904 and officially opened for business that month with a special art exhibition.<sup>159</sup> The opening of the new St. Petersburg headquarters “reflected management’s belief in and commitment to the future of its product in the Russian market.”<sup>160</sup> The location at 28 Nevsky Prospekt, across the street from the Kazansky Sobor (Cathedral) and beside the Catherine Canal, “would be a continuous and most splendid advertisement.”<sup>161</sup> It worked.

Singer sewing machines were enormously popular. They were to be found in a broad spectrum of Russian household, regardless of the social status of a family or its income. Consumers were offered credit to purchase Singer machines. Moreover the firm accepted in exchange old and used machines of any type, applying its value towards the price of a new,

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<sup>157</sup> Singer headquarters in St Petersburg managed the operations of three other central offices in Riga, Warsaw, and Moscow. An 1899 commercial directory of the entire Russian empire listed ninety-two retail outlets for Singer, either in its own name or Neidlinger’s. But Carstensen thinks that this is an incomplete number and that the Singer organization included by that time at least one hundred retail stores and probably more than a thousand employees. See Carstensen, *American Enterprise in Foreign Markets*, 40.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 48. St. Petersburg was the first and foremost location for advertising and marketing, even if the products were meant to be sold elsewhere in the vast empire. Thus, for example, in order to introduce the McCormick reaper to Russia, in 1860, at the suggestion of the Russian consul general in New York, McCormick “may have contributed a reaper to the new Imperial Agricultural Museum in St Petersburg.” Carstensen also mentions the St. Petersburg newspaper *Zemledielcheskaia Gazeta* that lauded the reaper as “the best thing of the kind known as yet.” Carstensen, *American Enterprise in Foreign Markets*, 120.

updated model. That policy and an effective sales organization expanded annual sales from 8.32 million roubles (110,300 sold machines) per annum in 1900 to 63.51 million roubles (680,000 sold machines) per annum in 1914, a sales increase of 8.3 fold. In the year after the subsidiary was established, the company's profit was 7 percent, which appeared to remain stable in the following years, except in 1900 and 1902, a period of economic crisis.<sup>162</sup> In 1903 the company's primary capital was 10 million roubles (it issued 10,000 shares, of 1000 roubles each).<sup>163</sup> By 1905 *Aktsionernaya Kompaniya Singer* owned a splendid building on Nevsky Prospekt, a factory in Podolsk, and around 300 stores all around the country. The company had additional profit from subleasing office space in its main building and another that they occupied at 40 Kasanskaya Street. For the average Russian the United States associated with Singer machine as much as it associates at present time with such symbols and implication of America as McDonalds or Coca-Cola. As Carstensen pointed out, the company probably had a major impact on people's perceptions of the world around them.<sup>164</sup> American journalist Louise Bryant retold a curious episode she experienced while she was roaming the streets of St. Petersburg, meeting

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<sup>162</sup> ““Manufaktornaya Kompaniya Singer,” 501. Fred Carstensen also provides statistics pointing out that “in 1909 sales were rapidly approaching half a million machines a year, valued at nearly 40 million roubles. These figures were four and five times greater than those for 1900.” Carstensen, *American Enterprise in Foreign Markets*, 66.

<sup>163</sup> It doubled, compared to figures given by Carstensen for 1897. Carstensen cites such sources as *Sobranie uzakonenii i rasporiazhenii pravitel'stva, Ukazatel' Predpriatii*, and writes that at the time the company opened, it had an authorized capital of five million roubles, of which two and a half million was paid up by the first meeting. 2,467,491,93 nominally went to Neidlinger for acquisition of his entire Russian organization, its assets and liabilities. See Carstensen, *American Enterprise in Foreign Markets*, 40. When Neidlinger left the board in May 1902, he sold his shares back to Singer. Carstensen explains that except for those shares Singer owned all the stock of *Kompaniya Singer*. Russian law prohibited the voting of more than one-tenth of the total stock by any one stockholder, so Singer always controlled its Russian subsidiary through “nominees.” Carstensen also refers to the claim made by Singer Manufacturing Company against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. SCA, Box 3533, F: Singer Company vs. USSR. See Carstensen, *American Enterprise in Foreign Markets*, 241.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

interesting personalities or getting involved in conversations. She recollects how she once found herself in a little restaurant in Zagorodny Prospekt where she conversed with “a very old and simple peasant,” who came in and “begged permission to blow on my fur coat to see if it were real seal.” When the peasant found out that she was from America, he became very excited. Bryant was curious about the peasant’s thoughts and ideas about her native land, and she asked him what he knew about it. After a lingering silence, the old man “gravely announced” that “America is a great nation! I know America. Sewing machines come from America.”<sup>165</sup>

As Carstensen points out in his history, by 1899 Singer was already planning to construct a new forty-story office tower in New York, to be its tallest building. The company planned to construct a similarly imposing edifice in St. Petersburg, on the Russian empire’s principal street. However, because of the capital’s building restrictions,<sup>166</sup> Singer built only a six-story structure in St. Petersburg, which, similar to its American counterpart, deserves a place in architectural

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<sup>165</sup> Louise Bryant, *Six Red Month in Russia* (New York: Arno Press, 1970), 177. Carstensen provides statistics that reflects the enormous scale of Singer operations that explains Bryant’s interlocutor’s awareness of its product. Thus he writes that Singer “was providing an important consumer (and producer) durable to an extraordinary large segment of the Russian population – Singer sold more than five million sewing machines in Russia in five years. No other commercial organization in Russia could have sold this product so widely.” Carstensen, *American Enterprise in Foreign Markets*, 95. The name was so well known in that country that it even influenced Russian perceptions of a famous American dancer Isadora Duncan, who returned there in 1908. Her reputation was undoubtedly enhanced by the fact that she first had an affair and was later briefly and unhappily married to Paris Singer, a son of the Singer Sewing Machine Company founder. Norman E. Saul, *Friends or Foes? The United States and Soviet Russia, 1921 – 1941* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 139.

<sup>166</sup> Until the late 1880-s no secular structure could be built taller than the cornice under the roof of the Tsar’s Residence, the Winter Palace. Even when this regulation was removed, the Imperial Building Code for St. Petersburg, which Carstensen refers to, remained in force, disallowing construction of buildings taller than the width of the street they are built on. This is one of the reasons why there are no skyscrapers in St. Petersburg. The only way to circumvent the height regulation was to build towers on the corners of the buildings constructed at intersections of streets, rivers or canals. Thus, Carstensen is not necessarily correct when he wrote that “the tower violated the legal limits on heights,” but he is right when he points out that “the translucent globe carried the Singer name above the surrounding buildings.” See Carstensen, *American Enterprise in Foreign Markets*, 49.

history.<sup>167</sup> Completed in 1905, Russia's first steel-girder building, with a tower, topped with a translucent, illuminated globe and girdled with the Singer name and a masterly sculptured symbolic U.S. whitehead eagle, it was "a center of American business offices as well as those of the American consulate."<sup>168</sup> Many American business executives would stay in a few apartments available within the building. William Smith, the director of the St. Petersburg manufacturing company Westinghouse, would host receptions in the Singer building for his compatriots.<sup>169</sup> The interior design and furnishings were no less innovative and also promoted Singer products in an extensive Singer sales display on the first floor.<sup>170</sup> It remained Singer's property until 1918 and nationalization.

The case studies of the Singer Company and the National City Bank reflect how American enterprises facilitated the process of modernization and industrialization in Russia, contributing to a growing and flourishing American community in its capital city. Both, Singer and the National City Bank occupied some of the best buildings in the very heart of the city, claiming leadership in their fields, by operating to their full potential and investing considerable capital and personnel in Russia.<sup>171</sup> Such American companies as McCormick-International

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<sup>167</sup> Though the landmark Singer building is still one of the most imposing structures on Nevsky Prospekt, it is not associated either with the history of the Singer Sewing Machine Company or with the American presence in the city. After nationalization the building housed the largest bookstore in St. Petersburg and it is known to the citizens as the House of Books (Dom Knigi). Nothing inside or outside the building reminds of "the biggest transnational corporate success stories of the period." Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 531.

<sup>168</sup> Saul, "The American Colony in St. Petersburg."

<sup>169</sup> Arthur William Thompson, and Robert A. Hart, *Uncertain Crusade: America and the Russian Revolution of 1905* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1970), 92.

<sup>170</sup> Carstensen, *American Enterprise in Foreign Markets*, 49.

<sup>171</sup> Carstensen concluded that Singer, for example, reinvested in Russia a large share of what it earned there. He writes that by 1914 the company invested nearly 15 million roubles in buildings and capital equipment and another three million in land. See Carstensen, *American Enterprise in Foreign Market*, 95. The author also emphasized the

Harvester and Westinghouse were not far behind. As Carstensen states, such American enterprises “did grease the wheels of commerce” in Russia with “large investments in operating capital,” created “the commercial cadre modern in skills, procedures, and discipline,” and brought to that country “a new awareness of consumption opportunities and a new capacity through generous credit to consume.”<sup>172</sup>

The unprecedented rates of industrial growth in Russia were also reflected in the growth of insurance operations. However, according to the director of the Museum of Insurance in Russia, V. Borzikh, life insurance was still quite exotic in Russia and had to be developed and promoted. By the end of the 1880s, Russia was rapidly entering the world market of insurance services, which, like banks, were involved in financial operations that resulted in the accumulation of capital. Borzikh points out that the relatively calm and secure life of the Russian insurers had been complicated by two major problems. First of all, the increasing value of premiums was paid out to foreign reinsurers. It resulted in increasing capital export and the issue became more socio-political rather than economic.<sup>173</sup> The other problem, that Borzikh considers as more important, was the emerging foreign insurance companies in Russia. In his article *Inostrantsi v Rossii (Foreigners in Russia)*, Borzikh writes that the established balance in Russian insurance business had been disturbed with the beginning of the direct insurance operations on the territory of the Russian empire provided by the American companies New

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impact of International Harvester on Russian Economic development, writing that both its capital and the American enterprise itself had made much of progressive transformation possible in Russia. *Ibid.*, 229.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 229-230.

<sup>173</sup> It was New York Life Insurance that was used by the National City Bank as an intermediary when an agreement on establishing a syndicate to issue bonds worth ten million dollars for the Society of South-East and Vladicaucasus Railroad was signed in Petersburg in 1899. The deal increased the National City Bank’s interest in Russia and resulted in Vanderlip business trip to Petersburg in the spring 1901. There he met with Witte in April. Tkachenko, *Amerikanskii bankovski kapital v Rossii v godi Pervoi mirovoi voini*, 13.

York Life (since 1888),<sup>174</sup> and *Equitable* (since 1891), and a French company *Urbain* (since 1890).<sup>175</sup> Borzikh writes that American insurance companies were especially criticized for “aggressive advertising” that was still alien and unfamiliar in Russia, having an overwhelming impact upon its people.<sup>176</sup> But, according to Borzhikh, it was unrelenting advertising that secured twenty-five years of success for American insurers in the Russian insurance market. In spite of the adverse publicity in the press, increasing competition from Russian companies, and the required \$500,000 security deposit, American insurance “sales bloomed,” and by the mid 1893 “the two companies had expanded their operations in Russia to a total worth of 35 million rubles in outstanding insurance.”<sup>177</sup> Wilkins summarizes that United States insurance companies operating abroad, including in Russia, were not concerned with foreign competition so much as with coming to terms with foreign governments’ protectionist policies. Certain countries required that as a condition of doing business, foreign life insurance companies keep a legal reserve within the host nation, that they buy specified host securities, and that such securities and cash be placed in depositories designated by the host governments.<sup>178</sup> Thus while negotiating the right to

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<sup>174</sup> Wilkins writes that by the 1880s, *Equitable*, *New York Life*, and *Mutual* - the Big Three in American insurance - were similarly active in foreign business. *New York Life Insurance Co.* led the way first to Canada, and then in 1870 it began to sell insurance in England. The company continued its business in France, Scotland, the West Indies, Mexico, British Columbia, Belgium, Venezuela, Russia, Ireland, Switzerland, Italy, and Austria, among others. By 1885 almost one third of its total business was done outside the United States and Canada. Wilkins, *The Emergence of Multinational Enterprise*, 65.

<sup>175</sup> V. Borzikh, “O “vtorzhenii” inostrantsev na strakhovoi rinok Rossiiskoy Imperii” in *Biblioteka Strahovshika* 13, (1999). Electronic resource. <http://www.allinsurance.ru/siteold/sbornik/1999/13.htm> (accessed 8 September 2006).

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.* Borzikh refers to the front page article in *Svet*, 20 February 1890, and to the report “O deyatel’nosti amerikanskikh obshestv po strakhovaniyu zhizni v Rossii” (On American Life Insurance Companies and their operations in Russia), April 1890.

<sup>177</sup> Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 412.

<sup>178</sup> Wilkins, *The Emergence of Multinational Enterprise*, 104. As a result of many restrictions and conditions that companies could not comply with, *Equitable* began gradually withdrawing from foreign sales and *Mutual* was also

do business in Russia, it was required of New York Life Insurance to invest in Russian bonds. A chief foreign agent of New York Life, George Perkins “greatly impressed with the future of the country,” undertook direct discussions with government officials with a determination to reorganize and reconsolidate operations of the company. In October 1899 he met with Minister of Finance Serge Witte in St. Petersburg and explained to the high official that “it was just possible” that New York Life Insurance Company might market some Russian bonds. Witte discussed the matter directly with the Tsar, and Perkins obtained his reward. On 27 October 1899, Witter addressed the New York Life Insurance Company:

I have this day ratified the contracts concluded between your establishment and the St. Petersburg International Bank of Commerce on the one part, and the South-Eastern and the Vladicaucase (sic) Railroad on the other part, which contracts bear on the purchase of \$10,000,000... worth of 4 percent bonds guaranteed by the State.<sup>179</sup>

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“fighting an uphill battle.” By 1905, when the famous Armstrong investigation of American insurance companies revealed revealed their multiple abuses, the investigators recommended to limit new business each year to \$150,000,000. Thus, Equitable, Mutual, and New York Life had to curtail not only their domestic, but also foreign sales. All three companies decided to eliminate unprofitable overseas business, resulting in *Mutual*’s decision not to make any more deposits abroad, and *Equitable*’s determination “to cease entering” foreign countries in 1912. Only New York Life, as Wilkins explains, retained a firm commitment to international business. In June 1908 its new President, Darwin P.Kingsley declared that while under the regulations the company had trimmed its sales in both Europe and the United States, it had retired from only two “juristics:” – “from Portugal... and from Texas... where laws were passed worse than anything ever written on any Statute Book of Europe or covered in any Ministerial Decree.” See Wilkins, *The Emergence of Multinational Enterprise*, 106. Thus, while the policy of *Equitable* and *Mutual* was on the retreat, New York Life Insurance continued to enlarge its foreign business. By 1913 the total amount of American insurance in force abroad (outside of Canada), even though declined from its peak of \$1,142,000,000 in 1905, was \$1,049, 178, 223. The amount of New York Life in force in foreign countries rose from \$494, 383, 349 in 1905 to its high point of \$525, 081, 511 in 1913. This means that by 1913, New York Life carried over half of all American insurance in force abroad.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 105. Wilkins refers to translation of a letter from Witte to New York Life Insurance Company. 22 October 1899. Perkins Papers, Box 8, RBML, GMC, CU.

It was agreed that New York Life would contribute directly or indirectly to the extent of 20 percent of overall Russian-American business in the course of the next two years.<sup>180</sup>

The keys to American businesses success in Russia were, first, “resident agents” who were “committed, patient, and knowledgeable about Russian practices;” and second, “parent managements, led by people like McCormick and Perkins, that actively pursued foreign business.”<sup>181</sup> In October 1899 on a train from St. Petersburg to Berlin, Perkins wrote New York Life Insurance Company president Jogn A. McCall:

We are now on the same pleasant and friendly relations with the Russian [Insurance] Department... They are our friends – they believe in us and even want to help us... our future could not be brighter.<sup>182</sup>

In conclusion, it is important to emphasize that at the turn of the twentieth century such financial enterprise as the New York Life Insurance Company was firmly committed to doing business abroad (in Austria, Swirzerland, Prussia, and in Russia) and in their attempt to maintain their position overseas, it was making large foreign investments.<sup>183</sup>

After the revolution some Americans embraced the new Soviet social order and lobbied for resumption of trade relation with the Soviet Union. Thus, a former American diplomat, a witness to the Revolution of 1905 in St. Petersburg, an active participant in the relief activities during the famine of 1921, and ardent sympathizer of the Soviet state, Paxton Hibben repeatedly urged the United States to continue business cooperation with Russia. He focused on the

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<sup>180</sup> Wilkins, *The Emergence of Multinational Enterprise*, 105.

<sup>181</sup> Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 414-15.

<sup>182</sup> Wilkins, *The Emergence of Multinational Enterprise*, 105 – 106.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

pragmatic advantages and denigrating ideology as an obstacle to setting up large commercial ventures over there:

Businessmen in the United States have seen one European country after another reach trade agreements with Soviet Russia and get in on the ground floor. The impression has been growing that American business is letting slip an opportunity which will soon be gone for good, unless America also shares in the commercial regeneration of Russia....<sup>184</sup>

A journal of Russian-American trade *Russia*, also attempted to draw the attention of both “allies and export merchants” to its market, calling the country “America’s greatest export opportunity.”<sup>185</sup> While summarizing statistical data on Russian–American trade in 1917 and analyzing conditions and prospects in Russia for the American business in the coming years, the journal, run by R. Martens and Company, Inc., advertised not only its own services that included “the cheapest and most successful means of introducing and pushing the sale of American products in Russia,” but also such enterprises as “Russia Trade Corporation of America,” “Parret Tractor,” and others.<sup>186</sup> Another advocate of trade with Russia was Dr. Russell McColluch Story. He had been a YMCA worker in revolutionary Russia. Story visited a Russia ruined by war and social unrest; when he returned and was asked if “Russia still remained rich in commercial possibilities,” he answered that “there is a fortune for the people who go in there after order prevails.”<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Paxton Hibben, “Changing Russia Requires New Trade Agreement,” *Indianapolis Star*, 10 January 1922.

<sup>185</sup> See Sterling H. Bunnell, “Conditions and Prospects in Russia” in *Russia: A Journal of Russian-American Trade* III, (18 January 18 1918):18–26.

<sup>186</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> “Returned YMCA Worker Tells of War Horrors in Russia,” *Champaign Sunday News*, (7 September 1919): 6.

Among other attempts to facilitate further economic cooperation between Russia and the Western powers was the creation of “The Russia and Siberia Trade and Finance Corporation” in 1918. In a document defining the corporate deed of settlement and terms of sanction, “promoters” of ongoing ties with Russia, especially in Siberia, underlined their intentions to “revive agriculture and supply food and articles of necessity where most needed,” to “acquire and work sources of raw materials and to transport and deliver said materials where they can be most usefully employed,” to “develop the coal, iron, steel, oil, chemical, cotton, and other industries,” to “inaugurate improved services of communication and transport including railway, rivers, harbors, roads, posts and telegraphs,” and ultimately to “provide technical, financial and material assistance to vital and urgent municipal, commercial and industrial undertaking.” The authors of the draft of deed and settlement of the corporation stated that it was going to be “incorporated under Russian law,” and that as soon as a Russian government is formed it was going to be fully recognized by the several governments, and the corporation will take steps to become formally incorporated in Russia and Siberia under the provisions and requirements of the law of said Russian government.<sup>188</sup>

The most significant effort was made by Raymond Robins, who negotiated with Lenin to develop “an economic proposal for the revival and stimulation of a Soviet-American trade.”<sup>189</sup> McFadden points out that that comprehensive proposal, given by Lenin to Robins on May, 1918, presented an extensive analysis of Russia’s economic situation and a detailed listing of materials and equipment “that the Soviets needed from the United States and, in return, Russian raw

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<sup>188</sup> “The Russia and Siberia Trade and Finance Corporation: the petition of promoters, draft deed of settlement, and draft terms of sanctions.” Box F-8. FAVP. Part F. RBML, GMC, CU.

<sup>189</sup> David McFadden, *W. Alternative Paths: Soviets and Americans, 1917-1920* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 5.

materials and resources available in exchange.” The proposal also suggested organizing Russian-American trade “on the basis of credits and gold in order to sidestep the crucial question of currency inequalities.” While that plan was never ratified by the U.S. government, the proposal served as the “most important basis for Robins’s advocacy of an alternative American policy toward Bolshevik Russia.” It also provided the basis for Ludwig Martens’s negotiations of contracts with American firms in 1919, which in the 1920s became prototypes for Soviet-American trade. It was then when “the first blossoming of American scientific, technical, and economic interchange with Bolshevik Russia” began initiating further contacts with such “old acquaintances” as International Harvester, National City Bank, as well as with numerous other American enterprises such as Ford Motor Company, and American manufacturers of machinery, food, clothing, and chemicals.<sup>190</sup>

Another advocate for the recognition of the Soviet regime, and providing the new government with the necessary economic assistance was John Reed who became a mediator for American support and economic assistance to the emerging Soviet nation during its very early days. In never published report of those negotiations Reed argued that “there is absolutely no doubt that a policy of real material help to Russia would create a love for America in this country which it would be difficult to alter... A great many people here admit the necessity of American technical and intellectual participation in the development of Russia.”<sup>191</sup>

In the 1920s, Western countries interested in assisting Russia acknowledged that reconstruction in Russia was impossible “without the assistance of the capital and the commercial experience of the West.” The memorandum sent to the Russian delegation by then British counterparts participating in the International Economic Conference in Genoa in May

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<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> Reed, John, “Skeleton Report,” 1/6/18, JR, 2:113 A., cited in McFadden, 347.

1922 states that even though economic disasters paralyzed Russia, they did not “destroy her resources.” The memorandum called for development of Russia’s resources, and her agriculture, which is fundamental to her economic system. It appealed for reopening of her mines, and setting her factories to work again.<sup>192</sup> The Russian delegation was summoned to present at the conference in Genoa where it was unanimously agreed that “Russia was the state whose economic reconstruction was of the greatest interest to Europe, and to the whole world.” The Russian delegation replied that Western help to reconstruct Russia would “give the world’s industries 140 millions of consumers and an immense quantity of raw materials, and so contribute to the relief of the crises, the unemployment, and the misery created by the World War, the intervention, and blockade.”<sup>193</sup> They assured the Western investors that the benefit of their technical knowledge, capital, property, rights, and profits would be protected under Russian laws.<sup>194</sup> There was no question as to whether or not Russia’s economic recovery was an absolute condition to the restoration of normal life in Europe. Moreover, Russia’s great importance in the economic structure of Europe was considered incontrovertible and consequently it was necessary

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<sup>192</sup> It is interesting that a copy of the memorandum that underlines the necessity to “advance immediately substantial sums to those of their nationals who will trade with Russia or settle there for that purpose” is found in the Vanderlip papers. Was the former City Bank chief executive considering the revival of the Russian enterprise? Or was he interested in the clause II that announced that Russian debts and obligations will not apply to balances standing to the credit of a former Russian government in any bank situated in a country of which the government made advances to former Russian government or assumed responsibilities for any Russian government loan floated in that country between 1 August 1914 and 7 November 1917.” See “Memorandum sent to the Russian Delegation, Wednesday, 3 May 1922,” 4. Genoa. Box F-8. Frank Arthur Vanderlip Papers [ca. 1890-1937]. Part – F. RBML, CU. Vanderlip also kept the reply of the Russian delegation to the memorandum. In that document Russians assured their Western counterparts that they intended to present a list of industrial, mining, agricultural, and other concessions, which they desired to grant to foreigners. See Reply of the Russian Delegation to the Memorandum of 2 May 1922.” Genoa. FAVP. Part – F. RBML, GMC, CU.

<sup>193</sup> “Reply of the Russian Delegation to the Memorandum of 2 May 1922.” Genoa. FAVP. Part – F. RBML, GMC, CU.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

to take into account Russian conditions both before and since the war for any survey of European conditions in their relation to American business.<sup>195</sup>

The analysis of American business interests and investments in pre-revolutionary Russia, reveals the organizational evolution of American financial institutions, industrial enterprises and trading companies operating there and adjusting to the country's legal, social, political, and economic environments. In this chapter I illustrate how American brands spread throughout the northern capital, rapidly becoming the symbols of a nation destined to flood world markets with its consumer manufacturing less than half a century later. I have attempted to demonstrate that Americans who came to Russia pursuing financial interests integrated closely with the rest of the American colony, and the diverse social milieu of the city, targeting prominent as well as average citizens alike, and introducing alternative modes of financial operations, efficient means of production, and innovative sales management techniques. Most importantly, I want to emphasize that regardless of whether they were adventurous and successful entrepreneurs, or sober and pragmatic business managers, Americans who went to Russia were inspired by its economic potential even at times, when their initiatives were not supported by official treaties, or secured by state-sponsored economic policy.

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<sup>195</sup> See "Russia" (Banking, transportation, foreign trade), 1922. Box F-8. FAVP. Part F. RBML, GMC, CU.

## CHAPTER IV

### **Ardent Sympathizers (1890s – 1930s)**

#### *Part I*

#### **American Missionaries and Confessors, Religious Societies, Relief Organizations, and Philanthropists in Their Survey of “the Most Dramatic” Russian City**

The American colony in St. Petersburg had a very distinct social life at the turn of the twentieth century. As Harper Barnes described it, the mass of Americans in Petersburg at the time presented a “proliferating number of official, semi-official, unofficial, and downright clandestine” American citizens who settled in the Russian capital to make American policy, often even without consulting the American ambassador.<sup>1</sup> Various religious and relief organizations settled in the city to facilitate spiritual and charitable activities there and elsewhere, and to secure and enrich the excellent environment for social networking that foreigners, as well as Russians, gratefully enjoyed. Short and long-term residents, visitors, American spouses of native Russians, as well as returning immigrants knew that American churches, or headquarters of non-governmental organizations, and even the Petrograd office of Creel’s Committee on Public Information, were as important to American cultural and social life in St. Petersburg as the embassy itself. This chapter serves as an account of such places, and as a comprehensive narrative about the people who worked there, with special attention to the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), as well as detailed profiles of individuals who left their pronounced and long lasting contributions to the legacy of Russian-American dialogue. It is dedicated to those Americans whose political, social, and “evangelical energies surged” in

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<sup>1</sup>Harper Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano: The Life and Times of David Rowland Francis* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press and The Francis Press, 2001), 277.

Russia.<sup>2</sup> Americans involved in large-scale relief operations contributed immensely to the cultural and social milieu of their hosting environment, promoting “good feeling among Russians.” After all, it was American charity and efforts to help Russian communities that prompted gratitude to the American nation and people, diminishing the misunderstanding and mistrust among Russians.<sup>3</sup> I argue that America contributed not only to foreign communities, whose social and spiritual needs they came to meet, but also to the lives of the citizens of St. Petersburg, who greatly appreciated their efforts.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> While referencing quite a number of organizations involved in charity, relief and other support activities and providing a list of personalities who promoted Russia to diminish prejudices and personal dis/beliefs, I still emphasize certain organizations and individuals, describing and analyzing their Russian experience as case studies. For example, even though I explore and compare various non-governmental organizations involved in many aspects of Russian life, one of them, the YMCA, is presented on much larger scale. Similarly, while I try not to miss out any important names within a long and diverse list of people involved in Russian affairs, some of them, for example Isabel Hapgood or Paxton Hibben, receive more coverage. Although I acknowledge that most of the characters and their stories deserve equal attention and all of the involved contributed to building and developing an unprecedented community of Americans dedicated to their ideals and willing to serve the Russian people, the limited format of a dissertation chapter prevented me from fully recognizing quite a sizable contingent of American “ardent sympathizers.” My choice has been primarily determined by the accessibility of primary sources. I write in more detail about the YMCA, because I served as a research associate at the University of Illinois where I worked on a collection of the YMCA veteran Donald Lowrie, and I pay special attention to the life and work of Isabel Hapgood in Russia, because I scrutinized every item in the NYPL Manuscripts and Archives Division, which is the most comprehensive collection of her papers. Finally, I intend to reveal the names that were only casually or episodically mentioned by historians previously, even though their role and participation in American community in St. Petersburg at the edge of the twentieth century was quite influential.

<sup>3</sup> Perovsky to Hapgood. Paris, October 1920. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, 1864-1922, Manuscript & Archives Division, hereafter cited as (MAD), folder 1, box 1, New York Public Library, hereafter cited as (NYPL).

<sup>4</sup> Russians both at home and abroad praised the efforts of various American non-governmental organizations. After the Bolshevik Revolution, those Russians who fled abroad relied on American relief activities and hoped that with their help a devastated Russia could be brought back to normal life. Thus for example in a letter addressed to Isabel Hapgood, who herself was involved in various enterprises helping émigrés, émigré groups, and those left behind in Russia, Count Perovsky, who was a head of a Russian colony in Norway cited the impressions of his son fighting on Yudenich front and bringing his first hand impressions from the Ukraine: “the only ‘allied’ organization there he is

As in many other foreign communities in the multinational metropolis, the church became a center of social as well as religious activities. The Anglo-American Church was originally founded by British Protestants and was situated to the west of the Admiralty along the Neva in the mansion of Count Boris Sheremetev. In 1753 the British Factory bought and converted it for use by British merchants, shipbuilders, and other English residents of the city as the English Church; it became “the center of the British community’s life in more senses than one.”<sup>5</sup> Most importantly, it opened its doors to Americans when they appeared in the city. Thus, when John Quincy Adams arrived in St Petersburg with the American diplomatic mission in 1809, he and his household became parishioners. When Adams’ thirteen-day-old daughter died, burial services took place at the English church.<sup>6</sup> With the arrival of more Americans, and their “New England Congregational leanings with considerable missionary and charity outreach activities,”<sup>7</sup> they established their own worship and meeting house. In 1833, English, Scottish and American residents of St Petersburg petitioned to establish a Congregational Anglo-

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able to speak about with praise is the American Red Cross society.” Perovsky to Hapgood, Christiania, Norway, 1920. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>5</sup> Anthony Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva: Chapters from the Lives and Careers of the British in Eighteenth – Century Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 10. Cross gives even more details in his article “The English Embankment,” writing that the two-story mansion of Count Sheremetev was purchased by Baron Jacob Wolff, the British Minister Resident, as the future English Church. “Revamped and internally much altered, it opened for divine service in March 1754.” The building was lately rebuilt by Giacomo Quarenghi. Anthony Cross, “The English Embankment,” Anthony Cross (ed.), *St. Petersburg, 1703 – 1825* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd., 2003), 59.

<sup>6</sup> T.A Soloviyova, “Prominent Americans in St. Petersburg” in *Sankt Peterburg-SSHA: 200 let rossiisko-amerikanskikh diplomaticheskikh otnoshenii* (Sankt Peterburg: Evropeiskii Dom, 2009), 139.

<sup>7</sup> Norman E. Saul, “The American Colony in St. Petersburg” (paper presented at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Central Slavic Conference, Lawrence, KS, April 3-5, 2003).

American Church on Novo-Isaakievsky pereulok.<sup>8</sup> By 1900 the church counted 140 members, most of whom were English or American Congregationalists. Services were in English and the church was under patronage of the American Embassy. In September, 1891 the church opened a full-time school for children of the congregation. They based curriculum on classical English comprehensive education even though its focus was foreign languages, such as Russian, German, and French. The curriculum also included Latin, drawing, and singing. From time to time the church became a place of gathering of the Russian chapter of the British corps of the Salvation Army.<sup>9</sup>

American missionaries' enthusiasm "extended well beyond denominational mission boarders." American clergyman Andrew Urshan reported in 1918 that "over one hundred and eighty million souls in Russia are eagerly looking toward America for political, commercial and

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<sup>8</sup> According to letters written by one of the ministers of the church Alexander Francis, the celebration of its fiftieth anniversary, in December 1890, was attended by a number of Russian dignitaries, including Foreign Minister Giers. The Congregational Anglo-American church in St. Petersburg "for many years promoted the circulation of bibles and other religious tracts with support from the American Bible Society, the president of which was one of the longest American residents in St. Petersburg, George H. Prince. See Norman E. Saul, *Concord and Conflict: The United States and Russia. 1867-1914* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1996), 299. The church became known in the city as the Congregational Anglo-American church on Novo-Isaakievsky pereulok. Alexander Francis was an acquaintance of Isabel Hapgood. She refers to him in her report on "mysterious" Kate Marsden case as to "a Scotchman and a minister of the Anglo-American Church," who maintained correspondence with the Russian royal family and with the Holy Synod. See Hapgood's brief description of the Kate Marsden case, 1912. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, folder 1, box 1. MAD, NYPL. For brief introduction of the history of the Church see A.V. Bertash, *Khrami Peterburga (Temples of St. Petersburg)* (St. Petersburg: Inform. - izdat. Agentsvo "LIK," 1992), 155. In Soviet times the street was renamed and was known as ulitsa Yakubovicha.

<sup>9</sup> "Angloiazychnyie obschiny," in P.E. Bukharkin, ed., *Tri veka Sankt-Peterburga: eñntñsñiklopediiñ añ v trekh tomakh*, tom 2, kn. 1 (Sankt-Peterburg: Filologicheskiiñ fakul'tet Sankt-Peterburgskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 2001), 143, 144.

religious help.”<sup>10</sup> David S. Fogleson mentions a dramatic increase in missionary activity following the tsarist government’s 1903 broadening of religious freedom,<sup>11</sup> and the April, 1905 edict on religious toleration. Fogleson names Adventists, Baptists, and Methodists as the three most active groups for whom “Russia’s enormous territory and population were crucial inducements.”<sup>12</sup>

The congregations and American parishioners in the city had a rich spiritual history and a reputation for religious tolerance.<sup>13</sup> Foglesong describes their close connections between the American colony, their mission, and relief activities. He discusses how Bishop William Burt, the director of Methodist missions in Europe, secured missionary funds for Russia and encouraged George Simons (1874 - 1952) “to take charge of that formerly languishing territory.”<sup>14</sup> Simons’ friend and biographer, the editor of the *Riga Times*, Leslie A. Marshall, believed that “there must be such thing as Fate.” In the early years of his ministry Simons did not even give Russia much thought. On the contrary, he was “deeply prejudiced against the Russian character, language, and customs, and aware of the danger lurking in a land that might flare up in a revolution any hour.”<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, Simons spent twenty years pioneering the Methodist Episcopal Church in Russia and the Baltic States, serving as the superintendent of the Finland and Petrograd Mission

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<sup>10</sup> Andrew Urshan, “Russia and Pentecostal people of United States and Canada,” *The Christian Evangel*, 30 (November 1918). Cited in Davis S. Foglesong, “Redeeming Russia? American Missionaries and Tsarist Russia, 1886 – 1917,” *Religion, State and Society* 25, (1997): 360.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 356.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 355.

<sup>13</sup> Foglesong describes the new religious repression following the outbreak of the Great War, but at the same time, referring to George Simons’ correspondence, he concludes that missionaries in Petrograd continued to enjoy ‘a certain amount of liberty.’ See *ibid.*, 359.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 356 –359.

<sup>15</sup> Leslie A. Marshall, *The Romance of a Tract and Its Sequel: The Story of an American Pioneer in Russia and the Baltic States* (Riga: Latvian Farmers’ Union Printing Office, 1928), 20, 43.

between 1907 and 1911 and remained a pastor of the American Methodist Episcopal Church in Petrograd until October 1918.

A reference edition, *Temples of St. Petersburg*, serves as a guide to the history of various churches in St. Petersburg; its author mentions both Episcopal and Reformed churches associated with the American colony. He refers to a Methodist–Episcopal Church, that was known as the American Chapel, or the Church of Christ, and situated on Vasilievski Island, Bolshoi Prospekt, 58 in a wooden building that has not survived.<sup>16</sup> It was solemnly initiated on the 26 October 1914. By that time there were around 132 parishioners of at least nine nationalities attending the services in a variety of languages.<sup>17</sup> The same address was mentioned in a letter of introduction sent to Ambassador Francis on the 20 June, 1916 by Simons, who introduced himself as superintendent and treasurer of The Methodist Episcopal Church which was also headquarters of Methodist Societies in Russia.<sup>18</sup> W. Sharpe Wilson, a member of the British committee for carrying on the affairs of the English speaking community, who happened to conduct a service at the Congregational Church in St. Petersburg and at the Church of England during the rule of Bolsheviks, described his friend and “brother-in-arms” George A. Simons as a man “gifted with a fine command of language in which he express his thoughts in prose as well as in verse.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Bertash, *Khrami Peterburga*, 155. The building was demolished in 1931. See “English Speaking Communities,” 144.

<sup>17</sup> “English Speaking Communities,” 144. It is mentioned in the article that the services were offered in Finnish, German, English, Swedish, Russian, and Estonian.

<sup>18</sup> George Albert Simons to David R. Francis. 20 June 1916. David Rowland Francis Papers, 1868-1919, hereafter cited as (DRFP). Record Series # 02/P0274, Box 397, A-22a. Missouri Historical Society, hereafter cited as (MoHS), St. Louis.

<sup>19</sup> S. Sharpe Wilson, “Foreword,” in Leslie A. Marshall, *The Romance of a Tract and Its Sequel*, 12. The services were also in many languages. See “English Speaking Communities,” 144.

As early as in 1910 Methodist-Episcopal Church turned into the cultural and social center of the American colony in St Petersburg. The church had an active Sunday school. It also offered free English classes open to anyone who would like to study language. Thanks to Simons, the church became a publishing center. His apartment in Vasilievski Island became the headquarters of the *Christian Advocate (Kristiansky Pobornik)*, an American-Russian periodical for the Methodist Episcopal Church, which first appeared in 1909.<sup>20</sup> As the chief editor, Simon established similar editions in Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian, issued hymnbooks, Wesley's sermons, catechism etc., in all these languages, as well as edited the *Baltic and Slavic Bulletin* in English.<sup>21</sup> As one appreciative reader mentioned in his letter to the editor, there was "no other paper just like it!"

Such a "modest bilingual monthly" as *Kristiansky Pobornik* played a unique role. It sought to serve all Americans not only in Petrograd but also in Moscow and other Russian centers.<sup>22</sup> This Russian-American periodical published in Petrograd served as a newsletter carrying the news of the American colony, the life of the community, major events, appointments, obituaries, as well as the updates on social events and gatherings in the capital. Thus, for example, the January 1916 issue, under the column "Items of Interest," the American residents learned about Captain David Hough's late return from the United States and his failure to get back to Russia soon enough to spend Christmas with his family due to "the heavy holiday travel and extreme cold which froze up the piping on the locomotives." They also could read

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<sup>20</sup> Various sources give slightly different addresses of the place where the periodical was printed. Thus an article in the Encyclopedia *Tri veka Sankt-Peterburga* listed the address that was not far from Congregation Church – 12<sup>th</sup> Line of Vasilievsky Island, number 33, apartment 2.

<sup>21</sup> Marshall, *The Romance of a Tract and Its Sequel*, 25 – 26.

<sup>22</sup> *Kristiansky Pobornik*, 16(16), № 84, January 1916. Box F-8. Frank Arthur Vanderlip Papers (FAVP) [ca. 1890-1937]. Part F. Rare Book and Manuscript Library, hereafter cited as (RBML), General Manuscript Collection, hereafter cited as (GMC), Columbia University, hereafter cited as (CU), New York.

about the exhibition of the fashionable English painter, whose pictures “were noted for their remarkable color-tones” displayed at the house of Mr. and Mrs. McAllister Smith, of Guarantee Trust, that promised to be “a striking illustration” of his art. It was a fund-raiser which opened with a program featuring “Mrs. W.C. Whiffen and Mrs. Barnes giving several classic selections on the piano, Mary Knechen singing some beautiful Russian songs, and Mrs. McAllister Smith rendering with genuinely dramatic expression Elizabeth Barret Browning’s poem entitled ‘Mother and Poet.’” The event raised 943 00 roubles for the American Refuge.<sup>23</sup>

The American-Russian monthly provided information on various changes, new appointments, resignations, etc., in the American diplomatic mission in Russia. Thus, for example January 1916 issue announced David Bell McGowan’s transfer to Moscow following his appointment as a vice-consul there. The paper reported: “As a newspaper man of twenty five years’ experience and having been in Russia and other parts of Europe for some years, Mr. McGowan will prove himself a most official man in the consular service. His many friends in Petrograd join in heartiest congratulations, regretting however that he is leaving them so soon again.”<sup>24</sup> Initially it printed 1000 copies, which it sent around the vast Russian empire, as well as to the Russian colonies in Canada, United States, France, and Switzerland. The monthly also carried news about Russian cultural matters. For example in 1915, Simons published a set of poems by the Great Duke Konstantin Konstantinovich. When the first Russian revolution took place in February 1917, the periodical released a “truly people’s anthem” “Brotherhood, Love,

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<sup>23</sup> *Kristiansky Pobornik*, 16(16), № 84, January 1916. The same issue announced about the Refuge opening on the 1 January 1916 stressing “a large number of Americans and Russian advocates being present,” and acknowledging that it was “highly gratifying to know this worthy cause has already received sympathetic and generous support of American and Russian friends in Petrograd. *Ibid.*”

<sup>24</sup> *Kristiansky Pobornik*, 16(16), № 84, January 1916.

and Freedom,” composed by the pastor himself.<sup>25</sup> The piece was dedicated to “the great resurrected free Russia.” The royalties were donated to pay tribute to the victims of the revolution.<sup>26</sup>

Besides publishing the *Christian Advocate* the church also supported and managed the activities of the Society of Deaconesses, dedicated to the development of social work in the Russian capital. Led by the Finnish Anna Eklund, the deaconesses desired to become “an outreaching hand of Christian love and charity that the Methodist Church offers to the residents of the great capital.”<sup>27</sup> The deaconesses were ready to provide help for those who were physically or mentally handicapped, regardless of nationality or religion. The organization provided short and long-term care for the sick, both for the fee and for free, visitation to the poorest households, made and distributed of children’s clothing. They also organized celebrations of important religious holidays. Thus, for example, in 1910 they organized a Christmas party was organized for more than 300 poor children. That devotion to serving underprivileged citizens was carried on even during the Great War. In the course of war the church and its pastor became part of the American committee that established a hospital for wounded soldiers. Pastor Simons worked closely with the American Red Cross, American embassy and other members of American colony. The president of the committee was Consul North Winship, its secretary a commercial attaché, Henry Baker.

The American Methodist Episcopal Church remained in the city after the embassy left Petrograd in 1918. According to Foglesong, Simons remained in Russia after the Bolshevik

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<sup>25</sup> “English Speaking Communities,” 145. It is not known who is the author of the words, but it is believed that Pastor composed the music himself.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

seizure of power. Referring to Simons' correspondence from Russia dated as late as 1923, Foglesong concluded that the Soviet authorities were "extremely kind to American Methodism."<sup>28</sup>

Similar to Methodists, Adventist leaders found the Bolshevik authorities "very kind and helpful." They found greater religious freedom than in tsarist times, and expanded in numbers, growing to 14,000 members in the late 1920s.<sup>29</sup>

Other congregations, in St. Petersburg, included the British-American church at the Alexandrovsky Mechanical Works of the Nikolaevskaya Railroad.<sup>30</sup> It was established in 1852 under patronage of such prominent Americans as the Winans and Harrison. The American embassy mediated its initiation. The main worship hall was built at the request of Winans, who was the principal lessee of the factory. The parishioners raised funds for constructing and maintaining the building. In 1865 they established a school for the children of English and American employees of the factory. In the period from 1870 to 1917 there were around 150 members of that British-American church, all of them were foreign nationals.<sup>31</sup>

American missionaries in St. Petersburg played an important role in relief activities. It was the Congregational Anglo-American church and its missionaries in Russia, that launched the first sound alarm about the 1891-1893 famine in the Volga region.<sup>32</sup> An article in *The St. Petersburg Times* refers to the event as "the greatest non-military humanitarian disaster in Europe in the nineteenth century." Americans responded with a campaign to pursue relief.

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<sup>28</sup> See Foglesong, "Redeeming Russia? American Missionaries and Tsarist Russia, 1886 – 1917," 360.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 361.

<sup>30</sup> The modern name of the street where the church was situated is Prospekt Obukhovskoi Oborony, 129.

<sup>31</sup> "English Speaking Communities," 142. In the course of years the number of British parishioners increased and the church was transformed from the American jurisdiction and operated under the jurisdiction of the British embassy.

<sup>32</sup> Titova, "History Shows America Also Went East." In *The St. Petersburg Times*, 23 March 2004, 1.

Private donations totaled \$1 million. *The New York Times* reported that a benefit concert had been held at Carnegie Hall where American opera stars sang for the victims.”<sup>33</sup>

Multiple agencies responded to the reports of American missionaries and other organizations. In 1892 the American government reacted to the devastating famine in Russia by forming a Russian Famine Relief Committee. That included former U.S. president Rutherford B. Hays, vice president Levi P. Morton, prominent senators, governors, members of the Russian Orthodox clergy, and other denominations, as well as individuals ready “to respond to the cry of want.”<sup>34</sup> The committee encouraged those who were interested in relief operations work through the American National Red Cross and its Russian branch, presided over by the tsarina.<sup>35</sup>

Isabel Hapgood, served as secretary of the Russian Famine Relief Committee and issued announcements in New York and Boston newspapers about its formation. She solicited aid from the American public for Tolstoy’s Fund to help the peasant victims of the 1891-1892 famine. More than \$7,110.00 was collected and forwarded directly to Tolstoy.<sup>36</sup> As she put it herself “when the Great Famine of 1891–2, in the Granary of the empire, the famous Black Earth Zone, began, I started a Tolstoy Fund in the New York *Evening Post*, the proceeds of which were to be

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> John W. Hoyt, the Chairman, Text of the “Appeal No. 7” of the Russian Famine Relief Committee of the United States, Washington, DC, March 1892. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 4. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. The American National Red Cross commissioned its General Field Agent Dr. Hubbell to sail to Russia with “full instructions regarding the disposition of the relief cargo, and his appointment has been made in answer to the express request of the Iowa Russian Relief Commission.” The Report of the President and Acting Treasure of the American National Red Cross to the Chairman, Madam E. Louise Demorest and to Alice Donlevy, secretary of a meeting of Ladies, members of the many women’s organizations, called to consider women’s work in the world, Washington D.C. 6 Aug 1892. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 5. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>36</sup> Marina Ledkovsky, “A Linguistic Bridge to Orthodoxy: In Memoriam Isabel Florence Hapgood.” A lecture delivered at the Twelfth Annual Russian Orthodox Musicians Conference, 7-11 October, 1998, Washington, DC <<http://anglicanhistory.org/women/hapgood/ledkovsky.pdf>> (accessed 21 January, 2009), 6.

sent to Leo Tolstoy, who was personally engaged in the Ryazan Government, in superintending the relief and establishing soup kitchens.”<sup>37</sup> The American public could refer to Count Tolstoy’s article published in *Evening Post* on 4 June “to see how faithfully their money has been used.”<sup>38</sup> People responded to her appeal from all parts of the United States and Canada with contributions from 25 cents to \$500.00. The donations were accompanied by letters which expressed sympathy for those suffering. *The Evening Post* published weekly the list of contributors.<sup>39</sup> Tolstoy’s daughter Marie wrote Hapgood in May 1892 that her father’s work is mainly sustained by American contributions.<sup>40</sup> Tolstoy expressed deep appreciation for the solidarity Americans showed to the sufferings of the famine victims. In his letter to Hapgood he wrote: “I’m deeply touched by the sympathy of your countrymen with our peasants’ distress and beg you to express my heartfelt thanks to your friends for their offerings. I shall not omit in relieving the starving with your money to explain to them the fact of their receiving help from their unknown brethren in distant America.”<sup>41</sup> Tolstoy gave Hapgood detailed reports on how the money was spent and the progress of the relief activities. She quotes one of his letters in her article, explaining to the donors and the general American public that using the funds from the United States Tolstoy and his assistants set up “more than hundred kitchens, nearly six thousand persons who are fed in them.... thousands of [similar] kitchens in different parts of the country, which are in relation

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<sup>37</sup> “Notes by Miss Isabel Florence Hapgood on Tolstoy Letters given to New York Public Library by her in June, 1911.” Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 4. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>38</sup> Isabel Hapgood, “Letter to the Editor,” *Evening Post*, 29 June 1892.

