

A Saga of How Vladimir Osipov visited Monterey
TOLD BY
Vladislav Krasnov
Vladimir Osipov, RIP and my 1979 article about him

Vladimir Osipov ([Russian](#): Владимир Николаевич Осипов; 9 August 1938 – 20 October 2020) was a Russian writer who founded the Soviet [samizdat](#) journal Veche (Assembly). The journal is considered to be an important document of the nationalist or [Slavophile](#) strand of the [Soviet dissident](#) movement. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladimir_Osipov

Sadly, I have to submit to the RAGA site this dated article below while I am still sorting out my recollections of my dear friend and fellow dissident who played an outstanding role in making Russia's liberation from the totalitarian Communist rule more peaceful and less painful for the people than it could have been otherwise. On my invitation Mr. Osipov visited California in April 1990. At Stanford I served as his interpreter. At the [Monterey Institute of International Studies](#) he was delighted that our students followed him in Russian. I am also grateful to my publishers in INDIA that they chose Osipov to be the hero of the first chapter of my book [From the East to the West a Message of Peace](#). I am not sure whether he was familiar with Mahatma Gandhi's writings, but I am sure he was just as benevolent and certainly Non-Violent.

Rest in PEACE, my Dear Friend! Below are my recollections of you as published in the RCDA journal in 1979 with minor corrections. Vladislav Krasnov.

Vladimir Osipov: from atheism to Christianity

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Presented as a paper at the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL) on December 29, 1978, New York. Published by RCDA (Religion in Communist Dominated Areas) magazine, Vol. XVIII, Nos. 1, 2 and 3, 1979/ Published by Rev. Blahoslav S. Hruby, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 100274. We thank Rev. Hruby, a Catholic, for his compassion with the oppressed Russian Christians in the USSR, such as Vladimir Osipov.



Владимир Осипов
Vladimir Osipov (1938-2020)

Introduction

THE NAME of Vladimir Osipov, the publisher and editor of the [samizdat](#) journals *Veche* and *Zemlia*¹ has been known in the free world for quite some time. Since the beginning of the 1970's his publications have been considered the principal purveyors of the resurgent [Christian neo-Slavophile](#) and Russianist thinking. Osipov's editorials, articles and open letters have been published in the Russian émigré press, most notably in *Possev*, *Grani* and *Vestnik*.² The Western media also have carried some information about *Veche* as well as the news of Osipov's arrests and imprisonment. In 1977 he received international recognition by being elected to [the PEN International](#).

Among American scholars he got the attention of Professor [Jon B Dunlop](#) who wrote a book about the [All-All-Russian Social Christian Union for People's Liberation \(VSKhSON\)](#), founded by Igor Ogurtsov ([Огурцов Игорь Вячеславович](#)) in 1964. Moreover, Professor Darrell P. Hammer of Indiana University in Bloomington told me he was writing a scholarly paper AB about Osipov. Also a recently a collection of Osipov's writings [Tri otnosheniya k rodine](#) (Three Attitudes to the Fatherland) was published by *Possev*.

Yet, in spite of his relative notability in the West, Osipov has not received the moral support he so richly deserves in his plight as a prisoner of conscience in

¹Now both available in Russian at <https://samizdat.library.utoronto.ca/content/>)

²See their listing at <https://libraries.indiana.edu/periodicals-russian-emigre.>)

the USSR, the main reason being that his ideas have often been perceived, erroneously in my opinion, as either anachronistic or hostile to the West. Some fear that his appeal to the national self-awareness of the ethnic Russians might degenerate into a form of chauvinism. Others harbor a suspicion that his publications may have given an expression to anti-Jewish feelings. Still others suspect him of anti-democratic and rightist tendencies.

What his critics fail to take into account is that his road to Slavophilism and Dostoyevsky, to Russianism and Christianity, has been neither short nor easy, but that he moved in that direction after having been a fervent Stalinist, Marxist, and in a sense, Westernist. Tragically, they fail to recognize even the obvious fact that at the end of the road Osipov landed not in the Kremlin hut in the labor camp dungeon where he still is. In other words, they prejudge the utterly powerless and abused man for what he conceivably might or might not do, but they fail to credit him for what he has already done.

My recollection of years at Moscow University

I would like to share with you my recollections of the man and of what he has done, and what he [has](#) gone through. The primary focuses will be on his student years at [the University of Moscow](#), from the autumn of 1955 through the winter of 1959 when he was expelled from there. I knew him in several roles as a fellow student and classmate in several courses since we enrolled the same year, in 1955; as a next door neighbor in the dormitories in Cheriomushki and on Stromynka Street; as a member of the [Komsomol \(Communist youth organization\)](#) to whom I had to relate as the Komsomol secretary over a group of 200 newly enrolled students. Finally and most importantly, I knew him as a fellow "co-conspirator" in a "conspiracy" not to overthrow the government but to confide to each other thoughts and feelings which had to be kept secret, lest someone might overhear and inform on us. Long before the word dissident became known in Russian, both Osipov and I belonged to an early troika of *yedinomyshlenniki* [persons who share the same views] who believed in the inherent value of *inakomyslie* [heterodoxy].

My first impression of him was that of a typical Soviet propaganda poster picture of a young, super-patriotic, thoroughly Soviet, and entirely devoted member of [the Komsomol](#). He was then only seventeen years old. Physically he was a picture of wholesomeness and vibrant boyishness. He also had a typically Russian appearance, blondish and blue-eyed, somewhat small in stature but strongly built. His rose-cheeked rounded face reminded me somewhat of the Russian warrior types shown in [the film Aleksandr Nevsky](#). This association was further enhanced by the fact that he came from the Pskov oblast, the area of [Prince Aleksandr Nevsky](#)'s ancient military exploits. Just as Osipov was physically rose-cheeked, so was he intellectually wholesome.

A Dorm Commune

At the dorm he joined a group of five or six room-mates who formed a sort of commune. They studied together, went to bed at the same hour (usually late), played cards together, ate together, and went hungry together, sharing literally everything to the last kopeck. Since they did not have much to share they often borrowed small amounts of money from others, and it was not always easy to get it back. Sometimes they even requisitioned individual food supplies from their neighbors outside the commune, partly because they were indeed penniless, partly to assert the principle of people's power over individual deviations. Politically, the commune was dominated by the spirit of Soviet super-patriotism and unquestionable loyalty to the Party. As a Komsomol boss myself, I knew it very well for they were the first to volunteer for *voskresnik* [Sunday communal clean-up], for Moscow Metro construction or to donate blood.

A Non-Marxist Student

A month later there occurred another divisive incident. In a seminar on [Marxism-Leninism](#) a certain student not only challenged his professor by pointing out contradictions in Marx but even dared to admit that he was not a Marxist. The prevailing mood of the commune was that of indignation at the "impudent" student. But Osipov took exception.

Not many students now dared to talk to the student during the breaks fearing to be associated with the "white crow". Since at the time I was the Komsomol leader, it was my duty to talk to him about the incident and also to remind him to join the trade union which he had steadfastly refused to do as he was not a member of the Komsomol and thus did not feel bound by the group discipline. I had met the man before on one of the first days of school, and he had struck me as extremely intelligent and knowledgeable. I quickly discovered that we shared an uncommon admiration for [Friedrich Nietzsche](#). His name was Anatoly Ivanov ([https://traditio.wiki/Анатолий Михайлович Иванов](https://traditio.wiki/Анатолий_Михайлович_Иванов)). He was a Muscovite. Under the pretext of my Komsomol secretarial duty I alone could talk to him freely. Soon I introduced Osipov to Ivanov.

Upon our recommendation, Osipov began to read Nietzsche's work and quickly found in his philosophy the antidote to the Soviet collectivist "faith". It should be noted that Nietzsche has played a significant role as a liberating spirit in the rise of Soviet dissidence. Because of Nietzsche's irreverence to Christianity and to all established religions, the Soviet censors did not outlaw pre-Soviet editions of his work when his popularity was close to that of [Karl Marx](#). However, they still feared that his call for "re-evaluation of all values" might boost Soviet dissidents. Osipov shared with me his ploy: to order Nietzsche's books from the Lenin Library he misspelled the name of German philosopher as NITUSHE feigning ignorance if caught by a librarian reading a "reactionary" philosopher.

The Khrushchev's Anti-Stalin Speech

The final blow against Osipov's Communist faith was delivered by [Nikita Khrushchev's speech at the 20th party Congress](#). Although the complete text of the speech was never made available for the public, we learned about its main thrust during a special meeting at which a party official gave us a briefing. In spite of his attempts to tone down the extent of Stalinist crimes, the facts that Khrushchev revealed were damning enough. As Osipov admits in his memoirs, "Khrushchev's report and the 20th Congress destroyed our faith because Stalin was the heart of ideology for those who grew up during his reign. It was easier for the older Communists because for them Stalin was not the nail which held socialism together".

Pointing out that Stalin and "Soviet power" were virtually synonymous for our generation, Osipov says: "We, all of us, the future dissidents, used to be fanatical Stalinists in our early youth. On the command of Stalin, who appeared to us the height of human intelligence, willpower, and conscience, we were ready to do anything. We ignored reality around us. We noticed neither the poverty of our villages, nor the arbitrariness of our bureaucrats, for we believed in him with a truly religious fervor".

Once Volodia told me that as a fifteen year old lad, he had come to Moscow from hundreds of miles away in order to mourn the "dead god" [Stalin in March 1953](#). He witnessed how the crowd of mourners, uncannily stricken with panic, trampled to death scores of people and how he himself narrowly escaped that fate. This tragedy did not shake his faith in either Stalin or Soviet power but it boosted the inquisitiveness of his mind. Three years later he had to accept the fact that the god he worshipped and mourned was but a bloodthirsty idol.

The Hungarian Revolution

No wonder that when [the Hungarian revolution](#) broke out in the fall of 1956, we did not believe the official lie about it. While some members of the now defunct commune preferred to ignore the fact of anti-Communist rebellion and some other expressed readiness to go to Egypt to fight the "Zionists and imperialists", Volodia tried to appeal to their sense of history by drawing a parallel between [the czarist intervention in Hungary in 1848](#) and Soviet intervention in 1956. In our troika we were dismayed not only at the Soviet intervention but also at the passivity of the West. If before Hungary we still believed the Soviet propaganda lie about the aggressive designs of NATO, after Hungary we began to suspect that NATO did not have even a defensive will. It became clear to us that in the struggle for the liberation from the Communist oppression we should not count on the governments of the West.

By now Osipov became one of the principal "fishermen of men" among our fellow students at the History Department of Moscow University. From reminding them of the czarist 1848 intervention in Hungary, he would go on to ask our coeds

other provocative questions, such as: What would you have done if you had fallen in love with a Nazi during the war? That was the time for our boys and girls frequently to fall in love with each other, therefore, the answers were often quite out of tune with the party line on love with the class enemies. This enabled Volodia to continue a further bombardment of the formerly totally brainwashed minds.

On other occasions he would speculate in front of students: Would it not have been better if Napoleon had succeeded in conquering Russia? When the innocent minds hurriedly objected not with arguments but with patriotic fervor, he would baffle them by saying that as a Russian he totally agreed with them but as a Marxist he must welcome the Napoleonic conquest as more "progressive" than the "yoke of the reactionary tzars".

Then there was a hand-written protest by a lone student against Soviet aid to the underdeveloped countries such as India "when we ourselves live in poverty and misery". The handwritten poster was quickly pulled down from the wall at the entry to the dean's office. The student was suspended from the university and sent to a factory for "education by labor".

The Krasnopevtsev Affaire

This was followed by an even more stunning incident: the arrest and trial of an underground organization which consisted of a dozen undergraduates and graduate students of the History Department. This organization had contact with the Moscow working class among whom they tried to distribute anti-government leaflets. The group was led by [Lev Krasnopevtsev \(Лев Николаевич Краснопевцев\)](#), a graduate student of Party history, a candidate to the membership of the Party, and the Komsomol secretary of a thousand students in the History Department. Their political platform was basically socialist and Marxist but they were critical of the way socialism was being built in the USSR. None of the three of us was in any sense implicated, but the numerous arrests in the department and harsh sentences meted out in February 1958 signaled that we might become the next target.

The 40th October Revolution Anniversary

In the fall of 1957 Osipov invited me to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Great October Revolution Day in the company of "like-minded people" whom I had never met before. This was on November 7, 1957. Somewhat stealthily we arrived at an undisclosed address. There we found plenty of food and drink, just as at any other party celebrating the "eternal glory of the Revolution". There were some forty people there, ranging from high-school students to workers and editors of state publishing houses. Although most of the people seemed to have met each other for the first time, a feeling of extraordinary trust prevailed throughout the evening.

Then, according to a custom, someone volunteered to pronounce the first toast. Without any preliminary, a neatly dressed man, who seemed a bit older than us, stood up and loudly without a hurry calmly and matter-of-factly pronounced: "Let this 40th anniversary of the October Revolution be the last one!" The audience reaction was just as surprising: Nobody objected and not a single person hesitated to empty his glass. The rest of the evening was spent in small-group discussions, sometimes rather heated, of philosophy, poetry, and politics.

However, I did not hear anyone raising the obvious question: What do we do in order to come closer to the toast's noble and brave goal to make that anniversary the last one? I am mentioning this episode for two reasons: First, to indicate the high degree of optimism that prevailed among the youthful opposition in 1957. Second, I wanted to show the inability of nascent dissident movement to match its slogans with action. This was also my last involvement with Osipov in organizational matters, though we continued to meet and discuss things.

After that evening there followed a series of incidents which ultimately led to Osipov's expulsion from the university and onto a path of open opposition to the regime. That path proved to be the path of martyrdom.

Soon our troika ceased seeing each other and ultimately fell apart. First Ivanov was suspended from the university allegedly for low grades (in fact he had A's in most subjects but failed some of the tests in Marxist doxology). Then a warning of suspension came against Osipov. He was accused of writing a ghost paper for a student. What upset the administration most was that it invoked the ghost of Leo Trotsky. I doubt that Volodia cared for [Trotsky](#), but he was censured for writing "from the Trotskyite position". Although the Komsomol zealots suspected me also of being an ideological provocateur in the guise of a Komsomol activist, they failed to find any missteps on my part for which to retaliate. Nevertheless, they recommended the administration to reduce my stipend for "lack of social involvement", which was quickly done.

The Climax and the Expulsion from University

The climax came in the winter of 1959 when Ivanov was arrested in [the History Library in Moscow](#) where he was writing an anti-Marxist philosophical treatise. He was charged with spreading anti-Soviet propaganda and wound up in an insane asylum. On February 9, 1959, right after the winter break, Osipov openly protested in front of some two hundred history students during a Komsomol meeting called in order to publicly censure Ivanov. I did not attend this meeting: due to my cold, I failed to return to Moscow on time from a winter vacation in my home town of Perm. Only a few days later I found out what had happened.

I learned that Osipov made a vigorous and brave attempt to defend Ivanov. Referring to Khrushchev's recent statement to foreign reporters that there were no political prisoners in the USSR, Osipov asked the Komsomol assembly to appeal to the government on behalf of Ivanov. It was in vain: instead Osipov himself was expelled from the Komsomol and then the university.

