New Europe College Yearbook
*Pontica Magna* Program
2017-2018

Editor: Irina Vainovski-Mihai

*Pontica Magna* Fellowship Program is supported by VolkswagenStiftung, Germany.




ISSN 1584-0298

New Europe College
Str. Plantelor 21
023971 Bucharest
Romania
www.nec.ro; e-mail: nec@nec.ro
Tel. (+4) 021.307.99.10

# New Europe College Yearbook
# *Pontica Magna* Program
# 2017-2018

NILAY KILINÇ
NATALIA MAMONOVA
ANDRIY POSUNKO
MARIA RYBAKOVA
SERGEY A. TOYMENTSEV

# CONTENTS

# NILAY KILINÇ

Born in 1989, in Istanbul, Turkey

Ph.D. in Migration and Mobility Studies, University of Surrey, UK
Thesis: *Lifestyle Returnees at 'Home': The Second-Generation Turkish-Germans' Search for Self in Antalya*

**Research Experience**

Guest Fellow at Leipzig University EEGA (2018)
Research Assistant for the EU-funded YMOBLITY project, University of Surrey, UK (2016) Research Assistant for the EU-funded ELITES project, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, the Netherlands (2013 – 2014)
Research Assistant for the EURO-TURKS project, Malmö University, Sweden (2012 – 2013)

# GETTING OVER THE "DOUBLE TRAUMA": THE SECOND-GENERATION TURKISH-GERMANS' NARRATIVES OF DEPORTATION FROM GERMANY AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION IN TURKEY

**Abstract**

This paper explores the social integration processes of the second-generation Turkish 'migrants' from Germany who were deported to Turkey on account of criminal activities. Based on the life-story narratives of 14 male respondents (collected in 2014-2015) who work and live in Antalya – the Mediterranean tourism hub of Turkey – the paper aims to analyse the ways in which tourist places offer spaces for self-healing, as well as enable social/economic integration. The paper aims to contribute to the academic knowledge regarding deportation as a forced-return migration phenomenon which has been overlooked in 'the second generation return migration' literature. The premise of the research is that for the second-generation Turkish-Germans, deportation evoked a "double trauma": on the one hand, they had to adapt to their new lives in Turkey without having parents and social networks, and on the other, they had to integrate to the civil society as ex-criminals.

**Keywords:** Turkish-Germans, deportation, return migration

## 1. Introduction

This paper explores the Turkish-German second generation's post-deportation lives in Turkey in relation to their social integration and psychosocial wellbeing. The subjects of this study are both counter-diasporic individuals who experience stigmatization and exclusion by their co-nationals (Tsuda, 2009; King & Kılınc, 2014) and also ex-criminals who have brought with them to Turkey their traumas related to social discrimination. Through their childhood years in Germany to their resettlement in Turkey, they have experiences of being neglected (by their parents, co-ethnics, German and Turkish authorities) and they also have anxieties related to

identity crisis and morality, as well as unpleasant experiences from their imprisonment years in Germany. The paper offers a qualitative analysis based on open-ended, in-depth and non-standard interviews with 14 male Turkish deportees from Germany who currently live and work in Antalya, a tourism hub on the Mediterranean coast of Turkey.

Deportation as a forced-return migration phenomenon has been overlooked in the literature of 'the second generation return migration' and there is a lack of empirical research regarding the post-deportation and social integration experiences upon the 'return' to Turkey. Although the deported second generation is invisible in empirical research dealing with return migration from Germany to Turkey, they are an integral part of the tourism and hospitality workforce mainly in the Turkish coastal towns and cities in the southern region (Kaya & Adaman, 2011).

The overarching research question is in what ways does a tourist place enable social and economic integration for the deported second-generation Turkish migrants from Germany? In this context, the paper further explores the following questions: First, what were the circumstances that led the second generation to be engaged in criminal activities in Germany? Second, once deported to Turkey, what were their experiences in terms of social, economic and cultural adaptation? Third, why did they decide to settle in Antalya? And fourth, in what ways do they benefit from living and working in a tourism destination?

To understand the ways in which they negotiate their new contexts in Turkey to heal this "double trauma" and achieve social integration as well as well-being, Wright's (2012) human well-being approach was found useful in evaluating migration and human-centred development for its focus on agency and freedoms rather than on what people lack. Because this paper suggests that any social integration process starts with the individual's own self-development and improving of their well-being.

The paper demonstrates that, in the case of engagement with criminal activities, most of the second generation face the consequence of deportation to Turkey unless they possess German citizenship. Subsequently, the second generation goes through a 'double trauma': on the one hand, they are forced to leave their families and the country they were born and raised in; on the other hand, they must cope with the new environment in Turkey where they become marginalised not only for coming from Germany, but also for their criminal past.

Thus, for the second generation 'returnees', disillusionment and disappointments in their post-return lives in Turkey, together with the

practical hardships of fitting into the society and the structural system, create a "counter-diasporic" condition, meaning that the second generation's idealisation of places is reversed and this time they develop a feeling of longing for the country they left (King & Christou, 2011). However, in the case of the deported second generation, life in the counter-diaspora entails other hardships, as they need to also erode the boundaries related to their criminal identities.

Based on these arguments, the theoretical contribution of the research is established on the problematisation of return migration with regards to the specific case of the second-generation migrants' deportation. The research has the potential to offer valuable insights for the local authorities, tourism directorates and stakeholders to understand the socio-economic challenges of the deported migrants and what kind of re-integration assistance needs to be implemented at the micro and macro level.

## 2. Background of 'Turkish' Migration to Germany

Due to labour shortages in its booming post-war economy, the Federal Republic of Germany signed intergovernmental contracts with the following countries: Italy (1955), Spain and Greece (1960), Turkey (1961 and 1964), Morocco (1963), Portugal (1964), Tunisia (1965) and Yugoslavia (1968) (Kaya & Kentel, 2005: 7). The widely-used term *Gastarbeiter* for these labour migrants illustrates the German government's attempt to recognise the contribution of foreigners to the country's economy, while also emphasising the idea of temporary stay. Nevertheless, guestworker populations became more permanent, maturing into diasporas (Mihajlovic, 1987: 188-189).

Today, Turkish migration to Germany is the third largest international migration in the world, after Mexican migration to the US and Bangladeshi migration to India (World Bank, 2011: 5-6). In addition, Turkish migration to Germany resulted in the emergence of the largest Turkish community within Europe – nearly 3 million Turkish residing in Germany (making up 16% of the total migrant population) and 1.5 million of them retaining Turkish citizenship even though 440.469 of them were born in Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2015). It needs to be mentioned however that 'Turkish' here refers to a heterogeneous group, and within the context of this paper it includes those people who hold or whose parents hold citizenship of the Republic of Turkey. Similarly, Sirkeci (2002) states that, Turkish migration flows refer to those of the Turks, Kurds, Arabs and others, as ethnic groups forming the population in Turkey.

The Turkish guestworker community has matured into a multi-dimensional diaspora in the last 57 years, due to family reunifications and irregular migration between 1973-1980s, and new migratory flows with refugees, students and highly-skilled migrants during the 1980s, following the political turmoil and the 1980 *coup d'état* in Turkey (Aydın, 2016). Turkish labour migrants were recruited mainly for factory work, filling the shop-floor jobs that German workers were reluctant to do (King & Kilinc, 2013). Most of the early migrant workers were men who were given temporary contracts and which were provided accommodation in worker houses. However, some women were also recruited, mainly to work in light industries such as electrical goods and textiles/clothing, and the number of migrant women in the workforce increased when family reunions were allowed in 1972.

In 1965, the conservative-led coalition government under Chancellor Erhard responded to the presence of (mostly Muslim) migrant groups, with a 'foreigner law' (*Ausländergesetz*) granting limited rights to 'guestworkers'. The government, at the time, considered the presence of foreigners a temporary problem which would resolve itself over time (Faas, 2009). The peak of Turkish labour migration in Europe was between 1971 and 1973, during which time more than half a million Turkish workers came to Western Europe. Around 90 per cent of them were employed by German industries (Özüekren & Van Kempen, 1997). When Germany was hit by the oil crisis in 1973, it decided to stop the intake of foreign workforce. In the same year, the Federal Republic introduced a 'recruitment ban' (*Anwerbestopp*) to halt the inflow of guestworkers. However, this had the unintended result of convincing many Turkish guestworkers in Germany to stay.

Yet the slowdown in the growth of the number of immigrants was temporary and the number of new entrants again peaked in the 1980s. A mass migration of refugees was recorded following the 1980 military intervention in Turkey. The second oil crisis resulted into an economic crisis and long-term unemployment became a serious problem. From that moment on, migration from Turkey consisted almost exclusively of family and asylum migration (Euwals et al., 2007). This was first followed by a steady inflow of asylum seekers and later by clandestine migrants until the 2000s (Sirkeci et al., 2012). Since the turn of the millennium, there has been a continuous decline in Turkish migration to Germany and elsewhere, largely due to strong economic development in Turkey and the fluctuating prospect of EU membership.

## 3. Return Migration from Germany to Turkey

In Germany, between 1974 and the early 1980s, the leadership of Chancellor Helmut Schmidt formulated three principles to regulate guest work, namely (1) the 'integration' of those who have the right to live in Germany, (2) the continuation of the 1973 ban on recruitment and (3) financial incentives to support the return of migrants to their countries of origin through the 1983 law for the 'Promotion of Readiness to Return' (*Gesetz zur befristeten Förderung der Rückkehrbereitschaft von Ausländer*). Under this law, every guestworker who voluntarily left Germany received a financial incentive of 10.500 Deutsche-Marks, but only about 250.000 Turkish migrants responded to this 'opportunity' (Bade & Münz, 2000).

Nevertheless, it can be claimed that return migration has been an ever-present feature of Turkish migration to Germany. Martin (1991) estimated an aggregate of 1 million returnees during 1960-90, but there have been phases of greater or lesser return. According to Gitmez (1983), 190.000 migrants returned in the wake of the first oil recession (1974-77) and another 200.000 between 1978 and 1983 (second oil crisis). Mainly, the 'return incentive' scheme operated by the German government resulted in around 310.000 Turkish returning to Turkey between the end of 1983 and 1985. Figure 1 illustrates the recent migratory flows between Turkey and Germany, highlighting that every year between 2006 and 2012 more people moved from Germany to Turkey than in the opposite direction.

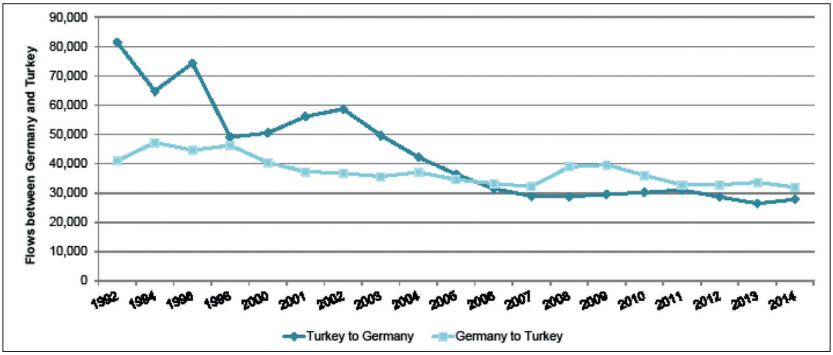


Figure 1: Migration flows between Germany and Turkey 1992-2012 (all nationalities) (BAMF, 2016)

Return migration to Turkey has been the subject of a number of studies over the past forty years, starting with the detailed field research on the impact of return migration on employment and development and continuing with several other, shorter contributions over the intervening period (Toepfer, 1985; Razum et al., 2005; Rittersberger-Tiliç et al., 2013). However, there are still not many studies that focus on the second generation and third generation who 'return' to Turkey. Yet, the current research and media articles suggest that this is a growing migratory phenomenon in Turkey nowadays.

With regards to the second generation's 'return' to Turkey, it is widely accepted in the academic literature that 'return' is a paradox for this group because it occurs to a country where the majority were not born and raised in, but only have vague memories of from childhood visits (or were taken to Germany at a very young age). Therefore, for the second generation, the act of resettling to their parents' country of origin is, in fact, a *myth* of return and reuniting with the roots (Tsuda, 2003). There are three socio-anthropological studies that mainly focus on the resettlement of second-generation Turkish-Germans in Turkey:

One study that focuses on this group's return to Istanbul has demonstrated that the lively and eclectic life in Turkey's metropolis together with vast job opportunities was favourable amongst the returnees, whilst the city chaos, high living expenses, traffic, and different setting when compared with domestic migration from the rural parts (higher rates of criminality, diminishing of Istanbul manners and etiquette, unplanned urbanisation etc.) created disappointments and frustrations (King & Kilinc, 2013). This group acknowledges a strong 'Istanbul identity' which they proudly embraced whilst living in Germany as well, as a social class status to distinguish themselves from the other members of the Turkish community who fit into the classic "guestworker type"[1] – those who immigrated to Germany from the rural areas of Turkey with limited or no prior education and skills, conservative and protectionist in terms of their traditional values.

The second generation who settled in the rural areas from the Black Sea Coast project their 'return' as a reunification with their parents' places of origin, hence base their choices on family and kinship networks, with the expectation of living in a secure environment (King & Kılınc, 2014). In both cases, 'return' is predominantly influenced by the second generation's family-related decisions – either their parents leading the return project, or encouraging the second generation to return to Turkey to find a partner,

and/or to conduct their high school/university studies. The places of 'return' were therefore either where the parents came from, or the ones where they had established most of their networks through childhood visits and holidays. Furthermore, for both samples, the realisation that Turkey has gone through an immense political, economic and societal transformation since the 1990s – mostly for the better, whilst Germany's weakening welfare and the gaining popularity of anti-immigrant public and political discourses – acted as rationalisation for 'return' decision, despite the second generation's various disappointments about their lives in the ancestral homeland.

The third strand of research within this topic focused on the tourism districts of Alanya, Side, Kemer and Antalya city in 2014 (Kılınç & King, 2017). The findings of the research highlighted a different dynamic of second generation 'return': the main reason why the second generation settled in the Antalya province was the uniqueness of the place as a touristic region, offering open spaces for the manifestation of more liberal and 'alternative' lifestyles in an environmentally and culturally attractive setting (Kılınç & King, 2017: 1493). Their 'narratives of lifestyle choices' demonstrated that the second generation in this particular locale projected their 'return' to utilise their social, cultural and human capital (mainly German and English language skills) to work in tourism-related jobs. Combined with the naturally beautiful scenery around them, flexible working hours and the social aspects of tourism work, the informants reflected that they could lead more 'fulfilling' lives in these relatively affordable and relaxed touristic towns (Kılınç & King, 2017: 1495).

## 4. Pathways to Deporation to Turkey and the German Legislation

In the late 1990s, the German government took important steps in terms of integration policies concerning its immigrant populations. The victory of the Social Democrats and the Greens paved the way for a new Nationality Act, which came into force in 2000. With this Act, German citizenship based upon the principle of *ius sanguinis* was reformed, allowing foreigners to obtain German citizenship through naturalisation. This legislation gave the right of citizenship based on the *ius soli* principle to children born in Germany and whose parents had resided legally in the country for the past 8 years (Hailbronner & Farahat, 2015).

Regarding the dual citizenship, the German government of 2001 introduced the Immigration Act (*Zuwanderungsgesetz*), a reduced and compromised version of which came into effect on January 1, 2005. The citizenship laws in this Act allow foreigners to obtain citizenship in a much more proactive stance towards integration. Since January 2000, immigrants' children born in Germany (who have at least one parent who has been in the country continuously for eight years) gain automatic citizenship (*ius soli* principle). They have the right to hold dual citizenship until the age of 23 when they need to decide between German citizenship and the citizenship of the country of origin (*Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Ausländerfragen*, 2000). The new law also includes provisions that ease the acquisition of citizenship for first generation immigrants, by reducing the residency requirement in Germany from 15 to 8 years (Ehrkamp & Leitner, 2003).

However, the German statistics widely use to the term "migration background" (*Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund*) to refer to those individuals not born in Germany, foreign nationals (even born in Germany), and those with at least one parent not born in Germany. Hence, the second generation Turkish even though born and raised in Germany or holding German citizenship are considered migrants. Such conceptualisation and the statistical numbers reveal a problematic situation for the *de facto* citizens: they had become German residents with a foreign passport and were demanded to assimilate to the legal, social and economic order and cultural, political values (*Ausländergesetz* of 1991) (Fischer & McGowan, 1995).

Furthermore, despite similar conditions of recruitment between the Turkish guestworkers and other groups from the Former Yugoslavia, Italy, Greece, Portugal and Spain, there prevailed an especially strong ethnic and religious labelling for the Turkish guestworkers (Faas, 2010). Whilst the immigrants from the above-mentioned nation-states have increasingly gained rights due to their countries' membership to the European Economic Community (EEC) (later the European Union), the "Turkish Question" has been exploited in the political discourse based on the cultural, educational and religious differences of Turkish people, as well as on their inability to integrate into the German society (Fischer & McGowan, 1995). Since 9/11, as well as the later attacks in London, Paris, Madrid, the rhetoric has evolved into the justification of discriminating against the 'non-Christian other', which is the strengthening public and political discourse when referring to the recent flows of refugees to Germany (i.e. Palestinians,

Syrians). Despite the policy changes in 1999 regarding the citizenship law (to *ius soli* principle), the highly-criticised political discourse of "*Deutschland ist kein Einwanderungsland!*" ("Germany is not a country of immigration") remained until the Merkel government agreed to adopt the EU's common principles for immigrant integration policy in 2005 (Brubaker, 2009: 174).

The Turkish community reacted to the stigmatisation practices throughout the 1970s by mobilising through diaspora organisations, ethnic neighbourhoods and the Turkish government's services (e.g. *imams* – religious leaders – and teachers were sent to Germany for religion, Turkish language and history courses) (Triadafilopoulos & Schönwälder, 2006). Nevertheless, in the long run, the lack of perspective about their future in Germany in terms of social, economic and political security had a negative impact on the integration of the first generation and second generation (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003). Most of the second generation inherited the experience of marginalisation, non-recognition, and exclusion, as well as the structural non-integration in German institutions (especially in schools) (Faist, 2000).

For instance, some academic literature depicts that, throughout the 1980s, the Turkish youth found alternative ways of coping with these integration problems, the birth of Turkish-German hip-hop and the creole language of *Kanak Sprak* reflected their identity struggles (Kaya, 2002). However, some members of the Turkish second generation (predominantly the men) were engaged in gang violence as a rebellion against the majority society in which they experienced discrimination, as well as a reaction to racist attacks towards the members of the Turkish community (Tertilt, 1997). On an individual level, some second generation suffered from drug abuse and they were involved in drug-related crimes, robbery and vandalism (Dünkel, 2006).

Dünkel & Geng's study on ethnic minorities and youth crimes in Germany (2003) reveals that the Turkish and people from former Yugoslavia shared the highest crimes rates, followed by the young naturalised immigrants, in the 1990s. Empirical findings show that economic difficulties within the family, hopelessness about getting a good education and a professional job, facing refusal and/or discrimination by their German peers and experiencing violence from parents can be the reasons behind violent crimes.

Another study shows that the Turkish committed the highest rate of violent offending compared to the Germans, the ethnic Germans

from the Soviet states (*Aussiedler*), ex-Yugoslavians and the southern European minorities, and even when the variables of "educational level", "socio-economic status" and "unemployment" were controlled in multivariate analyses, the significant difference remained in terms of violent offending between the Turkish and ex-Yugoslavian male juveniles (Wilmers et al. 2002). Enzmann & Wetzels (2003) evaluate these differences through utilising a theoretical framework of the "culture of honour". The authors argue that violent offending within the Turkish group is "characterised by a greater acceptance of violence as a means of restoring one's reputation and honour as a man" and show the "violence-legitimising norms of masculinity" as the prevalence of the Turkish youth's engagement with violence crimes (Enzmann & Wetzels 2003: 319).

The Turkish offenders who were prosecuted were given the choice of deportation (*Rückführung* – 'forced return' or *Abschiebung* – 'deportation') to reduce their imprisonment to half of its initial length or to two thirds of the sentence[2]. Deportation in this case would happen for those Turkish residents in Germany who did not hold German citizenship, thus the Turkish second generation who were naturalised (i.e. acquired German citizenship) were exempt from the deportation procedure, based on the Alien's Act which was amended in 1997.

A highly-debated deportation case in Germany concerned a second-generation Turkish youngster whose parents had immigrated to Germany as guestworkers. In 1998, 14-year-old "Mehmet" (pseudonym) was deported to Turkey unattended by family members due to his criminal activities (Green, 2003). Mehmet was born and raised in Munich, Germany however he did not hold German citizenship – consequently, according to the German law, he could be 'sent back' to his country of origin. Despite the public and legal debates on whether the deportation of a juvenile who was 'the product of the German society' to a country that he barely knew from summer vacations served the justice, the result was that the German authorities did not consider him to be their responsibility.

This example demonstrates how issues of citizenship, belonging, inclusion/exclusion and social responsibility are problematically dealt with at a socio-political and policy level. The official German criminologists' conceptualisation of the Turkish and other minority groups as "foreigners" indicates "a criminology of the alien other which represents criminals as dangerous members of distinct racial and social groups which bear little resembles to 'us'" (Garland 1996: 461) and this translates into policies of

not allowing them into the country (Law of Asylum), or deporting them after having defined them as criminals (Alien's Act). In fact, there are no Turkish reports and statistical data publically available about the number and living conditions of the deported Turks from Germany. In addition, there are no counselling or rehabilitation services when these people are delivered to the airport police in Istanbul. Hence, empirical research on their well-being and living conditions in Turkey can inform the policymakers and local authorities to take initiatives for developing mental/emotional/physical health and providing education or sector-specific professional training.

## 5. (Forced-)Return Migration and Social Integration

There are many interrelated factors contributing to or decreasing post-return social integration. Recent return migration studies increasingly put focus on the concept of well-being with regards to post-return experiences, by adopting a more holistic approach wherein human activity is understood beyond an economic framework, and include the role of 'quality of life', social remittances and networks as well as emotional and psychological aspects in return migrants' (re-)adjustment and (re-)integration processes in their countries of origin (Erdal & Oeppen, 2017; Vathi, 2017).

Within the second generation 'return' migration literature – and since the deportation topic is lacking – the aspect of psychosocial well-being has received little attention as the pillar of social integration and has often been evaluated with regards to the emotionally complex and unsettling experience of facing "social marginalisation at 'home'" (Stefansson, 2004: 56), empirical research demonstrating that the second generation's construction of the mythical 'home' is often challenged once they get the lived experience of the ancestral homeland (Wessendorf, 2007; King & Christou, 2011). These feelings of disappointment, rupture and disillusionment, together with the practical hardships of fitting into the society and the structural system, create a "counter-diasporic" condition wherein the second generation's idealisation of places is reversed and this time they develop a feeling of longing for the country they left (King & Kilinc, 2014).

Psychosocial well-being and mental health have been more emphasised in the case of forced-return (i.e. deportation of migrants and refugees) compared to the studies dealing with voluntary-return (DeBono 2017). Even though this paper focuses on the deportation-social

integration nexus for the second generation Turkish-Germans, it is also vital to acknowledge the criticism that the existing migration literature tends to put the psychosocial issues at the centre of discussion when the research is concerned with forced migration and migrants' war-related traumas; whereas voluntary return migration is considered psychologically safe (Vathi, 2017). Vathi further highlights that such a dividing approach that ties force and volition to macro level factors such as states' action consequently leaves voluntary migrants out of the policy-making focus and relieves the return migrants' country of origin from taking responsibility for the returnees' well-being and integration.

Human well-being is a complex notion and scholars recognise the difficulty of offering an adequate conceptualisation. Wright (2012) adopts the conceptualisation of Gough et al. (2007: 34) in which human well-being refers to "a state of being with others, where human needs are met, where one can act meaningfully to pursue one's goals and where one enjoys satisfactory quality of life". However, Vathi (2017) argues that the concept of psychosocial well-being is more suitable in the case of migration for being more considerate of the emotional, social and cultural aspects of migration. Vathi (2017) further suggests that human well-being is a 'state' whereas psychosocial well-being refers to a 'process' that emphasises the value of interactions, social/emotional consonance and the individual experience.

In this paper, I will use to term well-being without getting into a conceptual debate, and utilise Wright's (2012: 4) approach to well-being which includes both the objective and subjective dimensions and encapsulates the interplay between *functional domain* (concerned with welfare and standards of living such as income, employment, housing, also incorporating people's subjective assessments of these), *psychosocial/ perceptual domain* (values, perceptions, and experience in relation to what people think and feel about what they can do and be, including identity issues and psychological states such as self-esteem and anxiety, need for autonomy, competency and relatedness) and *relational domain* (concerned with both intimate relations and broader social relationships).

As the above framework shows, Wright (2012) does not ignore the overlaps, interdependence and interplay between different dimensions that operate in well-being, on the contrary, she highlights that individuals' conceptualisations of well-being are contextual, informed by the different social networks within which they are entwined, locally, nationally and transnationally. Here, Wright highlights the issues of place and scale,

explaining that the context and the structures within a place, such as the housing facilities, language(s) spoken, its migration regimes, welfare systems and particular spaces (e.g. sport facilities, community centres, markets etc.) may have positive or negative effects on migrants' well-being and life satisfaction. The relationality aspect in terms of place and people is quite relevant in the case of return migration; as for the second generation 'returnees', psychosocial well-being is found to be directly linked to the notions of home and belonging (King & Kilinc 2014; King & Kilinc 2016). However, more recently, scholars argue that neither belonging or homeliness are 'already-given' or static states, but in fact, the 'returnees' need to actively engage themselves in place-attachment practices to construct "the sense of physically being and feeling 'in place' or 'at home'" (Yüksel, et al. 2010: 275).

Therefore, it is vital to put focus on the specific localities of 'return' rather than dealing with the abstract and wide concept of 'ancestral homeland' and understand how well-being is constructed in 'returnees' everyday lives in different spaces/settings and how well-being 'travels' across spatial boundaries (Wright 2012: 469). With this, the issue of scale arises, which is also highly relevant for understanding the post-return experiences of the second generation. As return is not a finalised project, there may be further migratory paths (i.e. to different parts within the ancestral homeland, to different countries, or migrating back to the sending country of the second generation) and/or sustaining transnational ties and activities between the receiving society and the country of origin (Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004). Thus, Wright (2012) evaluates how living well is transformed or reinforced through instances in a "transnational social field" – for instance, focusing on the ways in which the maintenance or disruption of the social and other ties in several localities affect the migrants' well-being (Vathi 2017).

Wright's (2012: 85) analysis is also sensitive to different positionalities such as the social variables of gender and generation in order to demonstrate how well-being is embedded in local meanings/understandings and how well-being expectations, needs and the agency to achieve well-being vary according to gender, age, generation and stage in the life cycle. Gender and generation have been the key issues with regards to the second generation's 'return' experiences wherein the 'return' is not always an autonomous decision, especially for the women, but one initiated by the parents (the first generation), female returnees' autonomy being more limited upon return on matters such as where to study/work and how to

live, as families expect that the return will result in the second generation's marriage with a co-national (for both genders) (King & Kilinc 2014). So, for the returnees there is also an ongoing re-negotiation regarding their gendered identities in the "gender geometries of power" in which gender operates simultaneously on multiple spatial and social scales (e.g., the body, the family, the state) across transnational terrains where gender ideologies and relations are reaffirmed, reconfigured, or both (Mahler & Pessar, 2011: 445).

Based on the discussion presented until now regarding Wright's framework for human well-being and its possible integration and interpretation within the case of second generation deportees' social integration, this paper makes certain adjustments to offer a more effective theoretical framework for the specific case of the deported Turkish-German second generation who settled in Antalya. First of all, in order to accentuate the importance of place in providing environments that offer/promote well-being, this paper utilises a translocality angle which grounds transnational experiences in particular localities. Thus, the paper suggests that instead of understanding the second-generation 'returnees' lives in "transnational social fields", we need to conceptualise it as 'translocational social fields'. Brickel and Datta (2011: 6) offers a conceptualisation for translocality as the following, which this paper adopts within its theoretical framework: "We examine translocal geographies as a set of dispersed connections across spaces, places and scales which become meaningful only in their corporeality, texture and materiality – as the physical and social conditions of particular constructions of the local, become significant sites of negotiations in migrants' everyday lives." By focusing on the local, the contextual and social aspects that support or undermine the achievement of desired well-being outcomes can be better understood.

Secondly, following Anthias (2008) social roles, performativities and discursive practices of identities can be understood within "translocational positionality". According to Anthias (2002: 501), positionality is "placement within a set of relations and practices that implicate identification and 'performativity' or action". Anthias (2008) further explains that translocational positionality is the space at the intersection of *agency* – involving social positionings as well as meanings and practices attached – and *structure* in which social positions and effects are merged. In this space, identities are embedded within power hierarchies being constructed by narratives both in individual and collective levels. Anthias (2008) debates about 'identity' and 'belonging' in light of "translocational

positionality", in which she stresses that the understanding of 'belonging' and 'identity' is shifting because the national borders are challenged by newer migration flows (with refugees, asylum seekers, skilled migrants etc.) where "there exist complex relations to different locales; these include networks involving social, symbolic and material ties between homelands, destinations and relations between destination" (2008: 6). This framework is also useful to understand the relationship between agency-structure, who has access to certain spaces, who has autonomy to change their lives for the better, what attributes of identity help or limit an individual's active agency and to what extend an individual can go beyond the given structures through negotiating their identities in the power geometries within their 'translocal social fields'.

Thirdly, for analysing how the deported second generation socially and economically re-integrated themselves in Turkey, which led to the positive development of well-being, this paper adopts the notion of "field" (Bourdieu, 1999) which reflects the individuals' subjectivities, navigation practices and negotiation processes. The metaphor of "field" represents the social space(s) where the individuals learn how to play the "game". However, their interactions with the "field" are always related to their "habitus" – their worlds of meaning, subjectivities and the sum of their social, cultural, economic capitals. Habitus incorporates both structure and agency, acting as a "power of adaptation" in the field, through the exchange across different types of capitals (Bourdieu, 1993). This theoretical framework is useful to explore how the deported second generation found ways and created strategies to socially and economically adapt to the circumstances in Antalya and how they managed to benefit from liquidity, hybridity and (trans-) notions of identity and belonging (Bauman, 2005).

For the deported second generation 'returnees', changing their ex-criminal and counter-diasporic status to socially integrated locals require a level of self-reflexivity, i.e. active agency which seems to be difficult. However, the paper discusses that the second generation Turkish-Germans who come from a working-class background should not be evaluated in relation to class and class-related limitations, because class is a problematic approach in the individualised, hybridised and globalised societies of late modernity, as misalignments can often emerge between one's economic capital, social class, self-identity and lifestyle choices. Instead, the paper focuses on their cultural capital and habitus which are not durable but transformative. Hence, the second generation's evolving

subjectivities are based on their "transcultural capital" (language skills, know-how of two cultures, educational and professional qualities etc.) (Meinhof & Triandafyllidou, 2006).

## 6. Entering the field: Methodology and Characteristics of the Sample

Recognising that "migration is also a social and cultural phenomenon bound up with issues of place, identity and subjectivity" (Ni Laoire, 2000: 232), the primary data of this qualitative research is non-standard interviews that are semi-structured, open-ended and in-depth. Life-story narratives were chosen as the core research instrument to cover the different time-place stages of the interviewees' lives in Germany and Turkey. The fieldwork took place in the Antalya province, located in the Mediterranean region of Turkey. The research is a cross-sectional study as the data was collected in the framework of 2 months in 2014 and 3 months in 2015.

The criteria for the interviews were set as the respondents who would be classified as the second generation, based on Thomson & Crul's definition (2007), children of two immigrant parents (first generation) who were either born in the receiving country, or brought in before the school age (before the age of 6). Out of the total of 74 interviews collected in 2014 and 2015, 14 respondents had criminal backgrounds and were deported to Turkey when they were in their early 20s. All the 14 respondents are men, coming from guestworker family background, mainly in their 30s and 40s. Half of the sample was born in Germany and the other half was born in Turkey and was taken to Germany before the age of 5. 10 respondents have a secondary level education from Germany (predominantly vocational schools), and 4 respondents had to leave school, either because they were sent to prison, or the schools expelled them due to inappropriate behaviour. All the respondents are working in tourism-related businesses, predominantly in the service sector. None of the respondents' families are from the Antalya province, thus they had no prior ties to these localities. Furthermore, except for 3 respondents who have siblings in Turkey, none of the other respondents' parents or siblings live in Turkey, they either passed away or still reside in Germany. The sample group of this paper holds only Turkish citizenship, and this was the reason why they could be deported to Turkey, and they had a 10-year ban on entering Germany

from the date they were sent to Istanbul Atatürk Airport accompanied by the German police and being handed over to the airport police in Turkey.

The questions were also constructed to understand how the deported second generation found out about Antalya and imagined that they could have a better future in this tourism-oriented city. These interviews took around 1 hour, and the interviews were recorded on a digital recorder. All the interviews were held in the respondents' working places, however, in order to have a discrete environment, the interviews were held either when they were alone, or we sat down outside, far from their colleagues. During the interviews, the informants spoke in both Turkish and German, hence they were given the freedom to express themselves in two languages they feel comfortable using. These interviews were then translated and transcribed into English, however words and phrases unique to Turkish and German languages were kept in original and explanatory footnotes were added.

The informants were contacted through various sources followed by snowball sampling. I have used my previous networks for reaching potential interviewees and I have visited almost all the shops in the touristic districts of Kundu and Old Town area in Antalya city and asked if there were workers who were born and raised in Germany. In addition, I visited tourism agencies and hotels and asked the human resources departments if they could direct me to any possible interview candidates.

Certain ethnical procedures were followed during the data collection and analysis process, such as not giving away informants' personal stories to others, as in the tourism spaces most of the workers know each other. Secondly, I have adopted an 'empathic' approach to interviewing to allow the informants to speak in their own voice wherein I have embraced an active role, revealing personal feelings about the issues under discussion (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000). It was important to be ethical to my views and principles regarding certain issues such as violence, drug abuse, vandalism and robbery which I could not be neutral to or accepting about, and I believe my honest thoughts and reactions about these stories made my respondents to trust me more, to evaluate more on the experiences without feeling the need to justify their past actions. Thirdly, once the interviews were collected, the names of the respondents were anonymised through using pseudonyms and the names of their working places are not used.

During the transcription process of the recordings, I noted all the significant pauses, hesitations and interruptions that took place during the interviews, because in narrative analysis, not only what people say is

important but the way they say it also carries importance (Riessman, 2002). The transcriptions were analysed through following a thematic analysis narrative, putting an emphasis on *what* is said rather than *how* it is said. In addition, I paid close attention to the hermeneutic process involved in my own "activity of making sense" of the narratives (Schwandt, 2003) whilst reading and re-reading the transcriptions and creating the initial codes and themes. Once themes emerged, I re-arranged the themes using the human well-being theoretical framework of Wright (2012).

## 7. Starting a New Life in Antalya: Social Integration after Deportation

To start with, the respondents narrated their stories of marginalisation and the paths that led them to minor and major crimes in Germany, due to having turbulent relationships with their parents, lack of interest in school stemming from discrimination by peers or/and teachers, negative neighbourhoods or a 'ghetto' environment with problematic friendships and general identity struggles which put them in a complex and hopeless emotional state. When they were deported to Turkey, they did not have family support as their families remained in Germany and they found themselves in a completely new environment wherein they did not know where to settle in or how to start a new life in their so called 'ancestral homeland'. All the respondents mentioned that they firstly tried to live in the small towns where their parents come from, hoping to get support from their relatives there, and some informants also tried to live in Istanbul, expecting that the big city life would offer them jobs and they could socially integrate. However, the findings show that in both cases, the respondents were disappointed and their first months or years in Turkey evoked a 'double trauma' for them. Davut, who is 38 years of age and currently working in a clothing store in Antalya as a sales person, was deported at the age of 30 and he explains this 'double trauma' with the following:

> In Germany, I had a horrible family life, many problems… Then I had a thick criminal record. I became paranoid at some point, as if the police were always after me. Jail time in Germany was tough as well. Then when I got deported to Turkey, I somehow felt I could finally start over in a new place. I went to my parents' village and tried to work there, but one of my fingers got chopped in the machine, because in Turkey things are not

> done professionally as in Germany. My relatives there were not supportive either, they were seeing me as the black sheep of the family. I went to Istanbul a couple of times, but I got scared, that city would eat me alive… I said, "enough!" and I came to Antalya, knowing that I could get a sales job in a touristic shop. Until I came to Antalya, I was living in hell both in Germany and Turkey (Davut, 38, Antalya).

Davut's narrative has commonalities with the other respondents' narratives in terms of the hopelessness they felt when they were deported to Turkey, where they did not have knowledge about the country and places, and they had limited or no social networks.

The narrative accounts also show that they had received information about the life in Antalya mostly through other Turkish people in Germany (especially when they were in jail and discussed about what they could do after deportation to Turkey), or through their relatives and acquaintances in Turkey. In all cases, the informants were recommended to move to Antalya. As Aziz (46 years old) explains,

> If you were an *Almancı* with especially a dark past, everybody would tell you to go to Antalya. Especially in the 1990s. It was tourism's golden years, so many Germans were coming, they even bought houses here. There were many job opportunities, but there were no people who could speak German and English. It was perfect for people like me. We spoke Turkish, German, English and we were keen on starting a new phase in life (Aziz, 46, Antalya).

Indeed, it was also mentioned by the people in the tourism sector in Antalya that there was a flow of Turkish men from Germany who settled in Antalya from the 1990s onwards and filled most of the job positions in the tourism and hospitality sector. Here, it is important to acknowledge that return is a process of 'translocal dwelling' (Brickell & Datta, 2011) – meaning that, for the deportees, 'return' to Turkey was overall a stressful and at times disappointing experience, however Antalya, as the specific locale, provided them with new social and economic opportunities. In this framework, the informants' habitus and 'transcultural capital' of growing up with both Turkish and German languages, cultures, values etc. have a good fit with the 'field', i.e. Antalya, because the informants were able to adapt to the 'game' relatively quickly as their qualities via various types of capitals were valued in the tourism sector.

