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The Russian Revolution and the Postmodern Challenge

By: Jonathan Brunstedt

History is under attack — or so it seems from the titles of works such as Windschuttle's *The Killing of History* or Evans's *In Defence of History*. Postmodern theory has forced historians to question previous assumptions about objectivity and the nature of past reality. Many historians at the turn of the 21st century embraced this new shift, adopting the skepticisms of Foucault and Derrida in evaluating and articulating historical sources; others have rejected this intellectual movement altogether, arguing that postmodernism and its proponents are "devilish tempters who claim to offer higher forms of thought and deeper truths and insights — the intellectual equivalent of crack."[1] Whichever position one takes, there is no doubt that the postmodern challenge has compelled scholars in all fields to conduct a self-conscious reevaluation of existing historical interpretations and a reassessment of long-standing approaches to the study of history.

The historiography of the Russian Revolution and subsequent creation of the Soviet state is no exception; it has already been greatly influenced by recent trends in historical thought. A look at the established controversy over 1917 and the competing interpretations over the creation of the Soviet state reveals that plurality and controversy, far from undermining history as a field of study, in fact cultivate a more tempered, balanced assessment of the past. By assessing the value of competing explanations of the revolution, the significance of the postmodern paradigm is put into context. What becomes evident is that a synthesis of radical new intellectual challenges and the well established revisionist work of the past three decades can only enrich the ever-more sophisticated and discursive interpretations of the Russian Revolution.

[1] G.R. Elton, *Return to Essentials* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.43.

The earliest readings of the revolution as an historical event were highly politicized. The Bolshevik leadership, motivated by its Marxist-Leninist ideology and the need to legitimize its newly achieved power, disseminated the Soviet account. This interpretation asserts that Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, supported by the infallible "scientific" theories of Marx, galvanized the masses against the incompetent Nicholas II, precipitating the inevitable fall of tsardom and autocracy. It was Lenin and his elite corps of professional revolutionaries who, in the name of the lower classes, toppled the Provisional Government and defended the workers' revolution against the treacherous forces of capitalism during the civil war. The Party went on to establish the first socialist workers' utopian state – a new egalitarian society, free of capitalist evils. This account, with some changes, was the official Soviet version throughout the USSR's existence.[2]

The first Western interpretation of the event was not the product of historical objectivity but rather of political necessity to refute, in its entirety, the Soviets' anti-capitalist rhetoric. At the dawn of the Cold War, historians, particularly in the United States, were motivated by a feverish desire to "understand the enemy." The debate was shaped as Western scholars responded to "Soviet assertions, exposing flaws in the Soviet view, and presenting an account which was diametrically at odds with it."[3] Western historians concurred with the Soviet interpretation on two points: Russia was a backward nation and Lenin and his party played the central role in bringing about revolution. This is where agreement ended. The idea that the Russian Revolution was the culmination of class struggle was rejected, as was the idea of a set of "scientific" laws governing the course of events. It was, in these historians' view, "the result of a chain of ghastly accidents."[4] For instance, WWI might not have broken out at such a delicate

[2] E. Acton, V.I. Cherniaev, W.G. Rosenberg (eds), *Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution: 1914-1921* (Arnold, 1997), p.6-7.
[3] Ibid, 7.
[4] Ibid.

moment in Russia's economic development; the Tsar may have been a competent leader; key Bolshevik figures may have been prevented from returning from exile; or the Provisional Government might have been led by wiser, more able statesmen.[5] The traditional Western account paid little if any attention to the lower classes' role; they were considered pawns manipulated by Lenin. Once the legitimate government had been overthrown, the Bolshevik party, though opposed by a majority of Russians, relied on its efficient organization to exploit the chaos of the civil war and hold on to power. The authoritarian nature inherent to Bolshevism was quickly revealed during the civil war and subsequent consolidation of power. Though popular discontent forced Lenin to make a temporary economic retreat with the New Economic Policy, Stalin's brutal dictatorship emerged as a direct result of the 1917 seizure of power.[6]

A third early interpretation, the libertarian view, was established by various socialists who were forced out of Russia by the Bolsheviks. Though it is a disparate group, libertarian writers share a common anti-Bolshevik thread. They believe that the two revolutions of 1917 were genuine popular revolutions in which the masses, long repressed under tsardom, attempted to finally take control of their fate. Workers and soldiers took seriously the slogan "all power to the Soviets," and factory committees controlled by workers appeared after February, signaling the start of a successful transition of power to the people.[7] The popular October overthrow of the Provisional Government was "hijacked" by Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Power was then taken away from the workers and put in the hands of state bureaucrats who suppressed the democratic aspirations of the masses. The Bolsheviks were the antithesis of popular revolution, and once in power exploited their subjects in much the same way that the tsarist administration had.[8]

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[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid, 7-8.
[7] Edward Acton, *Rethinking the Russian Revolution* (Arnold, 1990), p.178.
[8] Ibid, 179-81.

Trotsky, writing in 1937, took a similar stance. He claimed that October was a genuine popular movement and that Lenin and the Bolsheviks articulated mass aspirations, but that Stalin "betrayed" Lenin's revolution and introduced systematic terror and authoritarianism into the Soviet system. This suggestion foreshadowed the view of many later scholars who would cite a clear discontinuity between Lenin's belief "that the future social order would be based on…the empowerment of the working people" and Stalin's creation of "one of the most vicious and oppressive states in modern history."[9] Libertarians and individuals like Trotsky paid greater attention to the masses of ordinary people; however, their influence on historical thought was negligible and they were never able to offset the dominant Soviet and Western interpretations that centered on main political groups and actors such as Lenin, Kerensky, and Nicholas II.

Beginning in the 1960s, a dramatic alternative to the history of high politics and elites was introduced by scholars who, in an attempt to broaden the historical spectrum and "open up new areas of research," shifted their attention to those groups and individuals previously neglected—ordinary people; the common soldier, worker, or peasant and the role that the overwhelming majority of the population played in determining the course of past events.[10] "History from above" now had to compete with "history from below." This social approach to history emerged through the influence of the French *Annales* school and British Marxist historians, who were determined to "explore the historical experiences of those men and women whose existence is so often ignored."[11] Thompson articulated this point in 1963: "I am seeking to rescue the [average man or woman] from the enormous condescension of posterity."[12] What united these "revisionist" historians was not a single approach or methodology, but a desire to

[9] Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment:Russia, the USSR and the Successor States* (Oxford, 1998), p.xiv.
[10] J. Sharpe, "History From Below," in P. Burke (ed), *New Perspectives in Historical Writing*, (Polity Press, 2000), *pg*.26.
[11] Edward Thompson, quoted in P. Burke (ed), *New Perspectives…* pg.26.
[12] Ibid.

examine "some notion of social determination, conceptualized on the ground of material life, whether in demographic, political-economic, labor-process, class-sociological, or class-cultural."[13] Thus, a new generation of social historians began to tear down the old Rankean paradigm, casting light on the anonymous "masses" and discrediting the assertion that, "History is past politics: politics is present history."[14]

The impact that revisionism had was immense. This movement occurred at a time when greater access to state and regional archives was being granted by Soviet authorities. Scholars could now work with many untapped historical sources and could explore the role that society played much more thoroughly than their libertarian predecessors. Indeed, these new historians of the revolution were characterized, as Acton shows, "by their recognition of the extent to which [the traditional Western interpretation] was inspired by Cold War hatred of all things 'left'…rather than by historical analysis." Revisionist historians adopted techniques of other social sciences, particularly those of sociology, and applied quantitative methods to the study of history in order to provide a better sense of the material condition of the typical worker, soldier, sailor, and peasant. As the masses were brought back into the story, a revisionist multi-causal interpretation crystallized. Suny writes, "The revisionist historiography argued that a deep and deepening social polarization between the top and bottom of Russian society undermined the Provisional Government…"[15] Workers and soldiers played an active role; workers expressed "their own concept of autonomy and lawfulness at the factory level, while peasant soldiers developed a keen sense of what kind of war (and for what regime) they were willing to fight."[16]

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[13] G. Eley, "Is All the World a Text? From Social History to the History of Society Two Decades Later," in T. McDonald (ed), *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences* (UMP, 1996), pg.194.
[14] Sir John Seeley, quoted in P. Burke (ed), *New Perspectives*… pg.3.
[15] Ronald Grigor Suny, "Revision and Retreat in the Historiography of 1917: Social History and Its Critics," *Russian Review*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (April, 1994), pg.167
[16] Ibid.

The Bolshevik party seemed to meet popular aspirations by calling for a government controlled by the lower classes and an end to the war. "The Bolshevik program resulted in elected Leninist majorities in the soviets of both Petrograd and Moscow and the strategic support of soldiers on the northern and western fronts," paving the way for a relatively easy seizure of power.[17] Lenin's party, never having achieved popular support in the countryside and facing economic collapse, ethnic revolts, and civil war, centralized the economy and reverted to the use of violent coercion and terror against opposition in order to maintain control.[18]

The revisionist work not only cast light on the role the masses played in the revolution, but revealed many weaknesses in the traditional Western and Soviet views. Rather than crediting Lenin's brilliance or the tight organization of the Party, new research suggested that it was lower class support that allowed the October seizure of power to occur. The mass appeal of Lenin's party was not, as the traditional Western view asserts, the result of brainwashing through propaganda, but, as Acton shows, "Bolshevism embraced a variety of competing ideological currents," and the move towards it was "part of a massive leftward shift clearly registered even among those who continued to support the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries."[19] Particularly important were revisionist findings about how the Bolsheviks were fundamentally altered during the civil war. The affect that this "struggle for survival" had on party leadership seems to be a key factor in the authoritarian manner in which the party and subsequent Soviet government evolved. Unlike the traditional Western view, which suggests that there is a direct tyrannical link between October and Stalin's terror and that Lenin's party was from inception inherently despotic and repressive, revisionists accentuated a shift that took place in the party's attitude during its dramatic and violent fight to maintain power and to secure, at all costs, victory

[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] E. Acton, V.I. Cherniaev, W.G. Rosenberg, *Critical Companion...* p.9, 11.

in the civil war. Moreover, the effectiveness of the lower classes, so evident during the February overthrow of the Tsar and the October removal of the Provisional Government from power, was, revisionism showed, severely curtailed because of the civil war as "they were divided, atomized and economically devastated" and because "of the disintegration of collective identities."[20] The masses, therefore, could not "prevent the emergence of a highly centralized, bureaucratized and authoritarian regime."[21] The painstaking revisionist work on the revolution soon overshadowed traditionalist views as most scholars in the West, and even some Soviet historians, began to accept revisionist suppositions about 1917.

But in the words of Edward Acton, "Old myths die hard."[22] The collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in archives being opened to Western and Soviet scholars alike. Political passions, however, once again crept into the agendas of many of those anxious to interpret the meaning of recent events. The dismemberment of the CPSU and the sudden ability of former Soviet historians to write free from political constraints not only eliminated the orthodox Soviet interpretation from the debate, but in a repudiation of "all things Soviet," saw the embrace by many Russian scholars of the more extreme anti-Soviet traditional Western account. In the West, with their ideological foes vanquished, many historians who had stubbornly resisted the revisionist movement, and instead had continued to espouse the traditional interpretation, felt that the USSR's demise vindicated their efforts. This Western antirevisionist minority was partly fueled by "a period of right-wing political and intellectual ascendancy which had been epitomized by the governments of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher."[23] In a triumphal manner, these scholars "revived older approaches and methodologies, again bringing politics

[20] Ibid, p.10.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Edward Acton, *Rethinking the Russian Revolution…* p.209.
[23] E. Acton, V.I. Cherniaev, W.G. Rosenberg, *Critical Companion…* p.12.

back to center stage…and subjecting social history to a savage critique."[24] In their opinion, since the revolution "depended on one man [Lenin]…the attempt to look for social explanations and class analyses is not very helpful. It can show us whether the preconditions for a revolution existed, but not why it took place."[25] This assessment concludes that social historians, for all their efforts, practiced a sort of bias against politics and, therefore, failed at the important task of uniting the political and social explanations of the revolution into a coherent synthesis.[26]

Richard Pipes, the most notable of the antirevisionists, in his works *The Russian Revolution* and *Russia under the Bolshevik Regime* epitomized the resurrection of the traditional Western account. He asserts that the revolution "was the result not of insufferable conditions but of irreconcilable attitudes…attitudes rather than institutions or 'objective' economic and social realities determine the course of politics."[27] In this view, the events of 1917 were "made neither by the forces of nature nor by anonymous masses but by identifiable men pursuing their own advantages."[28] This "flies in the face of the most meticulous and detailed specialist research; the overall picture painted is a mere caricature of the momentous social drama which that research is gradually recovering."[29] Though this view remains a minority within the academic community, its proponents initially found broad support in the press and among general readers.

The important social historical work of the previous decades could hardly be cast aside by Pipes and the reemergence of the traditional view. New research continues to support the significant role that society played. Christopher Read, writing in 1996, asserts,

> …The revolution was constantly driven forward by the often spontaneous impulse given to it from the grass roots. In the course of their struggle peasants, workers and perhaps most important in the

[24] Ronald Grigor Suny, "Revision and Retreat…", p.169.
[25] Walter Lacquer, quoted in Ronald Grigor Suny, "Revision and Retreat…", p.169.
[26] Ronald Grigor Suny, "Revision and Retreat…", p.169.
[27] Richard Pipes, quoted in E. Acton, V.I. Cherniaev, W.G. Rosenberg, *Critical Companion…* p.13.
[28] Ronald Grigor Suny, "Revision and Retreat…", p.171.
[29] E. Acton, V.I. Cherniaev, W.G. Rosenberg, *Critical Companion…* p.13.

> short term, soldiers and sailors thought out their programs and developed tactics to achieve them locally and regionally.[30]

Indeed, most historians are critical of Pipes. As Suny shows, "his account prevents an understanding of the complex relationship between the lower classes, which favored…a broadly democratic political order and the Bolsheviks, who eventually turned that order into a one-party dictatorship."[31] Some scholars, like Edward Acton, dismiss Pipes' perspective altogether. Debate, however, has a tendency of forcing both sides to reexamine their arguments and many of the criticisms put forth by antirevisionists were taken seriously by social historians. A shift in mindset occurred in response to the traditionalist accusations that social history maintained a sort of bias against political explanations. More significantly, though, this reevaluation was due to the introduction in other fields and other historiographies of French poststructuralist theory. Postmodern insights have helped to reveal that "neither the older political history nor the social determinism of many social historians has proven adequate in dealing with central issues of social categories and transformations."[32] The challenge of postmodernism and the way that it could potentially transform the historiography of 1917, and the history profession in general, could no longer be ignored by revisionist historians.

A brief examination of postmodernism is vital for understanding its broader historical significance. Do historians write about the past, or do they write their own subjective version of what someone *else* wrote about the past? Indeed, documents are a main source of information for scholars of the Russian Revolution. These documents use language to describe reality. However, the language used does not actually describe reality, only someone's interpretation of reality. The structuralist Saussure pointed out that words cannot reflect an objective reality because words

[30] Christopher Read, *From Tsar to Soviets: The Russian People and their Revolution, 1917-1921* (Oxford, 1996), p.5.
[31] Ronald Grigor Suny, "Revision and Retreat…", p.177.
[32] Ibid.

can be interpreted differently by different people. A word may be a symbol for a physical object, for example, but words alone fail to capture every nuance of the reality they describe. John Warren offers a good example, that of the word "sheep." The word "conveys a particular meaning to the British: to the French, the word 'mouton,' although clearly describing the same animal, has a subtly different meaning."[33] Historians, postmodernists argue, read documents and attempt to translate meaning and recreate some type of "reality" from them. But if words contain slight variation in meaning, no objective understanding of the past can be derived from them.

Just as Saussure argues that words are not objective transmitters of information, Derrida and Foucault elaborate the idea that history as a discipline is incapable of discerning past reality. Derrida sees the deconstruction of texts as essential to understanding how language hinders the historian's search for truth. Texts, he claims, consist of persuasive rhetoric that does not objectively portray an idea, but rather tries to convince the reader that an idea is truth. Literary deconstruction reveals this to be the case with all texts, including primary source documents. Historians are, therefore, not simply interpreting information; they are being influenced by the information, itself a subjective creation. Scholars who rely on texts for a method of objectively understanding and articulating past events, according to this logic, are dangerously misguided.[34]

This view is echoed by Foucault, whose work focuses on the relationship between language and structures of power within society. This does not refer to the power of policy makers or political elites, but rather to the power distribution of "'the most unpromising places' – in the operations of feelings, love, conscience, instinct…and far-reaching changes in disciplines such as biology and linguistics."[35] Power, therefore, is represented in the language of dominant historical trends which, through consensus, falsely claim to represent "truth." Historical truth is,

[33] John Warren, *History and the Historians* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1999), p.117.
[34] Ibid, 118.
[35] Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History* (University of California Press, 1989), p.9.

in this way, constructed through "systems of power," and is not the product of objective historical inquiry.[36] Similarly crucial are historians themselves – how scholars face choices when writing history; how and why they accept certain sources or assumptions while rejecting others. In the words of Scott Moore, "Foucault is interested in asking, 'from where do the criteria for such decisions come?'…Toward what end do we tell our stories? For Foucault… 'making history' is something which historians--and not just the people they study – do."[37] Foucault himself famously declared: "I am well aware that I have never written anything but fictions."[38]

Moreover, Hayden White shows how the writing of history is inevitably limited by "emplotment." The historian, in order to make sense of historical facts, must give them structure, must create a narrative from which to interpret and explain the raw data. The form used to present historical arguments is one that is "innate to the Western literary culture with which we are all familiar;"[39] it consists of a "plot" with heroes and villains. This is what makes the information comprehensible. However, the narrative construction of history, White writes, allows for stylization that represents the author more clearly than the event itself.[40] According to this view, the very narrative structure that makes historical data discernable is what causes historical "reality" to become lost in the subjective imagination of the historian. Warren writes, "There is no reality beyond the text to which one can appeal" however, it is the text that is blurring the line between reality and fiction.[41]

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[36] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (Harvester, 1980), pp.131-3.
[37] Scott Moore, "Christian History, Providence, and Michel Foucault," 12 Oct. 1996, <www3.baylor.edu/~Scott_Moore/essays/Foucault.html#note5#note5> (5 March 2004).
[38] Michel Foucault, quoted in Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History* (University of California Press, 1989), p.8.
[39] John Warren, *History and the Historians,* p.120.
[40] Hayden White, "Historical Emplotment and the Problem of Truth", in Saul Friedlander (ed.), *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazisim and the "Final Solution"*, (Harvard University Press, 1992), p.44.
[41] John Warren, *History and the Historians,* p.120.