The Survival

After his expulsion I saw him only occasionally. He was going through rough times working at odd jobs. But his spirits were high. He married and moved out of Moscow to live in a ramshackle house. Jokingly he called it [Colombey-Les-Deux-Eglises](#) in an ironic reference to [President Charles de Gaulle](#)'s residence in France. With a bit of self-irony he showed respect for a Western statesman who believed that the Russian people should not be written off as incorrigible Communists.

The Mayakovsky Square

From his Colombey he now made raids to [the uncensored poetry readings at the Mayakovsky Square](#) where he met such heroic people as [Eduard Kuznetsov](#), [Alexander Ginzburg](#) (1936 – 2002), [Yuri Galanskov](#), (1939 – 1972), [Ilya Bokshtein](#) (1937 – 1999) and [Vladimir Bukovsky](#) (1942 – 2019). Osipov became one of the first readers and distributors of Ginzburg's [samizdat](#) magazine [Sintaksis](#). He was also instrumental in popularizing the works of non-conformist Russian national revival painter [Ilya Glazunov](#) (1930 – 2017). When Ginzburg was arrested in July 1960, Osipov came up with the first issue of his own magazine [Boomerang](#). He also supplied some articles to the [samizdat journal Phoenix](#) initiated by [Yuri Galanskov](#) (1939 – 1972) who died in labor camp in Mordovia).

The Seven Years Sentence

On October 6, 1961, Volodia was sentenced to seven years of hard labor. He was charged with anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda and with a "discussion about a possibility of committing a terrorist act against the head of Soviet government." During the trial Osipov pleaded guilty but later vigorously denied the charges saying that he was punished solely for his "heterodoxy, for the independence and freedom of thought." It is also apparent that his thoughts did not stray from Soviet Communism further than the Yugoslav socialism did. "At that time", he writes, "Yugoslavia was for us a model of socialism, and we supported ourselves on such authorities as Lenin, Tito, Togliatti, and the leaders of [the 'workers' opposition' Shliapnikov and Kollontai](#)."

It appears that throughout his university years and up to his arrest at the end of 1961, Osipov's views were generally West-inspired: a goodwill toward the Western democracies, a sympathy for the Hungarians rising against his own motherland; an admiration for de Gaulle; combined with a residual attachment to Marxism; a flirtation with the Yugoslav model of socialism. But it is also true that throughout these years he remained a Russian patriot at heart, rather than a Soviet one.

How did his views evolve thereafter? To answer this question, I have no recollections because while he was facing the harsh realities of censorship and

labor camps. As in October 1962, I defected to Sweden, I have to rely on his own writings which I had an opportunity to examine by going through the [Arkhiiv Samizdata at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University](#), and some of which are now available in the collection of Osipov's writings, *Tri otnosheniya k rodine* (Three attitudes toward one's homeland).

Speaking of his first seven-year term, which he had served "from hell to bell" until 1968, he proudly mentioned that his captivity lasted a year longer than that of the hero of [Lord George Gordon Byron's](#) poem ["The Prisoner of Chillon."](#) The imprisonment broke the spirit of Byron's hero:

*At last men came to set me free;
I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where;
It was at length the same to me,
Fettered or fetterless to he,
I came to love despair.*

The Camp helped me to turn to God

With Osipov it was different. Although the conditions of the GULAG in Potma were no better than in Chillon, they proved to be corrective, albeit in the direction opposite to the intended. "If in the past I was a materialist, socialist, and a utopian, the camp made me a man believing in God, Russia, and the heritage of our forefathers", recalled Osipov in his memoirs ["Mayakovsky Square, Article 70"](#), written in 1970.

After his release he published samizdat journals *Veche* and *Zemlia*; that led to his second arrest and imprisonment for the eight years term which he is currently serving.

The first issue of Veche

In the introductory remarks to the first issue of *Veche*, Osipov vowed to work for the "preservation and restoration of Russian national culture and of the ethical and spiritual legacy of our forefathers." The name of the journal harks back to the Russian historical practice of *veche*, a popular assembly, which Osipov once described as being akin to the Greek agora or British parliament. In fact, *veche* flourished in the Novgorod and Pskov region prior to the Mongol conquest and subsequent annexation by Moscow. Osipov's ancestry hails from Pskov. True to its name, the *Veche* invited all readers to speak their mind on its pages, regardless of their political views. "One opinion may contradict and oppose another, but all our disputes should aim at one goal: the good of Russia." *Veche* samizdat survived ten issues and four years before it ceased its publication due to a split among its editors and official harassment.

After the cessation of *Veche* and before his arrest on November 28, 1974, Osipov managed to circulate two issues of *Zemlia* (The Earth). In this new journal he vowed again to follow the line of the Slavophiles and Dostoyevsky, and put

additional emphasis on the religious character of his nationalism. "People who do not show mercy, magnanimity, and love of God and men," declared Osipov, "are not Russians."

In the same vein he denounced the officially sponsored "atheistic nationalism" as satanic. This rejection of the official nationalism found an early expression in his article *Tri otnosheniya k rodine*, which gave the title to the Possev collection of his works. He discerned three attitudes to one's motherland: hatred, pseudo-love, and genuine love. The distinction between the latter two clearly suggests his condemnation of the official Russian nationalism which the Soviet leaders are not averse to exploit whenever they feel that the official ideology of Marxist internationalism is unable to hold the country together.

Agrees with Solzhenitsyn's program

Osipov's political views are perhaps best expressed in his article *Piat' vozrazhenii Sakharovu* [Five Objections to [Andrei Sakharov](#)] written in response to Sakharov's rebuke of [Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's](#) "[Letter to the Leaders of the Soviet Union](#)." While expressing his regret that there exists a "mutual intolerance" between the "nationalist" and the "democratic" wings of Soviet dissidents, he squarely sides with Solzhenitsyn.

Incensed by Sakharov's denunciation of the historical role of the Slavophiles as "evil", Osipov points out that not all of them were reactionaries. He favors the Slavophile Nikolay Danilevsky's (1822 – 1885) political ideal, a combination of nationalism and liberalism. In our time he sees in the person of Solzhenitsyn the kind of patriotism, in which "nationalism and liberalism are organically interwoven by the all-embracing love for his country", and concludes by saying that "Solzhenitsyn's program is the road to salvation."

Osipov on Russia's mission as a Christian country

The last piece of Osipov's writings that I have seen is his Christmas message of December 1976. He cordially thanked everyone who sent him greetings and expresses a humble regret that his free critics have often repeated the same accusations as his captors, namely, the accusations of obscurantism and chauvinism. "God is my witness", he says to his critics, "my heart has never been inflamed with pride, and never has soared haughtily over any nation or person." Nevertheless, he reiterated his adherence to that brand of Russian nationalism or Russianism which asserts the belief in Russia's special mission as a Christian country. "If the world is a hell", says Osipov, "then Russia is the manger in which Christ must be born."

Whether one agrees with Osipov or not, one cannot fail to recognize in him one of the most courageous, steadfast, articulate, and energetic champions of free expression in the USSR. As such, he is also an outstanding defender of human rights in Russia and elsewhere. He is also a prisoner of conscience par excellence,

for he has never advocated violence or revolution, and has always acted openly and within the letter of Soviet law. He is a victim, indeed a martyr, of the state ideology of Marxism-Leninism, which can tolerate no other ideas.

The End of Krasnow-on-Osipov 1979 RCDA article OSA Library Collections might be helpful in finding some articles of the mentioned articles in Russian or English.

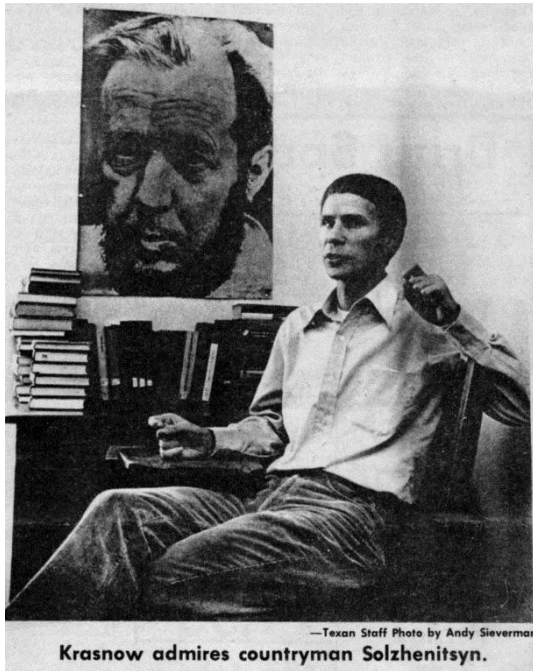
The collection consists of periodicals and reference books related to the Cold War, Human Rights and the archival/library profession. The library collections are searchable through the integrated search and they can be viewed while [browsing thematic special collections](#). Additionally, short summaries and inventories of Special Collections on microfilm could be accessed from [here](#).
<https://catalog.osaarchivum.org/>

The Vector of Russia's development

As it turned out when I designated the main vector of Osipov's spiritual development "From atheism to Christianity" it was also the course the whole of the USSR was about to take, including Russia in particular. One might call it also a gradual slide from the official – and strictly enforced Marxist-Leninism. Of course, in its ideology of "dialectical materialism" and "internationalism" back to one's ethnic, cultural and religious identity. Of course, we are not talking about restoration of the old Russia, but rather about the revival of its personality embodied in literature, culture and spiritual life, including Christianity but not in its official bureaucratic Orthodox Church subordinated to the atheist god-fighting Soviet state.

Osipov was not the first to call the country to move in this direction. Solzhenitsyn did it earlier and most eloquently in his [Letter to the Soviet Leaders](#) written in 1973 just before they kicked him out of the country. He did not ask them to resign, renounce their Marxism-Leninism and hold a free election. No: he just ask them to allow ordinary patriotic Russian believers to rise in the ranks and hold government posts. He would also allow the "border republics" to hold referendum if they wanted to secede. In 1974 Solzhenitsyn and his family were forcibly deported to Germany. Still, the pressure of discontent inside the USSR was growing. Soviet authorities tried to relieve the pressure by allowing individual dissidents to leave the USSR. Since 1973 the [Jackson-Vanik](#) amendment in the USA allowed thousands of Soviet Jews to leave, and many of them went not to Israel but the USA. More and more often one could see former Soviet citizens of Jewish origin at US colleges. The wall of isolation between the two Cold Warriors was gradually eroding.

Solzhenitsyn's Challenge



As soon as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn settled in the USA after his expulsion from the USSR, I welcomed him to the ranks of Russian compatriots and tried to keep him abreast of what I was doing. Among other things I send him a copy of my Osipov report at the AATSEEL (American Association of Teamers of Slavic and East European languages) convention in New York on December 29, 1978. As was customary I made the report in English. The only person who showed an interest in publishing it was Rev. Blahoslav Hruby, an immigrant from Czechoslovakia. At least, he was familiar with the problems of maintaining a religious faith in Communist countries. So, I made two copies. One went to the [Reverend Hruby's magazine RCDA](#), the other, upon my return to Monterey, to Solzhenitsyn's home in Cavendish, Vermont.

In the Spring of 1979, Solzhenitsyn sent me a long letter replying to several of mine. He handled the Osipov topic first of all. That's what he wrote (in my translation from his Russian): "I read – and with great interest – your report on Osipov. I of was unaware a lot of details here, and in general it's interesting to imagine the life of another generation of students, that came of age 20 years later than mine. (Your reports) are also interesting and useful to know for the Westerners too, although it is absolutely hopeless to arouse sympathy in them for the Russian national revival trend."

I found it hard to disagree with the man who, by revealing so convincingly the fundamental flaws of the Soviet system based on Marxist assumptions about World Revolution, made it clear that there is no way for Russia's greatness but the revival of its national roots, its cultural traditions, including Christian spirituality of classical Russian literature as well as the best of the suppressed writers of the Soviet period, such as Yevgeny Zamyatin (1884 – 1937), Nikolai Gumilev, Mikhail Bulgakov, Osip Mandelshtam, Anna Akhmatova, Boris Pasternak, Valentin Rasputin, Viktor Astafiev, Vasily Shukshin, and many more.

But was it really absolutely hopeless to arouse sympathy among the Westerners for the Russian national and spiritual revival from under the yoke of Communism right now when the Iron Curtain is losing its effectiveness? I did not dispute the writer's pessimism. I just did not want to wallow in hopelessness and do nothing. After all, I had stayed longer in the West, in Sweden, the USA and Japan, had studied and taught in these countries. I agreed it was nearly hopeless to

arouse sympathy, but was it really "absolutely" so? I refused to believe it and decided to take up the challenge.

Fortunately, my own book [Solzhenitsyn and Dostoevsky: A Study in the Polyphonic Novel](#) was just about to be released. I praised both Russian writers for using a Socratic dialogue as a method to undermine the monolith of monological Marxism. Moreover, the polyphonic concept of the dissident Russian scholar [Mikhail Bakhtin](#) (1895 – 1975) not just dealt a blow to Soviet "socialist realism" literature but challenged Western infatuation with the Age of Reason that culminated in the Marxist "omniscience".

At about the same time I challenged US policy toward the USSR in an article titled "Richard Pipes's Foreign Strategy: Anti-Soviet or Anti-Russian?"³ Almost influential scholar, Professor Pipes of Harvard argued that Soviet leaders could not be trusted due to their mostly peasant origin responsible for their cheating mentality. Besides, they just continue the czarist tradition of ruthless territorial expansion. As to the official Soviet doctrine of Marxist world revolution, Pipes said nothing.

By a contrast, I argued that one cannot understand the 20th century without taking into account the great appeal that Marxist thinking had for the so called progressive educated people of the West. No doubt, many of them were knowledgeable. But they were also cock-sure atheists. They loved to quote Marx's saying that "religion is the opium of the people." But they themselves were inhaling Marxism as the opium of the highbrow self-conceited intellectuals.

Then I tried to analyze the young Karl's personality by putting him on Sigmund Freud's psychiatric couch. The result was an essay, "Karl Marx as Frankenstein: Toward a Genealogy of Communism."⁴ It was published in 1978 by *Modern Age*, a Conservative Catholic magazine. Now my article can be accessed at the link <https://www.unz.com/print/ModernAge-1978q1-00072/> and here in Russian at the GGHA Dr. Leo Semashko website "Peace from the Spherical Harmony": https://peacefromharmony.org/?cat=ru_c&key=697.

As the time went on, it became clear that Mary Shelley has provided an early parable of how the increasingly scientific, industrial, and atheist Modern World—the West in particular—became overconfident in being able to "rule itself" by discarding all restraints that, in the past, had been provided by respect for the sacred. Mary Shelley restricted her phantasy to the ambition of Dr. Frankenstein to produce in a lab a "better" human specimen than what we naturally have.