<sup>39</sup> Hapgood’s notes on one of Tolstoy’s letter, receive on 23 July 1892. Letters from Count Leo Tolstoy, 1892 – 1893. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 4. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>40</sup> Marie Tolstoy to Hapgood, 22 May 1892. Letters from Count Leo Tolstoy, 1892 – 1893. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 4. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>41</sup> Lev Tolstoy to Hapgood, 4 February, 1892. Letters from Count Leo Tolstoy, 1892 – 1893. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 4. MAD, NYPL.

with us... some of them receive help from our fund... In the place where we are staying in present, the needs are almost provided for.”<sup>42</sup> Tolstoy’s great aunt Countess Alexandra Andreevna, also expressed her grateful feelings in a note sent to Hapgood in the spring 1892 “I heard from our dear cousin Tolstoy of the way in which our Lord has employed you for the sustaining of such a great number of starving people. And in the day when we will see Him as He is, Our Merciful Saviour will acknowledge the deed of Mercy of his children in America.”<sup>43</sup> Other members of Tolstoy’s large family tirelessly thanked Hapgood for her initiative. Tolstoy’s wife Countess Sophia Andreevna, for example, appreciated the energy that Hapgood input into the relief activities and wrote

You have done so much to help us in our work, that I really do not know, how to thank you for the sympathy and the interest you have taken in the distress, that has stricken such a large part of Russia. No country has done as much as America! We have admired so much lately with what energy, good will and haste were sent the ships with the aid for the famine-stricken Russians! If Russia could take example in it from your nice American people, it never would be in such a state, as it is now.<sup>44</sup>

While the American congregations served primarily the Americans residing in St. Petersburg, unifying the community, and refining the social and spiritual life of its members, the American-inspired religious institution<sup>45</sup> Mayak (Lighthouse), the Russian YMCA, targeted

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<sup>42</sup> Hapgood, “Correspondence: Tolstoy and the Czar.” The Newspapers *Russkie Vedomosti* published a very detailed report by Tolstoy about the activities of the fund. See “Otchyot L. N. Tolstogo: ob upotreblenii pozhertvovannikh deneg s 12go aprelya po 20e iulya” *Russkie Vedomosti*, Saturday, 31 October 1892.

<sup>43</sup> Note by Countess Alexandra Andreevna Tolstoy, 1892. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 4. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>44</sup> Countess Sophia Andreevna Tolstoy to Hapgood, 25 March – 5 April, 1892. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 4. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>45</sup> Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 586; M.D. Gus’kov, “YMCA v Rossii: istoria i nastoyashee.” *Religia i pravo*, № 3, (1999), 25-27.

Russians themselves. During the Great War, when the organization adopted its war program, a veteran of the YMCA in Revolutionary Russia, Donald Lowrie, described it as

the tremendous opportunity the Association has, of rendering a great and unique service to Russia: to Russia – whether she be Bolshevik or Monarchical: fighting the Germans with the rest of Allies, or engaged in fratricidal civil war: whatever Russia is or may become in the next few years, if she remains Russia and not a German dependency we have here not only an opportunity, but, as I see it, a responsibility which is equal if not greater than any other single demand which has ever faced the organized work of the Kingdom.<sup>46</sup>

According to the “Official Handbook” *Fundamentals of the Young Men’s Christian Association*, issued by the YMCA secretariat and the organization’s Russian members, the national association became an autonomous Russian institution in March, 1900.<sup>47</sup> The *Fundamentals* describes the official opening of the organization in September 1900 in St. Petersburg, featuring a secretary of the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna who brought her greetings to the opening service.<sup>48</sup> Originally Mayak rented grounds in Liteiniy Prospekt, but later in 1905 the YMCA, moved to 35 Nadezhdenskaya (Mayakovskogo) Street, the building by the famous architect P. U. Susor. A prominent American philanthropist, James Stokes, bought it for the organization for 118,500 rubles.<sup>49</sup> The first sponsor of the Society Mayak was Prince

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<sup>46</sup> Lowrie to Folks, Moscow, 14 March 1918, Donald A. Lowrie Papers, series No. 15/35/53, box. 1. Russian and East European Center. Liberal Arts and Sciences. The University of Illinois Archives, hereafter cited as (UIA), Champaign – Urbana.

<sup>47</sup> *Fundamentals of the Young Men’s Christian Association* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1929). Paul B. Anderson Papers, 1913 – 1982, record series 15/35/54, box 1, folder 9: Official Handbook (“Fundamentals of the YMCA”), English /Russian, Including Drafts, 1929, 31. UIA.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Gus’kov, “YMCA v Rossii: istoria i nastoyashee,” 25-27.

Alexander Petrovich of Oldenburg. The latter selected the organizing committee which included Emanuel Sudurgovitch Nobel, Prince Platon Sergeevich Obolensky, Nikolai Stepanovitch Taganzeff, Priest Nikolai Wasielievich Wassilieff, and Apollon Sidoroff.<sup>50</sup> For a number of years Nicholas II gave five thousand rubles annually, and Grand Duke Michael, his brother, added a thousand rubles to support the organization.<sup>51</sup> Association treasurer Emanuel Nobel donated 62,000 rubles. By 1908 the Y had 1615 members, between 17 and 25 years old. Though overwhelmingly Orthodox, members included Lutherans, and Catholics, Armenian–Gregorians, and Old Believers, Reformed, Jews, Syrian Orthodox, and Molokan faith, as well as Anglicans, and Baptists.<sup>52</sup> They were “drawn from various occupations and social status,” including “clerks

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As it mentioned above, Mayak was considered an autonomous Russian institution, situated in Liteiny Prospekt. But the YMCA also had its headquarters which was the coordinating center of the relief operations for war prisoners. Thus, on his arrival in Russia as a YMCA prisoner-of-war secretary, Edward Heald enjoyed the proximity of his residency at the Grand Hotel from the YMCA headquarters that was situated in No. 19, Gogol Street. See, Edward Heald, *Witness to Revolution: Letters from Russia 1916-1919* [ed. by James B. Gidney] (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1972).

<sup>50</sup> *Fundamentals of the Young Men's Christian Association*, 32. Here the transliteration of Russian names left as it is in the original source.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 32 – 33.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 - 32.

Such diversity raises a question of the YMCA's ability to serve the community with the majority of the population not being members of Evangelical churches but belonging to a variety of confessions and denominations, not necessarily Christian. I found the partial answer to the question in the “minutes” of the YMCA Canadian Club Conference that took place in May 1920. Among other topics considered those present at the conference discussed whether their field included service for Roman Catholics and Jews. The Chairman summarized the debates and concluded that regardless what kind of community the organization served the YMCA task remained “frankly and openly Protestant.” (The nature and purpose of the YMCA was adopted in 1855 in Paris, where the first International convention was held – L.G.). The ‘Y’ should first aim for the Protestant group in the community and it was from the Protestant viewpoint that the Association was willing to serve other groups that came along. However, the members of the conference also acknowledged that they should not work aggressively for other religious and ethnic groups “trying to proselyte them with the Christian faith,” but rather “serve any group of people who are desirous of joining the Association.” As one of the participants stated during the conference, “we ought to welcome

them and make them feel at home as any other boy and make clear that we are anxious that they should be loyal to their own church.” YMCA Canadian Club Conference, 17 May 1920, 13. Paul B. Anderson Papers, record series 15/35/54, box 1, folder 4: YMCA Canadian Club Conference, May 1920, UIA.

This policy was proved in September 1925, when YMCA organized the First Balkan YMCA Training School in Baile Herculane health resort in Banat, Romania. The list of twenty persons attending the school is of particular interest, as it shows that the participants were of various ethnic backgrounds and religious groups. Among others there were people of Romanian, Greek, Turkish, Bulgarian, Persian, and Swiss background who identified themselves as Protestants, Orthodox, and Moslem. In the suggestion for the next year summer school improvements the author of the memorandum, Ralph W. Hollinger, wrote that among other activities he would include presentations by the school participants about the historical background of their home countries as well as about their lives, customs, and habits. He also would ask participants to discuss the characteristics of their religion and social lives. The most moving though is Hollinger’s personal impressions that concludes the memorandum:

One impression made upon me at this school came with such force that I have not yet found it possible to adjust myself to it. The most profound spiritual influence manifest among us, the deepest – flowing spiritual power, the spirit nearest to the heart of Jesus’ way and message, - all these came from a Moslem. His prayer for peace and love among men, at the close of a talk on the “Place of Religion in Life” was to some of us the most moving incident in the conference. Every impact of this man’s personality upon us was vital with the spirit of our Master, who is, also, one of the Holy Ones of the Moslem religion.

Memorandum of the First Balkan YMCA Training School in Banat, Romania, 15 – 25 September 1925, 2, 10, 11. The Memorandum was written by Ralph W. Hollinger, on 30 September 1925 while he was on the board of Simplon Orient Express. It was revised in Lisbon, Portugal on 12 November 1925. Paul B. Anderson Papers, record series 15/35/54, box 1, folder 5: YMCA in the Balkans and Baltics, 1925. UIA.

Partly the question is answered in a document that is called “The Young men’s Christian Associations of the North America in Service for Russia,” Draft No. IV. The requirements for the YMCA membership and leadership are described very clearly in it. Although membership seemed to be fairly open (“any man or boy over 12 of good moral character, regardless of nationality, race or creed may thus participate in the local YMCA”), the leadership (the right to vote, to hold office, to become directors or employed secretaries, and to represent the Association in its national and international legislative) was limited to “men who believe in the divinity of Christ (the Paris Basis).” *Fundamentals of the Young Men’s Christian Association*, 13.

Similar discussion took place when the presenters of the YMCA Canadian Club discussed gender. While some participants claimed that “there are certain activities even of older men that are very much better without the women around,” others pointed at the experience of British colleagues who made “absolutely no distinction in membership whatever.” According to the presenter who pronounced that concept, the members of the British

and office workers, apprentices, factory workmen, ... shop owners, tradesmen, mechanics and technicians, printers and draughtsman, teachers, druggists, medical assistants” and others.<sup>53</sup> By the time of the revolution, the YMCA had more than 4000 members and its annual budget exceeded 100.000 rubles.<sup>54</sup>

With the patronage of James Stokes and support of David Francis and Westinghouse director, William E. Smith, the organization published a periodical *Mayak (Lighthouse)*.<sup>55</sup> Other publication services provided by YMCA Press included textbooks, ranging from elementary school to university level texts.<sup>56</sup> *Fundamentals* state that the North American YMCA was a pioneer in Russian textbook publication, especially after the revolution.<sup>57</sup> Other YMCA Press publications included philosophical tractates by the prominent Russian philosophers such as Berdiaeff’s *On Dostoyevsky*, and his *Marxism and Religion: Religion as an Instrument of Exploitation*, and Rev. S. Bulgakoff’s *Marx as a Religious Type*. The YMCA considered its literature service as one of the most effective means for Russian philosophers and theologians “to have a positive and helpful influence” on youth abroad. Desiring to preserve and promote Russian cultural heritage, the YMCA publishing house released the whole series of books on lives of Saints and history of the Orthodox Church such as *St. Seraphim Sarovsky* by V.N. Ilyin, *St. Sergius of Radonej* by N.A. Klepinin, and *St. Alexander Nevsky* by the same author. Other printed materials reflected the Association’s mission “to turn men and boys from living their life

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Students YMCA, both men and women, “go to all the summer camps and they wouldn’t change for anything in the world. That policy has a sound basis of equality.” YMCA Canadian Club Conference, 17 May 1920, 12.

<sup>53</sup> *Fundamentals of the Young Men’s Christian Association*, 32.

<sup>54</sup> Gus’kov, “S veroi v budushee,” 25-27.

<sup>55</sup> Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 586.

<sup>56</sup> Such as *Mathematics, German Textbook, Stenography, Bookkeeping, Electrotechnics, Civil Agriculture*, etc. See *Fundamentals of the Young Men’s Christian Association*, 41.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

according to the dictates of the uncontrolled impulses and unregulated and harmful habits, to an intelligent and reasoned control of the physical life.” Such books as *The Fight for Character, In the Great North, Athletic Training* and *Rational Sex Life* were supposed to encourage readers to fortify the body “against depression and temptation” in order to achieve the immediate objective of great health and enjoyment in life which would help to remove any obstacles and create favorable conditions “for the action of the spirit.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 10. The Complete List of Publications of the YMCA Press has also been included into *Fundamentals of the Young Men's Christian Association*, however it could be found only in the approved version of the text and not in the drafts. *Fundamentals of the Young Men's Christian Association*, Appendix, IX.

It is worth mentioning that YMCA programs for moral and physical development and improvement were similar to those in the Soviet Union, though the latter were motivated not by spiritual salvation but rather by ideological necessity. A lot of ideas and ideals (“intelligent and reasoned control of the physical life,” struggle “against depression and temptation,” that both evangelists and communists - and later fascists - considered as “decadent” impulses leading to “unregulated and harmful habits”) were incorporated in educational and recreational programs in the Soviet Union and later in fascist Germany. Good examples are the All Union Pioneer Organization or the Young Communist League. The activities in pioneer camps in Soviet Russia were very similar to those of YMCA and Boy Scouts. Even their motto “Be prepared” was the same. See for example Michael Barson and Steven Heller's *The Commie Menace in Propaganda and Popular Culture* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2001), 26, in which the authors compare various organizations and even write about the group which was called the Young Pioneers of America-Communist organization for boys and girls 8 to 15 years of age modeled on the Boy Scout movement. They mentioned that the Young Pioneers of America was included in a tome entitled *The Red Network: 'A Who's Who' and Handbook of Radicalism for Patriots* together with YMCA and YWCA. There is some resemblance between American (even though YMCA was originated by George Williams in England it has flourished and progressed in North America and outreached such countries as Russia from there) and Soviet social organization. This proposition has circulating since the emergence of the socialist state. See for example Raya Dunayevskaya, or Oswald Spengler who wrote that in America as in Russia “everything is the same for everyone; there is one recommended type of male and especially female when it comes to a prevailing idea of the body, the clothes, and the mind.” Oswald Spengler *The Hour of Decision. Part One: Germany and World-Historical Evolution*, trans. Charles Francis Atkinson (New York: Knopf, 1934), 68. Heidegger borrowed much from his predecessors warning about the dangers of “unrestricted organization of the average man...” See Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 37. Later such philosophers as Herbert Marcuse and Jean Baudrillard were caught up with the Spenglerian idea and strongly influenced by Heidegger's rhetoric. Thus, Marcuse for example would mourn the souls devoid of” uncontrolled

The organization “flourished and expanded with the backing of influential Russian clergymen, such as Father John of Kronstadt.”<sup>59</sup> Other prominent Russians, such as Senator A. F. Koni, Count Vladimir Kokovtsev, and Priest Rojdestvensky took active interest in Mayak.<sup>60</sup> One example of collaboration and understanding between foreign Protestant laymen, representatives of the North American YMCA and the hierarchy, clergy, and lay leaders of the Russian Orthodox community was addressed in *Fundamentals of the Young Men’s Christian Association* as “a new creative venture in the history of Christianity.” Expressed in the letter written by Patriarch Tikhon in 1919 on the occasion of the American YMCA publishing an *English Service Book* for Orthodox parishes in the United States, translated and prepared for publication by Isabel E. Hapgood. Patriarch Tikhon praised “all who shall labor in this great work,” mentioning Dr. John Mott and his associates in particular and pronouncing: “Our Patriarchal Blessing be upon Our American flock, always so near to our heart; and upon Our

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impulses” and human lives without “unregulated and harmful habits,” comparing Americanism in the form of a democratic middle – class way of life mixed with Christianity with the Soviet regime. Propagates of the “equivalency thesis” claim that both systems of social organization (as well as most of the religious practices) seek to administer personal lives of individuals, eliminating inner tensions and dynamism, and abolish psychological conflicts and contradictions in order to control desires within depersonalized masses. For this particular paradigm in critical thought see Marshal Berman, *All That Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), Herbert Marcuse, *One – Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon, 1964), Jean Baudrillard, *America*, trans. Chris Turner (London, New York: Verso, 1988).

<sup>59</sup>And yet, YMCA in Russia was not always compatible with local religious groups and organizations. In *Fundamentals of the Young Men’s Christian Association* it is explained that during the war, the organization had only a limited number of experienced and trained secretaries for their emergency work. Thus, they often had to provide service with a staff of men, who, “although trustworthy as to the integrity of their character and their general administrative ability, were ignorant of the language, the customs, and attitudes, cultural and religious traditions of the country they were going to serve.” Hence, under such circumstances it was inevitable that the relations with Russian Orthodox Church became tense and that “some Russians in authority and leaders of public opinion formed prejudices and suspicions and antipathy” towards the association and its members. *Fundamentals of the Young Men’s Christian Association*, 36.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

never-to-be-forgotten American friends, and unto you all.”<sup>61</sup> The Americans, in their turn, acknowledged that the life of the North American movement was enriched by their presence in Russia, and that they themselves benefited greatly from serving in Russia where Americans were touched by “the spiritual depth of Russian youth,” charmed by “the beauty, richness, the mystical quality of worship in the Orthodox Church,” and challenged by “the creative elements in Russian religious thought.”<sup>62</sup> Such appreciation of the beauty and solemnity of the religious celebrations and dramatic services accompanied by ever changing music that “only the Orthodox church has produced” was expressed in one of Lowrie’s letters to his parents from Petrograd in May 1918. After standing in the great porch of Kazan Cathedral on Maundy Thursday and watching “the crowd of bodiless faces, each illuminated with the glow of a candle, pouring out through the wide doors and scatter off through the streets,” Lowrie wrote:

We arrived here on “Holy and Great Thursday,” the day before Good Friday, and that night I went to the delightful Service in Commemoration of the Passion of the Christ. It is a long service, for all four Gospel accounts of that last night and the trial and the Death are read, with many prayers and Adorations in between. It is one of the few services in the year when Russians take their Testaments to church with them, and each time a bit of the Story is read, the people light their candles, and follow the reading. I went to the Great Kazan Cathedral, which was crowded, as it is for every service during this week, and it was a beautiful thing to see all the thousands of

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<sup>61</sup> The letter is translated from Russian (possibly by Isabel F. Hapgood) and cited in *Fundamentals of the Young Men’s Christian Association*, 44. And yet, not all representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church would so easily accept the organization. One of Hapgood’s correspondents Archbishop Platon of the Russian Holy Orthodox Archdiocese of Aleutia Islands and North America would write to her, apparently answering her inquiry: “In the International society of the YMCA I believe very little, as it seems to me to have very little love and too much common sense.” Archbishop of Aleutia and North America Platon to Hapgood, 7 – 20 September 1916. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>62</sup> *Fundamentals of the Young Men’s Christian Association*, 42.

candles dart into flame, all through the great throng, every time a section of the Gospel was read. It is after the Thursday evening service that people always try to carry their lighted candles home to kindle the ikon lamp which will be lit up all that week....<sup>63</sup>

Another war-time YMCA secretary, political science professor Russell M. Story of the University of Illinois,<sup>64</sup> in Russia in 1917 – 1918, was also enraptured with the role of faith in Russian life when he wrote in 1919:

one who has been through the agony of the past two years with Russians can realize how deep are the strata of love, forgiveness, patience and meekness; how universal the common sense and humor; how strong the mental fiber; how glowing the desire for knowledge; how wonderful the already developed capacity for cooperative effort; how rich the simple culture; how reverent and noble and genuine the religious life of this great people.<sup>65</sup>

An example of either close cooperation, or understanding and mutual respect between the YMCA and the Russian Orthodox establishment was the special delegation led by John Mott attending the general convention that preceded the Holy Synod Council. Mott delivered his speech addressing the highest Russian Orthodox clergy ranks, the assembly that included Mott's personal friend Archbishop of Aleutia Islands and North America Platon. Mott acknowledged his respect for the rich historic and cultural tradition behind the Russian Orthodox Church, and its

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<sup>63</sup> Lowrie to Folks, Petrograd, 5 May 1918, Donald A. Lowrie Papers, series No. 15/35/53, box. 1, UIA.

<sup>64</sup> He also was a Syracuse University Professor, and later taught at Pomona and became President of Claremont Colleges. See Ethan T. Colton, Sr., "With the YMCA in revolutionary Russia," *The Russian Review*, XXIV, (April, 1955):128 – 139 and "Story's Death Loss To Political Science," *St. Louis Post – Dispatch*, (2 April 1942), 3C.

<sup>65</sup> Russell M. Story, PhD, "Russia – Present and Future" reprinted from "The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science," Philadelphia, July 1919. Publication No. 1300, International Committee of Young Men's Christian Association. Simon Litman Papers, 1865 – 1965, Clippings on Soviet Russia, 1918 – 1931, series no. 9/5/29 box 11, UIA.

contribution to the creation of the Russian nation-state, that embraced a great diversity of ethnic groups and nationalities. He praised the church's efforts to build and further develop the Orthodox community in North America, emphasizing the ubiquity of the church and its willingness to operate independently of time and space.<sup>66</sup>

Among other initiatives, the YMCA introduced basketball in Russia and the game became fairly popular among St. Petersburg youth. The organization built a playground, opened a library and a game room, offered gymnasium classes for boys, provided entertaining programs for children, Boy Scout leadership, lawn tennis training, and numerous courses in drawing, acting, accounting, foreign languages, and communication skills. It also started a Russian correspondence school<sup>67</sup> that was managed from the Paris headquarters after 1922.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Undated clipping from a Russian newspaper, (sometime around 1916, since the article refers to a chair of the convention Platon, exarch of Georgia. From his correspondence with Hapgood, kept in the same collection, it is clear that he served in Georgia in 1916). Cristopher Grozdoff to Hapgood. Collection, Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3. MAD, NYPL. It is worth mentioning that Russian Orthodoxy has remained an object of interest and fascination for many generations of American visitors. Starting with prominent Episcopalian Reverend John Freeman, who extended his travels to Russia in 1864 to begin negotiations for effecting a "harmonious understanding to unite the Episcopal Church in the United States with the Russian Church," and continuing with Isabel Hapgood, and such prominent politicians as Senator Albert J. Beveridge, who travelled to Russia in 1901 and praised the religious zeal of the people. See "Rev. Mr. Young's Visit to the Russian Church," *American Quarterly Church Review*, XVI, (New York, 1864-65): 640 and Albert Beveridge, *The Russian Advance* (New York: 1903).

<sup>67</sup> Through that educational project the YMCA extended its service to thousands of young Russians forced to live scattered all over the world sometimes without access to educational establishments. It is written in *Fundamentals of the Young Men's Christian Association* that until 1928, in the course of seven years of service, the Russian Correspondence School enrolled "7257 students in 54 countries in its technical, agricultural, religious - philosophical, commercial general educational and language courses." *Fundamentals of the Young Men's Christian Association*, 41.

<sup>68</sup> This information compiled from a series of pictures that documented YMCA activities in St. Petersburg, Russia in various periods. Among others, there are the pictures of the library stacks and the reading room, of children's entertaining program numbers, of Giadmaskaya Playground built by the city Association, of soldiers' game room, of boys' gymnasium class, English class in one of commercial schools, and most of all of the bulletin board showing announcement of classes, courses, and other activities. The pictures are kept at the University of Illinois Archives.

After the October Revolution of the 1917, the YMCA continued its work in the city, during the times of deprivation experienced by its population. Donald Lowrie recalls his stay in Petrograd in May 1918 and writes that the food situation in the city “is very serious.” He called upon his acquaintances who had been fairly well off before the war and revolution and found that they were eating “horse meat and sour cabbage, in place of ordinary meat and bread.” When Lowrie offered them half a pound of butter, it “could not have created more stir if it had been that weight of diamonds.”<sup>69</sup> Lowrie pointed out that everything about Petrograd “reminiscent of the sad condition of not only this city, but all the country.” He mentioned the plight of widowed women who were forced to sell papers and various merchandised items in the street, being deprived of the support from their husbands, writing that “you pass a dozen well-dressed women, in a half-hour walk, all of them wear mourning. Some officer’s widow, perhaps, without a cent in the world, now that there is no husband’s salary, except what she can earn from paper – selling.”<sup>70</sup> Another witness, Russell Story, wrote to his wife from Petrograd that food prices went sky high, and YMCA officials found themselves “purchasing supplies from peasants who traveled over a hundred miles in freight and fourth class cars carrying two sacks of grain or seeds across their shoulders.”<sup>71</sup> And, yet, Lowrie assessed the work of Mayak in 1918 “proceeding as usual, with fair attendance,” adding that the boys’ department was having quite a successful season, and that it had several new features, such as a day school for children unable to attend

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Paul B. Anderson Papers, 1913 – 1982, record series 15/35/54, box 1, folder 2: Photographs general, YMCA work, 1910 – 1930.

<sup>69</sup> Lowrie to Folks, Petrograd, 5 May 1918, Donald A. Lowrie Papers, series no. 15/35/53, box. 1, UIA.

<sup>70</sup> Lowrie to Folks, Petrograd, 12 May 1918, Donald A. Lowrie Papers, series no. 15/35/53, box. 1, UIA.

<sup>71</sup> Russell M. Story to Mrs. Story, 18 January 1918, Petrograd, Story Family Papers, quoted in Donald E. Davis and Eugene P. Trani, “An American in Russia: Russell M. Story and the Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1919, Offprint from *Historian*, XXXVI, (August, 1974):710. Russel M. Story Biographical file, record series 26/4/1, Alumni Morgue, (UIA).

any other schools (former pupils of Regimental schools). Altogether, according to Lowrie, “the institution gives one the impression of a going concern, with a faithful staff of men, working in good cooperation, to keep it so.”<sup>72</sup>

During the Great War, the YMCA provided relief for Austrian and German prisoners of war. And though most of its members traveled extensively to the Asian part of Russia, the headquarters of the YMCA’s War Prisoners’ Aid was originally situated in 19 Gogol Street and later moved to number 9 Mokhovaya in Petrograd. The actual prisoners’ exchange took place weekly at the Finland station. “Food and money was given to them, but they looked unutterably sad as they lay on their stretches with the Cross of St. George, the highest military decoration, and other high orders on their breasts.”<sup>73</sup> Thus, the city became once again the center for those, who “suppressing their natural preferences, and refraining from all expression of their own convictions on the war, consented to reside in the territory of the central powers in order that they might continue to serve those Prisoners of War, whose needs were most acute.”<sup>74</sup> It was from that office that YMCA secretaries wrote friendly letters to German and Austrian prisoners who often had become Americans’ good friends when the latter carried out relief services in Siberia.<sup>75</sup> In various periods the headquarters was managed by Dr. Haggard, Donald Lowrie, who had to postpone his assignment in Omsk and was commissioned back to the capital in order to meet special needs of the war prisoners in Petrograd,<sup>76</sup> and, after he left for Moscow, by Paul Anderson and Russell Story. They communicated with European chapters, receiving reports of

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<sup>72</sup> Lowrie to Brackett, 15 May 1918, Donald A. Lowrie Papers, series no. 15/35/53, box. 1, UIA.

<sup>73</sup> Lascelle de Basily Meserve, *Memoirs of a Lost World* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1975), 63.

<sup>74</sup> *Work in Europe, 1917 – 1919*, Paul B. Anderson Papers, record series 15/35/54, box 1., folder: World Alliance of YMCA, 1919, 1928 – 1937, 1951, UIA.

<sup>75</sup> See for example a Lawrie’s letter to a Hungarian officer, that he addressed to as “Prince of Pilsen,” imprisoned in Tomsk. Petrograd, 5 May 1918, Donald A. Lowrie Papers, series No. 15/35/53, box. 1, UIA.

<sup>76</sup> Lowrie to Folks, Petrograd, 5 May 1918, Donald A. Lowrie Papers, series No. 15/35/53, box. 1, UIA.

relief activities carried out for the Russian prisoners of War in Germany. By 1916 the secretaries of the YMCA in Moscow and Petrograd became actively involved in such proceedings as prisoners' exchange and repatriation of refugees. Thus, upon receiving the information about a plan for a series of exchange operations along the German and Austrian fronts, Lowrie proposed "as a possible line of activity" to organize "something like a hostel" in each of exchange-points as well as in the larger Russian cities, like Petrograd. For that purpose he hoped to secure a building and food supplies. Thus, he hoped that while being in Petrograd, the organization could provide proper care for returned Russian prisoners, and secure transportation to their homes.<sup>77</sup> Lowrie expected that such approach would "touch such a large percentage of the two million returned Russians, and give them (the last impression before they reach homes) such a tangible assurance of the friendship of America, would be one of the most valuable means of contact, possible."<sup>78</sup> In a letter to his parents, he stated that "in the present disorganized state of affairs, very little is being done for those who come back from Germany, most of them invalids, and they are really in a pitiable state."<sup>79</sup> Lowrie's appeal was properly interpreted by both Soviet authorities and YMCA executives in New York headquarters and in his letter home, dated 12 May 1918, he writes that the Petrograd office received a permission to go ahead with their plans to accommodate prisoners who were going to be exchanged along the German and Austrian fronts and that he was involved in "a whirl of arrangements" necessary "to set the thing up as soon as possible."<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> *Memorandum*. Re Returned Russian Prisoners, addressed to Colton, Petrograd, 3 May 1918, Donald A. Lowrie Papers, 1911, series no. 15/35/53, box. 1, UIA.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Lowrie to Folks, Petrograd, 5 May 1918, Donald A. Lowrie Papers, series No. 15/35/53, box. 1, UIA.

<sup>80</sup> Lowrie to Folks, Petrograd, 12 May 1918, Donald A. Lowrie Papers, series no. 15/35/53, box. 1, UIA.

Mayak became officially known as the Young Men's Christian Association only after the Revolution. Davis and Trani point out that though the majority of YMCA secretaries were decidedly anti-Bolshevik,<sup>81</sup> some of them, like Russell Story, judged Bolsheviks as a group "stronger than any other combination." In his correspondence with the American ambassador in Japan, Story states that "while the Bolsheviks were not democratic," they were all that stood "between Russia and anarchy on the one hand and German domination on the other." His advice was to give the Bolshevik government "a chance, even to the point of cooperation and assistance." At the same time, Story argued that the Western allies must "not be fooled by Bolsheviks."<sup>82</sup> When he and Jesse Halsey met Lenin in Smolny, they found him friendly and helpful.<sup>83</sup>

The allied decision to intervene changed the YMCA operations in Russia, since the Bolshevik government "saw little difference between YMCA and the Allied forces."<sup>84</sup> After the withdrawal of the American secretaries from the Russian capital in 1918, the YMCA rested entirely in Russian hands; Mayak continued to operate as a Christian institution until it was taken

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<sup>81</sup> Some of the officers and secretaries, like YMCA prisoner-of-war secretary, Edward Heald, for example, did not take any personal stake in any of the events that they were witnessing. When he prepared his letters for publication in the 1940s, he wrote that his value consisted in his being neither pro- nor anti- czar, neither pro-nor anti-Provisional Government, neither pro- nor anti-Bolshevik, except to the extent that the Bolsheviks were placing an extra burden on the allies by taking Russia out of the war. Edward Heald, *Witness to Revolution: Letters from Russia 1916-1919* [ed. by James B. Gidney] (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 1972).

<sup>82</sup> Donald E. Davis and Eugene P. Trani, "An American in Russia," 714. The authors quote Story's letter to S. Morris, 15 June 1918, written en route to Vladivostok.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 710. The authors regret that Story never detailed his conversation with Lenin and explain that in his view of the Soviet Government, Story stands between the extremes represented by Raymond Robins and David R. Francis. The latter believed that the Bolsheviks were unrepresentative and contended that they maintained power through terror. The ambassador did not believe the Bolshevik regime would be permanent. David R. Francis, *Russia from the American Embassy, April, 1916 – November 1918* (New York: 1921).

<sup>84</sup> Davis and Trani, "An American in Russia," 715.

over by communist authorities. Mathew Miller refers to the account left by J.G. Turpeinin, one of the Russian secretaries of Mayak, who described the last days of the Petrograd Mayak in 1918:

Like a thunderbolt there fell upon Mayak the decree of the district Commissariat of Popular Education on 6 September, ordering its closing.... A special commission from the Commissariat appeared and requested the Mayak's secretaries to leave the building...

Thus sorrowfully closed the eighteen years of the light-bringing work of the Mayak.<sup>85</sup>

Although conditions in Russia did not permit the YMCA to continue its service among Russian young men, the movement still maintained representatives in the U.S.S.R. as a relief mission.<sup>86</sup> Some of YMCA officers returned to Russia in 1921 to contribute their experience to unfolding relief operations targeted at victims of the devastating famine.<sup>87</sup> The situation was

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<sup>85</sup> [J.G. Turpeinin], "Recollections of the last years activity of the Mayak Society for assisting in the mental, moral and physical development of young men in Petroograd for the period from 22 September 1917 to 7 September 1918, the day of its final closure," 4. Cited in Matthew Miller, "An American-Russian Venture in Philanthropy: The YMCA and the St. Petersburg Mayak, 1900-1918" (paper presented at 41<sup>st</sup> AAASS annual convention, Boston, November 12-15, 2009).

<sup>86</sup> According to the London *Times* correspondent, reporting from New York in October 1926, the final disruption of any cooperation between the Soviets and the YMCA followed Paul Anderson's expulsion from Soviet Russia that year. The article was translated and typed in *Vozrozhdeniye*. "Bolsheviks and the YMCA," *Vozrozhdenie*, N 508, 23 October 1926. Paul B. Anderson Papers, record series 15/35/54, box 1, folder 8: Council of Christian Associations. Student Friendship Fund, UIA. The article in *Vozrozhdenie* refers to the one published in *The Times* under the title "The Soviets and The YMCA." It also announced that less than a month ago before Anderson's expulsion from Russia, Sherwood Eddy, General Secretary of the Association, returned from his trip to Russia and submitted a report to President Coolidge urging recognition of the Soviet Government by the United States. "The Soviets and the YMCA," *The Times*, 22 October 1926: 17.

<sup>87</sup> According to many historians, the relief activities of American organizations after 1917 in general, and especially in 1921, remained until recently "one of the neglected chapters of the history of the twentieth century. See Norman

deteriorating, not only in famine stricken areas, but also in its major cities, such as Moscow and Petrograd. While in Riga, Donald Lowrie received letters from his acquaintances in Petrograd and quoted them to some of the officials who could be helpful in organizing relief to those suffering in Russia. In his letter to Mutter, dated June 12, 1921, he cited the letter from “the last American stranded” in Petrograd who, though working seven to eight hours a day as a translator, still could not “earn anywhere near enough for the very necessities of life” and was craving the assistance which was simply “sending food” from time to time.<sup>88</sup> When Lowrie came to Petrograd as a representative of the American Relief Administration in early September 1921, he described the magnitude of the task for Americans aid workers and wrote in detail about the “untold difficulties” that lay in their way and the “hindrances they were to encounter on every hand.” Being in Petrograd only three days, he understood that the conditions in the city were “worse than any American could possibly imagine.” He wrote that the weariness that he felt was only partly from “the heavy work [they] ha[d] been putting in.” Most of it came from Lowrie as in those three days he saw “more misery...more sheer desolation, than ordinary folks ...can

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E Saul, *Friends or Foes? The United States and Soviet Russia, 1921 – 1941* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 44. This gap has been filled by Bertrand Patenaude, the author of *The Big Show in Bololand: The American Relief Expedition to Soviet Russia in the Famine of 1921* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002). Patenaude himself mentions in the preface that “today, it is all but forgotten.” See Patenaude, *Preface*. George F. Kennan pointed out in an article in a 1959 *New York Times Magazine* that “few people now recall the detailed circumstances of this episode into which so much American interest and effort were poured at the time.” See George F. Kennan, “Our Aid to Russia: A Forgotten Chapter,” *New York Times Magazine*, 19 July 1959: 8.

<sup>88</sup> Lowrie’s acquaintance asked him to send, whenever it was possible, “table butter and lard, sugar lump... any canned meats...condensed milk... any canned goods, like sweet-corn pork and beans, etc.” The correspondent also asked for cocoa, egg-powder, and for sweets. He wrote that prices on butter and sugar in Petrograd were 20,000 rubles a pound, black bread and potatoes 3000, mild 1200 a tumbler. People “subsisted on black rye bread and water porridges and gruels.” Also in need were candles, since electricity was given only for a couple of hours and there was “no means of striking a light during the dark hours of night, which [was] not only extremely uncomfortable, but may on occasion be a real danger.” See Lowrie to Mutter, Riga, 12 June 1921, Donald A. Lowrie Papers, series no. 15/35/53, box. 1, UIA.

stand.”<sup>89</sup> A relief expert C.H. Bowden, who was in charge of Petrograd operations, and who had previously been working in other starvation and devastated areas, claimed that “the worst place he [had] ever seen [was] paradise compared to Petrograd.”<sup>90</sup> Together with Bowden, Lowrie compiled materials for newspaper articles to alert of the American public about the devastation in the former Russian capital. Some of these materials are copied in their personal correspondence. Thus those letters home documented the state of affairs in post–revolutionary Petrograd, where the prospect of winter was grave, since the supplies of fuel and food were very low (three pounds of white and two pounds of rye flour for each person). After a day of investigating the food situation, Lowrie explained the misery of thousands of its citizens. After their visit to one of the Soviet boarding schools Lowrie wrote that he was nearly sick as he saw

pitiful little ghosts of children – practically none of them of normal weight or height banging hungrily about the corridors leading to the dining rooms of their schools – places as thick with the nauseating odor of a lot of half-spoiled fish which was the only ingredient of the soup which formed their entire day’s portion that had any nutritive value in it at all; the rest was water with a few bits of beet-tops or scraps of carrots floating around in it. Not one speck of fat of any sort. They get two tiny platefuls of this and a half-pound of stuff called bread, and that is all they have every twenty four hours.<sup>91</sup>

The idea for Russian relief program emerged as early as in 1918, when Edward House, a principal adviser to President Wilson, recommended that Herbert Hoover administer a Russian relief commission.<sup>92</sup> Even though the U.S. armed intervention in Russia delayed the plan, “the

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<sup>89</sup> Lowrie to Mutter, Petrograd, September 3, 1921, Lowrie Papers, series no. 15/35/53, box. 1, UIA.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Saul, *Friends or Foes?*, 44.

idea of a large-scale Russian relief effort remained alive, promoted especially by Walter Lippman, Norman Hapgood, Hoover, and other humanitarians.”<sup>93</sup> Hoover continued his pursuits in 1919 at the Paris peace conference, but without success.<sup>94</sup> In *Russia as an American Problem* John Spargo raised alarm to progressive forces both in the United States and in the West in general stating that

the realist sees quite plainly that indifference on the part of the United States to the condition of a great nation like Russia is practically impossible, and that it would be morally indefensible if it were practicable. At the very outset we are confronted by the elementary and self-evident truth that there can be no healthful peace anywhere in the civilized world so long as a nation of 156 millions of people,<sup>95</sup> occupying a vast territory like Russia, is torn by anarchy and civil war, ravaged by disease and decimated by famine.... We cannot as civilized human beings ignore the sufferings of Russia. At a given moment it may be difficult, or even impossible, to discover any means of rendering effective help, but we are bound by the moral law which governs men and nations to hold towards her a compassionate and sympathetic attitude, and to give succor to the limit of our power whenever the means can be found.<sup>96</sup>

Spargo connects economic difficulties in Russia with the recession experienced worldwide writing that even though Russia is strategically vital and immediately important for European nations, its wellbeing is essential to the United States:

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>94</sup> Hoover’s efforts were overshadowed by “the poorly engineered plan to bring all the disparate Russian parties together at Prinkipo to resolve their differences,” as well as by the chaos and civil war in Russia. Saul refers to “Relief for Russia: Unsuccessful Attempts to Negotiate a Relief Agreement with Soviet Russia,” Harold Fisher memorandum. Saul, *Friends or Foes?*, 45.

<sup>95</sup> Spargo uses the figures of the population of Russia in 1914, exclusive of Finland and Poland. See Spargo, *Russia as an American Problem*, 9.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

There can be no real solution of the great of the great problem presented by the high cost of food until Russia's products again find their way into the world market. There is not a wage-earner's family from Maine to California whose interests are not affected. It is not an exaggeration to say that what is called the Russian problem enters into the grocery bill of every American household.<sup>97</sup>

In 1921 Gorky formed a non-partisan Russian relief committee. Instead of proceeding directly to the famine area as the government ordered, Gorky went abroad to appeal to save the "Russian people, society, and culture." Although Gorky's committee was dismissed on the 18 August,<sup>98</sup> his plea, as well as that of the head of Russian Orthodox Church Tikhon,<sup>99</sup> had success and the American government considered aid to Russia.<sup>100</sup> Foreseeing the beginning of large scale relief operations in Russia, Lowrie, who administered war prisoner exchanges and repatriation of refugees in Riga at the time, wrote in a letter dated 31 July 1921, "I believe the acceptance of Hoover's offer means the beginning of an entirely new period in the history of post revolutionary Russia. It surely is high time."<sup>101</sup>

Relief efforts depended on conditions imposed by Soviet authorities. The Soviets demanded control of all supplies brought in and refused "to guarantee the protection of any

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<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-15.

<sup>98</sup> Newspaper clipping dated 29 August 1920, Lowrie Papers, series no. 15/35/53, box. 1, UIA.

<sup>99</sup> Kennan wrote that in the Soviet history books published at that same time when his article was released (1959), authors usually ignore Gorky's appeal and portray A.R.A. as "having taken an initiative in proposing American assistance and the Soviet government as "having graciously accepted the proposal while rejecting the A.R.A. efforts to encroach on Soviet sovereignty." George F. Kennan, "Our Aid to Russia," 24. It is also necessary to remember that among other American agencies that provided relief activities in Russia was the Society of Friends. Long before the A.R.A. authorities began operations in Russia during the famine of 1921, that organization had been in the field estimating the desperate conditions and "doing what they could with limited resources." Their efforts were widely publicized by Anna Louise Strong, a journalist in the Soviet Union for the Hearst syndicate.

<sup>100</sup> Saul, *Friends or Foes?*, 48.

<sup>101</sup> Lowrie to Mutter, Riga, 31 July 1921, Lowrie Papers, series no. 15/35/53, box. 1, UIA.

American Relief Administration personnel in Russia unless the United States Government would enter into official relations with the Soviet Government.”<sup>102</sup> Political and commercial activities were considered outside of the realm of relief workers’ duties, and violations of that clause gave Soviet authorities the right to expel from Russia relief workers.<sup>103</sup> Americans announced their own conditions, though, and demanded that the Soviet Government release a number of Americans “whom it was holding in its prisons as hostages in order to bring pressure to bear toward the resumption of official relations.”<sup>104</sup> This led to actual release of about 100 American prisoners and to negotiations in Riga which identified the final conditions under which the aid could be provided to famine sufferers.<sup>105</sup>

On August 20 1921, the press announced that “the agreement between the United States and Russia was signed, providing for American relief for the famine stricken districts of Russia and combating of epidemics...by Walter Lyman Brown, European representative of the American Relief Administration (ARA), and Maxim Litvinoff, representative of the Russian famine committee.”<sup>106</sup> The Americans engaged in feeding and caring for famine sufferers, according to the agreement, would enjoy diplomatic privileges.<sup>107</sup>

Meanwhile other nations also responded to the devastating conditions in Russia. Newspapers wrote of the the first mortgage, backed by all the Russian assets, as security for the 10.000.000 pound loan (\$40.000.000) that Dr. Pritjof Nansen was trying to raise among the European governments for famine relief work in Russia when urged that all the governments of

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<sup>102</sup> George F. Kennan, “Our Aid to Russia,” 23.

<sup>103</sup> Newspaper clipping dated 29 August 1921, Lowrie Papers, series No. 15/35/53, box. 1, UIA.

<sup>104</sup> George F. Kennan, “Our Aid to Russia,” 23.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Newspaper clipping dated 20 August 1921, Lowrie Papers, series no. 15/35/53, box. 1, UIA.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

Europe come forward and take a full part in united action to mitigate the misery in the Volga region. While Nansen, who negotiated the first mortgage for famine relief, paid high tribute to Herbert Hoover's undertaking, he felt that ARA effort would not prevent appalling misery unless other national governments offered large aid to Russia through gifts and credits.<sup>108</sup> It also was agreed to take up later the question of recognition of the old Russian debt. The steamer *Phoenix*, filled with relief food, arrived in Petrograd on 1 September. Dural Noyes, of the American Relief Administration was believed to have arrived from Reval, and thus was the first American relief official to be there.<sup>109</sup> The same month newspapers announced two more relief administration groups started their activities in Petrograd. Coming from Budapest, C.H. Bowden led the first one and heading the relief work at Petrograd. Bowden was joined by "the old guards," people like Donald Lowrie, who had traveled around Russia and was frequently called to outposts in Siberia, Moscow, Odessa, and Petrograd and a young Kansan named Snook, who served as a secretary of the Petrograd group. The second party included Elmer G. Burland, who had been stationed in Vienna.

The scenes that Americans now witnessed contrasted with the once glamorous views of the Russian capital and deeply moved them. Thus Donald Lowrie wrote home that upon his return there in 1921 he found only "the shell of the city." In his horror-stricken description the American was appalled at how low the city had fallen wondering how "people in it could continue to exist at all in the utter deprivation [that] they here must endure." He wrote that

whole streets deserted and strewn with wreckage of houses which have either fallen in on account of the failure of their foundations in [its] swampy ground or [had] been

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<sup>108</sup> Newspaper clipping dated 29 August 1921. Donald A. Lowrie Papers, series No. 15/35/53, box. 1, UIA.

<sup>109</sup> Newspaper clipping dated 29 August 29 1921. Donald A. Lowrie Papers, Correspondence, August 1920, Series No. 15/35/53, box. 1, UIA.

ripped to pieces for the wood they contained -- on many once fine avenues whole mountain ranges of garbage and ashes – the wonderful Nevsky with not a vehicle in sight in either direction – scattered groups of shabby people half-sneaking along, everyone lugging some kind of a bag or bundle, nobody moving briskly, nobody with any color in his face or apparently enough blood in his body to make half an ordinary mortal. It is a dead city with ash-colored ghosts of folks in tatters haunting its streets... and everywhere dirt, and smell, and wreckage and desolation.<sup>110</sup>

The American Relief Administration stayed in *Angletterre*, renamed *International*.

According to Lowrie, it had just been “partially excavated from beneath the mountain of dirt which two years of Soviet occupation left in it, and fitted up (a couple of floors at least) with the remnants of once – fine rugs and furniture, to serve as a place for the government to house its guests.”<sup>111</sup> By 15 September Lowrie reported that Americans had opened at least twenty

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<sup>110</sup> Lowrie to Mutter, Petrograd, 3 September 1921. Donald A. Lowrie Papers, Correspondence, August - September, 1921, Series No. 15/35/53, box. 1, UIA. Other visitors, especially those who had lived or travelled to St Petersburg before, also emphasized the devastating conditions of the city. See for example Emma Goldman’s disillusionment in what she saw remained from St Petersburg gaiety, “its vivacity and brilliancy.” When she left with her sister to America, she carried with her the memories of St. Petersburg as “a vivid picture, full of life and mystery.” When she returned there in 1921, after she had been deported from the United States, she found quite a different place. “It was almost in ruins, as if a hurricane had swept over it. The houses looked like broken old tombs upon neglected and forgotten cemeteries. The streets were dirty and deserted; a life had gone from them... the people walked around like living corpses; the shortage of food and fuel was slowly sapping the city; grim death was clutching at its heart. Emancipated and frost-bitten men, women, and children were being whipped by the common lash, the search for a piece of bread or a stick of wood. It was a heart-rending sight by day, an oppressive weight at night... the utter stillness of the large city was paralyzing.” Goldman, Emma, *My Disillusionment in Russia* (Mineola, New York: Dover, 2003), 9.

<sup>111</sup>Lowrie becomes sentimental in his letter as he recalls that *Angletterre* was the first hotel he had stayed in when in Petrograd in 1916, when he had almost the same room overlooking the square and St. Isaac’s Cathedral. Even the porter at the front door was the same Lowrie got acquainted with when he was in Petrograd before the revolution. He sadly added that the park trees were all chopped down, and the streets had grass; the square itself, once noisy with life, was nearly empty; “Other buildings,” he wrote, “[were] ragged and windows gape vacantly between great holes where all the plaster [had] fallen from the walls, and in the midst of it all, St. Isaac’s rears its ponderous

kitchens within a week and were ready to start other facilities “as fast as the government can get the apparatus in repair.” The mission called for Petrograd to have “about a hundred feeding points, costing \$45,000 per month, and feeding up to 50,000 children.” By 29 September Lowrie reported that the series of kitchens feeding 15,000 were in operation in Petrograd as well as a number of special feeding-stations for the refugees from the famine districts. Americans managed to feed about 2,500 children in refugee camps organized in the city. Lowrie also mentioned medical examination of all the children in Petrograd to determine the most needy.<sup>112</sup> By the end of September Americans managed to give medical examination to 150,000 children in the city, and issued meal – cards to the 40,000 who were to have them.

Kennan estimates the amount of the American aid and writes that about one - fifth of the total dollar costs was covered by the Soviet Government itself, and “of the remainder, about one half was put up by the American Government.”<sup>113</sup>

Not only governments, but also private organizations and independent individuals played an important role in relief activities, even though their participation was “on a far smaller scale.”<sup>114</sup> Some scholars believe that volunteer relief organizations and individuals were not credited enough and overshadowed by the claims that official governmental aid provided by the

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columns with the wonderful golden dome above them, the only thing unchanged amidst all this desolation.” Lowrie to Mutter, Petrograd, 3 September 1921. Donald A. Lowrie Papers, box. 2, UIA.

<sup>112</sup> Lowrie to Mutter, Petrograd, 15 September 1921. Donald A. Lowrie Papers, box. 2, UIA.