In terms of how the respondents reflect upon their social integration processes, it can be said that their improvement of their well-being in the *functional domain* was the first step to a transition to a better life. All the informants have been at all times employed since they moved to Antalya and some of them have even opened their own businesses. Four informants have their own tourism-related businesses and the rest mostly work in sales in touristic shops. Therefore, their improvement of their economic welfare, living conditions and income enabled them a sense of security. Here, it is important to acknowledge that their 'transcultural capital' played an important role in getting and sustaining these jobs, but also their commitment to a disciplined life was the main reason why they could sustain their economic ventures. Their economic integration was important to boost their social integration, considering that none of the informants had consistent or legal jobs in Germany, or were able to get a sustainable career elsewhere than in Antalya in Turkey. Hence, the 'functional domain' was an enabler for achieving well-being in the 'psychosocial/perceptual domain' and in the 'relational domain'.

The narratives further showed that living and working in Antalya changed the informants' perception about themselves and the social Others. To start with, all the informants mentioned that they felt like foreigners both in Germany and Turkey, not particularly because they saw themselves as 'different', but because they were perceived as 'different' by the dominant Others. Irfan, who was deported to Turkey in his early 20s, explains this in the next paragraph. Irfan now owns a souvenir shop in the Old Town area and he is happily married with children.

> I was born and raised in Germany. I was quite good at school. But I had a teacher who didn't like me, he believed that I needed to go to a special school for slow kids. Turkish students experience this sometimes, it is harder for us to go to higher education because we were neglected by our constantly working parents, and teachers. Even though I had many German friends, in these instances I would feel like a foreigner. Then I had to come to Turkey, thought it would be different in our motherland. But this time I had to deal with people's judgements. At least in Antalya, please don't care about my background and we Turks from Germany have a strong position here, the sector depends on us (Irfan, 35, Antalya).

Most of the time, as in the case of Irfan, the respondents felt disappointed about the German society for excluding them – because they considered Germany their 'home', the place where they were born and raised in.

When deported to Turkey, this time they had to face stereotyping from the Turkish society and were dubbed as "Almancı", denoting that they were Germanised, degenerated people – or that they are not 'Turkish' enough. However, in Antalya, tourism spaces enabled them to go beyond such identity struggles, because even though they had a bad reputation as being Turks from Germany, they were valuable for the tourism sector and the locals could not discourage them with their words. In addition, the respondents mentioned that they realised their multiple identities allowed them to interact with different nationalities in Antalya, make friends with especially German-speaking tourists/expats and other Turkish people who returned from Germany. In that sense, through the touristic working environment, they not only gained autonomy and competency, but they also re-built their self-esteem and relatedness with these new social networks. The oldest respondent Rüştü (53) who was deported to Turkey 25 years ago reflects on his new life:

> Since I moved to Antalya almost 20 years ago, I finally stopped thinking who I am. Doesn't matter. Look around you, in Antalya you see people from all over the world. I have been working in the jewellery sector since I came here and I made a good career. I enjoy my life, I have good friends here, many German customers of mine became my friends over the years. During the day I speak Turkish, German, English, Dutch, French… I even forget which country I am in sometimes (laughing). Calmness, good people, that's what I care for in life now, and I feel good about myself. The rest is history (Rüştü, 53, Antalya).

Finally, the respondents mentioned that their economic and psychosocial integration allowed them to improve their well-being in the 'relational domain'. Half of the sample are divorced, two of them are married, and five of them are single. Somehow, even though their marriages did not always go as they wished, having kids (5 respondents have children) was a push factor for them to have a sustainable income to support their children's lives. However, the narratives accounts show that having intimate relationships is still the weakest part in their lives; many respondents mentioned that they would like to focus on themselves instead of taking bigger responsibilities – for instance, the previously introduced informant Rüştü has been divorced three times and has five children in two different countries from three women of different nationalities. He says he tries to visit his children, but he is mainly interested in keeping up his work discipline and healthy lifestyle in Antalya. Other than this,

five respondents mentioned that since they moved to Antalya and "fixed" their lives, they started to be closer with their families so that their parents would come and visit them in Antalya. For example, Idris mentions:

> My family had lost hope in me when I got into jail and when I got deported to Turkey. They stayed in Germany and they were worried that I was never going to fix my life. After the army service in Turkey I was even more traumatised. Then I came to Antalya and build a life from scratch. I earned well here. My parents started visiting me, and they are impressed… Everybody says I am a new person now, and I guess I am because I work here with people who are also trying to be better people, we support each other, we work hard. (Idris, 44, Antalya).

In that sense, as in the case of Idris, they improved some of their previous intimate relationships. The informants pointed out that they get on well with their colleagues, neighbours and customers who are mainly German tourists and expats. Furthermore, they value the friendly and open-minded environment in the tourism spaces, where they feel a part of a community of people who think alike.

## 8. Conclusion

This paper focused on the social integration of deportees based on a well-being analysis which encompasses the objective situations that typify people's lives, such as income, employment and housing, which relate to the broader economic, political, social and cultural institutional contexts (Wright 2012: 50) and include people's own subjective understandings of these objective conditions in relation to how they perceive 'living well'. Thus, the narratives of the respondents were analysed based on their functional and psychosocial/perceptional experiences in Antalya, by looking at what kind of adjustments the respondents needed to make (whether of not they needed to learn a new language, get an educational/professional qualification, move to a certain neighbourhood, find employment etc.) in order to achieve their goals of living a better life and being a better version of themselves. Furthermore, the paper evaluated how far the respondents manage to meet their goals and what have been the main obstacles that limit them. It needs to be noted however, that the themes explored cannot be understood in isolation but they

are all interdependent and there are overlaps because the respondents' development in one area eventually has influence on other parts of their lives.

Subsequently, it can be said that tourism environments in Antalya allowed the deportees to overcome their identity struggles by providing them spaces to re-build self-confidence and competence, as well as offering them various job opportunities to have economic independence, develop business ideas and utilise their 'transcultural capital' to become successful in their occupations. Finally, the findings showed that, because their personal backgrounds were tolerated in Antalya and that they had the freedom of being 'who they are', they were able to build new networks with locals, Turkish-German returnees, international tourists and expats. In addition, they could afford rents in Antalya, benefit from the naturally beautiful surroundings, and, most importantly, maintain a work-life balance, which all added up to their overall well-being. In the long run, the respondents felt that they were socially integrated and considered Antalya as 'home'. This study was a first in the literature of deportation from Germany to Turkey, and more research is needed. However, as it stands, the paper hopefully showed that return migration from Germany to Turkey has many layers in which people 'returned' for various reasons and they have different experiences in Turkey depending on which city/town they live, what they expect from their post-return lives and what economic/social circumstances they live with.

## NOTES

1 Two common terms are used for this group in the Turkish discourse. One is "gurbetçi", referring to someone in *gurbet* (diaspora) – deriving from the word "garaba" in Arabic with the meaning "to depart, to emigrate, to be away from one's homeland, to live as a foreigner in another country" (Kaya, 2007: 18). Another is a more derogative term "Almancı", meaning "Germanised" or "German-like", associated with pretentious behaviour (e.g. showing off with products such as German-made cars or, with 'culture': dressing, eating and living like Germans) and losing one's "Turkishness" (Kaya & Kentel, 2005: 3).

2 In the German system, youth prisoners are juveniles (14-17 years old) or young adults (18-21 years old) who are sentenced to a youth prison sentence (from 6 months up to 5 years, in extreme cases up to 10 years). They can stay in the youth prison until the age of 25 (Dünkel, 2006).

## References

Anthias, F., 2008. Thinking through the lens of translocational positionality: an intersectionality frame for understanding identity and belonging. *Translocations: Migration and Social Change,* 4(1), pp.5-20.

Aydın, Y., 2016. The Germany-Turkey migration corridor: Reffiting policies for a transnational age. In: *Transatlantic council on migration: A project of migration policy institute.* Washington(DC): Migration Policy Institute, pp.1-22.

Bade, K. J. & Münz, R., 2000. *Einführung: Migration und Integration–Herausforderungen für Deutschland,* Frankfurt Am Main: Portal für Politikwissenschaft.

Bauman, Z 2005, *Liquid life*, Polity, Cambridge.

Bourdieu, P., 1993. *The field of cultural production: essays on art and literature.* New York: Colombia University Press.

Bourdieu, P., 1999. *The weight of the world: Social suffering in contemporary society.* UK: Alhoda.

Brickell, K. & Datta, A., 2011. Introduction: translocal geographies. In: K. Brickell & A. Datta, eds. *Translocal geographies: Spaces, place, connection.* Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., pp.3-23.

Brubaker, R., 2009. *Citizenship and nationhood in France and Germany.* Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press.

DeBono, D., 2017. "Burning without fire" in Sweden: the paradox of the state's attempt to safeguard deportees' psychosocial well-being. In *Return migration and psychosocial well-being: discourses, policy-making and outcomes for migrants and their families*, Z. Vathi & R. King, eds. Routledge: London, pp. 129-148.

Dünkel, F. & Geng, B., 2003. Experiences of violence, social orientations and risk factors among juveniles in the Hanseatic city of Greifswald, 1998-2002: findings of an empirical longitudinal study about the conditions of life and delinquency of juveniles. In *Youth violence: new patterns and local responses – experiences in East and West,* F Dünkel & K Drenkhahn, eds. Forum Verlag Godesberg, Monchengladbach, pp. 295-315.

Dünkel, F. 2006. Juvenile justice in Germany: between welfare and justice', in *International handbook of juvenile justice*, J Junges-Tas & SH Decker, eds. Springer, Berlin, pp. 225-262.

Ehrkamp, P. & Leitner, H., 2003. Beyond national citizenship: Turkish immigrants and the (re)construction of citizenship in Germany. *Urban Geography,* 24(2), pp.127-146.

Enzmann, D. & Wetzels, P. 2003. Ethnic differences in juvenile delinquency: the role of violence in legitimising norms of masculinity. In *Youth violence: new patterns and local responses – experiences in East and West*, F. Dünkel & K. Drenkhahn eds. Forum Verlag Godesberg, Mönchengladbach, pp. 316-345.

Erdal, M. B., & Oeppen, C., 2017. Forced to return? Agency and the role of post-return mobility for psychosocial well-being among returnees to Afghanistan, Pakistan and Poland. In *Return Migration and Psychosocial Well-being*, Vathi, Z. & King, R. eds. London: Routledge, pp.57-73.

Euwals, R., Dagevos, J., Gijsberts, M. & Roodenburg, H., 2007. *Immigration, integration and the labour market: Turkish immigrants in Germany and the Netherlands,* Bonn, Germany: IZA.

Faas, D., 2009. Reconsidering identity: the ethnic and political dimensions of hybridity among majority and Turkish youth in Germany and England. *The British Journal of Sociology,* 60(2), pp.299-320.

Faas, D., 2010. Muslims in Germany. In: A. Triandafyllidou, ed. *Muslims in 21st century Europe: Structural and cultural perspectives.* London and New York: Routledge, pp.59-77.

Faist, T., 2000. *The volume and dynamics of international migration and transnational social spaces.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fischer, S. & McGowan, M., 1995. From 'Pappkoffer' to pluralism: Migrant writing in the German Federal Republic. In: R. King, J. Connell & P.White, eds. *Writing across worlds: Literature and migration.* London and New York: Routledge, pp.39-56.

Garland, D. 1996. The limits of sovereign states: strategies of crime control in contemporary society, *British Journal of Criminology*, 36(4), pp. 445-471.

Gough, I., McGregor, J.A. & Camfield, L. 2007. Theorising well-being in international development. In *Well-being in developing countries: from theory to research.* I. Gough & J.A. McGregor, eds. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, pp. 3-43.

Gitmez, A. S., 1983. *Yurtdışına işçi göçü ve geri dönüşler (Labour migration to abroad and return migration).* Istanbul: Alan Yayıncılık.

Green, S. 2003. The Legal Status of Turks in Germany. *Immigrants & Minorities*, 22(2-3), pp. 228-246.

Hailbronner, K., & Farahat, A. 2015. *Country report on citizenship law: Germany*. Florence: European University Institute.

Holstein, J. A. & Gubrium, J. F., 2000. *The self we live by: Narrative identity in a postmodern world.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kaya, A., 2002. Aesthetics of diaspora: contemporary minstrels in Turkish Berlin. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies,* 28(1), pp.43-62.

Kaya, A., 2007. German-Turkish transnational space: A separate space of their own. *German Studies Review,* 30(3), pp.483-502.

Kaya, A. & Adaman, F., 2011. Impact of Turkish-origin returnees/transmigrants on the Turkish society. In: S. Özil, M. Hofmann & Y. Dayıoğlu-Yücel, eds. *50 Jahre Türkische Arbeitsmigration in Deutschland.* V&R unipress, pp.37-57.

Kaya, A. & Kentel, F., 2005. *Euro-Turks: A bridge or a breach between Turkey and the European Union?.* Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies.

King, R. & Christou, A., 2011. Of counter-diaspora and reverse transnationalism: return mobilities to and from the ancestral homeland. *Mobilities,* 6(4), pp.451-466.

King, R. & Kilinc, N., 2013. "Euro-Turks" return: The counterdiasporic migration of German-born Turks to Turkey. *Willy Brandt Series of Working Papers in International Migration and Ethnic Relations,* 2(13), pp.3-60.

King, R. & Kılınc, N., 2014. Routes to roots: Second-generation Turks from Germany 'return' to Turkey. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research,* September, 4(3), pp.126-133.

Kılınç, N. & King, R., 2017. The quest for a 'better life': Second-generation Turkish-Germans 'return'to 'paradise'. *Demographic Research,* May, Volume 36, pp.1491-1514.

Levitt, P. & Schiller, G. N., 2004. Conceptualizing simultaneity: A transnational social field perspective on society. *International Migration Review,* 38(3), pp.1002-1039.

Mahler, S. J. & Pessar, P.R., 2001. Gendered geographies of power: Analyzing gender across transnational spaces. *Identities: Global studies in culture and power,* 7(4), pp.441-459.

Martin, P. L., 1991. *The unfinished story: Turkish labour migration to Western Europe: with special reference to the Federal Republic of Germany.* Geneva: International Labour Office.

Meinhof, U.H. & Triandafyllidou, A. 2006. Beyond the diaspora: transnational practices and transcultural capital. In *Transcultural Europe: cultural policy in a changing Europe.* U.H. Meinhof & A. Triandafyllidou, eds. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, pp. 200-222.

Mihajlovic, S., 1987. The Yugoslav gastarbeiter: The guest who stayed for dinner. *Northwestern Journal of International Law & Business,* 8(1), pp.181-196.

Ní Laoire, C., 2000. Conceptualising Irish rural youth migration: a biographical approach. *Population, Space and Place,* 6(3), pp.229-243.

Østergaard-Nielsen, E., 2003. *Transnational politics: The case of Turks and Kurds in Germany.* London and New York: Routledge.

Özüekren, A. S. & Van Kempen, R., 1997. Turks in European cities: Housing and urban segregation. *Comparative Studies in Migration and Ethnic Relations,* 4(1), pp.11-29.

Razum, O., Sahin-Hodoglugil, N. N. & Polit, K., 2005. Health, wealth or family ties? Why Turkish work migrants return from Germany. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies,* 31(4), pp.719-739.

Riessman, C. K., 2002. Analysis of personal narratives. In: J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein, eds. *Handbook of interview research: context and method.* Thousand Oaks(CA): Sage Publications, pp.695-710.

Rittersberger-Tiliç, H., Çelik, K. & Özen, Y., 2013. The return to Turkey: Return decisions and reintegration patterns. An analysis of the first and second generations. In: T. Baraulina & A. Kreienbrink, eds. *Rückkehr und*

*Reintegration Typen und Strategien an den Beispielen Turkei, Georgien und Russische Föderation.* Nürnberg: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, pp.83-177.

Schwandt, T. A., 2003. Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry: Interpretativism, hermeneutics and social constructionism. In: N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln, eds. *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues.* Thousand Oaks(CA): Sage Publishing, pp.292-331.

Sirkeci, I., 2002. Revisiting the Turkish migration to Germany after forty years. *Siirtolaisuus-Migration,* 29(2), pp.9-20.

Sirkeci, I., Cohen, J. H. & Yazgan, P., 2012. Turkish culture of migration: Flows between Turkey and Germany, socio-economic development and conflict. *Migration Letters,* 9(1), pp.33-46.

Stefansson, A. H. 2004. Refugee returns to Sarajevo and their challenge to contemporary narratives of mobility. In *Coming home? Refugees, migrants, and those who stayed behind.* L.D. Long & E. Oxfeld, eds. University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, pp. 171-186.

Tertilt, H., 1997. Turkish Power Boys. Zur Interpretation einer gewaltbereiten Subkultur. *Zeitschrift fur Sozialisationsforschung und Erziehungssoziologie,* 17(1), pp.19-29.

Thomson, M. & Crul, M., 2007. The second generation in Europe and the United States: How is the transatlantic debate relevant for further research on the European second generation?. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies,* 33(7), pp.1025-1041.

Toepfer, H., 1985. The economic impact of returned emigrants in Trabzon Turkey. In: R. Hudson & J. Lewis, eds. *Uneven development in southern Europe.* London: Methuen, pp.76-100.

Triadafilopoulos, T. & Schönwälder, K., 2006. How the Federal Republic became an immigration country: Norms, politics and the failure of West Germany's guest worker system. *German Politics and Society,* 24(3), pp.1-19.

Tsuda, T., 2003. *Strangers in the ethnic homeland: Japanese Brazilian return migration in transnational perspective.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Tsuda, T., 2009. *Diasporic homecomings: Ethnic return migration in comparative perspective.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Vathi, Z., 2017. Introduction: the interface between return migration and psychosocial well-being. In *Return migration and psychosocial well-being discourses, policy-making and outcomes for migrants and their families.* Z. Vathi & R. King, eds. London: Routledge, pp. 1-18.

Yüksel, A., Yüksel, F. & Bilim, Y. 2010. Destination attachment: effects on customer satisfaction and cognitive, affective and conative loyalty. *Tourism Management*, 31(2), pp. 274-284.

Wessendorf, S., 2007. "Roots migrants": transnationalism and "return" among second-generation Italians in Switzerland, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 33(7), pp.1083-1102.

Wilmers, N., Enzmann, D., Schaefer, D., Herbers, K., Greve, W. & Wetzels, P. 2002. *Jugendliche in Deutschland zur Jahrtausendwende: Gefahrlich oder gefahrdet?* Baden-Baden: Nomos.

World Bank, 2011. Migration and remittances factbook. Washington DC: World Bank.

Wright, K., 2012. *International migration, development and human well-being*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

# NATALIA MAMONOVA

Born in 1984, in Ukraine, USSR

Ph.D. in Social Sciences, the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands (2016)
Thesis: *Rethinking rural politics in post-socialist settings: Rural communities, land grabbing and agrarian change in Russia and Ukraine*

Research fellow at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, the Russia and Eurasia Program

**Former affiliations**

Visiting researcher at the School of Geography and the Environment of the University of Oxford, United Kingdom (Trinity term 2017)
Research fellow at the Department of Anthropology and Development Studies of Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands (2010-2011)

**Awards**

"The Best Article 2016" Award, the Graduate School of Erasmus University. Article: "Naive Monarchism and rural resistance in contemporary Russia"
"The Best Article 2015"Award, the Graduate School of Erasmus University. Article: "Resistance or adaptation? Ukrainian peasants' responses to large-scale land acquisitions"

**Grants & Projects**

The European Research Council Starting Grant. Project: "Land grabbing in Russia: Large-scale investors and post-Soviet rural communities" (Principal Investigator Oane Visser), 2013-2017

The Land Deal Politics Initiative grant. Project: "Black Earth, Red Barons, 'Green' Investors and Grey Communities: Land grabbing and responses by local communities in post-communist Ukraine", 2012

The Netherlands Academy on Land Governance for Equitable and Sustainable Development grant. Project: "Large-scale land acquisitions in the Former Soviet Union. A study of rural social movements and land conflicts", 2011-2012

Participation in conferences and workshops in the United Kingdom, the USA, Russia, Ukraine, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Finland, South Africa

Author of more than 30 academic articles, book chapters, and non-academic publications.

# RURAL ROOTS OF AUTHORITARIAN POPULISM IN CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA

**Abstract**

This paper examines rural support for authoritarian populism in Vladimir Putin's Russia. Supporters of authoritarian populism are commonly portrayed as "simple people", who vote against their own interests as they are not sophisticated enough to resist the propaganda they encounter. This study rejects this simplistic approach and investigates the objective and subjective factors that shape political views and preferences of rural Russians, who are the main supporters of Putin's regime. In particular, this study discusses the agrarian transformations and historical legacies that gave rise to rural support for the authoritarian regime. Special attention is devoted to analyzing discourses in which villagers express their opinions about strongman leadership, democracy, national interests, the 'others' at home and abroad and other elements of authoritarian populism.

**Keywords:** authoritarian populism, Putinism, rural communities, Russia

## 1. Introduction

A number of analytical discussions on contemporary populist movements include Russia as an example of authoritarian populism (Stroop 2017, Reicher 2017). Some experts even believe that Putin was the first who discovered a breach in the modern liberal democracy and created an authoritarian regime that enjoys popular support by "making empty populist promises and using the political short-sightedness and irresponsibility of the ordinary people" (Yudin and Matveyev 2017). Authoritarian populism is a subset of populism. It is characterised by a coercive, disciplinary state, a rhetoric of national interests, populist unity between the "ordinary people" and an authoritarian leader, nostalgia for "past glories" and confrontations with "Others" at home and/or abroad. While the supply-side of authoritarian populism (i.e. the strategic appeals of its leaders and the programs of populist parties) have received considerable public and academic attention (Chacko and Jayasuriya

2017; Inglehart and Norris 2016; Vieten and Poynting 2016), little is known about the demand side of this phenomenon. The supporters of authoritarian populism are commonly portrayed as "simple people", who vote against their own interests as they are not sophisticated enough to resist the propaganda they encounter (Judis 2016, Inglehart and Norris 2016). However, scholars often forget that "any regime reflects the needs of the society under which it had originated" (Taylor 1998, p.223).

This study looks beyond the assumption of "simple people – victims of propaganda", and discusses various social, economic, political and cultural factors that influence rural dwellers' support for Putin's authoritarian governance. Rural Russians are the key political actors in Putin's Russia: their electoral support and relatively high turnout at presidential, parliamentary and regional elections[1] have contributed to the regime's durability for more than 18 years (Zubov 2017, Mamonova 2016a, Vasilyeva 2015). However, their political views and preferences are largely overlooked in Russian studies literature,[2] which portrays them as politically apathetic, conservative, reluctant to engage in open contestations, and having no influence on the ongoing political processes (see Granberg and Satre 2017 on the "othering" of rural Russians).

This paper approaches the issue of rural support for Putin's governance in a complex way. It analyses both objective factors (the socio-economic and political situation in the countryside) and subjective factors (the popular discourses through which villagers justify their support for Putin and share their positions on democratic government, elections, domestic and foreign policy, migrant issues, etc.). In so doing, this paper contributes to the emerging literature on authoritarian populism and the rural world, which calls researchers to "understand, but not judge, the social base, and its class, gender, ethnic and cultural-religious dimensions, which gives rise to regressive and exclusionary, sometimes violent, political movements" (Scoons et al. 2017, p.3).

This study is based on primary qualitative data, obtained during fieldwork in the Moscow, Vladimir and Stavropol regions during 2013-2015 and in the Moscow region in 2017. The first set of primary data was collected to analyze rural politics in general, while the latter was conducted for the purposes of this study and focused on motives, incentives and underlying processes of rural support for authoritarian populism. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with various rural dwellers: commercial and subsistence farmers, rural workers, farm directors, civil servants, pensioners, rural activists, and other social

groups. Elements of critical discourse analysis are used to analyze the primary qualitative data. In order to ensure the respondents' anonymity their names have been replaced with pseudonyms. The interviews were conducted in Russian; the direct quotations used in the text are the author's translations. The primary data is complemented with secondary data derived from online sources, mass media and academic publications, interviews with experts, and statistical information from governmental and non-governmental analytical centers.

The paper is structured as follows. The next (second) section presents the existing theoretical assumptions about popular support to authoritarian populism and discusses their limitations. Section three briefly introduces the political situation in Russia. Section four discusses the relations between the structures of political authority and agrarian property regimes in Russia. The empirical analysis starts in section five, which provides an analysis of villagers' perceptions of democracy, elections and strongman leadership. Section six is devoted to understanding various interests behind villagers' support of Putin's regime. Section seven discusses who are the "Others" in rural Russia and why Russia's quest for great-power status in an international arena is more important for many villagers than their economic wellbeing. The final section discusses the implication of this study's results for understanding the rural support for authoritarian populism.

## 2. Popular Support for Authoritarian Populism: Key Assumptions and their Limitations

Authoritarian populism is not a new phenomenon. This term was first introduced by Stuart Hall (1980) to explain the policy of Margaret Thatcher that provided a right-wing solution to the economic and political crisis in Britain. Among the main features of authoritarian populism, Hall distinguished: a strong and interventionist state, a shift towards a "law-and-order" society, populist unity between people and the power block, an embrace of nationalist over sectional interests, and an anti-elite movement.

Hall's concept of authoritarian populism was criticized by Jessop et al. (1984) for its ambiguity and problematic coupling of the notions of "authority" and "people": "sometimes its authoritarian, disciplinary, coercive pole is emphasized, sometimes its populist, popular, and

consensual pole" (Jessop et al. 1984, p. 35). However, the very same contradiction between "authoritarian" and "populism" makes the concept of authoritarian populism suitable to explain the current crisis of liberal democracy. In this context, the ordinary people are willing to give up some of their personal freedoms and follow an authoritarian leader, who aims to represent the people's interests and to return the national "glory" – one presumably lost due to the activities of the "Others" at home and/or abroad. It is aimed at "taking back control" in favor of the people and nation-states. It favors "nationalist interests over cosmopolitanism cooperation across borders, protectionist policies regulating the movement of trade, people and finance over global free trade, xenophobia over tolerance of multiculturalism, strong individual leadership over diplomatic bargaining and flexible negotiations, isolationism in foreign and defense policies over international engagement, and traditional over progressive values" (Inglehart and Norris 2016, p.17).

In many countries, authoritarian populism has a strong rural bias (Scoons et al. 2017; Inglehart and Norris 2016; Edelman 2003; Berlet and Lyons 2000). Neoliberal capitalism has brought a number of problems to rural areas around the world. The commodification of land and nature, massive resource extraction, multinational corporations' control over the agri-food system, the dispossession of rural communities from productive resources, have caused poverty among many smallholders and farmers, exacerbated socio-economic inequality, and created the "relative surplus population" that spreads across rural, peri-urban and urban areas (Hall, Scoones, and Tsikata 2015; Edelman, Oya, and Borras 2013; Li 2010). Many right-wing populist parties use the ongoing crisis in the countryside to gain popular support among the rural population.[3] In their study of populist parties' strategies across Europe, Inglehart and Norris (2016) revealed that "support for rural interests" is one of the main goals in the parties' programs.

The supporters of authoritarian populism are commonly portrayed as "simple people" who vote against their own interests (Inglehart and Norris 2016). The popular support for this political movement is discussed as being "irrational" (Jessop et al. 1984, p.35) and "against all logic and humanism" (Peters 2017, p.1). For example, the recent choice of British farmers for Brexit was discussed in the media as a "vote against self-interests", because by leaving the EU, British farmers lost their access to subsidies within the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, cheap migrant labor from Europe, and European markets. In regimes where authoritarian

governments enjoy popular support for many years (such as in Russia and China), popular support is commonly explained by state-led propaganda that has the greatest impact on the less sophisticated population, who are not able to resist it (Geddes and Zaller 1989). Russian rural dwellers' consistent support for Putin despite rural poverty and unemployment is often presented as "paradoxical" and largely a result of the state control over mass media (Vasilyeva 2015).

There are two main explanations of popular support for authoritarian populism: the economic insecurity perspective and the cultural backlash thesis. The economic insecurity perspective emphasises the consequences of profound changes transforming the workplace and society in post-industrial economies (Inglehart and Norris 2016; Piketty 2014, Hacker 2006). According to this view, less secure social strata – so-called "left-behinds" – are heavily affected by economic insecurity and social deprivation and, therefore, are more vulnerable to anti-establishment, nativist, and xenophobic feelings; as a result, they blame "Others" for stripping prosperity, job opportunities, and public services from "Us" (Inglehart and Norris 2016). However, this perspective explains only one side of the phenomenon. In their analysis of 268 populist political parties in 31 European countries, Inglehart and Norris (2016) revealed that populists do indeed receive great support from those less well-off and those who have experienced unemployment. However, in terms of occupational class, populist voting was strongest among the "petty bourgeoisie", not unskilled manual workers. Moreover, populist parties received less support among those whose main source of income came from social welfare benefits (Inglehart and Norris 2016). Both of these findings contradict the economic inequality and social deprivation argument.

The cultural backlash thesis explains popular support for authoritarian populism as a reaction to progressive cultural change. According to this position, the societal transformation to post-materialist values (primarily, cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism) have triggered a retro backlash. This backlash would be especially present among older generations, who "feel strangers from predominant values in their own country, left behind by progressive tides of cultural change which they do not share" (Inglehart and Norris 2016, p.5). For these people, the past is associated with national "greatness", traditional family values, and a strong, monocultural national identity. Their conservatism and traditionalist inspirations are ardently manipulated by populist politicians. However, the cultural backlash thesis

does not explain why younger generations support authoritarian populism. It also presents the populist support as a unique moment in history.

An additional weak point of both cultural and economic theories is that they tend to treat the supporters of authoritarian populism as a homogeneous group, without distinguishing different motives and interests among them. When talking about the supporters of authoritarian populism, many scholars use the concept of "silent majority", borrowed from Richard Nixon's populist approach during the Vietnam War. This "silent majority" is portrayed as the majority of the "ordinary", "simple", "little" people, whose interests are often overlooked in favor of the "vocal minority" of the economic and political establishment (Judis 2016, Inglehart and Norris 2016). There is no significant attempt to understand the divisions and different interests within this group.

Finally, the majority of studies repeat the initial shortcoming of Hall (1980): they focus on the ideological, discursive aspects of authoritarian populism and the political strategies of populist parties, and overlook the socio-economic transformations and class conflict that provided the ground for this political movement's emergence (see the critique of Jessop et al. 1984). However, classic studies have demonstrated the existence of interrelations between the structures of political authority and agrarian property regimes. Moore (1966, p.426) believed that "the destruction of the peasantry was critical to the formation of liberal democracies, while the retention of peasantries into the modern era imposed either fascism or communism". Rueschemeyer et al. (1992) argued that the inclination of different rural groups towards democracy depend on the agrarian structure and class conflict in the rural society. According to them, "independent family farmers in small-holding countries were a pro-democratic force, whereas their posture in countries or areas dominated by large landholdings is more authoritarian. Peasants living on large estates remained by and large unmobilized and thus did not play a role in democratization. Rural wage workers on plantations did attempt to organize, and where they were not repressed, they joined other working-class organizations in pushing for political inclusion" (Rueschemeyer et al. 1992 p.247). Therefore, understanding the pattern of agrarian transformation is crucial to understanding the inclination of rural population towards authoritarian populism or liberal democracy.

## 3. Is there Authoritarian Populism in Russia?

There are ongoing debates on whether Vladimir Putin's rule can be characterized as authoritarian populism (Oliker 2017, Muravyeva 2017, Yudin and Matveyev 2017). Putin did follow the same path as some Western populists – he came to power through elections and then proceeded to centralize. His regime's strongman authoritarian leadership, coercive disciplinary state power, traditionalist and nationalist (sometimes xenophobic) appeals in domestic and foreign policies, demonstrative attacks on "disloyal" elites, and popular support among ordinary Russians are features that resemble authoritarian populism. However, Putin did not come to power in 2000 on a populist platform, and his first two presidential terms were based on a programme of economic modernization and neoliberal development. This period also coincided with rising oil prices, which boosted Russia's economic growth. The global financial crisis that hit the country in 2008 triggered growing dissatisfaction among many Russians who experienced a decline in earnings. People became more critical to systematic corruption and started doubting the government's ability to manage the economy. The crisis also "undercut whatever vestiges of support remained for the neoliberal, globalization, and pro-Western model of economic development" (Chaisty and Whitefield 2015, p.167).

In response to the growing social discontent, Putin's third presidential turn (from 2012 onwards) involved more direct engagement with nationalist issues, and took "a conservative direction, with greater prominence given to themes of order and the need to protect the state" (Chaisty and Whitefield 2015, p.169). Putin has used the Tsarist and Soviet legacies in order to develop patriotism and a unified sense of Russian identity and to create positive historical parallels to justify the state's policy toward internal opposition and external enemies (Mamonova 2016a, p.326). The idea of a strong – nearly sovereign – leader, who has the power to intervene in any political process and decision making, is often portrayed by the state-controlled mass media as the only efficient way to rule the country. Furthermore, the Orthodox Church gained an important role in constructing a unifying ideology and loyalty to the country's authoritarian leadership.

Mamonova (2016a) argued that Putin's governance (re-)established naive monarchist principles in the state-society relations: the president plays the role of an intercessor and benefactor for the ordinary people, while all problems are blamed on "disloyal" and "evil" elites, who

deliberately misrepresent and misinform the president. Indeed, Putin regularly demonstrates his benevolence and closeness to ordinary Russians (i.e. his shirtless pictures on fishing trips, staged meetings with provincial residents, the annual TV question-and-answer session "Hotline with the President", etc.). From time to time, Putin demonstratively punishes "disloyal" elites to maintain his image of the "just and impartial ruler". However, the business elites are the backbone of Putin's regime and his demonstrative punishments are aimed at maintaining the elites' loyalty and satisfying anti-elite sentiments of ordinary Russians (Mamonova 2016a).

The relations between Putin and elites are one of the arguments against calling the Russian regime "populism" (Oiker 2017, Yudin and Matveyev 2017). Oiker (2017, p.16) argued that "anti-elite and anti-corruption campaigns, and popular feeling, are fundamentally different in Russia, where corruption is simply more accepted as part and parcel of the system, than in Europe". Another reason against Russian populism is the depoliticization of ordinary Russians. According to Yudin and Matveyev (2017), while populist leaders in other countries are aimed at mobilizing and politicizing their supporters, Putinism is based on the demobilization and depoliticization of the Russian population and on the endorsement of peoples' "non-interference in the affairs of those who are above". However, Muravyeva (2017) argued that "parapolitics" and "depoliticization" are features of populism "a-la-Rus". This form of populism would be one where the president-elites coalition is officially "hidden" from the public, and where, in addition to the population's depoliticization, any political affair is also depoliticized and presented solely as an economic, technical issue (e.g., the protectionist food policy is presented as an economic measure and anti-LGBT policy as demographic revival).

The present paper does not take sides in the debates on Russian populism but rather aims to examine why rural dwellers support the following features of the regime: strongman leadership, a strong coercive state, traditionalism and conservatism, nostalgia for "past glories", and confrontation with the "Others" at home and abroad. Rural dwellers are the major supporters of Putin's regime. According to the Public Opinion Foundation (2017), 70% of rural Russians have a strong positive attitude towards the president and 21% a semi-positive attitude; these are the highest figures in the country, where the averages are 66% and 20%, respectively. We could certainly doubt the results of Russian opinion polls; however, even if the actual numbers of Putin's supporters are lower than presented, all experts agree upon the phenomenal popularity

of Putin among ordinary Russians, and especially among the residents of rural areas (Vasilyeva 2015). Rural dwellers constitute nearly 30% of the total population (Rosstat 2017). Moreover, many residents of small towns and town-like settlements are not very different from rural dwellers "in terms of lifestyle, consumption pattern, and socio-political orientations and beliefs". Together with villagers, they represent more than 50% of the population (Gudkov and Dubin 2002, p.1). This largely conservative social array "has a decisive influence on the course of changes in the country" (Gudkov and Dubin 2002, p.1).

## 4. Agrarian structure and political regime

In order to understand the villagers' support for the existing regime, we need to understand the socio-economic structure of the rural society. The classical studies on rural societies demonstrate interrelations between the structures of political authority and agrarian property regimes (Marx and Engels 1967 [1848], Moore 1966, Skocpol 1979, Rueschemeyer et al. 1992). Moore (1966) argued that the preservation of the peasantry leads to an emergence of authoritarian regimes, as the landed class needs a repressive state to help with surplus extraction. Meanwhile, the bourgeoisie is the major actor pushing for democracy, as economic development driven by capitalist interests in competition with each other brings about political freedom and democratization of the society (Moore 1966). Marxists, on contrary, believed that bourgeois democracies proclaim the rule of the people, but, in fact, only protect the interests of the capitalist class (Marx and Engels 1967 [1848]).

This study follows Rueschemeyer et al. (1992), who explained different classes' inclination towards or against democracy using the following factors: 1) their control of productive resources and relations to other classes; 2) their ability to organize themselves and engage in collective action; 3) the structure, strength and autonomy of the state apparatus and its relations with civil society; and 4) geopolitical dependence relations (since the geopolitical interests of core countries may generate direct interventions to support or resist the repressive state apparatus). Rueschemeyer et al. nuanced Moore's argument on the pro-democratic bourgeoisie, arguing that the bourgeoisie's attitude towards extending political inclusion to lower classes depends on its ability to accumulate productive resources in a given agrarian property structure. In small-holding countries, the

rural bourgeoisie – family farmers – is "a pro-democratic force, whereas its posture in countries or areas dominated by large landholdings is more authoritarian" (Rueschemeyer et al. 1992, p.247). Meanwhile, peasants are the least inclined to democracy, as they are unable to mobilize themselves and do not have a strong interest in effecting their political inclusion due to their subsistence-oriented production. The typical rules in agrarian societies that feature the peasant mode of production have been autocracy and oligarchy (Rueschemeyer et al. 1992). Even today, Kurtz and Barnes (2002) have revealed that a larger rural population with peasant-like features correlates with lower levels of democracy.

The Soviet government attempted to eradicate the peasantry and create rural proletariats. The peasants' land and property were confiscated in favor of kolkhozy and sovkhozy (large-scale collective and state farms) during the collectivization campaign of the 1930s. This was accompanied by *dekulakisation* – arrests, deportation and even murders of so-called *kulaks* – better-off peasants, who were labeled as "rural bourgeoisie" and seen as enemies of the socialist regime. According to Bernhard (2005, p.21), the Soviet government solved the "landlord-peasant problem, though democracy was not on the agenda". Along with the state control and planning system in all spheres of economy, a strong authoritarian regime emerged. Despite the proclaimed proletarianization of society, Soviet villagers did not completely become rural workers. Even though nearly all rural dwellers had official jobs at kolkhozy and sovkhozy, they also conducted subsistence farming on their household plots of 0.2 ha on average, which they had been allowed to own since the late 1930s. This highly productive food production – so-called *lichnoye podsobnoye khoziaystvo* [personal subsidiary farming] – was "outside the state planning and procurement system" (Wegren 2005, p.8) and preserved a number of peasant features (see Humphrey 2002 on "Soviet peasant").