Though the most extreme aspects of postmodernism suggest that truth is, in fact, out of our reach, it is by no means a unified movement, and many, despite its rejection of modernist notions about "truth" and "objectivity," perceive it as a necessary step in the evolution of historical study. Indeed, Foucault was himself an historian, and has published important historical analyses of social institutions and rituals.[42] The idea that postmodern theories are in direct opposition to the history profession is an inaccurate one. It is better, then, to view the postmodern debate not as a dispute between historians and postmodern intellectuals, but rather as a controversy within the field of history itself; between historians who have been influenced by and have accepted certain postmodern assumptions, and those who continue to insist that postmodernism presents a grave threat to our understanding of the past.

There has not yet emerged a distinct postmodernist interpretation of 1917; however, it is crucial to examine the implications that the theory might have for the revolution's historiography. Clearly, a shift in focus can already be identified as a new generation moves away from social-oriented topics such as class or Marxism to those of culture (in the anthropological sense) and the construction of identities. There is an emphasis on cultural relativism: the idea that historians' perceptions about the past are culturally constructed and "subject to variation over time as well as space."[43] Contemporary approaches, generally associated with what is labeled the cultural or linguistic turn, are centered, in the words of Lynn Hunt, "on close examination—of texts, of pictures, and of actions—and on open-mindedness to what those examinations will reveal."[44] Moreover, this cultural shift encourages contemporary scholars to "approach with greater care the complex ways in which the various discourses of the historical subjects they study affected how those subjects understood and reacted to the world

[42] Scott Moore, "Christian History…"
[43] Peter Burke, *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Polity Press, 2001), p.3.
[44] Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History* (University of California Press, 1989), p.22.

around them."[45] This, in a sense, presents a direct challenge to revisionist methods. Social history's concern is for the "everyday experience" of "ordinary people," but, Eley writes, "as long as the cultural construction of these processes is ignored (and categories such as 'everyday experience' and 'ordinary people' not put into question), the formulation will continue to dissatisfy."[46] In many ways, therefore, postmodernism's impact on the study of history has resulted not so much in the complete rejection of older social categories, but rather in a shift from classic materialist explanations to an exploration of "language, culture and the available repertoire of ideas."[47]

Historians of the Russian Revolution have only recently begun to reflect this new intellectual shift, and many remain skeptical of its implications. While an extreme element rejects the linguistic turn as a "hedonistic descent into a plurality of discourses that decenter the world in a chaotic denial of any acknowledgment of tangible structures of power and comprehensions of meaning," most—Edward Acton for instance—delineate a more judicious concern for the movement's potential danger.[48] Acton admits that postmodernism is "refining the insights from earlier work" but points out that this shift may, in many ways, reinforce the older traditional Western view more so than the substantial work of revisionists.[49] Postmodern skepticism, Acton writes, "doubts our ability to know anything; it has no use for origins, causality or synthesis, and refuses to accept that one explanation is superior to another… [it is] ultimately incompatible with the writing of history."[50] The danger, therefore, is that postmodernism's rejection of "our ability to know anything" or to discern causation will reduce

[45]Edward Acton, *Rethinking the Russian Revolution…* p.13.
[46] G. Eley, "Is All the World a Text? p.198.
[47] Ronald Grigor Suny, "Revision and Retreat…", p.178.
[48] Bryan Palmer, quoted in G. Eley, "Is All the World a Text? p.225.
[49] Edward Acton, *Rethinking…* p.14.
[50] Ibid, p.15.

the Russian Revolution, and every historical event for that matter, to little more than a chance event. This flies in the face of social history which depends on the actions and trends of "social groups" and "common economic interests," as these are themselves, according to postmodernists, artificial constructs. Moreover, the postmodern view that "human action and social change are to be explained in terms of the ideas, the values and mental images that people happen to have" seems to be associated more closely with the traditional Western view.[51] Acton is concerned, therefore, that the shift postmodernism is facilitating may, in the end, actually give credence to the Pipesian interpretation of the revolution and this, by eliminating any examination of the material conditions of society, would be detrimental to our understanding of the event.

Acton's concern is valid, but it seems to presuppose that there will be no dissenting voices within the historical community to keep the more extreme aspects of postmodern theory at bay. Nevertheless, scholars of 1917, particularly in the United States, are increasingly finding that social history in the strictly materialist sense may have taken us as far as it can.[52] What needs to happen next—and the influence of postmodernism is certainly a part of this—is to expand the limits of social history, or perhaps eliminate its boundaries altogether, to include "the larger, competitive discursive universe" in which the lower classes existed.[53] We now have some sense of the objective material conditions of workers and peasants but this is not the whole picture. As Suny shows, these "men and women might have thought of their miserable lot as something ordained by nature or birth and accepted it…or they might have thought…that they were the undeserving victims of ruthless capitalists who had only their 'bourgeois' interests at heart."[54] Such an insight would, obviously, be invaluable to scholars' understanding of 1917.

[51] Ibid.
[52] Ronald Grigor Suny, "Revision and Retreat…", p.181.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.

The cultural shift has also started to shed light on important themes such as the construction of identities and the "internal codes and discourses" of social practices. This, Suny argues, could provide a possible avenue for bringing "politics and society back together" by analyzing "the hidden ways in which people understand what they are doing and who they are."[55] Even amidst its critics, postmodernism is changing the way that scholars are looking at the past. For better or worse, the historians of the Russian Revolution are beginning to look beyond the strictly social into a much broader world where the social, cultural, and political are rapidly colliding.

There are those who continue to turn a blind eye to postmodernism and proceed "in their hard-won" materialist methods of the 1970s, and there are still those who radically embrace structuralist and poststructuralist theory and espouse the gross inadequacy of all previous historical practices. However, a majority, as is typical of historical debate, find themselves somewhere in the middle, willing to accept certain postmodern postulates but unable to dismiss the crucial social historical work of revisionist historians.[56] With this in mind, it would be misleading to describe the impact of postmodernism as an attack on history. Indeed, the discipline has evolved and become what it is today because of debate and criticism.

Challenges, controversy, debate, and plurality are, as this examination of the historiography of 1917 shows, what refine and improve historical consensus; they are what move our understanding forward. Postmodernism is the latest such challenge, and while it is seen as a threat by some, its significance can best be understood in the context of previous competing historical viewpoints. Just as the traditional Western view established itself in opposition to the orthodox Soviet account, and just as the revisionists directly challenged the older, traditional view, postmodernism challenges the classic materialist approach of social historians. But it is the

[55] Ibid, p.182.
[56] G. Eley, "Is All the World a Text? p.224.

historical community's array of differing voices and opinions and its ability to adapt that makes history such a powerful tool for understanding not only our past, but our present or, as Joyce Appleby notes, "for dealing with the world and preparing for the future."[57] Extreme interpretations of the Russian Revolution will persist, and this is a good thing, for it helps to create a vast middle ground within which sound, well-balanced syntheses of competing paradigms and new intellectual currents can emerge.

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[57] Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History* (Norton, 1995), p.236.

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From Vixen to Victim: The Sensationalization and Normalization of Prostitution in Post-Soviet Russia

By: Katherine P. Avgerinos

Since the height of its popularity in the mid-1990s, the Moscow nightclub "Golodnaya Utka," or "The Hungry Duck," has been dubbed "Moscow's first rape camp."[1] The club exploded on the Moscow night scene a few years after the fall of the Soviet Union. The interactive strip shows and other debaucheries attracted many young Muscovites, eager to experience the sexual liberalization that Russian society had undergone. The club also became a frequent spot for prostitutes, whose presence was becoming increasingly common in early post-Soviet Moscow. The club's reputation became so scandalous that the state Duma attempted to shut it down for corrupting youth. However, the sexualization of Russian culture had already come too far in Moscow, and the club was never closed. Today, the Hungry Duck continues to be a major establishment for entertainment in Moscow, catering to the needs of both Russian and foreign patrons, with services provided by teams of official strippers and unofficial prostitutes.

If one were to describe the Hungry Duck to Moscow residents prior to the mid-1980s, they would be in disbelief that such an institution could exist, as sex was largely invisible to the public eye under the sexually conservative Soviet state. However, from the period of Gorbachev's perestroika to the present day, the sexualization of Russian culture has become an integral part of Russian media and commercial culture. At the same time, the country's economic situation has been extremely volatile during the transition to capitalism, especially throughout the 1990s, leaving many women without jobs or financial security. Russian women, having grown up with the minimal, yet dependable financial support of the socialist state, became

[1] "Club Guide," *Exile*, 30 April 2006 <http://www.exile.ru/club_guide/>.

potential employees for Russia's booming sex and prostitution industries. Furthermore, the phenomenon of sex-trafficking, to which Russia contributes as both a destination and source country, further widens the spectrum of the problem.

I will argue that the sexualization of Russian culture has both sensationalized and normalized prostitution, causing many women to seek it as an acceptable form of work in the face of economic hardship. I will contrast this post-Soviet phenomenon with the Soviet period, when prostitution and the sexual representation of women in the media were almost nonexistent. This will provide the background for an examination of the contemporary activities of foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that try to either eliminate prostitution or support sex workers' rights. By placing current developments into a historical context, I aim to explain the changes occurring today, to broaden the terms of debate, and to further contemporary understandings of the problems of prostitution and sex-trafficking in post-Soviet Russia.

Such a survey must distinguish between the sensationalized view of prostitution and the relatively mundane reality of women selling sex to support their families and survive. The nongovernmental agencies that have become increasingly involved in this situation often present a sensationalized view, in which the woman is purely a victim of male exploitation. By focusing on stories of women who have been coerced and kidnapped in the midst of economic collapse and social chaos, such anti-prostitution advocates overlook the reality of women who turn to selling sex because no other profession is available to them. I hope to explain the historical and cultural circumstances that have contributed to the development of this widespread phenomenon.

Glasnost and the Sexualization of Post-Soviet Society

A survey compiled in the social and economic chaos of the 1990s revealed that Soviet women ranked prostitution eighth in a list of what they felt to be the top twenty most common

employment positions in the USSR.[2] In the same year, a separate survey indicated that 60 per cent of high school girls in Moscow admitted that they would exchange sex for hard currency.[3] The demise of state socialism in the late 1980s and the opening of Soviet borders to Western economic and political influences coincided with massive changes in the government's social and cultural policies. Known as *glasnost*, the program of cultural liberalization encouraged journalists and artists to address topics that had not previously been acknowledged or publicly debated in Soviet society, such as food shortages, inadequate housing, and drug abuse.[4]

The Soviet media also jumped to discuss sex and display nudity and erotic imagery. Many scholars have amassed evidence of a general "eroticization" of the country, in which "criticism of culture and politics increasingly included analysis of sexual behavior and relied on sexual metaphor."[5] The use of female nudity and semi-nudity to sell products or entertain—already familiar to the Western public—became increasingly prevalent in the USSR. Stores with imported Western sex toys or pornographic material became common and strip bars like the Hungry Duck were in high demand. By the early 90's, the playwright Mikhail Roschin would note the changes this helped bring about in social mores by pointing out that a brief nude scene in his play in 1971 had caused a major scandal, while under glasnost, a show without nudity was not considered a "good performance."[6] Likewise, Igor Kon, the Russian sexologist, would describe the proliferation of sexual discourse in the post-Soviet period as follows: "Now we have everything. Pornography. Erotic art. You can get an appointment with a sex therapist as simply

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[2] Carrie McVicker, ed., "Russia's Prostitution Trade," *Trade in Environment Database (TED) Case Studies,* 2 April 2006 < http://www.american.edu/TED/russsex.htm>.
[3]Brigder and Kay, "Gender," 32.
[4] John M. Battle, "Uskorenie, Glasnost' and Perestroika: The Pattern of Reform under Gorbachev," *Soviet Studies* 40.3 (July, 1988), 371.
[5] Jane T. Costlow, Stephanie Sandler, and Judith Vowles, Introduction, *Sexuality and the Body in Russian Culture* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993), 27.
[6] Sue Bridger, "Young Women and Perestroika," *Women and Society in Russia and the Soviet Union*, ed. Linda Edmondson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 184.

as with a stomach specialist. You can exchange a book about Russian sexology for French detective fiction or for knitting instructions."[7]

Kon's observations are illustrated by the 1988 landmark film *Little Vera*, which depicted alienated youth and pointless sex in the crumbling Soviet Union. Groundbreaking in its inclusion of the first Russian celluloid sex scene, *Little Vera* was viewed as a reaction to Soviet asceticism. The film, which provoked hundreds of letters of complaint, chronicles the moral disorientation and sexual rebellion of a young woman in one of Russia's economically depressed towns.

As historian Hilary Pilkington noted, young people had previously been seen "to be building the new society both in a symbolic and material way."[8] Through membership in the Party's youth branch, the Komsomol, Soviet youth were the embodiment of ideal citizens, who were patriotic and dedicated to the socialist cause.[9] However, with the disintegration of Soviet society, the social mores of young people became disoriented. Scholar Lynn Attwood states that "the image of the enthusiastic clean-cut Young Communist marching purposefully along the golden road to communism was replaced by that of the unkempt, amoral cynic, as much into sex and drugs and rock and roll as his—or her—Western counterpart was said to be."[10]

A Window to the West: Foreign-Currency Prostitution

Attwood highlights an important factor in the sexualization of Russian culture: the allure of the West. Throughout the later years of the Soviet regime, the West had been eroticized and glamorized. The official Party propaganda had put a negative twist on this notion by insisting that the West was morally corrupt and opulent. However, after *glasnost*, Western goods and

[7] Costlow, et al., 28.
[8] Hilary Pilkington, "Going Out in 'Style': Girls in Youth Cultural Activity," *Perestroika and Soviet Women,* ed. Mary Buckley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 143.
[9] Ibid., 143.
[10] Lynn Attwood, "Sex and the Cinema," *Sex and the Russian Society,* eds. Igor Kon and James Riordan (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993), 65.

lifestyles became the most desirable and this helped lure many women to work as "high-end" prostitutes for rich businessmen. The sexualization of Russian culture had normalized promiscuity and broken down the formally conservative social mores; women could now transgress sexual boundaries they previously would not have crossed.

The media in Russia and abroad were quick to report on the urban tales of sex and crime surrounding these ambitious "foreign-currency prostitutes." During Soviet times, journalists had only restricted access to the upscale hotels they frequented, which added to the excitement and voyeurism in reporting what now went on in those rooms. Scholar Elizabeth Waters states that these prostitutes became established as a symbol of the "golden world of dubious pleasures and unearned income."[11] One paper reported in 1987 that "Laura," who once earned 100 rubles a month as a village shop assistant, had managed to save 19,000 rubles in less than five months.[12] Such coverage contributed to sensationalizing the lives of prostitutes regardless of the fact that there was risk in their work. Moscow became a sex symbol and destination for sex tourism.

A key film in the *perestroika* period was *Intergirl,* the biggest Russian domestic hit of 1989. In the film, Tanya is a nurse's aid by day and an upscale prostitute for foreign businessmen by night. Her desire for foreign currency, goods, and luxuries leads her to move to Sweden to marry one of her clients. Tanya then falls victim to the incurable Russian disease of "nostalgia" and tries to return home, but crashes her car on the way to the airport and dies a violent death.

According to Lynn Attwood, the "film's ultimate message is not that prostitution is a fine choice of career for women throughout the world. It is that the old Soviet Union gave them no choice; everybody is forced, metaphorically, into prostitution."[13] Likewise Eliot Borenstein argues that the film "represents a turning point for the social construction of the Russian

[11] Waters, "Restructuring," 7.
[12] Ibid, 7-8.
[13] Attwood, 72.

prostitute."[14] Tanya is depicted in a wholly sympathetic light, and her choice of profession is shown to be an understandable way of responding to the inadequacies of the Soviet system.

However, Borenstein also draws attention to the fact that what impressed many viewers was the luxurious life that Tanya led, not her tragic end. Thus, many young Soviet women tried to follow in Tanya's "spike-heeled footsteps," leading to a major increase in the number of prostitutes.[15] Even a decade later, *Intergirl* was still accused of encouraging prostitution in Russia. A May 1999 issue of *Kino-Park,* a popular entertainment magazine, included an article entitled "How *Intergirl* Was Accused of Prostitution," in which scholars, policemen, and even prostitutes attest to the fact that Todorovskii's film enticed many girls into prostitution.[16] Such sensationalization in both film and the wider media served to normalize prostitution and portray it as a quick way to make money regardless of possible negative consequences.