<sup>113</sup> According to Kennan, the dollar costs were running to some \$ 62 million. The contingent of Americans was less than 200 people and they managed 18,000 feeding stations in operation, providing relief for more than 4 million children and over 6 million adults by August 1922. “It has been soberly and authoritatively estimated” writes Kennan “that, as a result of A.R.A.’s efforts alone, approximately eleven million lives were saved, of which at least a third were those of children and young people.” George F. Kennan, “Our Aid to Russia,” 23 - 24.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

American Relief Administration alone overcame the famine.<sup>115</sup> Stuart Hibben believes that the work of volunteers “was either ignored by Hoover’s team or dismissed as politically suspect.”<sup>116</sup> Stuart Hibben, the biographer of his remote relative Paxton Hibben, who participated in Russian relief activities, assumes that Paxton became a bitter opponent of Hoover over the conduct of Russian famine relief efforts in the early 1920s. The biographer writes that while appealing to Hoover for massive aid, Paxton Hibben, like some other sympathizers “decided to launch a private relief effort on his own initiative,” mostly because during his travels in the region he had been particularly struck by “the hordes of orphaned and destitute children.”<sup>117</sup> Thus, in March 1921 the American Committee for the Relief of Russian Children (ACRRC) was established in New York with an office at 110 West Fortieth Street and Paxton Hibben as its secretary.<sup>118</sup> Sponsors included Senator Robert La Follette, John Dos Passos, philosopher John Dewey, and

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<sup>115</sup>Stuart G. Hibben, *Aristocrat and Proletarian: The Extraordinary Life of Paxton Pattison Hibben* (Coral Springs, Florida: Lumina Press, 2006).

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, It is worth mentioning that the relief activities of both private and state missionaries were interpreted very differently by various groups and individuals. Thus, George F. Kennan, for example, points out that Lenin seemed “to have kept scrupulously aloof from the American relief undertaking and to have avoided committing himself in its favor or disfavor.” Kennan also states that even during the relief operations there were some Soviet officials who impugned the A.R.A. motives. The intentions were analyzed in a varied and contradictory manner. Thus, some of the Soviet leaders, for example Leonid Kamenev, spoke warmly of the A.R.A. work. During the farewell dinner that principle figure of the Soviet authority “presented Colonel Haskell with a Resolution of the Soviet of People’s Commissars professing most profound gratitude and declaring that the Soviet People would never forget the help given by the American people.” See George F. Kennan, “Forgotten Chapter,” 24. Yet, Kennan also refers to some other interpretative historians and mentions that at approximately the same time, Kamenev’s wife and Trotsky’s sister Olga Kameneva (Bronshstein) claimed that “foreign relief was just a subterfuge for the penetration of Russia and for getting rid of undesirable food surpluses.” See George F. Kennan, “Forgotten Chapter,” 24. Paxton Hibben even embedded that idea in the title of one of his article that was published in *Industrial Digest*. See Paxton Hibben, “Russia: An Outlet For American Products,” *Industrial Digest*, 1, 1922.

<sup>117</sup> Stuart Hibben, *Aristocrat and Proletarian*, 63.

<sup>118</sup> Among other members of the Committee was Alice Stone Blackwell. See Smith, Shannon, “From Relief to Revolution,” *Diplomatic History*, vol. 19, issue 4, (Fall 1995):601-616.

socialist Norman Thomas, whom Hibben described as “liberal activists or sympathizers.”<sup>119</sup> In 1921 Hibben published a report with a detailed account of all places visited by ACRRC and observations of local conditions. If Hibben had not gotten a chance to publish his report in *The Nation*, “it would have received virtually no circulation.”<sup>120</sup> Although he submitted the report to a Senate investigating committee and it appeared as a government document, it almost immediately disappeared.<sup>121</sup> In the United States the organization was supposed to solicit contributions of food, clothing, and medicine and forward them to the Russian Red Cross in Moscow for distribution at various Red Cross relief centers in Russia.<sup>122</sup> Stuart Hibben devoted an entire chapter to the situation around the Russian Red Cross and other Private Relief organizations.

The affiliation of the ACRRC and its private donors with the Russian Red Cross “was a subject of heated public controversy,” due to the belief that the Russian Red Cross was simply another branch of the Bolshevik government and not to be trusted with relief supplies.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Stuart Hibben, *Aristocrat and Proletarian*, 63.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.* Stuart Hibben writes that that was the fate of all but one of the major works that Hibben authored in his lifetime. His writings were suppressed for one reason or another. “He had a predilection for confronting the world with truths it did not want to hear.”

<sup>122</sup> See *ibid.*, 63.

<sup>123</sup> Stuart Hibben paraphrases a letter from Christian Herter to the American Red Cross, dated 16 November 1921. Hibben retrieved the letter in Hoover Institution Archives. See Stuart Hibben, *Aristocrat and Proletarian*, 74. It is important to add that the private organizations and individuals were undertaking their efforts in the atmosphere of the Red Scare that swept the country and generating the public stand against Bolshevism and immigrant anarchists. As the authors of *Red Scared!* Michael Barson and Steven Heller point out, as a result of a strategy of U.S. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, illegal nation-wide raids were carried out by the newly organized agencies such as General Intelligence Division and the deportation of hundreds of people who were suspected of being affiliated with communist party were enforced. Moreover, super – patriotic organizations such as American Defense Society, or National Security League came to the fore and scrutinize organizations and individuals who either had at least a whiff of left – leaning, or carried out some activities in Russia or with Russians. Thus, a lot of organizations, who

Christian Herter, Hoover's assistant in the Department of Commerce thought that Hoover himself would not encourage or endorse any relief effort that was not under direct American and governmental control as ARA was providing.<sup>124</sup> Some press accounts linked the Russian Red Cross to the Soviet government, considering it a communist organization in the United States. The *New York Times* reported that Hoover labeled the Russian Red Cross as a communist front, presenting the Russian Red Cross "as an arm of Bolshevik government that could not be trusted to pursue strictly humanitarian aims" and that contributing to it would be "playing into the hands of the Soviet propaganda machine."<sup>125</sup> Richard M. Whitney's polemical *Reds in America* (1924), attacking the Russian Red Cross for "secretly serving the political and military needs of the Soviet regime,"<sup>126</sup> stirred the controversy. Stuart Hibben discusses the credibility of Whitney's charges, considering only the 1922 pamphlet *The Russian Red Cross: What It Is and, What It Does*, as reliable. Hibben writes that the issuing organization was given as the Russian Red Cross Commission in America which consisted of a Representative David H. Dubrowsky and a secretary Paxton Hibben.<sup>127</sup> The 1922 pamphlet viewed the Russian Red Cross Society as a bona fide relief organization. Another article in Paxton Hibben's monograph was written by

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carried out the relief activities were under their scrutiny. Among others Michael Barson and Steven Heller mention Russia Famine Relief Fund. See Michael Barson and Steven Heller, *Red Scared!: the Commie Menace in Propaganda and Popular Culture* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2001), 20.

<sup>124</sup> Stuart Hibben, *Aristocrat and Proletarian*, 74. It is worth mentioning that under auspices of Hoover's A.R.A. and Friends Service Committee that were in the closest cooperation there was established similar relief agency known as the Federal Council Relief for the Children of Russia, situated at 105 East 22<sup>nd</sup> Street in New York, the headquarters of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America that was actively involved in the relief work.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 74. These accusations remarkably remind the modern times struggle with the NGO in Russia. Similarly to American official standpoint in the early 1920s, the Russian government and President Putin's administration try to accuse various NGO in providing the ground in espionage. Russian government also repeatedly condemns their activities and warns that they can not be trusted "to pursue strictly humanitarian aims."

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

Marguerite Harrison, who in spite of serving at some point for the United States army's military intelligence division, and repeated arrests in Russia, joined Hibben in his relief effort sharing his affection for the Russian people's tolerant view of the Soviet experiment. The report also provides the detailed account of the Russian Red Cross activities from September 1921 to April 1, 1922: "it lists the operating details of all the relief centers set up by the Russian Red Cross in the famine region, together with an inventory of all contributions received by them to date from American and Canadian donors."<sup>128</sup>

The relief activities of the 1920s continued initiatives begun during the Great War and both revolutions of 1917 and their aftermath. George F. Kennan mentions numerous private and semi-private American organizations that sent representatives or missions to Russia. The Great War had also brought hundreds more Americans in the diplomatic service, or as business entrepreneurs, military observers, journalists, surgeons and nurses. They were representatives of a wide range of social and interest groups "from the ardent sympathizers with radical, socialist revolution such as John Reed, Louise Bryant, and Albert Williams to the relief workers of the American Red Cross, YM<sup>129</sup> - and YWCA, and the American surgeons and nurses who volunteered with the Russian army at great risk. Their presence, work, and services were welcomed by the enduring American residents in the capital where its head, New York Life director Frederick Corse was working on establishing an "American hospital" for war wounded, and the members of the substantial diplomatic and technical missions.

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<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>129</sup> The Y recruits were much better prepared, trained, and motivated for service in Russia, than any other group (Saul compares the organization with the Red Cross). By November 1917 they were arriving in considerable numbers exceeding any other organization or mission; they "would come closest to a real American success story in Revolutionary Russia." Norman E. Saul, *War and Revolution: The United States and Russia 1917 – 1921* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 172.

Corse's initiative was approved and encouraged by Ambassador George Marye, and substantially supported with monetary donations by Americans residing in Petrograd. It was a way that the members of the American community could express their "exorbitant sympathy and deep respect to the great empire that was undergoing the ordeals of the war."<sup>130</sup> The hospital was situated in 29 Sergievskaya (Chaikovskogo)<sup>131</sup> Street, and had 40 beds available for the Russian wounded soldiers. No money for the hospital came from the United States; all the resources were provided by members of American colony in Petrograd.<sup>132</sup> Thus, it was Corse himself, who originally subsidized and staffed the enterprise. The American Methodist Episcopal Church provided funds for purchasing medical supplies and distributed the Gospels and other Synodal literature in the Russian language among the soldiers. Similar activities were wide-spread in other military medical institutions in the capital - Great Prince Alexey Mikhailovich Hospital in the Winter Palace was one of those. The Methodist Church was in constant contact with the

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<sup>130</sup> "English Speaking Communities," 145.

<sup>131</sup> Count Perovsky calls it the most aristocratic street in the capital; the houses on Sergievskaya were frequently visited by the diplomatic corps. See Unpublished article by Count Michail Perovsky, Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>132</sup> Such an arrangement did not last long, however. In January 1916, the head of the Russian-American Corporation, David L. Hough, who was also actively engaged in the work of the Russian Committee of the American Red Cross Society, sent Frank Vanderlip a clipping from *Kristiansky Pobornik*, January 1916 about the inability of the American Red Cross Society to continue running the hospital on the available funding being forced to withdraw some of their staff. That is why they reported that Captain Hough had, with the assistance of other interested Americans, to solicit subscriptions which the American Red Cross Society received. The checks "are drawn to the order of the American Red Cross Society and endorsed 'for use in Russia.'" They are deposited with the foreign department of the Guarantee Trust to the order of Mr. And Mrs. McAllister Smith, Treasurer of the Russian Committee. In January 1916, there were enough subscriptions to continue the Hospital until April, and with other subscriptions the organizers expected to continue their work longer. Among the subscribers were The American Locomotive Company, The Forged Steel Wheel Company, The National City Bank, The Pressed Steel Car Company, Middletown Car, Co. etc. *Kristiansky Pobornik*, 16(16), № 84, January 1916. FAVP Part F. RBML, GMC, CU.

Winter Palace Hospital managing committee. Americans in St. Petersburg made garments for the soldiers and offered financial help to assist poverty-stricken families in various parts of Russia. The American Methodist Church donated bookbinding equipment to the hospital so that recovering soldiers could be trained a skill.<sup>133</sup> In May 1916, Americans organized a handicrafts bazaar selling articles made by the patients of the American Lazaret. The empress attended the bazaar in person. She purchased some of the crafts and awarded the institution with a bronze medal for the exceptional and devoted services.<sup>134</sup> The proceeds from the sale were placed in the National City Bank special account opened for this purpose.<sup>135</sup> On Christmas Eve, 1916, the donations of the American colony were used for Christmas celebration in the hospital and gifts for the soldiers.

During a testimonial dinner in Petrograd in 1916 the commercial attaché - Henry D. Baker reported not only on American commercial achievements in Russia, but also about their personal involvement “through friendly dealings, courtesy, and generally considerate treatment of this country.” Baker praised the initiative, pointing out the importance in showing practical sympathy for Russia “during these days of trial” and acknowledged the work of “American Lazaret to care for wounded soldiers and the American Refuge to care for refugee children under

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<sup>133</sup> This activity was commemorated in Leighton Rogers’ novel *Wine of Fury*. When the principal character, an American banker, visited his American acquaintance (an American married to a member of Russian nobility), she updates him about the latest news of the relief work and those involved in it. Thus she refers to one of the Russian women a member of the charitable committee patronized by Grand Duchess Tatiana and established to assist to the orphanage known in Petrograd as American nursery and sometime as American shelter. Leighton W. Rogers’ *Wine of Fury*, (New York: Knopf, 1924), 12.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> The City bank clerk Leighton Rogers described it in his novel: “She [the principal heroine] had placed on sale samples of the handiwork done by the soldiers. The funds derived there from were to be devoted to enlargement and improvement. The sale was a great success. She came with him to the bank to establish an account with the money.” Rogers, *Wine of Fury*, 77.

the auspices of the Committee of her Imperial Highness, the Grand Duchess Tatiana, and also the work of Red Cross.”<sup>136</sup> Baker considered those efforts as an essential achievement and felt personally responsible for those humanitarian efforts in Russia.

Favorable sentiments between both nations reached its apogee when the Society for Promoting Mutual Friendly Relations between Russia and America was formed in Petrograd in March 1915. Foreseeing the need for further cooperation, the former ambassador to the United States and a member of the Russian State Council Baron Roman Rosen promoted and chaired the Russian – American society.<sup>137</sup> The enterprise was the result of mutual charitable efforts of the American Red Cross, the American Hospital, and the American Orphanage for the children of refugees in Petrograd which worked in close cooperation with the Salvation Army, the YMCA, and American Methodist Church. The office of the society was situated on 59 Nevsky Prospekt, in the very heart of the city. At the end of 1915 it had 113 members, including 12 Americans. The group “consisted mainly of persons who lived in America” and who took the initiative to promote mutually friendly relations between Russia and America. Its members hoped that the society’s work “will bring closer understanding between the two peoples in the interests of civilization and culture.” For that purpose the society opened a Russian-American club together with a bureau for mutual information of Russians about America and Americans about Russia. The organizers planned to lecture extensively to educate Russians about American institutions.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Henry D. Baker. *American – Russian Business Cooperation. Remarks of Henry D. Baker, Commercial Attaché of the United States of America, at testimonial dinner given for him by American business men in Petrograd, 24 May 1916.* DRFP, Record Series # 02/P0274, Box 397, A-22a. MoHS.

<sup>137</sup> Saul, *War and Revolution*, 36.

<sup>138</sup> “The Society for Promoting Mutual Friendly Relations between Russia and America.” A letter from the Society to George Kennan, Petrograd, 5 April 1915. George Kennan Papers, 1856-1987. Box. 1, Series I. Correspondence, 1903-1916, 1.5, Manuscripts & Archives Division, hereafter cited as (MAD), New York Public Library, hereafter cited as (NYPL).

The society often gathered for social events such as dinners, lectures, public talks, etc.<sup>139</sup> In an official letter, addressed to George Kennan, the initiators of that noble organization would stress that

There are no two other countries whose natural conditions are in such a degree similar as Russia and the United States of America with their vast territories and the variety of their national elements. Both countries could profitably learn from each other. In the United States we can observe the newest methods of agriculture, the highly developed organization of transport, the unification of various and sometimes antagonistic national elements and the development of a true harmony between different social groups. For all these reasons the study of the various sides of America and its social life is a question of vital importance for Russians. But there are other reasons too why it is essential to make it at once an effort in order to reach a closer understanding between these two great countries.<sup>140</sup>

By inviting such prominent scholars of Russia as George Kennan to join their society, the members hoped to “commend itself to American public men, journalists, members of learned professions and that those who will share the view of the desirability of closer relations between the two countries....” Most important the society hoped to organize “should the circumstances be favorable” an “excursion of men desirous to study America on the spot.”<sup>141</sup>

William Boyce Thompson and Raymond Robins were leaders in humanitarian efforts. George F. Kennan portrays Thompson and Robins, two senior members of the American Red Cross as “children of the American western frontier...honestly interested in the Revolution, but ...

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<sup>139</sup> “English Speaking Communities,” 145.

<sup>140</sup> “The Society for Promoting Mutual Friendly Relations between Russia and America.” A letter from the Society to George Kennan, Petrograd, 5 April 1915. George Kennan Papers. Box. 1, series I. Correspondence, 1903-1916, folder 1.5. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

helpless and bewildered in the face of the torrent of events.”<sup>142</sup> Although Chicago physician Franklin Billings was the titular head of the group, the real leader was “copper magnate, stock promoter, and financier William Boyce Thompson, who thought he should play a major role in world affairs.”<sup>143</sup> Thompson’s biographer Herman Hagedorn believes, “Thompson no longer found promotions and stock operations stimulating enough for his imagination.... The overthrow of the Tsar startled and thrilled him....”<sup>144</sup> When during the small embassy luncheon with Ambassador Francis, who also invited Kerensky, Thompson startled the guests “by offering to personally loan the Provisional Government one hundred thousand dollars.”<sup>145</sup> A few days later, after Kerensky arranged for Thompson to meet Katherine Breshkovskaya, Thompson gave a million dollars to Breshkovskaya for her Socialist Revolutionary Party.<sup>146</sup> Barnes concluded that while Thompson kept trying to prop up Kerensky, Ambassador Francis worried that Colonel Robins was getting out of control. Francis was concerned that Thompson’s advisor Raymond Robins, whom the ambassador calls in his letters to Secretary of State Robert Lansing “decidedly progressive,” converted Thompson to progressivism.<sup>147</sup> When, upon returning to the United

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<sup>142</sup> George F. Kennan, *Soviet – American Relations. Russia Leaves the War. The Americans in Petrograd and the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1958), 5.

<sup>143</sup> Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 251.

<sup>144</sup> Hagedorn, Herman, *The Magnate: William Boyce Thompson and His Times* (New York: Reynel and Hitchcock, 1935), 206.

<sup>145</sup> Earl Johnson to J.D. Francis, 27 July/ 9 August, 1917, DRFP, Record Series # 02/P0274, Box 397, A-22a. MoHS. Cited in Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 252. The most memorable moment, that illustrated American support of Kerensky and his Provisional Government was when on 7 November Kerensky commandeered an embassy car (a Renault that flew an American flag) to leave the city. When, according to numerous historical accounts, the second secretary of the embassy, Sheldon Whitehouse and his Russian brother-in-law Baron Ramsai, a Russian officer loyal to Provisional Government, turned the car over to Kerensky, thinking that he needed it to take him to the front, and tried to remove the American diplomatic flag, but Kerensky’s people left it on.

<sup>146</sup> Kennan, *Soviet – American Relations, Russia Leaves the War*, 56-57.

<sup>147</sup> Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 263.

States, Thompson publicly advocated for the Bolshevik government and program, commentators noted that “it was not a socialist who spoke. It was a Wall Street millionaire, a broker, a captain of industry, a ‘mining king.’” Unlike most of the Americans of wealth, wrote Charles W. Wood in *New York World* in January 1918, Thompson made it a point while in Russia to get acquainted with the Russian people. And not with that 10 percent who had made up the so-called respectable element, but with that 90 per cent of no-accounts who were most decisively counting at the time.<sup>148</sup>

Thompson’s principal aid and the founder of the American Progressive Party, Colonel Raymond Robins, was also very impressed with the Bolshevik leaders and saw little hope for Russia other than through the Soviet government.<sup>149</sup> Both he and Thompson attended the democratic congress that was summoned during General Korniloff advance on Petrograd in 1917 where the split between multiple factions over the coalition with the bourgeoisie took place. Louise Bryant, for example, recalls Robins’s ability to analyze the situation writing that he was more sensitive to the political situation than “all our diplomats.” She described the head of the Red Cross mission as a person who had never “spared himself any difficult task to further friendship between Russia and America. He never assumed an antagonistic attitude towards any group of Russian people. He supported the Provisional government; he supported the Soviets:”

No matter how fast the changes came or how sweeping they happened to be, he immediately made himself familiar with them... Colonel Robins did more to offset

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<sup>148</sup> Charles W. Wood, “Pointing to a General Peace,” in *Russia as a Democracy: Why and How We should Help. Views of Colonel William Thompson, an American Business Man Who Spent Four Months in Russia* (New York: The Evening Post Job Printing Office, Inc., 1918), 3-4.

<sup>149</sup> See Donald E. Davis and Eugene P. Trani, “An American in Russia: Russell M. Story and the Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1919,” 710. The authors also mention William Appleman’s *American-Russian Relations: 1781 – 1947* (New York: 1971) as a source that outlines Robins’s views.

unfavorable impressions, was more valuable and actually accomplished more than any other man or group of men sent to Russia by the United States Government.<sup>150</sup>

According to the American correspondent nothing proves better “the common ground for friendship” than the confidence of the Russians in Robins. The latter never “pretended to be a socialist, nor has he upheld the banners of the conservatives;”

Members of the American Red Cross Commission came to Petrograd in August 1917. Their headquarters was in the Hotel Europe. Kennan explains that the arrival of about “forty men in the uniforms of colonels, majors, captains, and lieutenants” was the response to the urgent call for doctors and nurses in Russia.<sup>151</sup> An active leader of the organization, Robins, who was a fervent liberal and evangelical Christian in his mid-forties, appeared to be “bright and mercurial, bursting with ideas sometimes untempered by judgment.”<sup>152</sup> He and Trotsky, who were known to historians as “idealistic zealots,” quickly developed mutual understanding and respect. Trotsky, according to Barnes, urged Robins to stay in Russia and “pulled strings to get Red Cross supplies moved quickly to where they were needed.” When at the end of November Thompson left Petrograd, after failed attempts “to reach an accommodation with the Bolsheviks,” the multimillionaire left Robins in charge of the Red Cross there.<sup>153</sup> With Secretary of State Lansing

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<sup>150</sup> Louise Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia* (New York: Arno Press & New York Times, 1970), 249.

249. The author recalls about the Colonel Robins triumphant departure when he was given a special train through Siberia and accorded every honor from the Soviet government. See *ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> George F. Kennan, *Soviet – American Relations. Russia Leaves the War*, 55-56.

<sup>152</sup> Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 276.

<sup>153</sup> Upon returning from Russia, Thompson published his views on Russia in *New York World* (10 January 1918, 13 January 1918), *Wall Street Journal* (18 January 1918), *New York Times* (27 January 1918) and expressed his opinion in speeches such as one at Rocky Mountain Club on 23 January 1918. He would refer to the formation of the Bolshevik government as to the “intense desire of the great mass of the Russian people for unrestricted and unthreatened liberty,” arguing that there was much “good in the Bolshevik program.” More over, he would blame the

forbidding official contact with the Bolsheviks, Francis decided he could and should continue unofficially through Robins. The later continued to meet with the Bolshevik leaders regularly and informed the American ambassador and military attaché Judson about his meetings<sup>154</sup> and other actions he undertook.<sup>155</sup> The ambassador developed “an odd symbiotic relationship with that fireball from the upper Midwest,” who after the Bolshevik Revolution became Francis’

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American press in failing to recognize that Russia “was pointing the way toward a new order of society throughout the world, a larger freedom, a more complete equality and what I believe to be a purer democracy than the world has ever known before.” His further comments pay tribute to “unaccountable sacrifice” of Russian people that echo Kennan’s reflections on the liberation movement in Russia made decades before. “The Russian people have made tremendous sacrifice for this ideal, but they have been happy in their suffering and would not exchange their new found freedom for the conditions that obtain anywhere else on earth.” *Russia as a Democracy: Why and How We should Help. Views of Colonel William Thompson, an American Business Man Who Spent Four Months in Russia* (New York: The Evening Post Job Printing Office, Inc., 1918), 2-3.

<sup>154</sup> Judson himself met with Trotsky on 1 December 1917 which, according to Barnes, marked the first substantive contact between high-ranking official representatives of the Bolsheviks and the United States, even though when Francis reported about the meeting to Washington, he emphasized it “non-official character.” However, the diplomatic corps was much criticized by Washington for maintaining contacts with the Bolsheviks. That is why the following meetings, like the one negotiating a month-long ceasefire agreement were arranged between Robins and Trotsky and did not include any diplomatic personnel. Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 280. Later, however, at the end of December Lansing cabled to Francis that the State Department prohibited direct contacts with the Bolsheviks and that the ban included the Red Cross. Barnes quotes from the cable sent by Lansing to Francis and copied to Robins on the 20 December 1917. See Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 284. However, the ambassador Francis agreed with his military attaché Judson that considered cooperation with the Bolsheviks and continued to approve Robins’ meetings with Trotsky. In late December 1917 the ambassador presented Lansing with a *fait accompli* about Robins’ regular meetings with the Bolshevik Government. Barnes concluded that Francis “forced the secretary of state to choose between approving the unauthorized meetings *ex post facto* or disrupting the process... that might help strengthen the Allied position in an armistice.” See Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 287. Lansing could not help but answering that The Red Cross could continue their cooperation with the existing government as it was necessary for the distribution of supplies. But he warned all the involved correspondents that Robins had to acknowledge “that he acts for and represents Red Cross and not the Embassy,” and that “Red Cross being an organization maintained by private subscription and not United States Government.” See George F. Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 231-232.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

“unofficial aide in all dealings with Smolny.”<sup>156</sup> Robins himself was ecstatic about his mission and contact with the Bolshevik rulers. In a letter to his wife he would state “I, a Red Cross man, am the only person in any authority that is permitted by our government to have any direct intercourse with the de facto government that has complete control over three-fourth of Russian territory.”<sup>157</sup> His mission was described in his British colleague’s “the wily and flamboyant” R.H. Bruce Lockhart 1932 autobiographical thriller *Memoirs of a British Agent*. The former acting consul general in Petrograd was sent back to Russia as an unofficial agent, after the British ambassador was recalled. With similar tasks as Robins, Lockhart recollected that the Red Cross representative “was an intermediary between the Bolsheviks and the American Government and had set himself the task of persuading President Wilson to recognize the Soviet regime....”<sup>158</sup> McFadden suggests that Lenin favored Robins as “liberal American bourgeois” and saw in him a valuable ally.<sup>159</sup> Lockhart concluded that, of all the foreigners “Robins was the only man whom Lenin was always willing to see and who ever succeeded in imposing own personality on the unemotional Bolshevik leader.”<sup>160</sup>

There are fewer references to other groups involved in relief activities, such as American women. Some of them married to Russian noblemen, some came to Russia with YWCA mission, the Red Cross, or other organizations, and others accompanied their husbands, or travelled alone and resided mostly in the Russian northern capital.

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<sup>156</sup> William Hard, *Raymond Robins' Own Story* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1920), 72.

<sup>157</sup> David McFadden, *W. Alternative Paths: Soviets and Americans, 1917-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 66.

<sup>158</sup> R. H. Bruce Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent* (New York, Putnam's, 1933), 222-32.

<sup>159</sup> McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 258-263.

<sup>160</sup> Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent*, 222.

Though rarely mentioned in scholarly works,<sup>161</sup> women were active participants in the social and cultural life of the American colony in St. Petersburg. Only recently, according to historian Shannon Smith, have scholars begun to examine public activity of American women internationally.<sup>162</sup> Anna Babey summarizes the accounts of American women's Russian travels from the end of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries and writes about a romantic poet Edna Dean Proctor. She was one of the first American female observers who, in addition to writing about the splendor of churches and palaces, touched the life of the peasants in Russia,<sup>163</sup> Dr. Rosalie Morton, of Virginia, a pioneer in medicine who spent the Christmas vacation of 1899 in Russia where she visited not only the upper classes and had a meeting with Tolstoy, but also observed the underworld.<sup>164</sup> Marian Fells Van Agnew, who accompanied her father on his mining trips between 1902-1908 when she was in her teens and twenties, learned

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<sup>161</sup> This is how Harper Barnes would describe this group in *Standing on a Volcano: The Life and Times of David Rowland Francis*: "At the head sat Francis and a woman guest, usually the wife of one of the men who worked for him, sometimes Madame de Gramm or one of the American women who lived in Petrograd and were married to aristocratic Russians." Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 200.

<sup>162</sup> Shannon Smith, "From Relief to Revolution," *Diplomatic History* vol. 19, issue 4, (Fall 1995):602.

<sup>163</sup> Babey refers to such accounts as Proctor's *A Russian Journey*, published in Boston in 1872, her *Complete Poetical Works*, 207-234, and to her article "Northern Russia and St Petersburg," *Scribner's*, 1873. See Anna Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917: A Study of the American Travelers in Russia from the American Revolution to the Russian Revolution* (New York: The comet Press, 1938), 14, 81, 155. Proctor travelled to Russia in 1871.

<sup>164</sup> See for example Rosalie Slaughter Morton, *A Woman Surgeon: The Life and Work of Rosalie Slaughter Morton* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1937), especially 71-84. Also mentioned in Babey, 81, 152. Rosalie Morton reports on her adventure when the rector of an Anglo-American Church asked her to take some books to Tolstoy. Those were Tolstoy's books that were banned in Russia. They were printed in England and smuggled back into the country. The rector warned Morton that if the police discovered the books she would have very difficult time, but the brave woman announced that she would "have risked it, even if it cost me a trip to Siberia." Morton, *A Woman Surgeon*, 76.

Russian, and became a connoisseur of Russia and a translator of Russian authors.<sup>165</sup> The other notable visitor was Isabel Barrows, a doctor of medicine, an active editor of a religious magazine, and the first woman stenographer ever employed by the State Department, who was interested in charities and prison reform. For twenty years she edited the proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections and assisted editing for the sixteen years the *Christian Register*. She visited Russia in 1907 when her husband Samuel S Barrows,<sup>166</sup> an American De Tocqueville, surveyed European prison systems. Barrows returned to Russia alone in 1909 to plead for a mitigation of the prison sentence given to Breshkovskaya,<sup>167</sup> who, at age 65 was thrown again into the Peter and Paul fortress.

In 1917 two experienced YWCA workers new to Russia, Elizabeth Boies and Clarissa Spenser, expanded the “Y” activities by opening a school for young girls. The school was situated in 34 Fontanka Embankment, just off Nevsky Prospekt and featured “a tea room, a gymnasium, and classes in languages, with English being the most popular.”<sup>168</sup> Local women activists such as Anna Miliukova (Paul Miliukov’s wife), Ekaterina Vasilchikova, and Madam Orzhevskaja, widow of a former tsarist head of police in the 1880s<sup>169</sup> expressed solidarity with

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<sup>165</sup> Among her other works Babey lists “The Turquoise Lake,” and the “Eagle Song” in E.N. Fell, *Russian and Nomad Tales, Plays by Anton Tchekoff* (New York, 1912), *Russian Silhouettes, more Stories of Russian Life By A. Tchekoff* (London, 1915), *Makar’s dream and Other Stories by v. Korolenko* (New York, 1916), *The Murmuring Forest and Other Stories By V. Korolenko* (London, 1916), *Ivanoff, A Play in Four Acts By Anton Tchekoff* (New York, 1923). See Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917*, 140-141.

<sup>166</sup> Samuel J Barrows of New York, was a congressman and clergyman; as a member of a commission for the construction of a new prison in New York state he went abroad in 1907 studying prisons in other countries. Barrows visited prisons in St Petersburg, Moscow, and Nijnii Novgorod. After that he traveled to Samara to see how people were recovering from the famine; he also visited Tolstoy; See Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917*, 28, 131.

<sup>167</sup> Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917*, 81.

<sup>168</sup> Saul, *War and Revolution*, 171-172.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

the Americans and assisted them in obtaining rooms and necessary permissions. The YWCA in Petrograd served mostly a non-Russian population of Latvians, Lithuanians, Poles, and Armenians.<sup>170</sup>

Before Ambassador Francis arrived in Petrograd he had secured a letter of introduction from Natalie Townsend, the wife of the American ambassador to Belgium. In her letter Townsend addressed the most notable and active participants of social life of the American colony in Petrograd. Thus the ambassador was initiated into “the very inner circle of Petrograd life” that consisted of Princess Belosselsky (Susan Whittier), her sister Mrs. Iselin, a granddaughter of Ulysses S. Grant Julia Grant Cantacuzène-Speransky, who was married to a Russian regimental commander, and others.<sup>171</sup> Lascelle Meserve, a step daughter of an American banker, also mentions in her memoirs a handsome Lilie, or M. Madlen Buton, an American actress also known as the “Countess from Iowa,” who was the wife of the Russian General Count Gregoire Nostitz, and auburn – haired Madam Artsimovich, wife of Vladimir Artsimovich, a distinguished member of the Russian foreign office.<sup>172</sup> Among others it is worth mentioning Baroness Frances (Fanny) Ramsay (Whitehouse’s sister)<sup>173</sup> and Zenaida Ragozin (née Vederevskaya), “who had lived in America for thirty years, but who returned to Petrograd in 1900 to spend the last twenty - five years of her long life there through war and revolution as an eccentric but widely respected historian and scholar.”<sup>174</sup> Ragozin was a widow of a Russian populist. Together with her late husband, they sought refuge in America in the 1870s. After her husband died, Ragozin was left stranded in New York. Gifted in languages, art, and music she

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<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

<sup>171</sup> Natalie Townsend to Francis, 12 March 1916. DRFP, Record Series # 02/P0274, Box 397, A-22a, MoHS.

<sup>172</sup> de Basily Meserve, *Memoirs of a Lost World*, 61.

<sup>173</sup> Saul, *War and Revolution*, 68.

<sup>174</sup> Saul, “The American Colony in St. Petersburg.”

survived by tutoring “the daughters of a later generation of “O’Henry’s Four Hundred” and by establishing a “salon” of the adventurous and semi-cultured wives of the American nouveau riche.”<sup>175</sup> Like many other American women residing in Petersburg/Petrograd, Ragozin served as a mediator between countries and cultures. She never left Russia again, as other Americans did. After the Bolsheviks took power, most of American nationals had to flee the country, even though many of them would consider it to become their second home.

Among the latter was Isabel Hapgood, “a devoted and benevolent friend of Russia and Russian Orthodox Church.”<sup>176</sup> Famous for her “interest in Russian people and things,”<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Saul, “Charles R. Crane, American Industrialist, Globalist, a Founder of Russian Studies in America.” Saul wrote that upon her return to St Petersburg she worked for a newspaper *Volost* and translated American children’s books into Russian, she was acknowledged as a successful translator by a grant from Nicholas II. *Ibid.* I checked for some titles of the American children books translated by Ragozin into Russian. Among other American writers she translated Lewis Sinclair and Helen Keller.

<sup>176</sup> Christopher Grozdoff to Hapgood. St. Petersburg, date is not indicated (approximately sometime between February and October revolutions, 1917). Even when she was back home in New York, Hapgood would never miss a chance to see the service in the Russian Orthodox Church. Thus for example she asked the captain of the Russian ship *Dmitrii Donskoi* Admiral Nikolai Kaznakoff if she could attend the service performed by the ship’s priest. Kazanakoff to Hapgood, New York, date is not identified. She also studied Russian Orthodoxy very seriously, carefully choosing books that could enlighten her about the subject. When she was not sure, she would ask her friends to have a look at the lists she made and asked them what publications, in their opinion, were the most informative and beneficial for her purposes. Dmitry Alexandroff (priest from Moscow) to Hapgood, 25 March 1917, Moscow. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>177</sup> Even during those years that she was back in the United States, for example in 1904-1907, 1911, she did not stop actively corresponding with her Russian acquaintances and was constantly involved in the affairs of Russian Orthodoxy, politics, lives of her friends, promoting and discussing Russia back home, acquiring materials for various American organizations, such as Greco – Orthodox churches in New York. Hapgood’s love and aptitude for Russia has been well documented in her correspondence from the period that includes letters from most notable members of the Russian society, the members of the most prominent noble families, and many artists, writers, and people of arts. Among others, her collection contains letters from Maxim Gorky, Admiral Nikolai Kaznakoff, Ivan Aivasovsky, niece of the famous Russian artist Vereshagin, ambassador Bakhmeteff, artist Elizaveta Bohm, Julia Cantacuzène Speransky, Princess Lvoff, neè Dolgoruky, princess E. Narischkin, and others. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3. MAD, NYPL.

Hapgood stands out among all women visitors and sojourners in Russia. Even though most Eastern Orthodox adherents in America know Hapgood by name, much about her life and activities, as well as her personality and contribution to bridging Russian and American cultures is not well known.<sup>178</sup> How and why did Isabel Hapgood get involved with Russian culture and, specifically, with the Russian Orthodox Church, when there was very little interest in Russia at that time in the United States? Professor Ledkovsky describes Hapgood's life story suggesting that it was "an ever-growing interest in and concern and love for Russia," which caused Hapgood to become "a sort of spokesperson for it before Americans who knew almost nothing about that distant country and whose misconceptions of Russia, its people, its culture and Orthodox Faith she thought to correct whenever possible."<sup>179</sup> She was carrying out the intentions of Count

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Hapgood's interest and love for Slavic life and culture were so intense that back in the United States she gained a reputation of a Russian "agent" whose "long residence in Russia and her intimacy with people in high places at St. Petersburg have caused her to be considered suspicious by the members of the colony of Russian exiles, and even a person in New York who "receives Russian gold in return for certain private services." See "Russia Spies Here: Gold from Czar's Treasury Pays Secret Service Agents in New York," *New York Recorder*, Monday, 1 August 1892. Paper clipping. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>178</sup> Professor Emeritus of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Barnard College, Columbia University, Marina Ledkovsky dedicated her lecture to the 70th anniversary of Isabel Hapgood's death and almost 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her birth. See Ledkovsky, Marina, "A Linguistic Bridge to Orthodoxy: In Memoriam Isabel Florence Hapgood." A lecture delivered at the Twelfth Annual Russian Orthodox Musicians Conference, 7-11 October, 1998, Washington, DC <<http://anglicanhistory.org/women/hapgood/ledkovsky.pdf>> (accessed 21 January, 2009)

<sup>179</sup> Ledkovsky refers to Kathleen Haverlack, "Isabel Florence Hapgood (1850-1928)," [Unpublished paper] (Crestwood, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Fall Semester, no date), 1-2, 3, *passim*. See Ledkovsky, "A Linguistic Bridge to Orthodoxy"<sup>4</sup>. That Russia remained estranged, distant, and incomprehensible land for most of the Western world was repeatedly acknowledged by Hapgood's correspondents in their letters. For example, Count Perovsky Petrovo Solovo complaints to Hapgood about "foreign ignorance of Russian affairs in general." Perovsky to Hapgood, place is not identified, May-June, 1907. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3. MAD, NYPL. Thus, Hapgood's primary goal was to explore as much of Russia for unaware foreigners, especially Americans, as possible. There are multiple examples of her attempts to do so. On the 19 March 1893, *The Sun* published an article about the morbid condition of life of Russian women of underprivileged classes who were, according to the author, forced to marry at twelve years old, and were brought to the house of their fathers-in-law

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who, in their own turn, would sire children with their daughters-in-law. The article portrayed Russian women ageing as early as in their 30s due to “rigorous climate and the hardships of their life,” showing the signs of loosing hair, and being “distorted and drawn up with rheumatism and disease.” As a rule Hapgood always replied to such articles in the American press, especially if she felt that there is a slightest possibility of misrepresentation, or if an author showed him or herself arrogant or unaware about their subject matter. She would not fail to correct a single misconception about the country and people that she was so passionate about, as it was in the case with *The Sun* publication. Thus on the 25<sup>th</sup> of the same month, there appeared a letter to the editor refuting the unproven facts and stating that “girls in Russia can not be married before having attained 16 years” and that “to affirm that in Russia fathers-in-law are the seducers of their daughters-in-law means to commit a grave mistake.” To the claim that the “rigorous climate makes them old women at thirty-five,” she rebutted that “The frost makes their cheeks redder than roses,” and to the statement that rheumatism is a national disease she concluded that it was more likely “typhus, cholera, black plague... but not rheumatism, which is a bane of changeable climate, such as we have here in the United States.” See *The Sun*, “Deplorable News On Russia,” 25 March, 1893. Paper clipping. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3. MAD, NYPL. In another occasion she refuted a series of articles that had appeared in British and American newspapers about Tolstoy’s inability to continue his relief efforts during the famine in 1892, as he had been dismissed by the government from the relief activities for having published unpatriotic sentiments in one of his recent articles. Hapgood could not leave that raw speculation unattended and published excerpts from her correspondence with Tolstoy’s cousin Countess Alexandra Tolstoy. The latter, being the Winter Palace Dame of Honor and close to the royal family, was a reputable source of information. Hapgood quoted Countess Tolstoy in her publication; emphasizing her devastation with misunderstanding, intentional distortion of the content of Leo Tolstoy’s article, and irresponsibility of the Western journalists. Countess Tolstoy’s letter went as following: “It [the publication] attacked all Russia in the most unjust and detested manner, at the moment when she does not deserve it in the least.” The Countess explains that “Tolstoy had the imprudence to give that article to a correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*,” Mr. Dillon, who completely altered its nature...” According to the Countess, the article was twisted so thoroughly,” that they “turned it into an appeal to a rebellion of the country, whereas Tolstoy was only preaching labor.” Hapgood found out that Mr. Dillon “has been notified from London that he can no longer act as their correspondent, for having falsified Tolstoy’s letter.” The Countess concluded that in contrast to the publications in the Western press, Leo Tolstoy “will not be touched in any way – neither by exile, nor police surveillance, by nothing, in short, which can interfere with his present activity, which he pursues perseveringly, tranquilly, doing more good than ever in the province which he has chosen for his own efforts, and sending the surplus of what he receives to other provinces which are less favored.” See Hapgood, Isabel, “Correspondence: Tolstoy and the Czar,” *The Christian Union*, 26 March, 1892. In her article, Hapgood explained why she felt she needed to refute doubtful and unproven statements in *Daily Telegraph* and the *New York World*. She writes that: “all my Russian friends write that their country is grateful beyond expression for America’s sympathy and aid. People have been very generous, and I hope they will continue to be so, now that they learn with authority how unassailable is Count Tolstoy’s position, how practical, wise, and economical are the measures he takes to relieve the terrible suffering.” *Ibid*.

d'Arnaud, the noble Russian, who distinguished himself at the battle of Shiloh during the American Civil War and dedicated his efforts to increase awareness of Russia in the Western world. Like Count d'Arnaud, Hapgood believed that “much of the information obtained by journalists, travelers and casual students while in Russia is wholly misleading.”<sup>180</sup> She knew that while failing to understand the language, habits and peculiarities of the natives, and having no sympathy with or interest in the country, foreigners remained unappreciative and prejudiced, not inspired as she was by her Russian experience. Hapgood was “a formidable lady of many talents and vocations: a polyglot-translator of works by great literary masters, a prolific journalist and writer, a successful lecturer and administrator, a moral crusader, an organizer of charitable work, a liturgical scholar, and a musicologist working on her *History of Russian Orthodox Church Music*.”<sup>181</sup> She had served for over twenty years as a correspondent to the *Nation* and *The New York Evening Post* and had also contributed articles, news reports, and feature stories to various other newspapers and magazines.<sup>182</sup> Her first sojourn in Russia resulted in “a lively travelogue,” *Russian Rambles*, published in 1895 and “marked by humor and shrewd observations by which she hoped to dispel the misconceptions and fantastic myths gained by Western readers from earlier stereotyped accounts.”<sup>183</sup>

Hapgood spent more than a decade in Russia. She resided there beginning in the late 1880s and was in and out until the Bolshevik revolution made it impossible to stay there any

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<sup>180</sup> See Perry S. Heath, *A Hoosier in Russia: The Only White Tsar – His Imperialism, Country, and People* (New York: 1888), 147-48. The author reproduces his conversation with Count d'Arnaud.

<sup>181</sup> Ledkovsky, “A Linguistic Bridge to Orthodoxy,” 1.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 6. See Isabel Florence Hapgood, *Russian Rambles* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1895).

longer.<sup>184</sup> She met Russians “in the most ordinary, every-day fashion. Some others were brought into my life in remarkable fashion.”<sup>185</sup> Hapgood developed an extensive list of Russian friends and acquaintances. With connections to other European royal families, she was introduced to the Russian court, and received invitations to several imperial ceremonies, even to a ball at the Winter Palace.<sup>186</sup> She was acquainted with Leo Tolstoy’s cousin Countess Alexandra Andreevna Tolstoy, “of the Winter Palace,”<sup>187</sup> and corresponded with such prominent members of the Russian nobility as a founder of the Agricultural Institute in Ponemun, Baroness Alexandrine de

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<sup>184</sup> Thus, according to the dates in her correspondence, she was out of Russia early in the twentieth century, but was in Russia in 1917, when she even experienced some serious financial difficulties. Anna Druzhinin to Hapgood, Vladimir, 26<sup>th</sup> of March, 1917. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>185</sup> Hapgood’s brief description of Kate Marsden case, 1912. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, folder 1, box 1. MAD, NYPL. (microfilmed)

<sup>186</sup> Hapgood’s collection contains telegrams from Princess Elizabeth Narishkin, who organized the audience with the Empress Alexandra Fyodorovna for Hapgood. Narishkin to Hapgood, Tsarskoye Selo, 11 December 1916. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3. MAD, NYPL. Ledkovsky also mentions that Hapgood was invited to visit the Empress Alexandra Fedorovna who gave her an album on the consecration of the Feodorov Cathedral in Tsarskoye Selo. See Ledkovsky, “A Linguistic Bridge to Orthodoxy,” 9. Among other illustrative evidence of Hapgood’s being a habitu  within the Imperial circle are the official invitation, menu cards, etc. Thus, her papers contain an invitation to the Court Ball in February, 1889; the invitation is accompanied by a menu of a splendid supper. She also was routinely invited to official receptions such as one in Tsarskoye Selo, that took place at the guard camp in honor of Emperor William II when the latter made his first visit, 20 July 1888. See the Program of the concert in Honor of William II. Another charming document is the menu of the Christening Breakfast of Prince of Greece that took place in Pavlovsk on the 11 August 1888.

<sup>187</sup> Hapgood’s brief description of Kate Marsden case, 1912. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, folder 1, box 1. MAD, NYPL. (microfilmed). In her notes to the correspondence with Tolstoy’s family, Hapgood gives more details about the countess. She points out that the Countess Alexandra Andreevna Tolstoy was the highest rank of Maid of Honor, one of the ten greatest ladies of the empire and a member of the order of St. Katherine. She was Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoy’s great aunt. Her daughter was married to Duke of Edinburg and carried a title Duchess of Edinburg Saxe-Goburg-Gotha. Hapgood considered her friendship with the countess as a great privilege and wrote that “she was not only a very great lady, and a very influential Court Personage, but a very straightforward, simple and lovely woman, kind, sympathetic, and sensible, a remarkable woman in every way, including her intellect;” Isabel Hapgood, “Notes by Miss Hapgood on Tolstoy letters given to New York Public Library by her in July, 1911,” Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 4. MAD, NYPL.

Budberg (née Countess Antrep–Elmpt), Admiral Nikolai Kaznakoff, Procurator General of the Holy Synod, K.P. Pobedonostzeff, Archbishop of Warsaw Nicholas, Archimandrite Anatoliy, Rev. Alexandr Alexandrovich Hotovitzky, Princess Lvoff (neè Dolgoruky), Princess E. Narischkin, Princess Julia Cantacuzène Speransky, and many others.

Hapgood was acquainted with Count L. N. Tolstoy whose works she translated and promoted for English-speaking readers and ardent Tolstoyans.<sup>188</sup> She knew Paul Biriukoff, the author of “Materials for the Life of Tolstoy,” whom she met in St. Petersburg.<sup>189</sup> She was invited to visit Tolstoy’s estate in Yasnaya Polyana, where she spent an entire summer with her mother. Isabel Hapgood’s friendship with Tolstoy and his family “was not limited to the translations of his works. According to Lrdkovsky, she found different ways to be of practical assistance and in offering emotional support to all members of the family during her visit and later through

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<sup>188</sup> She was one of the active participants of a symposium on Tolstoy that took place in New York in January 1911 where she shared with the interested public her excitement of becoming Tolstoy’s friend. Her presentation was entitled “Tolstoy the Man.” Other speakers were Professor Christian Gauss from Princeton, who presented on Literary achievements of the great author, Rev. S.D. McConnell, D.D., a former Rector of St. Stephen’s Church in Philadelphia, who made a speech about Tolstoy’s religious views, and Professor John Dewey from Columbia, who analyzed Tolstoy’s Relation to Modern Thought. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 5. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>189</sup> Hapgood’s brief description of the Kate Marsden case, 1912. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, folder 1, box 1. MAD, NYPL. (microfilmed) It is very important to acknowledge Hapgood’s role as an advocate of Tolstoy’s legacy. She began her efforts in promoting Tolstoy’s writing when American publishers still had not quite discovered that that Russian author could be of great interest to the American public. Hapgood left an account of a struggle she had with the publishers in the United States: “In the early ‘80s of the last century, I tried to induce American publishers to issue translations of Count L.N. Tolstoy’s works, especially “War and Peace” and “Anna Karenin.” They were unable to appreciate them. One publisher – Mrs. James T. Fields, to be precise--even said: “Only one man in Russia knows how to write – Turgenieff – and he is several pegs above the comprehension of Boston readers.” I gave up the effort; but I wrote two or three letters on the subject to the *Nation*, which probably, called some attention to the author.” See Hapgood Papers, Folder “Nathan Haskell Dole, Clippings, report.” Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 5. MAD, NYPL.

correspondence. (It must be remembered that her visit coincided with Tolstoy's crucial mental crisis)."<sup>190</sup> She also was very close with Tolstoy's most devoted friends and disciples.