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia stepped on the way towards capitalist development and democratization of society, largely promoted by Western experts and donors. In the countryside, the land reform was initially aimed at distributing the kolkhozy's and sovkhozy's land to rural dwellers by means of land share certificates for private farming development. However, due to the absence of financial resources and informational support, the fragmented and often non-functioning markets, and the rural dwellers' unwillingness to leave the collectives, the majority of land recipients did not become farmers (Pallot and Nefedova 2007). The restructured kolkhozy and sovkhozy

experienced severe financial difficulties in free market conditions. This led to increased rural unemployment and poverty. Many rural residents, especially young people, "voted with their feet" and moved to cities. Those who remained in the villages became highly dependent on subsistence farming on their household plots.

Putin's rise to power in 2000 has changed the direction of Russia's democratic reforms. His "guided democracy" is characterized by state control over political, economic, social, and civil institutions. The democracy is now used rather "for decoration, than direction": election results are predefined, the mass media is state controlled, and court decisions follow the interests of the authorities (Dawisha 2014, p.8). In the countryside, the previous state programs of private farming development were curtailed, and the main state support was directed towards the reestablishment of large-scale industrial agriculture, albeit in neoliberal guise. Land sales were legalized in 2002, which brought oligarchic capital to the countryside. Russian oligarchs and foreign investors bought (or rented) land shares from the rural population, which led to the emergence and spread of agroholdings and megafarms on former collective lands (Visser et al. 2012). In his analysis of the land reform, Wegren (2009, p. 143) states: "Russia's contemporary land reform did not deliver on early intentions in that large farms continue to use most of Russia's agricultural land. Individuals have not become 'masters of the land'". The former large collective farms were transformed into even larger agricultural enterprises, while the majority of the rural population continue being dependent on semi-subsistent farming at their household plots.

The preservation of Soviet-like agricultural structures makes it so the neoliberal agricultural development is socially accepted to a certain extent. Villagers often continue calling the large farms "kolkhozy" and "sovkhozy" and experience strong nostalgia about the Soviet past (Mamonova 2016b). Moreover, according to Petrick et al. (2013), due to the socialist tradition of industrialized farming, post-Soviet rural dwellers regard themselves primarily as workers and not as landowners; they therefore do not long for independent commercial family farming but prefer wage jobs. Although the newly established large farms need much less labor than their collective predecessors, the created jobs are very much appreciated by the rural population. Mamonova (2016b) argued that the contemporary Russian agricultural system is an example of the "coexistence scenario", i.e. a situation where large and small farms operate on different market segments and do not compete with earth other regarding land. Large farm

enterprises control 80% of Russian farmland and contribute to 52% of the gross agricultural output, specializing primarily in grain production for export. Meanwhile, rural households grow staple food for personal consumption and occasional sales at local markets. They produce 35% of the total food in Russia by cultivating only 8% of the country's farmland. Private farming remains underdeveloped, with only 0.5% of rural dwellers that can call themselves commercial family farmers; their contribution to the domestic agricultural product is about 10% (Rosstat 2017, All-Russian Agricultural Census of 2016).

The underdevelopment of rural bourgeoisie – i.e. individual family farmers – left the Russian countryside without the main driving force for democratization. The majority of small-scale food producers share peasant features, such as a self-controlled resource base, traditional farming methods, family labor, and a non-commercial orientation. This peasant-like farming makes rural households resilient to economic disturbances, and therefore, limits their propensity for collective action. Rural wages contribute to just one-third of the rural family income; other incomes come from farming and social transfers, making many households similar to what Dorondel and Șerban (2014) called the "peasant-worker" formation. The lack of capitalist development within rural society hinders the emergence of bottom-up demands for democracy. Meanwhile, the preservation of many Soviet structures and networks makes rural dwellers more inclined towards the former socialist values and system of governance. The post-socialist "pro-democratic" reforms did not result in the emergence of civil society in the countryside. The majority of the rural population tends to distrust independent civil organizations and collective initiatives. As a result, there are hardly any civic organizations or social movements that could defend the interests of smallholders and represent them in the political arena (Mamonova and Visser 2014).

The ongoing geopolitical conflict between Russia and the West brought Russia further away from Western forms of democracy and liberal governance. In response to the Western sanctions over Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and military interventions in Eastern Ukraine, the Russian government adopted an embargo on food imports from a number of Western countries. This embargo is often discussed as part of the protectionist food policy that aims to help develop national agriculture and guarantee national food security (Wegren et al. 2017). However, food embargo primarily benefits large agribusinesses that receive the majority of state subsidies. Meanwhile, the number of family farmers has declined

since the embargo was adopted, despite official claims that the embargo positively influences the small-scale entrepreneurship in the countryside (All-Russian Agricultural Census of 2016[4]).

## 5. Democracy, Elections and Strongman Leadership

In authoritarian populism, the ordinary people are willing to give up some of their personal democratic freedoms and follow an authoritarian leader who claims to represent their interests. In the early 1990s, many Russians were enthusiastic over democracy and supported democratic reforms hoping that the post-socialist transformation would bring a better life to many. However, the economic and political turmoil of the 1990s disillusioned many Russians with democracy, which became associated with instabilities and uncertainties. Today, a majority of the population believes that their country would be better served by a strong leader rather than a democratic government. According to a Pew Global Attitudes poll (2006), the Russian people would choose a strong economy over a good democracy by a margin of almost six to one. In the countryside, where people experienced the most painful post-soviet transition period, democracy provokes quite negative associations. Pensioner Vitaly (69), who used to be a combine driver at a former kolkhoz, does not believe in democracy for ordinary people, but describes it as a means of wealth accumulation by elites:

> *Demokratiya* [democracy] is, in fact, *der'mokratiya* [note: a vulgar and profane word associated with faecal matter]. It belongs to those who have large wallets [full of money]. They have democracy. [...] We do not know what democracy is. Maybe, democracy does not exist at all. There is a ruling elite [that follows the principle]: you give to me – I give to you. That is what they call a democracy.[5]

The vulgar word "*der'mokratiya*" is commonly used by less educated rural dwellers, as revealed in a number of interviews for this study. However, there is also another, more spiritual explanation for the 'bad nature' of democracy. Thus, Maria (59) – a former vendor in a rural shop, now a subsistent farmer – shared her understanding of democracy:

> Democracy comes from the word "demon". I cannot explain it, but it is very negative. I have read the Elders' sayings, I don't remember what it was exactly about, but he [the author of the text] compared democracy to demons.[6]

Certainly, the official position of the Orthodox Church does not support this argument. It is not possible to track the original source of the "demon" explanation for the word "democracy", but it would not be surprising for some extreme religious views to find support among rural dwellers, who are traditionally more superstitious and prone to believe in *supernatural* powers.

The recent study of Volkov and Goncharov (2015) on Russians' views on democracy revealed that the negative associations with democracy are shared by 13% of the population, and that 24% think that this form of government is not for Russia. Meanwhile, 63% of respondents believe that democracy is needed. However, the majority of them believe that Russia should have its own "unique" form of democracy, which is largely associated with a strong state that takes care of the people, economic stability, law and order, and free elections.[7]

Democracy finds its stronger adherents among those Russians who have benefited financially from the transition to capitalism (Pew Global Attitudes poll 2006). Independent family farmers that emerged during the transition period of the 1990s are, in general, pro-democratic and have a clearer understanding of democracy. However, they are disappointed with *how* democracy has worked out in their country. Alexander (55), a farmer specialized in potato production, shares his pessimistic views:

> Do not we have democracy? What is democracy? If it is to say whatever you want to say – I can say everything now, how does it change the situation? [...] Voting? I can go to the elections. But if I will not vote for him, they will 'draw' my answer. What is the point?[8]

The largest number of violations in the conduct of elections, including substitution of mobile ballot boxes, usually occurs in the countryside (Mishanova 2010). However, these violations do not provoke social resistance or mobilization, but rather contribute to a deepening of political apathy among rural dwellers. Many family farmers – who typically are more critical to Putin's regime – do not participate in elections. For example, a farmer Nikolai (65) said: "why should I go? My voice changes

nothing. Last time I voted for Yeltsin, it took me a half of a day, while my cows were not milked". However, Nikolai acknowledges that many residents of his village still go to the election polls:

> Here, people go to the polls. Mostly elderly. By inertia. It is like a duty of some kind. Elections, elections! You get a postcard. A beautiful postcard! There is a flag painted; they addressed me personally: "Nikolai Alexandrovich, come to the polls". But is there a choice[9]?[10]

Many respondents said that they consistently vote for Putin as there is no better alternative. Indeed, Putin's government consistently and purposefully eliminated all political alternatives, presenting Putin as the only man capable of ruling the country (Levinson 2017). Therefore, the elections are perceived not as making a democratic choice between different candidates, but rather as a symbolic act of expressing loyalty and their approval of Putin's performance. This distorted understanding of elections comes to the fore in the following quote from rural dweller Ivan (71). When asked whether he will vote in the presidential elections of 2018, Ivan answered with an honest surprise: "Are we electing Putin again? Five years have passed already? Time flies![11]"

Elections in the countryside are different from urban areas, in that rural voters are primarily guided by the candidates' personal characteristics, not by pre-election political campaigns and programs (Shpikalov 2010, Petrov 2013). Thus, many of this study's respondents stressed the importance of Putin's strong and heroic traditional masculinity and his charismatic leadership, but they are not interested in the political program of his party. The image of Putin as a representative of the ordinary people is highly popular among rural dwellers. A rural bus driver, Vladimir (58), stresses which of the president's features he appreciates the most:

> How nicely he treats the ordinary people! He knows [everything] inside and out. I like him very much. He can answer any question. And he does not look whether you are poor or a millionaire. He talks to everyone.[12]

In his public appearances, Putin shows that he does not only support the ordinary people, he is also one of them. Berelovich (2017) referred to Putin's shirtless photoshoots where he rides horses, goes on fishing trips, etc. as the means to create a populist image of a real "*muzhik*" (real man,

man of the people; and, interestingly, also literally a peasant man in Tsarist Russia). Indeed, in their interviews, villagers often used the word "muzhik" to characterize the president. In addition, although the "peasant" meaning of the word is less common nowadays, it is possible to suggest that Putin's "muzhik" image is more popular in the countryside than in urban areas.

While describing the ideal profile for a country leader, many of this study's respondents used the word "*khozyain"* (a household leader, a master). This description is also shared by villagers who do not support Putin, as they blame Putin for being a bad "khozyain". The word "khozyain" was first mentioned in the *Domostroy* (Domestic Order) – the 16th-century Russian set of household rules, instructions and advice pertaining to various religious, social, domestic, and family matters in the Russian society (Pouncy 1994). According to the *Domostroy*, the main qualities of a good khozyain were discernment, knowledge of the practical side of the matter, and concern for the material and especially moral position of subordinates. Today, the word "khozyain" is often associated with a leader of a wealthy rural household (similar to *kulak*). Many of the interviewed villagers compared the country with a traditional peasant family while explaining their views on what form of governance is needed for Russia. Villager Sergey (61), who is self-sufficient in food production at his household plot, refers to the idea of "khozyain" as the head of a peasant family and the head of the country:

> Russia – it used to be mostly peasant. How is a peasant family organized? There should be a *khozyain*. Otherwise, the household will fall apart. There should be only one bear in a den. And everyone should listen to him. A strong man should lead the family [...] The state is a family but on a large scale.[13]

Thus, even though the contemporary rural society is not a peasant society, many traditional peasant norms and values have been preserved and define peoples' perceptions of an ideal form of governance in Russia. The failure of democratic institutions to express the will of the people disencourages critically-minded people to participate in elections, while supporters of the regime go to the polls to express their loyalty and their approval of the president's performance. The rural attention to the personal characteristics of the leader, instead of his political programs, create a fertile ground for cultivating the image of Putin as a real "muzhik" and

a good "khozyain" for the country, which also have strong associations with the peasant culture and lifestyle.

## 6. Against self-interests?

Rural dwellers' support for Putin's regime is often portrayed as being against their self-interests. Russian journalist Vasilyeva (2015) wrote: "few jobs and little hope, but rural Russia sticks with Putin". Although Putin's agricultural policies enhanced the performance of the agrarian sector and caused a moderate decline in overall rural poverty (however, at a much slower pace than urban poverty), the percentage of the poor that are concentrated in the countryside has grown (Papalexiou 2015). The official rural unemployment is about 10%, while the real number might be 2-2.5 times higher (Bondarenko 2012). Rural salaries are at 53.3% of the average level in the country, and 20% of rural families live below the poverty line (Bondarenko 2012). Outmigration from rural areas in search of better employment in the cities is a growing trend, creating a demographic watershed. Today, the Russian countryside experience serious ageing, with 26% of its inhabitants are above retirement age.

In their interviews, rural dwellers expressed strong dissatisfaction with the socio-economic situation in the countryside. However, their feelings of inequality and injustice are less strong: "Have we *ever* lived well in the countryside?" – farm manager Sergey (46) rhetorically asked.[14] Many villagers take the period of economic and political instabilities during the post-socialist transition period of the 1990s as a point of comparison. For many of them, the situation has improved since then. Ludmila (54) – a milkmaid at the reorganized collective farm – refers to the interruptions in the payment of wages[15] during the 1990s to justify her support for Putin:

> As for me, I am for Putin. With him, we started receiving salaries. Before, we worked without salaries. Once, we did not receive salaries for seven months. I remember I did not go to a shop for three months. We planted our household plot with potatoes. That's how we survived. (I: When did the situation begin to change?) With Putin. With him, we started seeing the light.[16]

The bitter memories of the post-socialist transition period make rural dwellers afraid of any changes. Many respondents refer to the ongoing

political and economic crisis in Ukraine as a result of a societal push for pro-democratic changes. Villager Sergey (61) explained why he supports the existing order despite the existing socio-economic problems in Russia:

> Was it better during Yeltsin? Would it be better if the *der'mokrats* come to power again?! In Ukraine, they came. Nothing got better – the same corruption. Do you want to be like in Ukraine? There, they live even worse than us. If we will change the [political] power – it will be only worse.[17]

Thus, for the sake of stability, Russian dwellers are willing to tolerate corruption. Kendall (2013) found that, despite negative societal attitudes towards corruption, there is a high tolerance for it among the Russian society. A villager, Ludmila (54), said with regret: "You have to steal; you do not steal – you get nothing. Unfortunately, this is the rule. That is what we've come to". The belief that corruption is unavoidable and cannot be defeated was reinforced by various highly-demonstrative anti-corruption campaigns against regional governors that ended with the removal of all charges and the release of the corrupt officials (Sinelschikova 2017). According to opinion polls, 89% of Russians are convinced that government bodies are entirely or seriously corrupt; however, only 25% of respondents thought the president Putin accountable for this (Levada Centre 2016). In their interviews, many rural dwellers talked about the president as a just and impartial benefactor of the ordinary people, while all problems were ascribed to corrupt officials, who distorted the noble orders of the president. Natalia (81), who runs a small farm together with her son and daughter-in-law, gave this representative statement:

> Putin is a good man. He increased our pensions... He makes it better for people, but you cannot be a warrior when you are alone in the field. He cannot cover everything. The local authorities are those who do things wrong.[18]

Mamonova (2016a) revealed that many rural Russians faithfully believe in the myth of a just president and evil officials. However, some of them strategically use this myth in their grievances: they frame their dissent within the official discourse of deference and express their loyalty to the president to shield themselves from repressions. At the same time, they deliberately exploit the gap between the rights promised by the president and the rights delivered by local authorities, demanding that

the latter fulfill their obligations. This form of state-society interactions was commonly used by peasants in Tsarist Russia and has re-emerged in Putin's regime (Mamonova 2016a). The official forms of dispute resolution are ineffective – courts are among the most corrupt public institutions in Russia. Therefore, rural dwellers resort to more traditional methods: they write petitions to the president and organize pickets to Kremlin alongside appeals to prosecutor offices and courts.

Even though rural activists venerate the president in their grievances, few of them naively believe in his impartiality and incorruptibility. The following focus group discussion with rural dwellers – a group of former workers from the reorganized sovkhoz "Serp i Molot" in the Balashicha district – is indicative. These workers have been using different means to demand compensations for their land shares, which they lost during the illegal acquisition and deliberate bankruptcy of the sovkhoz:

> Woman 1: And who did this? It was during Putin. So, it was his will. The courts are not fools – they fulfilled his order. Putin could not be uninformed about this. I doubt that... Then, there was Medvedev [as the president]. Useless! Now Putin again.
> Woman 2: And wherever he speaks, he does not talk about rural areas – nothing. Silence. Like nothing is going on here.
> I: For whom will you vote in the next presidential elections?
> Woman1: Despite everything [I will vote] for Putin. He is experienced. He knows how to rule the country.
> Woman 3: It won't go our way, anyway.
> Woman 4: I voted and continue voting for Putin, although I know that this [corruption and injustice] is the result of his dealings. It is impossible that the *khozyain* does not know what is going on in his country.[19]

The abovementioned discussion reveals a phenomenon that, at first glance, seems paradoxical: rural dwellers blame Putin for his misdeeds, which have negatively affected their personal situation, but still support him during elections. The phrase "It won't go our way, anyway" can be a key to explain this. Rural socio-economic marginalization has exacerbated the sense of inferiority and pessimistic views on the future among the rural poor: villagers have found themselves in the bottom ranks of Russian society and have hardly any economic or political power to influence the status quo. This is added to 70 years of socialism, which were characterized by the suppression of personal interests for the benefit of the collective. If we take into account that capitalist rules (which prioritize individual

property and individual wellbeing) did not work out in the countryside, the neglecting of personal interest in favor of societal interests is not surprising.

## 7. Who are the 'Others'?

Authoritarian populism is largely based on the idea of "Others" at home or abroad, who are depicted as depriving the ordinary people of their rights, values, prosperity and identity, and who are presumably responsible for the decline of the nation's "greatness" and "wealth". For the last five years, only 25% of villagers interacted with foreign migrants, while, in Moscow, this share is 85% (Pipia 2017). The foreigners in the countryside are primarily migrants from former Soviet republics, who came to Russia to work (from Central Asia) and do business (from the Caucasus region). The latter ones are least tolerated by rural residents, especially by those who sell their farm product at local markets. Smallholders often complain that farm markets are controlled by the migrants from North Caucasus, who make it very difficult to get a fair price for their products. Farmer Alexander (61), who sells potatoes to a reseller from Azerbaijan, describes his experience:

> Azerbaijanis! They control our market. It is very difficult to negotiate with them. They have no sense of decency. [...] He [Azerbaijan reseller] sets the price and I have to accept it. If he finds somewhere cheaper – he leaves me. Like it was last year. I prepared my products for his price, and he left me with the entire harvest unsold.[20]

However, the level of intolerance towards migrants in rural areas is significantly lower than in urban areas. Pipia (2017) found out that 65% of villagers think that it is important to limit the inflow of migrants, and 20% are convinced that there is no need to create any obstacles for migrants, as they can benefit the country. In large cities, these numbers are 72% and 16%, respectively (author's calculations based on Pipia 2017). There is a common belief that Russian villagers do not want to work, therefore the migrant labor (primarily from Central Asia) is considered a necessity, and is, therefore, tolerated by many rural residents. Sergey (46) – a manager at a large agricultural enterprise – shares his experience with local rural labor:

> Local villagers do not want to work in agriculture. They prefer working at a pioneer camp or a holiday house, where salaries are even lower than at our farm. They are afraid of hard work. You know, a milkmaid's working day begins at 4 a.m. and ends at 10 p.m. It is very hard work. Here [at the farm enterprise], we have about 100 employees. Only 30 people are local. The rest are Uzbeks, Tajiks, Moldovans.[21]

This study did not reveal any significant tensions between local villagers and migrant workers as the jobs taken by migrants are not desired by the rural population because of their hardship and/or low payment. In fact, rural dwellers often hire foreign workers for construction, repair work and household services. The migrants from the former Soviet republics are not considered completely alien because of a common historical background (Yormirzoev 2015). Moreover, the Russian state promotes a multicultural and multi-ethnic society, which reduces ethnic nationalist sentiments (Arnold 2016). Therefore, although there is some hostility towards the "others" at home, these "others" are not seen as those who are responsible for the country's problems.

In contrast, the "others" from abroad are seen by many rural dwellers as the major enemies of their country. Certainly, there is a strong impact of the state-led propaganda regarding the external threat: during the ongoing geopolitical crisis, the Russian mass media has portrayed the West, and particularly the United States, as the enemy of Russia (Lohschelder 2016). For many rural dwellers, however, the West is also responsible for the collapse of the Soviet Union – a regime that many of rural dwellers idealize nowadays. Therefore, the anti-Western propaganda finds a fertile ground in the countryside. The following focus group discussion with rural dwellers is representative:

> Man 1: All our problems come from Americans. Americans – *they* paid Gorbachev to dissolve the Soviet Union. *We* did not want the Union to fall apart...
> Woman 1: Yes, Americans. They ruined us then, and want to ruin us now. They cannot get enough! They need to seize someone, start a war – and our guys resist.
> Man 2: America should understand that they will not conquer Russia. They must understand.[22]

Russia's opposition to the West has a long history and is associated not only with geopolitical conflicts but also with the perception of self and

of the country's "distinctive path of development". This self-perception, combined with Russia's striving for "grandeur" and "a high-profile place in the world" and its "feeling of being treated as a humiliated second-rate country" (Diligensky and Chugrov 2000, p.7). Throughout its history, Russia has been choosing between the Western, and a more unique and traditional "Slavophile" pathway of development. The recent geopolitical conflict has brought the country closer to the Slavophile path, which is characterized by an "authoritarian government and severe restrictions on human rights, while seeing the source of the country's further development in its own particular traditions", and which results in Russia pursuing a policy of self-isolation (Diligensky and Chugrov 2000, p.7). In rural areas, the ideological confrontation with the West is not discussed in abstract notions of human rights and freedom of speech, but rather in relation to natural resources – the subject which is much closer to the rural population. Kalinin (2015) argued that natural resources play an important role in the Russian national identity and patriotic discourse. According to him, natural resources are less associated with their economic and material value, and more perceived as a historical-cultural and ideological resource that contributed to the "greatness" of the country in the past, and continue doing so in the present (Kalinin 2015). While talking about Russia's confrontation with the West, pensioner Michail (69) mentioned natural resources to explain why Russia's geopolitical isolation will not be a problem for his country.

> These "foreign friends", so to speak... We need to implement harder sanctions against them. Harder. We should close our borders and work for a domestic market only. So that they would not have access to us. We will survive without them, while it will be hard for them without us. Look, we have all [natural] resources. They have only machines.[23]

However, despite overall support for Russia's foreign policy, the villagers' attitudes towards the food embargo, which was imposed by Russia in response to the Western sanctions, are not so unambiguous. This study showed that those rural dwellers who are not engaged in farming – i.e. employees of budgetary institutions and non-agricultural workers – are mainly in favor of the national policy of food self-sufficiency. During a lunch break, teachers working at a rural school shared their beliefs that the embargo has a positive impact on the development of domestic agriculture; they jokingly added that they personally "can

survive without the cheese with mould.[24]" Those who are engaged in agriculture often criticize the contemporary agri-food policy. Farmers and commercially-oriented smallholders criticize the government for helping only large agribusiness, while small-scale farmers are unable to get any grants and subsidies. Meanwhile, those dwellers who are not engaged in commercial food production, but grow food for personal consumption, said that they started buying less in shops, as they do not trust the quality of the industrially-produced food. Villager Igor (60), who is subsistence-oriented in his food production, explained:

> This policy of [food] self-sufficiency is, in fact, self-destruction. How can they increase food production in such a short period? With chemicals! They [industrial food producers] are now like Chinese farmers – they dump tones of chemicals into the soil. It is dangerous to eat their products. For example, I had a great harvest of cabbage this year, but quite a poor one of carrots. I bought carrots at the market. The carrots looked excellent! I began to marinate [cabbage, which requires some carrots] – the carrots gave a very artificial red color and became slimy, which is not normal. I gave everything away to my goats. I did not eat it myself.[25]

The failure of domestic policies to provide decent living standards for many people is compensated by a foreign policy that embraces imperial nationalism and aims to return the nation's glory and the respect of other countries (Arnold 2016). Even those rural dwellers who are very critical of Putin's governance support his neo-imperialist foreign policy, arguing that "we are being respected again!" (interview with villager Ludmila (54)[26]). Sergey (46) – a manager at a large agricultural enterprise – tried to explain why Russia's quest for great-power status in the international arena is more important than economic wellbeing at home:

> I: What is more important for you – Russia's domestic or foreign policies?
> Sergey: I think that the pride of the country is the main thing.
> I: Does this mean it comes before the economic concerns?
> Sergey: Yes, it does. You know, we Russians – we can complain about life, but when misfortune happens, we all rise to protect our motherland. This is the mentality. This is, perhaps, the democracy. Each country has its own democracy. This is our feature.[27]

Kremlin recently introduced the term "sovereign democracy", which fits the above-mentioned argument. Sovereign democracy implies the

country's ability to make and implement decisions for the benefits of its citizens independent of pressures from the international arena. Okara (2007) called sovereign democracy "a new social contract between the political regime and the nation", in which the Russian state is presented as "the guarantor of Russia's sovereignty and survival in the context of globalization and other external super-threats". This is quite similar to the authoritarian populism's discourse on the 'Others' abroad. This study revealed that this ideology fits well with the sentiments of many ordinary Russians, who put the "pride of their country" above their personal wellbeing.

## 8. Conclusion

This study investigates various factors that shape rural dwellers' support for the regime of Putin. Putin's government is often discussed as an example of authoritarian populism – a political regime characterized by a strong state, populist unity between the ordinary people and an authoritarian leader, a rhetoric of national interest, and hostility towards the "Others" at home or abroad. While the supply side of this form of governance is relatively well discussed, the demand side remains somewhat of a mystery. This study contributes to the emerging literature on authoritarian populism and the rural world in the following ways.

First, this study argues that, in order to understand the villagers' support for authoritarian populism, we need to understand the socio-economic structure and the nature of class conflict in the countryside. This study revealed that the post-socialist land reform failed to create a class of rural bourgeoisie – the main actor pushing for democracy. The majority of the rural population did not enter capitalist market relations, but instead took the form of "peasant-workers" that do not engage in conflict with large agribusiness over the land and associated resources, and therefore, do not strive for political representation. The preservation of many former Soviet structures in the agricultural production and in the relations between small and large farms makes the current agrarian structure to some extent acceptable by the rural population. Moreover, the semi-subsistence food production by rural households makes them resilient to economic disturbances, and therefore, less inclined to engage in collective action to defend their interests. The lack of civil society organizations that would represent the interests of the rural people, and the strong Soviet legacies

that guide people's perceptions about the strong state and authoritarian leadership, make the countryside the most prone to accept and even support Putin's autocratic governance.

Second, in order to understand why the ordinary people are willing to give up some of their personal democratic freedoms in favor of authoritarian governance, we need to understand how people experience democracy. In Russia, many rural people associate liberal democracy with the economic and political uncertainties of the post-socialist transition period. Democracy is seen as an abstract notion that benefitted local elites in the process of capitalist accumulation, but which was unavailable to ordinary villagers, who were left outside the capitalist development. Democracy finds its stronger adherents among those rural Russians who have benefited from the post-socialist transition period; however, even they are skeptical about the ability of democratic institutions to represent the interests of the ordinary people, because of widespread corruption and violation of democratic principles that are especially profound in the countryside. Instead of liberal democracy, many ordinary Russians prefer "sovereign" democracy, which is associated with a strong state that takes care of the people, economic stability, law and order, and the country's ability to make decisions free from international/globalization pressures.

Third, although many explanations behind rural support for Putin's governance can also be applicable to the Russian population in general, this research revealed a number of specific rural features that have their roots in the peasant culture. Despite the eradication of the peasant norms and values during socialism and the introduction of capitalist principles after the collapse of the Soviet Union, many rural dwellers preserved a number of peasant-like features, not only in their ways of farming but also in the ways of thinking. Thus, many villagers share traditional views on the hierarchy of power in a peasant family, and use them to explain the desired form of governance in the country. This helps to explain why the strongman leadership of Putin finds many supporters in the countryside. Moreover, this study revealed that villagers value the personal characteristics of the president much more than his political programs, which make them more responsive to Putin's image of "muzhik" and "khozayin" – the personal characteristics of a leader, according to peasant culture.

Fourth, this study suggests that rural support for authoritarian populism is not necessarily a result of state-led propaganda (although it is largely influenced by it). Propaganda has a strong impact on villagers' perceptions of Putin's governance: those households that are less engaged in food

production, and, therefore, have more time to watch television, express a stronger support for the regime than those who are full time busy with farming. However, this study revealed that rural dwellers do not naively believe everything they hear from mass media, and that the justification of their support does not always coincide with the official message sent via television screens.

Finally, this study demonstrated that the cultural backlash thesis and the economic insecurity perspective are only partly useful for explaining the support of some rural groups for Putin's governance. Thus, the harsh memories of the post-socialist transition periods, when rural residents felt abandoned and forgotten, support the economic insecurity perspective. In this context, even a small improvement in rural living standards during Putin's rule is highly appreciated by villagers. Similarly, the cultural backlash thesis explains the support of older groups of rural dwellers, whose nostalgia for the Soviet past is satisfied by the Soviet-style approaches in Putin's domestic and foreign policies. However, neither of these frameworks is enough to explain why villagers consciously vote against their self-interests, or why Russia's neo-imperialist policy abroad is perceived as more important than economic wellbeing at home.

This study explains that villagers ignore their personal interests because of their experienced socio-economic marginalization – which has exacerbated their sense of inferiority and their pessimistic views on the future – and the 70 years of socialism during which personal interests were suppressed for the benefit of the collective. It may also be explained by the recent shift towards a more traditionalist "Slavophile" episteme in the discursive sphere of Russian society, which led to a stronger association of Russian national identity with the country's status as a "global power".

Overall, this study revealed that different rural groups have different political positions and different reasons to support Putin's government. Although many rural opinions repeat the official discourse generated by the government, this does not imply that rural dwellers are the victims of state-led propaganda. Rural traditional perceptions on power relations and their idealization of the socialist past makes them more receptive to the official discourse and Putin's leadership methods. This study demonstrates that rural support for authoritarian populism cannot be explained by one single framework, but that it should be studied as a combination of various economic, political, social, cultural and ideological factors that shape the ordinary people's perceptions and practices.

## NOTES

1 The turnout is significantly higher for presidential elections than for regional and parliamentary elections.

2 With some notable exceptions, such as Mamonova 2016a,b, Mamonova and Visser 2014.

3 For example, French far-right presidential contender Marine Le Pen gained the support of many French farmers with her 'eating French' campaign, in which she called for more food to be produced and consumed in the country (Associated Press 2017)

4 According to the All-Russian Agricultural Census of 2016, there were 285 thousand family farms in 2006, while in 2016 this number declined to 174 thousand farms.

5 Interview conducted on 09-11-2017 in the Gravornoe village, Istra district, Moscow region.

6 Interview conducted on 10-11-2017 in the Sumarokovo village, Ruza district, Moscow region.

7 Volkov and Goncharov's sample also included urban population in their study, and the share of the rural population in their sample cannot be derived based on their published article. However, since they also included survey questions related to urban lifestyle, the rural population may have been underrepresented.

8 Interview conducted 24-08-2017 in the Deulino village, Sergiev-Posad district, Moscow region.

9 The words 'choice' and 'election' from the same word in the Russian language.

10 Interview conducted on 10-11-2017 in the village Sumarokovo, Ruza district, Moscow region.

11 Interview conducted 24-08-2017 in the village Deulino, Sergiev-Posad district, Moscow region.

12 Interview conducted on 09-11-2017 in the Gravornoe village, Istra district, Moscow region.

13 Interview conducted on 11-11-2017 in the Sumarokovo village, Ruza district, Moscow region.

14 Interview conducted on 12-11-2017 in the Sumarokovo village, Ruza district, Moscow region.

15 More than half of the Russian work force experienced some form of interruption of the payment of wages during 1994–1997 (Hjeds Löfmark 2008).

16 Interview conducted on 10-11-2017 in the Sumarokovo village, Ruza district, Moscow region.

17 Interview conducted on 12-11-2017 in the Sumarokovo village, Ruza district, Moscow region.

[18] Interview conducted 20-07-2014 in the Rasshevatskaya village, Novoalexandrovsk district, Stavropol Krai.

[19] Interview conducted 30-05-2013, in the Purschevo village, Balashikha district, Moscow region.

[20] Interview conducted 24-08-2017 in the Deulino village, Sergiev-Posad district, Moscow region.

[21] Interview conducted on 12-11-2017 in the Sumarokovo village, Ruza district, Moscow region.

[22] Interview conducted on 08-11-2017 in the Gravornoe village, Istra district, Moscow region.

[23] Interview conducted on 09-11-2017 in the Gravornoe village, Istra district, Moscow region.

[24] Interview conducted on 12-11-2017 in the Sumarokovo village, Ruza district, Moscow region.

[25] Interview conducted on 10-11-2017 in the Sumarokovo village, Ruza district, Moscow region.

[26] Interview conducted on 10-11-2017 in the Sumarokovo village, Ruza district, Moscow region.

[27] Interview conducted on 12-11-2017 in the Sumarokovo village, Ruza district, Moscow region.

## Bibliography

ALL-RUSSIAN AGRICULTURAL CENSUS OF 2016, Rezultaty [Results], 2017, Available from: http://www.vshp2016.ru/

ARNOLD, R., *Russian Nationalism and Ethnic Violence: Symbolic Violence, Lynching, Pogrom and Massacre*, Routledge, London, 2016

ASSOCIATED PRESS, Far-Right Le Pen Backs "Eating French" at Market, 2017, Available from: https://www.news24.com/World/News/far-right-le-pen-backs-eating-french-at-market-20170425

BERELOVICH A., "Putin - a Populist Against the Backdrop of Western Leaders", in *Herald of public opinion. Data. Analysis. Discussions*, 1–2(124), 2017

BERLET, C., and M. LYONS., *Right-Wing Populism in America: Too Close for Comfort*, Guilford Press, New York, 2000

BERNHARD, M., "The Moore Thesis: What's Left After 1989?" in *Democratization*, 23(1), 2016

BONDARENKO, L., "Bednost' Sel'skoy Rossii" [Poverty in Rural Russia], in *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, 6 (51), 2012

CHACKO, P. and K. JAYASURIYA, "Trump, the Authoritarian Populist Revolt and the Future of the Rules-Based Order in Asia", in *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, *71*(2), 2017

CHAISTY, P. and S. WHITEFIELD, "Putin's Nationalism Problem", in *Ukraine and Russia. People, Politics, Propaganda and Perspectives*, International Relations, Bristol, 2015

DAWISHA, K., *Putin's Kleptocracy: Who Owns Russia?* Simon and Schuster, New York, 2014

DILIGENSKY, G., and S. CHUGROV. The *West in Russian Mentality. Office for Information and Press*, Brussels Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Moscow, 10-11, 2000

DORONDEL, S. and S. ȘERBAN, "A Missing Link: the Agrarian Question in South-East Europe" in *The Agrarian Question in South-East Europe*, Martor, Bucharest, 2014

EDELMAN M., C. OYA, and S.M. BORRAS, "Global Land Grabs: Historical Processes, Theoretical and Methodological Implications and Current Trajectories", in *Third World Quarterly*, 34(9), 2013

EDELMAN, M., "Transnational Peasant and Farmer Movements and Networks", in *Global civil society*, Oxford University Press London, 2003

GEDDES, B. and ZALLER, J., "Sources of Popular Support for Authoritarian Regimes", in *American Journal of Political Science*, 1989

GRANBERG, L. and SÄTRE, A. M., *The Other Russia: Local Experience and Societal Change*. Routledge, London, 2016

GUDKOV, L. and B. DUBIN, Sel'skaya Zhizn': Ratsional'nost' Passivnoy Adaptatsii [Rural life: Rationality of Passive Adaptation], 2002, Available from: http://ecsocman.hse.ru/data/280/985/1219/05gudkov-23-37.pdf

HACKER, J., *The Great Risk Shift: The New Economic Insecurity and the Decline of the American Dream*, Oxford University Press, London, 2006

HALL, R., I. SCOONES, and D. TSIKATA. *Africa's Land Rush: Rural Livelihoods and Agrarian Change*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2015

HALL, S., "The Great Moving Right Show", in *Marxism Today* 23 (1), 1979

HJEDS LÖFMARK, M., "Search Strategies of the Unemployed in the Russian Federation", in *International Journal of Manpower*, 29(6), 2008

HUMPHREY, C. "Subsistence Farming and the Peasantry as an Idea in Contemporary Russia", in *Post-Socialist Peasant?* Palgrave, New York, 2002

INGLEHART, R. and P. NORRIS, "Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism: Economic Have-Nots and Cultural Backlash" in *Faculty Research Working Paper Series*, 2016

JESSOP, B., BONNETT, K., BROMLEY, S., and T. LING, "Authoritarian Populism, Two Nations and Thatcherism", in *New Left Review,* I/147, 1984

JUDIS, J.B., *The Populist Explosion: How the Great Recession Transformed American and European Politics*. Columbia Global Reports, 2016.

KALININ, I. *Petropoetics. The Oil Text in Post-Soviet Russia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2015

KENDALL, J., "Anti-Corruption Efforts and Russian Perceptions: Presidents Putin and Menvedev's Efforts to Influence Perceptions of Corruption", in *All Graduate Plan B and other Reports,* 340, 2013.