The behavior of the Russian elite and ruling class also had a significant effect on this normalization and sensationalization. Scholar Dmitry Shlapentokh argues that Russian culture had always been very "holistic" in that the values of the ruling elite "were actually disseminated throughout the entire society and, in fact, were espoused even by those groups who regarded themselves as enemies of the regime."[17] Pre-perestroika, this meant that the conservative moral values of the ruling class, which opposed prostitution, were accepted as the norm. Soviet authorities saw prostitution and any other free exercise of sexuality as being politically dangerous because "sexuality was one of the few activities in which one could engage without the direct supervision of the state."[18] In addition, according to Shlapentokh, Soviet "morality"

[14] Eliot Borenstein, "Selling Russia: Prostitution, Masculinity, and Metaphors of Nationalism after Perestroika," *Gender and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Russian Culture*, eds. Helena Goscilo and Andrea Lanoux (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006), 273.
[15] Ibid., 274.
[16] Ibid., 274.
[17] Shlapentokh, 121.
[18] Ibid., 120.

was directly connected with belonging to the messianic grandeur of the USSR, a philosophy in which money was "despised as a manifestation of materialistic narrow-mindedness."[19] Therefore, taking money for sex not only went against the conservative Soviet policies, but also threatened the fundamental socialist visions of the country.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the transition to a free market economy was far from efficient or well-regulated. The lack of legal framework and financial infrastructure resulted in a legal vacuum that allowed former leading Party members to take control of much of the country's wealth. Shlapentokh argues that these "new Russians," who obtained their wealth through cronyism and corruption rather than through labor, created the "spirit and conditions for which prostitution could thrive."[20] The "new Russians," who were eager to associate themselves with the West, known for liberal sexuality, flaunted their erotic drive. Sexuality was seen as a direct manifestation of economic power, and wealth became associated with sexual pleasure. Consequently, prostitution was fully incorporated into both the public and private life of the post-Soviet elites, who were often found in expensive night clubs surrounded by call girls. Shlapentokh contends that "the accumulation of money was not driven by the need to accumulate investments but for the sake of pleasure, and sexuality was one of the major manifestations of this pleasure… Buying love was now the most desirable way to attract the opposite sex."[21]

Shades of Gray: "Undercover Prostitution"

The desire for Western goods, sexuality in advertisements and entertainment, and the growing power of pleasure-seeking Russian and foreign businessmen all helped to foster an environment for both blatant and "undercover" prostitution. The promiscuity that had been unleashed during perestroika often turned into various forms of prostitution, especially in the

[19] Ibid., 122.
[20] Ibid., 137.
[21] Ibid., 129.

post-Soviet period when women were disproportionately burdened with economic hardship. In the following sections, I will expand this thesis to include both street prostitution and the more subtle prostitution of "favors," which has become a frequent practice in post-Soviet society.

In 1986, at the beginning of Gorbachev's reforms, an influential literary journal, *Literaturnaya gazeta,* described a group of well-educated girls who were regular customers at a city bar in an industrial town in the Ural Mountains. As in many industrial towns, a night out at a bar or restaurant was often the best option for entertainment. However, in the economic chaos of the time, such a night out could cost a girl a week's wages. The girls were thus willing to cross boundaries of social taboo by making themselves sexually available to the men who would pay their tabs. Scholar Elizabeth Waters discusses how Soviet readers of such articles were shocked both by the way the girls navigated the gray areas between promiscuity and prostitution, and by the way that they seemed unrepentant and nonchalant about their behavior.[22]

The "gray areas" of prostitution were also traversed in the rapidly expanding beauty contest industry, which had been imported from the West in the mid-1980s. Young women were keen to enter this world of apparently glamorous opportunities with hopes of winning money, fame, and often a foreign modeling contract, particularly after the first Miss USSR was crowned in 1989. The contestants were usually from modest families and had higher education, but were employed in low-paid jobs. Soviet psychologists supported beauty pageants because "feeling beautiful improved a woman's sense of well being and her work performance."[23]

In actuality, however, many contestants soon realized the contests held hidden agendas, requiring them to provide sexual favors to photographers, agents, and even pageant organizers. In this manner, the sexualization of the culture and the departure from Soviet protocol had

[22] Waters, "Restructuring", 5.
[23] Waters, Elizabeth, "Soviet Beauty Contests," *Sex and the Russian Society*, eds. Igor Kon and James Riordan (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1993), 122.

created a great deal of confusion about the boundaries between erotic art, glamour modeling, and commercial sex. Bridger, Kay, and Pinnick note: "Reports on several of these competitions imply that the women involved are expected at the very least to sleep with the organizers, and, if they really hope to win, probably with everyone from the judges to the lighting technicians as well."[24]

In the same way, women in the post-Soviet labor force often found themselves forced into gray areas of prostitution to retain their jobs or get a promotion. Although the exchange of sexual favors for promotions or time off had occurred under the Soviet system, the practice was not openly acknowledged and the socialist system helped to ensure that women would not lose their jobs if they did not comply.[25] However, the legal vacuum, coupled with the sexualization of Russian culture, resulted in a general sexualization of the workplace as well, normalizing sexual harassment; it became a regular and accepted practice for male bosses to openly demand that female employees sleep with them as part of their duties. By the early 1990s, it was commonplace to see ads for secretarial positions seeking only attractive young women "*bez kompleksov*," or "uninhibited," which was understood as code meaning that the applicant should be willing to provide sexual services as well.[26] By 1993, "sexual terror" was so widespread that one employer with good intentions felt it necessary to include "No sexual services required" in his advertisement for an office assistant. One newspaper, after having received many letters from women who had been harassed in the workplace, tried to set up a support group for them.[27]

Post-Soviet Realities: Prostitution as a Means of Sustenance

The documentary film *To Die for Love* by Tofik Shakhverdiev tells of two Moscow prostitutes, one who works in a hotel for foreign currency, and the other who works for rubles to

[24] Sue Bridger, Rebecca Kay and Kathryn Pinnick, *No More Heroines?* (London: Routledge, 1996), 170.
[25] Ibid., 178.
[26] Brigder and Kay, "Gender", 31.
[27] Brigder and Kay, "Gender," 31.

sustain her husband and three sons. Neither woman is idealized; in fact, images of them are juxtaposed with images of the homeless. In their 1993 book *Sexuality and the Body in Russian Culture,* Costlow, Sandler, and Vowles observed that this film provided "an important answer to the glossy visual representations of women's bodies that have also proliferated recently—they appear on items from key chains to postcards, in journals, and in beauty contests."[28]

Shakhverdiev's film presents a different image of a prostitute, one who is not sensationalized. She does not perform favors in return for luxurious Western products, and she is not a dejected, fallen woman on the outskirts of society. She may even have other employment opportunities, but she chooses sex as employment. In the following section, I will broaden the terms of debate to include this new portrayal of a prostitute as a woman who consciously chooses sex work as the best available means of supporting her family in a time of economic instability.

A 1998 *New York Times* report on prostitution in the Russian city of Saratov provides a good example of this. Saratov, an industrial town on the Volga with a depressed economy and wages that rarely topped $40 a month, had more than eighty escort services in a city of one million. The two prostitutes interviewed said that they had earlier worked as nurses, earning $30 a month at a local hospital, but then changed careers to work at an escort service, where they receive $10 an hour. One prostitute said that on a good night, she can make up to $80, which is more than local factory workers or teachers make in a month.[29] The girls stated that prostitution is not their first career choice, but for the moment, they accepted the risks because of the wages.

This non-sensationalized view of prostitution in post-Soviet Russia is further substantiated by a report compiled in 2005 by the Sexuality Information and Education Council

[28] Costlow, et al., 29.
[29] Stanley, Alessandra, "With Prostitution Booming, Legalization Tempts Russia," *The New York Times,* 3 March 1998: A1, *LexisNexis*, The New York Times Company, New York, NY, 14 April 2006 <http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/>.

of the United States. The report, entitled "Sex Workers: Perspectives in Public Health and Human Rights," includes a study of thirty-two female sex workers in Moscow conducted from October 2002 through March 2003. All of the participants worked on the central streets in Moscow (rather than in bars, hotels, or escort services) and worked for a pimp. The report estimated that such street-based sex workers comprise approximately 80% of all female sex workers in Moscow. All but two said they knew the people who recruited them into prostitution and knew that they were going to Moscow for sex work. The following quotation reflects a typical account of the participants' recruitment into the Moscow sex industry:

> I was coming here deliberately, I knew where I was going… I asked [my friend] to take me to this job… She told me that I would work on the street, would get 50 percent, and would share an apartment with her… [She described this work] a little better than it really is, but everything was correct.[30]

Two of the thirty-two women stated that they had responded to ads in *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, which had been the official newspaper of the Communist youth party. Most reported that all job details were given to them before they left their home towns; two said they were duped, believing they would be coming to Moscow to work in cafes. Only one reported that her passport had been taken and she was unable to leave her pimp. Eleven had children and had sought sex work to support their families. The report cautioned that "the fact that people besides [the women] themselves were dependent on the income of many of the sex workers must be taken into account when considering programs aimed at cessation of sex work."[31]

Sex-trafficking and Migration of Sex Workers

Researcher Donna Hughes discusses the rise of "marriage agencies" in response to a growing supply and demand for "Russian brides." Before the Soviet borders were opened, the major supply of mail-order brides for Western men had come from Southeast Asia. The

[30] Stachowiak, Julie A., "Health Risks and Power Among Female Sex Workers in Moscow," *Sex Workers: Perspectives in Public Health and Human Rights,* SIECUS Report, 33.2 (2005), 18-25.
[31] Ibid.

introduction of Russian women into the market saw demand grow even greater. In 1998, there were over 200 agencies operating in the United States which had helped spur 747 U.S. fiancée visas issued to Russian women and 282 visas issued to women from Ukraine in 1997.[32]

The results from such arranged marriages vary, with some women finding stable, supportive relationships, while others are abused or sent back home.[33] It can be very difficult for these mail-order brides to remain in control when most have fled economic hardship and now depend on their new husbands. However, many women are willing to take the chance, whether through marriage agencies or through independent migration to Western sex industries. As scholars Sue Bridger and Rebecca Kay argue, "when conventional employment prospects are so poor, ordinary jobs are by no means risk-free and the spectre of years of poverty haunts millions, they may well feel they have very little to lose."[34] Scholar Laura Agustin's research with various sex workers in Europe vividly demonstrates the dilemma. In one interview, a Ukrainian woman who had migrated to Spain reflected on her decision to migrate:

> Life is very hard there, because there is no work. Today I sent money to my mother… to pay for her house. You work, work, work and then they don't pay you, because there's no money. For example, I worked in an ashtray factory, and when there was no money to pay me they said "take ashtrays," 100 ashtrays. So? Can you eat ashtrays?[35]

The Sensationalization of Sex-Trafficking in the Media

The mail-order bride industry and the illegal migration of Russian women to cities in search of sex work has become a popular topic in Russian and Western media. The situation has been portrayed in both a tragic light, as a modern-day form of slavery, and in a more comedic light, as shown by stereotypes of Russian mail-order brides. For example, in the 2001 British film, *Birthday Girl*, Nicole Kidman plays a Russian mail-order bride who leaves Russia to marry

[32] Ibid., 50.
[33] Hughes, "Role", 56.
[34] Bridger and Kay, "Gender," 35.
[35] Laura Agustin, "Migrants in the Mistress's House: Other Voices in the 'Trafficking' Debate," *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State, and Society* 12.1 (2005), 99.

a lonely British banker. It is soon revealed, however, that Kidman's character is connected to a criminal ring and has alternative motives for marrying the banker. In the end, love and sex prevail, causing Kidman to break her ties with the Russian mafia in order to live happily ever after with the banker. This post-Soviet version of *Pretty Woman* takes a light, comedic approach to trafficking and Kidman's sexy character further contributes to the sensationalization of the Russian prostitute. Unlike *Intergirl*, this film has a happy ending, which can be seen as enhancing the appeal of importing Russian women for sex work or marriage.

However, there are many well-documented cases of abuse suffered by sex workers both within Russia and abroad. Reports are frequently circulated about Russian girls who believe they are going abroad to work as waitresses or nannies, but upon arrival in a foreign country are stripped of their documents, locked in an apartment, and forced to work as prostitutes. In Russia, such stories are publicized periodically on Russian television. In the West, journalists have also conducted investigations. For example, in *The Natashas: The New Global Sex Trade*, Canadian journalist Victor Malarek describes the undercover interviews he conducted with sex workers in Europe. The women he questioned repeatedly describe how they endured rapes, beatings, abortions, and death threats in the process of being forced to obey their captors.[36] Likewise, Michael Specter, a reporter for *The New York Times*, wrote a special report in 1998 entitled "Traffickers' New Cargo: Naïve Slavic Women." In the article he, too, describes the inhumane horrors of the girls' enslavement, stating that "few ever testify" for fear of being killed.[37]

Popular culture has been eager to explore this more brutal side of prostitution and sex-trafficking. For example, Swedish director Lukas Moodysson's film *Lilya 4-Ever* portrays the

[36] Ibid., 99.
[37] Specter, Michael, "Traffickers' New Cargo: Naïve Slavic Women," *The New York Times* 11 January 1998: A1, *LexisNexis*, The New York Times Company, New York, NY, 3 November 2003 <http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/>.

tragic story of a girl who falls victim to a sex-trafficking racket. Lilya is a poor Russian girl from a depressed town in Estonia whose mother abandons her and moves to America. In financial desperation, Lilya begins to work as a prostitute in order to buy food. She is then seduced by a young man who convinces her to move with him to Sweden. Once in Sweden, Lilya is forced to work as a prostitute, and receives such brutal treatment from her captor that she jumps to her own fatal end. Scholar Donna Hughes claims that "*Lilya 4-Ever* is the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of the anti-trafficking movement – the fictionalized, but realistic account of cruelty to one girl that is awakening the public conscience to the horrors of global trafficking for prostitution."[38]

Although the prevalence of such cases is not known, the existence of such human rights abuses cannot be denied. However, cases such as Lilya's only represent one side of a very complex situation; not all women who migrate abroad are manipulated and fall victim to violence, and it is important to recognize the distinctions between women's experiences in the sex industry. Nevertheless, as Borenstein observed, the "plight" of the prostitute can be just as seductive as her body.[39] Borenstein applied this idea to the pre-Revolutionary works of writers like Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, who were attracted to the sympathetic plight of the spiritually pure prostitute who had fallen victim to society.

The tendency to portray sex workers as such continues into current times. For example, the title of *The New York Times* article, "Traffickers New Cargo: Naïve Slavic Women," automatically implies that the women are helpless victims. Likewise, Victor Malarek's book walks the line between sensationalization and objective reporting. Malarek begins his book with a narrative of a girl named Marika who was trafficked from Russia to Tel Aviv against her will. He includes whimsical descriptions of Marika being led on camels across the desert by Bedouin

[38] Hughes, Donna, "Lilya *and* Uncle Tom: A landmark work of the contemporary abolitionist movement," *National Review Online* (July 8, 2003), 27 March 2006 <http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/lilya-4-ever.pdf>.
[39] Borenstein, 268.

guides with "long curved daggers dangling from their waists."[40] Malarek also cites dramatic accounts from Marika, who recalls: "This fat, sweaty pig is reaching his climax and he begins to murmur, 'Oh, Natasha! Natasha!' […] Natasha was my nightmare. Marika was my salvation."[41]

Such reports, which vividly describe the girls' sexual bondage, further exacerbate the problems of sex-trafficking by appealing to the sexual fantasies of potential customers, for whom the allure of prostitution is often one of sexual domination. For example, the recent Lifetime special, "Human Trafficking," follows the stories of several different women who were trafficked for purposes of sexual exploitation across the globe. In one scene, the sex-traffickers make an attractive young Ukrainian girl strip down to her sexy lingerie. Although this scene is meant to show the brutal treatment that the girls endure, the fact that the girl is shown as powerless victim in lingerie can be said to have a strong sexual appeal. A more extreme example of this was seen in Moldova: newspaper reports describing the trafficking of Moldovan women abroad included the fully-nude photographs of the women, which had been used by their pimps as advertisements.[42] This is more than just sexualizing the women's plights: it is pornography.

Activists' Discourse: Abolitionists vs. Regulationists

The rise in post-Soviet prostitution and trafficking and the subsequent involvement with other countries has sparked a heated debate on prostitution in Russia among nongovernmental organizations, activists, and policy-makers. The post-Soviet period has seen an increasing presence of both foreign-backed and Russian grassroots organizations, each with its own agenda and approach lobbying concerning sex work and trafficking issues. Some anti-sex trafficking activists are accused of subscribing to a more sensationalized view of prostitutes as innocent

[40] Malarek, Victor, *The Natashas: The New Global Sex Trade* (Toronto, Canada: Penguin Group, 2003), xiii.
[41] Malarek, xvi.
[42] Tomas Ekman, "The Cooperation of the Swedish Police with Other Governmental Structures and Non-Governmental Organizations in the Fight Against Trafficking," Anti-Sex Trafficking Conference: Safe Repatriation and Rehabilitation, Angel Coalition Safe House, Kazan, Republic of Tartarstan, 15 March 2005.

victims. Others argue that such measures do not represent the women who choose sex work as the best available means of supporting thier families. Such women should not be denied the status of legal workers, as illegal workers are usually the most disempowered and vulnerable members of society. The following section will examine the extent to which activists and policy-makers accurately represent the interests of Russian sex workers in Russia and abroad.