Hapgood was particularly interested in Russian church music, choir singing, and opera, all among her most irresistible 'passions.'<sup>191</sup> She explored great cathedrals, monasteries and parish churches, collecting materials, especially on chants and rituals, while "befriending the high and low clergy and many outstanding church musicians."<sup>192</sup> During her first visit, she had a memorable experience of Russian choral singing while attending a weekday vespers service at Saint Sophia's Cathedral in Kiev that she described in her *Russian Rambles*.<sup>193</sup> She had a copy of

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<sup>190</sup> Ledkovsky, "A Linguistic Bridge to Orthodoxy," 6. Hapgood's collection in New York Public library is a great inventory of her correspondence with the members of a large Tolstoy's family. She has letters, notes, article, postcards, and other written messages sent to her by Tolstoy's great aunt Alexandra Andreevna Tolstoy, the Count's daughter Countess Tatyana Lvovna, his son Lyeff Lvovich, the writer's wife Countess Sophia Andreevna, among others. She even received a thank you note (in English) from the youngest of Tolstoy's daughters Alexandra Lvovna (Sasha), when apparently Hapgood knitted a little outfit for Sasha's doll. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 4. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>191</sup> Of course she was not the only one or the first one in her fascination with the choir singing. A lot of Americans travelling to Russia enjoyed it and left touching accounts about their exposure to that Russian art form. For example Perry S Heath, who sojourned in Russia approximately at the same time as Hapgood, wrote: "Russians sing beautifully and the music they produce is charming. The rich, deep, bass voices harmonize perfectly with the clear, sweet, and high tenors." See Heath, *A Hoosier in Russia*, 107. Another famous admirer of Russian choir singing Lascelle Meserve de Basily wrote that during the "Orthodox religious service in gilded churches... the eyes of the stranger were dazzled by the rich gold iconostases... his ears intoxicated by the strains of celestial music sung by choirs without accompaniment. No organ is used in Orthodox places of worship and the soulful voices rise like a heavenly host." See de Basily Meserve, *Memoirs of a Lost World*, 55.

<sup>192</sup> Ledkovsky refers to "A Generally Obscure Calling: A Character Sketch of Isabel Florence Hapgood," [unpublished article by the Reverend Stuart H. Hoke,] (New York General Theological Seminary, June 1997); See Ledkovsky, "A Linguistic Bridge to Orthodoxy," 6.

<sup>193</sup> Isabel Florence Hapgood, *Russian Rambles*, 230. She was especially enchanted by the choir at the Dormition Cathedral in the Kremlin, led by Alexander Dimitrievich Kastalsky (1856- 1926), whom she described as "the wonderful composer and director." Hapgood not only promoted the further publication of this work in the United States, but also translated the songs for *Church Music Review* American edition. See the portion of the Russian edition, sent to Hapgood by the composer himself as well as a copy of American edition in Isabel Florence Hapgood

choir sheet music composed especially for the minor singers of St. Petersburg Imperial Capella by A. Kastalsky, the director of the Dormition Cathedral choir. She also acknowledged the work of the director of imperial opera Eduard Frantsovich Napravnik and translated the lyrics of the lullaby from his opera “Harold.”<sup>194</sup> She was acquainted with the head of Imperial Capella Count Sheremetieff, and translated lyrics of his composition in English.<sup>195</sup>

Her interest initiated her friendship and extensive correspondence with a conductor Vasily Safonoff, who came to New York to conduct for the philharmonic society, the assistant Choirmaster of the Imperial Capella Christopher Grozdoff, and with another Capella affiliate Antonin Viktorovich Preobrazhensky.<sup>196</sup>

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Papers, box 3. MAD, NYPL. The rights for Kastalsky’s Easter Anthem were obtained by Novello & Co., Ltd., a reputable house in London which still publishes music. The H.W. Gray Co. was their sole agent in New York; they released the anthem only in 1922. See Kastalsky, A., “Now Christ is Risen,” *Church Music Review*, № 642, The H.W. Gray Co., 1922.

<sup>194</sup> The latter expressed very warm sentiments in his letter to the American admirer of the art of Russian opera, confessing that he is very touched by her love and respect towards his work and acknowledging her masterly translation that maintained musicality necessary for the opera arias and that it was perfect in all possible respects. Eduard Napravnik to Hapgood, St. Petersburg, 24 November – 7 December 1906. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3. MAD, NYPL. I did not locate the recording of the song in English, but I did locate a recording of Napravnik’s lullaby from his opera *Garold* that is sung in Russian. Listen to Napravnik, Eduard Frantsevich, “Uspokoisya dorogoi,” cradle song from opera *Garold*. Sound recording. Cadmen, N.J.: Victor Record, [1906?] Recorded 1905 in St. Petersburg by the Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. for sale in North and South America only. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York.

<sup>195</sup> Hapgood collection contains a piece “Save and Keep, O Lord,” composed by A.D. Sheremetieff and translated by her. Published by The H.W. Gray, Co., and Sole Agents for Novello & Co., Ltd, 1922. After the Revolution, Hapgood assisted Sheremetieff in promoting his ecclesiastic compositions written for the liturgy with H.W. Gray, the sole agent of music publishing Novello & Com in London. Count A.D. Sheremetieff to Hapgood, Finland, July 4<sup>th</sup> 1922. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 4. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>196</sup> Ledkovsky identifies Preobrazhensky as a librarian of the Imperial Capella and later, since 1920, a professor of Petrograd Conservatory (Maksim Brazhnikov’s teacher). See Ledkovsky, “A Linguistic Bridge to Orthodoxy,” 10. She negotiated with them the possibility to publish in the United States partitura of the choir that Count Cheremetieff had directed before the revolution. Antonin Preobrazhensky to Hapgood, St. Petersburg, 7 May, 1917.

It was after the consecration of St. Nicholas Cathedral in New York in 1903 that the choir was organized. With the help and support of the American philanthropist and admirer of Russian ecclesiastical music, Charles R. Crane, the choirmaster, Ivan Timofeevich Gorokhov<sup>197</sup> came from Moscow, where he had been an assistant to Kastalsky at the Synodal Choir School. He brought with him six adult male singers; the boy voices came from the Russian colony in New York.<sup>198</sup>

After its first concerts in the Synod Hall of the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine on 13 October 1913<sup>199</sup> and later that year at Harvard University, the choir gave yearly concerts on extended tours throughout the United States. On 29 February 1914 the choir was invited to the White House for a private recital before President Woodrow Wilson, his family and state dignitaries. As at all concerts, the audience was provided with Hapgood's translations for the pieces presented at that occasion. The program consisted of selections in the tradition of the Moscow School attesting Gorokhov's training and good taste.<sup>200</sup>

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Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3.MAD, NYPL. Hapgood's affiliation with the choir also led her to a very close friendship with Archbishops of Aleutia Islands and North America Platon, who established the Cathedral Choir Fund, which had \$60, 000 endowment.

<sup>197</sup> See Hapgood, Isabel, "The Russian Cathedral Choir," *Haper's Weekly* (February 28, 1914): 26; "Ledkovsky, "A Linguistic Bridge to Orthodoxy," 10, Brill, N.P., *History of Russian Church Music 1888 – 1917* (Normal, IL: Illinois State University, 1982), 165 – 166, Haverlack, "Isabel Florence Hapgood (1850-1928)," 13.

<sup>198</sup> Ledkovsky, "A Linguistic Bridge to Orthodoxy," 9. At the insistence of Charles Crane, the choir was patterned on the famous Moscow Synodal Choir, consisting of male voices only. Hapgood was actively involved in organizing public concerts, and her energetic support led to extraordinary success. She frequently accompanied the choir as a lecturer and publicized the group in magazines and newspapers. In her articles she expressed her wish for a strong foundation for the Orthodox Church in America through its "angelic" liturgical singing. Hapgood, "The Russian Cathedral Choir," 26.

<sup>199</sup> There were many other occasions however. Thus, among other documents in Hapgood's collection, there is a program of one of the choir's performances in 1913 that took pace in Aeolian Hall in New York. Russian Cathedral Choir Program, 29 November 1923, and 1 February, 1914. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 4. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>200</sup> The "Program" of the Russian Festival, undated. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 4. MAD, NYPL.

During the Great War the choir participated in the Russian Festival in New York. The festival was organized for the relief of the “Russian war sufferers” and intended to exhibit for Americans “the characteristics of the Russian people, in their art, dancing, music, mysticism, and religion.”<sup>201</sup> The 1917 revolution ended the tours because the Holy Synod could no longer provide funds for its churches in America.<sup>202</sup>

Hapgood also served as a chair of the Russian Symphony Society. In a brief message to Hapgood Baron Romen Rosen expressed his regret regarding her resignation in 1906 and acknowledged her devotion and “much time and unselfish effort,” that she contributed to the enterprise.<sup>203</sup>

Hapgood was very interested in social developments in Russia and published her analysis on Russian political and economic affairs in American periodicals.<sup>204</sup> She asked her

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid. It was reported in the program that the concerts given by the Russian Cathedral Choir

attracted the attention of the entire musical world of America, and evoked the most enthusiastic praise from the musical critics, and the enthusiasm of the general public, who declared in print and in numerous letters, that concerts constituted a new musical sensation, and revealed a realm of Church music almost wholly unknown to others than Russians. One of the leading authorities on that subject in America has said of it: “In their Church Music the Russians come very, very near to expressing the Inexpressible.

<sup>202</sup> See Ledkovsky, “A Linguistic Bridge to Orthodoxy,” 10. The author refers to *Iubileinyi sbornik v pamiat’ Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi v Severnoi Amerike* (New York: Izdanie iubileinoi komissii, 1944), 232-234, a reprint from *Amerikanskii Pravoslavnyi Vestnik* (1914), 67-68 and Brill, 166-169.

<sup>203</sup> Baron Romen R. Rosen to Hapgood, February 24<sup>th</sup> 1906, Washington. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 4, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>204</sup> Thus, for example, an article on Witte is mentioned and discussed by one of her correspondents Count Perovsky in his letter to Hapgood. Perovsky to Hapgood, St. Petersburg, January 22 – February 4, (year is not identified). Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 4. MAD, NYPL.

correspondents about their analysis of revolutionary events, of the opening of the Duma, of censorship in Russia, and of public health, including such issues as prostitution.<sup>205</sup> Women's issues were of great importance to her. Hapgood would claim that "the Russian woman does thoroughly what she undertakes whether, as in the past, she voluntarily accompanied her husband into exile and made him a new home with tender, indomitable courage; or, as in the present, she writes, paints, sings, nurses, teachers, doctors, and in general, leads the life of the modern woman through choice or the compelling force of circumstances."<sup>206</sup> She collected information on women's education and progress in Russia and put together these surveys at the request of the Committee of Russian Women in St. Petersburg to be exhibited at the World's Colombian Exposition in Chicago, 1893. The collection consists of Hapgood's survey on education, medicine, and crafts, as well as of a number of biographies of prominent professional and artisan women written and sent to her by correspondents. At the close of the exposition, the exhibit materials were compiled in an informative pamphlet and distributed to libraries, colleges and other American institutions. In addition, the pamphlet was published in Europe in French and German translations.<sup>207</sup> Among others there are narratives about a famous Russian – American publicist and writer Barbara MacGahan (née Varvara Elagina), who wrote extensively on

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<sup>205</sup> A good example is Hapgood's correspondence with Maria Pokrovsky, a hygienist, and a member of the Russian Society of Guarding of Public Health, who authored a brochure "Eradication of Prostitution: What Is To Be Done To Eradicate That Evil," and sent it to Hapgood, asking Isabel in return to inform her about the situation in the United States. Maria J Pokrovsky to Hapgood, St. Petersburg, 1900. Another letter was from a Zinaida Yakovlevna Eltsina, specialist on syphilis and dermatology, who was consulting various groups dealing with health issues of prostitutes. Zinaida Eltzina to Hapgood, St. Petersburg, date is not indentified. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 4. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>206</sup> Isabel Florence Hapgood, "Russian Women," *Chautauguan*, XXXII, (1900-1): 589-94.

<sup>207</sup> Isabel Florence Hapgood, "Collection of reports, biographies, etc., which deal with the subject of Women's education and progress in Russia. Exhibited at the World's Colombian Exposition, Chicago, 1893." Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 4. MAD, NYPL.

America and American life for the Russian press and pioneer female doctors and scientists like Yulia Vsevolodna Lermontova. Hapgood included information about a philologist and translator O.I. Sreznevskaya, who introduced works by Bret Harte to Russians, translated literary works from French and Spanish languages, and devoted all her efforts to the publication of a reference edition on Old Slavonic language started by her father, a prominent philologist-Slavist I.I. Sreznevsky. Hapgood kept the biography of a writer M.K Zebrikova, who had become famous for her critical interpretation of Tolstoy's female characters, and for her translations from English, French, and German.<sup>208</sup> Hapgood was attracted by that writer's views on women's equality and rights expressed at the special committee promoting higher education for women. Other biographies included common-law specialist Alexandra Efimenko, who studied questions of interdependence of the common law and ancient traditions of ethnic groups in Russia and Anna Efremova, a female lawyer, who received a judicial degree in Leipzig and, upon her return to St. Petersburg, practiced the common law and researched the history of ancient Slavic code. Hapgood did not forget her good friends and acquaintances. Thus, among the biographies in her report is an artist Elizaveta Bohm, a master of silhouettes, who was a close acquaintance of the American.

While investigating women's questions, Hapgood compiled a report on higher education for women in Russia.<sup>209</sup> Her study begins with the first school for women in Russia in the eleventh century. At that time, it was considered the first school for women in Europe. Hapgood

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<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.* M.K. Zebrikova translated a book on Women in the American Revolution.

<sup>209</sup> Hapgood received essential help in the course of her studies from the head of the Imperial Public Library, Vladimir Stasoff's sister Nadezhda Stasoff. The latter, who was herself a leading initiator and advocate of the higher education for women in Russia, sent Hapgood two reports, one on the higher instruction for women, and one on the history of the Higher Medical Courses for women. Nadezhda Stasoff to Hapgood, St. Petersburg, 3-15 April 1893. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 4. MAD, NYPL.

mentions Catherine the Great's order to establish a female educational institution, the Educational Society for Young Ladies of the Nobility for young women from distinguished families to be educated at government expense, and a school for "daughters of citizens, that was set up and connected with the Educational Society." The report narrates the development of educational facilities for women in Russia and describes in detail the Empress Maria Fyodorovna's initiative to establish several institutions in the capital for the daughters of military nobles, those of lower ranks, the daughters of nobility and ordinary citizens alike, one of which she founded and supported.<sup>210</sup> Hapgood analyzes the establishment of schools for the lower classes in the 1860s and 1870s, "after the great reform, the abolition of slavery, when the country estates were entrusted with the care of educating people."<sup>211</sup> A great number of professional institutions arose due to the demand for "independent labor among Russian women." As a result, higher pedagogical and medical courses opened to Russian women providing them with a new opportunity for "a brighter and more intelligent existence." Several of Hapgood's correspondents proved by their own example that women in Russia were "not only capable of a higher kind of education," but that they had "a right to it." That right was realized with the establishment of the so called "Superior Courses for Women" in St. Petersburg in 1878. Hapgood emphasized Russian women's achievements to counter misconceptions about their repressive and backward existence prevailing in other countries.<sup>212</sup> She even cites the letter

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<sup>210</sup> Hapgood, "Collection of reports, biographies, etc which deal with the subject of Woman's education..."

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> In one of her articles she repudiates widely publicized opposition to the courses coming from prejudiced "women who had received the more fashionable sort of education, with governesses" and "from the aristocratic government institutes." Hapgood reminded her American readers about the fierce criticism asserting that the women who attended the courses were "inclined to laxity of conduct – not a new charge, even in America, in connection with women's colleges – and participating in political disturbances." Hapgood reported that at some point the opposition grew so intense that "several of the natural sciences were to be dropped from the curriculum," as they were thought

addressed to Russian female activists by John Stuart Mill who praises the efforts of “enlightened and courageous” ladies of Russia in their attempt to “have interceded on behalf of their sex, for the right of participating in the different branches of superior historical, philosophical and scientific instruction including the practical art of medicine and to have won the cause the weighty protection of the world of science.” Mill thanks Russian women, writing that “it’s what the most enlightened people in other countries of Europe have been laboring for with an ever growing persistency without having attained it yet. Thanks to you, Ladies, Russian may win them sooner.”<sup>213</sup>

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“to promote “uneasiness of mind.” The very existence of the courses was in jeopardy, but later, because the friends of the courses fought for them with all their might, they were reestablished “under somewhat different regulations.” Isabel Hapgood, “Russian Girls and Boys at School,” *Lippincott’s*, LVIII, (1886):526-7. Another commentator on women’s education in Russia, a socialist Leroy Scott describe their struggle for “intellectual liberty,” followed by their “attempt to awaken the masses” in his article “The Women of the Russian Revolution,” *Outlook*, XC, (1908): 915-928. The author also points out that they had “poignant hunger for education” and that “no suffering, no sacrifice is great enough to balk the efforts of these girls to gain an education.” Their parents are usually either too poor to help them or too conservative to give them any aid, that is why a large part of the girls literally “starve their way through college.” See *ibid.*, 921.

<sup>213</sup> Hapgood, “Collection of reports, biographies, etc., which deal with the subject of Women’s education...” Hapgood cites a letter by John Stuart Mill addressed to Russian women who were pursuing the higher education for women in December 1868. Other Western observers also paid tribute to the fact that in Russia women were granted “the equality of civil rights with men” as well as “their professional and educational equality.” Thus, ambassador Foster, a trained lawyer and historian, dwelt upon women’s cause as it was dealt with under the Reign of the Empress Elizabeth and under Alexander II who “opened universities and professions to them.” Foster noted that “during the time of Queen Victoria in England, when political, economic, and educational equality with men was denied English women, the amazingly contradictory land called Russia, which still practiced, in some scattered sections, the seclusion of women, had an historical precedent for the emancipation of women at least a hundred years old.” As if echoing John Stuart Mill, Foster remarked that in no other country of Europe at that time woman better protected in her rights or had more avenues of usefulness open to her than the woman of Alexander II’s Russia. “Marriage deprives no woman of her property. Married women can receive legacies, bequeath property, and deal with their estate in all respect as if they were unmarried. Not the least of the acts of the illustrious Alexander II was the opening of the universities and professions to them.” John W Foster, *Diplomatic Memoirs*, I (Boston: 1909), 208 – 211.

Another lengthy report is devoted to medical education<sup>214</sup> of women in Russia. Hapgood traces women's medical education to 1757 when a special order commissioned a number of midwives to travel to Moscow and St. Petersburg to train students about complications in labor and giving birth.<sup>215</sup> The manuscript carries the historical references and biographies of such pioneers in medical profession as Madam Kogievarova, who was commissioned to defend her dissertation at St. Petersburg Medical-Surgery Academy and to become a practicing doctor. She was sent to St. Petersburg to become a doctor to meet the needs of Muslim women in Bashkiria. The other "outstanding personality" that Hapgood hoped to attract attention to was Madam Suslova, whom Hapgood calls the first Russian female doctor. Suslova received permission to practice medicine in St. Petersburg and gained the public trust becoming the most famous gynecologist in the capital.<sup>216</sup> Hapgood also tells the story of women serving during the Russian

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<sup>214</sup> This topic was of interest to many American women who travelled to Russia around that time. See for example, the notes by Rosalie Slaughter Morton, a surgeon herself, who spent Christmas of 1899 in St Petersburg where she visited the city hospital and studied the question of women's medical education. Thus she would mention the contribution of Borodin, a famous Russian composer, who also was a professor of organic chemistry at the military academy and who had been among the pioneers demanding that women be given right to receive medical degrees. Morton informs her American readers that when that was achieved in 1878, Borodin organized the Medical School for Women in Russia. Morton, *A Woman Surgeon*, 72. Another visitor to Russia, who noticed that Russian women were the first who were permitted to practice "the healing art in Europe," was John W Foster. See John W Foster, *Diplomatic Memoirs*, I (Boston: 1909), 208 – 211.

<sup>215</sup> Hapgood, "Collection of reports, biographies, etc., which deal with the subject of Women's education..." This particular report is entitled "Russian Women in Medicine." Even though, those midwives were allowed to consult the practicing doctors and students of medicine, they themselves, according to Hapgood, were not allowed to be present at the lectures and gain any knowledge or scientific advice and information on their profession.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.* Nadezhda Suslova's parents, according to Hapgood, were serfs who were liberated after February 1861. Having become prominent and well to do merchants, they decided to give their children the best possible education and when Nadezhda was eleven years old she was sent to the best boarding school in Moscow. She applied and was accepted to audit a course at St. Petersburg Medical-Surgery Academy, where her advisors were anatomist Bruber and physiologist Sechenov. In her second year Suslova published an article in the most reputable medical journal *Meditsinskii Vestnik*. After the infamous order that banned all women from attending lectures St. Petersburg

– Turkish War in 1877 and recounts for Americans the significant year of 1879 when women in Russia gained the right to independently practice medicine.<sup>217</sup>

Hapgood's informants on political and social challenges in Russia included people with radically different views. On the one hand she corresponded with a former revolutionary minded member of *People's Will* group Ivan Pavlovich Yuvachev, who wrote to her from Siberia, where he underwent a transformation from a steadfast revolutionary fighter into a pacifist religious philosopher.<sup>218</sup> On the other hand, she valued the opinion of the chamberlain of the imperial court and foreign office official, rational agnostic Count Mikhail Mikhailovitch Perovsky Petrovo Solovo, who shared with Hapgood his views of the Russian future, predicting such an event as Stolypin's assassination<sup>219</sup> and predicting as early as 1906 the revolutionary turmoil and 'tyranny' of the Bolshiviki.<sup>220</sup> He also commented on Tolstoy's disillusionment with Russian Orthodoxy, the Synodal response to Tolstoy's criticism, and the writer's excommunication. It was with Perovsky's assistance that Hapgood arranged for the New York Public Library and for

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Medical- Surgery Academy in 1864, she left for Switzerland and became the first female student of Medicine at Zurich University. Upon her return she practiced medicine in St. Petersburg.

<sup>217</sup> Hapgood observed that even though it was Florence Nightingale who was considered as a pioneer combating the Victorian objection to female nurses, it was only because the West was not aware of the Russian Sisters of Mercy who went to Sevastopol to nurse the soldiers. The Russian nurses and female doctors proved their efficiency and usefulness in the Russo-Turkish and Russo-Japanese, and the World Wars. See Babey on Hapgood., 87 See also Hapgood, "Russian Women," *Chautauguan*, XXXII, (1900-1):589-94.

<sup>218</sup> Ivan Pavlovich Yuvatcheff to Hapgood, 14 – 27 June, 1912, Krasnoyarsk. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 4. MAD, NYPL. Ivan Pavlovich Yuvatcheff was a father of the famous Russian author I. Yuvatcheff, known to his readers as Daniil Kharms.

<sup>219</sup> Even though he was wrong with the place and time as he thought that Stolypin would be killed on his way to the opening of the Duma or "within its walls." Perovsky to Hapgood, St. Petersburg, February 20, (no year indicated). Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>220</sup> Perovsky to Hapgood, St. Petersburg, 1906, 1907. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3. MAD, NYPL.

the Greco-Russian Church in America to acquire a few Russian publications.<sup>221</sup> In his letters to Hapgood Perovsky speculated on the American character and incomprehensible reaction to Gorky's amorous adventures in New York that the count would assign exclusively to American chastity and Puritanism, even though his opinion of the "famous anarchist" writer was rather unfavorable.<sup>222</sup> Hapgood herself personally corresponded with Gorky and promoted his publication abroad. Thus, in one thank you letter Gorky acknowledges that he received royalties and a book from his publisher Scribner.<sup>223</sup> Hapgood knew and admired other famous Russian artists, writers, painters, composers, conductors, and choirmasters. Her fame as a successful translator helped her to become acquainted and maintain extensive correspondence with sculptor Mikhail Micyeshin and theater star Alla Nazimova (née Mariam Edez Adelaida Leventon), who sent Hapgood favorable accounts for her translations of excerpts from theatre plays.<sup>224</sup> Hapgood

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<sup>221</sup> Perovsky to Hapgood, St. Petersburg, October 20/ November 11, (no year indicated). Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3. MAD, NYPL. Among other treasures, obtained by New York Public Library, Hapgood mentions the memoirs of Mademoiselle Helène Vacaresco, who was betrothed with the Crown Prince of Romania and who authored her recollections that in Hapgood's words covered "three reigns and part of a fourth, beginning with that of Nicholas I." Hapgood arranged that a copy of those memoirs that "deal with interesting episodes of court life, history and politics, and will prove undoubtedly of great value" would be in New York Public Library. In 1892 Hapgood lamented that the only libraries in the United States that could "pretend to furnish even the rudiments" of the demands of the scholars in Russian and Slavonic philology were those of Harvard and Yale." See Hapgood, "the Russian Professorship," *The Nation*, 55, (14 July 1892). Perovsky to Hapgood, St. Petersburg, February 20, (no year indicated). Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3. MAD, NYPL and Perovsky to Hapgood, St. Petersburg, 1906, 1907. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>222</sup> Perovsky to Hapgood, St. Petersburg, 1906, 1907. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>223</sup> Gorky to Hapgood, Nizhnii Novgorod, September, 7, 1901. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3. MAD, NYPL.

<sup>224</sup> Alla Nazimova to Hapgood, place is not indicated, 25 November 1914. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3, MAD, NYPL.

was a friend of the artist Vereschagin's siblings,<sup>225</sup> maintained correspondence with Ivan Aivasovsky, and with Madam Elizaveta Merkur'evna Bohm, who became known in Europe and America for her artistic silhouettes that she published in fine artistic editions.<sup>226</sup> Reflecting on her friendship with Russians Hapgood refers to Russian interest in symbols and culture of Native Americans, essentially romanticized by Russians, especially by Russian children, who "absolutely adore(s) everything 'Indian.'<sup>227</sup> Another woman artist who became Hapgood's good friend was Pelageya Petrovna Kuriar (née Vokhina). She was famous for her landscapes, and, most of all, for her role in establishing in St. Petersburg "A Female Artistic Society," that became a great forum for women artists and a venue to raise money for the indigent or orphaned members of their families.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Olga Barsow (Vereschagin's niece) to Hapgood, Berlin, 8 March 1922. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3, MAD, NYPL. It is also worth considering the whole folder of Hapgood's correspondence with Vereschagin's brother General Alexander Vasilievich, whose book *At Home and in War* Hapgood translated into English. The book was published in New York by T.Y. Crowell & Co., Publishers in 1888. *Ibid.*, box, 4.

<sup>226</sup> Unidentified newspaper clipping, 1895. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3, MAD, NYPL. Among other popular postcards with the images of children illustrated by madam Bohm and addressed to Hapgood, there is one of her finest silhouette of Count Leo Tolstoy. Bohm letters are also interesting as a written account of the events that were notable with American presence in St. Petersburg and the reaction of the citizens to such occasions. For example she refers to the visit of American squadron to the city in June 1911 and writes that "we see a lot of American sailors all around. They are very well welcomed in our city, especially because people remember the American help in times of famine and want to thank the United States for her efforts by being nice and hospitable with the U.S. sailors." Bohm writes that American sailors were literary stopped in the streets by ordinary people who greeted them with gestures of friendship and favor. Bohm to Hapgood, St. Petersburg, 7 – 20 June, 1911. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>227</sup> Bohm to Hapgood, St. Petersburg, 9 February, 1913. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>228</sup> Pelageya Kuriar presented Hapgood with one of her memorial oil poster that was dedicated to the tenth anniversary of the association. Apparently Hapgood attended the festivities dedicated to the anniversary, as she had a program of the evening in her collection. 26 February 1892. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3, MAD, NYPL.

In her efforts to introduce ancient Russian culture to Americans Isabel Hapgood ordered a few Russian peasant costumes that she originally hoped to exhibit at the Columbia Exposition, but that finally she gave to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>229</sup>

Most importantly, Hapgood introduced to the West numerous translations of Russian literary texts and religious literature. She translated the works of Patriarch Tikhon, and Russian Orthodox *Service Book*, that required thorough knowledge of Church Slavonic and Greek languages.<sup>230</sup> Her work was highly praised by the Archbishop of Aleutia and the North America Platon, who wrote in his letter that “her efforts are essential not only for the purpose of unity of various denominations, but, most of all, for mutual understanding and respect between Russian

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<sup>229</sup> The description of the curious incidents that prevented those costumes from entering the United States is described by Hapgood in her notes to her correspondence with Tolstoy’s family. Thus she writes that “they came to America three times before I got them at last in the spring of 1893. Their first arrival was soon after the cholera scare, and the Custom House officials ordered “the dirty rugs” departed. The same thing happened the second time. But when Professor Yanschul, a distinguished member of the Moscow University faculty brought them to the United States on his arrival as a delegate to the Columbian Exposition, and the government official, the Custom House scornfully refused his offer to pay duty on the clothes (which were perfectly new and clean), and admitted them free, because they were “not worth anything.” See Isabel Hapgood, “Notes by Isabel Hapgood on Tolstoy Letters given to the New York Public Library by her in July, 1911.” Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 4, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>230</sup> Hapgood was seeking “the Holy Synod’s” blessings for publication of her translations, which was not very easy to obtain. Thus, from her correspondence with Procurator General of the Holy Synod K.P. Pobedonostzev, it is clear that some of her translations were to be very significantly revised and that the revisions were supposed to be made by specialists who were familiar with ancient languages and had excellent command of English at the same time. Pobedonostzev wrote that it was not easy to find such a specialist in St. Petersburg. That is why he sent Hapgood’s translations to London, where some of her work was first published. Pobedonostzev to Hapgood, St. Petersburg, 24 October 1897. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3, MAD, NYPL. Later the translation of the service book was released in New York and Boston, See *Service book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic apostolic (Greco-Russian) church*; compiled, translated, and arranged from the old *Church-Slavonic service books of the Russian church*, and collated with the service books of the Greek Church, by Isabel Florence Hapgood. New York, Boston: Mifflin and company, 1906. 1905. However, Archbishop of Aleutia and North America Nicholas was an ardent supporter of her work and provided the translator with a complete set of valuable Church Slavonic books for her translation task. See Isabel Hapgood, *Service Book*, 1906, vii.

and American people.”<sup>231</sup> Her work was also acknowledged by those who advocated the reunion of Orthodox and Catholic churches, Anglicans, and Episcopalians – the cultural-historical phenomenon at the turn of the twentieth century that “was on the mind of most earnest theologians, prelates and ordinary faithful on both sides.”<sup>232</sup> Thus, Hapgood was corresponding with Lucy Alexayeff (néé Maude), an English woman who was married to a Russian physician Pyotr Semyonovich Alexayeff, and served as a secretary of the Russian branch of the Anglican & Eastern Orthodox Churches Union. That organization was an English society and had branches in various countries, including Russia and the United States.<sup>233</sup> As a result of this dialogue, according to Ledkovsky, the availability of good translations of the Eastern Orthodox liturgy became a first priority. “Simultaneously there arose an urgent need for liturgical texts in English in the United States— for obvious practical reasons: the descendents of early immigrants from various countries of Eastern and Central Europe and the Near East began to lose the language of Divine Services in their respective traditions. Isabel Hapgood was the ideal person to

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<sup>231</sup> Archbishop Platon of the Russian Holy Orthodox Archdiocese of Aleutia Islands and North America to Hapgood, 12 March, 1916, Tiflis, Georgia. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>232</sup> Ledkovsky, “A Linguistic Bridge to Orthodoxy,” 1.

<sup>233</sup> Another advocate of the reunion was General A.A. Kireeff. He wrote in his letter to Hapgood: “I believe your translations are a very important thing, and a very useful one. The first step towards reunion is the mutual knowledge of each other, and you give the means of it. General A.A. Kireeff to Hapgood, Pavlovsk, (sometime around 1897). Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3, MAD, NYPL.

Among other adherents of the unity was Professor V. Sokoloff, the author of a book about Anglicanism. Even though he faithfully believed that the only truthful faith is the Eastern Orthodoxy and that the church in the West was heading astray, he expressed his desire to learn more about its dogmas and asked Hapgood in his letter to refer him to the works of leaders of her faith. V. Sokoloff to Hapgood, 18 – 23 June, 1898, Sergievsky Pasad. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 4, MAD, NYPL.

Ledkovsky also cites unpublished articles by the Reverent Stuart H Hoke praising Hapgood as a devout Episcopalian “who played a seminal role in promoting Anglican-Orthodox dialogue for church unity.

undertake that important mission.”<sup>234</sup> The quest for unity culminated in Hapgood’s translation of the *Service Book*, with moral support from Archbishop Tikhon of Aleutia and North America, later to become Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia and a Russian Orthodox saint.<sup>235</sup>

Even though Hapgood left Russia as the revolutionary turmoil made it dangerous for her to stay, during and after the revolution she continued her correspondence with many in Russia as well as with refugees. She helped Russians whenever and wherever she could. She also supported counter-revolutionary forces, helping the “heroic soldiers and officers of the Russian “North-Western Army” who for several months have been fighting the Bolsheviks on the Petrograd front under general Rodsianko and Balachowitsch”<sup>236</sup> and organized the shipment of medical supplies via the Russian Legation in Kristiania, Norway.<sup>237</sup> She helped coordinate correspondence between refugee communities around the globe and American relief organizations. Through her friends and acquaintances she was aware of the destitute refugees in Viborg, Finland, that was led by Princess Helene Cantacuzène<sup>238</sup> and in Crimea. Hapgood sought

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<sup>234</sup> Ledkovsky, “A Linguistic Bridge to Orthodoxy,” 3.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 -2.

<sup>236</sup> Perovsky to Hapgood, Christiania, Norway, 1919. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>238</sup> Princess Helene Cantacuzène, sister in law of Princess Julia Cantacuzène- Speransky (née Grant) is another interesting character in the history of Russian-American relations. According to count Perovsky, who was a close acquaintance of Princess Helene Cantacuzène, she was divorced and formerly married to Ermolinsky. Helene had two sisters; one of them was married to a nephew of former Russian minister in the United States Katakazi. After the Bolshevik Revolution both Perovsky and Hapgood addressed her appeals for help for the group of Russian refugees in Finland to Princess Julia Cantacuzène, who was the head of the refugee committee at the time in New York. Perovsky to Hapgood, Paris, 12 October 1920. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3, MAD, NYPL. After the Bolshevik revolution Princess Julia Cantacuzène became active in the Russian Relief Committee for Russian Refugees. She helped the refugee colony in Viborg, Finland, and was very active in supporting so called ‘artel’, the “Peasant Art - section” workshop organized by the Countess Moussin- Poushkin in Berlin for 400 refugees. Unpublished article by Count Michail Perovsky. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3, MAD, NYPL.

financial assistance for them by appealing to the American Relief Committee for Russian Refugees, former Russian Ambassador Bakhmeteff, and manufacturer Henry Ford.<sup>239</sup>

Through her articles in newspapers and journals she informed the American public about events in Russia. After the Bolsheviks took the power, she was concerned about the fate of her friends, acquaintances and prominent state and religious people. She followed the fate of Patriarch Tikhon, describing his trial in *The Sunday New York Times*.<sup>240</sup> She also wrote about the Russian royal family after she had heard various rumors about their fate, and she was one of the first to comment on the murder of the emperor and his family in *The New York Times*. At the end of her report she said “that the most dangerous of all [for Bolshevik Russia] is a murdered Czar [..., such] a mild, quietly enduring one, without a grave.”<sup>241</sup>

A few American women sojourners described their experience in St. Petersburg in memoirs. Thus, for example, Princess Cantacuzène published two volumes of her memoirs. Both *My Life Here and There* (1921) and *Revolutionary Days* (1920 and 1926) were compilations of her articles that had appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* earlier. From her narrative it becomes clear that Julia Grant Cantacuzène – Speransky’s interest and affiliation with Russia was influenced by her father who had served as an aid-de-camp and travelled to the Caucasus, then Moscow and St. Petersburg. In St. Petersburg he was welcomed by the city’s nobles.”<sup>242</sup>

Julia Grant Cantacuzène’s own first acquaintance with a Russian occurred around 1889, when her father became the U.S. minister for Austria. In her memoirs she mentions meeting

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<sup>239</sup> Perovsky (Paris) to Hapgood, 29 September, 1920. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>240</sup> Isabel Hapgood, “Life of Russia’s Patriarch Now Hangs in Soviet Scale,” *The New York Sunday Times* (April 8, 1923).

<sup>241</sup> Isabel Hapgood, “The Murdered Czar,” *New York Times*, 8 September 1918, sec. 3, 2.

<sup>242</sup> Julia Cantacuzène Countess Speransky, Neé Grant, *My Life Here and There* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1921), 5.

Prince Lobanoff, the Russian ambassador, “a bachelor, a student of people, history, and politics, a man of immense distinction and charm of mind and manner.” She also describes some features of the Russian character that he represented: “we grew unaccountably intimate with them, as one does with Russians, who are always natural and charming.” In Vienna, she first became acquainted with the noble Russian family of Cantacuzène having met her future husband’s relative Prince Gregory Cantacuzène. She got to know his daughter well and later their two sons would be classmates in the Russian Imperial Lyceum.<sup>243</sup>

Some of her family memorabilia, including the letters that President Grant sent her, was left behind in her Russian home in Petrograd, and “have doubtless, with all other small treasures of family life, fallen into Bolshevik hands to be destroyed.”<sup>244</sup>

Among other American women who married into Russian nobility was H. Fessenden Meserve’s step daughter, Lascelle Meserve de Basily. She married a former Russian foreign office director and the author of the Act of Abdication of Emperor Nicholas II. She left an account of her life in *Memoirs of a Lost World*. The American-born Lascelle Meserve was descended from a well-known Russian family of scientists and intellectuals. Her grandfather, Henry Struve, had immigrated in 1849 from Germany to the United States, where he became an American, “fervent perhaps as only men from other countries can be, fervent as converts to religion.” Struve settled in the territory of Washington and became a judge. President Ulysses Grant made him territorial secretary, and later he became mayor of Seattle.<sup>245</sup> Struve’s daughter, Helen, whom Lascelle describes as “beautiful, high-spirited, intelligent, and talented, with artistic ability and the highest ideals,” would become an activist in the American colony in St.

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>245</sup> de Basily Meserve, *Memoirs of a Lost World*, 2-3.

Petersburg, and an initiator of many relief activities. Helen's first marriage ended in divorce, after which together with her sister and daughter Lascelle she left for Europe never to return to the Pacific Northwest. Her second marriage was a lasting one. Helen's second husband was H. Fessenden Meserve, a Harvard graduate and an eighth-generation American. H. Fessenden Meserve adopted Lascelle, gave her his name becoming a real father to her.<sup>246</sup>

Meserve's step daughter recalls her anticipation of their trip to Russia and the excitement she felt upon arrival:

My own feelings upon undertaking this journey were indescribably tumultuous. I had always had a passionate interest in this mysterious land. In some vague way I seemed to have known it before. Now Russia was to be mine and I vibrated on the threshold of a marvelous experience.... I had always longed to see Russia. Now it lay before me and I wondered excitedly what images and secrets it held....<sup>247</sup>

The young woman was so completely beneath the charm of Russia, that even during the revolution living there seemed a thrilling adventure. Lascelle described the two years that she spent in Russia with her step father as a "swan song of a majestic empire." When they reached St. Petersburg in 1915, the empire was in its last phase, but yet "presented a façade of perfect stability, riches and power, and seemed immutable as the universe." Even though, she continues, "the former brilliant life of the capital was suspended" due to the war, still "enough remained to make it the most alluring place on earth." The mere idea that it could fall had appeared impossible. "If there were cracks in the edifice, they were not visible to the outsider."

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<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, 6, 16 – 17.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, 51, 53.

The family resided in the Hotel Europe for two years. The Meserves occupied a suite on the first floor of the hotel, that consisted of a large salon, with “two windows giving on the Mikhailovskaya, a fireplace and green plush furniture.”<sup>248</sup>

Lascelle Meserve recalls the American colony in which her family was very active:

Mr. George Marye was United States ambassador to Russia. We liked this cultured gentleman and the handsome Ambassadors. An *ouvroir* had been organized at the American Embassy in the Sergeevskaya, where ladies of the American colony sewed and knitted for the soldiers. Mama and I joined, helping to make bandages. The American colony also supported a small lazaret for wounded soldiers, as well as a crèche for war orphans under the patronage of Grand Duchess Tatiana, the Emperor’s second daughter. Mrs. Marye was president of the Tatiana Committee. A year later, when she left Russia, Mama became president and was deeply interested in this work, loving the children. We went often to visit them in the orphanage on the Kamenny Ostrov Prospect. Mrs. Noble, mother-in-law of Captain Sherman Miles, Military Attaché at the American Embassy, was also very active in this organization. Near the end Mama received a Tatiana medal, a dark blue enamel shield with the initials of the Grand Duchess in diamonds, in appreciation of her services.<sup>249</sup>

Other Americans that the Meserves met in Petrograd were the counselor of the embassy J. Butler Write and Mrs. Write, assistant military attaché Francis Riggs and embassy Second

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<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, 83, 55, 54.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 59. In another reference in the American-Russian publication *Kristianskyi Pobornik*, issue 84, there is more detailed address of the Refuge. According to the article “The American Refuge,” it was situated at Kamennooostrovsky Prospekt 27, lodge. 5. It also states that Mrs. W. B. Noble was one of the initiators of the enterprise “in whose heart the plan originated.” See *Kristiansky Pobornik*, 16(16), № 84, January, 1916 . Box F-8. FAVP, Part F. RBML, GMC, CU.

Secretary Norman Armour; North Winship, the American consul<sup>250</sup> and Admiral Nelson McCully, a naval attaché, who Lascelle describes as a “great gentleman whose warm heart and gift of friendship made him universally liked.” Nelson spoke Russian fluently.<sup>251</sup> Since her parents were mostly acquainted with the wealthy and privileged circles, she described luxurious receptions that took place in a private dining room of the Hotel d’Europe in the spring 1916 and mentioned dignitaries her parents invited: “The Grand Duke Boris was present, also Duke Alexander of Leuchtenberg, General and countess Nostitz, and a number of Russian and Foreign diplomats.” The American ambassador and Mrs. Marye were among the guests.<sup>252</sup> Life in their “green plush salon” was pleasant and engaging. “In the afternoon, friends came to see [us]... where a bridge table was always ready, also a gramophone for dancing. At five huge copper samovar, steaming like a locomotive, was brought in and silver spoons tinkled against tall glasses of weak tea and lemon.”<sup>253</sup> The same accommodations reflected the consequences of the February revolution that Lascelle recollects so clearly describing revolutionary officers and

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<sup>250</sup> Apparently Winship was on good terms with Meserve, his family, and enterprise. According to the bank documentation in the Vanderlip archives at Columbia, he was commissioned to testify before the State Department and before the branch bank committee in regard to conditions in Russia with special references to the opportunities existing at the present time for the establishment of an American bank in that country. Moreover, Meserve recommended Winship for the bank administration in New York, hoping that he would be appointed to work at the Petrograd branch. However, according to the number of cablegrams sent to and from St. Petersburg and New York office, Winship’s appointment was deferred. National City Bank/ Account Managers/ Papers related to the bank operations/ annual reports. FAVP. Branch Bank Committee – 8 May 1916. RBML, GMC, CU.

<sup>251</sup> de Basily Meserve, *Memoirs of a Lost World*, 59.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, 79. Notably, Lascelle names the “salon dances of the day” which were one-step and tango. She refers to her meeting and acquaintance with a group of young daughters of respectable bourgeois families - girls “of good reputation.” Most of them were much trained in classical ballet and were not aware of any fashionable salon dances. Lascelle suggested that she teaches them the one-step, an American dance, but “the idea aroused a storm of protestation.” See *ibid.*

soldiers who were inspecting the hotel with bayonets, searching for concealed firearms. “They knocked at our door and a grim crew entered and looked over the apartment carefully, peering into closets and feeling on top of high pieces of furniture.”<sup>254</sup> The Meserves left Petrograd and returned to the United States after another long-trip through Asia, and across the Pacific Ocean, leaving behind their Russian dream and carrying with them “the memoirs of a lost world.”

The role of many of those women, in both relief activities and in contributing to the vibrant social life of the American community, is largely underappreciated by scholars of the history of Russian-American relations. The local population however, acknowledged their work and such initiatives as the American Refuge for Women and Children (ARWC). The ARWC was supported by the Grand Duchess’s charitable committee and well known to the citizens of Petrograd and the surroundings as an American nursery and sometime as an American shelter. The orphanage served to accommodate several dozen children victimized by the War. Zenaida Ragozin and Julia Grant Cautecuzène actively worked there.<sup>255</sup> The latter was also involved with Russian Red Cross work. Other supporters of the enterprise were Mr. Harry Fessenden Meserve of National City Bank, Lee Hagood, Mrs. David Hough, the wife of the head of the Russian-American Corporation, and “Lady” Mercedes,<sup>256</sup> who was considered as a prime mover of the

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<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>255</sup> “English Speaking Communities,” 145.

<sup>256</sup> Apparently “Lady Mercédés” was McAllister’s spouse Mrs. Mercédés Leigh McAllister, who resided at number 8 on the French Embankment. She was active not only in Petrograd, but she tried to help the enterprise from the outside as well. Thus in November 1916 she directed Benefit performance to aid the refugee children in New York. The benefit took place in the Prince Theatre and promised to summon eminent artists and Russian dancers. It was taking place under the patronage of Madame Bakhmetieff and Prince and Princess Pierre Troubetskoy. “Benefit Invitation.” Mercédés Leigh McAllister Smith to Frank Vanderlip, New York, 2<sup>nd</sup> of November, 1916. Mercédés McAllister explained in her letter that she hoped to raise enough money to get shoes for Russian refugee children. It was written in the invitation that “thousands of refugee children in Petrograd are without shoes and therefore are compelled to trudge barefoot through the snow.” Mrs. McAllister obtained permission to take with her to Russia

refuge, and her husband L. McAllister Smith, the treasurer of Guarantee Trust.<sup>257</sup> Some Russian aristocrats, women who represented the highest circles of Petrograd society, also volunteered in the American refuge. Among them was notably Princess Mestchersky, who stayed behind in Russia with her two daughters after the revolution and was imprisoned by the new regime.”<sup>258</sup>

The ARWC rescued many children. A war correspondent Louise Bryant, who affiliated with the refuge, explained how it operated. She wrote that even on the more organized retreats where Red Cross doctors had charge, sick children had to be left behind in military hospitals with tags tied to their clothing with the hope that they would be reunited with their parents, even though “in most cases the hope was vain.”<sup>259</sup> Some of them, though, were sent ahead of the parents in order that, even if the parents perished, the children at least might be saved. One of those children, Vanya, son of a well-to-do peasant from Volhynia, became the favorite of the ARWC, and its personnel considered him “a legendary character ... [with] a charmed life.” He first got lost at one of the railroad stations and was later found by Cossacks who “loaded him down with all sorts of presents looted along the way.” Unfortunately, Vanya “had a genius for being lost,” and he was lost again by the Cossacks. Bryant writes that he was finally found by a woodcutter and his wife who adopted him. When his new adoptive parents fled from the Germans and reached Petrograd, Vanya was lost again and found by an American and brought to the American Refuge Home. The ARWC posted semiweekly lists of the refugees in the various

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“hundred pairs of shoes of which the little victims of this war are in such cruel need.” FAVP. Part – A., RBML, GMC, CU.

<sup>257</sup> Saul, *War and Revolution*, 42.