KURTZ, M. and A. BARNES, "The Political Foundations of Post-Communist Regimes", in *Comparative Political Studies,* 35, 2002

LEVADA, Rekordnoye Chislo Rossiyan Perestali Verit' v Pobedu nad Korruptsiyey [A record Number of Russians Stopped Believing in the Victory over Corruption], 2016, Available from: https://www.levada.ru/2016/04/06/rekordnoe-chislo-rossiyan-perestali-verit-v-pobedu-nad-korruptsiej/

LEVINSON, A. Sociology of Elections N2: People and Bulletins, 2017, Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bc7MIIvRErE

LI, T.M. "To Make Live or Let Die? Rural Dispossession and the Protection of Surplus Populations", in *Antipode,* 41(1), 2010

LOHSCHELDER, S. How Russia Views the West, 2016, Available from: https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/opinion/how-russia-views-the-west/

MAMONOVA, N., "Naive Monarchism and Rural Resistance in Contemporary Russia", in *Rural Sociology,* 81(3), 2016a

MAMONOVA, N., *Rethinking Rural Politics in Post-Socialist Settings: Rural Communities, Land Grabbing and Agrarian Change in Russia and Ukraine,* PhD Theses, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Hague, 2016b

MAMONOVA, N. and O.VISSER. "State Marionettes, Phantom Organizations or Genuine Movements? The Paradoxical Emergence of Rural Social Movements in Post-Socialist Russia", in *Journal of Peasant Studies,* 41(4), 2014

MARX, K. and F. ENGELS. *The Communist Manifesto*, Penguin, London, 1967 [1848]

MISHANOVA, E., Nablyudeniye za Vyborami [Observation of Elections], Center for Promoting Democracy and Human Rights "GELIKS", 2010, Available from: http://www.vibory.ru/analyt/nabl.pdf

MOORE, B., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*, Beacon, Boston, 1966.

MURAVYEVA, M., Is there Populism in Russia? Institute for Advanced Social Research, Tampere, 2017, Available from: https://iasrblog.wordpress.com/2017/05/03/is-there-populism-in-russia-by-marianna-muravyeva/

OKARA, A., Sovereign Democracy: A New Russian Idea or a PR Project? 2007, Available from: http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_9123

OLIKER, O. "Putinism, Populism and the Defense of Liberal Democracy", in *Survival*, 59(1), 2017

PALLOT, J. and T. NEFEDOVA., *Russia's Unknown Agriculture: Household Production in Postsocialist Rural Russia*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007

PAPALEXIOU, O. The Persistence of Poverty in Rural Russia. A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Consequences of the Agrarian Reforms and the Causes of Poverty among the Agrarian Population in Russia in the period 1992-2014, Master Thesis, University of Oslo, 2015

PETERS, M.A., "The End of Neoliberal Globalization and the Rise of Authoritarian Populism", in *Educational Philosophy and Theory,* 50(4), 2017

PETRICK, M., J. WANDEL, and K. KARSTEN, "Rediscovering the Virgin Lands: Agricultural Investment and Rural Livelihoods in a Eurasian Frontier Area", in *World Development*, 43, 2013

PETROV , A., Ot Putina do Putina: Sibirskiye Elektoral'nyye Predpochteniya na Vyborakh Prezidenta Rossii [From Putin to Putin: Siberian Electoral Preferences in the Presidential Elections in Russia], Irkutsk State University, Irkutsk, 2013, Available from: http://isu.ru/ru/publication/izvestia/article.html?article=_f827ef36212c42af9ebc7273b7302278&journal=_120d5bc720c84058a9fdc8511364c8cc

PEW GLOBAL ATTITUDES POLL, Russia's Weakened Democratic Embrace, 2006, Available from: http://www.pewglobal.org/2006/01/05/russias-weakened-democratic-embrace/

PIKETTY, T. *Capital*, Bellnap Press, Cambridge, 2014

PIPIA K. 2017. "Struktura Obraza Migranta v Rossiyskom Obshchestvennom Mnenii" [The Structure of the Migrant's Image in the Russian Public Opinion], in *Data. Analysis. Discussions,* 1–2(124), 2017

POUNCY, C., *The Domostroi: Rules for Russian Households in the Time of Ivan the Terrible.* Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1994

PUBLIC OPINION FOUNDATION, V. Putin: Reyting, Otnosheniye, Otsenki Raboty. Indikatory Otnosheniya k Glave Gosudarstva [V.Putin: Rating,

Attitude, Work Assessments. Indicators of Attitude towards the Head of State], 2017, Available from: http://fom.ru/Politika/10946

REICHER, S., Trust the People! On the Psychology of Authoritarian Populism. British Academy/ British Psychological Society Lecture, 2017, Available from: https://www.britac.ac.uk/video/trust-people-psychology-authoritarian-populism

ROSSTAT, Russia in Figures, Statistical Handbook, 2017, Available from: http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/doc_2017/rusfig/rus17e.pdf

RUESCHEMEYER, D., E.H. STEPHENS and J.D. STEPHENS, *Capitalist Development and Democracy*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1992

SCOONES, I., M. EDELMAN, J. BORRAS., R. HALL, W. WOLFORD and B. WHITE "Emancipatory Rural Politics: Confronting Authoritarian Populism", in *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 2017

SHPIKALOV, V., "Sel'skiye Vybory Lyudmily Sulunovoy" [Rural Elections of Lyudmila Sulunova], in *Politprosvet*, 2010

SINELSCHIKOVA Y., Poll: 89% of Russians Believe State Corruption Must not be Tolerated, 2017, Available from: https://www.rbth.com/politics_and_society/2017/03/29/poll-89-of-russians-believe-state-corruption-must-not-be-tolerated_730193

SKOCPOL, T. *States and Social Revolutions*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979

STROOP, C. Between Trump and Putin: the Right-Wing International, a Crisis of Democracy, and the Future of the European Union, 2017, Available from: http://www.politicalresearch.org/2017/05/11/between-trump-and-putin-the-right-wing-international-a-crisis-of-democracy-and-the-future-of-the-european-union/#sthash.Nhl4hhVW.dpbs

TAYLOR, C., The Hermeneutics of Conflict. In *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics,* Polity Press, Cambridge, 1988

VASILYEVA, N., Few Jobs and Little Hope, but Rural Russia Sticks with Putin, 2015, Available from: https://globalnews.ca/news/2217219/few-jobs-and-little-hope-but-rural-russia-sticks-with-putin/

VIETEN, U.M. and POYNTING, S., "Contemporary Far-Right Racist Populism in Europe", in *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 37, 2016

VOLKOV, D. and S. GONCHAROV, Demokratiya v Rossii: Ustanovki Naseleniya. Svodnyy Analiticheskiy Otchet [Democracy in Russia: Attitudes of the Population. Consolidated Analytical Report], 2015, Available from: http://www.levada.ru/sites/default/files/report_fin.pdf

WEGREN, S. K., "From Communism to Capitalism? Russia's Agrarian Relations in the Twentieth Century and Beyond" in *Rural Adaptation in Russia,* Routledge, London, 2005

WEGREN, S. K., "Russia's Incomplete Land Reform", in *Russian Analytical Digest,* 64(09), 2009

WEGREN, S.K., NIKULIN, A.M. and I. TROTSUK, "The Russian Variant of Food Security", in *Problems of Post-Communism*, 64(1), 2017

YORMIRZOEV, M., "Determinants of Regional Migration Flows from Former Soviet republics to Russia", in *Bulletin of Perm University. Series: The Economy,* 1(24), 2015

YUDIN, G. and I. MATVEYEV, Politik bez Naroda. Verno li Zapisyvat' Putina v Populisty? [A Politician Without the People. Is it Right to Refer Putin as a Populist?], 2017, Available from: https://republic.ru/posts/82802

ZUBOV, M., Putina Razlozhili po Polochkam: Eksperty Predskazali Yego Budushcheye [Detailed Analysis of Putin's future], 2017, Available from: http://www.mk.ru/politics/2017/05/04/putina-razlozhili-po-polochkam-eksperty-predskazali-ego-budushhee.html

# ANDRIY POSUNKO

Born in 1988, in Ukraine

Ph.D. Department of History, Central European University (2018)
Thesis: *The Ambiguities of Cossackdom: The Case of the Pontic Steppe 1775-1830s*

**Fellowships:**
Max Weber Stiftung (2014-2015)
ZEIT Stiftung (2015-2017)

Participation in workshops and conferences in Ukraine, Hungary, Turkey, Republic of Korea, Germany, Russia, Romania

Publications on Eastern European military history, transimperial migrations, and transfers of knowledge

# PROBLEMS AND PRECONDITIONS OF THE COSSACK SERVICE REFORM: LATE EIGHTEENTH – EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURIES


## Abstract

The traditional narrative on nineteenth century cossacks in the Russian Empire portrays this period as a time of "unification" and "regularization". Still, the preconditions that led to the 1820s-1840s homogenizing reforms of irregulars' military service are often omitted or oversimplified. Thus, as a step towards better understanding of the later period, in this article I will overview the problems encountered by Russian imperial officials regarding the organization and administration of cossack units that, presumably, largely influenced the course of later reforms.



**Keywords**: Cossacks, Russian Empire, Russian Imperial Army, Irregular Units, Eastern European History, Nineteenth Century


The death of Prince Grigorii Potemkin can be seen as one of the major turning points in the history of the Pontic Steppe cossacks. Under his direction, great authority over irregulars was concentrated in the hands of the all-powerful proconsul who was often present in the south. Even if cossack rights were not adequately defined in the Russian legislation in the late eighteenth century, Potemkin's penchant for cossackdom provided local cossacks with another rationale for securing their place in the imperial structure.

Much changed with the death of Potemkin indeed. After 1792, cossacks were obliged to correspond with the College of War in St. Petersburg. Nikolai Saltykov, Vice President of the College of War, and Platon Zubov, General Governor of New Russia, then began to work out new regulations for irregular units, bringing a certain degree of order into what

had become an ad-hoc militarized population. Yet, with these projects far from being complete, new revisions were introduced into all-imperial policies towards the cossacks once again upon the death of Catherine in 1796, and ascension to the throne of her son Paul.

Paul's attitude to the cossacks was contradictory at best. On the one hand, he treated cossacks of traditional units favorably: cossack delegates were allowed to be present at coronation festivities; the number of cossack units in the imperial guard increased; Ural cossacks were pardoned after a period of disfavor, during Catherine's reign, and introduced into the Life Guards. Even if Paul himself was a proponent of Prussian style warfare emphasis on discipline — contrary to Potemkin's, Suvorov's, and Rumiantsev's emphasis on personal courage and initiative — he understood the limitations of regular units and relied on Don cossacks as an uniquely suited mobile force to ride across half of Asia, reach India, and attempt to undermine the British rule there.[1] On the other hand, Paul's policies towards smaller and temporary cossack units were far less sympathetic. Almost immediately upon his ascension, he disbanded the Bug cossacks, Greek, and Tatar irregulars and brought to a halt the formation of the Voznesensk cossacks.

Nevertheless, on September 22, 1798 Paul issued an important decree affecting the crucial problem of standardization of cossack units, "On the equality of Don Host ranks with regular army ranks."[2] The equality between cossack ranks and ranks in the regular army finally enabled cossack elites to obtain officially recognized noble standing in the empire. Many benefits were associated with regular army officer rank: higher salary, social prestige, and the opportunity to be ennobled. Yet, there were drawbacks as well. Once having obtained regular army rank and taken the oath of office, it was no longer possible to bargain further or to cite traditional rights; in fact, these actions could be treated at the very least as insubordination. The practice of awarding regular ranks to cossacks was not new — after all, both Potemkin and Zubov rewarded numerous cossack officers from Zaporizhia, Don, and other units personally or collectively, in order to ensure their loyalty. Paul's vision to link officers' promotions directly to the favor of the monarch, however, led to a situation where several promotions previously made by Zubov were simply nullified.[3]

The 1798 decree, which consisted of only one sentence and dealt with only one cossack unit, caused much confusion and was open to competing interpretations. These stemmed from the fact that many irregular units had been identified as "organized according to the Don Host model" in their

statutes or rosters. Thus, an interpretation that 1798 decree could also be applied to other hosts was perfectly viable. A stricter reading would, however, limit the application of the decree to Don officers only. The legal loophole that resulted is another illustration of the uncertainties of cossack status during the transitional period of the late eighteenth – early nineteenth centuries.

Different interpretations of the decree led to different assessments in the historiography. For instance, Aleksandr Soklakov is skeptical towards the real impact of the decree and emphasizes that it was applied only to the Don Host, while Sergei Volkov argues that the decree meant an elevation of status for almost all cossack officers in the Russian Empire.[4] My approach to this debate is to analyze petitions of that time, keeping two questions in mind: whether Paul's decree was applied to other units in practice? Moreover, if yes, did it work retroactively? In other words, could *starshyna* and *chinovniki* of already disbanded units, say Bug or Ekaterinoslav, be granted equal rights with retired regular officers?

Hoping for the best, *starshyny* from Siberia Cossack Host submitted a collective petition in order to get army ranks in 1803; General Glasionov asked for clarification regarding the status of Caucasus line cossacks in 1805; *Sotnik* Kukhtin from the disbanded Ekaterinoslav Host petitioned in 1808 for a noble status for his child on the basis of Kukhtin's previous service.[5] These are just several examples out of many. While petitioners from non-Don units hoped that the decree would work for their unit as well, officials of the College of War preferred a strict reading that the decree applied only to the Don.

On the other hand, the College of War, as a response to Kherson provincial administration, in 1807 produced an obscure wording regarding the former officers of Ekaterinoslav Host:

> Even if [such cossack officer] will not be granted a real army rank [...] he should be generally treated as if he had it ... both when having been awarded according to his services and merits and when having been punished for his vices.[6]

This was an overcomplicating answer to a simple question: "how did ranks of these cossacks correspond to the civil service ranks?" In the end, it seems that the Don decree was not easily applicable to other units, even if they were organized on the model of Don Host as the empire continued the practice of dealing with each cossack unit separately.

The next reversal in cossack policies occurred as a consequence of the palace coup of 1801 and the regicide of Paul. The first years of Alexander's reign can be characterized by greater attention to cossack units and attempts to unify their terms of service and establish a common denominator for the status of all cossacks.[7] Taking into account the multitude and diversity of cossack forms that existed in the late eighteenth century, such imperial policy seems logical and consistent. Nevertheless, the form of these regulations that were issued separately for each unit requires close examination. The idea of a unified cossack estate, supported by legislation applicable to all cossacks in the empire, was, for the time being, either neglected or postponed; at the same time the policy of treating each cossack unit individually only prolonged the situation, in which cossacks and officers of different units retained vastly different status.

It is a speculation, however, what the cossack reforms of Alexander's early reign would have produced if they had been put in place. The challenge of new wars in Europe diverted both attention of government and resources thus ending the ambiguous transitional period between the death of Potemkin and the Patriotic War of 1812. Different circumstances influenced and changed the further evolution of cossackdom. Consequently, in the following article I will review and reconsider these factors that had an effect on imperial policies towards the cossack hosts in the early nineteenth century in order to better understand Russian military reforms of this period.

***

Several important factors influenced the evolution of the Russian military — and of the cossacks as part of it — in the early nineteenth century. First, it was the experience of wars with Napoleonic France and the reassessment of the functions that various types of troops had to fulfill in the new era of warfare. Second, it was a matter of expenses, since the Russian treasury struggled mightily in order to finance the biggest army in Europe. The coincidence of these two factors led the Russian military and civilian officials to reassess the importance of the cossack hosts and to search for ways to preserve and perpetuate them. The need to perpetuate cossackdom, in turn, led to the recognition of the existing problems facing cossack units: the passing of frontier in some areas; the growing population and a shortage of arable lands; the corruption of cossack elites. On the other hand, the long-lasting Caucasus War and the need to use the cossacks for their traditional roles, acted to prevent some of the more radical reform projects from being implemented.

Since cossacks were a military society, the first factor in influencing the evolution of cossack communities in early nineteenth century Russia was the changes in warfare. Under the impact of the French Revolutionary wars, improvements in armament, the introduction of new battlefield tactics, techniques of mobilization, and supply challenged the traditional attitudes.[8] One of the most profound changes was the nation-in-arms concept that yielded mass armies, well exceeding several thousands of men. For comparison, in 1789 Potemkin estimated the potential conflict with Prussia and indicated that in total the enemy army would be around 235,000 men – Prussian, Saxon, and Polish forces included.[9] In 1812, during the French invasion in Russia, the army of Napoleon, supported by French satellite-states, was around 600,000 men.[10] The total size of the Russian regular army in the first years of the nineteenth century is estimated as 446,000.[11] By 1812, this figure grew up to 622.,000, 480,000 of which were stationed on the western border. Still, serious weaknesses loomed behind these impressive numbers. The events of 1812 vividly exposed the great vulnerability of large armies: their supply lines exposed to raids by light cavalry where cossacks excelled. These raids on supply columns, together with guerilla activities, scorched earth, and maneuvers over greatly expanded operational areas could easily exhaust the enemy well before the crucial battle.

Therefore, as in any large conflict, the war of 1812-1814 as well as preceding coalition wars caused a boom in literature on military affairs. Russian officers eagerly published their reflections both on the successes of 1813-1814 and on the earlier defeats of Austerlitz, Friedland, and during first days of 1812. These works ranged from memoirs to treatises on the conduct of war in general. Partisan leaders like Denis Davydov, Ferdinand Vintsengerode, Aleksandr Seslavin, Petr Chuikevich quickly became legendary figures due to numerous articles and books dedicated to their heroic — even if exaggerated — exploits.[12]

A number of senior cavalry officers also shared similar visions on the importance of partisan-like warfare combined with deep raids performed by light cavalry. Aleksandr Chernyshev, for instance, already in 1815 argued that the new age of warfare required a reassessment of the role of cavalry.[13] Composed from several to a dozen regiments, light cavalry units supported by mobile horse artillery could easily conduct both independent and supporting operations while at the same time maintaining contact with the central command, so that they could be recalled to join the main force on the eve of a full-scale battle. It was outside the battlefield, however,

where light cavalry could display its true strength. It could operate in advance of the main force; serve as recon; seize objectives deep in the enemy rear. Besides, it could also serve as a mobile strike force engaging in large-scale raiding operations. Relentless, these operations would keep the enemy distracted while isolated units, lines of communications, and sources of supply, would be destroyed. According to Chernyshev – who naturally based his observations on his own experience of 1812 – small light cavalry detachments could demonstrate a military value greatly exceeding their size. Indeed, the events of 1812 proved that small mobile detachments could easily deny large enemy formations provisions and forage.[14]

Besides, Chernysev was not alone in such thoughts. Konstantin Benkendorf presented ideas on the importance of the cossacks, similar to Chernyshev's, in his memoirs of 1816.[15] A bit later, Ivan Vitt agreed on the growing importance of light cavalry and the need to bolster cossack hosts by solving problems that had arisen in their employment.[16] Moreover, Antoine Henri Jomini in his "Art of War" stressed the importance of cossacks or similar units acting en-masse, raiding enemy supply lines, and gathering intelligence as well.[17]

What is more important, however, is the fact that all these men occupied high offices in government during the second half of Alexander's and Nicolas' reigns and could turn their ideas into state policies, thus shaping the cossacks according to their vision. For instance, Chernyshev became the Minister of War in 1827 and the Head of the State Council in 1848. Vitt was the commander of the Southern Settled Cavalry — a post that even allowed him to approach the Tsar directly, without the intermediation of Arakcheev — chief of all settled units.[18]

Naturally, cossacks were perfectly fit for the operations envisioned by military theorists. Mobility, lightness, and speed were all traits that they had fostered because of previous centuries of frontier raids and counterraids. After 1815, the same qualities became virtues according to the new roles established for light cavalry. Indeed, focus on light cavalry operations can be treated as a response of the Russian military establishment to the creation of European mass armies. In the early nineteenth century, the total mobilization of cossacks could provide Russia with more than 100.000 men. These numbers enabled Russia to surpass the ability of other European powers to quickly mobilize considerable masses of cavalry.[19]

At the same time, cossacks were still needed in their traditional roles. In 1817, Russian forces advanced deeply into the Caucasus, fighting local

Circassians and Chechens. This was a typical frontier campaign, with some local tribes joining the Russians, while others fiercely resisted. Therefore, the nature of the fighting required light, usually self-sustained, units capable of operating in low-supply environments. The Ottoman Empire got involved as well, readily supplying weapons and supplies to those who opposed the Russians. This practice continued into later decades, even if formally the Ottoman Empire had to withdraw its protectorate over mountaineers' tribes as the result of the Russo-Turkish war of 1828-1829. The Caucasian war, at a certain point having become a religious one, raged well until 1864 with many cossacks participating in the pacification of the Caucasus.[20]

In addition to the needs of the campaigning in the Caucasus, the deployment of cossacks was essential in operating on the vast open steppe between the Orenburg and Siberian defense lines exposed to raiding by Kirgiz and Turkmen nomads, who were enslaving Russian colonists. The colonization of Transbaikal region was far from being complete as well.[21] Unlike other European powers, except for the Ottomans, the Russian Empire had to defend different types of borders, those which were more or less stable facing regular European armies in the West and the open frontiers to the South and to the East, which were subject to persistent raids, pillage, and other acts of everyday warfare, by local tribes. Creating a military system capable of performing well in two vastly different theaters was a challenging task.[22] Ideally, in the eyes of imperial officials, cossack hosts could be shifted from one frontier to another, filling both functions, preserving reservoirs of skilled manpower for the wars in the West while colonizing and protecting the borderlands in the East.

For this reason alone, the cossacks were regarded as an essential arm of the Russian military forces. To be sure, Russia already used cossacks in Prussia during the Seven Years War 1756-1763. Similarly, the Habsburgs employed their grenzers in Europe on many occasions. Ottomans fighting European powers also made frequent use of irregulars as well. There were even cases of Western European powers bringing colonial troops to Europe.

However, the cossacks occupied a special place in these formations by virtue of their dual function, their permanent organization, and their growing reputation as formidable fighters among both European and Asian opponents. In sum, the cossack hosts were a specific answer given by Russian military officials as a response to both the new challenges posed by European mass armies and to the cossacks' earlier function as fighters against the Asian nomads, still viable in the nineteenth century.

The experience of early nineteenth century wars and the corresponding development of military thought were not the only factors directing the reform of cossackdom. Russian military, the largest standing army in Europe in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, frequently consumed more than half of the annual imperial budget.[23] The wars with Napoleonic France and its satellites brought numerous changes into the Russian military and required costly outlays of the State Treasury: the reorganization of the College of War, Ministry of War, and General Staff; the introduction of divisions and corps system; new drill-books; the development of topography schools; the unification of artillery calibers, etc. With all these innovations, measures had to be taken in order to decrease the expenses of maintaining a modern army.

After the 1815 Congress of Vienna, when the post-war dust started to settle, the Tsar and his advisors returned to the question of reforming military conscription as a measure to both optimize costs and to remove other drawbacks of the existing system. The State Council had already discussed this project in 1811, yet the war of 1812-1814 interrupted the process and this reform had not left the preliminary stage of discussion.[24] After the war, however, the eighteenth century conscription system was left intact.

The main problem was that any plan for introducing compulsory short-term service, followed by long-term reserve obligations — the alternative solution to the problem — was practically impossible to implement in a society with the serfdom system left intact. Abolition of serfdom, on the other hand, meant no less profound reforms dealing with many other aspects of the imperial society. As such, universal military service was introduced in Russia only in 1874, being part of the Great Reforms.

Besides general costs, another important issue with conscription was the low quality of conscripts. Since the whole agricultural community was a tax-paying unit, communities preferred to conceal from the recruiter their strongest and fittest men for agricultural work, while surrendering the less than fit to fill their quota for the army. Bribes, self-mutilations, desertions by those who did not wish to serve were also widespread.[25] Fresh efforts to reform cossackdom as a martial society in constant state of readiness, offered the possibility of a partial solution to both these issues.

Next, after the Decembrist Revolt of 1825, the question of ensuring loyalty among the regular army units became a worrisome question for the monarchy. The idea of creating a separate military estate loyally attached

to the Tsar gained prominence. Experiments with military colonies and reforms of cossack units were attempts to solve this problem as well.

The transfer of knowledge about the Habsburg Military Frontier also influenced Russian military thinking about reforms. While not new, these ideas began to appear more frequently in the early nineteenth century in Russian proposals as a source of emulation. References to the Habsburg Military Frontier appeared not only in projects of local importance like that one of Moldavian cossacks. Arakcheev, Barclay de Tolly, Chernyshev – all influential Ministers of War – at some point or another were exposed to information on the operation of the Habsburg Military Frontier, which they included in their projects.[26] Such transfers of knowledge should not be discounted as a general phenomenon of imperial rule. Still, while the mutual influences of Habsburg, Ottoman, and Russian models of the borderland military organizations deserve further attention, the importance of the Habsburg model should not be overestimated either.

The principal difference between the Habsburg and Russian cases was that contrary to the generally static Habsburg Military Frontier, a number of Russian frontiers were movable. As imperial borders advanced, borderland communities – cossacks included – had either to resettle closer to new frontiers or to somehow adapt to the life in the internal provinces of the empire.[27]

The quantity of cossacks, who lived in stable regions like Don or Ural was growing. Without the daily threat of attack, these cossacks could easily lose their incentive to maintain a state of constant military readiness. Becoming, in fact, farmers and craftsmen, they might nevertheless cling to traditional rights and privileges granted to their ancestors for their previous service. Possible solutions, which had already been resorted to before, included resettlement of cossacks closer to the border or from stable regions to serve at frontiers; or imposition of regular-army-like training for these cossacks to enhance their skills without actual participation in frontier warfare. Still, in all these cases, the imperial policy had to be at least partially accepted by both rank-and-file cossacks and cossack elites.

On the one hand, no cossack rebellions broke out in the late eighteenth-nineteenth centuries. Cossack protests were limited to the outbreak of discontent among the Black Sea cossacks over the delay of their cash payments for serving on the expedition to Persia; the quickly contained revolt of Bug cossacks upon their transition into military colonists; some revolts of peasants settled on the land of Don officers in the 1820s; minor protests by Don and Ural cossacks – yet nothing

comparable to the revolts by Razin, Bulavin, or Pugachev. On the other hand, even if open revolt was no longer a viable option there were other ways to frustrate the will of St. Petersburg, most of which relied on various forms of everyday resistance.

Another endemic problem requiring a solution was the corruption and abuses of officers that plagued the Russian imperial army. In the case of cossack units, the problem intensified due to the remnants of cossack autonomy still in place. On the one hand, given the fact that cossacks were not allowed to elect their own leaders, many traditional mechanisms of deposing inefficient officers were rendered dysfunctional. On the other hand, the empire still relied on the rule of appointed atamans with little interest in interfering with the life of cossack hosts. Thus, the period of the late eighteenth – early nineteenth centuries provided cossack leaders — by that time appointed by imperial officials — with a unique opportunity. They could abuse common cossacks without fear of retribution from below and could easily embezzle funds assigned by the imperial treasury for cossack units into their own pockets without fear of punishment coming from above.

Besides traditional and well-known embezzlements of funds, the majority of cossack officers were officially ennobled in the early nineteenth century, which effectively meant they gained the right to acquire serfs.[28] This opened the way to various machinations, such as settling officers' own serfs on the communal cossack land or, vice versa, forcing cossacks to work on an officers' land as serfs. The appropriation of communal land for an officer's personal use, together with the natural growth of cossack population, led to the situation where rank-and-file cossacks increasingly often faced impoverishment and pauperization. Furthermore, rich cossacks often hired poor youth who were sometimes not proficient with weapons and horses, or worse, barely fit for service at all, to serve instead of the rich.[29]

The pauperization of common cossacks, in turn, could lead imperial officials to the questioning of the rationale behind cossack communities since the very idea of cossack obligations towards the empire relied on the principle of self-financed service. If the cossack could not maintain a weapon and a warhorse, of what use could he be? What would be the rationale for such cossacks' exclusion from tax-paying population and other — even though not to be exaggerated — still benefits? Naturally, such practices further decreased the fighting ability of cossack units, which, in cases of large-scale operations far from their homes would require

cossacks to be at least fit for prolonged service and to maintain their own horses and weapons during the campaign.

The following episode dealing with the adventures of several Bug cossack officers helps to illustrate the abuses accruing in the internal life of cossack units at the turn of the centuries as a major factor influencing the necessity of reform from above. On September 12, 1801, Captain Vasilii Khmel'nitskii, former officer of the Bug cossacks and a rich landowner himself, submitted a petition regarding the restoration of the recently disbanded Bug Cossack Host. Having been endorsed by the New Russian military governor Ivan Michel'son, this petition, presumably written on behalf of common Bug cossacks, reached Alexander.[30] Khmel'nitskii, however, was not acting out of pure altruism. As other petitioners striving to create or to restore cossack units, Khmel'nitskii, quite possibly, envisaged himself as the new ataman.

Furthermore, there was another motive behind Khmel'nitskii's mission to St. Petersburg.[31] As for 1801, the state treasury still owed Bug cossacks 68.600 rubles for their previous military service in 1787-1789.[32] Being the first to locate this money would allow Khmel'nitskii, acting as representative of Bug cossacks, either to embezzle it for himself or to distribute it to the host, building popular support for future atamanship.

As it turned out, however, Khmel'nitskii was not the only one on this treasure hunt. Practically at the same time another competitor emerged, by the name of General V. Orlov. Orlov was an officer from Don, assigned to command Bug cossacks in 1789. He remained at this post until 1797 — the year of the dissolution of the unit. Upon the dissolution of the Bug cossacks and Orlov's reassignment, he took all the documentation on the host with him in an attempt to conceal his own corruption. Not surprisingly, a fire at Orlov's house followed soon and destroyed a wealth of documents valuable both for cossacks and for later historians.[33] These were important materials that could prove, among other things, the fact that, for instance, out of 58,487 rubles assigned by the College of War to Bug host in April 1787-April 1789, only 14,256 reached the cossacks. Orlov and his aides — other Don officers — embezzled the remaining 44,231.[34] The College of War also subsidized the purchase and restoration of saddles for Bug cossacks – the sum granted was about 9,600 rubles. This money, stored by Orlov, never reached the common cossacks at all.[35] If we add the sum, which the treasury still owed to the sum already seized by officers, it turns out that the cossacks received only 9,256 out of 131,687 rubles — even less then ten percent of the due sum.

Furthermore, the remaining 68,600 the treasury owed the Bug cossacks were of interest for Orlov as well. In 1802, Orlov and twelve other officers from Don who had previously served with the Bug cossacks forged a fake letter and were able to receive 63,600 rubles from the College of War.[36] Khmel'nitskii found out that Orlov had already received 63,600 and approached him in St. Petersburg. While it is not known what arguments Khmel'nitskii used and how persuasive they were, Khmel'nitskii managed to obtain 58,285 rubles from Orlov.[37] The rest — 5,315 together with 44,231 stolen earlier — remained in the hands of Orlov and his friends for the time being.

At this point Khmel'nitskii sent his assistant Poruchik Saltykovskii back to Bug in order to receive another letter. Exploiting the fact that both Saltykovskii and the majority of cossacks were illiterate, he composed the letter himself, not forgetting to add that he is to receive one third of the due sum for all his troubles, yet neglecting to mention that he had already received part of the due money. Besides, Khmel'nitskii sent 20,000 rubles to his brother in order to conceal them. When cossacks signed another letter and sent it, Khmel'nitskii brought a court claim against Orlov in order to get the remaining money for 1787-1789. At the same moment, he extracted from the treasury an additional 17,890 for the service of Bug cossacks in the period of October 1791-April 1792. Having enriched himself by 76,175 rubles, Khmel'nitskii stayed in St. Petersburg while his petition on the restoration of the unit was still under consideration. Wasting no time, the would-be ataman spent this money lavishly on presents and bribes in various departments and chancelleries. As a result, he gained access to a number of important officials including Viktor Kochubei, Minister of Interior.[38]

In the meantime, Emperor Alexander I requested the opinion of New Russian governors on the issue of Bug cossacks. Reports by both civilian and military governors were submitted on October 27, 1802, and contained two opposing points of view. Mikhail Miklashevskii, the civilian governor, was against the restoration of the Bug Cossack Host. He calculated that Bug cossacks — with household economies in their current state — would be able to field only one five hundred strong regiment. As peasants, however, they would be obliged to pay 14,872 rubles in annual taxes.[39]

Ivan Mikhel'son, the military governor, on the contrary, argued that the necessity of maintaining troops to patrol the border would outweigh the loss of revenue from taxes and Bug cossacks presence would help local

police in the vast steppe province. Moreover, in Mikhel'son's vision, Bug cossacks would be perfectly able to field not one, but three regiments.[40]

Minister of War Sergei Viazmitinov and Minister of Internal Affairs Viktor Kochubei considered these opinions and prepared a report on the restoration of the Bug Cossack Host, which was approved by Alexander on April 28, 1803. The decree of May 8, 1803, officially restored the Bug Cossack Host by ordering the transfer of 6,457 men and 5,673 women state peasants back into the cossack ranks.[41]

Anticipating this decision, Bug *starshiny* loyal to Khmel'nitskii petitioned to make their candidate an ataman. Yet, unexpectedly for them Ivan Krasnov – a general from Don – was appointed to lead the Bug Cossacks, with Khmel'nitskii remaining one of many petty officers. Among the possible reasons for such a surprise appointment, there are hints in Khmel'nitskii's correspondence that Krasnov might have been a protégé of the dowager Empress herself.[42] Other motivations are unclear – especially taking into account the previous assurances that in order to attract foreigners to serve in the unit, only local cossacks would be promoted to officer ranks. Apparently, arbitrary appointments like this further illustrate the insecure and vulnerable legal status of cossacks during the studied period.

With not many options left, Khmel'nitskii went all-out. He enlisted the support of Kochubei and other patrons, secured their recommendation letters addressed to Nikolaev governor Sergei Bekleshov, and returned to the Bug host. Upon his arrival to Bug in June 1803, he portrayed himself as a savior thanks to whom the host had got restored, while at the same time spreading the word about Orlov's previous exploits and the money which Don officers had previously stolen. Igniting anti-Don sentiments was a natural move against Krasnov, a Don general himself. Further rumors appeared — and it is difficult to say whether due to Khmel'nitskii or spontaneously — linking Krasnov and Orlov's schemes together and predicting hardship for Bug cossacks being exploited by ruthless Don officers.[43]

On July 9, at a cossack gathering in *stanitsa* Novopetrovskaia, Khmel'nitskii announced that Krasnov had been appointed only temporarily, while Khmel'nitskii had been promised a permanent appointment, succeeding Krasnov. To bolster his support, Khmel'nitskii also promoted a number of Bug officers and began to distribute 3,610 rubles money from the host chancellery among cossacks.[44]

Krasnov arrived at the Host only in 1803, where he encountered well-prepared protests not only from pro-Khmel'nitskii starshyna, but also from common cossacks refusing to carry out Krasnov's orders and acknowledging only Khmel'nitskii as rightful ataman. At the same time, cossacks loyal to Khmel'nitskii sent another delegation to St. Petersburg, which was instructed to portray in vivid colors all the troubles caused by Don officers and to petition for Krasnov's resignation. The delegation did not reach Petersburg because in Vitebsk they were informed that a direct petition to the Tsar would have no chance to succeed and that they should first approach the military governor in Kherson. The problem was that the resident military governor, Bekleshov, died in September 1803, and the new one, Andrei Rozenberg, had not yet arrived. Krasnov, in turn, approached the commander of Sibir Grenadier Regiment stationed nearby, asking for help in dealing with the disobedient cossacks. It took the grenadiers ten days to restore order among the Bug cossacks. On October 11, 1803, Khmel'nitskii was arrested and delivered to St. Petersburg.[45]

To improve his administrative authority Krasnov readjusted the internal organization of the Host, reshuffled local elders (*stanichnye atamany*), greatly reduced the cossacks' mobility outside their settlements by strictly limiting the number of their travel documents and reserving the right to issue these documents only to the Host Chancellery; previously it belonged to the authority of stanitsa-level officers. Krasnov's aides ruled by fear and widely used beatings, confiscations, and other forms of coercion in order to prevent any further disobedience.

Cossacks, feeling themselves unjustly oppressed, submitted numerous complaints to various offices. At the point where the number of complaints had reached such embarrassing proportions that they could no longer be ignored, governor de Richelieu paid a personal visit to the Bug Cossack Host. After his inspection he suspended Krasnov's tenure and reported this situation to Emperor Alexander on September 1, 1806.[46] Krasnov and his associates were added to the list of suspects in the judiciary case, which already included Orlov and Khmel'nitskii.

In retrospect it turned out that Krasnov and his aides — Major Iuzefovich, Prosecutor Pokhitonov, and Titular Councilor Luzenov — were no better than their predecessors. In three years, they embezzled more than 44,000 rubles assigned to Bug cossacks. This sum included not only payment for cossack military service, but also 18,000 rubles, which treasury had returned to cossacks as part of unfairly collected taxes in 1797-1803, when the cossacks were turned into state peasants.[47] Besides

the embezzling of host money, the accused forced cossacks to work on their own land, practically as serfs, and to buy horses and ammunition directly from them at inflated prices. In this light, one may only wonder about the true motives behind Krasnov's letter to governor Rozenberg dated March 1, 1804, describing the poverty of Bug cossacks and requesting a 50,000 rubles loan to be given to the Host for twenty years. According to him, without such a loan the cossacks would be unable to field all three regiments required from them.[48] If such a loan was given, how much of it would have been stolen?

The investigation of the accused officers, however, was lengthy, and the final decision was reached only on March 12, 1813.[49] Krasnov was dismissed from service and had to return money which he had previously received from cossacks, i.e., he was not accused of direct stealing of money, but only of accepting the proposed bribes, a much lesser crime. Khmel'nitskii was tried for insubordination, deprived of both his noble status and military rank, and exiled. As for Orlov, he was found guilty, yet proof of his wrongdoings was considered inadequate to specify any punishment other than the partial recovery of the embezzled funds.

Such a prolonged ten year investigation can be interpreted in various ways: the cumbersome interaction between imperial institutions at the center and in the borderlands; the powerful patrons of the accused, who could delay the process; the unwillingness of imperial officials to intervene too much into the internal life of the cossack unit; the realization that corruption was the necessary cost to bear in order to maintain any high ranking officials as administrators in the remote and inhospitable borderlands.