³ "Richard Pipes's Foreign Strategy: Anti-Soviet or Anti-Russian?" By Wladislaw Krasnow. Vol. 38, No. 2, Apr., 1979 of *The Russian Review*, JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/i207433> The article was re-published in 1980 by the *Encounter* magazine, UK. Wladislaw G. Krasnow, "Richard Pipes's Foreign Strategy: Anti-Soviet or Anti-Russian?", *The Russian Review*, Vol. 38, No 2, April 1979; reprinted in British *Encounter* magazine, April 1980; In Russian translation: Владислав Краснов, «Внешнеполитическая стратегия Ричарда Пайпса: антисоветская или антирусская?», журнал ПОСЕВ, № 1 (1272), январь 1980, стр. 36 – 43.

⁴ It was published in 1978 by *Modern Age*, a Conservative Catholic magazine. Now it can be accessed at the link <https://www.unz.com/print/ModernAge-1978q1-00072/> In Russian translation: Владислав Краснов. «Виктор Карл Маркс фон Франкенштейн, или Генеалогия коммунизма». ГРАНИ, № 107, 1978

Karl Marx, a younger contemporary of Mary Shelley, was more than ambitious. He wanted to create not a single individual but – in a huge violent stroke of bloody birth – a whole New Mankind! Marx wanted to create a new type of society of individuals of equal income where there is neither rivalry nor strife. When Lenin's Bolsheviks attempted the "World Revolution" by seizing power via a coup in Russia's capital Sankt-Petersburg, it was a dare-devil attempt to create a new type of mankind, the artificial one that can be initiated and sustained only by force. And this is often in spite of good intentions of the revolutionaries. Just like Dr. Frankenstein's Monster tries to do good when released by its exasperated "father" in the wilderness of Russia.

After the Bolshevik coup in November 1917 and years of a bloody civil war, the USSR was created. [Russian Writer Yevgeny Zamyatin](#), a former Bolshevik himself, having witnessed the first years of Communism, came to the conclusion that Russia was in for a new type of tyranny nowhere seen before. In 1920-21 he wrote the first dystopian [novel WE](#) about complete subjugation of individual to the totalitarian state. Zamyatin was lucky for being able to get out of the USSR in 1937. George Orwell, the author of "1984" acknowledged his debt to Zamyatin. It took another Russian visionary, [Andrei Amalrik](#) (1938 – 1980), to give the world a relief from George Orwell's horrible dystopia "1984" when in 1979 the young Soviet dissident wondered [Will the Soviet Union Survive until 1984?](#) At the end of 1991 the USSR ceased to exist.

Since both of Karl Marx' parents had converted from Judaism to Christianity, as a high school student Karl was a devout Christian and excelled in writing devotional papers. However, later he turned atheist and came to see his future as a great Romantic poet with a twinge of Demonic omnipotence. He was no doubt an ambitious and talented young man determined to go his way. I even grant him wishing to be benevolent. But his ambition to solve all problems of mankind in a single stroke via "proletarian World Revolution" was akin to that of Dr. Frankenstein. And if the USSR was the major outcome of the Marxist efforts to create a new type of happy society than it was a Monster, just as that of the benevolent doctor Frankenstein.

The two essays, both of which Solzhenitsyn liked, plus the book Solzhenitsyn and Dostoevsky, helped me to make a good start at the [Monterey Institute of International Studies](#) (MIIS) where I was appointed as Head of Russian Studies in the Fall of 1978. I was hired at the rank of Assistant Professor. But in a few years I advanced to associate and then full professor. The main advantage here was independence in what I was doing in my program, including hiring adjunct instructors.

The location was great too. Now a small town of fewer than 30 thousand people, Monterey was founded as the capital of Spanish California and it still has an aura of cosmopolitanism about it. During WWII Monterey was chosen for training Japanese language specialists to support US war efforts across the Pacific. With the onset of the Cold War, the [Defense Language Institute \(DLI\)](#) was founded where several foreign languages were taught, including especially

Russian. Soon there were more than 300 Russian instructors. They were civilians usually from the ranks of "White Russian" anti-communist émigré's. There were even instructors from the Romanoff family.

After retirement, many Russian instructors chose to stay on the Monterey Peninsula. There is even St. Seraphim Russian Church there where my family went on Sundays. In fact, the MIIS was founded by former DLI instructors who, after years of military language drills wanted to share a deeper knowledge of their countries with Americans willing to learn in liberal arts environment.

When I was teaching at the MIIS (1978 – 1992) there were six language departments: French, German, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese and Russian. Economics and politics were taught in English. The degrees offered were B.A. (upper division) and Master of Arts, there was a Special Department of Translation and Interpretation. The MIIS had the distinction of the only college in the USA where one could receive the Master of Translation and Interpretation.

No wonder that our Institute, in spite of being private, small and underfunded, was noticed in the USSR with the onset of the Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika, At the end of the 1980-s an exchange of students was established with the [Maurice Thorez Pedagogic Institute of Foreign Languages in Moscow \(now Moscow State Linguistic University\)](#). In about 1988, Soviet Counsel General came from San Francisco to give a talk to our faculty. He praised Gorbachev's reforms and favored reducing Cold War hostilities and widening of cultural exchange. Then around 1990 a three-man delegation from the Diplomatic Academy, headed by Vice-Rector, came our way, and I made it sure they had a supper at my home.

Soviet Defectors Book

This was all the more remarkable as I was a Soviet defector of the old 1962 vintage when leaving the USSR without permission was treated as a treasonable act. I never concealed it because I defected not to give any classified information to the "enemy" but rather to receive all the information about the USSR and the world that I could find in the public domain.

Speaking of which, soon after joining MIIS in 1978, I received a letter from Norway from one Russian émigré and an [National Alliance of Russian Solidarists \(NTS\)](#) activist who had read my articles in GRANI or POSSEV. He informed me that his organization had obtained a secret KGB document, a sort of wanted list of Soviet defectors that had an entry on my name. He wondered if I was curious of "what they had on you". I was. "Then you should send us a copy of your passport and signature confirmed by a Notary Public, and if your data agrees with your KGB entry, we'd be happy to mail to you a copy of the entry." I was curious and requested my entry.

Soon I got another letter from Norway with the Photostat copy of not just my entry but of the whole book. To my surprise, my entry had info not just on me but on my relatives in Perm, including my nephew Sergei Zontov, the son of my elder sister who had moved out from our family apartment in Perm before I

defected. Well, Sergei was one of the best Soviet ski jumpers and was due to go to [the 1972 Winter Olympics](#) in Sapporo, JAPAN. However, he was shocked when in the last minute he was excluded from the team. As a result, Soviet team did not get any medal in ski jumps in Sapporo. We suspected that it has to do with his uncle's behavior's defection. Now, after reading my entry in the KGB Wanted List we knew it for sure!

Now the idea occurred to me to make the KGB list and the whole phenomenon of Soviet defections public in the free world. Since the List was only for the 1945-1969 period, I decided to expand it with all new defections that were reported in public domain, even though some cases were never revealed. Fortunately, I was able to get a contract with the Hoover Institution for a Summer Scholarship and research archives that released me from the Summer-time language teaching at MIIS.

What became immediately clear, Soviet defection was first and foremost a human rights issue, not a national security for either the USSR or the USA. People defected because they wanted to be free and do whatever they wanted at home or abroad. Actually, the freedom of movement across the borders is stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the majority of countries since the UN were founded in 1946. The USSR did not sign it then, but did so only in 1966. Still, both the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain at large remained virtually intact to the end of the USSR. Marxist-Leninist ideology taught Soviet leaders that they have the right and obligation to keep their citizens locked up and out of the reach of "capitalist propaganda" until the working and oppressed people of the world overthrow the "yoke of capitalism."

A big relief did not come until 1973 when the Jackson-Vanik amendment forced Soviet leaders to allow hundreds of thousands Soviet Jews to emigrate, for family re-unification in Israel, even though other thousands went streaming to the USA. Naturally, some of them sought the company of "old-timers" like me. Often they asked practical questions about the adjustment to the American way of life. They loved to tell me of the new dissident Soviet jokes from the "Armenian RADIO" series, such as this: "A listener asks this urgent question: What is the right definition of a Jew: Is it a religion? Or ethnicity? RADIO ARMENIA did research and that's what they found out: Jewishness signifies neither religion nor ethnicity. It's the surest way to emigrate from the USSR!"

I thought the joke related to the question raised earlier in my essay about broader ramifications of Mary Shelley's horror-novel about the Monster of Dr. Frankenstein. If Karl Marx, as an ethnic Jew, were to be born in the USSR, given his individualistic character, would he use the Jackson-Vanik amendment to emigrate to Israel or to the USA? My hunch was that he would seek to immigrate to the USA, in spite of it becoming even more capitalistic than it was in his time. I would even recommend him as German language instructor at MIIS. I won't mind hiring him in my department but the MIIS requires a native fluency.

Of course, after 1969, the last year covered in the KGB Wanted List, Soviet defections continued unabated. The Jackson-Vanik amendment only increased the

allure of defection. If for the period 1945 to 1961 the majority of defectors were Soviet soldiers and civilians who took advantage of comparatively porous borders from the Warsaw Block countries to the FRG and other Western countries, then after [the Berlin Wall](#) was built in 1961, potential defectors came to seek other avenues to seek an asylum, especially since the general tourist traffic increased. The Jackson-Vanick only increased the appetite for defections of other Soviet ethnicities.

Now many defectors came from the highest and most prestigious ranks of Soviet culture and sports: the ballet dancers [Rudolf Nuteyev](#), [Alexander Godunov](#) (1949 – 1995), [Natalia Makarova](#); chess champions [Viktor Korchnoi](#) (1931 – 2016) and [Lev Alburt](#), twice Olympic Champion in pair skating on [Lyudmila Belousova](#) (1935 – 2017) with [Oleg Protopopov](#), the composer [Maxim Shostakovich](#); film makers [Andrei Konchalovsky](#) and [Andrei Tarkovsky](#), and the famed director of the popular Taganka Theater in Moscow [Yuri Lyubimov](#) (1917 – 1914), as well as [Arkady Shevchenko](#), who as United Nations Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs was the highest ranking diplomat to defect.

Mikhail Voslensky

Not to exhaust my book let me say few words about two more remarkable defections. One was by [Mikhail Voslensky](#) (1920 – 1997). As his obituary says ([Independent](#), 23 Oct. 2011), he "single-handedly put the word nomenklatura into Western languages as he revealed and explained the powerful network of corrupt, power-hungry party officials who ran the Soviet Union in their own interest". I would concur with this statement. In fact, I was fortunate to meet this remarkable man during a research trip to Munich in 1987. I visited him for a short appointment to share with him my volume on "Soviet defectors" including his entry.

As he was a graduate – a generation earlier – of the same history department of Moscow State University as Osipov and myself, I let him know that we were familiar with the notion of nomenklatura as it had been described – and decried – by [Milovan Dilas](#) (1911 – 1995) in his books "The New Class" and "[Conversations with Stalin](#)" to which we had only a limited access in Russian samizdat. Dilas's writings made a strong impression on us because, like us, he used to be an ardent Marxist, then a student dissident against the Yugoslav monarchy and a guerilla fighter against the Nazi occupation. However, as a high ranking member of Yugoslavia's post-war Communist government he became dismayed with its bureaucratic abuses and dared to challenge the whole idea of Communism as a progenitor of totalitarian state.

Now, a quick online research gave me the following: "MS Voslensky's book *Nomenclature* is one of those extremely rare books that, after being published, immediately enters the treasury of political thought. It is needed today because of its relevance and exceptional merits... the book is structured clearly and logically. It takes the reader step by step through different parts of the Soviet system without losing sight of the system as a whole. So in itself there is a holistic picture.

"(Milovan Djilas, from the preface to the book). It is good to hear two outstanding men with the deep personal experience of how Communism really worked in two independent Communist countries concur that the Communist cure was worse than the capitalist illness.



On a personal note I'd add that my own dissidence may have started during the school-year 1954-55 when I was a student at the Institute of History and Archives in Moscow. During a seminar on Marxism-Leninism I asked our professor about Lenin's quote that I found in his Collected Works to the effect that an average salary of a party bureaucrat should be comparable with that of a professional worker. Professor confirmed that he had seen the same quote too but did not know why "Lenin's Commandement" has not been followed. (See <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/nov/18b.htm>)

While working on the book I developed close relations with the Hoover Institution at Stanford where my book was finally published in 1985.

Remarkably, the same year of 1985, suddenly my elder brother was allowed to visit me and my family for two Autumn months in Monterey. He was not interested in politics but liked the fact that Mikhail Gorbachev, "a new younger man", had assumed the office of Secretary General of the Party to replace the old gerontocratic party rule. He got a Soviet travel visa apparently in spite of my being defector. As I mentioned in 1972 Soviet authorities did not allow my nephew to compete in the Winter Olympic in Sapporo. In 1973 Soviet authorities did not permit my mother to visit our family in Austin, Texas, to see our new-born daughter. It was apparent that they continued to follow the old Stalinist practice of punishing the whole family for the "crimes" of one member. Now my parents were gone. The brother told me that he applied for the American visa as soon as the thaw between the two countries started under Gorbachev and Reagan. And—it worked! For the first time since 1962.

Of course, it bodes well for the whole country. I felt encouraged to drive the Russian cause in America further, as I promised to Solzhenitsyn. In particular, I wanted to proceed with my plan to invite Vladimir Osipov to visit Monterey and to speak to our students of Russia.

A couple of events happened that seemed as good omens.

Defending SOLZHENITSYN against the charges of ANTI-SEMITISM

Actually, before inviting Osipov I had to do a number of things to strengthen the Russian cause in America. For one thing, as a specialist on Solzhenitsyn I had to try to clear him of the unfair and poisonous charges of anti-Semitism that have

been heard at least since he had moved to the USA if not earlier. I used every public opportunity to fight them back.

In November of 1985 I went to the World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies that went in Washington, D.C. I decided to use this rare opportunity to discuss the new version of Solzhenitsyn's novel "August 1914" just to update the high opinion of its original version that had been included in my book "Solzhenitsyn and Dostoevsky: A Study in the Polyphonic Novel" that was published in 1980. I pointed out that Solzhenitsyn used freedom of research in the US, including archival resources of the Hoover Institution to augment the novel with a retrospective chapter about Pyotr Stolypin (1905 – 1911) who managed Russia's Prime-Minister who managed to drag the country out of the morass of revolutionary unrest of 1904-1907). I especially praise Solzhenitsyn for being able to portray Stolypin not just as a skillful politician and thoughtful reformer but also as a heroic man of civil courage that the time required. Of course, by such portrayal the novelist single-handedly undid the extremely negative and slanderous assessment of Stolypin, first by Lenin and then by virtually all of Soviet *nomenklatur* historians for just about all 73 years of the USSR.

The sticking point was, perhaps, not so much Prime-Minister, but his assassin, Mordko Bogrov, a double agent and terrorist of Jewish origin. Whereas Soviet historians usually glossed over his Jewish origin, Solzhenitsyn dwells on it quite a bit, trying to understand how the assassin's fatal, heroic and suicidal decision may have come out of his Jewishness.