<sup>258</sup> Unpublished article by Count Michail Perovsky. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers, box 3, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>259</sup> Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia*, 254.

camps. Thanks to those bulletins Vanya's parents finally found him after he had wandered all over Russia for a year and a half.<sup>260</sup>

Another American initiative introduced motorized American ambulances in Petrograd. That enterprise was also supported by Lady Mercédés and her husband L. McAllister Smith and wrote that she personally raised the funds for that initiative. The ambulance service was an achievement of American and English ladies of Petrograd, managed by an American surgeon Dr. Eugene Hurd.<sup>261</sup>

In the aftermath of the revolution, in the atmosphere of anarchy and chaos, that “seemed unending after the seizure of the Winter Palace” Americans in Petrograd could not be detached from the events around them. The “discussions were hot and heavy” especially around teas and dinners that were served and organized by American women, such as a regular gathering hosted by Pauline Crosley at General Judson's apartment.<sup>262</sup>

American – Russians who either returned to Russia or frequently visited their motherland present another interesting group in St. Petersburg. Among the most famous returnees was Russian-Jewish immigrant Leo Wiener, who promoted Russian Studies in the United States, translated numerous Russian and Yiddish texts, and who, in spite of the difficulties in getting a Russian visa, went there to acquire books for American libraries. One of his students George Rapall Noyes would become “an American in St. Petersburg” and before offering a course in

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<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 255 – 257.

<sup>261</sup> Mercédés Leigh McAllister Smith to Frank Vanderlip, New York, 2 November 1916. FAVP. Part – A. RBML, GMC, CU.

<sup>262</sup> Saul, *War and Revolution*, 191. See also the account of the revolutionary events as they were observed from a window of the Crosleys' apartment in Crosley, Pauline S, *Intimate Letters from Petrograd* (New Yoork: Dutton, 1920), 201.

Russian at the University of California-Berkeley, had attended the University of St. Petersburg for two years.<sup>263</sup>

Some American immigrants returned to Russia, after hearing of the overturn of the tsarist regime. They hoped to benefit from and contribute to the political changes. Albert Rhys Williams described exiles returning “on the immigrant tide then flowing back from across the Atlantic as “Bolsheviks trained in America.”<sup>264</sup> Travelling to Russia on the Danish steamer *United States*, and reading about “something strange and foreboding” that had occurred in Russia, American journalist Louise Bryant mentioned that she could hear “returning exiles in the steerage singing revolutionary songs.” She spent a lot of time with those people and reported that “there were about a hundred of them, mostly Jews from the Pale. Hunted, robbed, mistreated in every possible manner before they fled to America, they had somehow maintained the greatest love for the land of their birth.”<sup>265</sup> Thus, she described her encounters with one of them, Alexander Gumberg, who was described as “a New York Jew with melancholy eyes, sensitive features, and mind crammed with resources.”<sup>266</sup> Gumberg came to Russia with the Stevens mission and stayed there as an interpreter for John Reed and Albert Rhys Williams, as well as for Raymond Robins, Edgar Sisson, and Gregory Yarros, an Associated Press representative.<sup>267</sup>

On one occasion, Gumberg accompanied the Minister of War Antonoff to Pulkovo, just outside of Petrograd, where the Red Guards were digging trenches to hold a front against the advancing Cossacks. The overloaded automobile broke down and the expedition stopped a passing car with a soldier returning from the front to ask the minister of war to sign an order for

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<sup>263</sup> See Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 394.

<sup>264</sup> Albert Rhys Williams, *Through the Russian Revolution* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967), 21.

<sup>265</sup> Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia*, 20.

<sup>266</sup> Edgar Sisson, 94.

<sup>267</sup> Saul, *War and Revolution*, 187.

more supplies. Antonoff signed the order on the spot using Gumberg's fountain pen and an American notebook. Later Gumberg paid for food for the minister, the officers, and the courier. Gumberg's adventure ended rather miserably: despite his services to the new proletarian government, he "was abandoned along the muddy front, and after walking a few miles, met a farmer going to Petrograd with a load of hay, who took compassion on him and carried him back to town."<sup>268</sup>

Gumberg continued to function as an intermediary between the American embassy crowd and the Bolsheviks. As Williams put it, "diligently preserving his lone-wolf status, he was trusted by both." Gumberg served as an aide and translator for Raymond Robins, who, with the support of Ambassador Francis, had "the best contacts among the Bolsheviks."<sup>269</sup> Through Gumberg, who had known Trotsky in New York, Robins met with the Bolshevik leaders much more frequently than any other American. Barnes writes that thanks to Gumberg, Robins' contacts began as early as on the 10 November, when both men met with Trotsky, who was "trying to keep the exceedingly shaky Bolshevik government from being toppled from power either by troops loyal to the Provisional Government or by simple anarchy."<sup>270</sup> Gumberg later returned to America, where he was an important "behind-the-scenes figure on Wall Street."<sup>271</sup>

Bryant concluded that many repatriates welcomed the new social order in Russia. She also noted that a lot of exiles "had lived a long time in America and had become acquainted with American efficiency." Thus, she mentions a disciple of Prince Kropotkin, William Shatoff, who became a member of the famous Military Revolutionary Committee, organizer of the Printers'

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<sup>268</sup> Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days: A Personal Chronicle of the Bolshevik Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931), 150-52.

<sup>269</sup> Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 276.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>271</sup> Albert Rhys Williams, *Journey into Revolution: Petrograd, 1917-1918* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969), 45.

Union and a member of the executive committee of the Factory Shop Committees. Bryant writes that Shatoff was later reported to become the governor of Kharkov. Another returnee she mentioned in her book was Samuel Voskoff who became head of the Factory Shop Committee at Sestroretz, near Petrograd and was one of the chief inventors of that ingenious institution.<sup>272</sup> In the United States Samuel Voskoff (also known as Waskov, Woskov, Voskov or Woskoff) had been a union organizer in New York for the Carpenters' and Joiners' Union. Prior to that he had gone through strikes in the Midwest and "knew firsthand that police beatings of labor agitators in the United States were not uncommon in times of trouble."<sup>273</sup>

Another source of information on the Russian-American repatriates is Albert Rhys Williams' book *Journey into Revolution*. He describes how many of them acted as translators and mentors for and friends to visiting Americans. Besides Michail Petrovich Yanishev, there were V. Volodarsky, or Moisei Markovich Goldshtein and Jacov (Jake) Peters, a Russian political exile from England.<sup>274</sup> Alexander Krasnoschekov, "who alone among the émigrés left America with middle-class status, under the name of Tobinon." Back in Chicago, according to Williams, Krasnoschekov was a prominent educator and lawyer. During his stay in Russia after repatriation, Krasnoschekov was arrested by the whites and imprisoned in Irkutsk. Later, in 1920, he became president of the Far Eastern Republic. Williams writes about Yanishev, "a

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<sup>272</sup> Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia*, 276. It is interesting that in his novel *Wine of Fury*, one of the City Bank clerks Leighton Rogers portrays a collective image of such a repatriate who returned to Russia after the revolution and would occupy an important position in the new Government. See Rogers, *Wine of Fury*, 251.

<sup>273</sup> Williams, *Journey into Revolution*, 45.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, 44. Later on Peters, that "pudgy-nosed, short little fellow was lifted out of obscurity a few months later into headlines all over the world. As top assistant to Feliks Dzerzhinsky, the first head of Cheka, Peters became known to the Western world as "Bloody Jake Peters." It was Peters, who issued a document formally closing the work of the YMCA in Russia. Matthew Miller L., "American Philanthropy among Russians: The Work of the YMCA, 1900-1940" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2006), 133.

mechanic who had worked in numerous cities – on the docks of Hamburg, in coal mines in Austria, in Tokyo and Marseilles, among others; and in Boston, Detroit, and elsewhere in America.” Another famous repatriate was Volodarsky, a revolutionary since the age of fourteen. According to Williams, he had lived in the United States from 1913 to 1917 and was a member of the American socialist party. Upon returning to Petrograd, he became a secondary Bolshevik leader, and a member of the Petrograd Soviet, who was “a great favorite as a speaker in the smoky factory district on the Viborg side” even in the July days. In the period between July and October he was “a major force in swinging the 40,000 workers” in the Putilov factory to the Bolshevik party. Another great example of such an “American Bolshevik,” according to Williams, was an émigré-repatriate Boris Bernstein, whom the author calls “a mine of information.” Like many others Bernstein “experienced personally the ills of agrarian Russia with its famines and of industrial, capitalist America with its depressions.” Bernstein’s ambivalence about America was typical – his passion for its techniques, yet his shock at learning that in the country where the machine had developed such vast productive powers there was such waste of resources and of men. Like the others, he saw socialism as the only way of delivering mankind from the surges of spiritual and physical poverty, unemployment and waste.<sup>275</sup> Besides those Bolsheviks repatriates who returned to Petrograd by September 1917, Williams also mentions the émigrés from America with whom he was casually acquainted. Among others there were Leon Trotsky and Nikolai Bukharin. Arnold Yakovich Neibut, a good friend of Williams, arrived somewhat later. Back in Chicago he had been a member of the local socialist party, had worked in California around 1916, and later lived and worked in New York. On the whole, the Petrograd group of English-speaking émigrés was far from united politically. It included

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<sup>275</sup> Williams, *Journey into Revolution*, 44.

anarchists such as Agursky and Petrovsky. The later became a member of the Military Revolutionary Committee and greatly impressed Reed. Another political affiliation mentioned by Williams was internationalists, such as Nagel.<sup>276</sup> Most of the émigrés were well educated even though they lived as workers in the United States, as for example one of the leaders of the capture of the Winter Palace Grigori Chudnovskii.<sup>277</sup> Some such as Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, returned to Russia because they were stripped of their American citizenship and deported together with “two hundred and forty eight” political exiles. Emma Goldman called them American “political refugees;” some had lived and worked in the United States for more than thirty years.

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<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>277</sup> Saul, *War and revolution*, 186.

## *Part II*

### **American ‘Liberals’ and the Russian Revolutions**

*“Out there in the silver twilight of the white night she lay, a forest of flaming church steeples and giant factory chimneys, rising vaguely from the marches.... there on the edge of the east she waited for us, strange, mysterious, inscrutable, compelling – a candle drawing us on from the ends of the earth like so many fluttering moths... .”*

*Bessie Beatty  
The Red Heart of Russia, 1918*

By the turn of the twentieth century “the American colony in St. Petersburg changed dramatically.”<sup>278</sup> Increasing numbers of the American community became chroniclers, witnesses, and often sympathizers and participants in the revolutionary events unfolding in Petrograd, challenging the course of world history. Many choose to follow the steps of the founders of The Friends of Russian Freedom, a private organization founded to aid victims of tsarist oppression.<sup>279</sup> The group had been led by such prominent internationalists as the elder George Kennan, Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain), Julia Ward Howe, and Francis Jackson Garrison, son of ground-breaking abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison. Attempting to understand and add insight to Russia’s political turbulence and revolution, these devotees of humanitarian tradition referred to the works of their predecessors.

Among notable accounts introducing Americans to the issues of Russian social struggle, promoting a broader awareness of Russian and Slavic history, the elder Kennan’s analysis stands out. He exposed the Russian penal system in his writings on political exiles and Siberian convict mines, that began as a series of lectures delivered in London in 1894. Kennan publicized his survey of a broad range of aspects of Russian life and culture, including a detailed account of his

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<sup>278</sup> Saul, “The American Colony in St. Petersburg.”

<sup>279</sup> George F. Kennan, *Soviet – American Relations*, 12-13.

visit to Yasnaya Polyana, where he conducted interviews with writer and philosopher Leo Tolstoy. It was during a trip to Siberia when friends and adherents commissioned Kennan to go back to the count and report on conditions in which captured Russian insurgents were kept. Kennan fulfilled his promise and later described an appointment with the writer in his famous essay "A visit to Tolstoy." That publication generated further discussion among Kennan's like-minded compatriots about Tolstoy's "opposition to resistance as a means to overcome evil," as well as the writer's rejection of private property, and "all civil and ecclesiastical organizations in existing forms."<sup>280</sup> Along with other members of "The Friends of Russian Freedom," Kennan passed on to another generation of American internationalists his admiration and concern for the Russian people. He hoped that his followers would continue the work of acquainting the American public with Russian history, its cultural and social traditions, its challenges, and political experimentation.

That tradition was borne at the turn of the century by American intellectuals. In turn, they demonstrated sympathy for the new Russian social order, that was conceived in Russia. In the group were Stanley Washburn,<sup>281</sup> Melville Stone of the Associated Press,<sup>282</sup> Ernest Poole,

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<sup>280</sup> Kennan, George, "A Visit to Count Tolstoy," 260.

<sup>281</sup> Babey provides some brief biographical reference for this journalist writing that he was a manufacturer and a lawyer in Minneapolis before he turned to journalism. He was a war correspondent for *the Chicago Daily News* from 1904 to 1906 and covered the Russo-Japanese War. Then he operated a dispatch boat in the Black Sea and covered the Russian disturbances of January 1906. He returned to Russia in August 1914 as a correspondent of *Collier's Weekly*, and in September 1914 he became correspondent of *The (London) Times*. Attached to the Russian army for twenty-six months, he was the only American having Access to the whole Russian front. Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917*, 26.

<sup>282</sup> Melville Stone, president of the Associated Press who visited St Petersburg in 1904 upon the invitation of the government to negotiate stationing an Associated Press correspondent in St Petersburg. Stone succeeded in persuading the government to accept necessary conditions for the functioning of an A.P. branch in the Russian capital. Among other measures he would advocate for forwarding the news uncensored and for truthful reporting. Thus, Stone paved the way for incoming American reporters who would become more outspoken in their

William English Walling, Kellogg Durland, and later John Dos Passos, Suzanne La Follette, Jack Reed, Louise Bryant, Bessie Beatty, and others. Scholars have made few attempts to summarize and analyze that contingent of Americans who observed, discussed, and educated the public on such topics as despotism in Russia, opposition movements, and the outcome of the revolutionary struggle. Anna Babey is one scholar who provided a comprehensive survey “of American reactions to significant aspects of Russian civilization,” paying special attention to “the historical validity of travelers’ comments upon Russian history.” She also successfully evaluates the opinions of American observers, explaining them in the light of those traveler’s backgrounds, prejudices and “the manner in which these factors were reflected in those observations of Russia have been constantly born in mind.”<sup>283</sup>

Christopher Lash, author of *American Liberals and the Russian Revolution*, analyzes in turn, the uncertainty of opinion about the situation in Russia, especially among “various kinds” of liberals, most of whom he defines as left-leaning progressivists and some as socialists.<sup>284</sup> In his book Lash reveals the nature of the confusion, explains its implication and writes that a lot could be gained by distinguishing between different kinds of liberal responses to the war and revolution. Such differentiation between various attitudes, to one or the other of which liberals tended to adhere, according to the author, is indispensable for the analysis of “the controversy over the revolution, especially in its early stages.”<sup>285</sup>

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observations than they had been. See Melville E. Stone, “M.E.S.” *His Book: A tribute and a Souvenir of the Twenty-Five Years 1893-1918 of the Service of Melville E. Stone as General Manager of the Associated Press* (New York and London: Harper and Bros., 1918), 140-46 and Stone, Melville, *Fifty Years a Journalist* (New York: 1921), 262, 268.

<sup>283</sup> Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917*, xiv.

<sup>284</sup> Christopher Lasch, *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), xi.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, xi.

Among early travelers to Russia “with the avowed intention of seeing ‘lower life,’” was Missouri lawyer and author Lee Meriwether, who “donned the blouse and hobnailed shoes of the workingman in order to fraternize with the people, to live with them, and to win their confidence.” As a result, he was appointed by the secretary of the interior to research conditions of laborers in Europe, later publishing *A Trump Trip*. He attempted to analyze social and economic concerns of the humble Russians.<sup>286</sup>

Babey groups journalists Bullard, Kellogg Durland, Ernest Poole and William English Walling as the correspondents whose “observations upon the peasants and the policies of the government” during 1905, the year of the first Russian revolution, were “indicative of changes occurring in American society.” The four were socialists connected with the University Settlement’s work on New York’s Lower East Side. During the disturbances of 1905, before and after the first and the second Dumas of 1906 and 1907, these journalists and reformers promoted the need for change, reporting on the grievances of the Russian people and their antipathy to the government.<sup>287</sup>

As a new “generation of American social reformers,” they estranged themselves from many dominant values of American society, perceived social and political reforms as necessary for the improvement of the quality of life of society as a whole, rather than simply as means of self-advancement promoted by the ‘American Dream’ mythology. Gentlemen socialists painstakingly dedicated themselves to addressing burning social issues at home and overseas. Thus, before going to Russia in 1905 as a contributor to *Collier’s*, *Harper’s Weekly*, the *Review of Reviews*, the *Boston Transcript*, and the *New York Evening Post*, the Harvard and Edinburgh-educated Durland had worked as a coal miner in Scotland while studying mining conditions, had

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<sup>286</sup> Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917*, 14, 151.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, 26, 45.

investigated child labor abuses in Pennsylvania coal mines, and surveyed the immigration question in the United States. Durland also served at the University Settlement in New York.<sup>288</sup> In Russia, he was arrested. But that did not prevent his reporting which he did with zeal, inspired by the Russian revolutionaries. Among the latter he especially mentions young women “of finest character” who were involved in propaganda work and took risks to gain allies in their desperate struggle for liberty.<sup>289</sup> Durland’s friend and associate Arthur Bullard of Missouri, who was interested in studying the prison system, began his reform activities at the University Settlement. He later began his activities at the University Settlement. When he came to Russia in 1906 he wrote for *Harper’s Weekly*, *Collier’s*, *The Outlook*, and the *North American Review*.<sup>290</sup> William English Walling, a Louisville, Kentucky native, contributed to multiple magazines, as a

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<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-27.

<sup>289</sup> “Revolutionary women,” was a type unknown in the United States. Most of the comments on the temperament and morality of women engaged in revolutionary activity appeared in the decade following the assassination of Alexander II in 1881, and in the years immediately following the Revolution of 1905. Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917*, 81. The revolutionary women were discussed by a steadily increasing number of Americans. See for example John W. Foster’s *Diplomatic Memoirs*, I (Boston: 1909), 208-210, or Leroy Scott, “The Women of the Russian Revolution,” *Outlook* XC, 1908, 915-928, Isabel C. Barrows, “Madam Breshkovsky in Prison,” *The Outlook*, New York XCIV, 1910, 538-42, and Kennan’s numerous accounts of his personal meetings and conversations with the exiles revealing their sacrifice and the noblest character and trying to touch the hearts of Americans and arise their sympathies for those women who fought for freedom and liberation with heroism, self sacrifice and courage. The Kennan collection in the NYPL has abundant evidence of how deeply he was impressed by the personal qualities of many of his revolutionary women acquaintances. See for example Kennan’s letter to W.D. Foulke, 4 February 1888, Kennan’s letter to Foulke, New York, 17 February 1911, his letter to the Office of Associated Press, Washington D.C. December 20, 1887, etc. George Kennan Papers. Box. 1, Series I. Correspondence, 1885-1888, 1.2, MAD, NYPL. Kennan summarized his praises of Russian revolutionary women in *Siberia and the Exile System*. With regard for their ability and fortitude as well as their limitless capacity for self-sacrifice, Kennan thought of their resemblance to the early Christian martyrs. Kennan, George, *Siberia and the Exile System*, vol. II (London, 1891), 454. See also George Kennan Papers. Box. 3, Series II. Research and Publications on Russia and the Siberian Exile System, 1856 – ca. 1919, n.d., 3.8, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>290</sup> Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917*, 27.

professional economist and sociologist, while living in Russia in 1906 and 1907 with his wife, Anne Strunsky. He later lectured and wrote on social conditions there, while fraternizing with revolutionaries, and was arrested by the tsarist government. He first became interested in Russia through the Polish and Jewish exiles he met in New York. As Babey summarizes, Walling “went to Russia to seek personal contact with important leaders and to familiarize himself with the inner ideas and spirit of the people’s struggle.” Like Kennan, he considered the Russian government “so monstrous that he quite despaired of giving any satisfactory picture” of it at all.<sup>291</sup> Another prominent reformer was Chicagoan Ernest Poole. A 1902 Princeton graduate, he lived and worked at the University Settlement between 1902 and 1905, where he met Bullard and Walling and other Russian exiles. Poole recounts how Jewish socialist and journalist, *Forward* editor Abraham Cahan, “opened up a Russian world of revolution, books and plays, and stirred me [Poole] [deeply], as Tolstoy and Turgenev had in my last year of college.”<sup>292</sup> Like many of the others, Poole was a participant and an observer; he worked in “sweatshops, tenements, labor halls, and immigrant taverns. Poole was acquainted with Lincoln Steffens, Upton Sinclair, and Breshko-Breshkovskaya. He reported about revolutionary women who, according to the journalist, dedicated themselves to educating the masses through translating English, French, and German books into Russian. Poole describes his personal experience with a woman living in St Petersburg where he was lodging, who had translated Booker T. Washington’s *Up from Slavery*.<sup>293</sup> Poole wrote articles for the *Outlook* and *McClure’s*, and in 1917 he became the first journalist to win the newly established Pulitzer Prize in 1917. After the news of the first Russian revolution reached him in 1905, he went to St Petersburg, where Harold William, of the

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<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>292</sup> Ernest Poole, *The Bridge: My Own Story* (New York: MacMillan, 1940), 74.

<sup>293</sup> Ernest Poole, “St Petersburg is Quiet!” in *Outlook*, 1905, 689.

Manchester *Guardian*, who had contacts with revolutionaries introduced him to them. Poole returned to Russia after the revolution of 1917, to serve as propagandist on George Creel's Committee on Public Information and visited Russia in July to observe the Kerensky republic.

Poole was one of those Americans, who fell under the spell cast by 1905 revolutionary Petersburg. Another prominent American in St. Petersburg enamored by the social and political changes in Russia was Paxton Pattison Hibben. A diplomat, journalist, soldier, author, and humanitarian, Hibben embraced the new Soviet social order not only as a refreshing antidote to the corruption and tyranny of the old tsarist regime, but also "to what he saw as the corrupt capitalism prevalent in the West."<sup>294</sup> His acquaintance with Russia began in St. Petersburg when in 1905 he served as the third secretary at the United States embassy. Hibben learned to speak Russian with some fluency."<sup>295</sup> Although in poor health and facing "rigors of a Russian

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<sup>294</sup> See biography of Paxton P. Hibben by his distant relative, Stuart G. Hibben, *Aristocrat and Proletarian*, 114. Very similar explanations of their actions as well as sympathetic sentiments towards rebellious Russians were expressed by many prominent successors of Paxton Hibben. Thus, for example, Louise Bryant wrote in her introduction

We have here in America an all too obvious and objectionable prejudice against Russia. And this, you will agree, is born of fear. In Russia something strange and foreboding has occurred, it threatens to undo our present civilization and instinctively we fear change – for better or for worse. We hug our comforts, our old habits of life, our old values.... There are those among us who whisper that this change will mean darkness and chaos, there are those who claim it is but a golden light which, starting from a little flame, shall circle the earth and make it glow with happiness." See Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia*, ix-x.

<sup>295</sup> Stuart G. Hibben, *Aristocrat and Proletarian*, 9. The author of the recently released biography Stuart G. Hibben claims that there is no detailed official account of Paxton Hibben's performance in St. Petersburg partly because the State Department records on Russia up until 1906 consist mainly of official dispatches between Washington and St. Petersburg, and partly because some portion of the private sources was destroyed by Paxton's wife after his death. Hibben writes that besides Paxton's niece Phyllisann Courtis, who inspired the author to write a biography of that extraordinary man, and Paxton's daughter, who provided the biographer with "all the documentation that she could dig up," no other Hibben's relatives were willing to provide information on Paxton. They tried to distant themselves

winter,” Paxton Hibben was excited by the “growing political tumult in Russia,” and he “reveled in the pleasures of Russian aristocratic life.”<sup>296</sup> Hibben’s stay in St. Petersburg was eloquently described by yet another American who visited the city – John Dos Passos:

Pushkin for de Musset; St. Petersburg was a young  
dude’s romance:  
goldencrusted spires under the platinum sky,  
the icegrey Neva flowing swift and deep under  
bridges that jailed with sleighbells;  
riding home from the Islands with the Grand  
Duke’s mistress, the most beautiful most amorous singer  
of Neapolitan streetsongs;  
staking a pile of rubles, in a tall room glittering

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from that “black sheep” of the family mostly because of Paxton’s radical political beliefs. See “Acknowledgements” and chapter two in Hibben’s book. Yet the researcher refers to files in the National Archives and Records to shed some light on the third secretary’s exact duties, as well as at his life and activities in St. Petersburg in general. See also John Dos Passos’ *1919*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1932), 184, where the writer also reflects on injustices that Paxton Hibben had to face due to his political beliefs:

Back in America  
Somebody got hold of a photograph of Captain  
Paxton Hibben laying a wreath on Jack Reed’s grave;  
they tried to throw him out of the O.R.C.,  
at Princeton at the twentieth reunion of his  
college class his class mates started to lynch him; they were  
drunk and perhaps it was just a collegeboy prank twenty  
years too late but they had a noose around his neck,  
lynch the goddam red,  
no more place in America for change,  
no more place for the old gags: social justice, progressivism,  
revolt against oppression, democracy; put the reds on the  
skids... Dos Passos, *1919*

<sup>296</sup> Stuart Hibben, *Aristocrat and Proletarian*, 9.

with chandeliers, monocles, diamonds dripped on white  
shoulders;

white snow, white tableclothes, white sheets,

Kakhetian wine, vodka fresh as newmown hay,  
Astrakhan caviar, sturgeon, Finnish salmon, Lapland  
ptarmigan, and the most beautiful women in the world;<sup>297</sup>

Paxton Hibben “dined with aristocrats but marched with anti-tsarist demonstrators.”<sup>298</sup>

The embassy cable traffic of the time “gave alarming accounts of the growing chaos and anarchy in the city” that “was being racked by strikes and demonstrations,” that culminated in the bloody Revolution of 1905.<sup>299</sup> Members of the diplomatic corps were advised to carry weapons if they ventured out in public. In spite of the prohibition against such activities by American diplomats, Paxton Hibben became involved in the unrest, “at least as an observer, and was deeply impressed by what he saw.”<sup>300</sup> Dangerously close to some of the violence and active in the events unfolding in St. Petersburg, Paxton Hibben was on “doubly dangerous ground.” The American diplomat “was risking expulsion by the imperial Russian government as *persona non grata*” and his “boldness in this setting no doubt was a headache to his embassy bosses.”<sup>301</sup> Dos Passos’ *1919*, describes Hibben slipping out of the embassy to witness the bloody attacks by the tsar’s guards and to march with protestors:

but it was 1905, Hibben left the embassy one night

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<sup>297</sup> John Dos Passos, *1919* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1932), 180.

<sup>298</sup> Stuart Hibben, *Aristocrat and Proletarian*, 112.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.* Yet, this comment is speculative, since Stuart Hibben himself acknowledges that “there is nothing in the official record to suggest this.” See Stuart Hibben, *Aristocrat and Proletarian*, 13.

and saw a flare of red against the trampled snow of the  
 Nevsky and red flags,  
     blood frozen in the ruts, blood trickling down the  
     car tracks; he saw the machineguns on the balconies of the  
 Winter Palace, the cossacks charging the unarmed  
 crowds that wanted peace and food and a little freedom,  
     heard the throaty roar of the Russian Marseillaise;  
     some stubborn streak in the old American blood  
 flared in revolt, he walked the streets all night with  
 the revolutionists, got in wrong at the embassy<sup>302</sup>

At the time of Hibben's diplomatic service in St. Petersburg, the Russo-Japanese War was just concluding in the Far East. On his own initiative, Hibben visited Japanese prisoners of war detained in St. Petersburg and tended to their needs.<sup>303</sup> Not only the Japanese government noticed and appreciated Hibben's efforts of a true humanitarian, but also Russians recognized his urge to transcend the war mentality and act "in the name of simple humanity."<sup>304</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> Dos Passos, *1919*, 180.

<sup>303</sup> Stuart G. Hibben, *Aristocrat and Proletarian*, 11. The American diplomat's efforts were so essential that the Japanese government valued his work highly enough to award Paxton Hibben a civilian medal that was called the order of the Sacred Treasure, Fourth Class. This medal, according to Stuart Hibben, is usually awarded to Japanese public servants for many years of faithful services, and hence it was truly "a signal honor for a foreigner. With the State Department protocol that prevents anyone on diplomatic service to accept formally the award of a foreign state, Paxton Hibben was not able to enjoy the formal ceremony for ten years after he had resigned his diplomatic position. The official award ceremony took place in New York in March 1922 and was discussed in the local press. Stuart G. Hibben refers to the coverage of the event in *New York Times* and *New York American*, 29 March 1922. It is worth mentioning that Hibben was not the only American who was awarded by Foreign Government for the relief services. In 1919, a war secretary of YMCA Russell McCulloch Story was decorated with the Czechoslovakia Cross of War, for his relief services for the Czech prisoners of war in Russia during 1917 – 1918. See "Death Takes College Head" in *Los Angeles Times*, March 28, 1942.

<sup>304</sup> Stuart G. Hibben, *Aristocrat and Proletarian*, 11. Before he left St. Petersburg in November of 1906, he was likewise honored by the Imperial Russian Government with the Order of St. Stanislas, Third Class.

According to Dos Passos, Hibben's explicit liberties cost him his post in St. Petersburg and he was transferred to Mexico.<sup>305</sup> Hibben's biographer refers to the young man's St. Petersburg experience as "an eye-opener" that "seemed to trigger in him sympathy for proletarian movements that he carried with him from then on."<sup>306</sup> The 1905 civil turmoil in St. Petersburg and later unrest in Latin America, gave Hibben increasing sympathy "for the politically or economically downtrodden in society." He supported Theodore Roosevelt's progressive platform of suffrage for women, child labor laws, and labor unions, among others. His biographer concludes that although Paxton Hibben declined to define himself as a socialist, he truly believed that "social justice was a responsibility of government."<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>305</sup> Also see Stuart Hibben's comments, 10. He writes that although there is no official personal evaluation on record for Paxton Hibben in St. Petersburg, the ambassador at least gave him good remarks for his job performance there. The author acknowledged that "whatever the "trouble" was that Doss Passos referred to, it was not mentioned in the official record, and in any case it was not the stated reason for Hibben's transfer to Mexico." See Stuart Hibben, *Aristocrat and Proletarian*, 13.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*, 10. An interesting detail: Although the author describes Paxton Hibben as a political radical, and refers to his political evolution that tended farther and farther to the left, the editors of the *Encyclopedia of the Political Left* Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Buhle, and Dan Gorgakas did not even include him in the cohort of Americans who made the difference. Thus, I believe that Stuart Hibben's book meet the goal of the author and earned Paxton Hibben a place in history. In *Aristocrat and Proletarian*, Stuart Hibben tries not only to reflect on Paxton's extraordinary life story, but also to review the evolution of his political and social beliefs. The biographer considers it to be essential for understanding Paxton Hibben public behavior. For example, Stuart Hibben describes how while in Moscow with the Near East Relief Commission in October 1921, Paxton Hibben together with commission colleague Albert Johnson visited the tomb of John Reed and Johnson photographed Hibben putting a wreath on the tomb, an outrageous gesture that surely upset American public. Stuart Hibben mentions that there was a storm of recriminations and calls for retribution against Hibben for such a provocative behavior and that one of the most vocal critics was Isabel Hapgood, who charged Hibben not only with an outrageous act, but also with using Near East Relief money to buy the wreath. And yet, the biographer writes that Hibben remained true to his beliefs and "refused to be intimidated by public opinion." See Stuart Hibben, 112 – 121 (Chapter 14 "The Making of a Radical"). See also Hapgood – Hibben – *New York Times* correspondence in Isabel Hapgood Papers, Box 1, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

Paxton Hibben would return to Russia in 1919, when he was invited to join the Russian – Armenian Mission under the command of Colonel James Rhea, and then during the devastating famine of 1921 – 1923 in the Volga region. According to Stuart Hibben, Paxton Hibben was always welcomed by Soviet officials when in Russia, and “he had free run of the place.”<sup>308</sup> His final trip to Russia was in 1929, when his widow sent his ashes to Moscow for a state burial.<sup>309</sup> He is buried in Novodevichiy Monastery Cemetery in the Literary Section, next to the grave of poet Valeriy Brusov. In 1930 the Russian Red Cross, the organization that was initiated by Hibben, with the help from some of his American friends, built a children’s sanatorium on the Black Sea in Artek, near Yalta.

The early observers of the first Russian revolution of 1905 were succeeded in 1917 by like-minded Americans who went to Russia to witness first hand the events that “shook the world.” Among them was Louise Bryant. She wrote numerous articles in the *Philadelphia Public*

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<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>309</sup> The inscription on the tomb says that Paxton Hibben is buried in Moscow according to his wish. Although the author of his biography does not reveal whether it was Paxton Hibben’s will or whether it was his wife’s decision, he provides one of his letters addressed to the *New York Times* editorial in which he is trying to respond to his more vocal critic Isabel F Hapgood, who was outraged by Hibben’s act when he paid tribute to his friend and colleague John Reed laying a wreath on his tomb. In that letter Hibben announced that “when I come to die I shall be content if I may lie beside John Reed, under the Kremlin Wall, in Moscow.” See Hibben, Paxton, ‘Mr. Hibben Explains,’ *New York Times*, Thursday, November, 3, 1921. In spite of his wish, Hibben’s final resting place was in the cemetery of Novodevichi Monastery, since he was not a member of a Communist Party. But his wife Sheila mistakenly announced that his ashes were buried in the Kremlin. This was picked up by the press and caused some confusion that persisted for years afterwards. As Stuart Hibben pointed out, the myth was perpetuated by author John Gunther in his *Inside Russia Today*, published in 1962. Gunther listed several Americans entombed in the Kremlin, among them “the writer Paxton Hibben.” See Stuart Hibben, *Aristocrat and Proletarian*, 174. In the acknowledgement Stuart Hibben thanks his friends and colleagues, among them he especially credited Dr. Boris Boguslavsky who “made it personal mission to track down Hibben’s tomb in Moscow” in 1988. See the last chapter in Stuart Hibben’s book “Death and a Hero’s Burial” and the acknowledgements. Stuart Hibben, *Aristocrat and Proletarian*, 169 – 179 and 183.

*Ledger* and other newspapers and magazines throughout North and South America, that were later reprinted in her *Six Red Months in Russia: an Observer's Account of Russia before and during the Proletarian Dictatorship*. Bryant decided to go to Russia “when the news of the Russian revolution flared out across the front pages of all the newspapers in the world.”<sup>310</sup> She was impatient as she reached Russia: “Soon I should see how this greatest and youngest of democracies was learning to walk – to stretch itself – to feel its strength – unshakable! We were to watch that brave attempt of the new republic to establish itself with widely varying emotions....”<sup>311</sup> Even though she acknowledges that most of the time in Russia, she was continually “startled and surprised,” reflecting back on what she had witnessed, she wrote that “yet, I should have been prepared for surprises.” First and for most she was a war correspondent and she believed that “the great war could not leave an unchanged world in its wake--certain movements of society were bound to be pushed forward, others retarded.” When speaking of “certain movements,” she meant socialism. What attracted her most in the social changes, was that Socialism ceased being “an idle dream of long-haired philosophers” and came out into being even though reminding at times “the sudden upshooting of a mushroom,” and even though it might fail because it was premature<sup>312</sup> She was fascinated by the determination of Petrograd and its citizens to take revolutionary action in spite of tremendous hardships and tribulations that they faced during the October events. The city, with its rigorous climate and granite solemnity seemed more like “something out of an extravagant play than anything in real life,” with “King Hunger’

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<sup>310</sup> Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia*, 19.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, x.

stalking over it all while “a chill autumn rain soaked into the half-fed shivering throngs that hurried along, lifting their faces and beholding a vision of world of world democracy....”<sup>313</sup>

In the six months that she spent in revolutionary Petrograd, Bryant had a chance to observe the city’s day-to-day efforts to face social uprising, starvation, and destruction. All of that generated an abundance of material for the American journalist. She stayed, as did many of her compatriots, in the Hotel Angleterre, the place that more than any other, reflected the decay of the old splendid capital described by her predecessors:

I looked around at the great unfriendly room in which I found myself. It was all gold and mahogany with old blue draperies; most of the furniture was still wearing its summer garments. I had a feeling that no one had lived in this room for years – it had a musty, unused smell... Out in the streets I wandered aimlessly noting the contents of the little shops now pitifully empty. It is curious the things that remain in a starving and besieged city. There was only food enough to last three days, there was no warm clothes at all and I passed window after window full of flowers,<sup>314</sup> corsets, dog-collars and false hair!

I went along always looking for the happy youngsters to whom the bright toys in the shop windows, now dust covered should belong. I came to realize with horror that everybody in Russia is grown up.<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>314</sup> Flowers in the shop windows are always noticed and described by female observers, indicating dramatic changes in the city life, in economic difficulties, and even the course of action on the front. Thus, for example, another observer Lascelle de Basily also used flowers in the shop windows to describe the visible changes in the life of the capital: “formerly in winter, fresh flowers were sent daily by train from the French Riviera to St. Petersburg. The war ended this, but even when the mercury was far below zero, tender blossoms appeared in florists’ windows behind frozen panes.” See de Basily Meserve, *Memoirs of a Lost World*, 56.

<sup>315</sup> Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia*, 36-37, 252.

Another typical feature of war and revolution was the presence of a black market and speculators. Bryant described the appearance of smuggled small consignments and 10cent cans of the popular American brands of canned milk that Colonel Raymond Robbins, of the American Red Cross, supplied for babies of Petrograd, but that ended at the black market where they could be bought at the exorbitant rate of 16 ½ rubles.<sup>316</sup>

Bryant was one of the six English-speaking reporters who attended a famous democratic congress held in Petrograd in Alexandrinsky Theatre. There she heard the commander-in-chief of the Russian army and navy and Minister-President of the Russian Republic Alexander Kerensky speech. In the course of a “fortnight of oratory” she happened to hear “hundreds of delegates,” some of which “had never made a speech before and yet “would give a long sustained talk.” As Bryant noticed, “few used notes and every man was a poet.”<sup>317</sup> Bryant wrote about the twenty-three elected women-delegates. Among them she singled out Marie Spiridonova, “the most

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The physical appearance of the revolutionary metropolis, a place where people “kept in normal paths during the whirlwind of abnormal events,” turned into a theme in many similar accounts recorded by American witnesses, including Leighton Rogers’ fictionalized history:

Except for some windows boarded up and others pierced with round holes radiating cracks, a few blackened ruins, and white bullet-spots on the red plaster of buildings, the material city was unchanged –the same grey haze over the river and the house-tops; the same white snow falling silently from the same slate colored clouds, and the same bitter cold. In its buildings, streets and squares life rambled on. See Rogers, 134.

<sup>316</sup> Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia*, 253. The author notes that she would like to efface from her memory “the old peasant women and the little ragamuffins who stood in the snow outside the grocery windows gazing wistfully at the little red and white cans.” She also added in the footnotes that finally in February and March Colonel Robbins managed to distribute several hundred thousand cans of milk to Petrograd babies. *Ibid.* William Boyce Thompson also claimed that the Red Cross sent a good deal of condensed milk to Petrograd where there were 210,000 children under seven and 60, 000 infants in need of milk. *Russia as a Democracy*, 37.

<sup>317</sup> Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia*, 61.

politically powerful woman in Russia or in the world, and the only woman the soldiers and peasants are sentimental about.”<sup>318</sup> In the diplomatic box of the congress Bryant saw a number of Americans, including members of the Red Cross mission Colonel Thompson and Colonel Raymond Robbins, who “were present at nearly every session and took a lively interest.”<sup>319</sup> She was accompanied by John Reed and Albert Rhys Williams, when on 24 October she “started for the Winter Palace” to witness history. They passed through the cordons of Junkers, who “solemnly examined” their American passports, after which they were free “to roam all over the palace.”<sup>320</sup>

Bryant visited the Bolshevik foreign office, where she witnessed “strange new department and strange activities.” To an American, “accustomed to the time-clock and high-speed,” it seemed to be run in an incredibly haphazard fashion.” Her attention was attracted to the department of war prisoners, “which was particularly active during the month or two after the last Revolution,” and to the newly founded Bureau of International Revolutionary Propaganda, under the head of Boris Reinshtein of Buffalo New York, where two other American socialists, John Reed and Albert Rhys Williams worked. Bryant writes that the mission of the bureau was “to carry revolutionary ideas into Germany and Austria by every means possible.” Thus, the Americans introduced “American advertising psychology – briefness and concrete impressions --

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<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, 65. Bryant recalls that Robbins “often came down to the reporters’ quarters and discussed the situation with us.”

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, 79. Later Bryant refuted so many stories “that have come out about looting.” She writes: “It was so natural that there should have been looting and so commendable that there was none.” Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia*, 87. Leighton Rogers notes very similar distinguish feature writing how the word revolution would necessarily associate associate in his mind with “carnage and pillage” and how in reality there “there had been little carnage and practically no pillage.” See Rogers, *Wine of Fury*, 133.

into the propaganda.” The American “added energy to the plans of the Russians.” Williams even formed a foreign legion to help repel the threatened invasion.<sup>321</sup>

One of the first things that Bryant investigated when she arrived in Russia was another feature of the Great War that “caught the public fancy:” the “Death Battalion.” In the six months that Bryant spent in Russia, she “saw them [women] going through a curious development.” She observed that “class struggle permeated everything and it hurled the women’s regiments into the maelstrom with everything else.”<sup>322</sup> After investigating the roles of women Bryant concluded that “women in Russia have always fought in the army.... the principal reason for the failure of the woman’s regiment was segregation.” Bryant’s account of the death battalion is distinguished by her poignant representation of the women who served in it. Thus, while visiting Kira Volakkettnova and Anna Shub, former defenders of the Winter Palace, she described one detail that would not coincide with an image of a “Russian Amazons:”

Anna reached under her cot and took out a paste-box. The contents of that and what she had on her back was all that she had in the world besides a sick sparrow. The sick sparrow she had picked up upon on the street half frozen. Now it hopped about the room looking for crumbs and picking at spots on the floor.<sup>323</sup>

These women personified for Louise Bryant Russia itself, “Russia hungry and cold and barefoot – forgetting it all – planning new battles, new roads to freedom.” And their determination, their fervor passed on to her and when questioned if she herself was ready to

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<sup>321</sup> Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia*, 202.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

struggle for freedom of the Russian people,” she stated that she is willing to “offer my services unreservedly.”<sup>324</sup>

As a liberal and progressive feminist, Bryan respectfully pays tribute to the “emancipated female population of Russia” being positive that their “gold, brown and auburn tresses” could bring a fortune to an enterprising dealer who would start “selling them in America, France or some other backward country where women still cling to hairpins.”

She also writes about fashion, or, about the lack of any, the feature that she considers another indicator of a society liberated from commercialism, consumerism, advertising, etc.

There is practically no “fashion” in Russia, she noticed. Men and women wear what they please. “At one table would be sitting a soldier with his fur hat pulled over one ear, across from him a Red Guard in rag-tags, next a Cossack in a gold and black uniform, earrings in his ears, silver chains around his neck, or a man from the Wild Division, recruited from the most savage tribes of the Caucasus, wearing his somber, flowing cape.... Russian women are particular in regard to dress. If they are interested in Revolution, they almost invariably refuse to think of dress at all and go about looking noticeably shabby<sup>325</sup> – if they are not interested they care exceedingly for clothes and manage to array themselves in the most fantastic “inspirations.”<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

<sup>325</sup> Other Americans, including the male observers, would notice that particular feature about Russian women who dedicated themselves to the advancement of the society rather than to enhancing their own appearance. Thus, in 1915, in a famous article dedicated to Russian Revolutionary women, a prominent socialist Leroy Scott would report that none of the women he encountered with: “would have made a “pretty girl” cover for a popular magazine.” The Russian female students “have not the carriage nor the erect figure that characterize the American girl, neither have they achieved any mastery over the art of dress. They are so absorbed in mightier things that dress claims their last thought; in fact, a certain scorn is felt for fripperies and ornaments – to give time to such borders on the unpatriotic. A plain waist and a plain skirt, taking the minimum of time at the toilet, satisfy them. But beauty of an unstereotyped kind they do have. Theirs is the beauty of intelligence, of a quick, intense, sympathetic mind illuminating the face – of an exalted, martyr-like spirit unmatched in the world. Leroy Scott, “The Women of the Russian Revolution,” 921.

Russian children stranded by war and “King Hunger,” found their place in Bryant’s account. The correspondent acknowledged that “just to write it down, or to speak of it can not give a mental picture to any one who has not actually seen such a sweeping scourge of the little people.” After living in St. Petersburg for some time she came to realize “with horror” that

those young in years, whom we still call children, had old and sad faces, large, hungry eyes burned forth from pale countenance, wretched, worn-out shoes, sagging, ragged little garments accentuated their so apparent misery.<sup>327</sup>

The journalist devoted a chapter in her account to that “confusion and terror” that swept along with the refugees. She would describe the “huddled little figures” marching “through the called heavy dampness of the dreary Russian autumn,” going “through the mist,” which gave them the appearance of “a phantom army of all the children who have died in this war for the sins of a few diplomats sitting around a gilded table, plotting cogoodenquest and spilling the world’s blood.”<sup>328</sup>

Among other early observers, favorable to the revolutionary forces and the newly established Bolshevik regime were such witnesses of the Winter Palace takeover as Bessie Beatty and John Reed, “a poet revolutionary” buried in the Kremlin wall, Lincoln Steffens and William Bullitt, special Washington emissaries to Lenin in 1919, Isaac Don Levine and Lincoln Eyre. Dmitry von Mohrenschildt writes that it was those reporters who were “largely responsible” for creating a sympathetic attitude toward the new Russia among “the literary, artistic, and academic groups in America.” The author describes the early pro-Soviet American

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<sup>326</sup> Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia*, 37-38, and 44.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

observers as “a picturesque and adventurous group of the socially minded Americans and intellectuals.”<sup>329</sup> He believes that their favorable endorsement of the Soviet Russia was partly the result of their disillusionment with the “plutocratic” civilization of their native lands. As they reported the changes in Russia they emphasized that those changes “deserved the utmost sympathy and support of every progressive and liberal-minded American.”<sup>330</sup> Most of them, John Reed for example, even justified “the red terror” claiming that all revolutions are bloody, and that violence must run its course. John Reed’s attitude in this connection is well known. Emma Goldman documented some of his sentiments after she met him in Petrograd in her book *My Disillusionment in Russia*. Recalling her meeting she wrote that like Shatov, Reed insisted that “the dark sides of the Bolshevik regime were inevitable. He believed fervently that the Soviet Government would emerge from its narrow party lines and that it would presently establish the Communistic Commonwealth.”<sup>331</sup> For many of the early observers the realization of the vast significance of the events that they witnessed in Russia “had a vitalizing and stimulating effect.” The revolution in October was ‘a great show’ and an exciting experience. Thus, Bessy Beatty wrote in 1918: “I have been alive at a great moment and knew that it was great...” As Mohrenschildt concluded, their perception of the devastated revolutionary Petrograd pervaded “a spirit of lyrical exultation.” As they tried to “pierce its mystery,” the city became once again the background for the “colorful sketches of revolutionary scenes and atmospheres..., dialogues caught in the streets...,” and the place where those “poetic journalists and journalistic poets”

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<sup>329</sup> Dmitri von Mohrenschildt, “The Early American Observers of the Russian revolution, 1917-1921,” *The Russian Review*, Vol. 3, (Autumn 1943), 67.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>331</sup> Emma Goldman, *My Disillusionment in Russia* (Mineola: Dover, 2003), 11.

tried to discover that ideal of a society that they had been dreaming about long before the WWI.<sup>332</sup>

Concluding the chapter it is important to note that, even though the image of Russia in the West was routinely associated with cringing, servility and implicit obedience, many American missionaries, humanitarians, and revolutionaries who visited and resided in St. Petersburg at the turn of the twentieth century, turned to Russia in their search for answers to the burning social issues of their time. While some of them enjoyed the splendor of careless Russian aristocracy displayed in the capital, others threw themselves into the the Revolutionary movement trying to rehabilitate the notion of a righteous liberalism, democracy, and tradition of dissent that, as they thought, was inexorably vanishing in the atmosphere of the unbridled capitalism and rugged individualism prevalent in the West. Many of the “ardent sympathizers” consciously chose to withstand extraordinary hardships demonstrating brave effort to understand the country, to educate themselves and others about the complexity of Russia’s conflicting social milieu, in spite of condemnation, stigma, and even prosecution for their intentions back home. I would like to acknowledge their aspirations to renounce the fear of change and put to shame subjection to the ideals and ambitions of governing classes, petty comforts, and capitalist values that they thought were inconsistent with the welfare of mankind. Some of them never accepted the changes and would fight against the newly established regime with all their might. Others were, in contrast, largely responsible for creating a sympathetic attitude toward the new Russia among the literary, artistic, and academic groups in America. As radical reporters informed their compatriots about changes unfolding in Russia, they emphasized that those changes “deserved

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<sup>332</sup>Dmitri von Mohrenschildt, “The Early American Observers of the Russian Revolution, 1917 – 1921,” 69.

the utmost sympathy and support of every progressive and liberal-minded American.”<sup>333</sup> Some of them, for example John Reed even justified “the red terror” claiming that all revolutions are bloody, and that violence must run its course. For many of the early observers the realization of the vast significance of the events that they witnessed in Russia “had a vitalizing and stimulating effect.” The revolution in October was ‘a great show’ and an exciting experience. Their perception of the devastated revolutionary Petrograd pervaded “a spirit of lyrical exultation.” As they tried to pierce its mystery, the city became once again the place where those “poetic journalists and journalistic poets” tried to discover that ideal of a society that they had been long dreaming about.<sup>334</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> Williams, *Through the Russian Revolution*, 65.