After Krasnov's forced resignation in 1806, governor Richelieu appointed Colonel Nikolai Kantakuzin — his own protégé — as the ataman of Bug cossacks. Kantakuzin's activities were similar to those of the previous atamans': exploitation of cossacks on his own land, misappropriation of funds, and other acts of corruption. Due, however, to Richelieu's protection, Kantakuzin remained the ataman until 1817. Only the reorganization of the Bug cossacks into military colonists, and the Emperor's personal interest in this social experiment prevented Kantakuzin from remaining in office any longer.[50]

To obtain some idea of the scale of the sums embezzled by cossack officers, a comparison can be made with the remuneration paid to common cossacks in the unit. While officers could steal tens of thousands of rubles during their tenure, the payment of common cossacks during a campaign

was only twelve rubles per year. When not campaigning, a cossack had to sustain himself on his own. While officers could own tens of thousands of *desiatina* of land with hundreds of serfs, the average cossack household of Bug cossacks in the 1775 had around thirty *desiatina* per adult male which was barely adequate to sustain a family. Nevertheless, by 1817, the average had fallen to fifteen *desiatina* due to population growth on the one hand and the officers' practice of transferring communal land into their private estates on the other. This average, however, is only an arithmetic mean arrived at by juxtaposing several large landowners with the majority of cossacks having six *desiatina* or even less. For a further comparison, fifteen *desiatina* was standard state peasant's allotment in Kherson province.[51]

Thanks to surviving evidence, the case of Bug atamans may be studied in detail. The question, however, remains whether it is representative enough and can be used as a general phenomenon common to all or most cossack units? All the possibilities certainly existed; yet, the situation of the Bug host could easily be duplicated with that of other irregulars both in New Russia or other borderlands of the empire. If even large traditional hosts were not immune to the abuses of their officers, then smaller and short-lived cossack units proved to be especially vulnerable.[52]

The main factor, which influenced the scale of corruption, was the brief existence of units meaning they lacked the opportunity to form their own elites and were obliged to accept temporary appointments of officers having no previous connection to it. Thus, there were few restraints on these officers coming either from their superiors, who were often their patrons, or from below by the traditional mechanisms of communal regulations.

This was especially true when local landowners were assigned as atamans: as in the cases of Kantakuzin and to some degree of the first ataman of the Bug cossacks, Skarzhinskii. Indeed, local landowners often demonstrated keen interest in obtaining the rank of ataman. After all, cossack service being a form of military service was much more honorable and prestigious than civilian or administrative work in the Russian Empire. At the same time, it was much less demanding than serving in the Guards in far-away St. Petersburg, that required a long absence from one's estate or dealing with the hardships of the regular army. Moreover, the control of imperial institutions over irregular military units was notoriously loose. Cossacks could be used as cheap, or even free labor on private estates while serfs could be used to work on cossack communal land. The chance

to embezzle money and goods assigned to the host could be considered as an extra bonus. To be sure, Don officers assigned to command smaller units had no estates nearby, but being only temporary appointees they were in a good position to embezzle funds practically without fear of any punishment.

The scale of corruption in cossack units can be ascribed also to the transitional nature of the period in question. During the heyday of cossackdom — say in seventeenth century — the common practice among cossacks was to elect their own leaders. If, however, elected leaders did not live up to cossacks' expectations they could be quickly and efficiently deposed by the decision of the assembly (*rada* or *krug)*. This hallowed tradition of forcing the resignation of inefficient or corrupt leaders by executing them did not survive the early modern period; it was no longer in use in the early nineteenth century, when atamans became appointed officials of the state.

On the other hand, the empire was still looking for a proper solution to the cossacks problems. It has been argued that cossack elites were in no way modern public servants and it was tolerated, even expected, that they would use their station for enrichment.[53] There is some truth here. Yet three other factors should be taken into account in explaining the different standards applied to these abuses. First, if abuses of Don officers within the Don Host could, to a certain degree, be tolerated, the abuses of temporary appointed Don officers in other units would be perceived through the us-them divide and would only promote rivalry if not hatred between separate cossack units.

Second, the scale of abuses mattered a great deal in the level of their acceptance. A certain degree of self-enrichment and embezzlement of public funds could be easily tolerated. However, abuses that created real hardship and even starvation among the lower orders of the community were grounds for resistance.[54] Unchecked abuses could result in a decline in the military effectiveness of cossack units, both in economic terms by depriving cossacks of the means to properly arm themselves. and in terms of unit morale and willingness to fight. Therefore, as the imperial officials acknowledged the growing importance of cossack units both for the Western theater and in the wild frontiers, it became an increasingly pressing need to solve the problem of corruption within the units one way or another.

Finally, the process of incorporating cossacks in the institutions of the central government undergoing reforms under Alexander I argued

for greater restraint on arbitrary and, indeed, illegal actions by cossack officers. As the Russian administrative and legal traditions were moving from Colleges to Ministries and from vague charters of the 1780s to the digests of laws of the 1830s, the place of cossacks in the Russian society was gradually becoming more rationalized within the legal structure.

This process was given an additional impetus by the changing character of the New Russia. With the return of Transdanubian cossacks to the Russian Empire, less ad-hoc decisions were needed. If previously cossack units were created or reformed just to attract more migrants, in the 1820s-1830s the evolution of cossackdom became part of the all-imperial development of legislation. Here we have Speranskii's tradition, which culminated both in the Digest of Laws and in the Complete Collection of Laws. As the all-imperial current was towards formalization of social groups boundaries, cossackdom, previously vaguely defined and extremely diverse in its forms, could finally become a distinct social category — with all the benefits and drawbacks such a formalization could bring for cossacks themselves.

To summarize, the experience of Napoleonic wars led Russian officials to reassess the value of cossackdom for the empire: as light cavalry reserve for the West, as frontier force for the East, and as relatively cheap irregulars in general. This reassessment, in turn, led to the recognition of problems which plagued the internal life of cossack hosts — including the crossing of frontier in such units as Don and corruption that was especially rampant in smaller cossack units. Consequently, Russian officers were actively searching for the best solution and proposed a range of options more or less viable both for specific cossack units and for cossackdom in general. This search coincided with the effort of Russian civilian administrators to properly clarify and formalize many pending legal issues with various social groups inhabiting the Russian Empire. In this vein, cossackdom was moving towards becoming a defined and distinct social group instead of being an umbrella-concept applicable to almost any irregular force.

## NOTES

1 For more on the Russian military thought of the eighteenth century in general and outlooks of Potemkin, Rumiantsev, and Suvorov see V. S. Lopatin, *Potemkin i Suvorov* (Moscow: Nauka, 1992). On Paul's praise of Don cossacks and his planned invasion of India see OR RNB, fund 73, inventory 1, file 328, fols 1-2.

2 PSZ, vol. 25, no. 18673.

3 GAKK, fund 249, inventory 1, file 359, fol. 1.

4 Cf. S. V. Volkov, *Russkii Ofitserskii Korpus* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1993), 42–44; Aleksandr Soklakov, "Komplektovanie Kazach'ikh Formirovanii i Poriadok Sluzhby Kazakov Rossiiskoi Imperii v 19 – Nachale 20 v." (Candidate of Sciences diss., Voennyi Universitet, Moscow, 2004), 90.

5 RGVIA, fund 13, inventory 2/110, bundle 178, file 128, fols 1-3; inventory 3/111, file 46, fol. 1.

6 RGVIA, fund 13, inventory 3/111, bundle 181, file 42, fols 7-8.

7 On February 25, 1801, new host chancelleries were introduced to administer Don and Black Sea cossacks – PSZ, vol. 27, no. 20508. On September 29, 1802, new regulations of officers' promotion were introduced to Don – PSZ, vol. 27, no. 20436. On November 13, 1802, the internal administration of Black Sea cossacks was slightly revised and reconfirmed – PSZ, vol. 27, no. 20508. A similar decree dealing with Orenburg cossacks appeared on June 8, 1803 – PSZ, vol. 27, no. 20786. On August 31, 1803, new staff tables for cossack regiments were issued – PSZ, vol. 27, no. 20921. On November 2, 1803 the administration of Stavropol Kalmyk cossacks was readjusted – PSZ, vol. 27, no. 21025. The same went for Ural cossacks on December 26, 1803 – PSZ, vol. 27, no. 21101. Besides, decrees equating elites of other, non-Don, hosts to army officers were issued separately for Ural, Black Sea, Stavropol', Orenburg, as well as for the recently reorganized Bug Cossacks. All in all, these decrees can be treated as an attempt to bring a degree of uniformity both into the administration of cossack settlements and the organization of cossack military units.

8 On the warfare of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars see: Janet Hartley, Paul Keenan, and Dominic Lieven, eds., *Russia and the Napoleonic Wars* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Dominic Lieven, *Russia Against Napoleon: The Battle for Europe, 1807 to 1814* (London: Penguin Books, 2017); Gunther Rothenberg, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Napoleon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980).

9 O. I Eliseeva, *Geopoliticheskie Proekty G.A. Potemkina* (Moscow: Institut rossiiskoi istorii RAN, 2000), 244–72.

10 Modest Bogdanovich, *Istoriia Otechestvennoi Voiny 1812 Goda, Po Dostovernym Istochnikam*, vol. 1 (Sankt Petersburg: Tipografiia Torgovago

Doma S. Strugovshchikova, G. Pokhitonova, I. Vodova i Ko, 1859), 59-60, 512-513.

11 Walter Pintner, "The Burden of Defense in Imperial Russia, 1725-1914," *The Russian Review* 43, no. 3 (1984): 246.

12 John Keep, "From the Pistol to the Pen: The Military Memoir as a Source on the Social History of Pre-Reform Russia," *Cahiers Du Monde Russe et Sovietique* 21, no. 3–4 (1980): 295–320.

13 "Dokladnye Zapiski i DonesenieA. I. Chernysheva Imp. Aleksandru I 1814-1815 Gg.," *SIRIO* 121 (1906): 291–93. For more on Chernyshev's views see: Bruce Menning, "Military Institutions and the Steppe Frontier in Imperial Russia, 1700-1861," *International Commission of Military History* 8, no. 5 (1981): 10–17. Bruce Menning, "G. A. Potemkin and A. I. Chernyshev: Two Dimensions of Reform and the Military Frontier in Imperial Russia," in *The Consortium on Revolutionary Europe 1750-1850: Proceedings 1980*, ed Donald Howard, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Athens, 1980), 237–50; Bruce Menning, "A.I. Chernyshev: A Russian Lycurgus," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 30, no. 2 (1988): 190–219; David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye and Bruce Menning, *Reforming the Tsar's Army Military Innovation in Imperial Russia from Peter the Great to the Revolution* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2011), 273-291; Ol'ga Evgen'evna Khmel'nitskaia, "A. I. Chernyshev - Gosudarstvennyi Deiatel' Rossii Pervoi Poloviny 19 Veka" (Candidate of Sciences diss., Tomskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet, Tomsk, 2003).

14 "Dokumenty, Otnosiashchiesia k Voennoi Deiatel'nosti A. I. Chernysheva v 1812, 1813, i 1814 Godakh," *SIRIO* (Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obshchestva) 121 (1906): 235-37.

15 C. De Benkendorff, *The Cossacks. A Memoir, Presented to H.M. the Emperor of Russia in 1816*, trans. George Gall (London: Parker, Furnivall and Parker, 1849).

16 RGVIA, fund 405, inventory 6, file 392, fols 1-4.

17 G. Zhomini, *Analiticheskii Obzor Glavnykh Soobrazhenii Voennago Iskustva i Ob Otnosheniiakh Onykh c Politikoiu Gosudarstv* (Sankt Petersburg: Tipografiia Vremennago Departamenta Voennykh Poselenii, 1833), 269–90; Antoine Henri Jomini, *The Art of War*, trans. G. H. Mendell and W. P. Craighill, reprint (Westport: Lanham: Start Publishing LLC, 2012). For more on Jomini see John Shy, "Jomini," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, eds. Peter Paret, Gordon Alexander Craig, and Felix Gilbert (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 143–85. Besides, as an illustration of certain a continuity in the Russian military thought cf. Petr Chuikevich, *Podvigi Kazakov v Prussii* (Saint Petersburg, 1807); Petr Chuikevich, *Strategich. Rassuzhdeniia o Pervykh Deistviiakh Rossian za Dunaem* (Saint Petersburg, 1810); Denis Davydov, *Opyt o Partizanakh* (n. p., n. d.). For the Russian miltary thought of this period in

general see Frederick Kagan and Robin Higham, eds., *The Military History of Tsarist Russia* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

18 In the early nineteenth century, the ministerial reform took place in the Russian Empire. Previously, the Cossack Expedition of the College of War oversaw cossack units. From the 1810s as departments within the War Ministry replaced expeditions of old, there was no specific office to deal with cossacks and several various departments dealt with irregulars. Only in 1835 the Department of Military Colonies took over the centralized control over irregular troops in the empire. As for Vitt, he stood behind the transformation of the Bug cossacks into military colonists – it was his idea to create military colonies not on the basis of regular units like Arakcheev envisioned, but on the basis of the already existing cossack households. Under Vitt's guildance the Bug Cossack Host quickly underwent regularization dreadful for many cossacks – even if some coercion had to be applied.

19 Menning, "A.I. Chernyshev: A Russian Lycurgus," 199. Noteworthy, this figure almost equals to the number of Habsburg grenzers – see Gunther Rothenberg, *The Military Border in Croatia 1740-1881. A Study of an Imperial Institution* (Chicago: Universiy of Chicago Press, 1988), 108–9. Still, grenzers were not able to actively participate in the later Napoleonic wars as according to the Treaty of Schonbrunn, 1809, Croatia on the right bank of Sava River was ceded to Napoleonic Italy. Who knows what could be the assessment of grenzers performance and its influence on the military thought of Central Europe if Habsburgs were able to use manpower from their Military Frontier in the later campaigns.

20 For the classical works on the Caucasian War see: Rostislav Andreevich Fadeev, *Shest'desiat Let Kavkazskoi Voiny* (Tiflis: Voenno-Pokhodnaia Tipografiia Glavnago Shtaba Kavkazskoi Armii, 1860); Vasilii Aleksandrovich Potto, *Kavkazskaia Voina v Otdel'nykh Ocherkakh, Epizodakh, Legendakh i Biografiiakh*, 5 vols. (Sankt Petersburg: Tipografiia E. Evdokimova, 1887).

21 A. I. Nikol'skii, *Stoletie Voennago Ministerstva: Voinskaia Povinnost' Kazach'ikh Voisk*, ed. D. A. Skalon, vol. 11, part 3, (Sankt Petersburg: Tipografiia Postavshchikov Dvora Ego Imperatorskago Velichestva Tovarishchestva M. O. Vol'f, 1907), 225-422.

22 Consequently, contrary to previous policy directions of the cossacks, future reforms of cossack hosts in the Russian Empire were influenced not only by the defense of extended, practically transparent borders, but also — and in some cases even primarily — by changing strategies for the anticipation of warfare with European powers. Furthermore, while studying the development of military systems, one should not discard the tasks set for this system influenced by geography, culture, neighboring countries, etc. For instance, from the perspective of the Western European warfare, a focus on cavalry was becoming obsolete already in the seventeenth century. Still, in the Steppes cavalry reigned supreme much longer – i.e. armies of

Poland, Russia, or Crimean Khanate of the eighteenth century with their large cavalry detachments should not be considered backward compared to Europe. For more on this see Carol Stevens, *Russia's Wars of Emergence, 1460-1730* (New York: Longman, 2007); Jeremy Black, *Rethinking Military History* (London: Routledge, 2004).

23 According to calculations presented by Bogdanovich in various places, the total proportion of army expenses fluctuated between nineteen and sixty-eight percent of Russian annual budget. The peaks were 1810 with sixty-seven percent, 1813 and 1814 with fifty-eight percent per year, 1815 with fifty percent, 1816 with fifty-four percent. On this see also Anzhelika Iur'evna Kovalenko, "Voennye Reformy v Rossii v Pervoi Chetverti 19 Veka" (Doctor of Sciences diss., Rossiiskii Universitet Druzhby Narodov, 2004), 305.

24 RGIA, fund 1164, inventory 1, file 1, fols 1-25.

25 Janet Hartley, *Russia, 1762-1825 Military Power, the State, and the People* (London: Praeger, 2008), 25–47. As per Arakcheev's calculations, Russian Army was losing 24.000 men every six months due to illness and desertions – i.e. the army was losing one sixth of its size every year due to these reasons alone. See A. F. Lanzheron, "Zapiski Grafa Lanzherona: Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 g.," *Russkaia Starina* 131, no. 7–9 (1907): 575.

26 For Barclay de Tolly appealing to the Habsburg example see RGVIA, fund 405, inventory 1, file 507, fols 25-26. For Chernyshev's note on the same issue see "Diplomaticheskaia Missiia A. I. Chernysheva v Vene v 1816 g.," *SIRIO* 121 (1906): 342–46. For reports on the Habsburgs model presented to Arakcheev see RGVIA, fund 154, inventory 1, file 115, fols 9-15. As a side note, approximately at the same time, in the 1830-1840s, the French experimented with the military colonization of Algeria, presumably borrowing the Habsburgs model as well. Speaking of the transfer of military knowledge between the empires, one should also mention the Prussian conscription reform by Gerhard von Scharnhorst. If in Prussia this was a step towards the universal military conscription, the Russians could adopt certain points regarding the establishment of a trained reserve of manpower as well. For more on possible Prussian influences see A. N. Petrov, "Ustroistvo i Upravlenie Voennykh Poselenii v Rossii," in *Graf Arakcheev i Voennye Poseleniia 1809 - 1831*, ed. Mikh. Semevskii (Sankt Petersburg: Pechatnia V. I. Golovina, 1871), 88.

27 Habsburg and Ottoman borders were movable as well, however, the scale matters – one situation is the Habsburg-Ottoman competition over the relatively small Bosnia, the other is the Russian advance into Caucasus, Central Asia, Siberia. Therefore, if in the Habsburg case it was just a matter of adding several settlements to the existing military system, in Russia whole areas were transforming from frontiers to borderlands and later to hinterland – a situation unique for Europe yet similar to colonial frontiers

worldwide. Besides, it was the experience of New Russia at this point, as with the additions of Bessarabia and advance into Caucasus the province was gradually becoming less of a borderland. On the issue of cossack hosts left in internal provinces see also Brian Boeck, *Imperial Boundaries: Cossack Communities and Empire-Building in the Age of Peter the Great* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 239.

28 PSZ, vol. 25, no. 18673.

29 Vitt's comments on this issue: RGVIA, fund 405, inventory 6, file 392, fols 5-18.

30 RGIA, fund 1286, inventory 1, file 219a, fols 15-20v. The petition is also mentioned in the introductory part of PSZ, vol. 27, no. 20754.

31 For the primary source – a meticulously detailed court case – serving as the basis for the story below see RGVIA, fund 801, inventory 77/18, file 4, parts 1-12. For another take on the reconstruction of these events see I. A. Khioni, "Bugskie Kazaki i ikh Bor'ba Protiv Feodal'no-Krepostnicheskogo Gneta: Posledniaia Chetvert' XVIII - Pervaia Chetvert' XIX Vv." (Candidate of Sciences diss., Odesskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet imeni I. I. Mechnikova, 1973), 107–30.

32 RGVIA, fund 801, inventory 77/18, file 4, part 10, fols 90-91. The debt owed to the Bug cossacks for their service from September 16, 1787, till April 16, 1789, 122,087 rubles in total. Of this sum only 53,487 were allocated, thus the debt was 68,600 rubles.

33 RGVIA, fund 801, inventory 77/18, file 4, part 5, fol. 217; part 10, fol. 95.

34 RGVIA, fund 801, inventory 77/18, file 4, part 10, fol. 13.

35 Khioni, "Bugskie Kazaki i ikh Bor'ba," 104.

36 RGVIA, fund 801, inventory 77/18, file 4, part 5, fol. 217; part 10, fol. 95.

37 RGVIA, fund 801, inventory 77/18, file 4, part 10, fols 90-92.

38 Khioni, "Bugskie Kazaki i ikh Bor'ba," 108-13.

39 A copy of the report can be found at RGIA, fund 1286, inventory 1, file 219a, fols 1-10 or at ORRNB, fund 859, cardboard no. 2 (I.VI.14), fols 22-29. Noteworthy is the fact that at the same time Miklashevskii was a proponent – to a certain degree – of cossack autonomous rights in the Little Russia region.

40 RGIA, fund 1286, inventory 1, file 219a, fols 1-10.

41 PSZ, vol. 27, no. 20754.

42 RGVIA, fund 1, inventory 1, file 523, fols 25-27. If one is to believe court rumors of that time Orlov, being a commander of Life Guards at this point, approached Count Valerian Zubov, who in turn approached Prince Palatin, who in turn approached Maria Fedorovna in order to secure an appointment for Krasnov.

43 Khioni, "Bugskie Kazaki i ikh Bor'ba," 114.

44 RGVIA, fund 801, inventory 77/18, file 4, part 5, fols 51, 198.

45 Khioni, "Bugskie Kazaki i ikh Bor'ba," 119-20.

46 RGVIA, fund 801, inventory 77/18, file 4, part 4, fol. 1.

47 RGVIA, fund 801, inventory 77/18, file 4, part 8, fols 8-9.

48 RGVIA, fund 846, inventory 16, file 341, fols 154-155.

49 RGVIA, fund 801, inventory 77/18, file 4, part 8, fols 235-239.

50 For Kantakuzin being a protégé of Richelieu see Lozheshnyk, "Otamany Buz'koho Kozats'koho Viis'ka: Prosopohrafichnyi Portret," 57. This thesis stems in turn from Lanzheron's memoir, where Lanzheron describes Kantakuzin as follows: during the whole 1806-1812 campaign Kantakuzin was in Chisinau under the pretext of preparing crusts (*sushki sukharei*) for the army, leaving his cossacks and volunteers far from himself … in 1788 Kantakuzin pretended to serve, yet during this war he did not even pretend. He equipped his volunteers very poorly, yet increased the size of his own herds. See A. F. Lanzheron, "Zapiski Grafa Lanzherona: Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 g.," *Russkaia Starina* 130, no. 4–6 (1907): 600.

51 Khioni, "Bugskie Kazaki i Ikh Bor'ba," 83-84.

52 For corruption on Don see S. G. Svatikov, *Rossiia i Don, 1549-1917: Izsledovanie po Istorii Gosudarstvennago i Administrativnago Prava i Politicheskikh Dvizhenii na Donu* (Belgrade: Izdanie Donskoi Istoricheskoi Komississ, 1924), 264–74; A. P Pronshtein, *Zemlia Donskaia v XVIII Veke* (Rostov-na-Donu: Izdatel'stvo Rostovskogo Universiteta, 1961); Bruce Menning, "The Emergence of a Military-Administrative Elite in the Don Cossack Land, 1708-1836," in *Russian Officialdom: The Bureaucratization of Russian Society from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century*, eds. Walter Pintner and Don Rowney (London: Macmillan, 1993), 156–57; Boeck, *Imperial Boundaries: Cossack Communities and Empire-Building in the Age of Peter the Great*, 187–207. For the Black Sea cossacks see V. A. Golobutskiii, *Chernomorskoe Kazachestvo* (Kiev: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk Ukrainskoi SSR, 1956), 372–80. On Bug cossacks see Khioni, "Bugskie Kazaki i ikh Bor'ba"; Lozheshnyk, "Otamany Buz'koho Kozats'koho Viis'ka: Prosopohrafichnyi Portret."

53 On the popular acceptance of a certain degree of embezzlement see Shane O'Rourke, *Warriors and Peasants: The Don Cossacks in Late Imperial Russia* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 118–19.

54 On pre-modern economy in general and its idea of providing at least some sustenance for all community members see E. P Thompson, *Customs in Common* (London: Merlin Press, 1993).

## Bibliography

***Archival Sources***

*Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Krasnodarskogo kraia (GAKK), Krasnodar*
Fund 249: Kantseliariia nakaznogo atamana Kubanskogo kazach'ego voiska
*Otdel rukopisei Rossiiskoi natsional'noi biblioteki (OR RNB), St. Petersburg*
Fund 73: Bil'basov V. A. i Kraevskii A. A.
Fund 859: Shil'der N. K.
*Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv (RGIA), St. Petersburg*
Fund 1164: Osobyi komitet predsedatelei departamentov gosudarstvennogo soveta
Fund 1286: Departament politsii ispolnitel'noi MVD
*Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi voenno-istoricheskii arkhiv (RGVIA), Moscow*
Fund 1: Kantseliariia voennogo ministerstva
Fund 13: Kazach'ia ekspeditsiia kantseliarii voennoi kollegii
Fund 154: Arakcheev
Fund 405: Departament voennykh poselenii
Fund 801: Glavnoe voenno-sudnoe upravlenie
Fund 846: Voenno-uchenyi arhiv

***Published Sources***

BENKENDORFF, C., translated by George Gall, *The Cossacks. A Memoir, Presented to H.M. the Emperor of Russia in 1816*, Parker, Furnivall and Parker, London, 1849

CHUIKEVICH, P., *Podvigi Kazakov v Prussii*, n.p., Sankt Petersburg, 1807

DAVYDOV, D., *Opyt o Partizanakh*, n. p., n. d

———, *Strategich. Rassuzhdeniia o Pervykh Deistviiakh Rossian Za Dunaem*, n.p., Saint Petersburg, 1810

GOLITSYN, N., "Diplomaticheskaia Missiia A. I. Chernysheva v Vene v 1816 g", in *SIRIO,* 121, 1906

———, "Dokladnye Zapiski i Donesenie A. I. Chernysheva Imp. Aleksandru I 1814-1815 gg.", in *SIRIO,* 121, 1906

———, "Dokumenty, Otnosiashchiesia k Voennoi Deiatel'nosti A. I. Chernysheva v 1812, 1813, i 1814 godakh", in *SIRIO*, 121, 1906

JOMINI, A., *Analiticheskii Obzor Glavnykh Soobrazhenii Voennago Iskustva i Ob Otnosheniiakh Onykh s Politikoiu Gosudarstv*, Tipografiia Vremennago Departamenta Voennykh Poselenii, Saint Petersburg, 1833

———, *The Art of War*. Translated by G. H. Mendell and W. P. Craighill. Reprint. Start Publishing LLC, Westport, 2012

LANZHERON, A., "Zapiski Grafa Lanzherona: Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.", in *Russkaia Starina,* 130, no. 4–6, 1907

———, "Zapiski Grafa Lanzherona: Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.", in *Russkaia Starina,* 131, no. 7–9, 1907

*Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii*

***Literature***

BLACK, J., *Rethinking Military History*, Routledge, London, 2004

BOECK, B., *Imperial Boundaries Cossack Communities and Empire-Building in the Age of Peter the Great*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2014

BOGDANOVICH, M., *Istoriia Otechestvennoi Voiny 1812 Goda, po Dostovernym Istochnikam*, Vol. 1. Tipografiia Torgovago Doma S. Strugovshchikova, G. Pokhitonova, I. Vodova i Ko, Saint Petersburg, 1859

ELISEEVA, O., *Geopoliticheskie Proekty G.A. Potemkina*, Institut rossiiskoi istorii RAN, Moscow, 2000

FADEEV, R., *Shest'desiat Let Kavkazskoi Voiny*, Voenno-Pokhodnaia Tipografiia Glavnago Shtaba Kavkazskoi Armii, Tiflis, 1860

GOLOBUTSKIII, V., *Chernomorskoe Kazachestvo*, Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk Ukrainskoi SSR, Kiev, 1956

HARTLEY, J., *Russia, 1762-1825 Military Power, the State, and the People*, Praeger, London, 2008

HARTLEY, J., KEENAN, P., and LIEVEN D., eds, *Russia and the Napoleonic Wars*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2015

KAGAN, F., and HIGHAM, R., eds., *The Military History of Tsarist Russia*, Palgrave, New York, 2002

KEEP, J., "From the Pistol to the Pen: The Military Memoir as a Source on the Social History of Pre-Reform Russia", in *Cahiers Du Monde Russe et Sovietique,* 21, no. 3/4, 1980

KHIONI, I., *Bugskie Kazaki i ikh Bor'ba Protiv Feodal'no-Krepostnicheskogo Gneta: Posledniaia Chetvert' XVIII - Pervaia Chetvert' XIX vv.,* Candidate of Sciences diss., Odesskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet imeni I. I. Mechnikova, 1973

KHMEL'NITSKAIA, O., *A. I. Chernyshev - Gosudarstvennyi Deiatel' Rossii Pervoi Poloviny 19 Veka,* Candidate of Sciences diss., Tomskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet, 2003

KOVALENKO, A., *Voennye Reformy v Rossii v Pervoi Chetverti 19 Veka*, Doctor of Sciences diss., Rossiiskii Universitet Druzhby Narodov, 2004

LIEVEN, D., *Russia Against Napoleon: The Battle for Europe, 1807 to 1814*, Penguin Books, London, 2017

LOPATIN, V., *Potemkin i Suvorov*, Nauka, Moscow, 1992

LOZHESHNYK, A., "Otamany Buz'koho Kozats'koho Viis'ka: Prosopohrafichnyi Portret", in *Naukovi Pratsi Istorychnoho Fakul'tetu Zaporiz'koho Natsional'noho Universytetu,* 36, 2013

MENNING, B., "A.I. Chernyshev: A Russian Lycurgus", *Canadian Slavonic Papers,* 30, no. 2, 1988

———, "G. A. Potemkin and A. I. Chernyshev: Two Dimensions of Reform and the Military Frontier in Imperial Russia", in *The Consortium on Revolutionary Europe 1750-1850: Proceedings 1980*, Athens, 1980

———, "Military Institutions and the Steppe Frontier in Imperial Russia, 1700-1861", in *International Commission of Military History,* 8, no. 5, 1981

———, "The Emergence of a Military-Administrative Elite in the Don Cossack Land, 1708-1836", in *Russian Officialdom: The Bureaucratization of Russian Society from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century*, edited by Walter Pintner and Don Rowney, Macmillan, London, 1993

NIKOL'SKII, A., *Stoletie Voennago Ministerstva: Voinskaia Povinnost' Kazach'ikh Voisk*, edited by D. A. Skalon, Tipografiia Postavshchikov Dvora Ego Imperatorskago Velichestva Tovarishchestva M. O. Vol'f, Sankt Petersburg, 1907

O'ROURKE, S., *Warriors and Peasants: The Don Cossacks in Late Imperial Russia*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2000

PETROV, A., "Ustroistvo i Upravlenie Voennykh Poselenii v Rossii", in *Graf Arakcheev i Voennye Poseleniia 1809 – 1831*, edited by Mikh. Semevskii, Pechatnia V. I. Golovina, Saint Petersburg, 1871

PINTNER, W., "The Burden of Defense in Imperial Russia, 1725-1914", in *The Russian Review*, 43, no. 3, 1984

POTTO, V., *Kavkazskaia Voina v Otdel'nykh Ocherkakh, Epizodakh, Legendakh i Biografiiakh*, Tipografiia E. Evdokimova, Saint Petersburg, 1887

PRONSHTEIN, A., *Zemlia Donskaia v XVIII veke*, Izdatel'stvo Rostovskogo Universiteta, Rostov-na-Donu, 1961

ROTHENBERG, G., *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Napoleon*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1980

———, *The Military Border in Croatia 1740-1881. A Study of an Imperial Institution*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1988

SCHIMMELPENNINCK van der Oye, D., and Menning, B., *Reforming the Tsar's Army Military Innovation in Imperial Russia from Peter the Great to the Revolution*, Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington, 2011

SHY, J., "Jomini," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, edited by Peter Paret, Gordon Alexander Craig, and Felix Gilbert, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1986

SOKLAKOV, A., *Komplektovanie Kazach'ikh Formirovanii i Poriadok Sluzhby Kazakov Rossiiskoi Imperii v 19 - Nachale 20 v.,* Candidate of Sciences diss., Voennyi Universitet, 2004

STEVENS, C., *Russia's Wars of Emergence, 1460-1730*, Longman, New York, 2007

SVATIKOV, S., *Rossiia i Don, 1549-1917: Izsledovanie po Istorii Gosudarstvennago i Administrativnago Prava i Politicheskikh Dvizhenii na Donu*, Izdanie Donskoi Istoricheskoi Komissii, Belgrade, 1924

THOMPSON, E., *Customs in Common*, Merlin Press, London, 1993

VOLKOV, S., *Russkii Ofitserskii Korpus*, Voenizdat, Moscow, 1993

# MARIA RYBAKOVA

Born in 1973, in Moscow, USSR/Russia

Ph.D. in Classics, Yale University (2004)
Thesis: *Child-Snatching Demons of Antiquity*

Writer

**Fellowships:**
Virginia Humanities Fellowship
Artists-in-Residence at the Institute for Advanced Study,
Central European University

Articles published in journals of Classics and Humanities

Participation in conferences in Italy, the USA, Romania, Germany

Novels published in Russia, Germany, Spain, France and the UK

# THE MANTRA OF BUCHAREST*

**Abstract**

Jenia Isaac, a secondary character in Mircea Eliade's novel "Maitreyi," decides to come to Bucharest around 1990 upon reading the novel, because she wants to see the places associated with the author. She debates, with her young guide (and Eliade scholar) Andrei Florescu, the nature of her relationship with Eliade and what it means to be a secondary character. Their interaction forces Andrei to make a momentous decision that will impact the rest of his life.

**Keywords**: Mircea Eliade, Maitreyi, Bucharest, India, Tantra, magic, intertextuality, love, relationships, age, immortality, fiction.

Andrei woke up with a headache. He lifted his head from the pillow with a considerable effort and looked around. The morning light crept through the dark curtains and illuminated a square room with flower-patterned wallpaper peeling off the wall in a few places. It wasn't Andrei's room. He turned: a woman was sleeping next to him. Her face, in a halo of unwashed blond hair with dark roots showing, was young. Andrei remembered the day before, remembered how the drinking started, and, after a short struggle with his memory, remembered her name: Ileana. His clothes lay in a heap in the corner, but he could reach, without getting up, the pack of cigarettes and the lighter that were on the floor next to a cracked saucer that served as an ashtray and was overfilled with yesterdays' cigarette butts.

He lit a cigarette and inhaled the first smoke of the day. He wouldn't be able to feel awake without it, although it would have made more sense to stealthily get dressed and get out, before the woman woke up. The good thing about being poor was not having a phone: nobody could harass him with calls, and maintaining the contact was entirely up to him. The

* The text will be included in Maria Rybakova's novella-collection *Quaternity* that will appear with Ibidem Verlag.

bad thing about being poor was a) having to constantly borrow or steal books; b) not being able to travel to India.

It reminded him: Mrs. Jones.

Mrs. Jones. How could he have been so stupid. He looked at the small alarm clock that, due to the general lack of furniture in this room, was also standing on the floor.

He still has time to get to the hotel, if he runs (that is, if he understands correctly where he is at the moment: yesterday they walked quite a lot, from one apartment to the other, all of them filled with people and the smoke and conversations and cheap booze and giggling girls, and then he ended up here with this woman, Ileana). He remembered the street they had walked on in the dark: he recognized a school there. The walk from here to the hotel would take about forty minutes. He could ride the metro, but it would take about the same time. The walk would clear his head. Petrica got him a strange kind of tourist-guide-for-two-days job: Andrei had to not just show the city to a Western tourist, but to show the places connected to Mircea Eliade in particular. A rich lady traveled from Australia – or was it South Africa? – to see the street where Eliade was born. Not that Andrei didn't share her enthusiasm: he knew everything that had to do with Eliade in his town. But still. Westerners aren't too eager to travel here. They still think there may be shooters on the rooftops left over from December. Everyone in the world is still shocked. The president and his wife being both shot, and their bodies caught on camera. If the soldiers hadn't tied them up, they would have held hands, perhaps. And Ceausescu singing the "Internationale" before being wiped out.

Petrica said the lady was very old but paid well. It has to be a slow tour, he said. Otherwise the lady might kick the bucket right in the street. Petrica offered to find someone who could drive her around instead, but she said she wanted to walk. Just a short taxi ride, maybe. And then walk. She walks with a stick. She's a weird one, Petrica said. Makes little grimaces. As if she's flirting or something. You've got to get a bit soft in your head, alas, when you reach that age. You'll see for yourself. It's strange that her family even let her fly here, let alone spend all this money. Anyway, said Petrica, that could be quite a contribution towards your future trip to India and the new edition of the "Yoga." How's your study of Sanskrit, by the way? Still at it?

Andrei couldn't remember how the conversation ended exactly, but he had agreed and written down when and where he was supposed to meet Mrs. Jones. He had already lost the sheet of paper, of course, but in

his mind's eye he still saw his note, written down in Sanskrit characters: it was his practice now to write everything down in Devanagari, to make sure he remembered the signs (he had made the mistake of learning first the transliterated version, and now the switch to original characters was painful). He got out of bed moving cautiously and tiptoed towards his clothes. Ileana said something inaudible and moved in her sleep. Gingerly he got himself into his trousers, his shirt and his socks, and looked around for his shoes and the jacket. He couldn't see them anywhere.

"Andrei."

She remembers my name, he thought. That's a bad sign.

"Where are you going?"

She sat on the bed, half-naked, her breasts exposed, and Andrei's determination to leave somewhat waned. He had to remind himself that the chapter on Tantrism and Hathayoga awaits its commentary. The work will help him make a name for himself, and Ileana's breasts won't. He picked up the pack of cigarettes from the floor, then remembered that they belonged to her and put them back, saying: "Need to rush. Urgent work. A foreign colleague is waiting. It was a pleasure! Do you remember where I left my shoes?"

"Will I see you tonight?" she asked.

"The shoes, dear," he repeated and realized that both the shoes and the jacket were in the tiny hall adjacent to the door. "Of course," he said. She probably expected him to kiss her, but he didn't feel like mixing his morning breath with hers. He blew Ileana an air kiss – "Pa și pusi!" – and rushed into the hall to grab his shoes and jacket before she had time to say anything else.

Besides the cigarettes and a few lei, he had some gravel-stones in his pockets, to throw them at the packs of dogs roaming the streets. He must be vigilant when he walks with the old lady. Protect her from the animals and the like. Maybe she could go at them with her stick, though. If she was tough enough to fly all the way here from Cape Town – or where's she from? – then the stray dogs will probably scare her no more than a swarm of mosquitoes. He deftly navigated the crooked streets on his way to the University. He hoped that the demons in Hell were now dropping large slabs of concrete on the dead Nicolae and Elena, to punish them for destroying his city. They've got to have some sort of 'bodies' there in the underworld, didn't they? Otherwise the punishment wouldn't be as effective. He imagined how, amongst eternal fires and screams, every five

minutes or so a great slab of concrete falls on the evil couple and crushes them over and over again.