To me, such a portrayal does not need to come out of Solzhenitsyn's bias, much less of the alleged anti-Semitism. Solzhenitsyn may be wrong in second-guessing Bogrov, but this is not the same as saying he was unfair to him because of his Jewishness. Besides, in the same novel Solzhenitsyn creates a very positive character of Jewish entrepreneur Arkhangorodky and even suggests that the latter was more typical for the majority of Jews of the Russian Empire than Bogrov and the scores of Jewish Bolsheviks. Being true to his polyphonic method, he certainly lets a score of various characters to speak up their mind even if disagreeable to him.

Anyhow, soon after I returned from Washington to Monterey, one could read the following in The New York Times: "The expanded version of Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn's "August 1914" – containing a new section on the assassination of a Russian prime minister by an anarchist Jew – has touched off a controversy as to whether the Nobel Prize winner and author of the "Gulag Archipelago" is anti-Semitic." It was from the report by

<https://www.nytimes.com/1985/11/13/books/solzhenitsyn-and-anti-semitism-a-new-debate.html> Richard Grenier on Nov. 13, 1985.

The reporter went on: "Solzhenitsyn's purported anti-Semitism was dealt with head-on in an address by Vladislav Krasnov, a former editor of Radio Moscow's broadcasting division who is now a professor of Russian studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies in California. Mr. Krasnov said he found the charge "completely groundless."

The reporter went on: "And earlier, articles on Mr. Solzhenitsyn and anti-Semitism among Russian emigres appeared in The New Republic and The Washington Post and other American newspapers."

The reporter did say that the "accusations of anti-Semitism come from such impeccably anti-Communist sources as Prof. Richard Pipes of Harvard, a Soviet specialist and former director of Eastern European and Soviet Affairs on President Reagan's National Security Council". However, the reporter made it clear that many outstanding American scholars, including Pipe's own colleague at Harvard, Professor Adam Ulam, disagree with him. Professor Ulam and I had a lunch together and a very congenial chat. The same goes for Robert Conquest who likewise had only admiration for Solzhenitsyn.

Soon I converted my Washington conference talk into a full-scale paper that was next year was published by the leading professional magazine: Vladislav Krasnov, "Wrestling with Lev Tolstoi", Slavic Review, Vol. 45, issue 4, 1986. <http://www.jstor.org/pss/2498344> NB: You are viewing the first page/citation. Full-text access may be available if you are affiliated with a participating library or publisher. [Check access options](#) or [login](#) if you have an account.

After some time, David Aikman, a friend of mine since the late 1960-s and then a prominent writers for TIME magazine, a MSM flagman, called me up to ask whether I, as a Solzhenitsyn scholar and his defender, might have his phone number or, even better, if I could give him David's number so he could speak to him about making a full-scale interview so that the Russian writer could speak on a whole range of issues that have accumulated since his 1978 Harvard University address A World Split Apart. David mentioned in particular that he wanted to give the writer a chance to defend himself from the charges of anti-Semitism.

My speaking in defense of Solzhenitsyn prompted David Aikman, my old buddy from the University of Washington in Seattle where both of us served in the late 1960-s as Teaching Assistance in Russian making a bit of money to pay tuition. Yes, David was a British, but he moved from England to the USA to make a career in Russian Studies. His Russian was already superior to many an American student, so he was hired as a TA at the same time with me while studying for an MA in Russian history.

The fact that both of us were foreigners in America drove us together. We also went to the same Cosmopolitan Club off campus to socialize with the "locals". But in both cases the "locals" turned out very "cosmopolitan" as soon David married a Chinese American girl and I married a real Japanese exchange student. What also drove us together was the dislike for the student Left-Wing radicalism that actually resulted with a couple of bomb explosions on campus and unabashed acts of vandalism, even against our favorite professors. Remember the years of 1967-71 coincided with war in Vietnam that fed student unrest and terrorist acts. The radicals, including the SDS and Black Panthers were so dominant on campus that there was no room for other opinions. So David and I joint a small group of dissident students who knew that, a war or no war in Vietnam, Communism presents a real threat to liberty of all. So we formed a small group of lie-minded

individuals under the name Students for an Open Society, with the sobriquet SOS alluding to the danger to civilization itself.

Defending Ilya Glazunov against the charges of ANTI-SEMITISM

In addition to Solzhenitsyn, there was another big name that stressed the need for a Russian national revival as a way out from the Marxist-Leninist ideological dead-lock to which Soviet leaders were committed. I am speaking of an outstanding Soviet painter [Ilya Glazunov](#) (1930 – 2017) who made the theme of the need for Russian national and religious revival central to his art. I have already mentioned in my 1978 article about Osipov that he was "instrumental in popularizing the works of Ilya Glazunov" as early as the 1950-ies. Russian national revival painter [Ilya Glazunov](#) (1930 – 2017).

In fact, both Osipov and myself had met the artist in February 1957 when we help him to mount an exhibit in the sky-scraper dormitory of Moscow State University.

Twenty years later Glazunov's name was just as big and controversial. On the one hand, his art did not glorify Communism and Soviet experiment. Instead one could feel nostalgia for the good old times. On the other hand, his portraits of [Leonid Brezhnev](#) (1906 – 1982) and other Soviet leaders appealed to their vanity especially since he also gained fame abroad with the portraits of such "stars" as [Indira Gandhi](#) (1917 – 1984) and [Gina Lollobrigida](#).

Well, in 1978 and 1979, while Osipov was lingering in the GULAG and I tried to attract attention to his plight in the USA, Soviet authorities allowed Glazunov's exhibits in Moscow and Leningrad. The media coverage was mixed, with some standard complains about the artist's lack of Soviet patriotism and allegations of chauvinistic and "anti-Semitic" implications of his art.

However, there was another source to judge how regular Soviet citizens had reacted to Glazunov's art. In defiance of Soviet authorities, someone dared to photograph the two books of comments that were made available for visitors. Their content was then leaked into samizdat circulation that eventually reached the West. Glazunov's admirers among Russian émigrés found the comments worthy of being published. In 1980 under the title, *Khudozhnik i Rossia* (The Artist & Russia) they were published by Grad Kitezh" Gesellschaft fur Forderung russischer Kunst (Society for promotion of Russian Art). D-4000 Dusseldorf, West Germany.

Having met the artist in 1957, I was now curious to find out how his art developed and how Soviet citizens reacted to it. Finding the book extremely interesting and well-illustrated, I wanted to share it with my American colleagues. But how? I remembered Solzhenitsyn's injunction that it was "absolutely hopeless to expect any sympathy of Westerners for a Russian revival." As I still believed it was not absolutely so. I wrote a review of the book and presented it at the national convention of the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL) on December 30, 1982, in Chicago. My report stirred

some interest. So I decided to develop the opinion paper into a full scale research article.

First, I decided to subject the comments to statistical analysis. I did. The conclusion was that the large majority admired the Glazunov's art and wished there were more such artists and exhibits.

I also made it clear for the readers that it was an extremely rare occasion when Westerners could gain an access to uncensored opinions of regular Soviet citizens on how they see the USSR today and what they want in the future. Soon the article, supplied with statistical charts and photographs of Glazunov's artwork upon which Soviet onlookers commented.

The next problem was: Where to publish it? Major professional magazines were often critical of the USSR but few if any envisioned any other but Communist future for the USSR and the East block Soviet allies. Fortunately, there was a professional periodical which had actually asked for my contribution. It was Hokkaido University Academic Papers (HUAP).

For the record, I served as a visiting foreign researcher at the Slavic Research Center (SRC, surabu kenkyu senta) of Hokkaido [University](#) in Sapporo for the school year 1979–1980. My basic duty was to do my own research and be available for consultations for the Center scholars and other specialists interested in the USSR. I was also expected to present my research findings at conferences and in the collection Hokkaido University Academic Papers (HUAP). I did, but one paper was overdue after my return to MIIS. I found academic atmosphere at the SRC very refreshing and became friends with several members, especially professors [Tsuguo Togawa \(トガワツグオ\)](#) [Hiroshi Kimura](#), professors Watanabe and Mochizuki. So I find it very fortunate and even providential that my academic paper about Glazunov's historic exhibits of his art in Moscow and Leningrad was published by Hokkaido University in Sapporo, JAPAN.

Gosuke Uchimura and Solzhenitsyn

Before I proceed to presenting a review of my paper, let me tell about my meeting with Professor Gosuke Uchimura, a Solzhenitsyn scholar who himself had served 11 years in the Soviet GULAG as a POW after Japan's defeat in 1945. Uchimura was well-known and respected at Hokkaido and the SRC affiliate, but he lived near Tokyo. So I made an effort to go there to visit this remarkable man who, in spite of harsh conditions in the GULAG came to love Russian literature even more. Actually, at the time of my visit in early 1980 he had already had a meeting and interview with Solzhenitsyn behind. It happened in Paris, France in 1976. However, to stay focused, let me give just one fragment of Professor Uchimura's 2nd interview with Solzhenitsyn⁵ when the exiled writer visited Japan on October 5, 1982 that is two years after my scholarship in Hokkaido.

⁵Solzhenitsyn and Uchimura talk in Tokyo, JAPAN on October 5, 1982 <https://libking.ru/books/prose-/prose-rus-classic/53429-aleksandr-solzhenitsyn-teleintervyu-yaponskoy-kompanii-nihon.html>

Translated from Russian by VK. The first interview for the Japanese broadcasting company

Gosuke Uchimura: You said in your speech at Harvard University that now both American and Soviet leaders are afraid of nationalism. With regard to Japan, what do you think is the relationship between nationalism and internationalism?

Solzhenitsyn: I deliberately did not use the word "nationalism" in my previous answer. Nationalism is a term that defies strict definition, and now it is even abusive. I consider myself not a Russian nationalist, but a Russian patriot. Patriotism is love for one's homeland, and a person who deeply loves his homeland understands that other peoples also love theirs. And a patriot of his country cannot be a supporter of oppressing other peoples. I have just spoken about the preservation of national roots, national traditions, and national identity. I believe that in front of the leveling stream of the modern world, this is one defense for each nation. For the modern world civilization, in a greedy economic expansion without regard for anything individual, destroys moral values everywhere in the world. I am sometimes portrayed as an enemy of the West – I am not an enemy of the West, but I am an opponent of an impersonal modernity, yes.

I think that Solzhenitsyn, just as Osipov, was aware of the negative connotation the word "nationalism" has had in the prevailing Western MSM and scholarship since WWII especially for the large countries, such as the USSR. To put it simply, Marxism made "internationalism" fashionable at least since WWII. And the West did not mind it as long as it could match it with the market globalism. What many Sovietologists failed to realize was the fact that once a country passes the threshold between internationalism and totalitarian dictatorship than coming back to one country's national root system, including a pride in one's history, language, traditional culture and religious beliefs is often seen as its only salvation, regardless whether you call it patriotism or nationalism..

To come back to my Glazunov paper, I am delighted to say that, when I met Ilya Glazunov in the wake of Soviet collapse in the early 1990s – that is the first time since I helped, along with Osipov and other dissident students, to mount exhibit at Moscow University dorm in 1957. Then he told me that the best article about his art was "published in neither the USA, nor Europe, but in Japan!" Noticing my bewilderment, he added with a smart smile: "It was in English, but I recognized the Russian name of the author!"

Then he pulled out the 1985 issue of HUAP and showed it to me. A small World! It does not allow the Beauty to go unnoticed and vanish. To give credit to Grad Kitezh, the publisher of the Russian comments, its name is very appropriately symbolic as it refers to the legendary Russian fortress that submerged in the lake rather than surrender to the Mongol invaders, and now it surfaces from time to time but only to be seen by those onlookers who are true believers. I guess the publishers were German-Russian refugees living in West Germany in 1980 and nostalgic for Russia.

NET-TOKYO which took place on March 5, 1975 in Paris, FRANCE, is here

https://royallib.com/read/solgenitsin_aleksandr/teleintervyu_yaponskoy_kompanii_NET_TOKYO.html#0

One of the most controversial as well as revealing the artist's intent was "The Mystery of the 20th Century" that Glazunov himself called "a work of philosophical realism." To quote from my "Japanese" article, "Glazunov apparently aims at portraying a spiritual dilemma of our age by juxtaposing such major political and cultural figures as Lenin, Trotsky, Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, John Kennedy, Albert Einstein, and Pablo Picasso with the more sinister figures of Hitler, Mussolini, Mao, and Stalin. Stalin seems to dominate this century by occupying center stage. Significantly, Stalin is portrayed as lying in state on a bier floating in a sea of blood".⁶

Even more indicative of Glazunov's philosophical trust is a sympathetic portrayal of Tzar Nicholas II and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. The Tzar is portrayed as holding in his arms the murdered crown prince, Aleksei, with a Russian church tumbling in the background. The innocence of the martyred prince is emphasized by a halo. Such was the beginning of the bloody bacchanalia of the 20th century; the artist seems to be saying. Solzhenitsyn, with a *zek* number on his chest, is placed at the right flank of the picture, whereas, at the left, Glazunov places his own self-portrait. Thus, the affinity between the two, in their roles of principal witnesses of the age, is suggested. The only bright spot in the picture is the white-clad figure of the Savior which hovers over it all."

I find it very significant that Osipov was a great admirer of both the artist and the author of The GULAG, even though the two giants of Russian national and Christian revival, as far as I know, never met nor exchanged letters. Below is a sort of summary of the Comments book via my highlight quotes: "There are about 1,465 entries in the Moscow book and 622 in the Leningrad book. Together, they represent well over two thousand comments which are perhaps the largest statistical body of opinion on Soviet art available in the West."

"I estimate that about 57 percent of all entries in the Moscow book are anonymous, and the corresponding figure for Leningrad approaches two-thirds."

"A most striking feature of both books is the spontaneity, directness, and passion of expression. It is as if the volcano of public opinion, dormant for over sixty years of Soviet power, had suddenly erupted and the people who had been mute for too long suddenly acquired the gift of speech."

"About 75% out of the total of 2087 comments in both cities are very positive"

Significantly, "The architect signed Kliucharev thinks that Glazunov came too late and therefore his art is but "a requiem" to ethnic Russia. Like many other visitors, he points out that Glazunov is "the only Russian artist who has raised the national theme."

⁶This was quoted from my "Japanese" article *Il'ia Glazunov's Russian Nationalism : Notes from Two Exhibits* | Hokkaido University Academic Papers 1985 | Author: Vladislav Krasnov - President of RAGA. I do not know whether Hokkaido University digitized the paper. But I did digitize it for RAGA in 2018 <http://www.raga.org/news/hokkaido-university-1985-ilia-glazunovs-russian-nationalism-vladislav-krasnov>

The reader may find the reading more convenient on the site World Art News which has just posted the article on its site [HTTPS://WORLDART.NEWS/2021/04/18/ILYA-GLAZUNOV-S-R/](https://worldart.news/2021/04/18/ilya-glazunovs-r/) I am grateful to my Canadian RAGA colleague for connecting the great Russian painter ILYA GLAZUNOV with the World ART News.