<sup>334</sup> von Mohrenschildt, “The Early American Observers of the Russian revolution, 1917-1921,” 69.

## CHAPTER V

### “Ragtime St. Petersburg” (1890s – 1930s)

#### *St. Petersburg Venues for American Popular Culture and Traditional Russian Amusements*

Among other member of the growing American community in St. Petersburg were the musicians and stage performers that evolved into a cultural subset of the colony. Throughout the nineteenth century the Russian capital was an attractive destination for American actors, musicians, and entertainers who pursued careers overseas. One visitor was Ira Aldridge, a leading African American Shakespearean actor, who attracted attention of the Russian public, which praised him for his art. Curtiss writes that when Aldridge arrived in St. Petersburg in 1858, the political situation in the country “offered the perfect moment for his recognition as an American,” a “triumphant symbol of ‘his oppressed people.’”<sup>1</sup> The previous year the Russian monarch had publicized a draft of legislation for the liberation of serfs, and the Russian translation of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* appeared.<sup>2</sup> In Isaak Bickerstaff’s *The Padlock*, a farce with

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<sup>1</sup> Mina Curtiss, “Some American Negroes in Russia in the Nineteenth Century,” *The Massachusetts Review* (Spring 1968), 281.

<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that it was first published in Russian much later than elsewhere. The first publication was released in Moscow only in 1857. Various authors attributed the delay in publishing the book in Russia to the criticism of slavery, that was too obviously targeting serfdom system as well. See for example Olga Peters Hasty and Susanne Fusso who edited and translated *America through Russian Eyes, 1874-1926* (New Haven: Yale University Press, c1988). In 1857 Stowe’s novel appeared as a supplement to the rather conservative *Russkii Vestnik* and the journal’s editor, M.N. Katkov, later one of the most influential newspaper publishers in the empire, produced it separately in a 434- page edition. The next year another translation, in which five separate people had participated (Russian bibliographical reference edition states that it was the first translation that was done by five separate people, see below), was issued as a supplement to the more liberal *Sovremennik*.” See Robert V. Allen, *Russia Looks at America: the view to 1917* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1988), 87. *Sovremennik* editors were such leading writers as Nikolay Chernyshevsky and Nikolay Nerkasov, they devoted much writing in their journal to

Charles Dibdin's music, Aldridge played Mungo, a Black slave. Even though the play was supposed to be a comedy, it left Russian progressive intellectuals with "a heavy sad impression, because it reminded them vividly the saddest [of] scenes" from the newly published American novel. An editor of a liberal publication *Moscow Messenger* and a friend of Pushkin, *Mikhail Petrovich Pogodin* confessed:

You pass with that magician through every stage of human passion... and deep in the heart of every ecstatic spectator, sacred conscience is heard. Under the dark skin... a black body quivers from the same pain as the white.... These are thoughts that were awakened in me by the acting of the African Negro in -- what do you think -- in the farce, *The Padlock*. When the cruel master raised his stick above the beaten Negro, I saw only one thing -- such a quivering moment in his spine, his shoulders, that my very own body was shaken. In my imagination I saw the history of a whole people...<sup>3</sup>

Aldridge specialized in Othello, but also performed King Lear<sup>4</sup>, and other roles to acclaim. For his performances he was made an honorary member of the famous Imperial Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg. Curtiss refers to the dozens of enthusiastic accounts of Aldridge's acting, the analysis of his techniques, the appreciation of his personality in St. Petersburg newspapers and reviews that attest to his success.<sup>5</sup> No description though gives a better picture of his gifts, according to Curtiss, than that of Théophile Gautier who happened to be in St Petersburg in 1858: "He was the lion of St Petersburg and seats for the theatre had to be

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Aldridge. The supplement with *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was sent to *Sovremennik* subscribers just before Aldridge's arrival.

<sup>3</sup> Cited in Curtiss, "Some American Negroes in Russia in the Nineteenth Century," 284.

<sup>4</sup> The actor first performed as King Lear in St. Petersburg.

<sup>5</sup> Among other editions, the most detailed reports on Aldridge's performance in the capital was *Teatral'nii I Musykal'nii Vestnik* (Theatre and Music News). For the first time, Russians learned about his performance in Europe from an article "Aktyor- negr" in *Panteon*, 1852, № 10, 1852.

taken days before.... His entrance on the stage was magnificent. It was Othello himself as Shakespeare created him, with eyes half-closed as if dazzled from the African sun, his nonchalant Oriental attitude, and his free- and - easy Negro air that no European can imitate.”<sup>6</sup> Gautier was deeply impressed with “the great Negro tragedian,” who “was classic, majestic, recalling strongly Macready...he scored a great success and received boundless applause....”<sup>7</sup>

Clarence L. Holte, the author of *African Presence in Early Europe* refers to the translation of the article by the leading Russian critic S. Almazov published in Moscow in 1862. This is how Almazov describes the power of the actor’s performance:

Aldridge has nothing in common with those theatrical personalities from the West who visited us in recent times. His qualities consist not in picturesque poses and gestures, not in a melodic singing diction, not in an artificially (pseudo- majestic) tragic gait. No. He does not think of picturesque poses; he does not effect of this or other feeling which inspires him; he performs not coquetry with his voice, which is very pleasant, but which one does not think about, following his acting; he concentrates all your attention only on the inner meaning of his speech. He does not bother either about the majestic stride, but moves about completely naturally, not like a tragedian, but like a human being. No externality, no ballet-like grace and agility of movement, but a highly truthful understanding of art, a deep knowledge of the human heart, and the ability to feel the subtlest spiritual movements indicated by Shakespeare and to bring them to life before the public - that is what constitutes the essence of his acting ....<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Curtiss, “Some American Negroes in Russia in the Nineteenth Century,” 282.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Cited in Ivan Clarence L. Holte, *African Presence in Early Europe* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1985), 271.

Aldridge was born in 1807 in New York and raised in the city. Along with his older brother, Joshua, he frequented Brown's Theatre, in the Black community, and later the segregated Park Theatre. For four years he was a student at the African Free School where he won several prizes for his recitations. These honors crystallized his ambition to be an actor. Compelled by racism to leave the United States, he made his reputation in Europe. Aldridge learned the mysteries of the stage from Henry Wallack, a leading white actor. It was through Wallack's brother that James Aldridge was introduced to the theatre in England in 1824.<sup>9</sup> Barely known in the United States, Aldridge's success in England brought him fame and fortune throughout Europe. He became a British subject in 1863. His journey to St Petersburg in 1858 was "practically a royal progress." Curtiss writes that for each performance he received 400 silver roubles,<sup>10</sup> the equivalent to approximately \$300. The theater paid all his expenses, and during his stay in the capital there was always an "equipage" at his disposal.<sup>11</sup>

Aldridge arrived in Russia in 1858, in the midst of the greatest transformation that resulted in liberation of some 22.5 million serfs.<sup>12</sup> He visited again in 1859, and from 1861 to

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>10</sup> Marshall and Mildred Stock write that the terms offered to Aldridge by the Imperial Theatre were indeed unusual. A provincial actor in those days would earn about 25 roubles a month, and a city actor as much as 100 roubles. Aldridge received 400 roubles for a single performance, and the greatly increased prices of admission, met with no resistance by the public. Marshall and Mildred Stock, *Ira Aldridge, The Negro Tragedian* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 19680), 220.

<sup>11</sup> Curtiss, "Some American Negroes in Russia in the Nineteenth Century," 281.

<sup>12</sup> That was the time when liberal politicians embraced the principles of emancipation, established a committee "for ameliorating the condition of the peasants," and worked on the emancipation reform. The changes were prodded by devastating defeat in the Crimean War in 1856. Those political transformations resulted in restructuring the autocracy and fostering the growth of liberal movement supported by enlightened nobility and educated urban middle class.

1866<sup>13</sup> made several tours through Russia's European provinces.<sup>14</sup> An 1861 tour was long and extensive. He performed in both Russian capitals, as well as Poltava (April 1863), Rostov (September, 1864), and Stavropol and Kazan (Winter 1865).<sup>15</sup>

Clarence L. Holte notes that although Aldridge did not speak Russian, his artistic ability to communicate enabled him "to cast, produce and direct the plays with cast who did not speak English." He saw from the reception accorded him by audiences, actors, and the press that Russia presented opportunities for him to work at his craft on a sustained basis, which fulfilled a need in Russia.<sup>16</sup>

During Aldridge's first year in St. Petersburg, he played thirty-one performances at the prestigious Imperial Theatre, with critical success, receiving extraordinary honors and salary. He became friends with prominent Russian intellectuals, writers, and nobles. Among his acquaintances was Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko, who came to the capital at the same time as Aldridge did. The famous poet-painter, whose portrait of Aldridge is now in Tret'yakov Gallery, met the American actor at the Tolstoy's, where both artists fell into an immediate and close friendship. Tolstoy's daughters interpreted for them as neither of the two men spoke the other's

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<sup>13</sup> It is necessary to mention that Aldridge success depended upon the political situation in Russia. The euphoria preceded abolition of serfdom was shadowed by the great wave of reaction in the following years. *Sovremennik* editor Chernyshevsky was arrested and sent to exile, and in 1866 the journal was suppressed. After 1862 Aldridge's two productions, *Macbeth* and *King Lear* were banned and, more adverse criticism was found in the press, and by 1864 he was no longer permitted to perform in St. Petersburg. Stoke, *Ira Aldridge*, 222.

<sup>14</sup> Allison Blakely, *Russia and the Negro: Blacks in Russian History and Thought* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1986), 41.

<sup>15</sup> See Arthur Alfonso Schomburg, List showing the theatres and plays in various European cities where Ira Aldridge, the African Roscius, acted during the years, 1824-1867 (New York). Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.

<sup>16</sup> Holte, *African Presence in early Europe*, 271. Stoke wrote that most of the productions were in English. While in the capital, Aldridge worked with German troupes, which resulted in productions in two languages. Stoke, *Ira Aldridge*, 224. But when he toured provincial towns he worked with Russian actors.

language.<sup>17</sup> Except for short engagements in other countries on the European continent, Aldridge stayed in Russia for nearly 10 years. He died in August, 1867 at the age of sixty, and was buried in Lodz, Poland.<sup>18</sup>

Although Aldridge was the most acclaimed black performer, Russia attracted hundreds of other talented but less well known African Americans performers.<sup>19</sup> One art form that brought many Americans to Europe in general and Russia in particular is syncopated music. It involved particular perceptions of culture, music, and America that emerged across Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century, and between the two world wars. It also involved a notion of modernity often associated with the United States, especially as European capitals experienced unprecedented urban development represented by a cosmopolitan openness, cultural diversity, and “anarchic energy,” or, as Baudelaire characterized it in his prophecy *Mouvements Brusques*, “paradigmatic gestures of modernist art and thought.” The history and popularity of African American entertainers in Europe illustrate how territories of “high” and “low” art were merging, establishing a new musical terrain in large cities, where the artistic environment in which jazz flourished had created its own cultural and social space.

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<sup>17</sup> Curtiss, “Some American Negroes in Russia in the Nineteenth Century,” 285.

<sup>18</sup> See Ibid, 272.

<sup>19</sup> One could find only episodic references to African American musicians playing in orchestras in Russia in the nineteenth century. That was the case with an African American violinist who played in the orchestra pit of a theatre as early as in 1840s. That unknown musician was seen in the theatre by John Maxwell, a secretary to an American Minister: “a well dressed negro,” who “was tuning up his fiddle in the concert with the various instruments of the Frenchmen, Italians, Germans, and others who formed a company of musicians. There was no mistaking the nationality of the sable performer.... His style and manner of bowing was Virginia all over. His head was inclined on the left shoulder, his eyes were half closed, and his body swung so lazily back and forth as to convince us at once that he was bred among the minstrels somewhere south of Mason’s and Dixon’s line.” See Curtiss, “Some American Negroes in Russia in the Nineteenth Century,” 280.

African American musicians and entertainers played a critical role in that process, and in so doing, they laid the groundwork for “the revolution in popular music and social dancing which swept the world in the “Jazz Age.”<sup>20</sup> The constantly changing social meanings of jazz outside the United States, as well as the introduction of jazz to other countries, was not without conflict and controversy. Jazz has become a significant element of American culture, in terms of cultural integration, intercultural communication, and even official diplomacy, especially when it was performed for diplomatic purposes later in the twentieth century. Various meanings of jazz “modified and distorted” attitudes towards the United States, as well as Americans.

Jazz in Russia often involved references to America. It served to depict, modify and distort the American cultural landscape in the souls of Russian listeners and various regimes and authorities sought to shape those meanings. Paradoxically, jazz synthesized the spread of American influence on one hand, while stimulating anti-Americanism on the other, expressing itself in all kinds of official and public criticism, rejection, hatred and denunciation of the United States, its government, policies, and culture.

Such contradictory interpretations of America through jazz, and the varieties of American imagery, became a matter of mythology in Russia. Information available to the public was largely impersonal, and imbued with tsarist government anti-Americanism and later the official ideology of the Soviet state.<sup>21</sup> For those who never traveled to the United States, they found that

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<sup>20</sup> Rainer E. Lotz, *Black People: Entertainers of African Descent in Europe, and Germany* (Bonn: Birgit Lotz Verlag, 1997), xv.

<sup>21</sup> A good example of a “vitriolic attack on popular culture” was an observation made by a Russian music critic, who came from the sophisticated environment of St. Petersburg conservatory, Ivan Narodny. He considered traditional classical music in America as “an artificial class art,” and claimed that the only music over there was “the awful ragtime concoctious performed in restaurants and at homes.” Ivan Narodny, “Music in America,” in *New York Times* (March, 7, 1915), C2. Narodny’s reflections originated many of the arguments used decades later by Soviet cultural ideologists and gatekeepers. One of the best examples of the Soviet politization of jazz was the infamous essay by a

their imagined and stereotyped America were largely challenged by those visitors from the New World. The jazz scenes in Moscow and St. Petersburg illustrate those clashes. They provide an illustration of the attempts of Americans in St. Petersburg to “patronize and marvel at Russian creativity in the arts in all of its manifestations, directing it to new horizons.”<sup>22</sup> The American colonies became the advocates of “modern cultural taste” in “Ragtime Petersburg” and other cities, with their “restaurants, nightclubs, opera and ballet and gambling casinos -- all, of course, with a Russian twist.”<sup>23</sup> They spread American popular culture.

Frederick Starr provided the only comprehensive study of jazz music in Russia. According to Starr, “the first records manufactured in Russia were produced in 1899 by a St Petersburg branch of Deutsche Grammophone A. G., a division of the Berliner Gramophone Company of Philadelphia,” the same producers who later carried ragtime music to Germany and France, and Russia, in 1910. Gramophone became so popular that they were brought into town and city bazaars “to attract the passing ear.” This is how Donald Lowrie, a YMCA secretary, describes a scene in a town marketplace in Samara in 1918. “Phonographs somehow seem to be foreign to the proper atmosphere for a bazaar, but these cheap ones (probably made in Germany) are very popular with our peasants.”<sup>24</sup> Hence, American music “was sweeping into the realm of

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novelist Maxim Gorky entitled *On the Music of the Gross*. The essay was translated in English by Marie Budberg and first appeared under the title “The Music of the Degenerate” in *Dial*, in December 1928. It had been cited over the following half a century whenever “it was necessary to settle scores with jazz or simply to contrast the Soviet Union with the degenerate West, “feeding Soviet xenophobia.” The translation is reprinted in Frederick S. Starr, *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union, 1917 – 1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 89 - 90.

<sup>22</sup> Norman E. Saul, “The American Colony in St. Petersburg” (paper presented at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Central Slavic Conference, Lawrence, KS, April 3-5, 2003).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Lowrie’s letter to his parents, Samara, 1 April 1918, University Archives, Liberal Arts and Sciences, Russian and East European Center, Donald A. Lowrie Papers, 1911, 1916 – 1929, 1946 – 1965, Correspondence, April – June 1918, Series No. 15/35/53, box. 1, The University of Illinois Archives (UIA), Champaign - Urbana, IL.

Nicholas the II.”<sup>25</sup> A major advocate of American jazz music in St. Petersburg was the ‘dean’ of the American colony, Fred Corse. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Vermont, with an MA from Columbia University, he first came to St. Petersburg to work for Singer, but in 1903 became head of New York Life operations there.<sup>26</sup> Norman Saul refers to Corse’s musical preferences in describing the American diplomatic corps in St. Petersburg, noting that “Harper continued orienting Francis, and Huntington, enjoying ragtime music at the Corse.”<sup>27</sup> Another venue for enjoying one-step and other fashionable American dances was the Green Plush Salon in the Hotel d’Europe, where the Meserves family entertained Russian and American dignitaries.

African American impresarios were attracted to the Aquarium Gardens Villa Rode Pavilion, where entertainers Coretta Alfred, Ollie Bourgoigne, Louis Douglas and others “blasted the terrain of cozy, comfortable and sentimental salon music.”<sup>28</sup> Frederick Thomas, in particular, became a success story in his new homeland, establishing and managing Moscow’s largest and most popular restaurant, the Aquarium. The commodious stage in the middle of this glass-covered pavilion featured vaudeville acts and American minstrel-style music. Thomas was originally from Chicago, where he served tables at the Auditorium Hotel restaurant during the Columbian Exposition, meeting a lot of visiting Russians. He moved to Europe, where he acquired his own restaurant in Berlin and married a native. Upon his arrival in St. Petersburg in 1890, he took the Russian name Fyodor, found employment as a valet, and eventually amassed a small fortune by engaging in various amusement enterprises throughout Russia. By the

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<sup>25</sup> See Frederick Starr, *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union 1917 – 1991* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1994), 23, 30.

<sup>26</sup> Saul, “The American Colony in St Petersburg.”

<sup>27</sup> Norman E. Saul, *War and Revolution: The United States and Russia 1917 – 1921* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 71.

<sup>28</sup> Vladimir Feiertag, *Djaz ot Leningrada do Peterburga* (St. Petersburg, KultInform Press, 1999), 18.

beginning of the Great War he owned a large amusement complex in Moscow called the Aquarium. Visiting Chicagoans in Moscow were astonished to find a prosperous, white mustached, diamond-bedecked man greeting them.<sup>29</sup> The couple had three children who attended one of the leading academies of Russia. “Thomas is rich and has other enterprises. When the real cold weather comes along he operates an enormous skating rink in connection with the restaurant.”<sup>30</sup> Another observer wrote that the entertainment in the Aquarium “consisted of perfectly respectable operetta theatre, an equally respectable open-air music hall, a definitely less respectable verandah, café chantant, and the inevitable chain of private ‘kabinets’ for gypsy-singing and private carouses.”<sup>31</sup> Blakely writes that Thomas became well acquainted with prominent African American visitors to Russia. For example, the restaurant proprietor became fast friends with boxing champion Jack Johnson, who came to Russia in 1914 “to stage exhibition and to tour the empire.” At the outbreak of the Great War, both Thomas and Johnson “became privy to high military councils” as military officers “set up temporarily headquarters at

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<sup>29</sup> Undated clipping [c. 1908], vol. 1, Lobdell Papers, Chicago HS. The clipping was sent to me by the curator.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> R. H. Bruce Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent* (New York, Putnam’s, 1933), 71, Blakely, *Russia and the Negro*, 40. The Gypsy music that the narrator refers to could be heard in similar places of entertainment in both capitals. In St Petersburg there was a famous restaurant with the same name Aquarium that provided very similar repertoire as did many surrounding enterprises. Thus, Charles Crane for example writes in one of the letters home about his experience in having a dinner on the Islands (very possibly in Aquarium) and listening to Gypsies: “... last evening we spent on the islands... the rest of us were very late. We heard the gypsies - tsigans – sing and had supper.” Charles R. Crane (CRC) to Cornelia S. Crane (CSC), St. Petersburg, 24 May 1900. Charles Richard Crane Papers. Box 1. RBML, Bakhmeteff Archive, hereafter cited as (BA), Columbia University, hereafter cited as (CU), New York. Lascelle de Basily Meserve also mentioned in her memoirs about Gypsy captivating melodies. She described it as the music that “held Russia beneath its spell, exciting the senses and filling the soul with nostalgia.” Lascelle de Basily Meserve, *Memoirs of a Lost World*, (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1975), 69. It is interesting that her experience “having a dinner in the islands” sounds almost identical to that of Crane.

Thomas' Aquarium complex."<sup>32</sup> When the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917, Thomas fled to Constantinople; there he established a successful Russian cabaret called "Stella," in which he employed for other Russian émigrés, providing free meals and drinks to those who asked. He went bankrupt in the late 1920s and died in a Turkish debtor's prison.<sup>33</sup>

African American entertainers, especially musicians and dancers who came to the imperial capital shaped the culture of Russian Americana. Much of the early work of African American musicians in Europe has been done by Rainer Lotz, in his *Black People: Entertainers of African Descent in Europe, and Germany*. The author analyzes the itineraries of various troupes and musicians who performed in Europe invited by foreign impresarios like Frederick Thomas<sup>34</sup> at the turn of the century.<sup>35</sup> In his work Lotz recognizes Moscow's and St. Petersburg's importance in the continental theatrical circuit.<sup>36</sup> I agree with Lotz, that these musicians shaped the American musical influence in Europe. Specifically, the African American presence in St Petersburg illustrates how African American idioms were spread in Europe and Russia particularly, and demonstrates this element of the African American contribution to European culture.

At the turn of the century numerous troupes from the United States visited Russia. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Fisk Jubilee Singers visited, and in 1902, Olga Burgoyne

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<sup>32</sup> Blakely, *Russia and the Negro*, 44. The author refers to Johnson autobiographical account *Jack Johnson is a Dandy* (New York: Chelsea House, 1969), especially 64-65.

<sup>33</sup> "Slukhi i Fakti" *Novoe Russkoye Slovo*, 19 October 1965. Cited in Blakely, *Russia and the Negro*, 40.

<sup>34</sup> Rainer Lotz mistakenly thought that Thomas was an impresario in Aquarium Gardens in St. Petersburg. See Rainer E. Lotz, *Black People*, 311. In reality Thomas' enterprise was in Moscow. The author (L.G.) double-checked both cities directories of the appropriate years and found out that Thomas operated in Moscow.

<sup>35</sup> Some of them remained in Europe and performed there through the mid-1930s.

<sup>36</sup> See Lotz, *Black People: Entertainers of African Descent in Europe, and Germany*.

performed the cakewalk there.<sup>37</sup> In 1904 and 1905 The Louisiana Amazon Guards, a vaudeville troupe of seven African American women, toured Russia. The group consisted of Burgoyne, Emma Harris, Virginia Shepherd, Fannie Smith, and Coretta Alfred. Lotz discovered that the vaudeville troupe of black artists had assembled in New York in 1901 with the help the German impresario Mrs. Paula Kohn-Wollner. It originally consisted of seven Black women, six of whom performed on stage while the seventh stood by as an understudy. The troupe “left Wollner because of her mismanagement, and toured for three years under Olga Burgoyne. Around 1901-1902, three members of the group -- Correy Alfred, Burgoyne, and Emma Harris -- made trips to Russia. In 1904 the whole troupe arrived in Moscow. The women performed at theatres in St. Petersburg and Moscow for a year, then disbanded in 1905 because of revolutionary turmoil.”<sup>38</sup> Most of the women eventually returned to the United States, but Harris and Burgoyne stayed in Russia for a many years. Alfred never returned to America, and died in Moscow in 1951. She is buried in Novodevichii Monastery cemetery.

Corretta Alfred<sup>39</sup> was born in New York City in the 1870s, where she sang in the choir of the Mount Olivet Baptist Church in Harlem.<sup>40</sup> After traveling throughout Europe with a troupe, and moving to Germany to pursue an operatic career in a short-lived Negro opera company, Alfred finally settled in Russia around 1913. She performed in such well-known venues as Aquarium Gardens, and Krestowsky Theatre in St. Petersburg under the name “Kristy Kreol,” an obvious play on the term for the ‘exotic’ ethnic mix from southern Louisiana, and the Caribbean

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<sup>37</sup> Alexander, Tarsaidze, *Czars and Presidents* (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1958), "New Museum Traces Black Stage History," *New York Times*, (9 July 1975).

<sup>38</sup> *Southern*, 17. Cited in Lotz, *Black People: Entertainers of African Descent in Europe, and Germany*, 193.

<sup>39</sup> Which also differs from the data provided by Allison Blakely. Blakely writes that Alfred was born in Mexico in 1894 to a family of poor farm workers, but was raised in New York. See Blakely, *Russia and the Negro*, 144.

<sup>40</sup> See Lotz, *Black People: Entertainers of African Descent in Europe, and Germany*, 187.

basin of early French, Spanish, African, and Native American ancestry. During the civil war she performed in a troupe for red army units on the southwestern front. After the war she furthered her musical training by studying under composer Michael Ippolitov-Ivanov and graduated from his Tchaikovsky studio in Moscow in 1923.<sup>41</sup> She entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory “where she studied with Elizabeth Zwanzinger, and later attended the Moscow Conservatory, where she studied with Maria Vladimirova.”<sup>42</sup> In 1920 Alfred married Boris Bonsowitch Tiz (Tietz), a professor, a pianist and an accomplished musician, whose family originated in Kharkov, which the couple visited often. In 1921 she attracted wide attention with her debut in the title role of Verdi’s *Aida* at the opera studio of Moscow’s conservatory. From 1924 she went on concert tours, often accompanied by her husband, performing art songs and spirituals.<sup>43</sup>

When the Russian Philharmonic Society concert agency ROSFIL decided to invite jazz bands to the USSR, they selected Louis Michell’s Jazz Kings and a negro operetta accompanied by Sam Wooding’s band Chocolate Kiddies. They and a quintet under the direction of trombonist Frank Withers toured Moscow and Leningrad in 1926. In Berlin they met their old friend Sidney Bechet, who agreed to come along to Moscow. When Louis Mitchell came to Russia, Coretta Alfred Tietz joined them in Moscow and performed with the ensemble from mid-February until mid-April at a cinema palace called the Malaya Dimitrovka. There were also some performances in the great hall of the Conservatory. Sidney Bechet remembered that he played with the Jazz Kings in Moscow, Kharkiv, Kiev, and Odessa, mainly in movie theatres and at private receptions. In mid-May the ensemble, including Alfred-Tietz, left for Kiev, where they had great success, playing for two weeks instead of one. In Odessa they played at the Letnii

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<sup>41</sup> See Blakely, *Russia and the Negro*, 144.

<sup>42</sup> *Southern*, 17. Cited in Lotz, *Black People: Entertainers of African Descent in Europe, and Germany*, 197.

<sup>43</sup> See *Ibid.*, 197.

Theatre.<sup>44</sup> It is uncertain whether or not Alfred-Tietz was part of Chocolate Kiddies, who performed in the Music Hall in Moscow and in the circus in Leningrad, where the stage was specially rebuilt for their show.<sup>45</sup>

During the second half of the 1920s, into the 1930s, Alfred-Tietz often performed with some of the leading Soviet jazz bands. In 1933 she recorded two spirituals, “Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child” and “Roll, Jordan, Roll.”<sup>46</sup> Coretta Alfred-Tietz also performed in Scandinavia and in other Eastern European countries. During WWII, she toured Russian army camps, performing spirituals for Russian troops.<sup>47</sup>

When Langston Hughes toured Russia in the 1930s, he visited with Coretta Alfred-Tietz, leaving the following account in his article *Negroes in Moscow*:

Coretta Arle-Tietz has been in Russia for more than twenty years. She thinks in Russian, and often English words come hard for her now. For a time she sang with Emma Harris’ trio, then she took up serious study of voice at St. Petersburg Conservatory, and later with Madame Vladimirova at the famous studio in Moscow founded by Ipolite-Ivanov. She has sung the role of Aida at the Kharkiv Opera, and has toured the whole Soviet Union in concert with great success. Her scrap books are full of critiques and testimonials from workers and Red Army soldiers. She has known many of the leading revolutionists and is a friend of Maxim Gorky's.<sup>48</sup>

The musician is buried near the famous Russian singer Leonid Sobinov, with a tombstone with the following simple inscription: “Coretta Genrichovna Arle-Tietz, 1894 – 1951.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> See for example Arkadi Kotlyarski, *Spasibo Dzhazu: vospominaniya starogo utyosovtza*, (Leningrad, 1990), 5.

<sup>46</sup> W. Simonenko, *Melodija Dzhazza* (Kiev: Muzychna Ukraina, 1972);

<sup>47</sup> *Southern*, 17. Cited in Lotz, *Black People: Entertainers of African Descent in Europe, and Germany*, 197.

<sup>48</sup> Langston Hughes, “Negroes in Moscow in a Land Where there is no Jim Crow,” *International Literature*, organ of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers, n 4, (1933):78.

While in Russia, Langston Hughes also met older African American resident Emma Harris. She was a “very dark skinned, talkative” sixty-year-old woman... affectionately dubbed the “mammy of Moscow.”<sup>50</sup> Hughes writes that when he met Emma Harris, she had been in Russia for more than thirty years and was well known by resident American workers and journalists. Born in 1870, she came from Augusta, Georgia, and earned a reputation for her apple pies, which were the least of her achievements. Hughes felt that her life story would make a colorful book. She came to Europe in 1901 as a member of the Louisiana Amazon Guards. After a tour of Germany, as a member of the Six Creole Belles, they performed in Russia and Poland with great acclaim. When the group disbanded, Harris formed a trio of her own, which sang in large cities for a number of years. Finally, stranded in Siberia, Harris taught English for a livelihood. Upon her return to Russia, she appeared as a concert soloist. During the early days of the war she managed a motion picture theatre in Kharkiv. Later she earned a pension in Moscow. During the civil war she served as a nurse for the revolutionary forces in the Ukraine. Then under Colonel Haskell she worked with the American Relief Association.<sup>51</sup> According to Rainer Lotz, Emma Harris toured widely in Russia as a concert singer for more than a decade, marrying her manager, Ivanovitch Mizikin in 1911. Not until the end of the 1930s did she return to the United States, where she settled in New York.<sup>52</sup> Olga Burgoyne, born in Chicago in 1885, was the third participant of The Louisiana Amazon Guards, that became an expatriate resident artist in St. Petersburg, over a span of decades. Between 1896 and 1898, she appeared in John W. Isham’s

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<sup>49</sup> Lotz communicated with Arnold Grudin, who apparently found the grave and sent the author the letter where he copied the inscription from Arle – Tietz tomb. See Lotz, *Black People: Entertainers of African Descent in Europe, and Germany*, 197.

<sup>50</sup> Blakely, *Russia and the Negro*, 95.

<sup>51</sup> See Hughes, “Negroes in Moscow,” 78.

<sup>52</sup> See Lotz, *Black People: Entertainers of African Descent in Europe, and Germany*, 196.

Oriental America as a member of a quartet, with Belle Davis, Dora Dean, and Mattie Wilkes. She began her stage career in 1901 with a group of young female singers and dancers who toured Europe for nine years.<sup>53</sup> In 1903 she appeared with the talented actor, comedian, and dancer Ernest Hogan, in the vaudeville production "Uncle Elph's Christmas."

Between 1910 and 1928 she toured internationally, with various shows in Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Hungary, France, Switzerland, Egypt, and Turkey. In American vaudeville circuits she was often billed as an "Algerian girl."<sup>54</sup> Henry Sampson points out that her specialty was the Brazilian dance, the snake dance, and the famous Spanish dance: "Her arms, hand motions, and the swing of her graceful body in doing those dances caused the theatrical critics to rate her the peer of any dancer in the world."<sup>55</sup> During one of her European tours, she became stranded with a company of dancers in Leipzig, Germany, which led her to St. Petersburg, where she pursued dramatic acting.<sup>56</sup> By her own account, black women were a novelty in Russia, so she had no trouble finding places to perform, such as the Christoph Gardens (Kristowsky), and the Aquarium and Tsarskoye Selo in St Petersburg. A German language theatrical paper, *Der Artist*, announced Burgoyne's performance in St. Petersburg, at the Apollo Theater, stressing her exotic qualities: "The Creole girl Bourgogne, an exotic beauty with sparkling eyes, a tint of soft bronze and dazzling white teeth, performs with a strange charm the favorite dance of her American home, the cake-walk."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Henry T. Sampson, *Blacks in Blackface* (Metuchen: Scarecrow, 1980), 347.

<sup>54</sup> See John O. Perpener, *African American Concert Dance: The Harlem Renaissance and Beyond* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 73.

<sup>55</sup> Sampson, *Blacks in Blackface*, 347.

<sup>56</sup> See *ibid.* Also in Tarsaidze, *Czars and Presidents*, 177, and "New Museum traces Black Stage History," *New York Times*, (9 July 1975).

<sup>57</sup> "A.B." in *Der Artist*, No. 1182, 6.10.07

After dancing for the tsar, Burgoyne received an imperial document of commendation for her performance. She found her life to be gay and full of youthful excitement, but worked hard, saved money, and put her entrepreneurial skills into to use by buying a lingerie shop in St Petersburg, which, at its peak, employed twenty-seven workers.<sup>58</sup>

Unfortunately her successful career in Russia came to an untimely end, while out of the country on vacation in Marienbad, Bohemia, at the beginning of the Great War, in August of 1914. The American consul in St Petersburg advised her not to return to Russia. She heeded the advice, abandoning her shop and all her possessions.

Summarizing his account, Perpener concludes that:

during her long career Burgoyne had distinguished herself as a truly multitalented woman with immense energy and an adventuresome spirit. She participated in most of the theatrical genres and preceded the advent of black concert dance. Having performed in many types of productions -- from minstrel shows, musicals, revues, and vaudevilles, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, through black and white musicals and dramas of the 1920s and 1930s to performances in Winfield's company -- Burgoyne traveled a career path that illustrated in microcosm black performers' transitions from one dance and theatre genre to another.<sup>59</sup>

Upon her return to the United States, she continued her career as an actress and dancer. Her shows included "Ollie Burgoyne and Her Darktown Strutters" (1925), which Burgoyne produced and appeared in, as a "classic" dancer, and also included another Chicago-born African American artist, Ida Forsyne, as a "Russian" dancer.

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<sup>58</sup> See Perpener, *African American Concert Dance*, 74.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

Forsyne was especially famous in vaudeville for her unique style of Russian dancing. Born in 1883, she started dancing at the age of ten in front of a candy store, for pennies. She learned dance steps from Willie Mason, who played a piano in the saloon below Forsyne and her mother's apartment, and by watching shows such as "The South Before the War" and "Coontown's 400," rehearsed at the Alhambra Theatre.<sup>60</sup>

While still a fourteen-year-old girl, Ida Forsyne ran away from home with the tap-show "The Black Bostonian," a popular musical comedies of the early twentieth century. She sang "My Hannah Lady" and did buck dances. In 1904 she began to dance solo with Marion Cook's The Southerners at the Roof Garden in New York City. According to Henry Sampson, it was an integrated show, and one of the very few in that era where Black and white performers worked on the same stage. The following year Forsyne went abroad with the Tennessee Students, a troupe of seventeen performers, most of whom played string instruments and sang. Billed as "Abbie Mitchell and Her Coloured Students," the show opened at the Palace Theatre in London in 1906, where it was "a smash hit."<sup>61</sup> Ida was billed as "Topsey, the famous Negro Dancer."<sup>62</sup>

Forsyne did not return home with the troupe, but remained in Europe for the next five years. She performed at the Moulin Rouge in Paris and was booked throughout England. She first learned Russian-style dancing during a year's stay in St. Petersburg, and later appeared for a triumphant engagement in Moscow.<sup>63</sup>

Forsyne returned to the United States, where in the late 1920s she worked with Bessie Smith's show, doing the chorus and a Russian dance specialty. In 1935 she appeared in Black

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<sup>60</sup> Sampson, *Blacks in Blackface*, 364.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> The name is allusive to the character from Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, gaining world wide popularity at the time as a book and as the most toured play.

<sup>63</sup> Sampson, *Blacks in Blackface*, 364.

film pioneer Oscar Micheaux's "The Underworld," which was one of her last jobs in show business.<sup>64</sup>

There was also Edgar Jones, a musical clown, "the unsung black American" for whom biographical data is not available.<sup>65</sup> Lotz points out that although Jones must have been an exceptionally gifted performer, not even a photograph of him is known to exist. Only from the meager German resources at Lotz's disposal could the author deduce that Jones was "a full-blooded entertainer and comedian." According to Lotz's findings, Jones not only performed in three different languages, but was also an acrobat, a pantomimist, a dancer, and a multi-instrumentalist.<sup>66</sup> Lotz published the chronology of Jones' travels and performances as an attempt to reconstruct the entertainer's activities in Europe, from the time he arrived in Scandinavia around 1892, to his eastward travel across Siberia, in 1906. An itinerary presented by Lotz shows Jones performing in Riga, then part of Russia, in May and June, 1899, and in Russia proper after May, 1900. In June he performed at the Aquarium Gardens in St. Petersburg, where he returned in September 1901. Lotz's last entry places Jones performing at Ekaterinoslav, in Siberia, after which the comedian disappears from recorded history.<sup>67</sup>

While the narrative of the career of Edgar Jones disappears in trackless Siberia, his compatriots in European Russia, especially in the capital, enjoyed the latest European entertainments and conveniences.<sup>68</sup> Many American were engaged with the highest circles of Russian society and its accompanying "luxury" entertainment. One of the first acts of George

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Lotz, *Black People: Entertainers of African Descent in Europe, and Germany*, 152.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> J. Butler Wright, *Witness to Revolution: The Russian Revolution Diary and Letters of Butler Wright*, ed. by William Thomas Allison. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2002), xvii.

von Lengerke Meyer, sent to St Petersburg in 1905 as the American ambassador to Russia, was to purchase polo ponies.<sup>69</sup> Later, the staff of American embassy and other members of the American colony would ride to the city outskirts to play golf. J. Butler Wright mentions these rides in his diaries: “Spring has suddenly turned into summer overnight -- and the trees are shooting froth green faster than any foliage I ever saw. It tempted the ambassador and myself to the country to play golf in the afternoon....”<sup>70</sup> Harper Barnes also describes the ambassador as playing golf on Sundays and mentions another companion, Frederick M. Corse, the head of New York Life Insurance in St Petersburg.<sup>71</sup> Barnes calls the place “the outskirts of the city” and it is not exactly clear exactly where the Americans were playing golf. It’s likely that they may have gone to Krestovskii Ostrov (Island), a place as popular with the citizens of St Petersburg as Coney Island was to New Yorkers. The Krestovski Island facility was patterned on the famous Brooklyn amusement park, with a roller coaster that imitated New York’s, and is still termed the Amerikanskiye Gorki (American Hills) in Russia. A street not far from Krestovski Sad (Park) became Amerikanskaya (American street), which was renamed in the 1950s.<sup>72</sup>

Other entertainment, such as French farces, among others, attracted the young National City Bank of New York clerks, who developed a taste for European popular genres. “I’ve always

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<sup>69</sup> Norman E. Saul, *Concord and Conflict: The United States and Russia. 1867-1914* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1996), 430.

<sup>70</sup> See Wright, *Witness to Revolution*, 86.

<sup>71</sup> See Harper Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano. The Life and Times of David Rowland Francis*, (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, the Francis Press, 2001), 207.

<sup>72</sup> American Street was not the only street name associated with another nation: there is English Embankment, Swedish Alley, etc. Most of these streets had been renamed by the Soviet authorities but their historic names were returned in the 1990s. However the city still has not got its American Street back.

known that such farces were anything but moral, but the reality presented in the course of this one far surpassed any conception my mundane imagination could summon....”<sup>73</sup>

Russian sojourns would have been incomplete without getting out on the ice. An account of this traditional Russian form of exercise and entertainment that Americans in St. Petersburg enjoyed immensely, began:

The other evening, all of us feeling energetic, we took our skates and headed to a skating rink on one of the canals. They lay them out on the larger canals every winter, huge affairs with warm dressing rooms, buffet lunches, lounging rooms, and of course the rink itself fitted with slides, tracks for the fast skaters, a grand stand, and an orchestra. The ice is brilliantly lighted... and presents a gay scene, even from the street. None of us were any match for the skaters we found there. Even the girls made our efforts look feeble, and we soon grew tired and withdrew to watch the fancy skaters cutting figures, and the couples dancing to the music.<sup>74</sup>

Perry S Heath, who travelled to St. Petersburg in the late 1880s, found his winters there most active:

St. Petersburg is regarded a dull place in summer time. It is the winter that offers all the sports and amusements, and attracts the large crowds. People from all parts of Europe flock here to engage in the sleighing carnivals and holiday festivities, the balls and parties, and theatrical entertainments, which have worn celebrity throughout the

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<sup>73</sup> Leighton W. Rogers to Roger Brown, and friends. 23 November, 1916, Petrograd, Russia. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers. Box 1, folder 2, Manuscript Division, hereafter cited as (MD), Library of Congress, hereafter cited as (LC), Washington, DC.

<sup>74</sup> Leighton W. Rogers, “Diary,” 23 December, 1916, Petrograd, Russia. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers. Box 1, folder 3, MD, LC. Rogers could not help incorporating his excitement with Russian ice skating in his novel. There is a whole chapter in *Wine of Fury* devoted to that joyful amusement. See chapter X, of part I. Rogers, *Wine of Fury* (New York, London: Alfred Knopf, 1924).

world.<sup>75</sup>

Sleighting was no less popular amusement among American visitors and residents alike. Heath, for example, could not help marveling at the beautiful sleighs drawn by stately and handsome horses “long, graceful blacks, with immense manes and flowing tails which sweep the ground, all perfectly clean and glossy.”<sup>76</sup>

Other cultural enterprises included fine Russian opera. It “had revealed to him [Rogers] a world of beauty of which therefore he had known little,”<sup>77</sup> and of which he left an eloquent account:

...the four opera houses in the city in operation, there is a bewildered choice for the music lover... Here are performances given by Shaliapine,<sup>78</sup> called the greatest singing actor in the world; Smirnoff, the famous tenor, and Madam Lipkowskaya the soprano, none of whom I have ever heard... the performances themselves are put on with more care than is exercised at home; all parts are consigned to the hands of good singers who are in addition good actors, and this combined with effective scenery, splendid orchestration, and fiery loading, gives a mass effect of unity and realism which is decidedly lacking at home... acting ability and beauty, possessed of no mean voice in addition. We have to learn from them;<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Perry S. Heath, *A Hoosier in Russia: The Only White Tsar – His Imperialism, Country, and People* (New York: The Lorbom publishing company, 1888), 28.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 65.

<sup>77</sup> Rogers, *Wine of Fury*, 77.

<sup>78</sup> Almost all American visitors tried to see and hear Chaliapin. In addition to Rogers’ memoir, de Basily’s Meserve also adored with the Russian Opera: “We attended performances of Glinka’s famous opera, *A Life for the Tsar*, also Chaikovsky’s *Eugene Onegin*, a gem of Russian music based on Pushkin’s famous poem. *Boris Godunov* was also given, with Chaliapin resplended in the title role, and many others.” de Basily Meserve, *Memoirs of a Lost World*, 61.

<sup>79</sup> Leighton W. Rogers, “Diary,” 23 December 1916, Petrograd, Russia. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers. Box 1, folder 3, MD, LC.

This early fascination with the Russian theatre stayed with Rogers for the rest of his life. When he returned decades later for the Bell Aircraft Corporation of Buffalo and Niagara Falls, to supervise the delivery of Aircobra P-39 fighters to Russia under lend-lease, during the Second World War, he didn't miss the opportunity to enjoy Russian opera, ballet, and even drama, he recalls, in his unpublished "Curtain Up in Moscow: A Report on the Soviet Russian Theatre."<sup>80</sup>

Opera and choir music became favorites for many of the members of the American colony, as they attended choirs at the city's churches and cathedrals. Charles Crane recollects how he and a Doctor Harper went to Kazan Cathedral to a special service in honor of the founders of the Cyrillic alphabet. Crane writes that: "the service was the most beautiful one, almost entirely choral and the regular choir was assisted by a number of other choirs and especially by a choir of two thousand children, quite filling up the body of the church."<sup>81</sup>

In almost every letter home from St. Petersburg, Charles Crane describes their visits to the opera or choir concerts:

Prince Volkonski obtained for us a special service of the Imperial Choir... the highest point they had touched in music. I took down the different songs as they were sung and the director said he would go with me to buy them and select some others. We heard the opera of Eugen Onegin and also saw the most wonderful ballet with music by Tchaikovsky, and Stchilkainchik, in the Nutcracker.<sup>82</sup>

Ballet also became a favorite way for Americans to enjoy "a high degree of art." It was, according to Lascelle de Basily Meserve, whose mother had a box at the Mariinsky, "an occasion

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<sup>80</sup> Leighton W. Rogers, "Curtain Up: A Report on the Soviet Russian Theatre." New York City, Papers of Leighton W. Rogers. Box 3, folder 6, MD, LC.

<sup>81</sup> CRC to CSC, St. Petersburg, 24 May 1900. Charles Richard Crane Papers. Box 1. RBML, BA, CU.

<sup>82</sup> CRC to CSC, St. Petersburg, 16 May 1900. Charles Richard Crane Papers. Box 1. RBML, BA, CU.

for elegant St. Petersburg society to show itself. Loges and stalls were filled. Many fauteuils were reserved for a lifetime by the same person and passed as heirlooms from father to son. Smart officers in uniform and lovely Russian ladies made a brilliant spectacle in the famous Mariinsky Theatre with its pale blue draperies.”<sup>83</sup> De Basily added that the ballets she saw were “executed with such perfection of technique and stage setting that the performances were an enchantment.” She praised such Russian ballerinas as “ethereal Madam Karsavina” and “Madam Kshessinskaya” whom she called a remarkable artist. “This high expression of art transported one into another world.”<sup>84</sup> Among other Americans who had purchased a season box in Mariinsky was American Ambassador David Francis, who often enjoyed “the finest ballet” in the company of Minister of Finance P.L. Bark, the Minister’s wife, and “a very pretty young woman, the daughter of National City Bank’s Meserve.”<sup>85</sup>

Although the winter was the high season for every possible genre in St. Petersburg, the summer also offered delights. American visitors frequented the open air performances in the Summer Garden, which became one of their favorite places in the city:

...there I witness extraordinary performances nightly.... The first night that I attended the summer Garden I was thrilled with a peculiar sensation. We entered at a wide gate in a high wall, where we purchased and gave up tickets. On the inside was an open park, covering probably two acres. In the center of it was a canopy under which the nobility and aristocracy of the city drank various beverages and partook of luncheon. It was such a scene as one witnesses in some of the highest-class gardens in Berlin and other German cities.

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<sup>83</sup> de Basily Meserve, *Memoirs of a Lost World*, 56.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>85</sup> David Francis to Jane Francis, 26 September 1916. Cited in Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 207.

At about ten o'clock, when darkness had come on, the band called the multitude from the Garden into the adjoining open space, for which extra tickets were required. We entered what appeared to be a public square, in which were wooden seats. In front of this was the side of an enormous theatre. The glaring lamps from the garden shed a reflective light upon the space we now occupied. Finally the side of the theatre seemed to move away. It was a curtain rising and a stage was disclosed before us. This was the Summer Theatre. Nothing but the canopy of Heaven was over our heads. We sat there in the open air and witnessed a tragedy, a comedy, and an opera....<sup>86</sup>

What became of the enriched cultural life of revolutionary days? According to a number of accounts, Petrograd, even with "food for three days was not tragic or sad." As Louise Bryant wrote, "it would have upset New York completely, especially if it happened as it did in Petrograd that while the street cars were stopped, lights and water also were turned off and it was almost impossible to get fuel to keep warm." That was not the case in the Russian capital, however.

Theatres somehow managed to run two or three times a week. Nevsky after midnight was as amusing and interesting as Fifth Avenue in the afternoon. The cafes had nothing to serve but weak tea and sandwiches but they were always full. A wide range of costumes made the picture infinitely more interesting.<sup>87</sup>

Like many of her predecessors Bryant enjoyed Russian ballet, recollecting how she attended a performance of Karsavina, "the most beautiful dancer in the world." The American journalist recollects that in those "meager days" the ballerina danced not for a "once glittering and exclusive little band of nobles," but for a "marvelous audience.., an audience in rags; an

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<sup>86</sup> Heath, *A Hoosier in Russia*, 29.