One of the most predominant camps represented by foreign-backed NGOs in Russia is that of the abolitionists, whose roots are traced back to the upper-middle class feminists in nineteenth-century Europe. Also known as "the sexual domination discourse,"[43] the abolitionists consider all forms of prostitution as sexual exploitation and as human rights violations similar to rape. Women are never free agents, and thus prostitution should be illegal.[44] The abolitionist discourse was particularly influential in the Preamble to the 1949 Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of Prostitutes and Others, which states that "prostitution and … traffic in persons for the purposes of prostitution are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person…"[45]

The Angel Coalition is a NGO in Russia that subscribes to the abolitionist discourse; it consists of 43 grassroots organizations from Russia and other former Soviet republics.[46] The Angel Coalition in Moscow and its network of nine regional partners describe themselves as "the hub of rescue, repatriation and rehabilitation activities for Russian trafficking victims."[47] The organization is officially registered as a Russian organization, but much of the money and leadership is provided through Western funds and specialists. In addition to anti-trafficking

[43] Outshoorn, Joyce, "The Political Debates on Prostitution and Trafficking of Women"*, Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society* 12.1 (2005), 145.
[44] Doezema, 37.
[45] Ibid., 38.
[46] The former Soviet republics included are Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, and Ukraine.
[47] "About Us," *Angel Coalition,* 30 October 2005 <http://www.angelcoalition.org/angelcoalition1.html>.

efforts, the Coalition's work also promotes efforts to make prostitution illegal in the destination countries and fights all attempts to legalize prostitution in Russia.

Although the Angel Coalition has done excellent work through informational campaigns and transnational cooperation, its abolitionist philosophy remains controversial. For example, while working at the Angel Coalition in the spring of 2005, I learned of a case in which a young woman was repatriated from Athens, but upon arrival in Russia, her home country, wanted to go back to Greece. Juliette Engel, the Director of the Angel Coalition and herself an American, described her behavior as "Stockholm Syndrome." In an interview she stated:

> People are so emotionally and physically dependent on their pimps, it is very hard to separate them, even though the pimp is going to take them right to death. They are just hypnotically attached. It is very common in such situations, which is why they cannot have access to telephones because they will be calling the very pimps and traffickers who enslaved them. They have to get past that.[48]

Although Engel's interpretation is a valid one, there is an opposing camp of activists who find great fault in her reasoning. Categorized as regulationists, such activists would argue that Engel's attitude does not respect the fact that the woman returning from Greece is a free-willed agent whose desire to return to Athens is not due to the trauma of victimization, but rather to a conscious act of self-determination. This regulationist platform is the main opponent to the abolitionist discourse, which dominated international debates on prostitution for almost a hundred years until the development of regulationist trends in the mid-1980s. The new regulationist lobby challenges the abolitionist platform by recognizing a distinction between forced and non-forced prostitution, and between forced sex-trafficking and non-forced "prostitution-related migration."[49] Proponents of this "voluntary/forced" dichotomy argue that although many women fall victim to coercion and abuse, there are others who independently choose to become sex workers at home or abroad and who deserve recognition as legitimate

[48] Juliette Engel, Personal interview with author, 23 May 2005.
[49] Outshoorn, 149.

workers. Regulationists believe this is important for the safety of sex workers because when prostitution is legal, women are not dependent on pimps to protect them from the police. Legal prostitutes are guaranteed personal freedoms and protection by the state, and are therefore more independent and less likely to be forced into exploitative conditions.[50] Moreover, the illegal or non-legal status of migrant sex workers in most countries discourages cohesive political action. Scholar Laura Agustin points out that "given their irregular status and vulnerability to police harassment and deportation, most [sex workers] are loath to draw attention to themselves. Given the itinerant lifestyle that characterizes migrants selling sex in Europe, they tend not to 'settle' or join traditional migrants groups, and in some countries they have no right to 'demonstrate.'"[51]

The regulationist camp often accuses abolitionists of sensationalizing the "victim" status of prostitutes or migrant sex workers in order to promote the illegalization of prostitution. By focusing on stories of sex-trafficking victims who were dragged across the desert or claiming that girls suffer from "Stockholm Syndrome," abolitionists are blamed for skewing the situation in the public's eyes. Regulationists seek to dispel the abolitionist discourse by drawing attention to the fact that although such cases of forced prostitution exist, there are also women who consciously choose sex work as the best available means of supporting themselves in a particular social and economic climate, as attested by the accounts of the sex workers in Moscow.

The type of scholarly sensationalization that regulationists strive to undermine is found, for example, in the work of Donna Hughes, whose research on sex-trafficking has been commissioned by both the U.S. State Department and the Coalition Against the Trafficking in Women, a main proponent of the abolitionist camp. For her research in Russia, Hughes often works with the Angel Coalition's director, Juliette Engel. Hughes wrote an article that describes

[50] Alison Murray, "Debt-Bondage and Trafficking: Don't Believe the Hype," *Global Sex Workers: Rights, Resistance, and Redefinition,* eds. Kamala Kempadoo and Jo Doezema (New York, NY: Routledge, 1998), 57.
[51] Agustin, 12.

Engel's inspiration to establish MiraMed, an American-based organization that helps the Angel Coalition and other grassroots NGOs obtain Western funding:

> A decade ago, Dr. Engel, an American physician, went to Russia and discovered the scourge of epidemic trafficking while working with orphanages, from which groups of girls were mysteriously disappearing. Vans would arrive at the orphanages to take girls on field trips. They packed their lunches and overnight bags and hopped into the vans, never to be seen again…As she described the trafficking industry's methods of operation, many mothers and teachers would start to cry as they realized the likely fate of their daughters and pupils who had gone abroad and not been heard of since.[52]

Hughes uses dramatic descriptions of weeping mothers and kidnapped orphans in an effort to make prostitution illegal in both Russia and various destination countries. However, as discussed above, many women working as prostitutes are not "deceived victims" but rather are willing to endure the risks of prostitution, either in Russia or abroad, in order to make higher wages and support their families. Such was the case with the women in Saratov and with the women in the Moscow survey who could be viewed as simply "migrant sex workers." Reports should look at both sides of the equation in order to avoid a misrepresentation of prostitution and sex-trafficking and the subsequent jeopardization of the lives of many women by making their economically justified professions more dangerous. Once the terms of debate are broadened to address the needs of both coerced victims and free-willed sex workers, national and international legislation concerning prostitution and sex-trafficking can better protect the rights of all.

However, it is difficult to broaden the terms of debate in light of the fact that the sensationalized portrayal of prostitutes as victims sells better in the nonprofit world, just as the sensationalized portrayal of the prostitute is more lucrative in media and film. Nongovernmental organizations in Russia are dependent on outside funding from foreign philanthropic organizations and governments, and the Russian government is not able (or not willing) to provide funds for such social work. Because the topic of "sex workers' rights" is controversial

[52] Donna Hughes, "Prostitution in Russia: Does the U.S. State Department back the legalization of prostitution?" *National Review Online* (November 21, 2002) 11 April 2006 <http://www.nationalreview.com/comment/comment-hughes112102.asp>.

and considered less urgent than the human rights violations associated with sexual exploitation, it is easier for NGOs to secure funding to rescue sex-trafficking victims than it is to find funding to protect the rights of willing sex workers. Consequently, abolitionist groups receive grants from foreign donors and thus are given the advantage, as they are better able disseminate information, organize conferences, support research, lobby, and most importantly, apply for more grants.

The Angel Coalition, for example, has significant funding from the Swedish government and the Bush administration, both of which take a decisively abolitionist approach. In September 2003, before the United Nations General Assembly, President Bush called the global sex trade a "humanitarian crisis" and a "special evil," and he broadly condemned the entire "sex trade."[53] A human trafficking investigations officer for the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, who has experience working with the various anti-trafficking NGOs in Moscow, has stated that the Angel Coalition's funding from the United States and Sweden has allowed the organization to push an abolitionist agenda.[54] As long as the Angel Coalition presents "the sex trade" in Russia in this light, it will continue to receive the donations and grants needed to distribute information, host conferences, support the research of abolitionist scholars, and rent their comfortable and fully-staffed office in Moscow, complete with a stunning view of the Kremlin and the Moscow River.

Conclusions

The Russian sex worker has been labeled victim and vixen, sinner and saint, comic and tragic. Many have tried to redeem the "fallen innocent," while others have tried to defend her choice in careers. Most of these discourses, however, are guilty of one thing: the sensationalization of the life of the prostitute.

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[53] Hughes, Donna, "Approaches to Trafficking and Prostitution: The U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act," Presentation at the Anti-Sex Trafficking Conference: Safe Repatriation and Rehabilitation, Angel Coalition Safe House, Kazan, Republic of Tartarstan, 15 March 2005.
[54] Nicholai Basko, telephone interview with author, 3 May 2006.

This sensationalization and misrepresentation of the social conditions and realities of sex work are largely due to the fact that the discourse on prostitution and sex-trafficking has been waged mainly by non-sex workers, who often oversimplify the situation in order to promote their own agendas. In the case of Russia, the interests of sex workers are often left in the hands of foreign-backed NGOs, who hold the financial resources to organize informational campaigns and lobbying efforts. Because some charity groups and governments are more willing to fund projects that save "victims" rather than address the needs of women with a broad range of experiences, it is to the benefit of the abolitionists to subscribe to an outdated ideology and not to broaden the terms of their debate. The situation is further unbalanced by the lack of a strong feminist discourse in Russian civil society, as democracy and civil society are relatively new concepts in Russia and still in need of development.

The sex industry continues to grow all over the world, with women from the former Soviet Union representing a large percentage of those selling sex in Europe. For this reason, it is becoming increasingly important to reconsider the existing discourse on prostitution. Scholar Laura Agustin argues that current discussions focus too much on "abstract questions, such as the degree of consent, obligation, or force experienced by migrant women […] rather than on the practical issues of survival and success that women migrants negotiate."[55] It must be recognized that prostitution has become an available and effective way for thousands of women to support themselves in the post-Soviet world. Once this fact is accepted by the members of the government and civil society who have the money and power, legislation can more accurately reflect the needs of women in the sex industry. The image of the prostitute has long been incorporated in mainstream Russian society; the reality of their experiences now has to be recognized as well.

[55] Agustin, 96.

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Russian Political Culture Since 1985

By: Alexandra Denton

The traditional view of Russian political culture has been that, due to historical experience, Russians have favored strong autocratic rule. After nearly seventy years of the Soviet experience, Russian society was viewed as totally atomized and Russians themselves as disengaged from the political process. In 1985 Gorbachev came to power as General Secretary of the Soviet Union and within two years had relaxed the constraints on civic activity outside official party organizations. The apparent explosion of groups and organizations from this time onwards surprised many observers and put previous suppositions in doubt. Although it was not what he intended, Gorbachev started the process which was to end the Soviet Union and put Russia on the road to "democratization." However, the years immediately after *perestroika* were actually filled with disappointment for ordinary Russians, and twenty years later many Western observers consider the Putin regime to be one that is "backsliding" on democracy.[1]

There may be elements of continuity which are shaping Russian political culture, but the effects the last twenty years can only be examined for clues, not a definitive answer. This essay will provide a short definition of "political culture" and then look briefly at the so-called "authoritarian tradition." The main body will attempt to respond to past research on that issue.

Definition

Political culture is difficult to pin down – it has been described as "the classic case of a concept that simultaneously captures everything and nothing."[2] Most work on the subject which

[1] R. Sakwa, "Politics in Russia" in S. White, Z. Gitelman and R. Sakwa (eds.), *Developments in Russian Politics 6*, 6th edn., Basingstoke and New York, 2005 (hereafter, *Developments*), pp. 1-17, (p. 9).
[2] F. J. Fleron, Jr., "Post-Soviet Political Culture in Russia: An Assessment of Recent Empirical Investigations" (hereafter, "Post-Soviet"), *Europe-Asia Studies*, 48, 1996, 2, pp. 225-260 (p. 226).

will be used in this essay is based on the assumption that political culture is "the *subjective understanding of politics*…concerned with people's *values*, their *perceptions* of history…and with their *foci of identification*."[3] In addition, political culture is considered to be "neither immovable nor simply malleable"[4] and will only change gradually. There is also debate within the field over whether to include behavior as well as attitudes and beliefs.[5] This essay will examine surveys taken and researchers' interpretations of their data.

Authoritarian Tradition

According to those who espouse that Russian political culture has seen more continuity than change, there are two strands to this legacy – the first is the centuries' long experience of autocratic tsarist rule and the second is the nature of the Soviet regime. It has even been claimed that "true" democracy has not yet taken hold in Russia because the people themselves are "co-conspirators" in the rejection of democratic values and practices.[6] This approach holds that, due to historical experience, Russians do not possess an understanding of democratic practices. It is even claimed that "after 1991, Russia is struggling to create a new [national identity] based on a blend of tsarism, communism, and Stalinism."[7] Thus, according to this view Russian political culture has not evolved; the basic elements were there in 1985 and have continued to this day.

Is Vladimir Putin a reflection of this need for a "strong hand?" Some observers have pointed to the authoritarian nature of his regime, to his background in the KGB and to his apparent authoritarian tactics in government to illustrate this element of continuity in Russian

[3] A. Brown, "Conclusions" (hereafter, "Conclusions") in S. Whitefield (ed.), *Political Culture and Post-Communism*, Basingstoke and New York, 2005 (hereafter, *Political Culture*), pp. 180-202 (p. 182).
[4] J. Alexander, *Political Culture in Post-Communist Russia: Formlessness and Recreation in a Traumatic Transition*, London and New York, 2000 (hereafter, *Political*), p. 34.
[5] Those who take a more "anthropological" approach, such as James Alexander whose study "combines subjective orientations and behavior [sic]", espouse this view, (Alexander, *Political*, p. 14).
[6] T. J. Colton and M. McFaul, "Are Russians Undemocratic?" (hereafter, "Are Russians Undemocratic?"), *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 18, 2002, 2, pp. 91-121 (p. 93).
[7] R. Pipes, "Flight From Freedom: What Russians Think and Want", *Foreign Affairs*, 83, 2004, 9, pp. 9-15 (p. 13).

political culture. As Putin seems to make "a virtue out of rejecting 'politics' and ideology,"[8] in the opinions of some he is the ultimate "anti-politician," who came to power on a virtual platform which had no substantive content. This, perhaps, shows that people are once again disinterested in politics, as compared with the 1990s when they were seemingly clamoring for real democracy. In this sense, Putin's is not the strong hand. His very emptiness as a politician allows people to disengage from the political process.

Yet there have also been suggestions that this disinterest may be a myth propagated by the regime itself. As Sperling states: "It is in the interests of those who benefit from hegemonic state-sponsored belief systems that subjects doubt themselves, rather than question the regime."[9] Colton and McFaul discovered in their 1999 survey that Putin supporters were fairly supportive of democracy on the whole.[10] In 2004, Hahn conducted surveys in Yaroslavl' and discovered that there still seemed to be a "normative commitment" to democracy in spite of Putin's "systematic undermining since 2000 of *institutional* sources of accountability."[11] One could argue that this is not a reflection of a basic desire for authority, but more simply a need for stability.

Can Russia Ever be a Democracy?

It is often asserted that a political system – and a democratic system in particular – needs "to be consistent with the political values of its people."[12] This section will examine some of the research which has explored prospects for democracy in Russia and consider whether the experiences of *glasnost'* and the 1990s have affected Russian political culture.

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[8] He has been described as the "anti-politician", E. Bacon with M. Wyman, *Contemporary Russia*, Basingstoke and New York, 2006 (hereafter, *Contemporary*), p. 140.
[9] V. Sperling, "The last refuge of a scoundrel: patriotism, militarism and the Russian national idea", *Nations and Nationalism*, 9, 2003, 2, pp. 235-253 (p. 238).
[10] Colton and McFaul, "Are Russians Undemocratic?", pp. 115-116.
[11] J. W. Hahn, "Yaroslavl' Revisited: Assessing Continuity and Change in Russian Political Culture Since 1990" (hereafter, "Yaroslavl"") in Whitefield (ed.), *Political Culture*, pp. 148-179 (p. 176).
[12] W. L. Miller, S. White and P. Heywood, *Values and Political Change in Postcommunist Europe*, London and New York, 1998, p.3.

Attitudes Towards Democracy and a Market Economy

Many scholars have been criticized for being overly optimistic about the chances for a successful consolidation of democracy in Russia based on their survey data, because these are said to be, on the whole, "inconsistent and contradictory."[13] Initially, there was great optimism over survey findings at the beginning of the 1990s. In the conclusions to his surveys in Yaroslavl' in 1990, Hahn wrote that "Russian political culture, at least, would appear to be sufficiently hospitable to sustain democratic institutions."[14] In looking for the "presence or absence of the cultural prerequisites of a democratic polity," he found relatively high levels of support for elections and of political interest and knowledge. In addition, he related the results from Russia to those from surveys carried out in the USA in the 1970s to show that Russians are not much less "democratic" than Americans.[15] Yet this is precisely the kind of optimism which has been criticized, for it does not take into account varying understandings of "democracy." Also, 1990 was a year of generally high political excitement in Russia, which may mean that high levels of interest were simply an anomaly.

One needs longitudinal data to see how stable attitudes have been over a period of time. Colton and McFaul have compared data from surveys from both 1996 and 1999. This is particularly instructive, as some observers have commented that the experience of Yeltsin and his "democrats" during the period of transition in the 1990s turned "democracy" and "politics" into "dirty words" for many Russians.[16] Lukin even dedicated a whole book to analyzing these so-called "democrats," who in reality propounded what he called "Marxism turned inside out."[17]

[13] Alexander, *Political*, p. 25.
[14] J. W. Hahn, "Continuity and Change in Russian Political Culture" (hereafter, "Continuity"), *British Journal of Political Science*, 21, 1991, 4, pp. 393-421 (p. 421).
[15] Hahn, "Continuity", pp. 406-419.
[16] Bacon with Wyman, *Contemporary*, p. 140.
[17] A. Lukin, *The Political Culture of the Russian "Democrats"*, Oxford and New York, 2000, p. 292.