As to the allegation of Glazunov's "anti-Semitism", please read this quote from my 1985 Hokkaido University paper: "The few comments expressing a fear that Glazunov's art may degenerate into fascism and anti-Semitism are greatly outnumbered by positive, even enthusiastic comments signed by the people whose names suggest Jewish origin. Thus, M. L. Rabinovich, a piano student, calls Glazunov "Great artist, great thinker, great humanist, great man and great citizen". Iulii Naumovich Kantor simply says, "Thank you that you are". Rafael Abramovich Zak, from the city of Omsk, thanks Glazunov "for the joie de vivre (radost' bytiia) which you give us" and says that he especially liked the picture The "Russian Venus." Engineer Tepelbaum says that "a palace should be built to house I. S. Glazunov's exhibit." Engineer L. Vaisman's only regret is that "The Mystery" was not shown.⁷ Roza Markovna Shrug calls Glazunov "an artist of genius", thanks him for the "aesthetic pleasure afforded by the exhibit" volunteering to pose for him. R. Slutsker, a 27-year old woman engineer from Sverdlovsk, writes: "Today is one of the happiest days in my life, and I feel proud to be your contemporary. You have filled my life with light. "Finally, Ya. R. Kogan, an economist, calls Glazunov an "outstanding painter of our time."



I. Glazunov's "The Mystery of the 20th century"

As to my own conclusion, the Hokkaido paper says: my analysis of this unique Soviet source supports those Western scholars who, like [Donald Treadgold](#) (1922 – 1994), have held the opinion that "In Russia, the whole heritage of Orthodox Christianity, the liberal aspirations of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the entire precommunist corpus of village tradition, ceremony, and the arts, and other elements have been subjected to prohibition of scholarly study, direct attack, or grotesque and deliberate distortion by state fiat.[78] It also lends support to their argument that ethnic Russian nationalism does not have to be antagonistic to other nationalities of the USSR and must be viewed as an ally of the free world."

⁷"The Mystery of the 20th Century" was not allowed to be shown at the first exhibit in Moscow.

Of course, I was happy to quote Professor Treadgold, for not only he was one of my colleagues at the University of Washington (1967 – 1971), but he also wrote me a private letter in which he fully and strongly supported my critique of Richard Pipes' US foreign policy Russo phobic recommendations.

Nor did I fail to quote Pipes' own colleague at Harvard Professor Adam Ulam who in his lead article, "Russian Nationalism", in the collection *The Domestic Context of Soviet Foreign Policy*, [Adam Ulam](#) (1922 – 2000) concedes that Solzhenitsyn, whose views "it has become fashionable in certain Western circles to deride", "has one very perceptive insight: the hold of Soviet Communism can be loosened only if it is shown to be incompatible with Russian nationalism." Of course, the Jews are not the only ethnic group with whom the resurgent Russian nationalism has to be concerned in the multi-ethnic USSR or its successor. It may suffice to give just one comment written by Kabakhan Shtanchaeva. She identified herself as a graduate student at the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Science. Judging by her name, she hails from Northern Caucasus and is probably of Moslem origin. She is nothing short of ecstatic about Glazunov: "I would call this exhibit a hymn to spirituality and beauty. The spiritual might of his images is tremendous. The ethical intensity of his work is so strong that upon leaving the exhibit, one feels a state near catharsis." What she is saying is that Glazunov is not just about Russian ethnicity. It is about finding and mobilizing all spiritual resources of a nation seeking to survive and affirm its historical and cultural identity in a society that is committed to advancing a Marxist utopia at all cost.

My own conclusion was "The fact that the Soviet government has been able to create and maintain a semblance of co-existence between communism and Russian nationalism is due, at no small degree, to the unwillingness of the West to admit the legitimacy of Russian nationalism for unfounded fear that it may develop into an alternative worse than communism." I think that not just Solzhenitsyn and Osipov, but also professors Treadgold and Ulam would have agreed.

We can end with Glazunov's own assessment of what he saw as the Westerners' unfairness toward him: Referring to the West's favoritism toward some Soviet dissidents, most of whom disliked him, Glazunov drew an analogy with the matryoshka-dolls so liked by Western tourists. "They see only the first inner layer but fail to look deeper. So they see only the government on the outside and the face of the dissident physicist Andrei Sakharov on the first inside layer, but they fail to look deeper inside Russia." Does not this complaint echo Solzhenitsyn's saying that it was "absolutely hopeless" to evoke any sympathy in the West for Russia's national and religious revival?

With the Congress of Russian Americans

My publications in both English and Russian, both scholarly and journalistic, had its effect in my being invited in mid-1980-s to join the [Congress of Russian Americans](#). Actually, you can learn about the CRA and, perhaps, join it on its own site: <https://www.russian-americans.org/>

The main task of the CRA, founded in 1973, has been to defend the rights and dignity of Russian Americans, promote their consolidation, expose Russophobia and defamation of the history of Russia. The source of disinformation and defamation were [the Communist Party USA](#) and its allies among the leftists. According to them, Russia before 1917 was a country of Tsarist oppression, police surveillance, poverty, oppression and, of course, ubiquitous Jewish pogroms. The USSR, on the other hand, with all its purges and "excesses of Stalinism", including Trotsky's assassination, was portrayed as a progressive country that put an end to Hitler and the Holocaust, and was leading the world toward Proletarian Paradise. Alas, the Big Mass Media and the academic establishment largely bought into the pro-Soviet spin of "peaceful co-existence between countries of different ideologies", even while Soviet leaders refused to co-exist with their own citizens, like Solzhenitsyn and Osipov.

Solzhenitsyn told me he was appalled to hear elated Media reports about "Soviet sputniks", "Soviet athletes" and "Soviet ballerinas", but when it came to Soviet invasion in Afghanistan it was often described, à la Richard Pipes, as a "Russian aggression" in line with Peter the Great's plans to extend the Russian Empire to India.

There were indeed reports at the time that a liquor store owner in Chicago, to protest the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, ordered his sales people to take all Stolichnaya and other Russkaya vodka bottles out of his store to be spilled on the street. There was also a report that one Russian-speaking woman was shot at and killed in the turmoil.

The CRA was created to defend the rights of people of Russian descent who were forced to flee Russia after the October revolution or just chose to emigrate. Roughly there were now Three Waves of immigrants from Russia: the "White Russians" who came to the USA in the wake of the revolution, the Second Wave consisted of displaced persons, the DPs, who came to the USA after the war, and the Third Wave, consisting mainly of Jews and who immigrated on the basis of Jackson-Vanik amendment.

One major source of Russophobia that the CRA faced then and still faces it now has been the so called [Captive Nations Resolution](#). "As a part of the United States' Cold War strategy, an anti-Communist advocacy group, the National Captive Nations Committee, was established in 1959 according to [Pub.L. 86-90 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower](#). " ⁸

I think this [Wikipedia article](#) is exactly right when it states: "Russian emigrants to the United States (specifically representatives of the Congress of Russian Americans) argued that the Captive Nations Week was anti-Russian rather than anti-Communist since the list of "captive nations" did not include Russians, thus implying that the blame for the oppression of nations lies on the Russian

⁸I have criticized the law in both English and Russian. The latter see here. Владислав Краснов. Закон о порабощенных народах как реликт Холодной войны. 14.12.2009 <https://www.apn.ru/publications/article22237.htm> See also <http://www.csiorg.org/whereIUspoke>.

nation rather than on the Soviet regime (Dobriansky's allegedly Ukrainian nationalist views were named as the reason for this)."

The Wikipedia article also correctly states that such prominent Americans of Russian descent as <<[Gregory P. Tschebotarioff](#), [Stephen Timoshenko](#), [Nicholas V. Riasanovsky](#), [Gleb Struve](#), [Nicholas Timasheff](#) were among opponents of the PL 86–90.>>. MOREOVER, [George F. Kennan](#)(1904 – 2005) the great American Cold War strategist who at the end of his life had the courage to denounce the NATO expansion⁹ also vigorously objected to PL 86–90.

Actually, the text of Captive Nations resolution was drafted by Professor [Lev Dobriansky](#) (1918 – 2008), American economist of Ukrainian descent. It is full not just of bias toward Russians and Russia as a supranational entity, but also of historical and ethnic errors in his list of the nations that the Russians "captured."

Although Dr. Dobriansky is listed as Anti-Communist, he missed the very essence of Communism as a supra-national ideology and an international, indeed, global political movement. One might say it was a new secular religion, even fanatical one, since believing in atheism and Marxism-Leninism had been mandatory for any promotion in Soviet society.

Both Osipov and Solzhenitsyn, like me, lived in a country that Lenin's Bolsheviks had captured by force and deceit in November 1917. Ethnic Russians were not predominant in the Bolshevik internationalist government. Proportionately such minorities as Jews,¹⁰Latvians and Georgians (like Stalin), not ethnic Russians, were predominant in early Soviet governments. But even they were a tiny minority of their respective nations. As the elections to the [Constituent Assembly](#) sanctioned by a compromise decision of Emperor de-jure Michael II¹¹at the end of 1917 showed, the Bolsheviks barely got 25% of the vote. They dissolved the Assembly and dispersed pro-Assembly demonstrators in the streets of Petrograd with gun fire. This was the end of Communist "democracy" in Russia.¹²

When the intended Marxist world revolution failed to ignite in spite of [the Communist uprisings in Hungary](#)(1918 – 1919) and [the Roza Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht attempt in Germany](#), Lenin decided to turn the lands of the former Russian Empire into a staging ground for spreading the agents and the arms to foment revolutions elsewhere. After all, Karl Marx stipulated a world revolution,

⁹ NATO Expansion Is Unwise. Saying So Isn't Treasonous.

By John Glaser<https://www.cato.org/blog/nato-expansion-unwise-saying-so-isnt-treenuous>

¹⁰ As far as Jews are concerned, please read [American Pravda: The Bolshevik Revolution and Its Aftermath - by Ron Unz](#)**7/2018/ 8** <https://www.unz.com/runz/american-pravda-the-bolshevik-revolution-and-its-aftermath/> or <http://www.raga.org/news/american-pravda-the-bolshevik-revolution-and-its->

¹¹Donald Crawford, [The Last Tsar: Emperor Michael II](#)

<https://www.amazon.com/Last-Tsar-Emperor-Michael-II/dp/1466445009>

For an update see my article see [Emperor Michael II in the Solzhenitsyn House - Author: Vladislav Krasnov. 7/16/2018](#)<http://www.raga.org/news/emperor-michael-ii-in-the-solzhenitsyn-house-author>

For Russian original see [Emperor Michael II in the Solzhenitsyn House - Author: Vladislav Krasnov. 7/16/2018](#) <http://www.raga.org/news/emperor-michael-ii-in-the-solzhenitsyn-house-author>

Император Михаил II в Доме Солженицына

<http://pereprava.org/culture/4127-imperator-mihail-ii-v-dome-solzhenicyna.html>

and the [Soviet Hammer and Sickle coat of arms](#) made it abundantly clear to the USSR's very end in 1991.

Meanwhile, all ethnicities of the former Empire – Russian, Ukrainians, Latvians, Tatars etc. had to be merged and transformed into a single revolutionary nation, the so called Soviet people (sovetskii narog), all guided by Marxist-Leninist ideology. The task was tremendous, and so the whole country was turned into One Huge Lab to produce, as it were, a new species of human beings, the Homo Sovieticus. Of course, the Lab had to be leak-proof. No efforts had been spared to keep it isolated, until about 1973 when the Jackson-Vanik amendment was enacted that allowed thousands Soviet Jews to leave.

I recommend reading a book by Professor Andrei Tsygankov, *Russophobia: Anti-Russian Lobby and American Foreign Policy*.¹³ Mr. Tsygankov has been Professor at San Francisco State University for quite a while to be familiar with both sides.

To come back to the CRA, I was fortunate to have met both CRA president at the time Peter (Nikolaevich) Budzilovich (1926–2019) and vice-president [George \(Geotrgi Borisovich\) Avisov](#). Both were outstanding individuals. Avisov lived not far from Monterey on the way to San Francisco where he also edited the Russian newspaper *Russkaya Zhizn'*. Socializing with him I got more speaking and writing engagements and was made a member of CRA's Steering Committee.

As [Mikhail Gorbachev](#)'s glasnost and perestroika had intensified, so did CRA activities, including the formation of a liaison office in Washington DC to be able to relay our concerns to US officials. In the late 1989, if I recall it right, a remarkable speaker appeared in front of our crowd. It was [Milton Friedman](#) (1912 – 2006), the winner of the 1976 [Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences](#) and the guru of the neoliberal economics that was then gaining popularity. Knowing of our crowd's anti-Communist and conservative leanings he told us, in essence, that Karl Marx was out, [Adam Smith](#) (1723 – 1790) resurrected, and the USSR socialist economy in disarray. I felt personally gratified that Professor Friedman's research was connected to the [University of Chicago](#) where my American odyssey has started as a visiting fellow of the Slavic Area Studies in 1966.

Where the CRA failed, however, was in our efforts to dissuade US MSM from using the word Russian mostly for a negative spin while "Soviet" was something neutral, positive, and even admirable. Ironically, a new wave of Russophobia came in the wake of the Jackson-Vanik amendment that was by itself a positive step in the struggle for human rights in the USSR. As early as mid-1970s there started persistent reports about an unusual upswing of most brazen crimes in and around [Brighten Beach](#), a town where thousands of former Jews were settled. No doubt, the majority were honest people fleeing the oppressive Soviet regime, some for Israel, but also many for the USA to experience first-hand the country that had been maligned for years by Soviet propaganda. However, it is hard to imagine that the KGB could have missed this rare "legitimate" opportunity, first, to

¹³[Tsygankov, Andrei](#) (2009). *Russophobia: Anti-Russian Lobby and American Foreign Policy*. [Palgrave MacMillan](#). ISBN 978-0-230-61418-5

get rid of Soviet criminals as well as to plant their own agents. As far as I know, there was but one author who made an honest attempt to avoid ethnic slur even in the title of his early attempt to deal with the Brighton Beach criminality: ROBERT I. FRIEDMAN RED MAFIYA JEWISH OR RUSSIAN MAFIA?¹⁴

It was just about the only time when the word “Jewish” supplemented the omnipresent “Russian mafia” in a Soviet context. It is all the more remarkable because otherwise [Jewish-American organized crime](#) is well known in the United States and even takes pride of operating on a global scale.¹⁵ Moreover, as I have written before,¹⁶ there are reasons to believe that the Brighton Beach nest of criminals had been instrumental in the emergence of oligarchy system in Russia.¹⁷

CCRS moves the Russian cause forward

My efforts to advance the national Russian cause academically at the Monterey Institute got a big boost in 1987 with the hiring of new professors to teach political science courses. The new professor of political science was [Nicolai Petro](#).¹⁸ Dr. Petro was a young and very energetic person of a mixed German-Russian background, well educated in the United States. Our rather cosmopolitan MIIS seemed an ideal place for Nicolai to start his career.