<sup>87</sup> Louise Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia* (New York: Arno Press & New York Times, 1970), 43.

audience that had gone without bread to buy the cheap little tickets,” for that “tired, undernourished crowd.”<sup>88</sup>

When she came on it was as hushed as death. And how she danced and how they followed her! Russians know dancing as the Italians know their operas; every little beautiful trick they appreciate to the utmost. Bravo! Bravo! roared ten thousand throats. And when she had finished they could not let her go -- again and again and again she had to come back until she was wilted like a tired butterfly. Twenty, thirty times she returned, bowing, smiling, pirouetting, until we lost count....<sup>89</sup>

The American creator of modern dance, Isadora Duncan, performed in St. Petersburg at the turn of the century, where she revealed “the discipline that went into her dancing, her poetry, her nobility, the charm that disarmed those shocked by her defiance of convention, and her reflections concerning herself as artist and woman.”<sup>90</sup> According to a biographer, Francis Steegmuller, Duncan, who influenced the Russian ballet, electrified St. Petersburg, and by 1904, the Isadora cult was fervent. Steegmuller refers to Duncan’s conductor, Martin Shaw, who noted that “In St. Petersburg, Berlin, Paris, Vienna, Munich, Copenhagen, Stockholm, [and] Amsterdam, her name was a household word even among the ordinary public.”<sup>91</sup> Duncan found herself in St Petersburg, the incontestable capital of Russian classical ballet, on Christmas Day of 1904. She stayed at the Grand Hotel d’Europe, which was popular with Americans. Advertisements announcing her performance for the benefit of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, under the stewardship of Grand Duchess Olga, in the Hall of the Nobles

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<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>90</sup> Francis Steegmuller, ed., *“Your Isadora:” the Love Story of Isadora Duncan and Gordon Craig Told Through letters and Diaries Never Before Published* (New York: Random House & the New York Public Library, 1974).

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

(Dvoryanskoye Sobranye), appeared before her arrival. The original single evening had been quickly sold out and a second performance added. The performance was planned to be the Society's main annual event to raise "a major part of the funds which the Society needs for achieving its humane purpose -- namely, to rescue unfortunate children from the hands of their tormentors, of whom there are alas so many; to educate them, to house and feed them, etc."<sup>92</sup> The invitation promised to Duncan "a favorable milieu for a debut" in the Russian capital, "the most prestigious concert hall, the most select audience of St Petersburg, the virtually certain presence of the Imperial Family, etc." Even though the performance was described as a charitable affair, the author of the invitation stressed that this did not "in the least exclude a financial consideration" and asked the ballerina to state her terms.<sup>93</sup>

Duncan's first interview in Russia by Berlin correspondent Maurice Girschman appeared in the *St Petersburg Theatre Journal* in November, 1904. The author introduces "the little American" to the St Petersburg public, explaining that the celebrated barefoot American dancer, who had settled permanently in Berlin, was intent upon publicizing her ideas about dance, against a backdrop of what she termed as a renaissance of ancient classical tragedy.<sup>94</sup> The dancer's intentions, according to Girschman, were to illustrate in her work the internal function of the composer's creative process, to achieve a purer and nobler art form.<sup>95</sup>

Duncan's two performances in St Petersburg at the end of 1904, 'an *all-Chopin*' program, and *Dance Idylls*, were a tremendous success. A review of her first performance in *The St Petersburg Theatre Journal* reported a half-naked girl that made her appearance in a light,

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<sup>92</sup> Steegmuller is citing the actual invitation in his book. *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, 40.

semitransparent Greek tunic, giving full freedom to her movements and not concealing the form of her body.<sup>96</sup> Dancing to the music of Chopin, “she danced her soul, as she understood the soul of Chopin.”<sup>97</sup> Another reviewer, the well-known St Petersburg theatre critic Nikolai Shebuyev wrote in *Peterburgskaya Gazeta* on December 14<sup>th</sup>:

Yesterday all fashionable Petersburg assembled in the Hall of the Nobles, prepared to see La Duncan dance.... The sound of Chopin’s Mazurka (B-major, op. 7, no.1) made one’s nerves tingle, and onto the stage there entered a sylph.... A bit of pink-blue gauze mistily enveloped her slender waist, and veiled yet revealed her bare feet.... Her face is an exotic... and on it, with equal expressiveness, joy, sorrow, a tear, a smile, are fleetingly born and quickly die.... She emerged and swam like Undine, swaying in time with the beat, waving her hands with the beat, smiling, diving with the beat – and suddenly she flew up like a bird and soared carefree, joyful, chirping soundlessly - no: tunefully rather - for her dancing merged into a single chord with Chopin’s Mazurka... and then she floated down ain from the sky touched the cold surface of the river – shuddered – and swam again, green and graceful, proud of her cold, nymphlike beauty....<sup>98</sup>

The American dancer’s performance was referred to as a “sensational, epoch-making event.” Of Duncan’s first performances in Russia, Diaghilev recalled that “Isadora gave the classical ballet of Imperial Russia a shock from which it could never recover....”<sup>99</sup>

Groundbreaking Russian choreographer and dancer Michael Fokine was, according to Diaghilev’s memoirs, “crazy about her, and Duncan’s influence on him was the initial basic of

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<sup>96</sup> Cited in Laura Englestein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 410.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 411.

<sup>98</sup> Nikolai Georgievich Shebuyev, *Peterburgskaya Gazeta* (14 December, 1904).

<sup>99</sup> Cited in Steegmuller, “*Your Isadora*,” 40.

his entire creation....” Other celebrities of the Russian stage and artistic circles, such as Matilda Kshesinskaya, a favorite of tsar Nicholas II and Alexander Benoi, the painter and designer of ballet sets and costumes, all write of those momentous evenings in their memoirs.<sup>100</sup>

Duncan returned to Russia in 1905 in the midst of the revolution, then again in 1907 and 1908. She met with the renowned Moscow Art Theatre director Sanislavsky, whom she called “big manager.” In February, 1908, in a letter to British actor Gordon Craig, from St Petersburg, she referred to Stanislavsky as “the regisseur of the Theatre” and a “wonderful man..., really beautiful and great.”<sup>101</sup>

The emerging shift in artistic fashion during the first decade of the twentieth century became a favorable environment for Duncan’s attempts to challenge mainstream formal styles with her revolutionary improvisational dance. Avant-garde critics praised her for “resurrecting the creative side of the dance” and called her a Bacchante who “abandoned herself to love, [whose] wild love intoxicates.” Every movement of her body was “an incarnation of a spiritual act,” “sinless and pure,” and “a victory of light over darkness.”<sup>102</sup> Steegmuller emphasizes that Duncan’s eruption in St. Petersburg “had touched on the issue of greatest pertinence to members of the St. Petersburg dance world,” especially because it was there that the mainstream of the St. Petersburg ballet school was originated and maintained, within the premises of the Imperial School of the Ballet, a state institution under the patronage of the tsar himself. But if the ballet was St. Petersburg’s tradition, watchfully guarded by cultural gatekeepers, and passionately worshipped by many American visitors and long-time residents of the capital, at the time of

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<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.* 41.

<sup>101</sup> See the letter dated January or February, 1908, Petersburg, Grand Hotel Europe, compiled in “*Your Isadora*,” by Francis Steegmuller, “*Your Isadora*,” 286.

<sup>102</sup> Laura Engelstein compiles the opinions from the avant-garde journal *Vesy* (1908). See Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, 411.

Duncan's appearance, it was already under the scrutiny of such reformers as Diaghilev and Benois, who noticed that the Russian ballet had fallen into a state of "dreamy lassitude," and by Mikael Fokin, who just before Duncan's arrival, "when visualizing the unachieved ballet *Daphnis and Chloe*, studied sculptures and bas-reliefs of ancient Greece and was ready to use this style of *plastique* in his production."<sup>103</sup>

The reactions to Duncan's revolutionary philosophy of dance were mixed, and included praise, astonishment, and outrage. Responding to her critics,<sup>104</sup> advocates for her art argued that her approach to the means of expression, as well as her themes and tone "had close affinities with the world of the sophisticated avant-garde." They rejected accusations that her art was not sophisticated, but rather represented primitive boulevard entertainment, reasoning that "the boulevard differed from the gutter precisely in its close association with higher cultural forms."<sup>105</sup> As Engelstein notes in *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia*, the overtly erotic element in her art did nothing to dampen her success. Duncan's appearance on stage spread psychological contagion among young girls everywhere she performed. They all wanted to go barefoot.<sup>106</sup> Duncan's ability to ignite physical excitement inherent in the rhythms of ancient Hellas, her ability to penetrate the unique relationship of an ancient hero with the universe that represented deified nature, and finally her ability to set the dancing body on fire and fill it with the ardour of pagan flames, inspired Russian philosopher

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<sup>103</sup> Natalia Rozlavleva, *Era of the Russian Ballet* (London: Gollancz, 1966), 76-77.

<sup>104</sup> See for example articles in *Slovo* from 15- 18 December in which Isadora was attacked for "sacrilegious" reinterpretation of the music of old masters by a dancer. For more detailed reference to the numerous review and articles in St Petersburg and Moscow newspapers see Steegmuller, "*Your Isadora*," 377.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 410.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

Vasilii Rozanov to dedicate to the American artist a number of articles that appeared to be as heated, sincere, and passionate as her dances.<sup>107</sup>

Like so many compatriots, Duncan became sympathetic to the revolutionary movement in Russia, and in 1917, when she learned about the abdication of Nikolas II, she declared that “all lovers of freedom were filled with hopeful joy.” That night she danced the “Marseillaise” and performed with “a fierce joy.”<sup>108</sup> After the Bolshevik revolution she “veered further to the left” and in 1921, upon an invitation from the new commissar for education and culture, “embarked on a journey to the ‘promised land.’”<sup>109</sup> This time, however, her destination was not sophisticated and cosmopolitan St. Petersburg, but rather its old rival Moscow, still adjusting to its role as the capital of the new state. In Moscow she established a school with resident children.<sup>110</sup> Duncan simultaneously developed romantic relations with Sergei Esenin, a tragic imaginalist poet, dissolute and disenchanted by the revolution, which influenced Duncan’s perspective, as her career in Soviet Russia faltered. Running out of money, Duncan accepted an offer from an acclaimed Ukrainian-born impresario Sol Hurok for a series of performances in the United States in 1922. The next year she returned to “the land of vodka and black bread,” but

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<sup>107</sup> See for example the collection of Rozanov’s writings *Sredi khudozhnikov* (St Petersburg, 1914), where three out of five articles dedicated to Duncan were published. Duncan visited the philosopher during her visit to Russia in 1912. To see the analysis of Rozanov’s philosophical contemplation on Duncan creative activity see Pavel Rudnev, *Teatral’nye vzgl’iady Vasiliia Rozanova* (Moskva: Agraf, 2003), 52-73.

<sup>108</sup> Isadora Duncan, *My Life* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927), 239, 334.

<sup>109</sup> Norman E. Saul, *Friends or Foes? The United States and Soviet Russia, 1921 – 1941* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 139.

<sup>110</sup> Vasilii Rozanov, continued to praise the dancer, not only for her liberating arts, but also for her piety and affection the example of which he saw in her effort to reveal her skills to the Russian youth. See Rudnev, *Teatral’nye vzgl’iady Vasiliia Rozanova* 357.

in May, 1924, after a serious auto accident near Leningrad, she left Russia to save her remaining property in France and seek additional resources from friends.<sup>111</sup>

St. Petersburg itself had now come to serve as one vast venue for all kinds of cultural experiences enjoyed and appreciated by Americans. Theatres, opera houses, and stages, as well as public gardens, golf courses and skating rinks were not the only places where Americans were embraced by Russian culture. St Petersburg's streets, squares, public buildings, parks and embankments, the whole city, would offer an opportunity for visitors to become acquainted with the city's and Russia's culture, customs, mores and manners. Thus, Louisa Bryant, for example, would describe visiting the 'flea' market, where one might buy "old Bokharas, ikons of wood, brass and iron, amber, carved silver chains, old enamel, cameos, tapestries, brocades, peasant embroideries, jewel-studded silver bracelets, heavy silver earrings and silver rings set with agates, old lusters, Bristol glass, Chinese porcelains, furs and great trays of precious and semi-precious stones." Bryant wrote that the market was known as the "Thieves' Market, because most of the things that are for sale there are stolen goods." Americans in Petrograd did not miss an opportunity to acquire antique treasures and were frequent visitors to the market, in effect, as with travelers in general, attempting to acquire and assimilate a piece of Russian culture itself.

Bryant recollects her trip there with an American consul, and English playwright Somerset Maugham.<sup>112</sup>

In conclusion it is important to note that at the end of the nineteenth century St. Petersburg was routinely added to itineraries of Americans touring Europe with artistic and entertainment programs. Among others there were such actors as Ira Aldgridge, the first

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<sup>111</sup> Saul, *Friends or Foes?*, 142.

<sup>112</sup> Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia*, 160. She claims that the Consul picked a pipe owned by Peter the Great and Maugham "picked up two marvelous bead purses." *Ibid.*

American tragedian and comedian who acclaimed fame from European critics and public and Isadora Duncan, who defied conventional ballet with her revolutionary dancing improvisations. There were also stage performers and musicians, who conquered the capital with their “shocking anti-academic approach, and intriguing rhythmical patterns,” blasting the terrain of cozy, comfortable and sentimental salons, sublime and imposing philharmonics and somber other-worldly cathedrals. Similar to other European capitals, St. Petersburg, more than any other place in Russia, reflected its citizens’ openness to the variety and complexity of music forms. As illustrated in this chapter, by the beginning of the twentieth century many American performers realized European “dissatisfaction with prevailing forms of artistic expression, and with the state of culture in general, intensified into an urgent restlessness and desire for change.”<sup>113</sup> In responding to impulses of Europeans to end the hegemony of art that was exclusively elitist by virtue of its standards and conventions, Americans saw an opportunity to flee “the artistic snobbery” raving back in the United States, where, ironically, the cultural gatekeepers were expecting Europe to provide the “*sine qua non* for true culture.”<sup>114</sup>

Among those Americans, who, according to a Russian music critic Ivan Narodny, comprised “a certain musically interested class,” were quite a few members of the American colony. However, Narodny’s assumption that they were interested in attending music events only as social functions, perceived Russian musical tradition as an expensive luxury, was not accurately descriptive of the colonists. First of all, as discussed in the chapter, St. Petersburg offered a wide range of musical genres to be enjoyed by Russians and foreigners alike. Even if, at first, some Americans did attend the Russian opera or ballet out of curiosity or obligation, the

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<sup>113</sup> Harold B. Segel, *Turn-of-the-Century Cabaret. Paris, Barcelona, Berlin, Munich, Vienna, Cracow, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Zurich* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), xv.

<sup>114</sup> Lawrence W. Levine, “Jazz and American Culture” in *Journal of American Folklore*, 102, (1989), 10.

emotionally tense and rich symphonic overtones of the musical performances would soon transform the sense of conventional duty and social necessity into a true passion that would remain with them for the rest of their lives, as observed by Roger Leighton and Perry S. Heath. Deep appreciation, rather than proof of status, would motivate Charles Crane and Isabel Hapgood to introduce Russian music, especially church choir and liturgical music to the United States. They arranged respective performances and dedicated serious research and financial investments to the publication of theoretical analysis of the Russian musical tradition and the release of selected scores.

Lastly, some American tastes and preferences would accept both, classical traditions and deep-rooted folk heritage. While in rapture to the splendid opera and spectacular ballet, some, such as Crane and the Meserves, allowed captivating Gypsy melodies to excite their senses, reveal their sensibilities, and to “fill the soul with nostalgia” at the same time. Most importantly, that cross-pollination in the culturally-electricifying city, would “level” the “ranks,” referenced to in Narodny’s criticism, and “abolish race barriers, till all present became as one heart.”<sup>115</sup>

According to Narodny, some Americans who would be labeled as “refined,” did not shy away from challenging social and moral ‘obligations’ to explore innovative syncopated rhythms in their innovative Art Nouveau dwellings, as in case of Frederick Corse, or to tickle the vanity of respectful bourgeois families of the capital with the tunes and moves of one-step or tango – an effort undertaken by Lascelle Meserve to introduce young Russians to fashionable American salon dances.

For those who wished to go even further, revolutionary Petrograd allowed for the vigorous rejection of cultural heritage as an oppressive and enslaving force, bearing witness to

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<sup>115</sup> de Basily Meserve, *Memoirs of a Lost World*, 69.

how social standards and conventions were falling apart, and how cultural idioms were becoming meaningless, with bits and pieces of the past greatness bargained away in a flea market...

## CHAPTER VI

### Study Abroad

#### *American Students and Scholars in Russia*

This chapter discusses the increasing impact of Russian culture and scholarship in the United States, especially in the late nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. It chronicles and analyzes the experience of those American expatriates who believed, similar to Edward Everett, a scholar in the humanities, governor of Massachusetts, and president of Harvard, that going abroad to study would prepare them for “greater usefulness and happiness” upon their return to the United States.<sup>1</sup> As a European American who had never felt completely independent of the Old World either culturally or intellectually, he was the first American to be awarded a PhD, from the University of Gottingen in Germany in 1817. Although the most common destinations for pursuing advanced studies were England and France, a yearning for the “far-off Northern light” soon caused “a fundamental shift away from American parochialism”<sup>2</sup> regarding Russia. Thus, with the growing interest in Russian language, religion, and culture, as well as a fascination with the cosmopolitan nature of the Russian capital, which was a major European educational center, there emerged another category of Americans visiting St Petersburg, who came to master the language and study Russian literature, art, music, science, and politics. The research reveals some stories of those travelers who considered visiting Russia in order to master the language and study in depth Russian literature, art, music, science, and politics.

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<sup>1</sup>George S. Hillard, *Life, Letters, and Journals of George Ticknor* (Boston: 1876), I, 24.

<sup>2</sup>Norman E. Saul’s *Distant Friends. The United States and Russia, 1763 – 1867* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991), 377.

Norman Saul identifies William David Lewis as the first American student of the Russian language in St Petersburg.<sup>3</sup> Lewis came to Russia in the summer of 1814, when “American shipping was absent from the Baltic and the business was slow.” His brother, who owned an export-import company in St Petersburg, encouraged William to learn Russian and German “for the purpose of facilitating transactions with local and foreign merchants.” Thus Lewis began his studies under Professor Miltendorf at a gymnasium in St. Petersburg, continuing in Moscow and Tver’, perfecting and mastering the Russian language.<sup>4</sup> Most likely Lewis had “the best knowledge acquired by any American up to that time.” His ability to negotiate business with Russian merchants in their own language as well as to gather more and better information, and analyze the Russian market more effectively than other Americans “may have been the reason for the rapid rise of John D. Lewis and company as one of the three largest import-export firms in St Petersburg, a position it held into the 1830s.”<sup>5</sup> His command of Russian was so good that he composed poetry. Among other verses is a poem entitled “Description of a Petersburg Beauty.” Though it has never been published, it clearly reflected his “continuing literary ambition.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See for example articles by Norman Saul “A Russian Yankee Doodle” published in *Slavic Review* 33 (March 1974), or “America’s First Student of Russian: William David Lewis of Philadelphia” in *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* xcvi, (October, 1972).

<sup>4</sup> Saul refers to William David autobiography (1870), in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. He also mentions that to obtain “a more complete immersion in the language” Lewis later moved to Moscow, the city where fewer foreigners would be encountered and hence more chances to communicate in Russian. Later, however Lewis went to Tver’ where the opportunities to speak Russian were unquestionable. Thus he spent there five month and then, after his conversational ability naturally improved, he returned to St Petersburg to begin working in his brother’s business. See Saul, Norman, “A Russian “Yankee Doodle,”” *Slavic Review*, vol., 33, number 1, (March,1974), 46, 49.

<sup>5</sup> Saul refers to a few business letters in Russian that survived. See *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 47. Indeed, according to Lewis’s correspondence with the United States minister in Sweden Jonathan Russell, Williams discovered his *poetical abilities* in Russian and “even gone so far as to write several love epistles to young ladies” and composed Russian verses for Yankee Doodle, which he believed was “the first song in this

Upon returning to Philadelphia Lewis continued his Russian studies. He published translations of verses collected in 1849 in a separate volume, the most significant of which were “The Bakchesarian Fountain” by Pushkin, and “Ode to God” by Derzhavin.<sup>7</sup> Among other prominent American scholars who mastered Russian and pursued a thorough knowledge of Russia and its provinces was Eugene Schuler, a diplomat with a reputation as the most knowledgeable outsider on Russian affairs, a secretary of legation who regularly attended the meetings of the Russian Imperial Geographical Society, translated Turgenev and Tolstoy, and was possibly the only American to meet with both writers.<sup>8</sup>

By the time of the Fox naval mission in 1866, there were many long-term residents in Russia and its capital city. Some “had taken the trouble to study the language systematically.” Saul mentions at least six Americans that were almost fluent in Russian, among them Jeremiah Curtin, the secretary of legation, entrepreneur Joseph Ropes, who after graduating from the local gymnasium and demonstrating a talent for languages, continued his studies at St. Petersburg University, his cousin from Salem, Henry Prince, and George Kennan.<sup>9</sup> It is notable that

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language in which Yankee doodle come in for any share.” Lewis was proud of his endeavor and in the letter to the American Minister in Sweden he noted “will not our country owe us much for spreading the glory of her exploits through these northern regions, and even giving ourselves the trouble of putting them into northern rhymes? If Mr. [President] Madison makes me no remuneration for the sleepless nights this Russian Yankee Doodle has occasioned me, all I have to say is that “he may kill the next Hotspur himself.”” See Saul, “A Russian “Yankee Doodle,” 50. Saul cites Lewis letter to Russell, 28 September, 1815.

<sup>7</sup> See *The Bakchesarian Fountain, by Aleksandr Pooshkeen, and Other Poems, by Various Authors, Translated from the original by William D. Lewis* (Philadelphia, 1849). Lewis was credited for being the first American to translate these particular works. See Saul, “A Russian “Yankee Doodle,” 51 and Cross, Samuel, H., and Ernest J. Simmons, *Alexander Pushkin, 1799 – 1837: His Life and Literary Heritage (with an English Bibliography)* (New York: American Russian Institute, 1849).

<sup>8</sup> Norman E. Saul, *Concord and Conflict: The United States and Russia, 1867 – 1914* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1996), 92 – 94, 320.

<sup>9</sup>Saul, *Distant Friends*, 377.

Jeremiah Curtin, who helped Russian artist Vereshchagin organize an exhibition for the Chicago Art Institute in 1902, mastered Russian over a four-year stay there, translating classics, while attempting to promote them along with his own books about the broader culture.<sup>10</sup> Curtin first was engaged in St Petersburg as a translator before he began diplomatic duties as an assistant secretary of the United States legation.

Another notable diplomat with an interest in Russian was Eugene Schuyler, who used his time as consul in Moscow and as secretary of the American legation in St. Petersburg to study literature and history and “to acquaint himself with the life and colonial policy of Russia.” He published translations of Turgenev’s *Fathers and Sons* in 1867, Tolstoy’s *The Cossacks* in 1878, and a biography of *Peter the Great* in two volumes in 1884, which became his most extensive work. He also translated numerous magazine articles.<sup>11</sup> J.M. Crawford was another American diplomat who did translations, including the encyclopedic five volumes on the industries and resources of Russia for the Columbian exposition at Chicago, published in St Petersburg in 1893. He also served as a member of the American relief commission during the devastating famine of 1892.<sup>12</sup>

I would also emphasize the contribution of Charles Crane, “an American businessman, publisher, Russian expert and connoisseur, diplomat, and philanthropist,” who is largely

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 321, 332.

<sup>11</sup> Anna M. Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917: A Study of the American Travelers in Russia from the American Revolution to the Russian Revolution* (New York: Comet Press, 1938), 12.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 13, 136. While in St Petersburg in a capacity of U.S. consul-general in the period of time between 1889 – 1904 Crawford was a mediator between the Russian government and the administration of the World’s Fair in Chicago and an active member of the relief commission. He authored an “Introduction” in *For the Benefit of the Russian Sufferers Autographic Album of Writers, Painters, Artists, Compositors and Other Distinguished Persons. An Enterprise and Edition of the Daily Newspaper “The Russian Life,”* St Petersburg, 1892, and was awarded a jeweled vase in recognition of his service during the famine.

responsible for the inception of Slavic studies as a formal course curriculum in American academic circles. Norman Saul writes about Crane's "obsession with Russian history, religion, music, and art." Besides being active as a businessman, and a business manager with Westinghouse, Crane was also a devoted advocate of "what might be considered an early form of an Institute for Advanced Russian Studies" in the United States.<sup>13</sup> Crane supported and encouraged a number of American scholars to pursue Russian studies. His initiatives resulted in the establishment of the center for Slavic studies at the University of Chicago, devoted to serious academic study of Russian society and culture. Chicago's first president, William Rainey Harper, traveled to Russia with Charles Crane and spent two days with Tolstoy in Yasnaia Poliana in 1900, and his son Samuel started learning Russian at the Sorbonne in Paris while spending summers in Russia, financed by Crane. Samuel Harper became the premier American scholar of Russia at the University of Chicago, as Crane continued to provide financial help throughout Harper's career, eventually totaling \$400,000.<sup>14</sup> When Crane and William Rainey Harper stopped in Moscow in May, 1900 they called upon Viktor Vasnetsov, the famous Russian painter, and "had an agreeable hour with him." They also visited Tolstoy and tried "to capture him for the Russian lectureship." Even though, as Crane writes "the old gentleman was much interested," he seemed to appear "too feeble."<sup>15</sup> During the meeting with the Russian emperor, Harper spoke about the possibility of establishing a Russian chair at the university, "in which the

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<sup>13</sup> Norman E. Saul, "The American Colony in St. Petersburg" (paper presented at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Central Slavic Conference, Lawrence, KS, April 3-5, 2003).

<sup>14</sup> Norman E. Saul, "Charles Crane, American Industrialist, Globalist, a Founder of Russian Studies in America" (paper presented at several forums, including 40<sup>th</sup> AAASS annual convention, Philadelphia, November 20-23, 2008). Among others who accompanied Crane to Russia that year were his cousin Martin Ryerson, and Charles Hutchinson. *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>15</sup> Charles R. Crane (CRC) to Cornelia S. Crane (CSC), St. Petersburg, 1 May 1900. Charles Richard Crane Papers. Box 1. RBML, Bakhmeteff Archive (BA), Columbia University (CU), New York.

Emperor expressed great satisfaction and asked about it and about what our plans were in the way of obtaining men for it.”<sup>16</sup> Crane went on to support Harper’s professorship and academic initiatives, by establishing “an early form of student exchange by financing the studies of Americans in Russia.”<sup>17</sup>

Crane deplored “the meagerness of information regarding Russia,” especially the lack of reliable books, and expressed hope of establishing a center of Russian studies in the United States that would help overcome existing prejudices. Crane set up a lectureship at the University of Chicago and invited distinguished specialists in Russia and Slavic language and literature annually. The series was open to the public as a part of “outreach” activities of the university. He also sponsored publication of the lectures.<sup>18</sup> Thomas Masaryc and Maxim Kovalevsky held the lectureship in 1902, and Paul Miliukov held it in 1903.<sup>19</sup>

Crane financed the publication of the first grammar book of the Russian language written for American students, an expansion and adaptation of an existing French edition.<sup>20</sup> Among other scholars, he supported the appointment of the first instructors of Russian at Columbia University, and later at Dartmouth College, Elizabeth Reynolds and Bernard Pares, who founded the first interdisciplinary program of Slavic studies at the University of Liverpool and authored *A History of Russia*, a textbook dedicated to Crane.<sup>21</sup> In the 1930s while continuing his pursuit of educating Americans about Russian history and culture, Charles Crane sponsored the publication of the

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<sup>16</sup> CRC to CSC, Berlin, 28 May 1900. Charles Richard Crane Papers. Box 1. RBML, BA, CU.

<sup>17</sup> Saul, “Charles R. Crane, American Industrialist, Globalist, a Founder of Russian Studies in America.”

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Christopher Lasch, *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 5.

<sup>20</sup> Saul, “Charles R. Crane, American Industrialist, Globalist, a Founder of Russian Studies in America.”

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

first comprehensive history of Russia in English. Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu's *Empire of the Tsars and the Russians* was published by G.P. Putnam's in an English translation by Zenaida Ragozin, a family friend of both Crane and Putman.<sup>22</sup>

At the turn of the twentieth century, many American publications addressed the lack of attention to Russian and Slavic studies at American universities. The Philadelphia *Book News* informed readers about a devastating fire at the home of a resident who had accompanied George Kennan to Siberia, in charge of topographical drawings and other illustrations for Kennan's report. While the article reported the irreparable loss of the records of the eventful trip, the broader topic of studies in Russian history and philology was also further elaborated upon. Nathan Haskell Dole found it rather strange that "not one of the universities or colleges in this big country should pay any attention to Russian and Slavonic languages and Literature." Dole explained his bewilderment stating that even though Russia differs from the United States "so widely" in "language, customs and laws," it nevertheless is bound to America "with peculiarly sympathetic ties" being its "nearest neighbor on the West." The lack of Russian studies at American universities was inexcusable, said Dole, since Russia "has a splendid literature and a language which as mental discipline is fully equal to Greek or Latin and almost as interesting philologically." He regretted that "Russian was a sealed book to all except a few," even though the nation was publishing almost half as many books a year as did the United States. He predicted that it to be a "quite a glory to the first college which should establish such a chair," hoping that Chicago would see its opportunity and "rescue the honor of the cause."<sup>23</sup> *The*

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 13.

<sup>23</sup> Nathan Haskel, Dole, "Notes from Boston," *Book News*, 10, № 118 (June 1892), 426. The article was found in Hapgood papers. See Hapgood Papers, Folder "Nathan Haskell Dole, Clippings, report." Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers. Box 5, Manuscript & Archives Division, hereafter cited as (MAD), New York Public Library, hereafter cited as (NYPL), New York.

*Harvard Daily News* reflected that “there has been considerable talk of late concerning the establishment of a chair of instruction in the Russian language in the university; such a step would be altogether desirable.” The article outlined the obstacles in proceeding with such an enterprise, reporting that “the difficulties in the way are mainly of a financial nature.” Russian should be taught because, it was acknowledged, “the Russian language is represented by a literature that is in every respect worthy the attention of the English speaking race. This literature is entirely original, and possesses a vigor and promise of great things.”<sup>24</sup> Active, if quiet “agitation” was reportedly underway at Harvard where two men were proposed with to fill a new chair. One was Prince Volkonsky, “a Russian nobleman who stands high in the estimation of the imperial government.” The other candidate was Nathan Haskell Dole, who in spite of having translated Russian classics, had not been recognized as an authority in the field.<sup>25</sup> Financing the chair was a principal obstacle. Yet it received support from such individuals as Professor Francis

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<sup>24</sup> *Harvard Daily News*, 23 January, 1859. Hapgood Papers, Folder “Nathan Haskell Dole, Clippings, report.” Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers. Box 5, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>25</sup> Unidentified newspaper clipping. Hapgood Papers, Folder “Nathan Haskell Dole, Clippings, report.” Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers. Box 5, MAD, NYPL. Hapgood opposed Dole’s appointment as a professor of Russian and Slavonic Studies at Harvard after she discredited his translation of Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenin*, revealing that Dole performed the translation from French and not from the original text in Russian. Moreover, Hapgood wrote a letter to *The Nation* referring to that article “Notes from Boston,” declaring that “there is not a single man in this country who is fitted to fill that chair even creditably.” She explained that such a position would demand knowledge of Russian, Old Slavonic, Polish, Bohemian, Servian, Croatian, Montenegrin, Wendish, and the varieties of Russian used in different parts of Russia proper, especially of Little Russian, or Ruthenian.” Hapgood concluded that the position requires “a speaking and writing knowledge of Russian such as no American possesses.” Hapgood hoped that “no American will be appointed to a place which he will certainly be unqualified to fill. Let the university get a trained professor from St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kieff – any first class Russian University. Many of these professors are accomplished English scholars. Even if the one chosen is not perfect in English at the outset, that will be an actual help to his students in their preparation for acquiring enough of the languages to qualify them for literary studies;”(See Hapgood’s letter to *The Nation*, 16 June 1892). Leo Weiner (who at the time lived in Kansas City, Mo) secured the professorship instead.

Child, who was interested in the study of modern languages and helped get Russian offered at Harvard. He favored a professorship in Russian and stated that “it is a shame that Harvard University, with its magnificent equipment, should be so conspicuously lacking in this important respect.” He made the argument that “a language that is spoken by three hundred millions of people in one dialect or another, a language that possesses the splendid array of master-writers is certainly worthy of a place in the catalogue of Harvard University.”<sup>26</sup> Another advocate for the establishment of Russian studies at Harvard was historian Archibald Carry Coolidge. He was very interested in Slavonic languages and well connected with the United States embassy in St. Petersburg. In the Russian capital he knew several members of the Russian ministry of education. Coolidge secured a number of valuable books related to Russia, Poland, and other Slavic countries for the Harvard libraries.<sup>27</sup> He was also an important early regular correspondent with Charles Crane, who “wrote checks to him for library purchases, especially after Coolidge became director of Harvard’s Widener Library.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid. Child mentioned that only one university in the country offered some instruction in Slavonic studies. According to Professor Child that was the University of Ohio. See Ibid. The article is not dated; however similar articles on the same topic and in the same folder are dated 1895. Hapgood collected other articles that would discuss the topic and present various reasons why learning Russian language might be desirable for Americans. Among others there is the following curious excerpt: “for social uses it would certainly be a great advantage to possess a talking acquaintance with it; educated Russians are encountered all over Europe and the Russian ladies are noted for their beauty; indeed, no American young man can say beforehand that they may not wish to woo a fair daughter of the Slavic race upon her native heath; upon which occasion an interpreter would never be missed.” Unidentified article. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers. Box 5, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. See also Potter, Alfhred Claghorn, and Wells, Edgar Huidekoper, *Descriptive and Historical Notes on the Library of Harvard University. Library of Harvard University bibliographical Contributions* (Cambridge, Mass: Library of Harvard University, 1911), 50. Electronic resource.  
[http://books.google.com/books?id=jIIXAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA46&lpg=PA46&dq=Doctor+A+C+Coolidge&source=bl&ots=Pcr476ZQfU&sig=JYk4ttsyUwARqzEDlwmeZivs7n0&hl=en&ei=BaSlSaWNFdG3twfqh8XVBA&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&resnum=1&ct=result#PPA1,M1](http://books.google.com/books?id=jIIXAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA46&lpg=PA46&dq=Doctor+A+C+Coolidge&source=bl&ots=Pcr476ZQfU&sig=JYk4ttsyUwARqzEDlwmeZivs7n0&hl=en&ei=BaSlSaWNFdG3twfqh8XVBA&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=1&ct=result#PPA1,M1) Accessed February 25th, 2009, 3:24 pm

<sup>28</sup> Saul, “Charles Crane, American Industrialist, Globalist, a Founder of Russian Studies in America.”

A professorship of Russian and Slavonic studies at Harvard was finally granted to an émigré from the Russian empire, a professor from the department of Germanic and Romance languages at the University of Missouri, philologist and historian of Yiddish language, literature, and folklore, Leo Wiener.

Born in Bialystok, in present day Poland, in 1862 (when the city was within the Russian empire), Wiener mastered several languages from early childhood. While German was the language of the family, Russian was the language of the state. Wiener went to Lutheran school where he learned French, as it was the language of educated society, continued his education in the Minsk Gymnasium and then Warsaw, where all classes were conducted in Russian, although Polish was the language that he spoke with his playmates. From Gymnasium he went to medical school of the University of Warsaw, before continuing his education at the Polytechnicum in Berlin.<sup>29</sup> Wiener was eighteen years old when he immigrated to the United States, arriving at New Orleans in 1880 with fifty cents in his pocket. Knowledge of languages helped him to secure a job in Kansas City, first as a high school teacher, and later as a professor of modern languages at the University of Missouri, Columbia, where he taught both German and French.<sup>30</sup>

It was then, that Wiener attracted the attention of Professor Francis Child of Harvard, the learned editor of *Scottish Ballads*. Child studied the ballads trying to trace their parallels in European and Asian languages and needed help in collating sources for many of them. Wiener was given the southern Slavic languages as his assignment and made himself so useful to Child that the latter helped him to find a position near Boston, with appointments at Boston University and the New England Conservatory. He also worked in the cataloguing department of the Boston

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<sup>29</sup> Norbert, Wiener, *Ex-prodigy: my childhood and youth* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953), 12-13.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 18, 20, 28.

Public Library. Later Child helped Wiener into an instructorship in Slavic languages at Harvard, the first of its kind there, which Wiener held until 1930, when he retired.<sup>31</sup>

Wiener's contribution to studies in languages and cultures of the former Russian empire in the United States was unique. The linguist went beyond his colleagues' interest in Slavic elements of Russian cultural legacy, turning to its multicultural components and published articles on Yiddish linguistic influences in Polish, German, Ukrainian, and Belarusian. In *The Popular Poetry of the Russian Jews* (1898), he introduced Yiddish folk poems to American scholars and readers and analyzed the poetry of badhanim (folk bands). In 1898 Wiener traveled to Europe to collect material for his pioneering volume *The History of Yiddish Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (1899).<sup>32</sup> When he came to St. Petersburg, he became acquainted with renowned Russian Orientalist, a scholar of Jewish history and literature Albert (Abraham Elijah) Harkavy (1835-1919), the head of the department of Jewish literature and Oriental manuscripts at the Imperial Library. Harkavy was an adherent of the Wissenschaft des Judentums school, studying the origins of the Jewish community in Russia and trying to secure equality for Russian Jews.<sup>33</sup> Harkavy graduated from St. Petersburg State University and was an active in the Jewish

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>32</sup> Fred Skolnik, editor in chief, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Vol. 21 (New York: Thompson & Gale, 2007), 47.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., vol. 8, 356. Harkavy argued his theories in several essays and articles, and especially in his first Russian book *O yazyke yevreyev I o slavyanskikh slovakh, vstrechayemykh u yevreyskiikh pisateley* (1865), which also appeared in Hebrew as *Ha-Yehudium u – sefat ha-Slavim (The Jews and the Slavic Language, 1867)*. Harkavy claimed that Jews in Russia descend from Jews who migrated from the region of the Black Sea and Caucasia, where their ancestors had settled after the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles. Those people, who preserved an ancient Jewish heritage, which they spread among the Khazars, expanded through the Khazar kingdom westward to Czechoslovakia. Their spoken language was Slavic, at least from the ninth century on; Ibid. Harkavy was esteemed by the tsarist regime, and in the 1890s he was awarded a hereditary noble title and made an honorary member of several scientific societies in various countries. Ibid.

community of the city as *gabbai* of the central synagogue and as a member of the Mefize'i Haskalah be-Yisrael and Mekize'i Nirdamim societies. He welcomed Wiener to the capital and presented him with a thousand Yiddish books, which eventually formed the basis of the Yiddish collection of the Harvard University library.

Wiener compiled a valuable anthology of Russian literature in two volumes and translated Tolstoy into English. His translation was released in London in 1904 by J.M. Dent & Co. as *The Complete Works of Count Tolstoy*. Among other considerable contributions to Russian studies scholarship, there were such publications as *An Interpretation of the Russian People* (1915) and *The Contemporary Drama of Russia* (1924).

One of Wiener's students, George Rapall Noyes, would become "an American in St. Petersburg" and before offering a course in Russian at the University of California-Berkeley, had attended the University of St. Petersburg for two years.<sup>34</sup>

An American Catholic from Virginia, Andrew J. Shipman was another, though little-known, yet a devoted student of Russian. He first began to take an interest in Slavic studies when he exchanged Czech and German lessons for English, with an emigrant in the United States. Fascinated with Slavic immigrants and various Eastern religious rites, he not only mastered the language, but became "one of the most eminent authorities in America on the laws of the Orthodox Russian Church." Anna Babey writes that he made a special study of Russian, Polish, Greek, and Slavic subjects, spending considerable time in Eastern Europe and Russia for that purpose.<sup>35</sup> Later he became known as a prominent lecturer on the various Eastern rites in the United States.

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<sup>34</sup> See Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 394

<sup>35</sup> Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917*, 55.

Isabel Florence Hapgood, previously noted as an ardent sympathizer and philanthropist as well as a devoted friend of Russia and the Russian people, was an important contributor to the development of Slavic Studies in America. Privately educated in New England and formally trained in Latin and French, Hapgood used her exceptional gift for languages to master many Romance and Germanic tongues, as well as Russian, Polish, and Church Slavonic. As Ledkovsky concludes, Hapgood “was obviously taken with Russian and, being a persistent and well organized student, she engaged a Russian lady to achieve natural fluency in spoken Russian.”<sup>36</sup> After having mastered conversational Russian, she made her first prolonged trip to Russia, accompanied by her mother, in 1887, traveling across European Russia until 1889. Hapgood was most famous with her translations of Russian masterpieces. Even before her first journey Hapgood had published several translations from Russian into English; the first was *Epic Songs of Russia*, with ample annotations. Published in 1885, it received rave reviews in several journals.<sup>37</sup> In 1886 her translations of Tolstoy’s Trilogy: *Childhood, Boyhood, Youth*; and Gogol’s *Taras Bul’ba, Dead Souls* appeared. Many more of Hapgood translations of Russian,

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<sup>36</sup> George Kennan admired Hapgood’s talent and disposition to learning languages in general and Russian in particular. He wrote: “that you should have so thoroughly mastered Russian by your own unaided exertions and without ever visiting Russia, seems to me a very remarkable thing. It is an achievement of which you have every right to be proud.” George Kennan to Isabel Hapgood, Washington, DC, June 16, 1887. Unidentified article. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers. Box 5, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>37</sup> See Marina Ledkovsky, “A Linguistic Bridge to Orthodoxy: In Memoriam Isabel Florence Hapgood.” A lecture delivered at the Twelfth Annual Russian Orthodox Musicians Conference, 7-11 October, 1998, Washington, DC <<http://anglicanhistory.org/women/hapgood/ledkovsky.pdf>> (accessed 21 January 2009).

5. The scholar refers to the following publications: *Dictionary of American Biography*, Dumas Malone, ed., VIII (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1932), 233; *The National Encyclopedia of American Biography*, XXI (New York: James T. White Company, 1931), 51; Haverlack, 1-2, 3, *passim*; The Reverend Stuart H. Hoke, “A Generally Obscure Calling: A Character Sketch of Isabel Florence Hapgood,” [unpublished article] (New York General Theological Seminary, June 1997), 14 - 14 See also Isabel Florence Hapgood, *The Epic Songs of Russia; with an Introductory note by Professor Francis J. Child* (New York; Charles Scribner’s sons, 1885);

French, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and Polish literature appeared in the following years. Among them were more works by Tolstoy, Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*, a 16-volume edition of Turgenev's *Novels and Stories*, Gorky's novels, and Chekhov's *The Seagull*. Leskov's *The Steel Flea* (1916), *The Cathedral Folk* (1924), and Bunin's *Village*, were among Hapgood's last undertakings. Hapgood's translation of Sonia Kovalevsky's *Recollections of Childhood* illustrates her interest in Russian women's issues. She dedicated some of her work to the importance of the education of Russian women, to the exploration and analysis of public health in Russia, and to such evils of society as prostitution and its influence upon women's lives in Russia and elsewhere. Hapgood's translations achieved immense popularity and the translator "became as widely known as the authors of modern bestsellers."<sup>38</sup> In 1902, in "her efforts to enlighten her fellow countrymen about Russia," she released a *Survey of Russian Literature*, with representative selections, which, according to Ledkovsky, was considered "an excellent introduction to a then virtually unknown field."<sup>39</sup> Among others, George Kennan held a very high opinion of Hapgood's translation work and highly valued her contributions. He acknowledged that her translations from the Russian are:

to me the best and the most satisfactory that have ever been made in English. I'm familiar with the work in your field of Schuyler, Ralston, Ralston, Turner... and most

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<sup>38</sup> Ledkovsky, "A Linguistic Bridge to Orthodoxy," 5. Ledkovsky refers to a review in *The Nation* claiming that Hapgood "set a new standard for fidelity in translation, especially from Russian, as former translations were made from French renderings of the Russian masterpieces, and these were sometimes not reliable." (the article is cited in a *Dictionary of American Biography*, 233). Ledkovsky also refers to the 1928 obituary of *The New York Times*, that describes Hapgood as "one of the few members of an honorable profession who succeeded in rising above the obscurity" and who "raised the middleman's craft in world literature to the level of art." See *The New York Times*, (28 June 1928):24, col. 4.

<sup>39</sup> Ledkovsky, "A Linguistic Bridge to Orthodoxy," 6. See Isabel Florence Hapgood, *A Survey of Russian Literature*, with selections (New York: The Chautauqua Press, 1902).

of the other English and American translators of Russian books, and I feel no hesitation in saying that your work takes the very first rank. If you had had the rendering into English of all the Russian books which have been translating during the past fifteen years, Russian literature would be better understood and appreciated in America than it is.<sup>40</sup>

He encouraged Hapgood in her quest of Russia and Russian literature, thanked her for her interest in his publications about Leo Tolstoy and wrote that Russia was for him “a fascinating country and the more I know it the more it attracts me.”<sup>41</sup> There could not be higher praise of her work, however, than the acknowledgment and approval of the authors themselves. Tolstoy expressed his support and appreciation and asked his daughter to update Hapgood regarding the publication of new pieces, assuring Hapgood that he would love to see his new works translated by her.<sup>42</sup>

As a scholar and admirer of Russian Orthodox liturgical singing, Hapgood was inspired to write a history of Russian Church music. In spite of the unfolding hostilities of the Great War, she “set out on her last trip to Russia in 1916, to collect materials for such a book. For this purpose she met again with representative choir directors and church musicians, seeking advice and source books.”<sup>43</sup> Among those in Petrograd, “the famous expert” (Hapgood’s note), Antonin Viktorovich Preobazhenskii, of the imperial capella, who later became a professor at the Petrograd conservatory, and with the assistant choirmaster of the imperial capella, Christophor

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<sup>40</sup> George Kennan to Isabel Hapgood, Washington, DC, 16 June 1887. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers. Box 5, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>41</sup> George Kennan to Isabel Hapgood, Washington, DC, 16 June 1887. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers. Box 5, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>42</sup> Countess Tatyana Lvovna Tolstaia to Hapgood, 4 September 1888, Tula, Yasnaya Polyana. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers. Box 4, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>43</sup> Ledkovsky, “A Linguistic Bridge to Orthodoxy,” 10.

Grozdoff. Ledkovsky also mentions Hapgood's earlier correspondence with Vladimir Vasilievich Stasoff (1824-1904), head of the Imperial Public Library and author of several important publications on Russian ecclesiastical singing, who also co-authored with Modest Tchaikovsky *The Life of Pëtr Il'ich Chaikovskii*.<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately, revolutionary events made it impossible to proceed with the publication of the book.

Hapgood's literary and philosophical inquiries and studies continued as she tirelessly worked to introduce and promote Russian literature and culture to the American public. She advocated for the works of Tolstoy himself, as well as the writings of his devoted followers. She translated and assisted with the publication of the works of the famous adherent of Tolstoy's world view, the writer's friend and advocate Vladimir Grigorievich Chertkoff. In a May, 1888 letter to Hapgood, Tchertkoff thanked her for arranging the publication of his work in the United States.<sup>45</sup> Another initiative put in order all Tolstoy's copyrights, so that he might profit from being published in the United States. The enterprise was not consummated, however, as Tolstoy had no interest in profiting from selling his work. His daughter Tatiana thanked Hapgood in her efforts and intent, acknowledging the wisdom and practicality of obtaining copyrights, while explaining that Tolstoy's only desire was "to circulate them as widely and freely as possible."<sup>46</sup>

Boston journalist and author Curtis Guild, who compiled "an inventory of church and palace possessions," was another visitor interested in the arts, who felt that Russian treasures were not as well-known as they deserved to be.<sup>47</sup> John Stoddard, who lectured widely on European culture in his American lyceums for nearly twenty years, shared his audience's

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Vladimir Tchertkoff to Hapgood, 31 May, 1888, Rossosha, Voronezhskaya Province. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers. Box 4, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>46</sup> Countess Tatyana Tolstoy to Hapgood, July 16, 1992. Isabel Florence Hapgood Papers. Box 4, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>47</sup> See his book *Britons and Muscovites or Traits of Two Empires* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1888).

interests. During Stoddard's journey to Russia in the 1880s, he collected "bits of myths and lurid history" that he delivered back home "in an interesting, talkative, personal fashion."<sup>48</sup> Stoddard's fellow countryman from California, Professor of Slavic Languages George R. Noyes, studied at St Petersburg University between 1898 and 1900. He provided an extensive discussion of Tolstoy's religious philosophy in his 1913 publication "The Essential Elements in Tolstoy's Ethical System," which was followed in 1918 by a biography.<sup>49</sup>

Americans like Joseph Goodrich were interested in understanding the nature of Russia's development, its growth and colonization, its diplomatic and political history, and system of higher education. In 1910, Goodrich "made his study of university life on outgrowth of his investigation of popular education." In *Russia in Europe and Asia* he expressed his "feelings for and pleasant experiences with the Russians, even though he condemned much in the treatment to which the Russian government subjected its own people."<sup>50</sup> He paid special attention to the student population, and drew some pertinent conclusions, writing that:

Nearly all of the Russian university students come from homes wherein poverty exists of a kind that is scarcely known in this country among the classes that, even for a moment contemplate such a thing as higher education. They must therefore live in a way that cannot furnish the nutriment required by that healthy body which is supposed to harbor a sound mind. It is by no means a ridiculous conclusion that other observers

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<sup>48</sup> Babey refers to Stoddard, John L., *John L. Stoddard's Lectures Illustrated and Embellished With Views of the World's Famous Places and People, Being the Identical Discourse Delivered During the Past Eighteen Years Under the Title of the Stoddard Lectures* (Boston: Balch Brothers, 1901) and to the same author's *Red Letter Days Abroad With Illustrations* (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1884).