Colton and McFaul found that, although dissatisfaction with democracy in Russia itself had declined over these years, support for various components of democracy (freedom to elect the country's leaders, freedom to have one's own convictions, freedom of expression etc.) and the idea of democracy *per se* was relatively high.[18]

As many scholars have pointed to the need for a strong economy as a precondition for the consolidation of democracy, Hahn examines data from 1993 to 2004 to assess Russians' views on a market economy.[19] He finds that the "response to the benefits of a market economy is mixed, but on the whole favorable" and that there are "no dramatic swings of opinion between 1993, 1996 and 2004."[20] However, Fleron had warned about taking this to mean support for democracy *per se*, as he shows in his quotation from Brown that "the link between attitudes and behavior has been shown to be greatly strengthened by *vested interest*."[21] Hahn also recognizes that "assessments of economic performance have little or nothing to do with the *political* preferences"[22] of those interviewed and more to do with, as Fleron points out, stronger support for political change coming from the beneficiaries of economic reform.[23] Thus, if there is an emerging middle class in Russia,[24] one could say that the events of the last twenty years (due to the economic, social and political reforms since 1985) have created a particular political subculture which could be a strong source of support for the consolidation of democracy.

One might also look here at the legacy of the disjuncture between public and private lives left over from the Soviet system. Although outwardly many Russians conformed to Soviet

[18] Colton and McFaul, "Are Russians Undemocratic?", pp. 99-108.
[19] In 1991 he wrote that "economic development changes the way people think about politics; it predisposes them to be receptive to ideas and institutions.", Hahn, "Continuity", p. 396.
[20] Hahn, "Yaroslavl'", pp. 173-174.
[21] Fleron, Jr., "Post-Soviet", p. 246.
[22] Hahn, "Yaroslavl'", p. 174.
[23] Fleron, Jr, "Post-Soviet", p. 246.
[24] According to Sakwa there is a middle class of thirteen million people, R. Sakwa, "Partial Adaptation and Political Culture" in Whitefield (ed.), *Political Culture*, pp. 42-63 (p. 52).

propaganda and rituals, it has been shown that in private Soviet citizens behaved very differently, which gave rise to what Tucker called "cross-thinking"[25] and the "dual persona" phenomenon.[26] Fleron takes this as an argument against the reliability of surveys,[27] but it might also be an interesting point to consider for the prospects of democracy. If in 1985 Russians were much less inculcated in Soviet values than had been assumed then perhaps the private persona has now triumphed over the public, Soviet one. However, Fleron once again cautions against this assumption, taking Eckstein's theory of "formlessness" to show that "extreme social, political, and/or economic discontinuity" should result in "anomie and political extremism, not rapid developments of new cultural orientations such as democracy."[28] Levada also writes about another "dual persona" legacy from the Soviet era that may not be conducive to consolidating democracy. Using George Orwell's idea of "double-think," he shows how people got round the strictures of the Soviet system by seeking out loopholes and convincing themselves that there was nothing wrong in this.[29] In his research he found that "there are no strict dividing lines between the spheres of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour"[30] and thus this legacy lives on. Thus, one might argue that this duality may well hamper the chances for democratization.

Modernisation

Many observers point to the coming of new generations as enhancing the prospects of democracy. This view argues that, over time, the process of modernization and concomitant rise in levels of education and political awareness will have an impact on a political culture.[31] Thus, one might say that since 1985 the experiences of those who are now politically of age could have

[25] Fleron, Jr., "Post-Soviet", p. 238.
[26] Fleron, Jr., "Post-Soviet", p. 237.
[27] Fleron, Jr., "Post-Soviet", pp. 238-239.
[28] Fleron, Jr., "Post-Soviet", p. 238.
[29] Y. Levada, "Homo Praevaricatus: Russian Doublethink" (hereafter, "Homo Praevaricatus") in A. Brown (ed.), *Contemporary Russian Politics: A Reader*, Oxford and New York, 2001, pp. 312-322 (p. 314).
[30] Levada, "Homo Praevaricatus", p. 315.
[31] Hahn, "Continuity", p. 399.

complemented and enhanced the modernization processes which had already been taking place during the Soviet era. Indeed, Hahn found differences with respect to generations in his work between 1990 and 2004. In 1990 he wrote that he shared the view that "education is the critical intervening variable between development and political culture,"[32] illustrating this by relating levels of education to political trust in the Soviet system.[33] In 2004 Hahn also reported the different understandings of the word "democracy" among different generations: for older people "democracy indeed requires political trust, but trust means that a good government (*gosudarstvo*) will take care of its citizens."[34] In addition, he found that it was only the younger generation aged 21 to 25 who have "a sense that they can and should participate,"[35] otherwise known as "internal political efficacy," which is held to be one of the most important supports for democracy. Thus one could argue that, because of high levels of education during the Soviet era, a new political culture was already being formed, and with the rise of generations who had not known Soviet politics this process might continue in a democratic direction.

Civic Participation

Many scholars believe that "without a vibrant civil society, the chances for…the success of a transition to democracy in a country formerly under authoritarian rule, are severely diminished."[36] Thus, a state needs healthy and functioning links between it and society, with a significant number of people somehow involved. The traditional view of Soviet society was one that incorporated "*enforced departicipation*"[37] (that while the regime outwardly encouraged public participation in the political process, the reality was quite the opposite) and "social

[32] Hahn, "Continuity", p. 417.
[33] Hahn, "Continuity", p. 419.
[34] Hahn, "Yaroslavl'", p. 167.
[35] Hahn, "Yaroslavl'", p. 169.
[36] A. B. Evans, Jr., "A Russian Civil Society?" (hereafter, "A Russian Civil Society?") in White, Gitelman and Sakwa (eds.), *Developments*, pp. 96-113 (p. 97).
[37] Roeder quoted in D. Bahry and B. D. Silver, "Soviet Citizen Participation on the Eve of Democratisation" (hereafter, "Soviet"), *The American Political Science Review*, 84, 1990, 3, pp. 821-847 (p.822).

atomization,"[38] (the destruction of bonds between members and different levels of society) but the events after 1985 led many to question these assumptions. Once Gorbachev "sanctioned free expression and encouraged 'the creative activity of the masses'"[39] in 1986, there was an apparent upsurge in civic activity in groups known as "informals," which represented a wide range of interests, and the so-called "popular fronts." Some observers have estimated that there were "more than sixty thousand independent associations involving nearly fifteen million people."[40]

One might look at the concept of "social capital" for this aspect of political culture. It "refers to the network of ties that keep people engaged in various kinds of cooperative endeavours"[41] and these will in turn affect levels of trust and expectations of government. A low level of social capital in a society will indicate "correspondingly poor government." These can reinforce each other and could result in the long-term stability of this situation, also known as a "low-level equilibrium trap."[42] In their article from 1990 Bahry and Silver, using ideas from the already large body of democratization research warned that "as old constraints are removed" this initial upsurge will be followed by "a substantial proportion of the population [availing] themselves of new opportunities *not* to participate in politics" and to become merely "spectators."[43] Indeed participation in voluntary associations is now very low in Russia; according to data collected in 2001, 91% of the population do not belong to any organization.[44]

Thus, what Bahry and Silver predicted may well have come true and, to refer once more to the idea of a "low-level equilibrium trap," it may be possible to see just what effect the events

[38] Bahry and Silver, "Soviet", p. 823.
[39] M. A. Weigle, "Political Participation and Party Formation in Russia, 1985-1992: Institutionalizing Democracy?", *Russian Review*, 53, 1994, 2, pp. 240-270 (p. 242).
[40] N. N. Petro, *The Rebirth of Russian Democracy: An Interpretation of Political Culture*, Cambridge, MA and London, 1995, p. 1.
[41] T. F. Remington, *Politics in Russia*, 3rd edn., New York and London, 2004 (hereafter, *Politics*), p. 87.
[42] Remington, *Politics*, p. 88.
[43] Bahry and Silver, "Soviet", pp. 841-842.
[44] Remington, *Politics*, p. 89.

of the last twenty years have had. After the initial enthusiasm during *perestroika* the hopes of many were dashed and, as the economic reforms of the 1990s hit many people very hard, their expectations of government lowered to meet its actual performance. In addition, it appears that Putin wants a "pseudo-civil society," which is subordinate to the state and whose demands are in line with its general program.[45] Thus, one might conclude that, if voluntary participation remains low and if opportunities for independent organizations are curtailed, then Russian political culture may stay within this "low-level equilibrium trap" that has been operating since the disillusionment which came after the high hopes of *perestroika* and *glasnost'*.

Conclusion

Even though the selective use of history to justify explanations has been discredited, there are many who still see authoritarianism as a vital element in Russian political culture. Yet there are also those who have used research to discover what the chances for democratization are. It can be argued that in 1985 Gorbachev started the process, albeit unwittingly, which we have been observing in Russia in recent years and which could be recreating its political culture. By definition, culture can evolve only slowly, and this may mean that Russian political culture as yet cannot be definitively characterized. However, this does not preclude the possibility that there are elements other than authoritarianism which could have been remolding it well before the break up of the Soviet Union. The USSR had a somewhat distorted journey towards modernization, but it has been shown that one vital element was there – high levels of education. Yet Russians' experiences of "democracy" during the tumultuous years of transition may be another factor in the reformulation of their subjective feelings towards politics. It is still difficult to say how the events of the last twenty years have really affected Russian political culture, but in conclusion two points will be tentatively put forward. Firstly, the experiences of *perestroika*

[45] Evans, Jr., "A Russian Civil Society?", p. 109.

and *glasnost'* gave expression to elements which were to some extent already present in Soviet Russians. Secondly, the disillusionment and trauma of the 1990s may have enhanced the people's need for stability as human beings, not necessarily as authority-loving Slavs.

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Military Learning Between the Chechen Wars

By: Michael Coffey

The downward spiral of the Russian military that began with Afghanistan is often compared to the U.S. army's experience in Vietnam. However, unlike the American experience, the conflict did not serve as an impetus for drastic military reform. In fact, the decline of the Soviet army continued through the 1980s, leading to the defeat of the Red Army's "ghost" in Chechnya in 1996 at the hands of a few rebels. Three years later, President Vladimir Putin ordered the army back into Chechnya. The military did not undergo dramatic transformation in the intervening years, but performed remarkably better the second time around.

Two sequential questions are a necessary prelude for this paper's attempt to explain this. First, how do military organizations learn and what are the prevailing theories of military learning? Second, how did the Russian armed services perform at the operational level during the two Chechen wars? This paper will argue that improved performances exhibited by Russian ground troops and artillery, an increased emphasis on elite units, and marginally better interoperability between forces suggests the Russian military underwent internal low-level learning between the Chechen wars. However, these lessons – some of which run counter to current trends in international norms – will be quickly forgotten without a deeper reformation.

Learning Theory

Many scholars have contributed to a substantial body of work on military learning. A favored topic is the so called RMAs, or "Revolution in Military Affairs:" periods when armed conflict radically transforms. The numeration of RMAs varies, but professionalization (implemented in the European conflict with Napoleon), and mechanization (fully instituted with the advent of the tank during World War II), all marked crucial changes in warfare. Militaries

that fully embraced these RMAs defeated laggards. For example, France adopted the tank early in the 20th century. However, the German military harnessed the technology to achieve breakthroughs that allowed Berlin to take Paris and defeat France in just six weeks in 1940. This example demonstrates the importance of learning, although without clarifying why the two militaries implemented the same technology (learned from it) differently.

If these simple premises held true: open organizations encourage change; closed hierarchical organizations discourage change; losing organizations look for new alternatives; and winning organizations resist change, an observer could accurately predict tendencies for change and learning. However, few modern theorists have accepted that "militaries [are] hidebound bureaucratic actors, inert unless pushed, and oriented above all toward... predictability."[1]

Williamson Murray argued against this type of simplification in his book Military Innovation in the Interwar Period. Murray argued that societal influence, military organization, individual personalities, government type, and budgetary constraints all played an inextricable role in determining what changes a military will adopt and the lessons it will learn from conflict.[2] This approach coalesced in the interwar period in military politics with the influence of politics and society, along with the clout of exceptional individuals.

Different Approaches from the Same Conflict

In Britain, society refused to pay for armaments during the interwar period and politicians acquiesced, halting armor development completely.[3] The British also slowed the advancement of reformers, enabling doctrine to stagnate as top echelons remained in place. Despite external social influences and internal organizational characteristics that limited tank warfare

[1] Kimberly M. Zisk, *Engaging the Enemy: Organization Theory and Soviet Military Innovation, 1955-1991* (Ewing, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1993), p. 11.
[2] Williamson Murray and Allan Millett, *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), pp. 7-8.
[3] Ibid., pp. 11, 20, 21.

exploitation, Lord Milne managed to conduct important exercises with mechanized cavalry that emphasized the importance of large-scale mobility (Ibid., p. 26.). With more funding and a longer tenure for Milne in his post, the British possibly could have achieved greater advancements in mobile warfare than the Germans.[4] The French military also suffered from insufficient funding, while military passivity and frozen doctrine, as well as a political fetish for the levee en masse, all militated against significant tank development.[5] Here, Murray cited internal military conservatism in addition to external political/social pressures. The French meshed new armor with old planning, treating the tank like mobile artillery.[6] In contrast, Germany initiated a post-war research program that involved 400 officers from combatant commands and dozens of committees.[7] They were able to create and institute a new de facto doctrine, even before the famous Army Regulation 487.[8] This evokes Huntington's suggestion that only the army can know and change itself.

Internal Learning – Two Approaches

Stephen Rosen discussed military learning in a different context. Rosen confined his 1988 piece New Ways of War: Understanding Military Innovation to modern Western (Anglo) armies whose peacetime innovations provided dividends in war. Outside political support for an internal military hierarchy already convinced of the importance to innovate, even following victory, fostered successful learning and new doctrine. Rosen defined military innovation as:

> a change that forces one of the primary combat arms of a combat service to change its concepts of operation and its relation to other combat arms, and to abandon or downgrade traditional missions.[9]

[4] Ibid., p. 29.
[5] Ibid., pp. 12-15.
[6] Ibid., pp. 32, 34.
[7] Ibid., pp. 36-37.
[8] Ibid., pp. 37-38.
[9] Steven Barry Rosen, "New Ways of War: Understanding Military Innovation," *International Security*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Summer 1988), p. 134.

For Rosen, mavericks could not influence military doctrine precisely because of their outsider perspective and alienating temperament. In two examples of peacetime learning, the U.S. military successfully prepared for World War II having seen the effects of eschewing preparation to fight in its last war and because senior military officials widely supported new doctrines.

The transition of the U.S. Navy from being battleship-based to carrier-based and the transformation of the Marines from a shipboard defense to an amphibious assault arm depended on military officers translating new capabilities into a new mission.[10] Once officers redefined doctrines and missions, they had to support a career path for younger leadership to grow into these new roles.[11] According to Rosen, the navy's faith in carriers dated to 1919, to the appointment of Rear Admiral William Moffett as the first Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, who began an internal process that converted the naval outlook on carriers.[12] Moffett promoted aviators to form a substantial coterie of proponents of offensive carrier warfare, providing internal foundation to later development. Thus, the U.S. Navy developed differently from the Royal Navy, which had few aviators in leadership positions by 1939.[13] For example, Major Earl Ellis developed a rough doctrine in 1921 that described assaulting islands in the Pacific, but the Marines did not develop the Fleet Marine Force until the 1930s, under a new commandant.[14]

Rosen concluded that the ability of civilian governments to influence militaries in peacetime was severely limited, that change will only begin with the officer corps who can push new thinking that will then affect all levels of the military. A civilian leadership can best effect change through the appointment and promotion of officers amenable to reform. Rosen

[10] Ibid., p. 151, 136.
[11] Ibid., p. 136.
[12] Ibid., pp. 155-156
[13] Ibid., p. 157. In 1926, the U.S. had one carrier, but four admirals, two captains and 63 commanders receiving flight pay. In 1939, the British, with three carriers, had just one flying admiral.
[14] Ibid., pp. 162, 164.

acknowledged that peacetime innovation differed greatly from wartime learning, but he suggested a greater role for civilian leaders and a faster pace of learning.

Neither of these caveats fit the learning described by Michael Doubler in his World War II text Closing with the Enemy. Doubler attributed two significant factors to U.S. military learning on the western front. The U.S. Army, created from a democratic society, permitted greater openness and discussion on issues of planning and waging war. Free discourse allowed privates at the front lines to proffer solutions. Open networks transmitted knowledge up the chain of command, which disseminated lessons horizontally to the entire force. When the U.S. First Army broke out from Normandy, company-level engineering troops fashioned the makeshift solutions that allowed the army to navigate tall embankments of bocage.[15] This bottom-up solution, and others like it during the drive to Berlin, occurred because information flowed freely in a democratic army. German tactical development prior to World War II, by contrast, depended on internal evolution that originated with top officers (a top-down variant of internal learning).