And he did it well. And right away. Within weeks of his arrival he set up an exhibit of Russian émigré journals, including POSSEV, GRANI and KONTINENT, which used to publish such dissidents as Osipov and Andrei Amalrik, but now with increasing frequency published new free-thinking Soviet authors that emerged under the policy of perestroika and glasnost. Now MIIS students got direct access to Soviet and Russian heterodoxy.

¹⁴ ROBERT I. FRIEDMAN RED MAFIYA JEWISH OR RUSSIAN MAFIA ?
<http://robert-friedman-red-mafiya.blogspot.com/>

¹⁵ [Sighing-and more- at the Secrets of Jewish Genius: Vladislav Krasnov's Rebuttal to Bret Stephens's The New York Times' article. 4/23/2020](#) Comments
<http://www.raga.org/news/sighing-and-more-at-the-secrets-of-jewish-genius-vladislav-krasnovs-rebuttal-to-bret-stephenss-the-new-york-times-article> See also Sighing at the Secrets of Jewish Genius
Rebuttal to Bret Stephens's The New York Times Column. [VLADISLAV KRASNOV](#) • FEBRUARY 3, 2020
• 10,000 WORDS • [251 COMMENTS](#) • [REP](#)

¹⁶ [Why Recent Court Verdicts against Russia Have No Merit. By W. George Krasnow 8/7/2014](#)
RAGA president W. George Krasnow at *The Voice of Russia*. Live Debate “Legal Scourge from the West: What’s Behind the Epidemic of Lawsuits against Russia”. <http://www.raga.org/news/why-recent-court-verdicts-against-russia-have-no-me>

¹⁷ [Why Recent Court Verdicts against Russia Have No Merit. By W. George Krasnow 8/7/2014](#)
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¹⁸ **Nicolai N. Petro** is the Silvia-Chandley Professor of Peace Studies and Nonviolence (2017-2019) and Professor of [Political Science](#) at the [University of Rhode Island](#), in the United States. He also served as the [US State Department](#)'s special assistant for policy on the [Soviet Union](#) under President [George HW Bush](#).
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolai_N._Petro

Professor Petro's main contribution to the MIIS was his proposal to strengthen MIIS graduate program by creation of the Center for Contemporary Russian Studies (CCRS). I supported his proposal enthusiastically and right away because its emphasis on "contemporariness" and "Russianness" was exactly what our Institute and – I dare to say – the USA needed at a time when Communist ideology was questioned in the USSR but there was no national alternative yet formulated, except the writings of people like Solzhenitsyn and Osipov.

The creation of the CCRS made my goal of advancing the Russian cause more realistic and not "absolutely hopeless" as Solzhenitsyn had feared. Professor Petro's mixed origin, was also an asset. He knew Russian well, but he was also a real American in his education, language and cultural patterns. Also, he is married to an American well-educated woman, Alison, who eagerly attended our Russian language courses. Soon Nicolai and Alison had a son born who was baptized in St. Seraphim Church in Monterey. By teaching political science courses in English, Nicolai was able to expanding the circle of students familiar with the realities of the USSR. CCRS publishing program was also on its way.

CCRS publications

During the three years of its existence the CCIRS published a whole series of books all aimed at the foremost goal to prepare the Americans better for the changes that, we hoped, would end the USSR as an ideological Marxist-Leninist totalitarian state to evolve into a new polity founded on the pre-1917 spiritual, cultural and political traditions. It may suffice to just list the titles and the authors, some of whom are Russian émigré, the others are independent Soviet citizens.

Christianity and Russian Culture in Soviet Society 1st Edition by Nicolai N. Petro (Editor): <https://www.amazon.com/Christianity-Russian-Culture-Soviet-Society/dp/0367013061> 1st Edition/ by Nicolai N. Petro (Editor)

Christianity and Government in Russia and the Soviet Union: Reflections on the Millennium. By Sergei Pushkarev, Vladimir Rusak, and Gleb Yakunin. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1989.

<https://academic.oup.com/jcs/article/32/1/127/959974>

Self-government And Freedom In Russia (C C R S SERIES ON CHANGE IN CONTEMPORARY SOVIET SOCIETY) 1st Edition/ by Sergei Pushkarev (Author) <https://www.amazon.com/Self-government->

Reflections on Russia 1st Edition by [Dmitrii S Likhachev](https://www.amazon.com/Reflections-Russia-Dmitrii-S-Likhachev/dp/0367300818) (Author) <https://www.amazon.com/Reflections-Russia-Dmitrii-S-Likhachev/dp/0367300818> These were all outstanding books by prominent Russian authors both from the Russian émigré community and the USSR. All of them felt that the USA and its Western allies not only should cease to fear the re-emergence of national thinking in the USSR but should welcome it as a benign and vibrant alternative to the totalitarian Communism which had clearly showed cracks under Gorbachev's glasnost.

Next in the series was my own book [Russia Beyond Communism: A Chronicle Of National Rebirth](https://www.amazon.com/Russia-Beyond-Communism-Chronicle-Of-National-Rebirth/dp/0979000000) (CCRS SERIES ON CHANGE IN CONTEMPORARY SOVIET SOCIETY) 1st Edition by Vladislav Krasnov (Author), W. George Krasnow (Author) [https://www.amazon.com/Russia-Beyond-Communism-Chronicle-](https://www.amazon.com/Russia-Beyond-Communism-Chronicle-Of-National-Rebirth/dp/0979000000)

Mikhail Kheifets in Monterey

But let us return to the mid-1980s, particularly to my quest to disprove Solzhenitsyn's assertion that it was absolutely hopeless to evoke any sympathy in America for the legitimacy and nobility of the Russian national cause. Indeed, if by that time I had defended such well-known Russian figures as Solzhenitsyn and Glazunov from the fortuitous but still vicious charges anti-Semitism, is it not likely that similar shots would be fired at Vladimir Osipov, my close friend at the Moscow University who has emerged as an open spokesman for the nationalist ideology of the Russian "Slavophile philosophers and Dostoevsky"? After all, Dostoevsky himself had been sometimes so branded.

From my student years I don't remember ever talking about Jews in hateful terms even while noticing their prominence among the Bolsheviks and in Soviet cultural life. Nor did I notice any anti-Jewish pronouncements in his samizdat publications. But later? What if I manage to have him invited to speak to my American students, and he would spew just hatred? In fact, I have had some students from among new Jewish immigrants and even two instructors with whom I got along just fine. In fact, Naum Korzhavin, a renown dissident poet once came to Monterey and was a guest of honor in our house.

Well, by mid-1980s, the contacts with the USSR intensified. My own elder brother, whom I did not see since 1962 when I defected came to visit my family in Monterey for a three-week visit. I made the conclusion that my book Soviet Defectors had a salutary effect on Soviet system of justice and they no longer ascribe the sins of one member of the family on the rest of it.

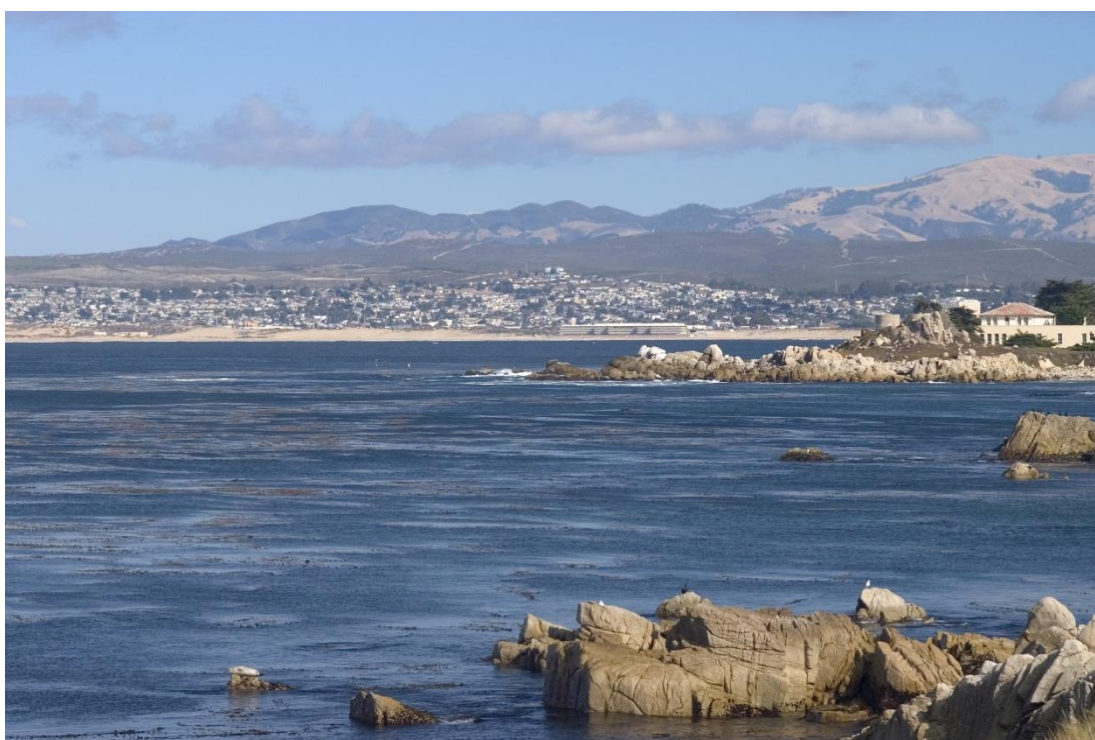
One of these good forebodings was a chance meeting on the beach of the Monterey Bay in mid-1980s with someone who had known Osipov at close range for a longer time and at dire circumstances. It was Mikhail Kheifets who spent at least a couple of years in the same GULAG camp where Osipov served his second 8-year term. I met Kheifets in mid-1980-s in [Monterey](#), even before I was able to invite there my friend Osipov. Our meeting was all the more remarkable as it was accidental. It was on the beach of [Monterey Bay](#). Both of us came to the beach independently just for the sightseeing. There were hardly any people around as the weather was rather chilly. By his appearance and demeanor I concluded that the stranger must be from my part of the world, and struck a conversation with him. In a minute we discovered that we were on the same wave-length about the USSR, and the friendship between the Jew Mikhail Kheifets and the Russian Vladimir Osipov was the focus.

I was delighted to hear from Mikhail that he had a very high opinion of Osipov both as a person of great courage and as samizdat publisher who advanced a Non-Violent evolution of Russia away from the totalitarian Soviet model. The conversation lasted 15 minutes at the most as he had to return to his Jewish hosts, the teachers at [the Defense Language Institute](#) (DLI) whose buildings could be seen from the beach. A chance meeting with Mikhail Kheifets strengthened my determination to have Osipov come as a speaker at the [Monterey Institute of International Studies](#) where I was then teaching.

Mikhail Kheifets remembers Osipov in the camp

If you wish to read Osipov's work in Russian, the Sakharov Center site is most useful: just find Osipov's name on a very long list of those who wrote about the GULAG <https://www.sakharov-center.ru/asfcd/auth/?t=listst>

One of those authors is [Mikhail Ruvimovich Kheifets](#), an outstanding Soviet dissident who served in the same labor camp with Osipov. Kheifets was sentenced for four years of hard labor for promoting the poetry of [Iosif Brodsky](#) as well as and [Andrei Amalrik](#)'s prophecy [Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984?](#)



The gulf of Monterey.

In fact, I had met Kheifets in mid-1980-s in [Monterey](#), even before I was able to invite there my ΦΦremarkable as it was accidental. It was on the beach of [Monterey Bay](#). Both of us came to the beach independently just for the sightseeing. There were hardly any people around as the weather was rather chilly. By his appearance and demeanor I concluded that the stranger must be from my part of

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Now I am happy to report that as soon as I started my research for an article to honor the memory of Vladimir Osipov who passed away on October 20, 2020, a COVID victim, I discovered that it was Kheifets who had left one of the best and rather detailed accounts of the four years he served in [the Dubravlag](#) roughly at the same time with Osipov.

Kheifets published a three-volume book of memoirs. However, it is in Russian and not readily available, as it was published in 2000, Kharkov, Ukraine. But if you read Russian, you can do it online at [The Sakharov Center](#) in Moscow. Just find and read for free at <https://www.sakharov-center.ru/asfcd/auth/?t=list>

The list has hundreds of GULAG authors arranged according to Russian alphabet. Since the first two letters in Kheifets are equal to the Russian letter X, please find it and you see dozens of authors whose family name starts with X. Our hero is #26, Хейфец Михаил Рувимович. Please read it: you will learn much about Osipov and the GULAG system!

In the first volume of the three-volume collection Kheifets dedicated several chapters to Osipov. One is titled "The Russian Patriot Vladimir Osipov". That's where I found these powerful lines: "Osipov ... is national type of Russian character. Its strength is often not in depth, subtlety or consistency; it is in passion, in a desperate search for the Spirit, sometimes in spite of Reason. Osipov, in my opinion, is far from being always right, but he is honest. When he is deluded, he is deluded as a deeply religious person, not as a cunning demagogue." <https://www.sakharov-center.ru/asfcd/auth/?t=page&num=9178>

Sadly, Kheifets [died in Israel](#) in November 2019. I had seen him once being interviewed on a Russian TV channel in Moscow, and he was good. Alas, now I have to send condolence to his family via the internet. I also need to confess that shortly after our chance encounter in Monterey I got Mikhail's friendly postcard greeting from Israel. Before parting we had agreed "to keep in touch". He kept the promise. I did not. I do apologize and ask for his forgiveness.

Why not invite Vladimit Osipov?

The Kheifets incident certainly speeded up my old plan to have Vladimir Osipov invite to Monterey to speak at least to my class. Even though during our

dissident years at Moscow University I never heard a hateful word about Jews from Osipov or any of our associates, I also knew that the charge of "anti-Semitism", usually in the form of innuendo, rumor, or suggesting a guilt by association for all national-minded ethnic Russians are the rule of the day since the early 1900s. That is, if they are not bona fide Communists, proletarian internationalists or Marxist, even though Matx himself did not escape it for observing the devotion of "Sabbath Jews" to the Golden Calf.

Well, after having defended both Solzhenitsyn and Glazunov from such fortuitous charges, I was certainly prepared to do the same for Osipov. However, I decided to do everything to prevent such charges from surfacing in order not to hurt Osipov's feelings and spoil his impression of the USA, and also for projecting an accurate picture of the dissident Russian nationalists to my class. Of course, I did not want to read anywhere that MIIS professor sponsored an "anti-Semitic" speaker.

First of all, I turned to Barbara Futtman, an official of the Freedom House in Washington DC to inquire if her organization could provide funding for the trip. I had already met her at a professional conference in New York and inquired privately of Osipov's chances of getting support. I frankly mentioned that he is a Russian nationalist and, as such, liable to possible allegations as an "anti-Semitic". She replied that the Freedom House does not judge the applicants on rumors and that, as Osipov was jailed twice for his non-violent convictions, he was a bona fide "prisoner of conscience" and his application would be as good as any.