He couldn't believe his luck that he could enter that hotel. He always dreamed of going there. There were always rumors that it was a den of international spies and intrigue. He imagined them in their impeccable Western clothes, nursing a whisky in the English bar and speaking in hushed tones. There are probably no spies there now. It's surprising the hotel is even open, given the paucity of the tourists and what happened on the square in front of it so recently. The façade still looks damaged. But still. Inside it must be luxurious. Full of informers just a year ago. Every room bugged, every prostitute reporting on her clients. And now? Maybe they still do. But not on Mrs. Jones. She doesn't sound like she could be a spy. Maybe she's a former émigré? Who married a foreigner and then took his name? And now she's coming back home to die? I do hope she doesn't die on me, thought Andrei and surreptitiously crossed himself.

He entered the lobby through a revolving door and stopped in front on the receptionist's desk. A uniformed woman and a uniformed man with stern faces both looked up at him. He didn't know which one to address and started speaking to both at once, turning his head right and left. He mumbled that he had an appointment with Mrs. Jones who was a guest here and who was waiting for him. He half-expected to be refused entry and thrown out, but the man raised his palm and started dialing the phone. "He's here," he said in English, and then, to Andrei: "Please go up to her room. She is expecting you." He pointed with his chin towards the elevator.

Marveling at his freedom of movement, Andrei crossed the grey lobby with the marble floor and pressed the elevator button. He thought that maybe the lift would have an operator, but it was, alas, a regular elevator, just very clean and with a mirror inside. On the second floor he turned and walked, on a soft rug, up the corridor. The hotel was completely quiet. He wondered again whether it had any other guests, beside Mrs. Jones. He knocked, very quietly. He then thought that the lady, being so old, was most probably hard of hearing, and therefore it was not the time and the place to be shy. He knocked again, louder, then pressed the door, which yielded, allowing him to enter.

"Good morning, Mrs. Jones," he said quickly and cheerfully, before he even had a chance to look at her, since it was the phrase he had prepared on his way up. Then he looked.

What he noticed first were her pearls. Multiple strings of heavy pearls, five or six or maybe seven, were circling her neck and making it seem

impossibly thin. The skin on that thin neck was loose and leathery, like that of a turtle. Her eyes seemed very big behind her thick glasses, and so did her nose. Andrei read somewhere that a person's nose never stops growing: that's why old people all seem to be long-nosed. He kept this observation for himself, though. Mrs. Jones did not raise herself from the armchair to greet him but extended her hand. Thankfully he had the wits to walk over and kiss it. Her nails were painted bright red.

Mrs. Jones gestured towards a chair, and he took it as an invitation to sit down.

"May I offer you something?" she asked in a throaty, raspy voice of a life-long smoker. He noticed an open pack of "Kent" on the table. She saw his glance and offered it to him, striking a lighter as soon as he put a cigarette in his mouth. It was strange to be proffered light by a woman, even by an old one.

He inhaled and looked at her again, racking his brains as what to say next. How old was she really? Her lips were so thin they wouldn't be noticeable if she hadn't covered them in red lipstick whose brightness rivaled that of the nail polish. She was very ugly, with that wrinkly face in an almost-bold head with a few wispy strands of hair. Gigantic, incongruous earrings extended her huge earlobes. Her dress, made of something bright and shimmering, rustled with her every move. Beyond the aroma of good tobacco, he sensed the sour smell of medicine in the room, a smell he associated with old people. That and the smell of urine – the odors of decay.

He saw a violin on the bed, and, next to it, a whole block of duty-free "Kents."

"Do you play?" he asked, because he couldn't think of anything else to say.

"Yes," she said. "I used to play the cello. Now I am sticking to the violin. Do you play an instrument?"

"Unfortunately, no."

"Should I play for you?" she asked, suddenly and loudly, raising her head as if she were challenging him to something.

In his embarrassment he didn't know what to answer. He hadn't come to hear her play, but, on the other hand, declining her offer may seem rude.

"I would be very grateful," he said, "But I don't want to impose on your time."

"It's not an imposition," she answered. "It would be my pleasure. But maybe… later…"

She lit a cigarette. Her fingers were long but crooked. He couldn't understand how she could play the violin with such arthritic-looking fingers. "Well, tell me about yourself, if you don't mind," she said.

Why hadn't she died of cancer, he thought, if she smokes so much? Must not be as bad a habit as doctors claim, after all.

This thought made him draw in on his "Kent" with redoubled pleasure.

"I like Mircea Eliade's work very much," he said. "It would be a pleasure to serve as your guide. I first discovered his novella 'With the Gypsies,' and I was mesmerized. I never read anything like this before – you know, we had mostly socialist realism in our literature, with no place for the fantastic or for the other-worldly."

She was nodding, and the loose skin above her pearls was slightly shaking.

"Since then, I tried to find as many books by Eliade as possible," Andrei continued. "We had so few. I searched the used book shops, asked friends. I found out about how he was in India and how he wrote about loving a woman there. And then I discovered his Yoga treatise. It interests me. It interests me a lot."

The woman kept nodding.

"I met him in India, you know," she said with a smile. Her teeth were big and white, and looked unnaturally healthy in such an old woman. "Unfortunately, we met only briefly. I will tell about it, if you want. Afterwards."

"I would love that," he said sincerely.

Then she nodded towards the window and asked: "Have you been there?" It took him a few moments to understand that she means the events on the square. He half-nodded, half shrugged, noncommittally.

"Too bad I couldn't get one of the rooms facing the Palace. Too damaged from bullets and such like. They are not using that part of the hotel now. What a pity. I would have had such an amazing view."

One day the view might have been amazing, he thought, but now the former Royal Palace was covered in scaffolding. The round Atheneum looked awful, and so did the building of the former Central Committee on whose balcony Ceausescu gave the last public speech of his career. Everything in that square was crumbling or covered in bullet holes. What could she find so beautiful here? It was gorgeous once, in another era. Maybe she has the ability to see the past. That woman who supposedly

knew Eliade in India. She may be lying, of course. But if she's not, that's a really curious case.

He didn't dare to press her with questions but walked back to his chair and extinguished his cigarette in the ashtray. She did the same and looked at him with a sense of expectation.

"I propose we begin by going to the place where Eliade's childhood house stood, on Strada Radu Cristian, formerly Melodiei" he said. "It is, unfortunately, long gone. There is a grey apartment block there now. Nothing exciting. But one could still feel the atmosphere. We could see what he saw when he was a child. Then we could walk from that place to the Mantuleasa street, where his primary school was located. The school building still stands, thankfully."

"Pe strada Mantuleasa," she said and nodded, revealing her knowledge of another of Eliade's books.

"Yes, exactly!" he said. "But I suggest we first take the taxi to the Strada Radu Cristian. It is a bit far from here. He lived there as a teenager and left it to go to India when he was twenty-one. I am sure you know it. I just thought I would remind you. Just in case." He stopped talking, embarrassed. He asked himself again how old she must be now, if she had met Eliade in India? She must be in her late eighties. That is, if she was a young girl when they met. Well, in all probability, she's got to have been a young girl then. Otherwise she couldn't possibly be still alive. It's not easy to imagine her young, though. Young and full of life, thirsty for adventure, otherwise why would she go to India. Although it may have been easy for South Africans to get there, they were British subjects in the 1920s, weren't they? Unlike traveling there now for us, he thought. Still, one day I will get there. And an Indian woman may fall in love with me some day.

"Then we could go see the University, the Cișmigiu Parc…" he continued.

"Let's take it slow," she said and, with a considerable effort, lifted herself from the arm chair. "Could you bring me my stick, please?"

He turned and saw a black walking stick leaning on the wall. He stood up to get it, and, in passing, saw a slim volume on the table, with a bookmark in the middle of it: "Noces au Paradis," Eliade's "Wedding in Heaven" in the Gallimard edition. For a second, he almost wanted to ask her if she would lend him the book but thought better of it. Evidently, she was in the process of reading it herself, and he didn't want to seem impertinent. But the book piqued his curiosity. He knew it was based on

Eliade's former love affairs, one with his future wife Nina, the other with the actress Sorana Topa. Eliade combined them into one character, that of Ileana/Lena (Ileana, he thought, like the woman I just spent the night with; should I call her later?).

"Do you know that he started writing this book…" Andrei held out the stick to her and she clasped its handle in her arthritic hands.

"Yes?" she asked.

…When he was in prison with the Iron Guardists, Andrei wanted to say, but saw the expression in her eyes and stopped himself. That was the moment when Andrei understood that she had loved him. This old ugly lady used to be in love with Mircea Eliade. When they were both young.

This realization gave Andrei a pause. He felt sometimes, suddenly and despite himself, a curious mixture of anger and pity whenever he saw how old people were trying something in vain, something that escaped them in their youth. He saw them forget for a second about their age only to be reminded a moment later that they were reaching the final part of their journey in this world. He felt anger at that inexorable forward march of Time that mocks the soul, makes it small and helpless, a subject to ageing and finally death, forcing it to say its goodbyes before it is ready or willing to go. The eyes of this old hag were, for a second, those of a young girl who was about to confess her feelings, and for that very second Andrei wished he could give her back her youth.

He didn't know why that overwhelming pity for old people assaulted him from time to time with such violence. He was not inclined to sentimentality. He fancied himself quite a heart-breaker, a ladies' man, a cynic.

"Mircea Eliade wrote this book" (Andrei pointed to the "Noces") "when he lived on the Dacia Boulevard in his thirties. That house is still standing. It is not far from here. We could go there if you wish," he added.

"I'd rather go to the Melodiei Street first," she answered. "I mean, to Radu Cristian. Whatever it is called. I like to see where a person spent his childhood. I am originally from Helsinki myself. When it was still part of the Russian Empire."

"So… You are a Finn?"

"No, no, I am not," she laughed. He couldn't understand what could be so funny about being Finnish, but let it slip. "My family emigrated to South Africa. It was better for people like us there. At that time, at least. I played in the municipal orchestra, you know. In Cape Town. Do you love music, mister Florescu?"

"Andrei, please. Just call me Andrei," he hurried to say.

"In that case, you should call me Jenia," she parried with a smile that could only be described as coquettish. Now Andrei understood what Petrica had meant when he talked about her grimacing. It was very unpleasant: that crooked smile, that little girlish giggle. And yet he felt compelled, by some inexplicable force, to kiss her hand again. It wasn't even prescribed by the etiquette. A man was supposed to kiss a lady's hand when greeting her and when saying goodbye. But not when they switched to the first-name basis – or was he? Maybe it was customary after all. Some vague memory raised from the depths of his brain and forced him to take her proffered hand with long crooked fingers – somewhat less crooked now, the conversation must have relaxed them – and kiss it. Maybe it was a vague feeling of guilt that he was only half-conscious of, the guilt of the young and the healthy.

"Let's go, shall we?" she said and marched to the door leaning heavily on her stick. Andrei turned the handle and opened the door for her, then followed her on the soft carpet to the elevator. He pressed the button and waited, in silence, till the cabin got there. Once they were inside, he pressed the button again and tried to look into a corner, or at his feet, or at the ceiling, in order not to stare at the old woman who stood so close to him. From the corner of his eye he could see, however, that she scrutinized his face, with a little smile on her lips. He knew that the features of his face were too vivid to be considered handsome (when he thought about the male beauty ideal he imagined an implacable square-jawed giant like Arnold Schwarzenegger). But girls liked him. It may be his conversation – he knew a bit of everything – or his light touch, or his pretended self-assurance. He didn't actually know why they kept falling for him, but he always thought that he had to move quickly, before they wised up to his real self. His real self he thought, nobody could ever fancy, what with his strange feelings of guilt, pity, anger, and a longing for India that would come suddenly upon him, out of nowhere.

On the Radu Cristian Street, Andrei opened the door of the taxi and helped the old lady to get out. Then he reached inside and brought out her cane, which she gratefully accepted. They stood in front of the multi-story apartment block, built on the spot where Eliade's family house once stood. The structure was grey, fortress-like, with small windows. "No real traces left here," said Andrei, "But look at the beautiful old house in front. Look at that bay window. Mircea could probably watch it from his

attic. He talked about observing a loving couple and wishing himself to have a little wife."

From his jacket pocket Andrei extracted a cherished copy of the "Diary of A Short-Sighted Adolescent" that appeared in 1988, with a photo of young Eliade on the third page. He remembered buying it two years ago and reading it through in just one night, with a mixture of admiration and superiority, feeling so much older that the teenage author, if not in years than in historical experience. It would have never occurred to Andrei to whip himself like a medieval monk or to sleep-deprive himself until he would start hallucinating. But he was familiar with that desire "to show them," to become a great man to the astonishment of all who knew him and didn't believe in him. He just didn't know yet in what particular field his future greatness lay. Something to do with India, he thought. Or maybe with politics. Or writing.

"You know that he wrote this novel before he was twenty, but they rediscovered it only in the 1980s? It just stayed in some box all this time, with his other papers. Most of them written in that attic which he also described in the novel. He sat there and wrote about how he sat there and wrote… I think he started scribbling when it was raining. It was raining, and he felt alone. Did you know, by the way, that the very first story he ever wrote was titled 'How I Found the Philosopher's Stone'?"

The old woman, still gazing at the grey building, replied:

"Oh yes. And he looked for it his whole life, I suppose." With a chuckle, she drew something out of the pocket of her rustling dress. "But he looked in all the wrong places. Here it is." She stretched her arm towards Andrei. "Try it. What do you see?"

He looked down at what she had put into his palm.

It was a small piece of rock crystal, with just one side smooth and polished, and others still rough. For a few moments Andrei tried to gaze into the smooth side, but could only see something very vague, perhaps a dim reflection of his own face. With a shrug, he gave the stone back: "Sorry, I cannot see anything."

The woman – Jenia, he reminded himself, she wants me to call her Jenia – started turning the rock in her long fingers, and he thought again that these fingers must have preserved their agility despite their appearance. She kept turning it and then lowered her face to the crystal so that her nose was almost touching it.

"I see a room… And a boy… A blue table, a red bed…"

God, why on earth did I agree to take this job, thought Andrei. She must be senile, or else why would she be delivering that crazy performance in front of my eyes.

Her monologue went on for quite some time. She was talking more to herself than to him, describing a lamp with a white shade, an herbarium, Egyptian signs on the walls of the attic, pictures of tomb frescoes, books everywhere. "Ugly boy, ugly boy in spectacles. But smart, oh so smart, so smart, hee-hee."

"Can you see the Green Room, too?" asked Andrei.

He had no idea why he asked her that. He remembered reading, in a smuggled copy of Eliade's autobiography, that, as a child, Mircea walked into a room with green curtains and felt like he was being held by the hand of God. Later, whenever he remembered it, Mircea fell into some kind of a trance.

"Well," Jenia answered. "Look for yourself."

Her fingers with their blood-red nails held the stone in front of his eyes. This time he didn't take it into his hand, out of a mixture of fear and disgust. But he couldn't resist looking into the smooth surface of the crystal.

Inside there was something green, glimmering. The longer he looked the better he could discern the contours of a room. It was as if the smooth surface of the stone grew in size. It offered him now a detailed view of a row of floor-to-ceiling windows covered with silk green curtains. The daylight was penetrating the room through these curtains, coloring the walls into the curious greenish color. Andrei saw bric-a-brac on a small table carved out of dark wood: some toy soldiers, three miniature elephants, a Chinese statuette. There was a long sofa and large empty armchairs as well. He walked over to a Venetian mirror on the wall and saw his own reflection. He was four or five years old, in a little boy's costume. The mirror was large and dark. He could see his face: it was a handsome face. He liked it. He wanted to stay there and keep looking at himself. He felt *seen* by the dark, enticing depth of this mirror. He felt loved.

"Do you see anything?"

The voice startled him. He looked at her but saw, instead, a little girl who was glancing back at him, intensely peering into his eyes. The girl was led away by an old man. The man kept walking forward and was pulling at her arm, but the girl kept turning back to Andrei, not willing to break this eye contact. And he, again, felt so – so *seen*, so happily and joyfully and lovingly seen by this girl that he felt a seizure coming up, a pressure mounting somewhere in his brain. He made himself squeeze his

eyes shut, counted to five and opened them again. Jenia was putting the stone back into her pocket. They were standing in front of the same grey building on the Radu Cristian Street.

"What was that?" he asked.

"What do you mean, Andrei?"

He suddenly felt embarrassed, as if he had fallen asleep on the job. She must have caught him day-dreaming. "Sorry, Mrs. Jones. I mean, Jenia. Really sorry. Never you mind. I think I got lost in my thoughts for a moment."

She giggled: a little-girl giggle, bewildering and unpleasant.

"Will you show me now where his school stood?" she asked.

They walked along the curving tramway rails, past the island of the 'Church with the Saints' with its curious frescoes of Greek philosophers (including Hermes Trismegistus and the Sybil). They turned again and again, eventually coming to the Negustori Street and walking up it until it crossed the Mantuleasa Street in front of a little square. It was more of a triangle than a square. Jenia pointed to a bench there and said that she would like to rest a bit.

As soon as they sat down, pigeons started coming down in droves. The birds walked to and fro in front of them expecting to be fed. "Sorry," said the old woman. "I really have nothing to give you at this moment." She opened her purse and searched inside. She found a big black wallet, fished out a few notes and asked Andrei: "Would you mind going and buying some bread for them?" When she saw hesitation on his face, she put the money back and said, as if agreeing with his objection: "All right, all right, I know, we shouldn't be feeding them, they are vermin, after all…"

The birds, however, kept coming and coming, and soon the little square was covered in blue and reddish feathery bodies. Andrei who always felt an aversion to pigeons couldn't wait to get up and continue walking, but the old lady seemed tired, and therefore they had to stay there a little while. The pigeons were making guttural noises, and Jenia seemed to be listening to them tilting her head to one side. With her big spectacles, her long nose and a bald head, she resembled a bird herself.

"So, where was the school?" she asked.

"Just a few steps away. It's an old building. There is talk of demolishing it."

"All right. We will walk there. Let's just take a few more moments to rest. Look, another pretty church. You have so many of them in this city."

Andrei looked ahead, to the little church. “It has a bestiary painted there,” he said. “A unicorn, a centaur…”

No car passed them by, and there was no sound except for the one the pigeons were making. An old tree was partly covering the church from their view. This this street seemed so old, so far it was removed from the big-city noises, that they could have been sitting there seventy years ago. Jenia searched inside her purse. She took out a pack of cigarettes, gave one to Andrei, took one herself. Then she subjected him, again, to the somewhat emasculating ritual of clicking the lighter in front of the tip of his cigarette. He inhaled deeply and asked:

“How does Cape Town look like?”

“Very beautiful,” she answered enthusiastically. “Very, very beautiful. So much sun. And the ocean, and the mountains! You should visit it.”

Yeah, a fat chance I will get to travel there, Andrei thought bitterly.

“And India, too. You ought to go to India,” she added.

“I have always wanted. But how was it – then?”

“Not at all like he describes,” Jenia turned to him, and Andrei had to draw back, so close was her face to his now. “I didn’t fall sick at his place. I didn’t even stay at his place. I had my own kutyar. A bungalow, you know. A hut. Mine was right at the river shore. Swami Shivananda gave it to me before leaving. He was very impressed with me. Very, very impressed. Just think: a young woman going to India all on her own in the 1920s. Yes, I went in search of the Absolute. And what was so funny about that, I ask you? What was so absurd? A lot of people had gone there in search of the Absolute later. Even famous people. Only we were the first. Mircea and me, and almost nobody else. I mean, no other Westerners. Now, I have heard, that shore is littered with Western rubbish. All these tourists go there and party. But not us. We were serious about our spiritual search. Very serious. You want to know how Mircea and I got into talking?”

She was drawing closer and closer to his face, and he felt a drip of her spittle landing on his cheek. He was, however, intrigued, if there was any chance she was not just confabulating. He remembered that there was, indeed, a character named ‘Jenia’ in the “Maitreyi.” She appeared somewhere close to the end of the novel. Andrei couldn’t remember much about her. Then one that made a strong impression on him was Maitreyi, Narendra Sen’s daughter, with her poetry and her unusual way of speaking. And then there appeared a character named ‘Jenia’ in the protagonist’s life: a disappointment, an afterthought.

"Swami Shivananda introduced us," she continued. "We sat on my terrace and drank cocoa. Mircea said he was writing a doctoral thesis on yoga. Later he told me about the tantric practices. He came every evening. We just sat and talked. He told me how to find an object for meditation. I meditated every day, you know. I sat in the lotus position, looked at the river and meditated. He said that I must choose a god to meditate on. Such was the tantric practice. But I didn't know that much about the tantric gods. So, I thought of Mircea. I sat there and thought of him during the day, and it really helped me to concentrate. You know, by the way, how I decided to come to India? I saw a bookshop in my dream. Mircea recorded it in his book, actually. In his mocking way. Everything to do with me, he mocked. My search of the Abolute, my Ramacharaka book. I didn't know Mircea had became a writer, let alone that he wrote about me. I read his novel just two years ago. He had written very little about me, mind you, but still. He recorded that dream of mine – I almost forgot about it myself. I had dreamt – I was still in Cape Town at that time – I dreamt that I was passing a bookshop in my car. And then, one day, I took a wrong turn and ended up in a neighborhood where I had never been before. Suddenly I see something that I had seen before: that bookshop. It took me a few moments to realize where I had seen it, in a dream, how curious."

She became silent. Andrei looked at the tip of his cigarette, at the tiny red burning dot, at the smoke escaping from it and departing for the cloudless sky. The pigeons kept walking around, cooing, fat and self-satisfied, bobbing their heads. Three emaciated dogs appeared from behind a corner and jogged past, not paying Andrei and Mrs. Jones any attention. Andrei looked at the tip of the church, but a car appeared, and the quiet was broken.

"I went inside and bought something," Jenia continued. "Mircea laughed a lot when he heard it. He despised the author. Yogi Ramacharaka – you probably never head the name. At that time, he was all the rage. Him and Blavatsky. Ramacharaka was an Englishman, actually. In India, Mircea despised all the English. Later I learned to despise them too, but when I had bought this book back in Cape Town, it was a revelation for me. Probably sounds funny now, but at that time… The idea that one can achieve enlightenment by breathing, by exercise, by concentration – it was all new to me. Especially the idea that everything around us is but an illusion. I had kind of intuited it, even before reading, but when the book stated it, so clearly, so eloquently, I was truly impressed. It said that

happiness was possible, or at least a way out of suffering. One just needed to learn the right thinking and how to be detached."

She turned her beak to Andrei with such vehemence that, startled, he almost lost his cigarette.

"Tell me, young man, are you a Christian? Or a Communist?"

"I am… I would describe myself as an Orthodox Christian," he said after some musing. He couldn't understand what she was driving at.

"Then tell me, young man, what does this saying mean: *For unto everyone who has, to him shall be given. But from him that has not shall be taken away even that which he has*? We had religion classes at school in my time. I was obliged to attend even though I was not a Christian, you understand. I was always bored with our Western ways of understanding religion, even before going to India. But ever since I heard this, I kept thinking about it. I thought about this saying again and again. What does it mean? What do you make of it?"

"You think it may have something to do with yoga? With detachment? Maybe with having contentment?" He searched for an answer that she was evidently looking for.

"No, no, young man." She shook her head and the turtle skin on her neck shook too. "It was nothing to do with yoga. It has to do with me, Andrei. With my life. I knew it rightaway when I first heard it. I just never wanted to believe it."

She clutched her stick with both hands, one still holding the cigarette, and knocked it on the ground forcefully. Then she drew on the cigarette again, inhaled, waited a few moments before exhaling. She seemed to have calmed down.

"Mircea had his own version," she said. "To me, he seemed to have his own version of everything. Only twenty-three years old – that's what I was thinking of him at that time – only twenty-three, and he already knows everything. I felt he thought about everything, he had ideas about everything! He told me to read Evola and Avalon instead. But I rather preferred to listen to his own words. I asked him to explain things to me. He visited me every evening. We sat on the terrace, we drank cocoa. He talked about yoga, about Tantra. Do you find us ridiculous?"

"No."

"Don't, young man. Don't laugh at the youth of the old people, because one day somebody might laugh at your own youth. Do you know what Tantra is?"

"I read Eliade's book on yoga, actually," said Andrei.

"I thought his books were prohibited here?"

"No, you could find some… And some were actually reissued… And then there are used-book shops… Obscure libraries… Private collections… You just needed to know people."

"And did you like it? The book?"

"I liked it very much," said Andrei. "I thought I told you. One day I hope to write a commentary on it."

"Oh! A commentary? Very commendable, young man, very commendable." She started giggling again, with that girlish giggle that seemed to Andrei inappropriate and looney. "In that case, you might find it interesting that I saw him writing that book. That thesis. He said it was a doctoral thesis. Am I right? A thesis. He had many papers and books everywhere. He wore a whilte dhoti, you know, we were the first Westerners to adopt the Indian dress. He wore a dhoti, I wore a sari. Wait, what was I talking about? Ah, yes, he was writing that – that thing, – and he always talked with me about it in the evening. It's curious, you know, how well I remember his voice and how little I remember what he was actually saying. He had thin lips. His mouth was cruel. Yet his eyes, his eyes, you know, they were short-sighted, not strong."

She fell silent. Andrei looked at her from a corner of his eye. Like other old people, she made a chewing movement when she was lost in her thoughts. Then she said:

"Well, you know… I tried doing that on my own. Every day I tried to remember what he said and I tried practicing it. The postures. Breathing in and out, consciously. He said that the more you meditate on something, the better you know it. And the better you know it, the more you have power over it. Thus, you can get the power over the sun, the stars. The river. Or even the time. I thought of him, actually. I sat there, and I envisioned him, Mircea, and I thought of him, and I thought that I knew him. Maybe not very well, but intuitively. Then he told me all about how he had loved this Indian girl and how it broke his heart. I thought of that, too, when I sat on my terrace in meditation. I thought and I thought. Did I hope it would bring me power over him? Maybe. I thought he kept coming because the power of my thought invoked him. Not my cocoa or my gramophone. I had some records with me, you know. We listened to Grieg, to Schubert. Imagine, Andrei, this music actually fits well with the Ganges. Sounds strange, but it really does. Once you go to Rishikesh, bring a recording of 'Peer Gynt' with you. Sit on the shore and listen to it. Maybe you'll

slide back in time and you'll suddenly find yourself back in the 20s with Mircea and me, hee-hee."

She shook her head.

"Well, anyway. I thought he was coming. But one night he simply forgot. I waited and I cried, and then I went and knocked at his door. And he said he was coming. I put my transparent sari, you know, and made up my face."

"What did you do it for?" asked Andrei. The question came out unexpectedly even for him, but he persisted. "Did you want to seduce him?"

"He came and though I was a *nayika*," the woman continued without paying any heed to his question. She giggled again. "You know who is a nayika?"

"The woman, the tantric partner."

"Yes. I was the Shakti, the goddess. I was the concubine. I was the lover. It was me, me! He never slept with her." She laughed derisively. At first Andrei didn't realize whom she meant. Then he understood: Maitreyi.

"It was me," she insisted. "It was me, it was me."

But it didn't matter, Andrei wanted to say, since Mircea loved the other woman. You were incidental, a secondary character, an afterthought. It was strange that she still hadn't understood this. He didn't say anything though. He waited a few moments to see if she tells him anything else. But, since she was silent, he coughed to clear his throat and said: "How about we go to see the school building now? If you are not too tired?"

Many years later, when working on his commentary under the contract with the publisher, Andrei, who, by that time, was already a member of several international – and one Royal – academic societies and married to an Indian woman with a doctorate in Political Science (she taught in the UK and they flew to visit each other every other weekend: theirs was an utterly modern marriage), he remembered that conversation, and went to his bookshelf to pick up Eliade's autobiography. He read how the young Eliade entered Jenia's bungalow, and found her transformed. She was not a shy and silly girl anymore. She was suddenly imbued with a seductive power of a divinity, and even the white walls of her hut emanated some foreboding of an initiation. Mircea felt that something dangerous was about to engulf him, unless he turned on his heels and fled. It was a momentary and a momentous decision, he wrote. The fates have put her on his way

in order that to teach him something. Jenia was the first real challenge on his way towards spiritual perfection. To run away would have been cowardice. He thought he must take up this ordeal head-on.

The rest was left to the reader's imagination.

Andrei sat down in an armchair with the book and thought about their tantric exercises: breathing, posture, visualizing a god and a goddess, touching each other, getting closer and closer, kissing (Jenia passionately, Mircea – trying to control himself).

But, instead of dwelling on this imaginary picture, Andrei's thoughts reverted to the end of that day in 1990, when he returned the old lady in a taxi back to her hotel. He knew that he would be coming back the next day, but dreaded it, feeling drained and exhausted after this day they had spent together. He also felt, in a peculiar way, derided, as if his was the real object of her crazy giggles. He wanted to drink a glass of something strong and he couldn't resist the temptation to walk to a pay phone and dial Ileana's number. She sounded peeved about him departing so abruptly in the morning, yet she invited him back, with a half-laugh, half-sigh. She also sounded tipsy already (which was a good sign). Andrei walked back along the boulevard, crossed the University square and plunged into the labyrinth of narrow streets leading to Ileana. He had to shout under her window to make her come down and open the front door for him. She walked down and unlocked the door. He followed her up the stairs looking at her thin back in the threadbare morning gown, at her unwashed blond hair, at her feet in the ludicrous boudoir slippers with spiky heels and pompoms, and he felt such pity that he had to drink himself into oblivion that night, nearly missing his next day appointment.

In the morning Andrei reached the hotel with a headache throbbing in his temples. He thought he was on time, but Mrs. Jones was already waiting for him in the lobby, sitting in a chair. She didn't have the stick with her. "I am feeling exceptionally good today," she explained with a smile, and indeed she looked fresh: her thin hair seemed more abundant, her eyelashes behind the thick glasses were covered with mascara, she held her back straighter. People age so much slower in the West, thought Andrei. She could actually pass for a sixty-years-old.

"Are we going to the Cișmigiu Park today?" she asked.

"Yes. It is close. We can take a cab…"

"No, no, no cab. I am in the mood for walking. Especially if it is close. Last night I remembered what Mircea had recounted about that park. I will tell you. But let's get going. Give me your arm, young man."

She slid her arm through his, and they walked to the revolving door, only to disengage their arms there. After passing through it, however, they interlocked arms again. For some inexplicable reason, it felt very natural for him, as if he always walked in this neighborhood with old South African ladies on his arm. He had to adapt his steps to hers, but it was not as painful as walking with his grandmother when he had to stop after every step to wait for her to catch up for him: Mrs. Jones walked slowly, but she walked steadily. A large purse hung on her shoulder, swung over her head, postman-like. Andrei wanted to offer to carry it, but decided that it was too womanly a purse, and it would be wrong. Mrs. Jones didn't seem to suffer under its weight. There was a spring in her step that had lacked the day before. Maybe she got over the tiredness after that long flight from Cape Town. Maybe she had a good night's sleep. Maybe she liked the city. Or his company.

They crossed the street, walked past the Palace, turned right before the red-brick Cretulescu church and walked a few steps down, in order to proceed further, towards the park. The architectural beauty of the square was disturbed here by the Sala Palatului, a giant monstrosity built to house a party congress, and the faceless apartment blocks. Mrs. Jones seemed oblivious to all of it, never commenting either on the ugliness or on the devastation of the empty spaces they were passing on their way. Her thoughts seemed to be on the Cișmigiu Park.

"It has a liver-shaped pond, doesn't it? And then another small one, with swans? At least, that's what I remember. He said that couples always came there to snog."

For a moment, Andrei imagined her misunderstanding what Eliade was saying. The silly girl may have thought that, by telling her these things, Mircea was suggesting she should come back to Bucharest with him. Perhaps that's what occupied her thoughts for the past sixty years: the dreams of walking around the Cișmigiu lake arm-in-arm with her red-haired Romanian. Now she is finally about to do it, after having flown for – what, thirteen hours? Just so that she could walk around the lake that a lover told her about two generations ago.

"He said the garden used to belong to a Turkish merchant. Is that true?"

Andrei shrugged.

"Maybe I don't remember exactly," she said. "But I seem to recall what he had told me about that garden a lot better than his talk about the yoga. Perhaps it's because I heard a lot about yoga afterwards, from other teachers. But that garden, this park, I remember him talking about it one evening. He said he once came here with a very rare book that he got from an antique book dealer. Something about a Sybil. How the Delphic Sybil makes herself Apollo's mouthpiece by submitting to the god. And he said, I still remember, I remember he said that he was reading it and suddenly thought: what am I doing here, what is it all for, what can a Sybil possibly have to do with me, why am I even reading any of these books. Such a sense of futility, out of nowhere. Like nothing matters, and you don't know any more why you are here – I don't mean here in the garden, I mean here on earth. He said he had overcome this feeling thanks to his will. He made a conscious effort not to succumb to that apathy. He was very much into 'will,' young Mircea. We all were. Me, too. I thought I could do it alone, take the bull by the horns, so to speak. So, this is the famous garden?"

Andrei was aware that the park wasn't presenting itself in its best condition at the moment. The city did not have enough money to keep it clean or to repair the benches, and there were even more dogs here than on the streets. Parts of the park looked unkempt, wild, as if nobody ever mowed the lawns or cut the tree branches. But Mrs. Jones, clutching his arm, seemed transfixed. She wanted to walk close to the lake, then she looked at the trees in bloom, and then asked: "There are underground tunnels here, right? Secret passages to the river?" When he didn't answer, she said: "And a restaurant? He said was there was a restaurant, or a café, round in shape, on the water."

The restaurant was closed, and they sat down on a bench where, on the back, some words were carved with a knife. Andrei was hoping that Mrs. Jones – Jenia – won't ask him what these words meant. She didn't. She looked around, then searched her bag for cigarettes and offered him one.

He thought that he ought to be ashamed of himself, always smoking her cigarettes, never having any of his own. But he didn't refuse.

"I was thinking, later, when we broke up, why he had reacted like that to that Sybil. I even found the book at an English bookseller's, when I followed Mircea to Calcutta. You know I followed him, right? No, that's not it. You know how he broke up with me? He said 'We met, we were intoxicated with each other, we collaborated on the most miserable fall. Now I must leave.' These were his parting words. I couldn't understand. It

had been so good. He came to my bungalow every night, and we practiced tantric yoga. We were advancing. We already could do that thing where you stop your breath – during sex, of course – and the time stops with you, and you are outside the time. I hope I am not shocking you, young man? No? Well, you see, we were doing very well, Mircea and me. He even told me that he was advancing in other ways, he was working more, he was sleeping less, everything was coming easy to him. And then, suddenly, he decides to leave. Somebody must have said something to him. I don't know. As if there was something wrong with what we were doing. We didn't have a guru, mind you, but ours were just the preliminary steps on the big path towards enlightenment. It was Mircea, actually, who had told me we could do these preliminary steps even in the absence of a guru. And then he suddenly bolts. I just couldn't understand, I couldn't. I thought that maybe it was his way of testing me. A rejection test: to see whether I was strong enough. If I was strong enough to stop seeing him in the midst of that joy, because it was a joy, you know, every day was a joy – and then it all stopped. I tried to stay in the ashram and not to think of him. But then I packed my bag and went to Calcutta. I thought that maybe that's how he had meant it, maybe he wanted to see if I would dare to go after him, maybe it would be a proof of something. I didn't know he already got back with his tart there. Ruth. Or was it Guertie? She lived at that same pension, on the Ripon street, with the Anglo-Indians. He stayed there, and she stayed there, and when I came and knocked at the door, and they let me in, and I saw them there – then I understood that he was sleeping with her now. But I thought to myself again: maybe it was a test, too. Maybe he was testing me with jealousy. To see if I am advanced enough not to mind it. All right then, I thought. I will get rid of it."

She fell silent. Andrei was feeling utterly uncomfortable, but he didn't know what to say, mumbling finally: "So you bought the book?"

"Yes, I did," she answered, "Some ancient author. I came to Mircea again and showed it to him, and I said I had read the paragraph he told me about, about the soul being but a tool for a god, that had so confounded him. But he wasn't very impressed, you know. And then – I tried to become a tart myself!"

She started laughing. She laughed very loudly, not like an old woman, but like a young one, laughing and laughing, although she didn't say anything funny, and her laugh was by no means infectious. Her glasses slipped off her nose and she took them off, putting them inside her purse. Andrei wondered again at how big and white her teeth are. That must

be dentures, he thought, it is not possible to preserve such good teeth into an old age, no matter your hygiene or your health. Her pink tongue protruded between the even rows of her teeth. That tongue was teasing him, daring him to contradict her or to accuse her of lies. All the details of her relationship with Eliade that she was recounting weren't improbable, but they could be easily found in books. She could have been one of these half-crazy impostors who claim to be former Russian princesses, or lovers of some king, or a hero's bastard children. Only why would she want to go through with this? Why would she deliver such a performance only for the benefit of his, Andrei's, eyes and ears? It made no sense. He ought to believe her. Maybe he even ought to write down everything that she was saying, for posterity. But, again, he doubted she was saying anything new. And, on top of that, she spoke with such a sense of bitterness, as if she and Mircea had just broken up a few days ago, not more than half-a-century. Did she still think of it? Was that how she spent the rest of her life, after 1932, rehashing their break up every day in her memory, asking herself why, and wishing it had been different, wishing he had actually taken her back with him to Bucharest, wishing that he had married her? But she must have married somebody else, a Mr. Jones. There must have been a Mr. Jones at some point in her later life. He saw a wedding band on her finger, on her right hand. She must be a widow.