Externally Motivated Learning

Stephen Rosen's article responded to conventional thinking about military innovation that emphasized the importance of civilian influence. Writers in this category included Kurt Lang, who emphasized the need for civilians to counteract the military's conservatism.[16] Rosen cited Barry Posen as arguing that civilians effected change via the instrumental use of mavericks within the military.[17] A variation of this view espoused by Graham Ellison argued that militaries acted as oligopolies (or cartels) that attempted to minimize risk – thereby stifling change.[18] Thus,

[15] Michael D. Doubler, *Closing with the Enemy: How GIs Fought the War in Europe, 1944-1945* (Lawrence, Ks.: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1994), pp. 37, 44-45. Engineers equipped tanks with pipes and cutters to bulldoze through the bocage, enabling tanks to support infantry as they advanced together through hedgerows.
[16] Rosen, *New Ways of War*, p. 138.
[17] Ibid. p. 139.
[18] Ibid. p. 140.

militaries evolved only because they were forced to respond to external pressures or threats. Downie placed many authors in this externalist camp: Jack Snyder, who argued military doctrines changed to preserve military independence; and Scott Sagan and Steven van Evera who held that the military preference for offensive military doctrine enabled the armed forces to maintain a high level of independence and funding.[19]

Downie's internalists, arguing military innovation transpired from the military professional, rooted their discourse in Huntington's understanding of the soldier.[20] Only the military professional could understand the unique concern connected with waging war and organizing and preparing a military force. Additionally, Huntington urged a civil-military divide that circumscribed planning and operations within the purview of the military officer.

Joint Learning Approach

A third theoretical grouping, a joint approach, combined external and internal thought. Kimberly Zisk argued against an either/or approach in her book Engaging the Enemy. Zisk argued that weapons procurement and development signaled a military's willingness to innovate. The desire for resources is not only meant to justify the existence of the military, but to allow commanders to respond and react to the threats they perceive ahead.[21] In her discussion about the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, Sarah Mendelson emphasized learning that depended on both externalities and internalities: the Soviet decision to withdraw took into account domestic politics, foreign relations, changes in personnel, and Mikhail Gorbachev's push for reform.[22]

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[19] Richard D. Downie, *Military Doctrine and the "Learning Institution:" Case Studies in Low Intensity Conflict* (dissertation, Calif.: presented to the Univ. of Southern California, 1995), p. 4.
[20] Ibid., p. 6.
[21] Zisk, *Engaging the Enemy*, pp. 11-12.
[22] Sarah E. Mendelson, "Internal Battles and External Wars: Politics, Learning, and the Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan," *World Politics*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (April 1993), pp. 327-328.

Raymond Garthoff argued that Russian military learning was unique because of the political-military role played by the Communist party.[23] However, his description of changes in doctrine during the late 1980s mirrored externalist explanations. In 1987, the Russian military determined that doctrine required an emphasis on the avoidance of conflict.[24] The role of military doctrine, especially with regard to nuclear weapons, ceased focusing on just victory. This change followed political developments permitted by *glasnost'* and Gorbachev's personal involvement.[25]

The following two sections will describe the performance of Russia's armed security services in terms of ground forces, air forces, special operations and intelligence, and command and control during the two Chechen wars.[26] The analysis will use frontline reporting, after-action reports from think tanks and war colleges, and Russian language articles. The depiction of the second war relies less on frontline reporting, as a media blackout limited independent news. Changes between the wars will provide a template to test the various theories of learning.

The First Chechen War, 1994-1996

Planning and Organization

The Russia military/security apparatus manifested a near systemic dysfunction during the first Chechen war. Anatol Lieven's gripping account of the conflict in Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power, emphasized the pervasive brutality, incompetence, and malaise affecting the Russian military. Yeltsin abdicated responsibility for planning the invasion, checking into a hospital for an operation on his "deviated septum," which was likely a euphuism for Yeltsin's

[23] Raymond L. Garthoff, *Deterrence and the Revolution in Soviet Military Doctrine* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1990), p. 112.
[24] Ibid., p. 101.
[25] Ibid., p. 94.
[26] This essay considers "special forces" any troops with more training and better equipment than regular contract soldiers or conscripts. This includes, among others, OMON (*Otryad Militsii Osobogo Naznacheniya* – special police for the Ministry of Interior), Spetsnaz (*Spetsialnoe Naznachenie* – special mission troops under army intelligence), and SOBR (*Spetsial'nie Otryady Bystrogo Reagirovaniya* – special rapid reaction forces, also known as OMSN). The U.S. distinction between special forces and special operations forces is not applied to the discussion here.

drinking.[27] With responsibility for the operation in the hands of military leaders, the generals ignored rudimentary principles. Units sent to Chechnya did not know each other, had never trained or operated jointly, were cobbled together from different ministries and did not have interoperable communications or similar doctrines. "Jointness" is a current buzzword in Washington, but the benefits assumed from such integration assume common training. Even low-level combined arms actions proved beyond Russian capabilities.

Institutional Memory

The assault on Grozny demonstrated Russian forces could not conduct combined arms urban operations and Russian forces failed to employ even lessons most had learned from WWII when soldiers called urban warfare "the corporal's war" because small corporal-led units operated in isolation. Tall buildings limited communications and observation and necessitated independent decision making.[28] Tanks and infantrymen needed to move in unison, providing mutual reinforcement, but they required heavy firepower backup from tank destroyers, bazookas, and lowered anti-aircraft guns. WWII soldiers learned to control subterranean areas and storied buildings and to avoid wide boulevards by going from building to building using wall-busting techniques to smash through walls, so soldiers could avoid "murder alleys" and instead surprised enemies in adjacent buildings.[29]

Ground Forces - Armor

The armor NATO planners feared would be effectively used during a projected third world war suffered extensive losses in the first Chechen war. The BMD-1 (*boevaya mashchina desantnaya*) armored airborne vehicle, T-72 main battle tank, and other armored vehicles proved

[27] Anatol Lieven, *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1998), p. 103.
[28] Doubler, *Closing with the Enemy*, p. 92.
[29] Ibid., p. 93.

vulnerable to concerted Chechen firepower.[30] Chechens armed with rifles and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) savaged the 131st Motorized Rifle Brigade and the 81st Motorized Rifle Regiment when they entered Grozny because soldiers did not coordinate movements or receive close air support. One column lost 102 (85 percent) of its armored personnel carriers (APCs) and 20 (77 percent) of its battle tanks; the two units also lost all six of their Tunguska surface-to-air missile batteries.[31] In sum, the Russians lost 225 armored vehicles in the first month of combat.[32] Lt. Col. Aleksandr Labzenko cited the absence of even basic communication between units and their own commanders and reported that, "an enormous amount of armored equipment [was] thoughtlessly left in narrow streets without any cover... not protected by the infantry."[33]

Special Forces

A very few ground forces exhibited discipline and order during the first war. Lieven noted the Interior Ministry Special Rapid Reaction Force (SOBR) silently surrounded a house he was visiting and controlled the building's occupants without firing a shot in the middle of the night.[34] Lieven also remarked upon their relative sobriety and cleanliness.[35] However, even the "elite" SOBR, whose capabilities were said to be on par with U.S. regulars, emerged from an arbitrary amalgamation of troops from police, military units, the Federal Counter-intelligence Service, and the Interior Ministry, across all of Russia.[36] This potluck approach to military

[30] Quentin Hodgson, "Is the Russian Bear Learning? An Operational and Tactical Analysis of the Second Chechen War, 1999-2002," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (June 2003), p. 70.
[31] Timothy Thomas, "The Caucasus Conflict and Russian Security: The Russian Armed Forces Confront Chechnya III," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, Ks., Vol. 10, No. 1 (March 1997), <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/chechpt3.htm>.
[32] Lester Grau, "Russian-Manufactured Armored Vehicle Vulnerability in Urban Combat: The Chechnya Experience," *Red Thrust Star*, Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, Ks. (January 1997), <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/rusav/rusav.htm>. In "Mars Unmasked: The Changing Face of Urban Operations," Sean J.A. Edwards noted Gen. Konstantin Pulikovsky's claim that only 16 vehicles were destroyed.
[33] Thomas, *The Caucasus Conflict and Russian Security*.
[34] Ibid., p. 51.
[35] Ibid., pp. 51-52.
[36] Ibid., p. 53.

formations could have just as easily resulted in an incapacitated military unit. Such a formation usually requires time to establish camaraderie and familiarity necessary for unit cohesion.

Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence – C3I

Command, control, communications, and intelligence (C3I) activities failed to magnify the few bright spots in Russian military performance.[37] The 65th Motorized Infantry, sent into Grozny on Dec. 31, 1994, did not have maps of the city, intelligence about enemy concentrations, or even Global Positioning System targeting devices to call in artillery or air strikes when they contacted the enemy.[38] Many units entered battle without basic radios and those that did often lacked encryption capabilities, allowing the Chechens to monitor planned movements and operations.[39] In one successful intelligence operation, the Russians managed to assassinate Dzhokar Dudayev with a guided air-to-ground missile. The operation likely indicates cooperation between Russian air force and possibly the army's GRU (*Glavnoye Razvedyvatelnoye Upravleniye*) intelligence service.[40]

Air Force

The Soviet air force failed to provide adequate close air support or timely intelligence and reconnaissance during the first Chechen campaign. Pilots did not receive adequate training hours and funds were not allocated for aircraft upgrades. Consequently, the Russian air force and army

[37] As a point of contrast, U.S. war planners now use the acronym C4ISR (which stands for command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) to describe modern net-centric warfare. The technological-individual integration envisioned in C4ISR is beyond the capability of many NATO allies, not to mention Russia.
[38] Lieven, *Chechnya*, p 110.
[39] Hodgson, *Is the Russian Bear Learning?*, p. 71.
[40] The GRU and other intelligence organs were responsible for psychological operations and winning the "hearts and minds" of the Chechens, but this essay will not include a discussion of those measures and their effectiveness. Suffice to say the first Chechen war was wildly unpopular and liberal Russians sympathized with the independence movement. The second Chechen war did not evoke similar feelings. Terrorist attacks in Russia and the U.S. muted most criticism about the war from the left. A clampdown on the press under Putin prevented Russians from obtaining unfettered access to the frontlines of the second war.

aviation units could not operate in poor weather or at night. Fixed-wing aircraft depended on dumb bombs. Only 2.3% of strikes used precision-guided munitions (PGMs).[41]

The Russian air force completed some basic tasks during the first war. The air force eliminated 266 Chechen aircraft on the ground.[42] The 4th Air Army and collected aviation units deployed 140 Su-25s, Su-22Ms, and Su-24s, as well as an A-50 Mainstay; these aircraft flew more than 9,000 sorties including 5,300 strike missions and hundreds of reconnaissance missions.[43] Army aviation deployed more than 100 helicopters, including Mi-24s and Mi-8s.[44]

The Russian air force had the numbers to repeatedly strike targets in the open with dumb bombs, but did not effectively do so. Timothy Thomas also argued that the air force ignored command and control centers and other targets of opportunity because of a focus on traditional air missions – destroying the Chechen "air force" and flying combat patrols.[45] In the first year of combat the air force lost: 12 helicopters; 3 fighters; and another 24 fighters were damaged by anti-aircraft fire.[46] Without an integrated air defense, the Chechens still managed to down one in 10 Russian helicopters and damage one in four.[47]

Second Chechen War, 1999-Present

Mark Kramer and many other authors writing about the second Chechen war noted Russia's improved performance against the rebels. The Russians seized and held cities, and most counterattacks failed to route Russian forces. The Russians adopted different tactics against the

[41] Anne C. Aldis and Roger N. McDermott Eds., *Russian Military Reform 1992-2002* (London.: Frank Cass, 2003), p. 152.
[42] Ibid., p. 151.
[43] Ibid., p. 151.
[44] Aldis, *Russian Military Reform*, p. 152.
[45] Timothy Thomas, "Air Operations in Low Intensity Conflict: The Case of Chechnya," *Airpower Journal* (Winter 1997), <http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/apj/apj97/win97/thomas.html>.
[46] Ibid., p. 152.
[47] Hodgson, *Is the Russian Bear Learning?*, p. 72. Coffey: The Chechens never, by most accounts, deployed advanced man-portable air defenses during the first war in significant numbers.

Chechens in 2000 and different leaders sent better trained forces into battle. Security services created a more efficient media blackout during the second war, but the two wars still offer an excellent comparative case study for military learning.

Planning and Organization

The military spent so much time planning and organizing the second campaign that Timothy Thomas of the Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO) at Ft. Leavenworth joked the Russians not only read lessons learned in 1996, but they reread histories of the conflict between Imam Shamil and tsarist forces in the early 1800s.[48] In 1999, Russia amassed 100,000 troops for a multi-phase operation that involved – 1) cordoning Chechnya from the rest of the Caucasus; moving the cordon south to the Terek River; 2) establishing complete control over Chechen territory where Russia could create a model Chechnya; and 3) finally dealing with remaining terrorists in southern mountains. Additionally, the Russians attempted to establish a single command to control the army, internal, and other security forces.[49] In February, 2001 Putin placed the Federal Security Service (FSB – *Federal'naya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti*), successor to the Soviet-era KGB, in charge of the Chechen mission.[50] This change indicated a desire to complete combat operations and move on to a low-level counter-terrorism phase of conflict. Events did not unfold as hoped, but to its credit, the Russian military did plan for the second war.

Command, Control, and...

Improved planning before the onset of conflict improved the Russians' starting position compared to the 1994 invasion, but primitive systems hampered effective implementation. In the 1990s, U.S. war planners developed net-centric warfare theory. Generals wanted to eliminate

[48] Timothy L. Thomas, "A Tale of Two Theaters: Russian Actions in Chechnya in 1994 and 1999," *Analysis of Current Events*, Vol. 12, Nos. 5-6 (September 2000), <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/chechtale.htm>.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Pavel Felgenhauer, "The Russian Army in Chechnya," *Central Asian Survey*, Vol 21. No. 2 (2002), p. 157.

Karl von Clausewitz's "fog of war" with perfect real-time knowledge of the battlespace. In 2001, the report "Building and Development of Armed Forces Plan for 2001-2005," acknowledged Russian backwardness.[51] The plan called for reinforcing the south and unifying command and control (C2) systems.[52] Conventional militaries need to integrate communications and intelligence at multiple levels to succeed in modern warfare. Yet as late as 2001, the Russian command structure still struggled to establish authority over subject power structures.

Ground Forces – Infantry

Ground forces bombarded cities and populated areas at range. Russian soldiers' poor tactics in urban terrain and a fear of ambushes encouraged them to mimic western standoff bombing, but without western precision, using high-explosives and superior firepower to destroy urban landscapes from a distance. Whether or not this proved the local assumption that the Russian conscripts were afraid of Chechens, it did show a capacity to innovate and change.

Soldiers used land-based multiple-launch fuel bombs called "Buratino" (Tos-1) against population centers in the second war, weapons largely absent from the first.[53] The thermobaric blast zone created by the Buratino is deadly against closely packed soldiers in urban settings. The Russians also used RPO-A single-shot flamethrowers against fortified bunkers.[54]

Urban Warfare

Lester Grau and Timothy Thomas, writing for the FMSO and *Marine Corps Gazette*, argued unequivocally that Russian military commanders learned from the two previous battles

[51] Michael Fiszer and Jerzy Grusczynski, "Results of Russia's Military Reforms Exhibited in Minsk," *Journal of Electronic Defense* (July 2003), p. 35.
[52] Ibid., p. 35.
[53] Felgenhauer, *The Russian Army in Chechnya*, p. 158. Lester W. Grau and Timothy Smith, "A 'Crushing' Victory: Fuel-Air Explosives and Grozny 2000," *Marine Corps Gazette* (August 2000), Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, Ks., <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/fuelair/fuelair.htm>.
[54] Ibid.

for Grozny - January 1995 and August 1996 – in a third fight for the city in January 2000.[55] Russian forces surrounded the city and refused ceasefires that would allow the Chechens to resupply and rearm. Russian troops in the city learned to advance to contact the enemy, but quickly pull back 300 meters – the maximum effective range for the RPG-7 and Kalashnikov.[56] Once Russian troops located the enemy, they called in heavy artillery from the surrounding hills. They also depended on former mayor Bislan Gantemirov and his local militia to act as scouts.[57]

Ground Forces - Armor and Artillery

Instead of entering Grozny where they were vulnerable to RPG fire, tanks and artillery took up station on hilltops ringing the city to provide indirect fire support. Troops used zonal-targeting, which allowed a rifle company to quickly contact battalion-level officers for additional indirect fire support from nearby assets.[58] The decentralization of authority plus the addition of mortars and batteries allowed for a concentration of firepower not seen in the first Chechen war.[59] Building on this, Russian forces employed several tactics not employed since Afghanistan, including the fire block, artillery sweep, defensive box barrage, and fire corridor.[60]

Air Force

The first air campaign provided valuable training for Russian pilots, but the Russian military failed to upgrade aircraft and weapons during the interregnum to the point where air power would play a decisive role in 1999. Stephane Lefebvre wrote that the Russians introduced

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[55] Lester W. Grau and Timothy L. Thomas, "Russian Lessons Learned From the Battles For Grozny," *Marine Corps Gazette* (April 2000), Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, Ks., <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Rusn_leslrn.htm>.
[56] Scott E. McIntosh, *Thumping the Hive: Russian Neocritical Warfare in Chechnya* (thesis, Calif.: presented to the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, Calif., September 2004), p. 61.
[57] Grau, *Russian Lessons Learned From the Battles For Grozny*.
[58] McIntosh, *Thumping the Hive*, p. 61.
[59] Ibid., p. 62.
[60] Ibid., p. 62. Fire blocks barrage an area to pin an enemy. Fire sweeps are systematic and evenly-spaced harassing fire against enemies in remote areas. A defensive box barrages a forward position to prevent overruns and fire corridors target suspected enemy artillery sites while barraging troops.

the Pchela-1T unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) in the second war, but reports placed the UAV in the field as early as 1995.[61] Lefebvre also noted the introduction of Ka-50 prototypes, but the helicopter never entered full-rate production.[62] The night-capable Mi-28N will not enter service in significant numbers this decade. Combat experience improved pilots' skills, remedying inadequate training hours, but aircraft never received real-time, all-weather, and precision technologies necessary to capitalize on accrued experience.