<sup>49</sup> See George Noyes' "The Essential Elements in Tolstoy's Ethical System" in *Anniversary Papers by Colleagues and Pupils of George Lyman Kittredge, Presented on the Completion of His Twenty-Fifth Year of Teaching in Harvard University*, June, MCMXIII, (Boston, 1913), 295-303 and *Tolstoy* (New York, 1918).

<sup>50</sup> Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917*, 96.

besides myself have reached: that something of the character which marks so many acts of the Russian students towards the Government and officials, is chargeable to intense study overtaxing an under-nourished body until the brain almost gives away; and not infrequently violent dementia appears.<sup>51</sup>

Goodrich was convinced that the bureaucrats, the dukes, and the tsar “dread the time when the people of all the Russias are educated... for it spells their downfall.”<sup>52</sup> Another prominent educator, the president of Western Reserve University, left a detailed account describing the Russian system of the higher education, and acknowledging much the role the government played in shaping educational policy. He devoted a special article to St. Petersburg University in his volume *Universities of the World*, writing that Russian students were obviously “a mighty force for the betterment of Russia; the rebellions of the universities in Russia go beyond the academic walls to the state... yet, the government does keep a constant eye and not remote hand on the student body...”<sup>53</sup>

Americans who studied in Russia examined not only the language, but took advantage of its excellent scientific and engineering schools. One of the first American exchange students in Russia was Cleveland Abbe, who was invited by the noted Russian astronomer Otto Sturve to study at the Pulkovo observatory early in 1865.<sup>54</sup> Among those who pursued their studies and research in St. Petersburg and later contributed to the advancement of experimental science and technology was Joseph Tyckocinski Tykociner, a professor of electrical engineering from the University of Illinois. “From the time he first conceived of the photographic recording of sound in the 1890’s until the time of his death [on] June 11, 1969,” his obituary observed, “Joseph

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<sup>51</sup> Joseph K. Goodrich, *Russia in Europe and Asia* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1912), 260-264.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Charles F. Thwing, “The University of St Petersburg” in *Universities of the World* (New York, 1911), 174-176.

<sup>54</sup> Saul, *Distant Friends*, 378.

Tykociner was totally devoted to and contributed actively to science for the benefit of mankind.”<sup>55</sup> His colleagues proclaimed him “the universal man, perhaps one of the last of the breed -- an inventor, a scientist, a philosopher, a humanitarian, a patron of the arts<sup>56</sup> and a lover of nature.”<sup>57</sup>

Born in Vlacavek, present day Poland, in October, 1877 (when the city was within the Russian empire) Tykociner went to the United States in 1895 at 18, working for two years in the electrical industry, before returning to Europe. He graduated from the Higher Technical Institute at Coethen, present day Poland in 1901, then worked in Chelmsford, England as a junior engineer with the Marconi Wireless Telegraph company. In 1904 he was a research engineer with the Telefunken Wireless Telegraph Company in Berlin and afterwards pursued university studies at St. Petersburg,<sup>58</sup> where in 1905 he organized a radio department for the Russian

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<sup>55</sup> W.L. Everitt, J.A. Simon, E.C. Jordan, D.F. Holshouser, *A Memorial to Joseph Tykocinski Tykociner* Alumni and faculty Biographical File (Morgue), 1882 – 1995, record series 26/4/1, folder: Tykociner, Prof Joseph T (Deceased 6/11/69), The University of Illinois Archives, hereafter cited as (UIA), Champaign – Urbana.

<sup>56</sup> Tykociner’s broad interests in various spheres of arts, science, and humanities is illustrated by his participation in collective translation of *The Old Slavic Version of St. Jerome’s Life of Hilarion* undertaken in collaboration with John Kivko, and Roman Jakobson. See the Typescript of the translation from St. Petersburg edition dated to 1880.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> This biographical data, however, has not been repeatedly confirmed in various sources that I managed to research in Tykociner’s papers at the University of Illinois. Mostly I refer to the “Memorial” written by his colleagues to honor him after his death. Though in other biographical sketches kept in the collection it is mentioned that he did only the research in the Russian capital while working for the Russian Siemens Company, it is possible that Tykociner studied in Russia, especially because he arrived in the Russian capital two years before the death of another prominent scientist Alexander Stepanovich Popov, who had been teaching at St. Petersburg Electro Technical University since 1901 and became a director of that school in 1905. Tykociner does not mention any educational experience in St. Petersburg in his curriculum vitae, but he does not mention many other aspects of his life and career experience, such as his work for the Russian navy. Unfortunately a reputable solid comprehensive biographical account on the life and work of such a prominent scientist has yet to be written. That Joseph Tykociner is not featured in either *Radio’s 100 Men of Science*, ed., by Dunlap, in *Historical Dictionary of American Radio*, ed. by Donald G. Godfrey and Frederic A. Leigh (This dictionary appeared to be very inaccurate – when checking on

Siemens company.<sup>59</sup> He was chief engineer of the department from 1905 to 1908, and manager from 1908 to 1918.<sup>60</sup> Russian pioneer of radio Professor Alexander Stepanovich Popov was among the prominent physicists collaborating with Tykociner, and were affiliated with the department.<sup>61</sup> Tykociner was in charge of developing and installing radio equipment for the Russian navy, army, and the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs (which opened its first

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their coverage of a biographical note of Alexander Popov, I noticed that the date of his death is not correct. Popov died not in 1905 as it is written in the dictionary but a year later in 1906, two years after Tykociner's arrival in Russia. Thus, the information in Myer's article about Tykociner's collaboration with the prominent Russian physicist is very likely to be correct), or in a comprehensive multi - volume reference edition on the history of American Cinema, causes numerous speculations about the controversial life of the scientist. See Donald G. Godfrey and Frederic A. Leigh, ed., *Historical Dictionary of American Radio* (Westport, Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press, 1998), and Charles Harpole, general ed., *History of the American Cinema, 1915 – 1928*, vol. 3 (New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1990), Dunlap, Orrin., ed. by *Radio's 100 Men of Science* (Freeport, N.Y: Books for Libraries Press, 1970). Hopefully Tykociner's biography will be written soon as claimed on Joseph Tykociner Commemorative Website, which is based on the forthcoming book tentatively called *Out of Sync: The Life of Joseph Tykociner "Father of the Talkies"* conceived by Paul Doering, < <http://www.doer.com/JTT/>> (accessed 19 July, 2007)

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. Some of the biographical information is also taken from "He Photographed Sound" in *Esso Oil Ways*, June, 1951, clipping found in Alumni and faculty Biographical File (Morgue), 1882 – 1995, record series 26/4/1, folder: Tykociner, Prof Joseph T (Deceased 6/11/69), (UIA).

<sup>60</sup> As Tykociner recalls during the interview with a journalist student Wayne Kalpin in March, 1967, in the fifteen years he spent in Russia, he witnessed three revolutions and the WWI, and was one of the very few specialists who knew both "Russian and radio." Joseph T. Tykociner Papers, 1900 – 1969, series No 11/6/20, box 18, Biographical tape recordings, reel 2, the tape received from Mrs. Jenifer Johnson, (UIA).

<sup>61</sup> It is important to mention that such collaboration mattered to Tykociner since Popov specialized in the same area as the young researcher. Thus, on May 1895 Popov publicly demonstrated wireless signaling over 600 yards of letters (to spell out Heinrich Hertz's name), and in 1897 established a station in Kronstadt, where Tykociner was equipping ships with wireless during Russo – Japanese war. Popov also installed wireless apparatus on a Russian cruiser *Africa* and embarked on a series of wireless ship-to-shore experiments including one in 1900 when a wireless dispatch from St. Petersburg was flashed to the icebreaker *Ermak* in the Baltic instructing the crew to rescue a group of fishermen stranded on floating ice in the Gulf of Finland. A year later the Russian army started using equipment for wireless. See Donald G. Godfrey and Frederic A. Leigh, ed., *Historical Dictionary of American Radio* (Westport, Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press, 1998), 308.

commercial wireless service in 1903, only a year before Tykociner came to the Russian capital) and worked on a radio communication system for Siberia and Kamchatka.<sup>62</sup> Tikociner first came to St Petersburg in the spring of 1904, during the Russo-Japanese war, when he was called to oversee the installation of the wireless for the navy.<sup>63</sup> The scientist's contribution was essential. Educated in Europe, he was a leading figure in the development of wireless communication in Russia, where, as vice-admiral Stepan Osipovich Makarov noted, advocating for Popov's efforts to develop both research and educational facilities, the matter was limited to the general physics

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<sup>62</sup> In the article "Tykocier Installed Radio On Russian Fleet In '04" published in August 9 1945, the author Fran Myer reports on Russian decisive move to enter the war against Japan and writes that the news was of special interest to Professor Tykociner. According to the reporter of *News Gazette*, as a young man Tikociner was called to go to work for Russian navy in 1904 during Russo – Japanese war and installed "the entire fleet, or at least a large part of it, with wireless." Fran Myers, "Tykociner Installed Radio On Russian Fleet In '04" in *New Gazette*, August 9, 1945. Clipping found in Alumni and faculty Biographical File (Morgue), 1882 – 1995, record series 26/4/1, folder: Tykociner, Prof Joseph T (Deceased 6/11/69), (UIA).

<sup>63</sup> Tykociner's arrival in St. Petersburg was approved by the city authorities that issued him a permission to work and reside in St. Petersburg despite his Jewish background. This occurred at the same time that a wave of pogroms with many victims and property damage (Norman Saul mentions as many as forty three) took place in Russia in 1904 (According to the stamp in his passport and the letter of reference from Russian Siemens & Halske Company, dated September 1920, which are kept in Tykociner's papers). See Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 485. It might seem strange that at the time when Jews would flee Eastern Europe and Russia immigrating to the United States, Joseph Tykociner was moving in opposite direction. The permits issued to him by St. Petersburg authorities is found in his papers at the University of Illinois. It is necessary to mention though that the permits were issued urgently as a measure to prevent Tykociner's expulsion into the pale. Another interesting document is a stamp put in his passport by a St. Petersburg rabbi who married Tykociner and Elena Levkovna Goldman in St. Petersburg in 1909. Thus, Tykociner's residence in the capital and his employment as well as family affairs witness life in St. Petersburg at that period, portraying the city as more tolerant and cosmopolitan than many other places in Russia, where Jews were barred from many prestigious posts. Permission from the office of the City manager of St. Petersburg to reside and to work in the capital as an engineer at Siemens and Halske Electric Company, dated 29 May 1907 and a special registration ticket No 32925, issued by the Police Station on Petrogradskaya side, allowing Joseph Davidovich Tykociner, of Jewish faith, reside with his wife Elena Levkovna in the capital, and work as an engineer and electrician for Siemens and Halske Electric Company, dated December 1916. Joseph T. Tykociner Papers, 1900 – 1969, Engineering, Electrical Engineering, series records 11/6/20, box 1, folder: Passports and travel documents. (UIA)

laboratory at the Electrotechnical Institute of St. Petersburg, while abroad, where tremendous sums of money were being expended in research work, great strides were made. “No one in this country,” Makarov pointed out, “is seriously engaged in training specialists, especially radio research workers.”<sup>64</sup> Radovsky’s portrait of Popoff’s work cites Admiral Makarov’s view of an absurd state of affairs in a country, “where the very inventor of this new means of communication lives and works and is at the height of his creative strength,” yet it had to order radio equipment from abroad.<sup>65</sup> This is exactly what happened in 1904, when Russo-Japanese War broke out. Radovsky wrote that although the army and navy had the know-how and resources,

“they did not take a single practical step to organize properly the production of radio equipment and to supply the units of the army and the warships with it. When Japan suddenly attacked Russia and a squadron had to be sent immediately to the Far East, it turned out that radio equipment for the ships was lacking and that it had to be ordered from abroad.”<sup>66</sup>

Specialists were also invited from abroad, including Siemens employee Tykociner. The fleet was harbored in Kronshtadt, where he was in charge of outfitting twenty-four ships. He administered the installation of equipment for wireless communication and later built the first mobile wireless field units for their cavalry.<sup>67</sup> According to Fran Myers, his work included arranging for the

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<sup>64</sup> Quoted in M. Radovsky, *Alexander Popov: Inventor of Radio* (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1957), 104.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Fran Myers, “Tykociner Installed Radio on Russian Fleet In ’04” in *New Gazette*, August 9, 1945. This phenomenal contribution made by an expatriate from the United States during Russo – Japanese war also illustrates general division between private individuals and institutions that became very explicitly committed either to one

ships to receive installation of antennae, transmitters and receiving sets, and he also provided instruction for naval officers.<sup>68</sup> The article notes that for his accomplishment, Professor Tykociner received one of his earliest awards, from Russian tsar Nicholas II.<sup>69</sup>

During the Great War Tykociner was in charge of important branches of radio engineering for the Russian government.<sup>70</sup> After the revolution Tykociner returned to Poland where he did research and other work at the Radiological Laboratory in Warsaw and prepared plans for trans-Atlantic radio communication between Poland and the United States.<sup>71</sup> As a memorial written by his colleagues upon his death in 1969 reveals, Tykociner was an early pioneer in radio, responsible for the introduction of the technology in the first attempts to transmit across the sea.

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side of the conflict or the other, even though the American government was adhering formal neutrality. While Joseph Tykociner contributed to the technical improvement of the Russian fleet, “American Jewish leaders, led by Jacob Schiff, sought out opportunities to back Japan’s war effort financially.” See Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 484. Another example would be the YMCA account of the War Work with regards to the first foreign experience that the organization had during the Russo-Japanese War. Financed by gifts from friends in the United States and administered by the National Council of the Young Men’s Christian Association in Japan, the organization acted on behalf of the Japanese Army. See *War Work in Europe, 1917 – 1919*, Paul B. Anderson Papers, 1913 – 1982, record series 15/35/54, box 1, folder: World Alliance of YMCA, 1919, 1928 – 1937, 1951, UIA.

Tykociner was not the only one who tried to assist Russia. Saul mentions Wharton Baker, and Charles Flint. The latter made at least four trips to St. Petersburg and arranged “the purchase of six submarines from the Simon Lake shipyards in Bridgeport.” One of those was “secretly loaded at night aboard a Russia – bound ship anchored off Staten Island,” and the others were shipped to St. Petersburg in parts to be transported to Vladivostok. See Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 486 - 487.

<sup>68</sup>Fran Myers, “Tykociner Installed Radio On Russian Fleet In ’04.”

<sup>69</sup> See “Prof. Tykociner Dies” in *Courier*, June, 11, 1969. Clipping found in Alumni and faculty Biographical File (Morgue), 1882 – 1995, record series 26/4/1, folder: Tykociner, Prof Joseph T (Deceased 6/11/69), UIA. The author of the commemorate website also refers to that event. See < <http://www.doer.com/JTT/>> (accessed July 21, 2007)

<sup>70</sup> As it is mentioned in the reference letter issued by Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Company. Joseph T. Tykociner Papers, 1900 – 1969, Engineering, Electrical Engineering, series records 11/6/20, box 1, folder: Correspondence Regarding Job Possibilities. UIA.

<sup>71</sup> See “He Photographed Sound” and Myers, Fran Myers, “Tykociner Installed Radio On Russian Fleet In ’04.”

Tykociner returned to the United States in 1920 to work as a research engineer. He worked for K.G. Frank, a consulting engineer, which represented Siemens and Halske in the United States, then for Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing. After a year, he came to the University of Illinois as a research professor in electrical engineering, remaining there until his death. In June, 1922, Professor Tykociner demonstrated for the first time in public a physics development which he had dreamed of accomplishing for more than twenty-five years, which involved the recording of sound on film in synchronization with moving pictures. It's of note that although the demonstration was successful, it did not produce any enthusiasm and "was received with apathy by both University officials and industrial leaders."<sup>72</sup> Tykocinsky's hope, however, was not to revolutionize popular commercial culture, which would accompany the introduction of sound with motion pictures ('talkies') a few years later,<sup>73</sup> but to provide the opportunity for students around the globe "to hear and see lectures by the greatest scholars in each field, and works of the finest concert artists and actors so recorded could be enjoyed not only by greater audiences but by posterity."<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> An article in *Esso Oil Ways* "He Photographed Sound" states that Professor Tykociner was not the first to understand the need for sound-on-film, not was he the first to make commercial "talking" pictures. "The first "talkie-movie," shown to the public" the article claims, "was produced by projecting the picture film and simultaneously operating a phonograph record of the sound" in a show of film "Jazz Singer" produced by Warner Brothers. The article also mentions that by an odd coincidence the story for the movie was written by a graduate of the University of Illinois Sam Raphaelson. See "He Photographed Sound" in *Esso Oil Ways*, June, 1951, clipping found in Alumni and faculty Biographical File (Morgue), 1882 – 1995, record series 26/4/1, folder: Tykociner, Prof Joseph T (Deceased 6/11/69), UIA.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* Thus, Professor Tykociner definitely predicted the importance of media enhanced education and envisioned in his hopes such later developments as recorded broadcasts available for the audience all around the world, virtual schools, video and audio educational facilitating materials so broadly used today. He also had a great hope for wireless communication that would bring people and their interests closer together that would contribute to furthering ultimate peace. See *A Memorial to Joseph Tykocinski Tykociner*.

Russian revolutionary movements had a great impact upon American visitors, who reflected upon historic events unfolding there, in providing accounts of the actions of participants. If some observers regarded radicalism and revolutionary sentiments as “the bitter product of social corruption and moral chaos,”<sup>75</sup> others sought to explore the complexities of contradictory, unique and multifaceted events which would dominate modern Russia, and gain a reputation in the West as “Nihilism.” Perry S. Heath considered these issues in *A Hoosier in Russia*. So too did Poultney Bigelow, who left an account called “Who is this Mr. Nihilist,” and James William Buel, who “dashed across the tsarist empire” in the summer of 1882, to write *Russian Nihilism and Exile Life in Siberia*,<sup>76</sup> returning in 1903 to study comparative European

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It is mentioned in the memorial compiled by his colleagues that Professor Tykociner also pioneered work at very short wavelength. During and following the WWII he pursued work on devices for generating millimeter wavelength and his laboratory “was the nucleus for the postwar expansion of research in physical electronics.” See *A Memorial to Joseph Tykocinski Tykociner*. But most of all Professor Tykociner wanted to be remembered for his development of Zetetics, the science of research. The name of that new at a time area of knowledge studying “the unity of all knowledge” and “interrelations between its parts” was derived from the Greek word meaning “to investigate.” See *A Memorial to Joseph Tykocinski Tykociner* and Zetetics brochure, explaining the basics, the outline of Zetetics, and the University of Illinois public Information Office Release dedicated to Tykociner’s 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary (Interestingly, in that brief biographical reference it is mentioned that Tykociner attended the technical institute at Gothen, Poland, from where he graduated in 1901, and studied in Berlin and Goettingen, Germany, but there is no word about his studies in St. Petersburg, Russia. I assume such a gap was due to the date which was October 1967, when it was not very favorable to acknowledge any associations or relations with Russia). Alumni and faculty Biographical File (Morgue), 1882 – 1995, record series 26/4/1, folder: Tykociner, Prof Joseph T (Deceased 6/11/69), UIA.

<sup>75</sup> One of them was Cassius M. Clay, who regarded nihilism “as infamous, the quintessence of radicalism and revolution” and thought that “the upshot of a forcible overthrow of a central power by the nihilists would be universal anarchy and the dissolution of the empire into petty governments and old time barbarism.” See Babey’s summary of Clay’s ideas in Babey, 40-41. See also Clay, C.M. *The Life of Cassius Marcellus Clay, Memoirs* (Cincinnati, 1886), 333.

<sup>76</sup> The full title of his book is *Russian Nihilism ad Exile Life in Siberia. A Graphic and Chronological History of Russia’s Bloody Nemesis, and a Description of Exile Life in Its True and Horrifying Phases, Giving the Result of a Tour Through Russia and Siberia Made by the Author, Who Carried With Him Letters of Commendation from Both*

governments. Army-lieutenant Francis Greene spent two years in St Petersburg after 1877, as a military attaché to the U.S. legation, acknowledging nihilists' well-founded grievances against the government.<sup>77</sup> Lecturer John Stoddard's sympathies were aroused "by the pitiable conditions of the Russian people, by the long list of exiles sent to Siberia, and by the unlimited power of the police."<sup>78</sup> There was William Jackson Armstrong, who "portrayed nihilists as martyrs devoted to American principles in *Siberia and the Nihilists: Why Kennan Went to Siberia*. Durland Kellogg enlightened his compatriots about the revolution of 1905 in *The Red Reign: The True Story of an Adventurous Year in Russia*. Ohio journalist William Curtis investigated the nihilist movement in 1887. John Reed and Louise Bryant analyzed the politics and standing of various political factions active during revolutions in Russia, and devoted several chapters in their accounts to notable revolutionary personalities like Katherine Bresko-Breshkovsky, Maria Spiridonova, and Alexandra Kolontai. Others fascinated by the revolution include Charles Emory Smith, who was Minister Plenipotentiary to Russia in 1890-92, and George von Lengerke Meyer, American merchant and banker, who also served as ambassador extraordinary to Russia in 1905-1906. These and other Americans devoted their attention to the demands of revolutionists and "were fascinated by the spectacle of a people persistently and courageously struggling for political democracy."<sup>79</sup>

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*the American and Russian Governments. The Latest, Most Authentic and Thrilling History of Life in Russia and Siberia* (Philadelphia, 1889).

<sup>77</sup> Francis V. Greene, *Sketches of Army Life in Russia* (New York: 1885), 33-34.

<sup>78</sup> Babey concludes that in the end, "the popular and facile lecturer agrees with the revolutionists." See his *Red Letter Days* (Boston: 1884), 141-142.

<sup>79</sup> Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917*, 47. The author refers to the following accounts: Smith, Charles Emory, "The Internal Situation in Russia" in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 1905, XXVI, 91-95, Mark Antony De Wolfe Howe, *George von Lengerke Meyer His Life and Public Services with*

The most renowned expert on social unrest and struggle in Russia is George Kennan. His publications, and papers at the New York Public Library manuscript division document his profound knowledge of Socialist-Revolutionary ideas and movements in Russia. Among other manuscripts are biographical sketches of such prominent Russians as Anna Pavlovna Kobra, Vladimir Galakteonovich Korolenko, Egor Lazerev, and documentation of more than a thousand political exiles and dissidents. Other materials include the accounts of the Yakutsk Massacre, and the history of Russian revolutionary movements and their timelines. Kennan reported that what was happening in Russia was “one of the most gallant and desperate fights for liberty that has ever been recorded in history -- a fight more full of individual heroism, fortitude, self-sacrifice and indomitable courage than any popular struggle of which we have knowledge.”<sup>80</sup> Reflecting upon the “much beclouded subject of nihilism” Kennan would state:

There could be no possible reason or excuse for calling by that name a professor who opposes the inquisitorial provisions of the new university laws, an editor who questions the right of the Minister of the Interior to banish a man to Siberia without trial, or a member of a provincial assembly who persuades his fellow-delegates to join in a petition to the Crown asking for a constitution. These people are not nihilists; they are not even revolutionists; they are peaceable, law-abiding citizens, who are striving, by reasonable methods, to secure a better form of government; and yet, after having been removed from their official places, silenced by ministerial prohibition, and exiled without trial, they are misrepresented to the world as nihilists and enemies of all social order. It seems to me extremely desirable that the use of the word nihilist to characterize a Russian political offender be discontinued. It is not accurately

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*Illustrations* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1919), 171, 173, 183, and Samuel Harper, “Russia’s Second Duma” in *World To-Day* XIII, (1907), 692-6.

<sup>80</sup> Ke Kennan to W.D. Foulke, 4 February 1888, Washington. George Kennan Papers. Box. 1, Series I. Correspondence, 1885-1888, folder 1.2, MAD, NYPL.

descriptive of any branch or faction of the anti-government party in Russia; it does great injustice to the liberals and the non-terroristic revolutionists, who constitute an overwhelming majority of that party; it is misleading to public opinion in Europe and America; and it deprives a large class of reasonable, temperate, and patriotic men and women of the sympathy to which they are justly entitled, by making it appear that they are opposed to all things, human and divine, except bomb-throwing and assassination.<sup>81</sup>

Kennan was perplexed that Americans, to whom the fighters for freedom in Russia, those who “submitted themselves completely to the will of the nation,” had every right to look for encouragement and sympathy “were so indifferent....”<sup>82</sup> He returned to Siberia in 1885 to report on Russian exiles. That trip resulted in a widely publicized account on the infamous of the Russian penal system and on political exiles and Siberian convict mines. He published his observations in *Siberia and the Exile System* (1891). Over the next two decades Kennan promoted the cause of Russian revolutionaries, becoming a prolific lecturer.

Kennan’s transformation in the understanding of liberalism, democracy, dissent, and finally the revolutionary outcome of the Russian liberation movements is reflected in his rich correspondence. In February 1892 in a letter to *The Nation*, Kennan recalled that when he reached St. Petersburg in autumn 1884, he almost abandoned the idea of going to Siberia because “I feared that the material I should get would not pay for the risks and hardships that the journey would involve.” Until then, he had been favorably disposed toward the Russian government; “I was inclined to take a favorable view of Siberian prisons and the exile system, [and] I was strongly prejudiced against Russian political offenders, and I had no idea of writing as sensational narration, nor of attracting attention to my work by presenting Siberian penal

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<sup>81</sup> George Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System*, II (London: 1891), 433-35.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

methods in a dark light. Many of the things that I afterward saw and learned in Siberia," he concluded, "were a greater 'surprise' to me than to any reader of the *Century Magazine*."

What changed Kennan was that instead of meeting ruthless political offenders, he encountered, among others, highly educated aristocrats who "gave up everything" for their people."<sup>83</sup> What Kennan saw in meetings and conversations with exiles was their sacrifices, which contradicted the usual stereotypes of anarchists and terrorists.

"All these people" he wrote "are not mere names, but human beings of the noblest character for whom I have warm affection. It is as hard for me to write coolly and temperately of their sufferings in prison as it would be to describe coolly and temperately the prison life of my brother, my sister or my wife, and yet I have tried to do it, in order that I may not throw myself open to the charge of exaggeration or passion. If however I do not touch the hearts of the American people before I finish my series of Siberian articles, I shall think that my countrymen have no hearts to be touched and no sympathies to be roused."<sup>84</sup>

He indeed failed "to touch the hearts" of the American public and congressional policy-makers, when in spite of his vigorous opposition to the new treaty with Russia, which provided for the extradition of persons charged with political assassination, it was ratified by Congress in 1893. Kennan did all he could to prevent its passage, arguing that the scope of the provision would be wide and far-reaching, that this treaty should be negotiated on behalf of "the purest, noblest and most heroic spirits I have ever had the good fortune to know." He would blame

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<sup>83</sup> Kennan to W.D. Foulke, 4 February 1888, Washington. George Kennan Papers. Box. 1, Series I. Correspondence, 1885-1888, folder 1.2, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

Secretary of State John W. Foster and President Benjamin Harrison for their “conspiracy of silence.”<sup>85</sup>

At the turn of the twentieth century, many observers, especially socialists, classified “the coercion and suppression with revolt” as continued factors of the “political education” of both the people of Russia and themselves. American sojourners in Russia investigated the people’s reaction to the government and their own efforts at educating themselves.<sup>86</sup> The so called “gentlemen socialists” who were connected to the University Settlement work in the Lower East Side of New York, had worked with urban immigrants, then went to Russia where they got an “advanced education” from socialist revolutionaries. They then offered the West a new Russian scenario for regenerating the spirit of democracy and transforming Western ideas in such a way that the evils of capitalism might be bypassed.<sup>87</sup> Thus, as Babey put it, they “allowed the humble Russian to figure in [the] description of secret meetings, propaganda, strikes, and union activities.”<sup>88</sup> The majority of the group of journalists including Bullard, Kellogg Durland, Ernest Poole and William English Walling, inspired by Kennan’s campaign against tsarist despotism and went to Russia to report on events, employing revolutionaries as their guides and interpreters.<sup>89</sup> Ernest Poole travelled to Russia as a special correspondent for the *Outlook*, to study the Russian situation and report first-hand on “the greatest social and political upheaval

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<sup>85</sup> Kennan’s letter to Foulke, New York, 17 February 1911. George Kennan Papers. Box. 1, Series I. Correspondence, 1885-1888, folder 1.2, MAD, NYPL.

<sup>86</sup> Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917*, 94.

<sup>87</sup> Thus, for example, Poole longed to hope for such transformation when he declared “Desperately I wanted something new to work for. I found it in Russia.” *The Bridge: My Own Story* (New York: MacMillan, 1940), 7-8.

<sup>88</sup> Babey, Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917*, 39.

<sup>89</sup> Foglesong, *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire”* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 39.

since the French Revolution.<sup>90</sup> Poole documented the aftermath of the 1905 revolution, relying upon radical journalists, workingmen, and soldiers, attending their secret meetings, and risking his own wellbeing.<sup>91</sup> Babey notes that Poole learned from Russian provincial representatives their struggles to advance education, and from travelling agricultural teachers, the efforts of peasants to promote education. Poole examined the trials of workers who learned not only from their experience with strikes and setting up barricades, but who attended night schools in the factory districts where university students “acquainted them with political ideas...history, mathematics, economics, and politics.”<sup>92</sup> Like others, Poole longed to understand the social and political forces behind the turmoil in Russia, while addressing the injustices and exploitation he became familiar with while working at the University Settlement in New York.<sup>93</sup> Fellow socialist William Walling also wrote about the dramatic events of 1905-1907, and how the fever of agitation across Russia had caused more reading and inquiry and discussion than had taken place in the course of the previous half-century.<sup>94</sup>

In 1917, when the February revolution broke out, followed by the November uprising, American socialist-leaning intellectuals sympathetic to the new social order, went to Russia to

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<sup>90</sup> The editors of the journal addressed their readers acknowledging that at the time of the correspondent’s departure from New York to Russia, via Paris and Berlin, “no statement of his mission could be made in these columns, least the Russian authorities (who, by wholesale censorship of copies of *The Outlook* going to subscribers in Russia, have clearly shown that this journal is not favorably regarded by them) might deport him on his arrival, as they deported Mr. Kennan a few years ago when he visited Russia as an American correspondent. For the same treason we do not now print our correspondent’s name.” Poole, Ernest, “St. Petersburg is Quiet!,” *Outlook*, LXXXIX, (1905): 681.

<sup>91</sup> See the series of articles that started with “St. Petersburg is Quiet!” in *Outlook*, LXXXIX, (1905): 681-90.

<sup>92</sup> Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917*, 100.

<sup>93</sup> Ernest Poole, “The Dark People” in *Russia’s Crisis* (New York, 1918):103.

<sup>94</sup> Walling, William English, *Russia’s Message. The people Against the Czar* (New York, 1917): 100, 154, 178-79. Babey especially emphasizes Walling’s perspicacity, pointing out that his writings are important “when it is remembered that he foresaw a future communistic or socialistic Russian state superseding the despotism of the Czar.” Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917* 126.

educate themselves and their compatriots about the complexity of the social changes and upheaval underway there. Significantly, in choosing to go to Russia at a time when most of the American colony had left, such notables as John Reed, Louis Bryant, Bessie Beatty, and Albert Rhys Williams, among others, played a unique role in informing the world as to “how this greatest and youngest of democracies was learning to walk -- to stretch itself -- to feel its strength --”<sup>95</sup> and to report on it for the American public. Whether they were directly involved in revolutionary events, like Williams and Reed, or simply attempted to assess the Russian revolutions, like Kennan or Louisa Bryant, whether their interpretations were intricate, naïve and ambiguous, or veiled with uncertainty about the situation in Russia, their sincerity in trying to understand that country and to educate their compatriots about its culture and politics should be acknowledged and respected.

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<sup>95</sup> Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia*, 21.

## Conclusion

This analysis of the American experience in St. Petersburg, at the turn of the twentieth century, beyond the projection of its political, social and cultural diversity and involvement in multilateral Russian-American relations, represents a perspective on America itself. The legacy of the American colony in Russia's principal city, its involvement in varied aspects of pre-revolutionary life in the capital, and the experience of its participants in the revolutionary turmoil witnessed first-hand, serves "not as much to acquaint us with the history of Russia as to inform us of the manner in which Americans gradually enlarged the scope of their interest in foreign countries and brought even distant Russia within the purview of their attention."<sup>1</sup> It also illustrates the extent to which some American sojourners with varied backgrounds, interests and predilections played crucial roles in and were influenced by the historical, social, cultural and economic development of St. Petersburg. An early example is John Quincy Adams, who returned with a diplomatic mission to St. Petersburg where he explored the diverse polyphonic reality of the city's streets and captured it in his memoirs for posterity in Russia and America. George W. Whistler's technical and managerial skills left the city with a railway network and five "American" bridges, adding a futuristic theme to St Petersburg's architecture. The Russophile sentiments and enviable fortune of philanthropist and internationalist Charles Crane contributed to the industrial development of the northern capital as well as its cultural treasures and the artistic creativity of St. Petersburg's many talents. Entrepreneur George Neidlinger, a former mechanic from a Singer Sewing Machine factory in New York City, promoted his company and endowed St. Petersburg with an architectural landmark that still dominates the legendary Nevsky

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<sup>1</sup> Anna M. Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917: A Study of the American Travelers in Russia from the American Revolution to the Russian Revolution* (New York: Comet Press, 1938), 124.

Prospekt. There was Olga Burgoyne, a successful business woman, who operated her fashionable lingerie store catering to St Petersburg's most fashionable women and performed as a cake-walk dancer a "favorite [moves] of her American home" at the city's theatres, vaudeville, music halls, and café chantants. Another character was Melville Stone, who established an Associated Press bureau in St Petersburg in 1904, when, upon negotiating with the Russian tsar "with frankness approaching boldness," he broke through established state censorship laws, turning St. Petersburg into a hub for foreign journalists who came to Russia to truthfully and openly cover its politics and social issues.

Americans in Russia learned new things about themselves as well. Exposed to a widely dissimilar culture than that of the United States, Americans residing in St. Petersburg acquired a new "consciousness" of their own culture and conditions, sometimes questioning the accepted precepts of western democracy, pragmatism, and the desire for the 'pursuit of happiness' which, as they often discovered in Russia, did not necessarily involve the acquisition of material wealth. After almost a year in St. Petersburg, a bank clerk Leighton Rogers discerned that he had become "foreign to his own nature" questioning his incentive to "rush to pile up property, position, and power," which he had considered to be the expressed goal of an American. Similar to his predecessors such as George Kennan, Isabel Hapgood, and many others, while living in Russia, Rogers became sympathetic to Americans the majority of whom, as they thought, were more artisans than artists, neglecting in their haste the pursuit of truth and beauty which a Russian soul would continuously follow.<sup>2</sup> Albert Rhys Williams had a similar experience, interacting with

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<sup>2</sup> Leighton Rogers, *Wine of Fury* (New York, London: Alfred Knopf, 1924), 216. Rogers confessed that ever since 1916 he had "maintained interest in Russia and its enigmatic people," and he was to return there 25 years later during WWII as the Bell Aircraft Corporation of Buffalo and Niagara Falls specialist invited by "none other than Stalin" to oversee "what was being done with the P-39 Aircobras that were being sent to Russia under Lend-Lease." Together with three other engineers Rogers flew to Russia over the Army Air Transport routes, "stopping briefly in

Russian peasants. Even though he could not get over the image of the Russian peasant as “a shamble creature of the earth, immersed in the night of medievalism, chained by superstition, steeped in poverty,” he felt that the Russian peasant “challenges our long-held convictions. He revises our estimate of western civilization. It is not all obvious to him that it is worth the price we pay for it.”<sup>3</sup>

After spending four months in revolutionary Petrograd in the fall of 1917, multi-millionaire Colonel Thompson suggested that Americans learn from those Russians, who were born and raised “in the densest ignorance, with restricted lives and brutalized surroundings,” and yet, were “worthy of all praise.” Even patriotism, or at least the notion of it, so vigorously cultivated within American perception of the social compact, was questioned by that “rugged American.” He suggested that it was impossible to comprehend what patriotism was “until one sees in Russia examples of what I should call the patriotism of mankind.”<sup>4</sup> In “Real Devotion to Liberty” Thompson contemplates on meanings of such notions as freedom and democracy revealed to him while he witnessed “considerable civil strife” over there:

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Cairo and Tehran, among other places.” After four month in Russia, Rogers was invited to present for a *March of Time* radio program and published an article about Russia and Russian people in *Harpers' Magazine*. Rogers' continuous interest and expertise in Russia and Russian affairs that were initiated in St. Petersburg at the beginning of the century secured him a position to be a consultant to the President's Committee on International Activities (1953), a dedicated participant of The American Friends of Russian Freedom, Inc. Rogers negation of the Soviet and Communist government resulted in his prominent role in anti-communist organization that operated Russian refugees affairs in Germany with the help of the United States and West German Government and had an administrative office on Park Avenue in New York. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers. Autobiographical Sketch. Papers of Leighton W. Rogers, 1912- 1982. Box 1, folder 1, Manuscript Division (MN), Library of Congress (LC), Washington, DC.

<sup>3</sup> Albert Rhys Williams, *Through the Russian Revolution* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1967), 50.

<sup>4</sup> *Russia as a Democracy: Why and How We Should Help*. Views of Colonel William Thompson, an American Business Man Who Spent Four Months in Russia (New York: The Evening Post Job Printing Office, Inc., 1918), 25.

Russia is happy in her trials, because Russia has found something which her sons, and their fathers and grandfathers and great- grandfathers, have been striving for... It has mud on its boots, hair on its face, and the love of freedom in its heart.<sup>5</sup>

While some American business people managed to establish and develop their successful enterprises in pro-western St. Petersburg, others, especially proclaimed socialists, opposed imposing on Russians harsh industrial terms. Rather, they threw themselves in St. Petersburg gloomy Baltic indefinity, flitting through its mysterious aura and ephemeral nature that evolved “the surging tide of liberal feelings.” They believed that the energy of revolutionary agitation would inevitably spread from Russia and, thus, would make of Americans “the Kings Canutes of modernity....” A number of left-leaning journalists and reformers who went to St. Petersburg to study the social conditions there during 1905 – 1907 projected some of their observations there to the horrors of the raging capitalism back home. Even less radicalized travelers, such as the congregational minister and learned geologist - Wright developed a skeptical perspective on the widespread belief of Americans in “rugged individualism” and their distrust of governmental control and support. He noticed, after traveling around Russia and through China, Siberia and Central Asia, that even the most democratic form of government finds itself helpless without some centralization of power, that will inevitably “amount in substance to autocracy.” On the other hand, he denounced a widely spread western perception of Russia as desperately backwards, and, underlying the importance of Russian liberating movements stated that “even the most autocratic government necessarily was compelled to give attention to the prevailing public sentiment of the nation.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> George Frederick Wright, *Asiatic Russia, II* (New York: McClure, Phillips & co., 1902), 470.

For many Americans, St. Petersburg offered an avenue for new opportunities. They found there a unique chance to express themselves, to reveal artistic talents, to enhance entrepreneurial skills, to initiate successful businesses, or much appreciated relief activities, to pave the way to American popular culture, and to satisfy their hunger for Russia's ancient heritage, to learn Russian language and literature, to surrender to the obscurantism of Orthodoxy with its exuberant rituals and liturgical music, to enjoy life free of discrimination and humiliation based on skin color, and, finally, to search for answers to the burning social issues while witnessing revolutions and living through "a saturnalia of blood and tears" along with human joy "more direful and glad than yet mankind have known."<sup>7</sup>

Even when exposed to unspeakable hardships in the city torn by war and revolutions, Americans learned "not to avoid unpleasantness," but instead "turn it to beauty." It is that beauty of their openness, dedication, consciousness, courage and curiosity that this research is dedicated to. Although the history of Russian-American relations has been a well explored topic for a long time, the contribution of the 'American colony' to the social, economic and cultural development of a "potentially just and progressive" Russian city has been neglected or deliberately underestimated because of the context of Cold War politics. Only by abandoning old prejudices and rivalries can the importance of St. Petersburg American colony be fully understood. Over the course of the last few years more and more scholars are undertaking efforts to reexamine anew the past and to explore the American St. Petersburg. Thus, for example, the independent American researcher and *New York Times* contributor John Varoli announced his intention to publish his research on the history of Americans in St Petersburg after he attended the city's three hundredth anniversary in 2003. St. Petersburg State University scholar Vyacheslav

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<sup>7</sup> Seymour, William, Edwards, *Through Scandinavia to Moscow* (Cincinnati, 1906).

Tkachenko repeatedly refers to the lack of a comprehensive history of the diversity and complexity of Western financial institutions in St. Petersburg at the turn of the twentieth century. In his research devoted to Petrograd National City Bank branch, he provides a comprehensive analysis of the topic for the first time. Finally, *Sankt- Peterburg – SSHA: 200 let Rossiisko-Amerikanskikh Diplomaticheskikh Otnoshenii (St Petersburg –USA: 200 years of Russian-American Diplomatic Relations)*, published only in 2009, is the first serious effort to recover the memory of Americans in St. Petersburg and situate them among the numerous foreign communities that contributed to the city’s unique national, cultural and social mix.<sup>8</sup>

My research pursues similar goals. I hope that the dissertation further encourages reexamining the interrelations of American and Russian cultures, social and political histories.

Finally, writing this dissertation allowed me to reflect upon my own relations with America, which diffused the world around me from early childhood. What was left of the American legacy, explored in my research, half a century after the colony ceased to exist in 1918? By the time of my childhood and adolescence in the 1970s and 1980s, there were very few traces of the American presence remaining in the city. Amerikanskaya Street was renamed in 1955. The landmark Singer headquarters on Nevsky Prospekt became a bookstore. The American consulate did not open its doors to the citizens of Leningrad until 1973.

Yet the 1970s marked the beginning of a gradual return of Americans to the city, and a growing curiosity of the Soviet people about the other superpower. In spite of the atmosphere of

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<sup>8</sup> Among others, this publication features one more author, Vladimir Noskov, who is currently undertaking a profound research on Americans in St Petersburg. I became acquainted with some elements of his project when Norman Saul shared with me a number of pictures of the actual places related to American presence in the city. A lot of the shared material was included in edition, in Noskov’s article “Diplomatic geography: addresses of American diplomats in St Petersburg.” See *Sankt- Peterburg – SSHA: 200 let Rossiisko-Amerikanskikh Diplomaticheskikh Otnoshenii* (St Petersburg: Evropeiskii dom, 2009), 46-102.

confrontation that prevailed in formal international relations, there were a variety of forces which quenched a growing hunger for information about the United States. First of all, there were numerous translations of American literary classics that, though chosen by conservative state agencies for their desolate themes of American reality, often presented fanciful views of America, its citizenry, and its culture. Many Russians were engrossed in James Fennimore Cooper's adventure stories, the tales of Mayne Reid, the epic poems of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and other authors who collectively created a literary imagery of an ever-expanding frontier, contributing to an engrossing American mythology. Readers delved into Emerson's doctrine of self-perfection, rejecting engagement in a continuous struggle with society or pursuit of social change. They contemplated *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*, by Henry David Thoreau, and sought inspiration while mastering Edgar Allen Poe's "psychological intensities and obscurities." With the flood of books pronounced to raise Soviet awareness of American realism, Theodore Dreiser and Eugene O'Neil joined Sherwood Anderson, John Dos Passos and Sinclair Lewis in disclosing unexpected trains of American thought, introducing regional and cultural peculiarities unknown to Soviet readers, revealing features of American character, and many new points of view regarding the American "backdrop." Many curiously followed Mark Twain's descriptions of "the life of organized American society," and were amused by the burning indignation and piercing sarcasm that the author "delivered from its mores and foibles." Twain's reputation in Russia has been larger than that of any other American writer, aside from Jack London. Ernest Hemingway, Erskine Caldwell, and Richard Wright perpetuated Russian interest in their "psychological profundity, faithfulness in observation of human relationships, [and] breath of social understanding."<sup>9</sup> Numerous accounts of tramps, vagabonds, and the

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<sup>9</sup> For more detailed analysis of Poe's recognition in Russia see Robert V. Allen "American Literature and Film" in

American “hobo” appeared in translations. Soviet readers developed an even stronger taste for romantic adventures than for the explicit class consciousness in autobiographical writings of such authors as poet Harry Kemp, “scholar tramp” Glen Mullin, and song writer Woodrow Wilson (Woody) Guthrie.<sup>10</sup> Some formed a vision of America, traveling with ‘Charley,’ or following, in Yevtushenko’s words, “a drunken beatnik staggering along a well-lighted avenue.”<sup>11</sup> Despite the state censorship which excluded many works, America was always given a chance “to speak for herself through her literature,” especially when other avenues of cultural understanding were shuttered.

Jazz, that differed so radically from soviet musical standards, was another irresistible source of inspiration for those who rebelled against officially-sponsored mass ideology in search of inner-directedness and privacy, apart from pervasive Soviet collectivism. For many Soviet citizens jazz music became, in the words of the famous Russian jazz theorist and historian Efim Barban, almost “a religious precept.” Throughout its history in Russia, jazz had become an intelligible “form of spiritual resistance to surrounding reality.”<sup>12</sup> Leningrad, as it might be expected, became the capital of jazz in Russia. It was there where the first unofficial Soviet jazz magazine *Kvadrat* (Chorus) was published in “samizdat” in the 1960s, and where famous jazz historian Vladimir Feiertag organized lectures on jazz and published a book about the city’s jazz

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*Russia Looks at America: The View to 1917* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1988) and Delaney Joan Grossman, *Edgar Allan Poe in Russia: a study in legend and literary influence* (Wurzburg: JAL-Verlag, 1973). For more details about Russian interest in American literature and translation of American authors into Russian see Glenora W. Brown and Deming B. Brown, *Guide to Soviet Russian Translations of American Literature* (New York: King’s Crown, 1954).

<sup>10</sup> A brilliant translation of *Bound for Glory* by Woody Guthrie was published by the well known journalist Vladimir Pozner with a preface by Pete Seger in 1968.

<sup>11</sup> Alayne P. Reilly, *America in Contemporary Soviet Literature* (New York: New York University Press, 1971), 180.

<sup>12</sup> Efim, Barban, “Soviet Jazz: New Identity.” *Russian Jazz: New Identity*. ed. Leo Feigin. (London: Quartet, 1985).

history, paying tribute to the pioneers and enthusiasts of Soviet jazz. It was in Leningrad where the first Russian jazz club opened its doors to a wide and devoted audience of artistic nonconformists. My father, Alexander Matveevich Ginzburg, was one of them. He collected hundreds of records and publications devoted to jazz and other aspects of American culture and history. I was exposed to the sounds of jazz from infancy, accompanied by Uncle Remus stories that flowed as reassuringly as a lullaby, when read at bed time by my conspiring parents.

While my father's collection of jazz recordings and books about the United States was growing geometrically, my appreciation for American literature, music, and culture developed into an exploration of American history, and the post-WWII societal phenomena which gave rise to American counterculture, and its condemnation of the country's underlying social, political, and religious values. It was that fascination with cultural and social otherness that led me to choose modern American literature as a major at St. Petersburg State University. Throughout the intervening years, I have grown closer to American letters, managing to translate my field of professional competence and knowledge of the history of American literature into a broader context of American studies curricula. Thus, the adolescent fantasies which barged in with the irresistible power of jazz, helped to define the subject matter of my academic interest that I pursued further, given the opportunity to come to teach and study at the University of Kansas in America's heartland. Through this experience, I found that the breadth of our field is as enormous as the country itself. I began to realize how challenging it can be for an outside observer to adequately assess the cultural and social diversity of the United States, and to project an accurate picture of America to a sprawling world beyond.

Choosing the topic of the American presence in Russia, and in my native city in particular, I conceived of an opportunity to reveal the extent to which the characters of my

narrative managed to narrow that gap, by initiating a dialogue with Russians, while staggering the historical, cultural and geographical boundaries between our two nations.

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**SC**- Schomburg Center, New York Public Library (**NYPL**)

**UIA**- University of Illinois Archives, University of Illinois, Champaign - Urbana

**LC**- Library of Congress, Washington, DC

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