With a sudden agility Mrs. Jones – Jenia – started searching in her bag again. She drew a book out of there. She was triumphantly holding the Gallimard edition of Eliade's novel about his love for Maytreyi Devi, titled, in French, "La nuit bengali." She shook it a few times and then started feverishly turning the pages. She would point out a line, read it aloud, and then continue searching:

"This is the book where he wrote about me," she was saying in a high-pitched, girlish voice, "Only it's not a book about me, mind you, of course not, it's a book about *her.* You see, the first time he meets her, he is so impressed by her arm – by the color of her arm – that he thinks it could be the arm of a goddess. And then he sees her again, and, look, her eyes are too big, her hair is too black, and it all, in his view, combines to making her superhuman. He thinks she is a walking miracle. Then she laughs – she laughs – and he thinks it's a sacrilege to see her laughing! He thinks her beauty is magic. Not the classical kind of beauty – a rebellious kind of beauty. Her beauty was rebellious, he says. What was rebellious about this girl, Andrei? She lived with her parents. I came to India, alone, from Cape Town, I wasn't even twenty yet. But he was infatuated – not with

me – with her. He says he was afraid of her, afraid and joyful at the same time: with me he was never joyful. And if he was afraid in my company, then only of the temptation that could impede his way towards perfection, or that I would make him waste time, but he was never afraid of *me.* He says she has a ferocious thirst of purity. I say she was just brought up that way! She simply didn't know any better. She didn't explore. She had never lived on her own. He loved her for the mystery, but the mystery wasn't hers, I am telling you, Andrei. He invented the mystery he wanted to see. Oh yes, she was a poet. So what? Did he ever even read her poems? And if yes, did he like them? He doesn't say. It means these poems couldn't have been that impressive. He even says himself that he was bewitched by her. He says, here (she kept turning the pages, then triumphantly scratched a line with her red-taloned finger): "I was bewitched and not in love." Yet he persisted in his desire. He knew it was impossible, he knew she'd never marry him and never follow him anywhere. He knew her parents would never consent to their being together. He wouldn't have needed to ask *my* parents, you see. I was a free person. I would have followed him anywhere. Only he didn't want *me.* He says – here – that he felt her life quivering when he held her hand, and here he says (she turned a page) that he looked at her like one looks at a goddess, a goddess that appears naked on a balcony lit by a street lamp, surrounded by flowers…. She was the gates of happiness open into the world, she was unfathomable, a saint, and he was – he says – but a cast, a mold of her soul and her desires. But I – what was I?

She shut the book and sat, panting, angry, with tears in her eyes. In her petulance, she looked no older than forty, and she turned to Andrei, her spine suddenly agile, her face almost unlined:

"When I met Robert Jones, many years later, I thought to myself: 'this one will be mine.' I thought he could be mine, completely. I met him in Cape Town, through friends. He was an accountant, small, bespectacled, always wearing a tie. I asked him out myself, can you believe it? I asked – I hinted – that I wouldn't be opposed to having a glass of wine on the promenade. He got the hint. He came to pick me up in a white shirt and a black tie, and the rest was history. Forty years of wedded bliss, everyone thought. But he had loved another woman before me and he never forgot her. He never got over her, Andrei. All these forty years he lived next to me until he got a heart attack in a bath tub and drowned rather just dying from the blood clot – at least that's what the doctor said – all these forty years he carried a torch for that woman who had rejected him. He never

talked about it. He thought I didn't know. But of course I knew. I felt it. Every second that he spent with me he thought how different it all could have been, had it been with her. He never told me her name, I know that he wanted to forget and couldn't. I even felt pity for him, can you imagine? I found out on my own who she was. One day I drove over and parked my car in a shadow of a big tree near her home. I wanted to see her. I saw her. She was an ugly cow. I almost wanted him to meet her again, but he probably would have still seen that young girl in her that he had such a crush on when he was twenty. And I sat there, in the car, and I thought: what is it about me that I am always on the side lines? Everyone gets a chance, but not me. When God was writing his big book of life, has he, from the outset, thought of me as a secondary character? He looked at me and said: 'You will be a shadow to the others' brightness. You will be but a temptation to overcome. The second-best. The consolation prize. The forgettable one. Because – hear me out! (God may have told me raising his pen above the divine scroll) – in order to create heroes, I need to create cowards, too. And, for true love to exist, there must also be – the unloved.'"

She hung her head so deeply that it almost touched her chest, and sat there as if drunk. Her transformation into a younger woman was so remarkable that Andrei couldn't stop the question escaping from his lips:

"How do you do this?"

She raised her head and smiled at him, her eyes full of tears:

"Do what?"

"This… Changing your age… You have become younger, haven't you?"

Now she laughed.

"I told you he had looked in all the wrong places for his philosopher's stone! After Mircea rejected me, I left Calcutta and went to Sri Aurobindo's ashram, in Pondicherry. I studied the Integral Yoga. His companion was very nice to me. You know that Sri Aurobindo lived with a French woman? We all called her Mother. I learned to integrate all the aspects of my being in that ashram. They didn't scoff at my search of the Absolute… Then I went to Adyar, to the Theosophical Society. I know, I know, you think they were all charlatans. And maybe they were. But I learned things. I learned such things that you cannot imagine. I can teach you, too."

Andrei turned to her. Jenia was looking straight into his eyes, and he saw a bit of spittle in the corners of her mouth. She made a movement as if she wanted to touch his hand, but thought better of it.

"Come tonight to that bar at the hotel. It will be open. They tell me it's open very late into the night. There will be music there. We will dance, we will talk. I will tell you everything. I can teach you how to change time. You will be amazed how easy it is. It's almost like resetting your watch. You just need to want it. We can go up to my room later. I will show you things. You will see."

He looked at her and didn't know what to say.

"Will you come?"

He was silent.

"You have to come tonight. It is now or never. Tomorrow I will be leaving."

He looked down at the ground and nodded.

"Good. I must go now." She put the book and the cigarettes back into her bag. Andrei stood up and offered her his arm. She shook her head: she was strong, agile. "No, no, I will find the way back to the hotel by myself. It is very close. I must go. I feel like playing my violin right now." She turned away from him and raised her hand to make a small gesture of good-bye. Did he hear her say "Pa și pusi," or was it just his hearing playing a trick on him, because he so often used this expression himself, getting away in the morning from yesterday's dates? She said something light and funny and walked away with a spring in her step, a woman of maybe thirty, most of her life still in front of her.

(Many years later he planned a study of immortality myths: Gilgamesh, Odysseus. The alchemists. The count Cagliostro. He wanted to show that the refusal of immortality – rather than being bewailing one's inevitable end, Odysseus feeling Circe rather than Gilgamesh cursing the snake – represented a bolder step in accepting the reality of human condition. The preparation for writing this study seemed to extend itself into several years. He worked slowly and doggedly, as if preparing a court case or a speech that was meant to justify the decision he had made many years ago.

He kept a bottle in the lowest drawer of his desk that he kept locking and then unlocking during a day's work. Whenever he went out with his wife to The Skinner's Arms or to Mabel's Tavern, to the Gradina Eden back in Bucharest, he tried to keep his drinking under control. He never ordered any hard liquor, only beer, and waited after finishing one glass before asking for the next one. Yet he knew that she had recently started keeping a tab on the number of his drinks. She became suspicious, vigilant.

He hoped she would not ask him to choose between her and the alcohol. Because he already knew what choice he would make).

Andrei ironed his best shirt and trousers before putting them on and setting off to the hotel. So this was the night when he would see the famous English bar, the former den of spies, the scene of so many international intrigues! He waited forever for the bus which finally came and took him to the stop closest to the Palace. He walked from there, whistling, along the barely lit, deserted streets. He was again apprehensive that they may not let him in (too young, dressed too poorly), but, to his surprise, they did. Things were, indeed, changing in his country.

He heard the sound of the saxophone when he was still in the lobby, and paused at the door to the bar, transfixed. He saw the portly, garishly dressed men at the tables, formerly, perhaps, Securitate agents or the inhabitants of the underworld who were on their way to becoming the new upper class, the nouveaux riches of Romania, if, in the process, they managed not to get killed in the mob disputes. He saw the women hanging on their arms or sitting at their tables, brash, painted, scantily clad women with improbably long legs and severe mouths. And then there was her.

Jenia Isaac sat alone. She looked no older than twenty, in her pumps and a low-cut dress, with flaxen curls falling on her bare shoulders. Her whole body was turned towards the entrance with a sense of expectancy, and he saw the expression in her blue eyes. They were ravenous, thirsty.

He turned and walked away. Upon leaving the hotel, he inhaled the night air of the big city. In the middle of the vast, deserted square a gypsy woman was selling blue flowers. He went up to her and bought a bunch (only later, on his way through the narrow streets, he wondered, for a few moments, what profit that flower-seller was hoping to make there at night, when no other customers were in sight). He decided to walk to Ileana's place without giving her a call, hoping she wasn't asleep yet nor had another man in her bed already. In half an hour he reached the courtyard in front of her balcony, whistled and then shouted, the flowers in his hand, "Ileana, let me in! It's Andrei down here, and it's getting cold."

## Bibliography

ELIADE, Mircea, *Juvenilia* (available in the University of Bucharest Central Library): journals, story draughts, magazine publications.
ELIADE, Mircea, *Novel of a Short-Sighted Adolescent*, Istros Books, London, 2016
ELIADE, Mircea, *Gaudeamus*, Istros Books, London, 2018
ELIADE, Mircea, *La nuit bengali,* Gallimard, Paris, 1950
ELIADE, Mircea, *Techniques du yoga,* Gallimard, Paris, 1948
ELIADE, Mircea, *Yoga, Eseu asupra originilor misticii indiene,* ediție științifică și critică de Eugen Ciurtin, Instiutul de Istorie a Religiilor, Academia Română, București, 2016
ELIADE, Mircea, *Noces au paradis,* Gallimard, Paris, 1986
ELIADE, Mircea, *Autobiography*, Vol. I: 1907-1937, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991
ELIADE, Mircea, *The Forbidden Forest*, University of Notre-Dame Press, Notre Dame,1978
ELIADE, Mircea, *The Old Man and the Bureaucrats*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1979
OBEYESEKERE, Gananath, *The Awakened Ones: Phenomenology of Visionary Experience,* Columbia University Press, New York, 2012
RĂSUCEANU, Andreea, *Bucureștiul lui Mircea Eliade: Elemente de geografie literară*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2013
RICKETTS, Mac Linscott, *Mircea Eliade: The Romanian Roots 1907-1945*, East European Monographs, Boulder, 1988
TURCANU, Florin, *Mircea Eliade: Le prisonnier de l'histoire*, Paris, Editions La Decoverte, 2003

# SERGEY A. TOYMENTSEV

Born in 1976, in Kazan, Russia

Ph.D. in Comparative Literature, Rutgers University (2014)
Thesis: *Deleuze and Russian Film: Transcendental Exercise of the Faculties on (Post-) Totalitarian Screen*

Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Polish Institute of Advanced Studies, Warsaw (2017-2018)
Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow at Florida State University, Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics, Slavic Program (2015-2017)
Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Russian Institute for Advanced Studies, Sholokhov Moscow State University for the Humanities, Moscow (2014-2015)
Teaching Assistant/Part-Time Lecturer at Rutgers University (2005-2014)

**Fellowships:**
Junior Fellowship at Polish Institute of Advanced Studies, Warsaw
Graduate Student Fellowship, Rutgers University (2003 – 2007)
Fulbright Research Fellowship, Washington State University, Pullman; University of Washington, Seattle (2002 – 2003)
Research Fellowship, Free University in Berlin, JFK Institute in North American and Canadian Studies (2001)

Published several articles, book and film reviews, and interviews

# THE CRISIS OF THE SOVIET ACTION-IMAGE: TOWARDS A DELEUZIAN TAXONOMY OF THAW CINEMA

**Abstract**

The paper examines the exemplary films of the Soviet "Thaw" cinema in light of Gilles Deleuze's theory of the crisis of the action-image elaborated in the context of post-war European cinema. I argue that, besides aberrant movement as the key characteristic of such a crisis, Thaw cinema could be characterized by other tendencies, such as the proliferation of films foregrounding the sublime action-image, as well as its radical enfeeblement in the 1970s, which similarly testify to the overall crisis of the Soviet action-image. The ambiguous or aporetic form of the Thaw action-image, which both celebrates the sublime revolutionary spirit and emphasizes its utter futility at the same time, serves to problematize the dogmatic aesthetic of socialist realism, as well as helps us explain the constitutive contradictions of Khrushchev's de-Stalinization.

**Keywords**: Deleuze, Thaw cinema, action-image, revolutionary, sublime, superfluous man, aberrant movement

## Introduction

Toward the end of *Cinema 1*, Deleuze's philosophical taxonomy of film images and concepts has recourse to a historical account of the crisis of the action-image in post-war European cinema. As he writes, "Why is the Second World War taken as a break? The fact is that, in Europe, the post- war period has greatly increased the situations which we no longer know how to react to, in spaces which we no longer know how to describe".[1] Not only does Deleuze provide an exact timing for "the great crisis of the action-image" in European cinema ("around 1948, Italy; about 1958, France; about 1968, Germany"[2]), he contextually specifies its causal dependence on a given ideological crisis "external to the cinema".[3] For example, the cinema in France, he argues, was able to break with its classical tradition only after the demise of de Gaulle's

"political ambition to belong fully to the circle of victors" at the end of the war; German cinema had to take time to recover after its long and total subjection to the state ideology; while Italy was the first to move beyond the movement-image, "before France and Germany," because it "could certainly not claim the rank of victor" and, at the same time, "had at its disposal a cinematographic institution which had escaped fascism relatively successfully."[4]

Deleuze never mentions a similar crisis of the action-image in post-war Soviet cinema, which is probably due to its limited availability to the *Cahiers du Cinéma* film critics whose reviews served as his dominant frame of reference regarding the history of cinema. And yet, could Deleuze's omission mean that in the 1950s and 1960s Soviet filmmakers were still imprisoned within the sensorimotor whole of the movement-image and could hardly establish a new tradition of the time-image? In this paper I will demonstrate that the crisis of the Soviet action-image was indeed parallel to similar tendencies in post-war European cinema, yet it can only be explained by slightly different terms we can find in the *Cinema* volumes: namely, the sublime intensification of the action-image as well as its radical enfeeblement, in addition to its definitive crisis via aberrant movements. In Deleuze's taxonomy, the sublime and enfeebled versions of the action-image refer only to its structural instability and somewhat foreshadow its crisis caused by the eruption of pure optical and sound situations. In post-war Soviet cinema, because of its ultimate subjection to the Communist censorship as well as countless compromises with it, such imperfect formations of the action-image (including aberrant movement in film) could, however, qualify as legitimate indexes of its historical crisis in the Thaw era.

## The Agony of the Dream and the Rise of the Action-Image

In his discussion of Kazan's post-war films (e.g. *On the Waterfront* (1954), *East of Eden* (1955), *America, America* (1963)), Deleuze discovers a curious dialectics in the relation between the American dream and reality: the more the American dream is challenged and contradicted by reality (e.g. corruption, crime, poverty, betrayal, etc.), the more powerful and intense it becomes. As he writes,

> The American Dream is affirmed more and more to be a dream, nothing other than a dream, contradicted by the facts; but it draws from this a sudden burst of increased power… And it is precisely after the war - at the very moment when the American Dream is collapsing, and when the action-image is entering a definitive crisis… that the dream finds its most fertile form, and action its most violent, most detonating, schema. This is the final agony of the action cinema, even if films of this type go on being made for a long time yet.[5]

After Khrushchev denounced the cult of Stalin's personality at the Communist Party's Twentieth Congress in 1956, the Communist dream was similarly on the verge of collapsing under the pressure of Stalin's (partially) exposed crimes as well as the great flock of amnestied prisoners returning home from the gulag camps. Yet in his repudiation of and moving away from Stalin's terror, Khrushchev reemphasized his loyalty to the fundamental tenets of Communism, betrayed by Stalinism, and pledged to return the country to the early ideals of Leninism by praising the heroism of old revolutionaries. The ambiguity of the Thaw "de-Stalinization" campaign consisted, therefore, in viewing the thirty-year period of totalitarianism, which took the lives of over ten millions of people, as an unfortunate digression from the Soviet radiant path toward Communism. The idealization of Leninism as a counterweight to the condemnation of Stalinism was, nevertheless, a rather fragile ideological compromise promoted to save the shattered regime from decisive defeat, as it seemed utterly unconvincing to the socialist allies in Eastern Europe, such as Poland and Hungary, where Khrushchev's liberal policies stirred political uprisings in 1956 (brutally suppressed by Soviet troops). In the Soviet Union of the late 1950-1960s, however, this ambiguous compromise was sufficient to serve as a powerful stimulus for the intellectual and cultural renaissance known as the Thaw epoch, characterized by a rapid expansion in film production. Although still supervised by the state censorship apparatus, the Thaw cinematic image was no longer in total service of ideological propaganda and was, therefore, rather quick to express the inherent contradictions of the Communist dream and its criminal underside. Just as Kazan's post-war films push the action-image to the limit in order to salvage the American dream, the Thaw action-image similarly finds "its most violent, most detonating, schema" in order to defer the agony of the Communist utopia.

The post-war Soviet action-image celebrating the excessive revolutionary heroism of pre-Stalinist times could best be described by Deleuze's concept of the sublime action-image which he attributes to Herzog's action cinema that exhausts both large and small forms of the action image by pushing the character's activity to an utter absurdity. In Herzog's SAS' action films, according to Deleuze, the hero is presented as a conqueror of the useless, i.e. "a man who is larger than life" confronted with "a milieu which is itself larger than life, and dreams up an action as great as the milieu."[6] Given in such form, the empirical value of this action-image is strongly undermined because

> the action, in effect, is not required by the situation, it is a crazy enterprise, born in the head of a visionary, which seems to be the only one capable of rivaling the milieu in its entirety. Or rather, the action divides in two: there is the sublime action, always beyond, but which itself engenders another action, a heroic action which confronts the milieu on its own account, penetrating the impenetrable, breaching the unbreachable. There is thus both a hallucinatory dimension, where the acting spirit raises itself to boundlessness in nature and a hypnotic dimension where the spirit runs up against the limits which Nature opposes to it.[7]

In Herzog's films, such as *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (1972) or *Fitzcarraldo* (1982), the heroic action is no longer executed according to empirical laws of activity; it is rather hyperbolically magnified to its sublime or transcendental exercise and thus abstracts itself into "pure Idea."[8] This ambiguous form of the action-image, which simultaneously celebrates the sublime acting spirit and emphasizes its utter futility, will help us explain the constitutive contradictions of the Soviet action films in the late 1950s which similarly romanticize the excessive heroism of revolutionary action, yet implicitly problematize its overall purpose.

## Korchagin & Co: Revolutionary Sublime Action

The Thaw tradition of the sublime action-image arguably begins with Alov and Naumov's *Pavel Korchagin* (1957), an adaptation of Nikolai Ostrovsky's *How the Steel Was Tempered*. Unlike Donskoi's earlier adaptation (1942) that organizes the narrative in a linear fashion, *Pavel Korchagin* starts off with the end of the novel, where the already blind and

paralyzed protagonist receives the news that the only manuscript of his novel has been lost in the mail and is thinking whether he should rewrite it over again. What follows is the hero's entire life presented in a series of flashbacks. As Lev Anninskii observes, "the life itself is structured in the film as a preparation and justification of such finale."[9] By the end of his mnemonic journey, the film shows the hero's hand blindly scribing the titled words of Ostrovsky's novel in the dark, which symbolizes the victory of the revolutionary spirit over his bedridden condition. The film's circular self-reflexive narrative composition, therefore, invites the viewer to reassess together with the protagonist the value and meaning of his life from the point of view of his present disability. Although at the closing scene the healthy Korchagin (or rather the actor who plays him) cheerfully declares to the viewer not to believe that he surrendered and died, the overall message that the film conveys is far from the obligatory optimism of conventional socialist realism. While some critics praised the film for its return to the pure form of the socialist realism of pre-Stalinist times ("*dorappovskie vremena*"),[10] others were appalled by the darkness of the representation of hardships and sufferings that the hero must go through by protesting that it "was not like that" in the early years of Soviet Russia.[11]

Whereas Donskoi's pro-Stalinist adaptation fully omits the fact of Korchagin's illness, Alov and Naumov, on the contrary, focus on those episodes in which the hero has lost his health and thus problematize his fanaticism and ascetic sacrifice. Most of Korchagin's flashbacks are centered on his building of a narrow railroad somewhere in the Ukrainian countryside, a construction project commissioned by the Party during the late autumn. The film deliberately emphasizes how this project amounts to an inhuman and nearly impossible mission since no working conditions have been provided for the young Komsomol enthusiasts forced to live in shabby barracks and die of typhus, hunger, and cold. For Korchagin, however, this railroad, which will be abandoned after it fulfills its service of supplying firewood to the city, emblematizes the Revolution itself and it is there that his physical health has been fully undermined. Furthermore, the directors reintroduce this construction site as the setting for the hero's attempted suicide towards the end of the film. While returning home after his trip to the doctor from whom he learns that complete paralysis and blindness await him within a year, he decides to get off the train at a random station and shoot himself. In Ostrovskii's novel, Korchagin thinks about committing suicide in Crimea, on the Black Sea shore. In the film, the train station where he plans to end his life turns out to be Boiarka, the

same Ukrainian town where he used to build his "revolutionary" railroad a while ago. For Korchagin, the encounter with the landmark of the past, which is largely responsible for his illness, triggers his spiritual rebirth and encourages him to stay alive to the very end in his service to the Revolution. For the viewer, however, such a convergence of the hero's suicidal mission in the past and his suicidal attempt in the present only further problematizes the validity of his Christ-like sacrifice.

For Anninskii, "Alov and Naumov not only recreated the world of revolutionary romanticism in its purified and crystallized version; they turned this world of heroic act into an argument in the debate."[12] That is to say, by pushing the heroic action beyond the limit of its empirical exercise, they abstracted it into a "pure idea". The same idea of the destruction of a personal life sacrificed on the altar of a new state is foregrounded in their next film, *Wind* (1958), where young revolutionaries perish one by one on their long journey to the first Komsomol Congress in Moscow, yet their tragic death is shown as accidental and essentially antiheroic. The conventional image of heroism is most strongly subverted by the figure of the prostitute, Mary, who joins the trip to Moscow not because she shares the revolutionary cause of the voyagers, but because she is personally attracted to one of them, Fyodor. After both of them are arrested by the White Army police, she exposes herself as the chief delegate to the Komsomol Congress and thus rescues Fyodor so he could continue his important journey. Mary is executed, yet her sacrifice has neither ideological nor romantic reason, since she knows that Fyodor doesn't love her. Her death, as Neya Zorkaya argues, "cannot give us an idea of either the collapse of the old world or the birth of a new proud person out of the revolutionary turmoil."[13] That is, her entrance into the Revolution is as accidental as her exit from it.

By the late 1950s, the sublime action-image, initiated by Alov and Naumov, had become almost the official cinematic discourse, by which the Communist utopia could legitimize itself and through which more critically oriented directors would smuggle their reservations about the nature of revolutionary heroism. In Raizman's *Communist* (1958), for example, the hero of titanic power struggles against the hostile mass of peasants in a remote Russian village to which he is appointed by the young Soviet government to work on one of the electrification projects. Yet, during the White Army attack on the village, he is the only one who perishes. His heroism is undermined by the fact that as the civil war veteran he is often dressed in a military uniform, yet he never uses a gun in any

of his confrontations with the local counter-revolutionaries. The film was commissioned for the fortieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution and its release was even delayed because of the close supervision of the state censors. Despite the enormous ideological investment in the film, the protagonist turned out to be more complicated than expected. As Josephine Woll observes,

> Vasili Gubanov is *not* the hero these critics so desperately wanted him to be. He is not a revival of the heroes of the 1920s, nor a new incarnation of the revolutionary communist ideal. He superficially resembles the heroes of the 1920s or 1930s… and his heroism is set within the civil war context, but its nature and performance are redolent of post-Twentieth Congress values. He never holds a weapon, even amid a barrage of shots… He does give up his life for his cause, but his self-sacrifice is motivated by… "thaw altruism" rather than by revolutionary zeal.[14]

Soviet Russia was born in the bloodbath of civil war, in which violence, brutality and aggression should be the prime characteristics to be attributed to the early communists, as they were in Rogozhkin's post-Soviet drama *Chekist* (1992), in which the sublime action-image is degenerated into the impulse-image of dark naturalism. In the Thaw romanticization of this period, however, the revolutionary hero could only be a martyr ready to sacrifice his/her life for the common cause, even though s/he "wants to live and be happy."[15]

The theme of revolutionary martyrdom continued to dominate in the early 1960s as well. Remaining structurally the same, the plot of romantic self-sacrifice was only modified in terms of gender and ethnicity. In Samsonov's *Optimistic Tragedy* (1963), a fragile female commissar, representing "the image of an impregnable fair maiden as a symbolic embodiment of the Revolution,"[16] is sent by the Party to the Marine squad led by anarchists, in order to form from the marines a Red Army battalion to take part in the civil war. Although she triumphs in taming the anarchic power of the all-male crew, managing to escape their attempts to either kill or violate her, she still tragically perishes in combat. In Konchalovsky's *The First Teacher* (1965), the ascetic and over-committed revolutionary Diuishen, appointed by the Party to educate illiterate countrymen in a Kyrgyz village, is eager to enlighten them about the Marxist values, yet his romantic fanaticism results in nothing more than an avalanche of disasters. The film's final sequence is particularly representative of the

utter futility of his enterprise. After his school has been burnt down as an act of revenge on his endeavors, he starts chopping down the only poplar tree in the village in order to rebuild the school. Even though it is the only tree in the village, and it would thus be of little help to him anyhow, he still obsessively keeps on chopping it even after the film's credits start running. This sequence perfectly exemplifies what Deleuze says about a sublime action as "a crazy enterprise" which is "not required by the situation" and is "born in the head of a visionary" (C1 184). The romantic action of the teacher does reaffirm the shining power of Communist ideals for a moment, yet the emphatic futility of such action undermines their relevance to the actual milieu.

## Revolutionary Sublime Action in Peacetime

The resistance Diuishen encounters from the inhabitants stubbornly sticking to their tribal traditions is structurally analogous to the resistance of any other milieu associated with the old pre-revolutionary world, whether it is a Russian village with ignorant peasants or a ship with anarchic sailors. It restages the old mythological conflict between order and chaos (as well as culture and nature or center and periphery), in which the romantic hero-demiurge is responsible for bringing light to the darkness even at the expense of his/her life. In this regard, the Thaw vogue for the revolutionary "death drive" was extended to and replicated in the contemporary civic context, in which self-sacrifice was not required at all. In Romm's *Nine Days in One Year* (1962), for example, the atomic physicist Gusev is obsessed with his research on nuclear energy. As the result of his ultimate dedication to science, he gets accidentally irradiated, yet refuses to abandon his work until his death by exposing himself to even more radiation. Despite the film's foregrounding an intellectual as a new type of Soviet hero, it did scare a number of critics with its overbearing pessimism regarding the enlightening power of scientific progress predicated on personal self-destruction.[17] As Alexander Prokhorov points out,

> That progress… is questionable in the film, portrayed as sickening obsession that slowly kills the protagonist. The invisible deadly power of nuclear radiation incarnates the perilous force of progress as the master-narrative of modernity.[18]

The film's plot consists of a number of isolated episodes or novellas that discretely portray Gusev's personal and professional life from the accident of his irradiation to his lying in the hospital and are bound together into a coherent narrative by the hero's unifying perspective as a scientist at the service of scientific progress. As Deleuze comments, "Romm's *Nine Days of One Year* proceeds by clearly distinguished days, each of which has its indices, and the whole of which is a progression in time."[19] In this regard, Romm is a "disciple of Pudovkin,"[20] since both of them integrate the small form of the action-image, associated with random occurrences in the individual life, into its large form in the context of a greater ideological narrative, be it Communism or scientific progress. What Deleuze does not elaborate, however, is that in *Nine Days* both forms of the action-image are in a "dialectical struggle"[21] with each other: the discrete personal narrative is integrated into, or sacrifices itself for, the totality of the grand narrative of the film, yet its integration, or sacrifice, ultimately undermines the sublime coherence and teleology of the latter.

After the premiere of *Nine Days of One Year*, Yevgeni Urbansky, the lead actor of Raizman's *Communist*, remarked that "the time of the intelligent, delicate and ironical hero is approaching. The time of my straightforward, non-compromising and down to earth mastodons is coming to an end."[22] Urbansky could be right in his prediction regarding the emergence of a new intellectual hero who would replace the working class protagonist in the Soviet cinema of 1960-1970s.[23] Yet the mutation of the positive hero in terms of gender, ethnicity or class did not affect the overall structure of the Thaw action-image but only further reinforced its ideological foundation. In Ordynsky's *The Big Ore* (1964), Urbansky plays an overly ambitious truck driver who comes to work in a mine which is desperately digging for an iron ore hidden under the layers of clay and rocks. Eager to beat the records of labor productivity, the driver strives to transport much more gravel than required despite heavy rainfall and his worn-out vehicle. Eventually he does get killed after his truck slips into the canyon under the pressure of its massive load. Yet the mine's final discovery of "the big ore," as the film sadly suggests in the end, is the result of his excessive efforts. Mysteriously enough, Urbansky himself perishes in a car accident by volunteering to perform a stunt on his own during filming.

The intentional hyperdramatization of action for its own sake found its most radical expression in Kalatozov's *Letter Never Sent* (1959) that follows four geologists in search of diamonds in Central Siberia. Once they find

them, they dream out loud about how many schools and kindergartens the government can build after selling them. The heroes, however, never make it home since throughout the film all of them tragically perish in fire and ice, leaving behind only the unsent letter about this expedition and the map for diamonds. The final sequence depicts the delirious vision of one of the characters seeing the future "Diamond City" built thanks to the diamonds they found. Yet the vision is soon replaced by the vast panorama of the majestic Siberian scenery with the frozen hero lying in the snow. In the film, the landscape plays a role on its own by expanding to an inhuman and indifferent totality that absorbs characters one by one. Its autonomy from humanity, visually represented by Urusevskii's panoramic and angle shots, effectively undermines the assumed superiority of the Soviet man over nature characteristic of Stalinist cinema (e.g. Stolper's *Story of a Real Man* (1948)). The Stalinist director Pyriev was one of the most critical opponents of the film, claiming that it did not show us a "man" but only a "furious elemental nature."[24] Furthermore, censors were so appalled to see so much death and suffering in the film that they forced the director to revise the script and leave at least one survivor. And yet, as Prokhorov rightly observes, "this imposed closure hardly changes the general atmosphere of the picture."[25] What was most scandalous about *Letter* is that it was shot in the actual natural environment, in severe Siberian conditions, although a similar setting could be found "fifty kilometers from Moscow."[26]The romantic yet unnecessary sacrifice in the service of the state was thus intentionally reenacted by the film's crew themselves. Some of the actors were even hospitalized after the film shooting: Vasili Livanov, for example, broke his voice and Innokenti Smoktunovsky got a brain concussion.

The sublime action-image of the Thaw cinema seemingly remains within the confines of the socialist realist aesthetic. And the characters' ardent devotion to the early Communist ideals that such films persistently promote could be viewed as a "counterweight to the shocking revelations about the Stalinist system"[27] in the late 1950s, as it is most evident in Kalatozov's tendentious celebration of the Castro Revolution in *I am Cuba* (1964), despite its acrobatic cinematography. Yet by following the dictum of the Communist ideology to fully sacrifice personal happiness for the collective well-being to the letter, such an image pushes the characters' identification with the ideological machine to an utter absurdity and thus ultimately deterritorializes the heroic rhetoric of the movement-image. As Zizek comments,

> an ideological identification exerts a true hold on us precisely when we maintain an awareness that we are not fully identical to it, that there is a rich human person beneath it… For that reason, an ideological edifice can be undermined by a too-literal identification, which is why its successful functioning requires a minimal distance from its explicit rules.[28]
>
> [Therefore,] overidentifying with the explicit power discourse - … simply taking the power discourse at its (public) word, acting as if it really means what it explicitly says (and promises) - can be the most effective way of disturbing its smooth functioning.[29]

The sublime revolutionary hero overidentifying with the power discourse to the extent of his or her personal destruction is, therefore, a logical extension of the Stalinist search for the "new Soviet man" fully devoid of psychological complexity and, instead, overcommitted to the collective purpose of building socialism. As John Haynes puts this in Lacanian terms, for socialist realism "the positive hero was in no way to be seen as a split subject," it "refuses to work with anything exploring or celebrating the split between subjectivity and objectivity."[30] The subject of socialist realism is rather a subject stuck in the imaginary "mirror stage", being completely identified with the image of its own wholeness. As Leonid Trauberg proclaimed at the 1935 All-Union Creative Conference of Workers in Soviet Cinema, "in these five years we got away from the accursed legacy of fractured consciousness."[31]

For Deleuze, the "fractured self" is the foundation of the time-image as it internalizes the split of time into "before" and "after." Furthermore, it is only through this fracture filled with the pure and empty form of time that a genuine thought can be born. The sublime action-image of the Thaw period does nevertheless articulate the urgent need for this fracture within a cinematic subjectivity by hyperdramatizing the tragic consequences of the radical or *unfractured* revolutionary consciousness. Such image, therefore, could be viewed as the origin of the crisis of the Soviet action-image, which reflected the "unsteadiness"[32] of the Communist dream in all its aspects.

## From Romantic Action to Romantic Inaction

What happened to the sublime action-image after the Thaw revolutionary optimism finally exhausted its vital power and got replaced by the intelligentsia's pessimism of Brezhnev's era of stagnation? Indeed, should

there be any need for the excessive romantic pathos when post-Stalinist reforms were discontinued and the Communist dream itself was no longer in danger? Interestingly enough, in 1970s the failure of the Thaw rhetoric of romantic *action* gave way to a similarly subversive tradition of romantic *inaction*. A great number of late Soviet films (e.g. Konchalovsky's *Uncle Vanya* (1970), Melnikov's *September Vacation* (1979), Daneliya's *Autumn Marathon* (1979), Balayan's *Flights in Dreams and in Reality* (1983)) foregrounded a deliberately weak and passive protagonist whose genealogy refers to the Russian version of the romantic or Byronic ennui of the "superfluous man" aka Onegin, Pechorin, Rudin, Beltov and Oblomov. The Soviet "superfluous man" of the seventies was no longer a hero but an educated loser, i.e. a bored intellectual lost in his mid-life crisis and self-indulgent enfeeblement, incessantly abstaining from work and social and family duties. With no venues to realize their talents in Brezhnev's milieu, the Soviet Onegins and Pechorins found their legitimate refuge in "the small form" of the action-image that let them drift from one absurd situation to another and dispassionately engage in idleness, adultery, betrayal, public embarrassment and alcoholism. Such shift from the romantic heroization (or hyperactivity) to equally romantic deheroization of action (or hyperpassivity) in the Soviet cinema of stagnation strongly resonates with Herzog's subversion of active heroic agency by the opposite extreme of its radical "enfeeblement" in his other films (e.g. *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* (1974), *Nosferatu* (1979), *Woyzeck* (1979)), where heroes are replaced by idiots and weaklings and whose activity is similarly reduced to the minimum. In both cases, the failure of the visionary's sublime plan in "the large form" found further extension in "the small form" where "his whole reality was enfeebled."[33]

The enfeeblement of the Soviet action-image proceeded mainly through a series of screen adaptations of Russian classic literature, which proved to be the safest mode of representation in that cultural climate of stagnation. Film adaptation has always been a popular genre in Soviet cinema, yet in the mid-seventies the cinematic translation of the literary classic became particularly subversive. Its critical potential is most evident if we compare the adaptations of Pushkin's story *The Shot* from *The Tales of Belkin* and Lermontov's novella *Princess Mary* from *A Hero of Our Time* in the Thaw and stagnation periods. Both literary texts center on the disillusioned and mysterious Byronic hero who withdraws from all social activities and thus inadvertently provides a critical commentary on Nikolai I's reactionary reign: in the former, the protagonist Silvio dedicates

his entire life to plotting revenge for a slight he received in his youth, in the latter, Pechorin is engaged in plotting psychological games with people to whom he is utterly indifferent. Both narratives deconstruct the romantic notion of honor and dramatize the desperate lack of purpose for the Russian intellectuals of the nineteenth century squandering their lives in idleness and useless actions. Whereas Naum Trakhtenberg's adaptation *The Shot* (1966) faithfully follows the plot development in Pushkin's original by closely reproducing the characters' flashbacks as well as the lively dynamic of their confrontations, Petr Fomenko's theatrical staging *The Tales of Belkin: The Shot* (1981), on the contrary, emphasizes the static gaps of silence and immobile passivity between the characters' encounters and focuses more on their facial expressions rather than on actions, rendered by unnaturally long close-ups. According to Deleuze, the close-up stands for the affection-image: "*The affection-image is the close-up, and the close-up is the face.*"[34] Furthermore, the face in the affection-image, as the interval between the perception-image and the action-image, "is abstracted from the spatio-temporal co-ordinates which would relate it to a state of things,"[35] it sacrifices the mobility of the body for the sake of affect and thus expresses the state of suspension between received action and executed reaction. A film consisting of predominantly facial close-ups, such as Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928), would thus unavoidably occasion the crisis of the action-image, since affects in such film are expressed as separate entities, independently of their connection to sensory-motor situations. Fomenko's repeated use of close-ups, portraying the unshaved, exhausted and somber face of the protagonist (played by Leonid Filatov), as well as the unemotional and detached face of the narrator (played by Alexei Eibozhenko), similarly abstracts affects from their dependence on either characters or situations. While watching Fomenko's theatrical production, one simply forgets that Pushkin's story is about a duel and a plotted revenge, since the incredibly dense ambience of black melancholia and alienation permeates the entire screen and emphasizes the futility of any action whatsoever. Anatoly Efros' *Pages from Pechorin's Journal* (1975) similarly differs from its cinematic predecessor *Princess Mary* (Issidor Annensky, 1955): whereas the latter is more interested in the narrative intrigue unfolding in the setting of the typically romantic mountain landscape and accompanied by the sentimental soundtrack consisting of romances set on Lermontov's lyrics (e.g. "Sail"), the former deromanticizes Pechorin's superfluousness and dramatizes instead its tragic consequences by reducing actions and

decorations to a bare minimum and having the despondent protagonist play the role of Lermontov as well. In other words, in the films of mid-seventies the romantic ennui of the Russian superfluous man is stripped of its dependence on the dramatic action and milieu and taken in its own right as an autonomous affect which manifests itself as a powerful expression of the morbid sensibility of the late Soviet intelligentsia.