Some analysts suggested the air force learned to depend more heavily on the Frogfoot during the second conflict, but this is only backed by generalizations.[63] The Finnish Fighter Tactics Academy said Russian Su-25s led the second air campaign, but Frogfoots and Fencers both played an active - if sometimes ineffective - role in both conflicts.[64] The air force flew 5,800 missions in less than a year according to Col. Gen. Anatoly Kornukov, but these were not nighttime strikes and there is little indication of the prevalence of forward air controllers, who are necessary – barring aircraft upgrades – to improve ground attack accuracy.[65]

Some technical improvements for aircraft are underway, but funding issues perpetually delay upgrades. The MoD is equipping Su-27s with new radars and precision weaponry and Su-25s are being upgraded with new displays and terrain-mapping radars, but as few as five upgraded versions of the latter platform could enter service in 2006, more than a decade after the first war began.[66] The Ministry of Defense regularly announces planned upgrades and

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[61] Stephane Lefebvre, *The Reform of the Russian Air Force* (Surrey, U.K.: Conflict Studies Research Center, July 2002), <http://www.da.mod.uk/CSRC/documents/Russian/B57>.
[62] Ibid., p. 13.
[63] Alexander M. Golts and Tonya Putnam, "State Militarism and its Legacies," *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Fall 2004), pp. 137. Hodgson, *Is the Russian Bear Learning?* p. 68.
[64] Heikki Nikunen, "The Current State of the Russian Air Force: Tactical Viewpoints," Dec. 28, 2000, <http://www.saunalahti.fi/fta/ruaf-3-6.htm>.
[65] Nikunen, *The Current State of the Russian Air Force*.
[66] Denis Trifanov, "Russia Boosts Counterinsurgency Efforts in North Caucasus," *Jane's Intelligence Review* (February 2006), p. 37.

improvements, but few programs are ever carried through to completion. In 2000, the Russian military still had not procured the planned "N"-version Hind helicopters; by 2001 a "PN"-version night- and fog-capable Hind was still in the experimental stage.[67]

Special Forces

Special forces in Chechnya continued hunting high-value targets in the second war, but their success has been mixed. Russia's FSB assassinated Samir Saleh Abdullah Al-Suwailem (also known as Khattab) in March of 2002, with a poisoned letter delivered by messenger.[68] On March 8, 2005 the FSB claimed credit for killing former president Aslan Maskhadov in Tolstoy-Yurt.[69] However, Russian forces failed to capture or kill terrorist leader Shamil Basayev, despite numerous reports of his demise.[70] In fact, Basayev claimed responsibility for assassinating Chechnya's Russian-backed President Akhmad Kadyrov during a parade in May 2004.[71] In February 2000, during a three-day battle, Chechens wiped out the 2nd Battalion of the 104th Paratroop Regiment, Pskov Division that parachuted into the Argun Gorge.[72] An OMON group later took heavy casualties in the same region.[73]

Still, Russian special operators are considered competent and capable forces, while regular forces remain undependable. Russian high command believes it can train and improve special forces units. Accordingly, in 2006 the Russian Security Council ordered security agencies with special operations arms to boost training and equipment and develop long-term strategies

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[67] Felgenhauer, *The Russian Army in Chechnya*, pp. 161-162.
[68] "Chechens 'Confirm' Warlord's Death," BBC News, April 29, 2002, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1957411.stm>.
[69] Musa Muradov and Sergey Mashkin, "Aslan Maskhadov Killed," *Kommersant*, March 9, 2005, <http://www.kommersant.com/page.asp?id=552963>.
[70] Basayev died on July 10, 2006, when explosives being transported in a truck detonated accidentally. "Chechen Rebels Confirm Basayev's Death, Blame it on Accident," MosNews, July 11, 2006, <http://www.mosnews.com/news/2006/07/11/basayevconfermeddeath.shtml>.
[71] "Profile: Shamil Basayev," BBC News, July 29, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4727935.stm>.
[72] Thomas, *A Tale of Two Theaters*. Air power could not protect this force because of poor weather, wrote Pavel Felgenhauer citing the Russian high command. Felgenhauer, *The Russian Army in Chechnya*, p. 161.
[73] Ibid.

for their organizations operating in the Caucasus.[74] With training and new equipment, special forces should be able to operate in rugged areas like the Argun, the implication being that such operations – regardless of state investment – are beyond the capability of regulars.[75]

Because Russian special forces are effective, military leaders are giving them a greater combat role, command authority, and boosting their numbers. In 2005, Defense Minister Ivanov announced the creation of two special Defense Ministry mountain warfare brigades for the Caucasus.[76] Meanwhile, the Interior Ministry created a special anti-terrorist crime center with a command responsible for OMON, SOBR and special interior forces (VV – *Vnutrennikh Voisk*).[77]

Analysis and Conclusion

Pavel Baev and Roy Allison both argued for a void of innovation in The Russian Military: Power and Policy over the course of the Chechen wars.[78] Baev argued the joint interpretation that innovation only occurred with the "convergence" of external and internal factors.[79] He blamed internal opposition for the Russian military's failure to reform, but also the disintegration of the armed forces as a whole in the 1990s. General officers eager to maintain their status militated against any streamlining that threatened their prestige.[80] He said that only an end to the Chechen conflict could provide space for genuine reform.

Allison also believed that the war in Chechnya impeded reform and development, but he did not assess the situation as starkly. The first Chechen war did not create a large movement for reform and politicians failed to exert external pressure. The few changes that occurred at the

[74] Trifanov, *Russia Boosts Counterinsurgency Efforts in North Caucasus*, p. 34.
[75] Ibid., p. 34.
[76] Ibid., p. 36.
[77] Ibid., p. 36.
[78] Steven E. Miller and Dmitri Trenin, eds., *The Russian Military: Power and Policy* (Cambridge, Mass.: American Academy of Arts and Sciences).
[79] Ibid., p. 67.
[80] Ibid., p. 68.

tactical level did not portend significant change and learning because Russia did not incorporate Chechen lessons for every other local intervention by Russian military forces.[81] Allison also viewed a lack of adherence to international norms as indicative of a Russian military learning failure.[82] The first assumption, about incorporating Chechen lessons and applying them to every instance of operations other than war, is a broad and simplistic transference. For example, the trans-Dniestr region has never required the same application of force as Chechnya. The second assumption about respecting human rights in modern conflict is based on the assumption of norms that are not universally held.

Allison further disallowed military learning by crediting internecine Chechen conflict with allowing Russia to create a "construct" of imagined Russian power.[83] Allison also included several caveats about performance during the second war: the Russians gave troops better training and conducted command staff exercises; tactics at the individual level evolved; air power improved; and organizational and command structures underwent change.[84] His criticism ultimately centered on the absence of a "modern counterinsurgency doctrine" for the second war. This remains a significant deficiency that will impair Russia's ability to achieve a lasting victory, but Allison's exceptions acknowledged a broad range of changes. The failure to establish permanent readiness mobile response forces also received criticism. Politicians supported the idea, but military necessity demanded attention to the immediate war in Chechnya instead. This prioritization, according to Allison, evinced a rejection of change – but was likely rather a practical response to the most pressing demands on the ground.

[81] Ibid., p. 127.
[82] Ibid., p. 126.
[83] Ibid., p. 128.
[84] Ibid., pp. 128-129.

The Russian military operated more effectively at the tactical and operational levels during the second war. The Russian military learned to use brute force in the second Chechen war because it did not have a military that was capable of conducting a modern "bloodless" war. Russian soldiers learned to apply their superior firepower on the battlefield more effectively, while simultaneously increasing their own chance of survival. An effective chain of command could have taken advantage of minor battlefield achievements by sharing this learning vertically and horizontally within the military. Or, general staffs and military colleges could have evolved new strategies that took battle-tested units and coordinated new doctrines and joint operations. Neither event took place, limiting Russian military improvement to low-level internal learning.

The Russians did not just reinvent the World War II wheel in Chechnya, as Sean Edwards suggested in his assessment of military operations in Grozny.[85] When Russian forces moved into the southern mountainous portion of Chechnya, the armed forces had to relearn counterinsurgency tactics developed during the Afghanistan campaign. Conceivably, the Russians could have considerably boosted military efficacy by integrating special forces with aircraft modernized for precision strike. Such jointness would have considerably improved the ability of troops to amass firepower on defined enemy targets. The military did increase its focus on special operations troops, but it also used tanks and artillery indiscriminately against population centers. Thus, the army learned to use its troops more effectively, but not to train effective soldiers. The increased dependence on special military units had a downside as well: this will increasingly balkanize the military hierarchy at a time when the chiefs are attempting to unify commands. More chains of command make joint operations and combined arms warfare harder to realize on the battlefield.

[85] Sean J.A. Edwards, "Mars Unmasked: The Changing Face of Urban Operations" (Santa Monica: RAND Arroyo Center, 2000), p. 27.

The changes between the two wars suggest learning. However, a weak institutional memory – due in part to turnover among conscripts, a non-existent non-commissioned officer (NCO) corps, and an organization that is reluctant to change and adapt – is unlikely to retain these lessons if fighting ceases completely. A "learning organization that institutionalizes the organization's learning philosophy," as described by Lt. Col. Stephen Gerras, calls for a more thoroughgoing transformation of discourse and cooperation in military operations than what occurred between the two Chechen wars.[86] The Russian military learned from the first conflict, but a system trained to understand, develop, and disseminate new theories did not emerge.

The Russian Military Doctrine of 2000 called for a military that could effect:

> standardized command and control of troops and control of weapon assets, communications, intelligence-gathering, strategic-early warning, and electronic warfare systems, and precision mobile non-nuclear weapons and the information support systems for them.[87]

The military showcased few of these improvements during the second war although it succeeded by focusing on already-existing strengths: greater numbers, massive firepower, heavy weaponry, and dominance of the sky. General officers have not created an institution where leaders spend as much effort thinking about learning as they do carrying out the basic functions of command.[88]

Change is taking place at the tactical level rather than in headquarters, leaving the army unprepared to move beyond the current crisis in Chechnya. Russian fighter pilots "trained" in combat and special forces troops received more training and money as the conflict progressed. Yet, too often those were standalone improvements - such as new sensors for aircraft or radios for troops on the ground - done without any view towards creating an integrated and responsive military force. Ground forces learned to avoid close quarters combat and blast their enemies

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[86] Lt. Col. Stephen Gerras, *The Army as a Learning Organization* (Strategy Research Project, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pa., March 3, 2002), p. 1.
[87] *Russia's Military Doctrine*, Arms Control Today (Russian Ministry of Defense, 2000).
[88] Col. John Richard, *The Learning Army, Approaching the 21st Century as a Learning Organization* (Strategy Research Project, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pa., May 22, 1997), p. iii.

from a distance. These changes improved military efficacy in the short-term, but these tactics have not led to new doctrine and the Russian army does not seem prepared to continuously learn from its mistakes and widely disseminate lessons learned at the lowest levels of combat.

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US-Russian Energy Security in the Caucasus: The Prospects for Conflict in the National Interest

By: Aaron G. Sander

It has taken energy (namely coal and oil) to produce the industrialized and economically prosperous nations of today. That is certain to change in the future, as fossil fuels are expiring; however, until that period comes to pass, oil will continue to be an integral part of the modern world. As the world is running out of oil, the choice is now whether to make realistic efforts for a viable alternative sooner, with the least amount of growing pains, or later. The US government, as well as, it seems, the other industrialized nations, have chosen the latter; and, therefore, they have concluded they have a need to secure what fossil fuels still remain.

The Caspian issue may be seen as an extension of the 19th century Great Game (Hopkirk 1990, 1; STRATFOR1 2000), though this "round" reflects the economic importance of energy resources in southern Eurasia. Early in the 1900s, it became well apparent that oil would be vital for the future security of states (Engdahl 2004, 37). From European navies switching to oil as their primary power source (Klare 2004, 148), to the battle for Stalingrad in World War II, the efforts for control of energy resources still abound in the Caucasus.

The majority of proven global reserves lie in the Middle East, where the US already has made significant inroads in Saudi Arabia (Klare 2004, 26), and has a formidable presence in Iraq. With the threat of an impending oil peak on the horizon, western efforts to secure an alternate source of energy outside of the Middle East has become a matter of national security.

From the Silk Road Strategy Act and the Quadrennial Defense Report, to observations in pipeline politics and military activity in Eurasia, efforts to secure US supply is evident. Clearly

US activities in the Caucasus can be seen to reflect the US policy of maintaining its position as global hegemon. This policy has not come without its challengers, notably Russia.

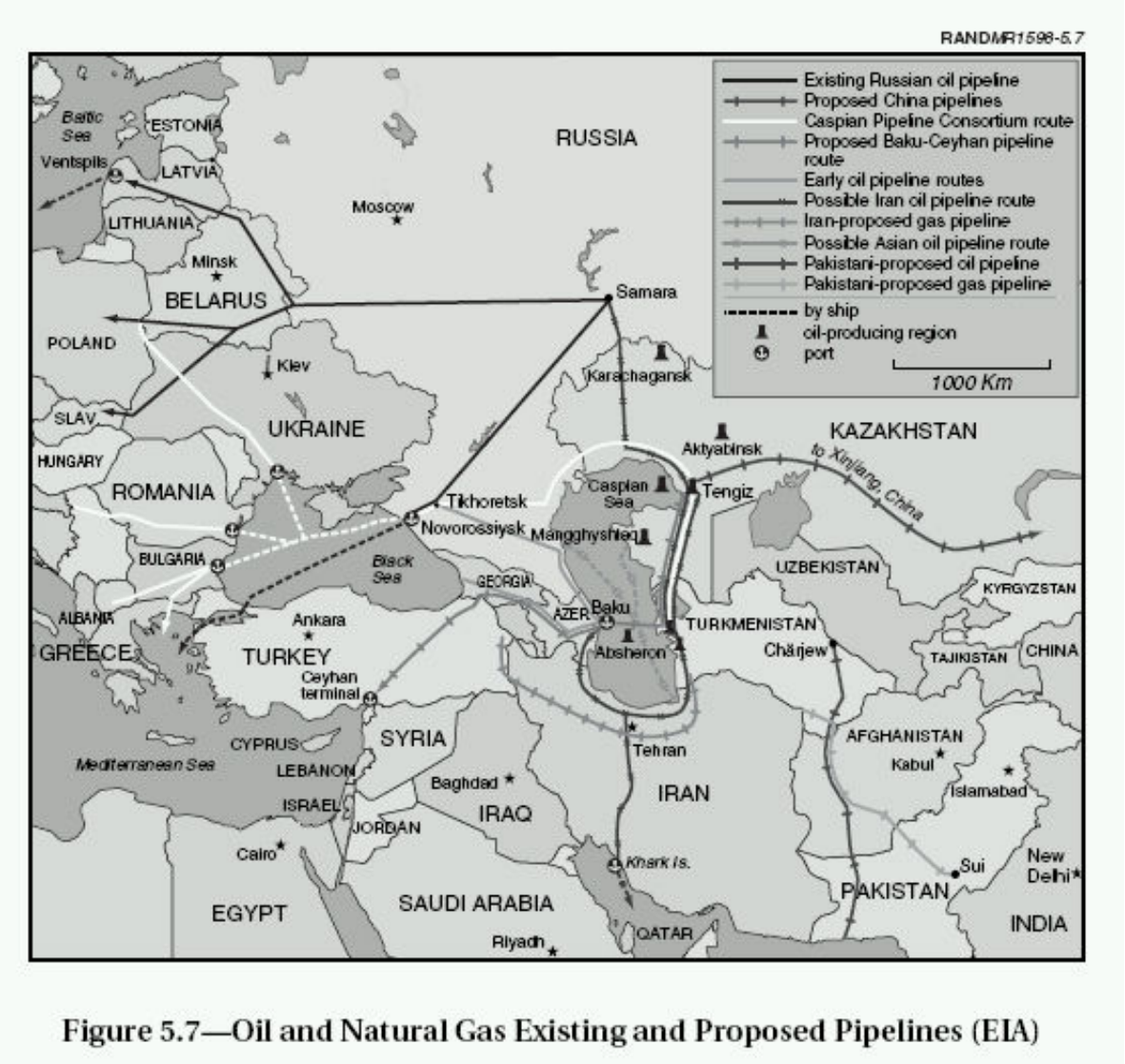

Figure 5.7—Oil and Natural Gas Existing and Proposed Pipelines (EIA)

(Mahnovski 2003, 116)

These events have helped spur a struggle for influence in the region. Particular issues of debate are: 1) Does Russia have the right to exact rents on Soviet energy infrastructure and 2) Does the US has the right to protect energy resource supplies from the Caspian. If the two powers do not to cooperate in the region, there is question as to what extent the US will be willing to project its energy security, and whether this could involve force protection.

By referencing current policy and examining current events, it is possible to make a fair assessment of the possible use of force in Transcaucasia.

A Look at Policy and Action

Perhaps the first indication of establishing influence in the Caspian region of the Former Soviet Union (FSU) came in 1992. Abroad, the US was involved in the Balkan conflict; and at home, a policy memo called the Defense Planning Guide (DPG) for 1994-1999 was drafted. By this time, it was clear that for any state to maintain its own welfare, it must have a reliable source of energy; and that if it had not already secured this, it had better begin. This need significantly increases should a state wish to project power beyond its borders. When the DPG first appeared, this certainly seemed to be the main goal, to protect US hegemony. To do so, it was willing to dominate the Eurasian landmass in order to thwart any foreign competition (Gellman 1992; Tyler 1992). A goal in this approach was to diversify US sources of petroleum as outlined in the 2001 National Energy Policy. While the language may be softer, and with less emphasis on unilateral action, the proposal of looking toward the Central Asian/South Caucasus (CASC) region for trade, investment and resources remains unchanged (NEPDG 2001).