Then I decided not to go alone, but join forces with the two of my old allies, whose work I had mentioned in my 1979 article "Vladimir Osipov: from atheism to Christianity." Dr. [John B.](#) now of the Hoover Institution, who in his book [The New Russian Revolutionaries](#) provided a broader context for Osipov's turning to Christianity while focusing on [the VSKhSON founder Igor Orurtsov](#), [Leonid Borodin](#) (1939 – 2011) and other "Christian revolutionaries". Also [Darrell P. Hammer](#) (1930 – 1998) had his paper on Osipov published in *The Russian Review* in 1985.¹⁹

Volodya Osipov made it to America—and Monterey

If my memory serves me right, by the end of 1989 we sent our triple request for Vladimir Osipov's speaking tour in the USA to Barbara Futtman at the [Freedom House](#). Early in 1990 we learned that it was granted. Then Bloomington, Stanford and Monterey worked out a mutually convenient schedule and mailed it to Osipov. Soon we learned that mid-May was a good time for his one-week journey across America, including three speaking engagements in [Professor Darrell P. Hammer](#)'s (1930 – 1998) class at Indiana University, Dr. Dunlop's group of

¹⁹ Vladimir Osipov and the Veche Group (1971-1974): A Page from the History of Political Dissent Darrell P. Hammer. *The Russian Review*. Vol. 43, No. 4 (Oct., 1984), pp. 355-375 (21 pages) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/129530?seq=1-->

sovietologists at the Hoover Institution in Stanford and a group of some twenty advanced students of Russian language at the MIIS in Monterey.

As I was then on sabbatical doing the last project of the now defunct CCRS, I found the time to drive to Stanford and then help out [Dr. John B Dunlop](#), my colleague at Hoover, with the interpretation of Osipov's Russian. On the same day I drove the speaker to Monterey to stay overnight with my family before he spoke the following day at the Monterey Institute. Being of sabbatical, I relinquished the chair to Professor Natalie Lovick and went home to prepare a little reception. Natalie was an old Russian émigré who never visited the USSR but knew the language well.

The next day I learned from The Courier, the Monterey Institute campus newspaper that the lecture went very well. The article written by Maria Sundeen started on the front page. It was titled "From Bell to Bell "referring to Osipov's the full terms of service in a GULAG labor camp, fifteen years in total. In fact, there were two articles: a review of his speech and a comment. It was subtitled "Soviet Dissident Speaks" and had an extended review of his speech on page

Soviet Dissident Speaks

From Bell To Bell

by Maria Sundeen

The focus of political development in the Soviet Union has been mainly economic; however there is a more important foundation to lay. The spiritual foundation is where the country has been most devastated, and this is where the political emphasis must be, said Vladimir Osipov, a noted Soviet dissident.

The former Soviet prisoner spoke about his experiences as a dissident and the condition of the Soviet people to a crowd of about 30 on Monday, April 9 in a forum sponsored by the Monterey Institute Russian Club, and again on Tuesday to a Russian Studies class. Currently touring the United States on speaking tour, Osipov has lectured at the Smithsonian Institute's Kennan Institute, Stanford's Hoover Institute, Indiana University and the UN among other places.

Osipov reflected on the decline of moral spirit in Soviet society and described his grief for the soul of a people who have been "paralyzed by years of torture, fear and terror."

He described the ills of Soviet society as symptoms of the demoralized state of the people. Health, moral standards, individualism and economic conditions have deteriorated to such an extent that he feels

any progress in the political structure will not be able to surmount these diseases and will thus be seriously hindered. He saw alcoholism as a major obstacle to overcome, as there are some 40 million alcoholics within the country.

"It is so bad, people drink cologne, acetone, and toothpaste as a substitute, and steal laundry to buy alcohol," Osipov said.

The disintegration of the family is one of the most serious problems for the Russian people now, Osipov said. Fifty-six percent of Russian families have only one child, and if this trend continues it will lead to the extinction of the Russian people.

Osipov's dissatisfaction with the current themes of progress has culminated in the formation of the Christian Renaissance Party, a group organized to promote the rebirth of Russian Orthodox Christianity, an influence over 1,000 years old, and to foster national consciousness.

"The perestroika changes have not been codified, and could change orientation anytime, with any whim," Osipov said. "The people have been brought up in a non-spiritual, ignorant and nihilistic atmosphere where individualism, personality, freedom of will and independent judgment

see DISSIDENT page seven

DISSIDENT from page one

were suppressed." This lack of spiritual consciousness and the absence of ideals has led to our problems and the growing rate of suicide and crime, he added.

Although religious in orientation, Osipov stated explicitly that his organization advocates no specific religion in terms of policy, and insists on separation of church and state. The need for strong spiritual guidance is such that the Russian people need to lead the way solely to fundamentals in the political arena, he said.

His group advocates maintaining the Union, pluralism, both politically and socially, gradual economic change, freedom of conscience and the rebirth of Russian Orthodox spirituality.

He added that the Russians, who make up the majority ethnic group in the Soviet Union, have a great responsibility. Other nationalities have the same problems and parallel goals, insofar as it is important to allow freedom, but retain the idea of unity. "For both communists and non-communists secession will lead to strife and civil war," he said. He added that, the Russian people must fall back on their roots to find their future.

Osipov first began his political career as the publisher of *Vecher* (which denotes democratic town gatherings under the tsars), an underground, or *samizdat* publication. After three years and nine issues, Osipov was arrested for subversive activity.

"I did not regard these publications as underground or subversive. I published these with my name, address and phone number on the front," he said.

Topics ranged from theology to Russian history, Russian philosophy, the preservation of nature and cultural monuments, and the problems of the democracy movement.

The government did not know what to do about this "non-political" publication. According to Osipov, there was no constitutional pretext for dealing with this.

"This was the beginning. 'Glasnost by fiat.' But they were not political in the Western sense. We considered ourselves followers of Dostoyevsky and the Slavophiles."

Those themes, the problems of the moral and ethical state of people and their environment, were aimed at reviving the national consciousness and the spirit of the Russian nation.

Moving from an embryonic political consciousness to a concept of moral consciousness was a natural progression, Osipov said, considering the moral state of the people. His dissatisfaction grew so that his desire for change led him to publish his first *samizdat* in January 1971.

After his first arrest and going from "bell to bell", a term for serving a full sentence, Osipov was ostensibly freed; but his civil rights were severely restricted and he had no opportunity to return to Moscow, to travel outside of his restricted area, to continue working in his trained profession, or to even visit his mother without prior government approval.

In spite of these obstacles, Osipov returned to publishing *Vecher* and was able to maintain country-wide distribution of the publication. "Even the KGB interrogators were impressed with the breadth of the distribution," he said.

This popularity evoked political wariness because of its



TAK SUKEKANE/Courier

Soviet dissident Vladimir Osipov

suggestion of power. "[This was] how Lenin began his support movement, but Lenin's called for the destruction of the existing regime. We did not," Osipov stated. Despite this, the magazine was labeled "anti-Soviet" by KGB chief Yuri Andropov.

In defiance, Osipov started up a new publication, *Zemlya* (earth). Because of the popularity of his movement, he was invited by Amnesty International to lecture in West Germany, but declined the invitation. "They would have liked any excuse to get rid of me, but I did not want to abandon the publication."

Zemlya is still in distribution, and represents only one of "three hundred other magazines of this type, perhaps more."

Editor's note: Pam Clark provided additional information for this article.

PRIORITIES from page six

commitments to this institution. Invest in responding to our needs for quality facilities so that we can produce the quality which this school is supposed to be all about. This is what I recommend to the administration. To the students, staff, and faculty, I encourage you to coordinate your efforts to keep improving the school and hold the administration accountable for their professed commitment to competitive salary increases. Many of you have been or will be educated in public administration. What is the sense of learning theory when right before us there needs to be better practice?

Corinne Borel, IPS

INTERPRETERS from page three

In light of its rapid growth and the worldwide enthusiasm over the Language Line, Sottung believes it will not be long before AT&T sets up divisions on the East Coast, in Europe and in Hong Kong. He also sees the necessity for in-house translators in the near future. Subscriptions to the service by international businesses continue to multiply, and the use of AT&T to translate company manuals and brochures has become more popular.

Editor's note: Sottung is hoping to add to AT&T's "Monterey Institute contingent" and will be on campus April 18 and 19 to pass along information, answer questions, and arrange testing times for interested students. For more information and sign-ups, see Jeff Wood in the Career Development Office.

Below is a page that the students themselves volunteered to write. The visit was so hectic that the letter was not rewas able to incert it into my next-week thank-you lrtter to Moscow. Volodya was delighted no end. And I was proud of oir American students of Russia.

Monterey Institute of International Studies

17-го мая 1990 ~

Знаю за Вас
визит в Монтерей
Тимофеевич -
Н. Н. Лобин

Дорогой Владимир Николаевич!

От имени студентов и аспирантов
института, Русского Клуба и членов
Монтерейской общности, мы хотим бы



поблагодарить Вас за то, что Вы двараца поделились
Вашими письмами и опытом. Слышать из первых рук Вашу
историю и видеть Вашу верность идеалам при
жестких обстоятельствах - это вдохновило
нас на более глубокое изучение России. Ваша дружба
русскому народу и Ваша готовность защищать культурное
наследство наши достойное стремление в Ваших
сочинениях и в политической программе.

Прилагаю к письму экземпляр нашей
студенческой газеты "Курьер" в которой содержится
интервью с Вами.

Je vous salue
au coup de chance
qui la vie de la
ville continue -
MARIA SUNDEEN

Мы надеемся что Ваше путешествие
по США оставило у Вас приятные впечатления.
Мы хотим бы продолжить контакты
с Вами. Мы желаем Вам счастья, успеха,
здоровья и прописку в Москве!

С дружеским приветом,

Thank You
Jeff Walsby

полное Вам спасибо!
и беседе стали более
интересными открытиями
и т.д.
Всего хорошего
Татьяна Кирья

Спасибо,
Мишель Лобанская

Спасибо Большое
Татьяна Север

In fact, Osipov's presentation was so successful that hours after the event, students wrote a collective letter in Russian addressed to the speaker. However, by that time, I had already driven Osipov back to Stanford at Natasha Lovick kindly gave me a copy of the collective thank-you letter written in hand-writing on the stationary of the former CCRS which after Professor Petro's departure was renamed Center for Russian and Soviet Studies as can be seen at the bottom. Anyhow, the letter was full of gratitude to the speaker for bringing fresh insights into fast evolving political scene in the USSR.

I especially enjoyed short personal remarks that students left on the letter's margin in hand-writing. I saved that letter. From time to time I look at it to reassure myself that my persistent efforts to have Volodya speak to Americans paid off. I felt that a tiny bridge of friendship between two mighty nations was erected. Even Solzhenitsyn would agree that my defiance of his gloomy prediction was justified.

Post Scriptum: How to Move Russia beyond Communism

Vladimir Osipov was not the only preoccupation of mine. Rather he was an integral part of a broader historical momentum. As soon as [Mikhail Gorbachev](#) came to power, I sensed that huge and fundamental changes in my homeland was on the way to change the world. My Moscow University friend since 1955 Vladimir Osipov pointed to the main vector of change – from atheism to Christianity. Or, more precisely, from a fanatical devotion to the "progressive" Western "science" of Marxism-Leninism back to a set of ancient native beliefs, be they Christian, Judaic, Muslim or whatever the peoples of the Russian Empire had believed prior to the Bolshevik revolution.

Not for nothing, I dedicated my volume "To the Millennium of Russian Christianity" as it had been marked in 1988 in the condition of glasnost rather openly. People in the West tend to forget that just about until the end of the USSR, Soviet soldiers of Russian descent had not been allowed to bear a cross, nor Jews and Muslims display their religious symbols. In short, freedom of conscience and heterodox beliefs had been abrogated for millions of Soviet citizens since the Bolshevik coup in November 1917. In essence, the Cold War was not just a confrontation between different economic and political systems, that is socialism vs capitalism or a one-party totalitarian dictatorship vs multi-party democracy, but also, first and foremost, between the atheists of the USSR and agnostics of Western countries where belief in God has been steadily declining at least since WWI. Westerners tend to underestimate the degree of integration of various nations and ethnic groups of the Tsarist Russia as well as the religious liberties they enjoyed. For an example, one of the best fighting units in WW1 was the so called "Savage" Cavalry division that consisted from volunteers of virtually all Muslim nationalities of Northern Caucasus with a small admixture of Russian Cossack officers. It was commanded by the [Tsar's younger brother Grand Duke Michael](#) who himself was subordinate of general [Hussein Khan of Nachitchevan](#). In 1915

American reporter William Washburn visited the cavalry division at the front line and wrote a glowing report not only about its military prowess but also the democratic spirit that Grand Duke Michael cultivated in the ranks.²⁰ See also the [Savage squadrons](#), a book of memoirs written by one of the fighters, the Russian Cossack Serge Kournakov who later emigrated to the USA.²¹

The most powerful embodiment of the direction of change was Alexander Solzhenitsyn. He had a deep experience of Stalinism both before and during the war and of the GULAG, including a secretive scientific work at the sharashka research lab. He also combined great literary talents with the skills of mathematical thinking, so beloved by Pythagoras.

Unfortunately, Professor Petro had been let go from the MIIS in 1989. I remain indebted to him, first, for putting my book project into the CCRS publishing pipeline. Second, I am grateful his graduate helped me with research, editing and formatting the book.

I made sure the book included a discussion of Solzhenitsyn's fundamental articles suggesting an evolutionary Non-Violent way of the Communist dead-lock. One was his "Letter to the Soviet Leaders" of 1973 which they ignored. Another was Solzhenitsyn 1990 article on how Russia should be rebuilt. Finally in Appendix 2 I included my own article "Why Not Solzhenitsyn?", a reprint from "The San Diego Union", suggesting that Solzhenitsyn would qualify to advance to the top of Russia, just as Lech Walesa did it in Poland.

Yet I saw Solzhenitsyn's main contribution as neither political nor even literary but in methodological through his advancing the culture of dialogue in a country that for 73 years got used to hear just one endlessly monotonous, monologue of the Communist party. It was the time to open eyes and ears to other opinions in the country.