Characteristically enough, it was Konchalovsky who launched this post-Thaw tradition of noble boredom and passivity in the Soviet film. Whereas the figure of the young overcommitted revolutionary in his debut feature strictly followed the conventions of the Thaw sublime action-image, which was already in the pre-stagnation stage of demise in mid-sixties, his *The Nest of Gentry* (1969) and *Uncle Vanya* (1970) offered a completely different protagonist: a middle-aged melancholic aristocrat isolated from any civic activity in the Russian hinterland and brooding over the lost years of his unfulfilled life.[36] What is most interesting about Konchalovsky's transition from one romantic extreme to another is that it is mediated by his *The Story of Asya Klyachina Who Loved but Did Not Marry*, made in l967 yet shelved until 1987. Shot in the naturalistic style of *cinema verité* with only two professional actors involved, it thoroughly demythologizes the life and labor of simple collective farm workers by portraying their everyday activity on the fields. As Anna Lawton comments, *The Story of Asya Klyachina*

> records the hardships of work during the harvest days, under scorching sun, with sweating farmers covered with dust and dirt, shouting at each other in the realistic language of workplace. This was a deliberate blow on the director's part against one of the most cherished myths of Socialist Realism, the country idyll. In the 1930s 1940s images of… rural beauties in embroidered blouses and smart fellows in shiny boots and dancing to folkish accordion tunes were intended to afford the people a glimpse of the promised land. Mythmaking was used to pacify desires and to foster dreams. But even before Konchalovsky made this film, the dream was long gone, exposed by Khrushchev's "secret speech" at the XX party Congress.[37]

That is to say, because of its innate tendency to push the utopian impulse to the very limit where it eventually dissolves, the excessive revolutionary romanticism triggered by Khrushchev's de-Stalinization was destined to extend itself to harsh naturalism in order to represent reality "as is." Konchalovsky's endeavor, in this regard, aimed at redeeming the

ordinary life of farmers from the Stalinist glamor of kolkhoz musicals by discovering there the unadorned poetry of simple work beyond ideological mythologization. It should not, therefore, be surprising that after this film was scandalously banned, he decided to focus on the theme of the inability and impossibility to work at all, a theme which was already consistently developed in Russian literature throughout the entire nineteenth century.

In the seventies, the late Soviet abstinence from work became almost like a political stance which could be compared to the French Situationists' resistance to any labor as such, proclaimed in Guy Debord's famous 1953 slogan "Ne travaillez jamais!" Although safely packaged in the genre conventions of melodrama and screen adaptation, a great number of films of this period centered on the sympathetic, if not celebratory, representation of the hero as an idle non-achiever whose social failure was, nevertheless, rendered as self-chosen and therefore justifiable. For example, in Mikhalkov's *An Unfinished Piece for Player Piano* (1977), Sophia almost faints when she learns that her former lover Platonov is not a minister, as expected, but a university drop-out and a current schoolteacher in a remote village. Yet it is Platonov, according to Mikhalkov, who is granted the most rational voice of judgment among all the characters in the film. In his *Oblomov* (1979), the lazy protagonist is no longer a parasite benefiting from the institution of serfdom but a lovable dreamer whose sentimental idealism is nostalgically poeticized as a viable alternative to Stolz's pragmatic materialism. In Kheifits' *A Bad Good Man* (1973), the adaptation of Chekhov's *Duel*, Laevsky's boredom and lyrical sensibility are similarly juxtaposed with the cynical Darwinism of the naturalist von Koren. In Melnikov's *September Vacation* and Balayan's *Flights in Dreams and in Reality*, mischievous yet adorable protagonists always try to find hilarious and absurd excuses to sneak out from their workplace. In Daneliya's *Autumn Marathon*, the talented translator Buzykin is suffering from his impotence to become a writer; even his translations are rejected for ideological reasons. In Mikaelyan's *Love by Request* (1982), a parody on the socialist realist production drama in which a more sophisticated communist assists a younger character in her/his ideological and professional evolution, the former sportsman Bragin, working now as a mechanic, is couched by his would-be girlfriend to approach his work at the factory lathe with more enthusiasm and pleasure, yet with no success.

In all these films, the cause of the hero's melancholia and inability to realize the creative potential is never fully disclosed or explained but only indirectly suggested through a chaotic series of absurd and tragicomic

circumstances which loosely comprise the film's overall narrative. The elusive nature of the protagonist's social abnormality in such features makes them very similar to mystery movies structured according to the small form of the action-image (ASA') where "one moves from blind actions, as indices, to obscure situations which vary entirely or which fluctuate completely."[38] Just as in the detective genre, educated viewers were summoned to decode through the romantically framed enigma of the protagonist's malaise, imperceptible to the censors, a symptom of a larger pathological condition of the late Soviet system, which could neither be changed nor challenged at that time. Once the social system got changed in the late eighties, the Soviet melancholic similarly vanishes from the screen or literally dies, as it occurs in Ryazanov's *Forgotten Melody for a Flute* (1987). The post-Soviet resurrection of the Soviet-like charming loser in Veledinsky's *The Geographer Drank His Globe Away* (2013) could be another riddle for viewers and critics to decode: some of them, following the novel's author, identified the despondent protagonist as a "saint"[39] and others as "the gloomiest symptom of the post-Soviet intelligentsia's defeat."[40] However, given Veledinsky's excessive melodramatization (if not victimization) of his hero's self-indulgent enfeeblement and passivity with little reference to social factors for such a condition, we may conclude that the critical potential of the socialist romantic legacy is yet to be fulfilled.

## Aberrant Movements of Soviet *Flâneurs*

The sublime action-image was not the only form of subversion of the Soviet movement-image in the Thaw cinema; it run parallel with another dominant image where the excessive valor of the revolutionary subject was deconstructed through a thorough and systematic deheroization and "the sensory-motor action or situation [was] replaced by the stroll, the voyage and the continual return journey."[41] By the end of *Cinema 1*, Deleuze argues that at the moment when the "most 'healthy' illusions fall," the "first things to be compromised everywhere are the linkages of situation-action, action-reaction, excitation-response, in short, the sensory-motor links which produced the action-image."[42] The loosening of the sensory-motor link in the action-image results in the irruption of aberrant movement freed from the spatio-temporal coordinates. In this regard, Deleuze discusses films of Italian Neorealism, the French new wave and

post-war American cinema outside Hollywood that foreground characters' aimless movements and strolling through the city. He categorizes such films as "trip/ballad" films (*films de bal(l)ade*) in which the wandering movement itself becomes the form of narration. In the voyage form, characters are no longer responding to situations they are confronted with but become instead the passive observers of various spaces they traverse.

Surprisingly enough, Deleuze never mentions any Soviet film to exemplify this trend, which was indeed extremely popular in the Thaw cinema at the time. Suffice it to mention such films in which the trip/ballad narrative form is already inscribed in their titles: films like *Ballad of a Soldier* (1959), *Man Follows the Sun* (1963) and *Walking the Streets of Moscow* (1964). These films testify to the emergence of the so-called "poetic cinema" in the Russian new wave. And yet, Deleuze's omission of Soviet examples could be justified by the fact that such films, emphasizing the natural and unabashed sincerity of the characters' emotions, were still produced in the mode of traditional psychological realism, a mode of expression celebrated in Vladimir Pomerantsev's early Thaw article "On Sincerity in Literature" (1953). Deleuze is, however, not interested in the characters' psychology. In *Cinema 2*, the aberrant movement of the voyage films is immediately linked to the emergence of the pure optical and sound image, a new image which is occasioned by the character's encounter with something intolerable and unrecognizable and is exemplified by Rossellini's *Germany, Year Zero* (1948) and *Europa '51* (1952). In such films the traumatic optical image can't be assimilated into consciousness as the perception-image but persists on its own as something literal and imperceptible. For Deleuze, the only proper reaction to it would be a paralysis, which at the same time designates the transcendental exercise of sensibility. Such "transcendental" experiences were still unavailable for the Soviet *flâneur* of the time as they were naturally overwhelmed with freedom and jubilation granted by Khrushchev's liberal politics. In other words, Soviet cinema of the late 1950s appears to be behind the developments of Western cinema outlined by Deleuze. Even though their emphasis on emotional simplicity was truly innovative in the context of early post-Stalinism, for most Western film critics it seemed more like an anachronistic "anomaly." As Woll comments,

> At Cannes [in 1960], *Ballad* presented an attractive anomaly when set alongside Antonioni and Buñuel's surrealism, and Fellini's scandal provoking *La Dolce Vita*. The British critics called it a 'calming note in a

discordant symphony'; *Le Monde* acknowledged that 'from time to time it's nice to see normal and healthy people on screen'.[43]

It is only towards the end of the Thaw period, that is, in the mid-1960s, that we can witness the emergence of the pure optical and sound images in Soviet films, such as Khutsiyev's *July Rain* (1966), Shpalikov's *Long Happy Life* (1966) and, of course, Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev* (1966), considered to be the last film of the Thaw era. In what follows I will discuss how the "trip/ballad" form manifests itself first in the Thaw war film and then in the early "poetic cinema."

## Wanderings in a War Movie

Grigory Chukhrai's *Ballade of a Soldier* is justifiably praised for having introduced a new kind of Soviet subjectivity characterized by authentic sincerity and disarming naiveté and sharply opposed to the cold austerity of Stalinist superheroes. The film narrates about a nineteen-year-old soldier Alyosha who becomes a war hero purely by accident: while running from the enemy tanks as they chase him through the battlefield, he fires at them in fear and desperation and, to his own surprise, hits them. For his bravery, which he attempts to disclaim out of modesty, he is granted a medal which he trades for a six-day leave to visit his mother at home. What *Ballade* then offers to the viewer is Alyoasha's "continual return journey" to his home in a Russian village with multiple digressions, delays and interruptions which eventually leave him only a minute to kiss and embrace his mother before rushing back to the Front, where he is killed, as we learn from the off-screen narrator. The film's time frame and progressive teleology strictly set at the beginning are thus continuously dismantled by the protagonist's "aberrant" movements through multiple urban and rural spaces devastated by war. As Deleuze would put it, Chukhrai's journey narrative becomes a ballade of *balade* (trip or wandering) which displaces the linearity of movement by discontinuous deviations from the goal caused by the slackening of the sensory-motor link between the hero and the milieu.

In *Ballade*, Alyosha's short leave from the war temporality expands into his falling out of the empirical temporality regulated by timetables, schedules and deadlines. His progressive trip home is broken down into a series of digressions, during which he sacrifices his precious time to

help others on various utterly insignificant occasions. At the train station he volunteers to help a one-legged soldier carry a suitcase and because of this he misses the train. He misses another train when he attempts to fetch water for his accidental travelling companion, Shura. Although he gets a lift to the next station from an old woman truck driver, he is still too late. The train has already departed yet Shura is awaiting him and they gradually fall in love with each other. Before the trip, he has promised to his war fellow Pavlov to deliver a present to his wife in another town *en route*. Yet Pavlov's wife is having an affair and he delivers the present to Pavlov's invalid father instead. For Turovskaya, the protagonist's "road to his native village becomes his road to himself."[44] For Widdis, his journey similarly "acts as a path to self-knowledge or consciousness... [presented as] a series of trials and encounters... through which he grows in self-awareness."[45] For Woll, Alyosha's chance encounters constitute his "heroism" as "a mosaic consisting of many separate details."[46]

From a Deleuzean perspective, however, the hero's return journey would be neither spiritually enlightening, nor heroic, even in an ordinary sense. His personality hardly evolves throughout the narrative since there are no signs of the hero's internal progression in his physical digressions; just as his ordinary "heroism" seems to refer more to the viewer's impression rather than to his character quality. Chukhrai's *ba(l) ade* is essentially about the hero's failure of time management: he loses his time as well as his control over events in the present because he is always *affectively* open to the world and others in general. That is to say, the hero is as open to his mother as he is to others. In his trip to help her fix the roof, he keeps helping strangers instead by getting affectively involved in their affairs. His affection is multiplied and disseminated and so is his action, or the sensory-motor link between situation and response. For Deleuze, affection serves as the interval between perception and action. That is, the affection-image is what enables the character's reaction to what s/he perceives. With the "break-up of the sensory-motor schema" after the war, according to Deleuze, the narration similarly gets fragmented because of "the rise of situations to which one can no longer react."[47] In *Ballade*, on the contrary, the narrative is fragmented because the hero is affectively responsive to *all* situations occurring to him. In a strictly Deleuzean sense, there is no crisis of the action-image in Chukhrai's *Ballade*, yet its protagonist consistently manifests affective openness to "intolerable" situations (rather than the Stalinist denial of them) which would later trigger that crisis.

Whereas in *Ballade* the character's sensory-motor whole is splintered and dispersed into multiple contingent actions, in Bondarchuk's *Fate of Man* (1959) it is nevertheless unified by the hero's spiritual evolution as the result of his traumatic encounters during the war. The narrative totality and continuity (or "fate") of Sokolov's numerous hardships and wanderings that constitute the film's plot (e.g. the loss of his family, his captivity, escape, etc.) are provided by the fact that the protagonist himself plays the role of narrator presenting the story of his life in a series of flashbacks to his fellow military driver. Even though he is irreparably damaged by the war, he is celebrated as a survivor who has managed to put together the scattered pieces of his life and identity and become a responsible father for his adopted son, playing around while he recounts his story. Sokolov is undoubtedly no longer a Soviet hero but he is proudly a Russian man. Whereas in *A Tale of a Real Man* the hero overcomes his ordeals because he is a *Soviet* pilot, in *Fate* he finds his will power in the fact he is a *Russian* soldier. In the concentration camp, for example, Sokolov has a drinking duel with the Nazi officer: despite his hunger, he refuses to eat the offered bread with vodka by claiming that a Russian soldier never eats after drinking (he does nevertheless break off a demonstratively tiny crumb after his third glass). As Graham Roberts observes, "the kind of masculinity which Sokolov represents can be read as a sign of the Soviet Union's new-found confidence under Khrushchev."[48] Enjoying huge commercial success at the time, Bondarchuk's film, therefore, resolves the crisis of the Soviet action-image by removing it from the Stalinist context and refashioning it in terms of the hero's Russian patriotism and dedication to family values.

Receding from the ideological constraints of socialist realism, the Thaw action-image gravitated toward the conventional psychological realism. Efros' *Two in the Steppe* (1962) similarly deheroizes the protagonist who fails to deliver the commander's order because of his panic attack in the battlefield. The army tribunal sentences him to death for cowardice, yet the sudden intrusion of German troops interrupts his execution, which leaves the hero together with his committed escort alone in the steppe, disconnected from their battalion. Efros' faint-hearted soldier, nevertheless, manages to reclaim his heroism, or sensory-motor whole, towards the end of the film: while randomly wandering through the vast spaces of the Russian steppe and joining scattered military units in occasional combats, he never attempts to escape from his escort; even after the other gets killed, he returns to the commander and demands to repeat execution. The

spiritually reformed soldier is acquitted and the action-image, therefore, restored. That is to say, the deheroization of military action in the Thaw cinema, influenced by the public acknowledgment of the enormity of war casualties concealed by Stalin's government, hardly undermines the overall coherence of the action-image, in which the sensory-motor link is only temporarily suspended. In this regard, Stolper's *The Living and the Dead* (1964), a long overdue "artistic explanation of what happened in the summer and fall of 1941,"[49] entirely focuses on the chaos and confusion of the first months of the war during which the Soviet Army was encircled and paralyzed. The film is often praised for its honest representation of the immensity of the disaster at that time: crowds of scared refugees and disoriented soldiers from disrupted battalions intermingle with each other, running into different directions, falling dead here and there under constant bombardment and the sudden attacks of German tanks; soldiers losing their weapons and documents and committing suicide in despair. *The Living*, nevertheless, concludes with a Soviet massive counter-offensive just as the wounded protagonist, officer Sintsov, who has lost his documents and is awaiting a trial, is reinstated in his title.

## Wanderings in Poetic Cinema

The crisis of the action-image was most strongly implemented in the "poetic cinema" where the protagonist was not a soldier but an artist, a teenager or a child. Many critics have noticed that the Thaw cinema was virtually obsessed with the figure of child as a protagonist. As Prokhorov observes, in order to fight the epic monumentalism of Stalinist cinema in favor of "individuality, domesticity, and emotional self-expression," the Thaw filmmakers "literally reduced the hero in size and made him much younger and more spontaneous."[50] "If there were such a term as "pedomania," writes Anninskii, "it would perfectly define that conscious or unconscious tendency which appeared in our cinema of the early sixties, i.e. an attention to a little future person put at the center as our moral judge."[51] For Deleuze, in this regard, the figure of child as a seer becomes particularly important in effecting that crisis which, in turn, triggers the emergence of a new sound and optical image disconnected from action. As he writes,

> in the adult world, the child is affected by a certain motor helplessness, but one which makes him all the more capable of seeing and hearing. Similarly, if everyday banality is so important, it is because, being subject to sensory-motor schemata which are automatic and preestablished, it is all the more liable… suddenly to free itself from the laws of this schema and reveal itself in a visual and sound nakedness… There is… a necessary passage from the crisis of image-action to the pure optical-sound image. Sometimes it is an evolution from one aspect to the other: beginning with trip/ballad films [*films de bal(l)ade*] with the sensory-motor connections slackened, and then reaching purely optical and sound situations. Sometimes the two coexist in the same film like two levels, the first of which serves merely as a melodic line for the second.[52]

The "visual and sound nakedness" of everyday banality perceived by the child is the main theme of Mikhail Kalik's *Man Follows the Sun* (1962), whose innovative genre, according to one commentator, resembles a "lyrical ballad as it inscribes the novelistic principle of narration into its overall "poetic" composition."[53] Kalik's film is widely considered as the Russian version of Albert Lamorisse's short *The Red Balloon* (1956). Both features focus on the imaginary friendship between the child and the object in the context of urban space: Sandu befriends the sun just as Pascal, the red balloon. Yet Kalik's film significantly departs from its French predecessor in two important moments. First, in Lamorisse's "fairy tale", the boy's "affair of the imagination" is possible due to "the zoomorphism of the balloon" merging with "the anthropomorphism of the animals,"[54] an affair which is easily transcribed into Winnicott's model of the child's imaginary relationship with the transitional object and which solicits essentially allegorical interpretations. As Catherine Liu points out, "Lamorisse's narrative… is intensely allegorical and pivots on the anthropomorphization of the balloon, which appears first as a mischievous and loyal companion and then as martyred victim of a resentful mob when it falls victim to the persecution of group of ragamuffin bullies. Lamorisse's balloon can be interpreted as a martyr to class resentment; its rebirth a Christ-like resurrection."[55] Second, Lamorisse's "imaginary documentary,"[56] despite its visual splendor, does not represent the Parisian space in its "visual and sound nakedness" but diegetically frames it as a contrasting background for the balloon's singularity: the city is deliberately colored in grey and dark tones to make the balloon look vividly and exceptionally red or crimson. In *Man Follows the Sun*, Sandu's imaginary friend is the opposite of the zoomorphic/anthropomorphic "balloon that can follow

its master like a little dog."[57] As the film's title pointedly suggests, it is Sandu, or rather "a man," who follows the sun. Such a reversal of the boy's relationship with the imaginary companion effectively transcends the projected anthropomorphism of the sun by radically opening the protagonist's perception toward the brightness and vastness of the world. In contrast to Lamorisse's gloomy ambience, therefore, Kalik's sunlit city spaces emphatically manifest their full exuberant autonomy.

*Man Follows the Sun* narrates about one day of the life of a five-year-old boy who has heard from his fellows at the playground that if one follows the sun in its trek, one can cover the entire earth and get back to the same spot of departure but from the other side. Excited about this idea, the boy decides to prove it in practice and sets off on a journey by rolling his hoop around the city and looking at things through bits of tinted glass. During his urban odyssey, he encounters a great number of amusing, absolutely disconnected strangers whose sketchy portraits and stories constitute the film's fragmented narrative: for example, a lottery ticket vendor; a scientist from the Sun Research Institute; a boy with a magnifying glass; a girl rushing to a date with a bunch of multi-colored balloons; happy fathers at a maternity hospital; a motorcycle racer who performs dangerous stunts yet turns out to be a timid aged man rather than a daredevil; a young woman working as a gardener taking care of sunflowers in her flower bed, and her boss, a park attendant, who cuts a sunflower down by insisting on replacing them with roses; a shoeshine man with a passion for soccer who has lost his legs in the war; a funeral procession and taxi drivers respectfully waiting for it to pass; a truck driver worried about his sister dating a suspicious stranger; golden fish in the fountain; gymnasts working out in a huge stadium while the sun is setting down. By the end of the day, Sandu falls asleep next to a stone lion on the street. In his dream, most characters he has met during the day reappear in their surreal metamorphoses: the park attendant cuts a sunflower and turns into a mannequin, while the now gigantic sunflower replaces the dead body in a funeral procession which the boy and the gardener follow in somber silence. Then comes the shoeshine man, who now has his legs again, standing against the huge disc of the sun in the background. He guides the boy along a wide beautiful street at the end of which they would meet the sun. Next the boy sits near the truck driver who gave him a lift but then he drives the truck himself giving a lift to one of the happy fathers with a child he has met at the maternity hospital. At the end of his dream he sees himself in the place of the lottery-ticket

vendor but instead of lottery-tickets he gives out pieces of tinted glass to other children. They look at the world through the glass, which makes the world appear splintered into multicolored fragments. He wakes up in the arms of a man who introduces himself as a military musician. Together they now go to meet the sunrise.

The film's narrative could not be more naïve and banal. Yet the naïve banality of the everyday is precisely what the film is striving for since its goal is to present the world through the eyes of the child. The entire film consists of a series of discontinuous pure optical and sound situations, which the protagonist passively observes and moves on without responding to them. As one Soviet critic remarked, "the director renders the narrative of his film as rhythmic, yet passionless. The possibilities of passions emerge and the viewer does entertain them. But passions themselves are absent."[58]Unlike Lamorisse's *The Red Balloon*, the film does not contain any conflict, such as that between individual and collective or brightness and darkness. The motifs around which the narrative is loosely organized are quite minimal and archetypal: such as birth (maternity hospital) and death (funeral precession) or good (the gardener) and evil (the park attendant). The boy's wandering is fundamentally anti-teleological: by following the sun he intends to arrive at the same place from which he sets off. Furthermore, not only does the boy abstain from reacting to numerous situations he encounters, he lets them enter his memory, from where they reemerge as dream-images. As Deleuze characterizes the same process, "between the reality of the setting and that of the action, it is no longer a motor extension which is established, but rather a dreamlike connection through the intermediary of the liberated sense organs."[59] That is, the film reenacts the passage of the cinematic image from the actual to the virtual and it is the perception of the five-year-old boy that makes this passage possible. It is at this point, according to Deleuze, when the actual environment loses its utilitarian and diegetic functions and gets disconnected from the character's actions and passions, that "objects and settings [*milieux*] take on an autonomous, material reality which gives them an importance in themselves."[60] Such an autonomous "deactivated" milieu born by pure optical situations is, for Deleuze, "any-space-whatever," i.e. a singular "space of virtual conjunction"[61] opposed to the "qualified space-time of the old realism."[62] Removed from their ideological determination and infused with impersonal non-actualized affects, the film's fragmented spaces (e.g. streets, alleys, parks, roads, stadium, etc.) understandably met a negative reaction from the Communist

censors. As one of them protested, "a man follows the sun, but what does he see? He sees total nonsense, not Soviet achievements."[63] By its de-socialized and dehumanized nature, any-space-whatever is therefore one of the most powerful cinematic means of subversion of the ideological status quo. Deleuze exemplifies such spaces by Bresson's disconnected milieus and, most importantly, Antonioni's empty alienated landscapes. In Soviet post-war cinema, however, such spaces began appearing only towards the end of the Thaw era, such as in Shpalikov's *Long Happy Life* (1966) or Khutsiev's *July Rain* (1966), where the camera seems to fall out of the diegetic course of events for a moment and forget about the viewer and characters by staring at unrelated areas and strangers involved in their own activities.

## Conclusion

Anyone familiar with Deleuze's *Cinema* volumes would certainly remember their fast and sketchy analyses of film examples serving to illustrate his vast philosophical taxonomy of cinematic concepts and images. In my attempt to put Deleuze's theory of the crisis of the European action-image in the Soviet context, I have tried to dwell a bit longer on representative films that exemplify similar tendencies in the Thaw cinema. Besides aberrant movements, which Deleuze describes as the main characteristic of such crisis, I have also examined the sublime intensification of the action-image and its radical enfeeblement in the Soviet cinema of the 1950-1970 period. These developments clearly position post-Stalinist Soviet cinema within the overall history of post-war European cinema.

## NOTES

1 Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989, xi (Hereafter C2).

2 Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image*, tr. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986, 211 (Hereafter C1).

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 C1, 157-8.

6 C1, 184.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Lev Anninskii, *Shestidesyatniki i my: kinematograf, stavshy i ne stavshy istpriei*. Kinotsentr, 1991, 14.

10 Pogodin, N. "Eto i est' pravda" in Aleksandr Alov, Vladimir Naumov: stat'i, svidetel'stva, vyskazyvania, Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1989, pp. 38-43, 38.

11 Lev Anninskii, *Shestidesyatniki i my,* 15.

12 Ibid.

13 Neya Zorkaya, "O yasnosti tseli" in *Aleksandr Alov, Vladimir Naumov: stat'i, svidetel'stva, vyskazyvania*, Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1989, 47-50, 50.

14 Josephine Woll, *Real images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw*, I.B. Tauris, 2000, 86.

15 Ibid.

16 Elena Monastireva-Ansdell, "Redressing the Commissar: Thaw Cinema Revises Soviet Structuring Myths," *Russian Review*, Vol. 65. 2. (2006), pp. 230-249, 238.

17 See Josephine Woll, *Real images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw*, 127-33.

18 Alexander Prokhorov, "The Unknown New Wave: Soviet Cinema of the Sixties" in *Springtime for Soviet Cinema: Re/Viewing the 1960s.* Ed. by Alexander Prokhorov, Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Russian Film Symposium, 2001, 7-28, 10.

19 C1, 179.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid., 11.

22 Kirill Baryshnikov, "Lubov' kommunista," *Ogoniok* No 52, 1998: http://www.ogoniok.com/archive/1998/4577/42-40-45/

23 In Mashchenko's *How the Steel Was Tempered* (1973), the third adaptation of Ostrovsky's novel, the figure of Pavel Korchagin is indeed presented as a "delicate" intellectual.

[24] Baskakov, Vladimir. ""Serebryanyi vek" sovetskogo kino" in *Kinematograf ottepeli: Dokumenty i svidetelsva ochevidtsev*. Ed. by V. I. Fomin, Moskva: Materik, 1998, pp. 178-188, 183.

[25] Alexander Prokhorov, "The Unknown New Wave: Soviet Cinema of the Sixties," 12.

[26] V. I. Fomin, *Kinematograf ottepeli: Dokumenty i svidetelsva ochevidtsev*, Moskva: Materik, 1998, 125.

[27] Peter Rollberg, *Historical Dictionary of Russian and Soviet Cinema*. Scarecrow Press, 2008, 43.

[28] Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, Verso, 1997, 21-22.

[29] Slavoj Žižek, "Class Struggle or Postmodernism? Yes, please!" in *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*. Ed. by Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, Slavoj Žižek, Verso, 2000, pp. 90-136.

[30] Haynes, John. *New Soviet Man: Gender and Masculinity in Stalinist Soviet Cinema*, 45.

[31] Ibid., 156.

[32] C1, 206.

[33] C1, 185.

[34] C1, 87.

[35] C1, 97.

[36] After his return from emigration in the US, Konchalovsky once again turned to Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* by directing it on stage: yet this time, in 2009, the protagonist's boredom is no longer poeticized but is harshly ridiculed and satirically criticized. That is to say, in contemporary Russia the aristocrat's noble sloth has become out of sync with the newly adopted capitalist ideology of work.

[37] Anna Lawton, *Kinoglasnost: Soviet Cinema in Our Time*. CUP Archive, 1992, 120-121.

[38] C1, 164.

[39] Dmitrii Bykov, "Proiti porog," *Moskovskie novosti*, 1 November 2013: http://www.mn.ru/oped/20131101/361232510.html

[40] Mark Lipovetsky, Tatiana Mikhailova, "Aleksandr Veledinskii: *The Geographer Drank His Globe Away* (*Geograf globus propil*, 2013)" *KinoKultura*, Issue 43 (2014).

[41] C1, 208.

[42] C1, 206.

[43] Josephine Woll, *Real images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw*, 97.

[44] Quoted from Josephine Woll, *Real images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw*, 97.

[45] Emma Widdis, "'One Foot in the Air?' Landscape in the Soviet and Russian Road Movie," in *Cinema and Landscape*, eds. Graeme Harper, Jonathan R. Rayner, Intellect Books, 2010, 73-89, 80.

46 Josephine Woll, *Real images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw*, 98.
47 C2, 272.
48 Quoted from John Haynes, *New Soviet Man: Gender and Masculinity in Stalinist Soviet Cinema*, 176.
49 Denise Youngblood, *Russian War Films: On the Cinema Front, 1914-2005*, University Press of Kansas, 2006, 137.
50 Alexander Prokhorov, "The Adolescent and the Child in the Cinema of the Thaw," Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema, 2007, Vol. 1.2. 115-129, 115.
51 Lev Anninskii, *Shestidesyatniki i my*, 88-89.
52 C2, 3-4.
53 Natalia Balandina, "Poeticheskoe prostranstvo Mikhaila Kalika," *Kinovedcheskie zapiski,* vol. 57, 2002: http://www.kinozapiski.ru/ru/print/sendvalues/482/
54 André Bazin, *What is Cinema?* Volume 1, University of California Press, 2005, 45.
55 Catherine Liu, "The Flight of the Red balloon (2007) and D.W. Winnicot", in Pyschoanalytic Pscyhology. Vol 28(3), 2011, 446-456, 446-447.
56 André Bazin 46 *What is Cinema?*, 46.
57 Ibid., 45.
58 Lev Anninskii, *Shestidesyatniki i my*, 90.
59 C2, 4.
60 Ibid.
61 C1, 109.
62 C1, 208.
63 Lev Frukhtman, "'Ya rodilsya svobodnym chelovekom…' (zametki o tvorchestve kinorezhissiora Mikhaila Kalika)," *Dom uchionykh i spetsialistov Rekhovota*, January 2012: http://www.rehes.org/lst7/lst7_k.html

# NEW EUROPE FOUNDATION
# NEW EUROPE COLLEGE

## Institute for Advanced Study

*New Europe College (NEC)* is an independent Romanian institute for advanced study in the humanities and social sciences founded in 1994 by Professor Andrei Pleșu (philosopher, art historian, writer, Romanian Minister of Culture, 1990–1991, Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1997-1999) within the framework of the *New Europe Foundation*, established in 1994 as a private foundation subject to Romanian law.

Its impetus was the *New Europe Prize for Higher Education and Research*, awarded in 1993 to Professor Pleșu by a group of six institutes for advanced study (the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, the National Humanities Center, Research Triangle Park, the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in Humanities and Social Sciences, Wassenaar, the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences, Uppsala, and the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin).

Since 1994, the NEC community of fellows and *alumni* has enlarged to over 600 members. In 1998 New Europe College was awarded the prestigious *Hannah Arendt Prize* for its achievements in setting new standards in research and higher education. New Europe College is officially recognized by the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research as an institutional structure for postgraduate studies in the humanities and social sciences, at the level of advanced studies.

Focused primarily on individual research at an advanced level, NEC offers to young Romanian scholars and academics in the fields of humanities and social sciences, and to the foreign scholars invited as fellows appropriate working conditions, and provides an institutional framework with strong

international links, acting as a stimulating environment for interdisciplinary dialogue and critical debates. The academic programs NEC coordinates, and the events it organizes aim at strengthening research in the humanities and social sciences and at promoting contacts between Romanian scholars and their peers worldwide.

## Academic programs organized and coordinated by NEC in the academic year 2017-2018:

- ***NEC Fellowships (since 1994)***
  Each year, the NEC Fellowships, open both to Romanian and international outstanding young scholars in the humanities and social sciences, are publicly announced. The Fellows are chosen by the NEC international Academic Advisory Board for the duration of one academic year, or one term. They gather for weekly seminars to discuss the progress of their research, and participate in all the scientific events organized by NEC. The Fellows receive a monthly stipend, and are given the opportunity of a research trip abroad, at a university or research institute of their choice. At the end of their stay, the Fellows submit papers representing the results of their research, to be published in the New Europe College Yearbooks.

- ***Ştefan Odobleja Fellowships (since October 2008)***
  The Fellowships given in this program are supported by the National Council of Scientific Research and are part of the core fellowship program. The definition of these fellowships, targeting young Romanian researchers, is identical with those in the NEC Program, in which the *Odobleja* Fellowships are integrated.

- ***The Pontica Magna Fellowship Program (since October 2015)***
  This Fellowship Program, supported by the VolkswagenStiftung (Germany), invites young researchers, media professionals, writers and artists from the countries around the Black Sea, but also beyond this area (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine), for a stay of one or two terms at the New Europe College, during which they have the opportunity to work on projects of their choice. The program welcomes a wide variety of disciplines in the

fields of humanities and social sciences. Besides hosting a number of Fellows, the College organizes within this program workshops and symposia on topics relevant to the history, present, and prospects of this region. This program is therefore strongly linked to the former *Black Sea Link* Fellowships.

- ***The Pontica Magna Returning Fellows Program (since March 2016)***
  In the framework of its *Pontica Magna* Program, New Europe College offers alumni of a previous *Black Sea Link* and *Pontica Magna* Fellowship Program the opportunity to apply for a research stay of one or two months in Bucharest. The stay should enable successful applicants to refresh their research experience at NEC, to reconnect with former contacts, and to establish new connections with current Fellows.

- ***The Gerda Henkel Fellowship Program (since March 2017)***
  This Fellowship Program, developed with the support of Gerda Henkel Stiftung (Germany), invites young researchers and academics working in the fields of humanities and social sciences (in particular archaeology, art history, historical Islamic studies, history, history of law, history of science, prehistory and early history) from Afghanistan, Belarus, China (only Tibet and Xinjiang Autonomous Regions), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan, for a stay of one or two terms at the New Europe College, during which they will have the opportunity to work on projects of their choice.

- ***How to Teach Europe Fellowship Program (since April 2017)***
  This Program, supported by the Robert Bosch Foundation and a Private Foundation from Germany, introduces a new and innovative Fellowship module at the Centre for Advanced Study (CAS), Sofia, and the New Europe College (NEC), Bucharest. Beyond the promotion of outstanding individual researchers, the Program focuses on the intersection of fundamental research and higher education. The joint initiative seeks to identify and bring together bright and motivated young and established academics from South-eastern Europe to dedicate themselves for a certain

amount of time to research work oriented toward a specific goal: to lend the state-of-the-art theories and methodologies in the humanities and social sciences a pan-European and/or global dimension and to apply these findings in higher education and the transmission of knowledge to wider audiences.

The goal of the proposed program is to use this knowledge to improve the quality of higher education in the humanities and social sciences and to highlight its public relevance. A tangible output will be the conceptualization of a series of new courses or, ultimately and ideally, the development of innovative curricula for the universities of the participating scholars.

- ***The Spiru Haret Fellowship Program (since October 2017)***
  The *Spiru Haret* Fellowship Program targets young Romanian researchers/academics in the humanities and social sciences whose projects address questions relating to migration, displacement, diaspora. Candidates are expected to focus on Romanian cases seen in a larger historical, geographical and political context, in thus broadening our understanding of contemporary developments. Such aspects as transnational mobility, the development of communication technologies and of digitization, public policies on migration, the formation of transnational communities, migrant routes, the migrants' remittances and entrepreneurial capital could be taken into account. NEC also welcomes projects which look at cultural phenomena (in literature, visual arts, music etc.) related to migration and diaspora. The Program is financed through a grant from UEFISCDI (The Romanian Executive Unit for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding).

***

New Europe College has been hosting over the years an ongoing series of lectures given by prominent foreign and Romanian scholars, for the benefit of academics, researchers and students, as well as a wider public. The College also organizes international and national events (seminars, workshops, colloquia, symposia, book launches, etc.).

An important component of NEC is its library, consisting of reference works, books and periodicals in the humanities, social and economic sciences. The library holds, in addition, several thousands of books and documents resulting from private donations. It is first and foremost destined to service the fellows, but it is also open to students, academics and researchers from Bucharest and from outside it.

***

***Financial Support in the academic year 2017-2018***

The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation of Switzerland through the Center for Governance and Culture in Europe, University of St. Gallen

The Ministry of National Education – The Executive Agency for Higher Education and Research Funding, Romania

Landis & Gyr Stiftung, Zug, Switzerland

Private Foundations, Germany

Fritz Thyssen Stiftung, Köln, Germany

VolkswagenStiftung, Hanover, Germany

Gerda Henkel Stiftung, Düsseldorf, Germany

Robert Bosch Stiftung, Stuttgart, Germany

European Research Council (ERC)

***Administrative Board in the academic year 2017-2018***

Dr. Ulrike ALBRECHT, Head of Department, Strategy and External Relations, Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Bonn

Dr. Katharina BIEGGER, Head of Admissions Office, Deputy Secretary, Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin

Emil HUREZEANU, Journalist and writer, Ambassador of Romania to the Federal Republic of Germany, Berlin

Dr. Dirk LEHMKUHL, Chair for European Politics, University of St. Gallen; Director of Programmes International Affairs & Governance, Center for Governance and Culture in Europe, University of St. Gallen

Dr. Florin POGONARU, President, Business People Association, Bucharest

Dr. Jürgen Chr. REGGE, Formerly Director, Fritz Thyssen Foundation, Cologne

Dr. Heinz–Rudi SPIEGEL, Formerly Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft, Essen

***Academic Advisory Board in the academic year 2017-2018***

Dr. Edhem ELDEM, Professor of History, School of Arts and Sciences, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul

Dr. Luca GIULIANI, Rector, Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin; Professor of Archaeology, Humboldt University, Berlin

Dr. Dieter GRIMM, Permanent Fellow, Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin; Professor (emer.) of Law, Humboldt University, Berlin

Dr. Samuel JUBÉ, Director, Institut d'Etudes Avancées de Nantes, France

Dr. Daniela KOLEVA, Permanent Fellow, Centre for Advanced Study, Sofia; Associate Professor of Sociology, St. Kliment Ohridski University, Sofia

Dr. Vintilă MIHAILESCU, Professor of Anthropology, National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest

Dr. Thomas PAVEL, Professor of Romance Languages, Comparative Literature, Committee on Social Thought, University of Chicago

Dr. Ulrich SCHMID, Professor for the Culture and Society of Russia, University of St. Gallen; Head of the Center for Governance and Culture in Europe, University of St. Gallen

Dr. Victor I. STOICHIȚĂ, Professor of Art History, University of Fribourg

**NEW EUROPE COLLEGE**
Str. Plantelor 21, București 023971
Tel.: (+4) 021 307 99 10; Fax: (+4) 021 327 07 74;
e-mail: nec@nec.ro; http://www.nec.ro/