In order to bring more oil to market, the US has adopted a policy of diversification, where the Caspian region has been suggested as one possible alternative source of energy. Geostrategically, the area also has immense importance (Blandy 2001, 38). In fact, the East-West (E/W) energy and transportation corridor that has been proposed may have more to do with geopolitics rather than the consolidation of resources. As the route bypasses Russia and Iran, the route's importance may simply be to curb rival influence in the region (Nanay 2003, 3). Alternatively, Caspian oil may not even be intended for US consumption, but rather for the

European market (Oliker 2003, 221) (STRATFOR2 2003). Nonetheless, repeated US calls for CASC resources come from analysts and US politicians alike (Baker 1997).

Economic Ties, and Energy Acquisition

Further evidence demonstrating US energy interest within the region is in the Silk Road Strategy Act (SRSA) of 1999, where its findings support stability, democracy and an E/W corridor with US investment across the Caucasus and into Central Asia (U.S. Senate 1999, 2-4). Emphasis on US investment in the region was also forwarded by special advisor for the US on Caspian energy issues, Steven Mann (STRATFOR3 2003).

There is no doubt that Western investors have contributed heavily to energy development and its transportation to Western markets (Goldman 1995); from the Caspian to the Mediterranean (Baran 2003) as well as to Kazakhstan (Nanay 2005, 142; STRATFOR4 2003). In the West's quest for diversified energy acquisition, the Caucasus' strategic position bridges two vital areas (Blandy 2001, 38).

Contested Pipeline Routes: E/W vs. N/S

Soviet infrastructure in northern and central Eurasia relied on routes stretching from north to south (N/S), as well as from east to west through Europe. However, with the fall of the USSR, Russia is more restricted in CASC. Now looking toward energy resources in CASC, the US and Europe require transport on an E/W axis. As previously mentioned, at stake for Russia are transit rights through old Soviet and new Russian lines, giving Russia the ability to tax the transfer of petroleum (Ebel 2005, 6). For the US, secure transit of oil resources from east to west, not hindered by former, current, or future adversaries, is of utmost importance.

Now that Russia has encountered transit difficulty from parts of its former empire in the Caucasus and Central Asia, Russia wants to ship as much as possible through Europe and the

Black Sea (through the Straits). So far, Russia has been able to build the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) pipeline (partially backed by Western investment), from the Tengiz oil field in Kazakhstan, through the northern Caucasus to Novirossiysk on the Black Sea (Matzke 1997). Russia has also been able to transport some oil through its soviet lines from Baku, in Azerbaijan, going north through the northern Caucasus to, again, Novirossiysk, the Northern Pipeline (Matzke 1997). However, it faces increasing opposition from a US NATO ally, as Turkey has insisted that increased shipping through the Straits will be restricted (STRATFOR2 2003). In addition to the Black Sea/Turkish Straits route, Russia carries approximately 40 percent of its oil exports to Eastern and Central Europe through its Druzhba and Adria lines (Kalicki and Elkind 2005, 151).

Challenging Russia's former control over the region and its energy infrastructure is the US and its series of pipelines, both existing and proposed. The most popular Western-backed pipeline, running along the E/W corridor, is the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) Pipeline. This line avoids both Iran and Russia as it winds from the Azeri coast through Georgia and out onto the Turkish Mediterranean coast (Svante, Tsereteli and Socor 2005, 20, 30; STRATFOR5 2003; TurkishPress.com 2005; Matzke 1997). Also, the Baku-Tbilisi-Supsa (BTS) route, mostly used to ship "early" oil from the Caspian to the West, also uses the Turkish Straits from the Black Sea to bring oil to western markets (Svante, Tsereteli and Socor 2005, 20, 30; Matzke 1997). As more oil is shipped through the BTC and/or the BTS, it is likely to reduce the amount shipped through Russia's lines. The issue is a source of friction between the two powers. It would seem from the two Western pipelines in the region that the main focus is on Azerbaijan, as it is from its source in Baku that the shipments begin. However, this is not the case.

Azeri's claim on the Caspian has never been the main aim of the US search for diversification. Instead, it has been the vast oil fields in Kazakhstan (Nanay 2003, 4; USACC1 2006; STRATFOR6 2002; Paton 2003). At the moment, while not the best alternative, oil from Kazakhstan is being shipped across the Caspian to Baku (Starr and Cornell 2005), extending the Eurasian Corridor past the Caucasus and into Central Asia (Matzke 1997; STRATFOR7 2005; USACC2 2006). Whether the countries choose to send oil through the BTC (STRATFOR8 2006; USACC3 2006) or the BTS (STRATFOR7 2005; USACC2 2006; Matzke 1997), a significant portion of Kazakh oil would be shipped via western pipelines, rather than Russian lines. At a glance, the BTC looks more convenient as it ships directly from the Mediterranean, rather requiring passage through the Straits, already congested with a multitude of other tankers. In the near term, however, this should not pose a problem as crude shipments from Supsa will follow a different route to the world market.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the Balkans underwent a significant chain of events which resulted in NATO intervention and occupation. This area, which allows for secured transit along an ancient Roman E/W trade route known as the Via Egnatia, is even more important than Central Asia locations. A US-sponsored Albanian Macedonian Bulgarian Oil (AMBO) pipeline will transport CASC resources along this route from the Bulgarian port at Bourgas to its exit at Vlores in Albania (FreeRepublic 1998; Engdahl 2004, 238-245; Mahnovski 2003, 119; STRATFOR11 2000). The direction of AMBO runs nearly perpendicular to Russia's N/S line from Bourgas to its exit at Alexandroupolis, Greece (STRATFOR1 2000; STRATFOR9 2003; STRATFOR4 2003). Consequently, Russia has lost another export option (Alexander's Gas and Oil 2000; Deliso 2005; BBC News 2004). Once AMBO is completed, the Turkish Straits may very well see a sharp decline in Russian tanker traffic. In addition to supplying oil to European

and world markets through Western pipelines in the Caucasus and Balkans, another major development in the Crimea is taking place.

Russia sends approximately 40% of its petroleum export to Europe, through its Druzhba line, which traverses Belorussia, Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, to Croatia's port on the coast through its Adria line (Kalicki and Elkind 2005, 151). Russia's export to Europe was challenged by a Western pipeline through the Black Sea port of Odessa to Brody in Ukraine (STRATFOR10 2004). The pipeline, however, was not used for a period of time, until the Russian government convinced Ukraine to reverse the flow to enable more Russian oil shipments into the Black Sea (STRATFOR11 2003). While Russia has been able to capitalize on the West's temporary disuse of the line, that may change very soon (STRATFOR12 2005). As the AMBO and Odessa-Brody lines could impose on Russia's current supply into the regions of the Crimea and the Balkans, the addition from Brody to Plock, in Poland, has the potential to further restrict Russia's export routes to market (STRATFOR13 2005).

When observing the recent and current pipeline maneuvers within the Eurasian theatre, a pattern to outflank the Russian state comes into view. The E/W pattern of Western pipelines should prove to highlight this. However, pipelines are vulnerable, as states are also vulnerable to oil dependency. It has, therefore, been necessary to secure these routes militarily.

Military Ties, and Energy Security

As energy diversification has become more important since the 1990s, so has the increase in energy security. A combination of reasons (international terrorism, regional insurgency, foreign competition) requires states to physically protect their energy supply lines. Through individual bilateral agreements, the US has taken steps to do so. As well, NATO is fast becoming

a valuable force in energy security (Gallis 2006, 5). US/NATO troops are in the three regions with sensitive western pipelines noted above, along the E/W corridor.

The 1990s Balkan conflict saw an expansion of NATO influence into the region. Following the countries involved in the AMBO pipeline, we see Albania and Macedonia participating in NATO's Membership Action Plan, slated to become members in NATO's sixth round of expansion (NATO1 2006). NATO currently has missions that are based in Albania (NATO2 2006), Kosovo (NATO3 2006), and Macedonia (NATO4 2006). Bulgaria, already a NATO member, has allowed a series of US bases within its territory, where joint NATO exercises have taken place (STRATFOR14 2006; RoB-MoD 2006).

Bulgaria's access to the Black Sea makes it a very strategic ally in the E/W energy corridor (NATO5 2004). Two other littoral states on the Black Sea also would like closer ties with the West and the security of NATO: Ukraine with its Odessa-Brody to Plock pipeline; and Georgia with the West's Caucasus pipelines.

Presently divided along its mountainous terrain, the Transcaucasus region is split with Russia to the north and the FSU to the south. The two countries bordering Russia in this region are Georgia and Azerbaijan. It is within these two geostrategic states that two very important pipelines run (with the BTC this includes Turkey) and where the US is attempting to stabilize the flow of oil (Cornell, Tsereteli and Socor 2005, 21,26,28). Both countries participate in NATO's Partnership for Peace program (Cornell et al. 2004, 70, 73). While Georgia has benefited from relations with NATO, it has also had bilateral military ties with the US (DoD 2006, 12, 14), particularly through US European Command (Klare 2004, 72). For Azerbaijan, in addition to training (ANS News 2004), the US has cooperated with the Azeris on Caspian security (USACC4 2006), and may be asked to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute (Blank 1994, 11),

an issue under current Russian arbitration. To complete the solidification of the Caucasus, even Armenia, traditionally a Russian ally, has expressed interest in NATO (RFE/RL 2004). NATO has a keen interest in the Caucasus, as well as across the Caspian (NATO5 2004).

The Transcaspian region, being the link between Central Asia and the Caucasus, is a focus of the new Great Game. Moving across the Caspian, we also see NATO has given Central Asia particular attention (Cornell, Tsereteli and Socor 2005, 21,27). As the Caspian is a geopolitically important zone (Sokolsky and Charlick-Paley 1999, 81), NATO also has formed an individual partnership with Kazakhstan (NATO6 2005). Additionally, in 1999 US Central Command's area of responsibility was expanded to include this vitally important region (Klare 2004, 4, 132).

It is possible now to see the significance of the Caucasian bridge between east and west. Countries in the south Caucasus have an important role to play in the transit of resources and the regions' security (NATO8 2000). And it is in the Caucasus, should tensions escalate between the great powers, that a conflict could arise between the US and Russia.

Energy Security and Force Projection

Having outlined recent trends in energy security, through the routing of pipelines and the expansion of the US dominated security organization, it is possible to look at circumstances in which the US could be heading for a direct confrontation for power in the Transcaucasus. The Caspian sits at the heart of a zone of instability that Zbigniew Brzezinski has referred to as the "Eurasian Balkans" (1989, 123). The area "threatens to become a cauldron of ethnic conflict and great power rivalry" (Brzezinski 1989, 195); one in which American personnel could be deployed for combat operations (Klare 2004, 139). Whether the threat originates from within the region, or outside of the region, it is pipeline security that would bring troops into harm's way.

For the West, security along the Caucasian energy routes has been a great concern. The three countries along the BTC have been fraught with secessionist movements: the Abkhazians, South Ossetians, and Adjarians in Georgia (Pravda.Ru1 2003); the Karabakh issue in Azerbaijan (MacDougall 1997, 96-97); and the Kurds in Turkey (STRATFOR15 2005). Mitigating these threats, the South Caucasus countries are working on safeguarding the energy routes (RGA1 2003). With our commitment to the region, through investment and security ties, the US is at an increased risk of being drawn into conflict (Oliker 2003, 225).

The RAND Corporation has concluded that conflict resulting in a US armed response is fairly likely in CASC (Oliker and Szayna 2003, 353). Other analysts concur that instability in the Caucasus is likely (Cornell et al. 2004, 12, 13). While it may be that conflict and response would most likely stem from regional terrorism (Oliker and Szayna 2003, 355), it is energy security that is the key driver (NIC 2000, 10), and it would be to secure energy supplies that would bring US military action (Oliker and Szayna 2003, 356-357; Klare 2004, 137). However, it is not necessarily internal disputes that will destabilize the region. Resembling south Eastern Europe, the "Eurasian Balkans" can assign much of its instability to outside sources.

Like the Great Game of the 1800s, great powers are maneuvering for control of key territory. It is this competition that could spell conflict due to escalating tension (Oliker 2003, 185, 240). In the case of pipelines, we can see how Russia's energy dominance in the region has waned. From independence in the FSU, along with western investment, events could eventually lead Russia to rely on western supply lines (STRATFOR16 2003). It has already been suggested that they may utilize US backed pipelines to ship oil to the world market (RGA2 2004). This turn of events, of course, is not favorable to Russia (Blum 2002, 3).

In fact, Russia has been working hard to prevent this dependency and weakened influence in the region (Blagov 2006; Klare 2004, 154). It is clear that Russian leaders are upset by US and NATO's growing military presence in the region (Klare 2004, 156). Some Russian analysts even believe that the only reason for expansion could be to prepare for a likely conflict (Pravda.Ru2 2004). Putin wants to put Western expansion in check and reassert influence through the Caucasian corridor (Torbakov 2004), and if need be by force (Oliker 2003, 187). Russia has a history of destabilizing the CASC region for its own purposes (MacDougall 1997, 96-97; STRATFOR17 2006). It has even been alleged that Russian intelligence has attempted to sabotage the US's E/W corridor (Walsh 2003). If proven, Russian presence and possible attempts to reassert influence in the area would not be taken lightly by the US.

The US, with its increasing involvement in the region, would react sharply to renewed Russian expansion into the Caucasus (Blum 2001, 4). Since the recent western supported coups from the Black Sea to Central Asia, the region is increasingly dominated by western influence (STRATFOR18 2005). As such, there are calls from within the US to keep hegemony within the region (Brzezinski 1989, 30), and on energy security in particular (Kalicki and Goldwyn 2005, 12). To what ends the US has been willing to guarantee this is an intriguingly curious matter, as it has been claimed that the US has had its hand in the northern Caucasus.

Russia's debacle around its Chechen province has spurred the lack of investor confidence in Russia's energy pipelines running parallel to the Caucasus mountain range (STRATFOR19 1999). A Chechen official has even stated that the Chechen rebellion was meant to aid the completion of the BTC pipeline (Kazaz 2000). If so, the Chechen rebels may not be acting alone (Kober 2000, 7-8). Russia has made claims that the CIA has been present, and operating effectively, in the North Caucasus (Simonov and Oku 2005; Mosnews 2005), against Russia

(The Jamestown Foundation 2006). At minimum, we know that the US is considering direct aid development to the Chechen breakaway province (STRATFOR20 2005).

US actions, seen as provocation, have threatened Russia. As STRATFOR has noted, "Brussels and Washington alike envision ultimately adding a major natural gas export line and massive rail network, all designed to pry the entire southern flank of the former Soviet Union off of Russia" (STRATFOR21 2005). Along with the US, the OSCE is of the mind that the Caucasus is an integral part to European stability (Blank 1995). Due to this provocation, Russia is likely to react (STRATFOR22 2005).

Russia is sending clear signals that it aims to maintain its presence on its southern periphery. From a Russian regional air defense system in Armenia to Russian gunboats on the Caspian, the militarization of the region is increasing (Shermatova 1998). One year ago, Russia took effort to show the US that it is still a force to be reckoned with, and may act militarily to reign in territory it feels is within its sphere of influence. Russian military exercises have been meant "to check the expanding U.S. geopolitical offensive into Russia's near abroad by sending a message to Washington and reinvigorating the Russian military" (STRATFOR23 2005). Additionally, Russia recently announced renewed effort through its Collective Security Treaty Organization, in reaction to NATO's "growing encirclement" (Bhadrakumar 2006). As a possible showdown nears, the potential for armed conflict with Russian forces increases (Larouche 1999), particularly since the aim seems to be Russia's isolation.

Conclusion

With the world's oil supply nearing its peak, the powerful industrialized nations have taken measures to protect their supplies. As time passes, and the geostrategic value of key

locations increase exponentially, and the melding of energy security and national security have come to be solidified as parallel policies.

This has been an analysis of the capacity and willingness of the US to secure Western petroleum supplies from the Caspian. Its primary challenger, Russia, threatens this and has shown that transporting oil through Russian pipelines is not within the US's strategic interests. With the increased militarization in the Transcaspian region, along the Eurasian corridor, and claims of foul play from both sides, it is hard to imagine the region escaping another episode of great power intervention and conflict. As the US military is being transformed in order to better operate in the Central Asia and the Caucasus region (Giragosian 2004, 65), and as its government has established its willingness to act preemptively (Bush 2002, 15), the prospects of conflict exploding beyond the Transcaucasus region is frightening.

If policy continues along the current course of "securitizing" (Engdahl 2004, 12) the E/W energy corridor at the exclusion of Russia, as Brzezinski has advocated, one can wonder if we may be edging toward war. The escalating tension in the region could amount to the events in the Balkans prior to WWI, where Russia is forced to react in order to maintain its great power status. While possible, more likely will be a regional conflict(s) played out by proxies (Klare 2004, 178-179). Equally likely, particularly as time progresses, would be sporadic low-intensity conflicts involving US personnel as Klare refers to:

> The consequences are not hard to imagine, American forces will speed overseas to protect oil fields, pipelines, refineries, and tanker routes more and more frequently, and they will often encounter enraged local populations. The American military can help deter attacks on vital oil facilities and ensure the continuing flow of petroleum, but it can never guarantee that our rising demand for imported oil will be satisfied. All that is certain is that we will pay for it with an increasing sacrifice of blood (Klare 2004, 73).

Unfortunately, much of the above may be unknown to the public, and unless governments choose to work toward a viable alternative energy source, perhaps in cooperation, eventual conflict and loss will be inevitable, with the ostensible goal to secure national interest.

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