That's why I not so much wrote my own ideas and observations but rather tried to arrange the voices of other people into a polyphonic choir. In that choir one can find voices of such "nationalists" writers as Vladimir Osipov, [Valentin Rasputin](#) (1937 – 2017) and [Victor Astafiev](#) (1924 – 2001) next to the more liberal popular journalist [Larisa Latynina](#); [Dmitry Likhachev](#) (1906 – 1999), a historian of Russian culture and a former [labor camp](#) prisoner whose work the CCRS was happy to publish; [Sergey Averuntsev](#) (1937 – 1994) professor of philosophy at my own Moscow University who now confessed himself a Christian; [Vladimir Shubkin](#) (1923 – 2011), one of the founders of post-Soviet post-Marxist Russian

²⁰See my Russian book about a movement in Russia for the recognition of Grand Duke Michael as the last Emperor-de-jure. Vladislav Krasnov, "Permskiy Krest: Mikhail Romanov"? ([Пермский крест: Михаил Романов](#) сборник статей Владислава Краснова, 2006-2011 . Esp. page 24 https://rusneb.ru/catalog/000200_000018_RU_NLR_BIBL_A_011197416/ See also Donald Crawford, The Last Tsar Emperor Michael. <https://www.amazon.com/Last-Tsar-Emperor-Michael-II/dp/1466445009>

²¹[Savage squadrons, 1935. By Sergei Nicholas Kournakoff](#) (Author) <https://www.amazon.com/Savage-squadrons-Sergei-Nicholas-Kournakoff/dp/B00085T50S>

sociology;²² Yury Karyakin (1930 – 2011), a literary critic and public figure best known for his profound work "Reading Dostoyevsky Again;"²³ Aleksandr Tsipko, a former Communist activist who later saw the light.²⁴

At the early 1991, I completed the manuscript and sent it to the same West view publishers. In mid-Summer 1991, I got a few fresh copies just on time before I was due to go to Moscow. I flew to Moscow as a delegate of the First World Congress of Russian Compatriots that had been called into session by Boris Yeltsin for the two last weeks of August 1991. Yeltsin then was in charge of the Russian Federation as a part of the USSR. That Congress was fated to become the turning point of world history. It is best described in Russian by [Mikhail Tolstoy](#), the chief organizer from the Soviet side.²⁵

It was the first reunion of the Russians since [Lenin banished "the counter-revolutionary Russian philosophers" in 1922](#) on board a steamers to eternal exile.²⁶ Since 1922 and up to 1991 Soviet citizens had been not allowed to talk to the "whites" just as to the CIA agents.

Now more than 400 "overseas Russians" came to Moscow and were scheduled to see Leningrad as well. They came from a dozen foreign countries: the USA, France, Germany, Argentina, Israel, and Australia. Some were members of Russian nobility. But there were also some of Cossacks and Kalmyks descent who remained loyal to the Tsar. There were also members of the Romanoff's family and the Rodziankos. Strictly speaking, not all Congress delegates were "whites" or ethnic Russians, but all were true to the pre-Soviet Russia.

Fatefully, the Congress opened on the same day of August 18, 1991 as the Communist coup started. After suppressing [the August 1991 coup](#), Boris Yeltsin who was then in charge of the Russian Federation, spoke to the "white Russian" delegates and assured us that the Communist experiment is over and the Red flag of Communism will be replaced with the Russian national tricolor. After his speech at [the Palace of Congresses](#) I managed to get on the stage next to Yeltsin and presented him the freshly printed copy of *Russia Beyond Communism*. Telling him that the recent events had been foreshadowed in the book, I gave him a copy, inscribing it with Alexander Pushkin's line "Prophets do not fear the mighty rulers."

²²See Vladimir Shubkin, "A Difficult Farewell", p. 135 in *Russia Beyond Communism*. See his obit in Russian in a RADIO of LIBERTY program: Владимир Шубкин – один из основоположников российской социологии 28 марта 2011 <https://www.svoboda.org/a/3539666.html>

²³Yuri Karyakin biography <http://www.karyakinyury.com/en/bio.html>

²⁴See my discussion of Tsipko's article "Sources of Stalinism", pp. 130-133, in "Russia Beyond Communism". Read his biography in Russian? Including his work for the Central Committee of the CP of the USSR <http://www.biografija.ru/biography/cipko-aleksandr-sergeevich.htm>

²⁵[Первый Конгресс соотечественников](#). Текст научной статьи по специальности «История и археология» Толстой Михаил Никитич <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/pervyy-kongress-sootchestvennikov>

²⁶Philosophers ship https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophers%27_ships

Homecoming



While I was totally on the schedule of the First Congress of Russian Compatriots, at the end of August 1991, I finally returned to my hometown of Perm, a megapolis sitting now on the banks of the Kama River, the largest tributary to the Volga River. It was through the Perm region that the [Russian Cossack Yermak](#) (1532 – 1585) and his army crossed the Ural Mountains in the 16th century and conquered the remnants

of the Mongol invaders thus laying the foundation to Russia's eastern expansion across Siberia and the Far East. I came onboard a Trans-Siberian train which I always used while visiting my parents during my school years in Moscow.

Alas, more than 29 years passed since my defection and since I saw them last. My younger sister Lyuba who had visited my family in Monterey in the Fall of 1990 took care of me in her apartment, even though I could have stayed in an hotel courtesy of the Yeltsin's government.

So what do I do in the few days before returning to Moscow and then flying back to Monterey?

First of all, I had to honor the memory of my parents who had always cared for me like for the rest of three siblings. For sure, my 1962 defection was a shock to them, only slightly alleviated by our steady correspondence, be it in Sweden, the USA or Japan. My several efforts to invite them to visit me and my family in America were in vain. By Soviet law or rather bad habits since Stalin's tyranny, the "sins" of sons had been laid on their parents. No respect for [the Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), at least, until the Jackson-Vanik 1973 amendment. Now in Perm, for the first time since 1962, I had to think hard on how to spend the five days I had at my disposal. I visited my high school #21 named after [Sergei Kirov](#) (1886 – 1934), one of the highest ranking communists. I was rather pleasantly surprised that the school's principal seemed to know who I was as she showed me my photograph on the occasion of my being decorated with the gold medal for getting straight. She also asked me to visit one of the classes where English was taught and address the students in English.

Another high school which I had known as # 11 invited me to a banquet to honor its renaming to the [Sergey Diaghilev](#) (1872 – 1929) Gymnasium (same as high school). After all, the Diaghilev family had owned the building and the school until the 1917 Bolshevik revolution. Now it is [High school #11 named after Diaghilev](#).

Then I got a call from a certain Viktor Shmyrov²⁷, a history professor who wandered if I could help convert one of the Perm-36 GULAG barracks into a library of political repression. "The Labor Camp is now empty. There are no prisoners, and only guards watch for the real estate. They would be happy to get some money for maintenance", he argued. As the country was near a financial collapse, he may have heard rumors that "Professor Krasnov as the author of three books can afford anything". They did not know that in America nobody gets rich from academic books.

Anyhow, the rumors did not stop but change the venue: "Krasnov may not be rich, but is friends with Solzhenitsyn whose books are bestsellers in the West". I declined again, but Shmyrov insisted I take his letter to Solzhenitsyn to be resent to the writer on my arrival at the USA. Eventually, Solzhenitsyn replied directly to Shmyrov who later told me that Solzhenitsyn gave his blessings but declined participation for he needed to focus on his own [Fund to Aid Political Prisoners and their Families](#).

Then I went to the Perm State University to give to its library my book "[Solzhenitsyn and Dostoevsky: A Study in the Polyphonic Novel](#)". Also I gave a copy to a student who seemed to follow Solzhenitsyn's work. It was a pleasant surprise that in 2012 a Russian translation of my book [СОЛЖЕНИЦЫН И ДОСТОЕВСКИЙ: ИСКУССТВО ПОЛИФОНИЧЕСКОГО РОМАНА](#) was posted for a free copying on the site of [Perm State University](#).

At the same Perm university, I ran into Yuri Belikov, a talented poet and essayist with whom I had exchanging letters since the late 1990s. Once I inserted into my private letter to Belikov my appeal to Soviet leaders asking them to invite Solzhenitsyn back. I asked Belikov to publicize it widely. In fact, he did manage to publish it but only in a small circulation journal so my appeal had no measurable effect.

However, Belikov connected me with another person, [Rudolf Vedeneev \(1939 – 2018\)](#),²⁸ a renowned Perm sculptor and painter, with whom we became fast friends. As soon as Belikov introduced us in Rudolf's studio, I recognized in him a childhood neighbor known simply as Rudik with whom we did not socialize much as we went to different schools. "I know that you like Solzhenitsyn", started Rudik, "so you might want to know that I am also a GULAG graduate". Then he told me that in the early 1970-s he and his friend were arrested for reading samizdat.

That news immediately connected Rudik in my mind with both Solzhenitsyn and especially Osipov. His studio was full of sculptures including those for [Osip Mandelshtam \(1891 – 1938\)](#) and [Boris Pasternak \(1890 – 1960\)](#) and a memorial to

²⁷Viktor Shmyrov in Russian

[Шмыров, Виктор Александрович](#) <https://ru.wikipedia.org/Шмыров, Виктор Александрович>

Later Shmyrov succeeded in his plan and became director of Perm-36 Museum. However, since 2015 the museum was reorganized and Shmyrov, as its founding director, faced severe penalty. **Russian labor camp memorial group faces pressure**. May 15, 2015 <https://apnews.com/article/724221b4d8cc49a49f6e47e48589081f>

²⁸A most comprehensive information on Rudolf Vedeneev is available in Russian at the Sakharov Center <https://www.sakharov-center.ru/asfcd/auth/?t=book&num=1322>

the Chukotka GULSAG. Now, encouraged by his openness to Soviet taboo topics, I asked him if he knew that the last Tsar's younger brother Mikhail was killed in Perm? Nope.

Then I told him that while spending over 29 years overseas, I never forgot about Russia and learned a few things from both the Russian emigrants and American scholars. "Don't you remember, Rudik, who we kids used to explore our neighborhood, from Lenin Street down to Communism Street and the Kama River, from the October Street to the Karl Marx Avenue near the [Perm Opera and Ballet Theater](#)? Once, when I was 5 or 6, I wandered around the park near the Opera Theater, I stopped at a neat looking building at Karl Marx № 5. It was supposed to be an old-fashioned hotel with an intriguing name *Korolevskie Nomera* (Royal Chambers). But when I opened the door to look inside, the guard quickly told me to get out and get lost.

Naturally, my curiosity only peaked. At home I asked my parents the same question. "Don't ever go there and don't ask any question. Those who do, don't live long."

"Well, upon my return to Perm at the end of August 1991, I ordered at once two memorial wreaths, one for my dear parents, and the other in memory of the Tsar's younger brother Grand Duke Michael whom I regard as the last Emperor of Russia de-jure. But, regardless of what you might think of royal succession, both Nicholas and Michael were victims of lawlessness and were canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church Overseas, so I invite you to come tomorrow to the ceremony of fixing a memorial wreath the wall of The Royal Chambers'. Not only did Rudolf agree, but volunteered to bring along not only some former Gulag prisoners but also his own brother "who happens to be a priest and could officiate our vigil".

The immediate result was a short notice in the local Perm paper. A few months later my relatives mounted a memorial plaque at my request. It was both for Muchal and "Brian Johnson"²⁹his assistant and companion Brian Johnson, a Russia military officer of mixed foreign decent who joined Michal out of friendship and loyalty, were victims of the Bolshevik lawlessness.

Soon an official plaque was mounted. It was made by an artist of the Perm School of Painting and Sculpture affiliated with the Ilya Glazunov School of Arts in Moscow. For more details and pictures see my article: Emperor Michael II in

²⁹That's how we spelled his name in early documents. Now some people attribute him French origin is name and spell his name accordingly. What is not disputed is that as Nikolai Jonson he served permission to stay on as Michael's aide de camp and did not have to follow his superior to his exiles to Perm. However, he asked for permission to stay on out of loyalty to his friend. Therefore, by calling attention to the "last Tsar Michael, we also celebrate loyalty and friendship.



V.Krasnov is knailing down a wreath in the memory of Grand Prince Mikhail Romanov in Perm in September 1991.



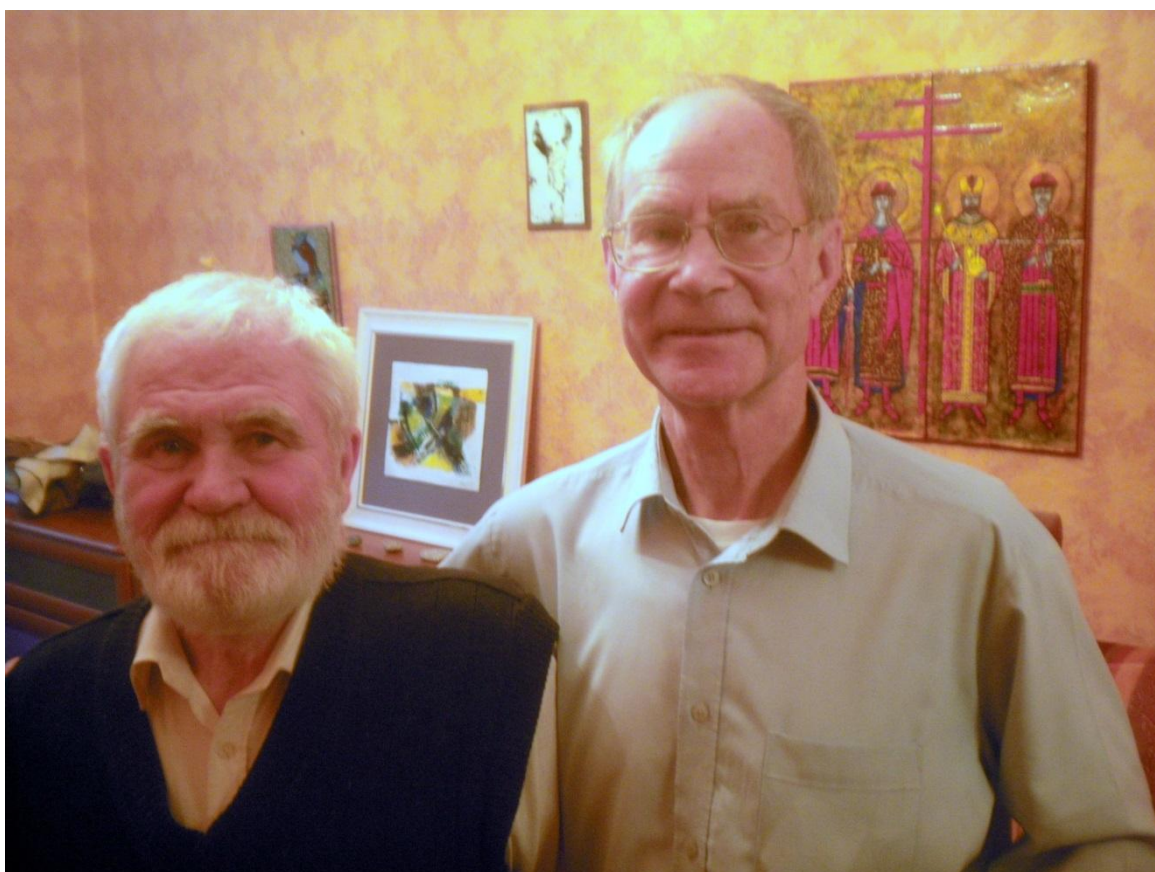
Krasnov at the memorial plaque, 1992.



V.Krasnov is speaking at Slavyanskay Square in Moscow on July 17, 2006



V.Putin visits the gallery of I.Glazunov



V. Osipov and V. Krasnov in front of an icon dedicated to the memory of the Grand Prince Mikhail Romanov. In Krasnov's apartment in Moscow in 2014.



In the Solzhenitsyn House. 2018

I had reasons to believe otherwise. I had known some American professors with solid knowledge of Russia who would agree with me and Solzhenitsyn. One of them was Dr. Donald Treadgold (1922 – 1994), I had known him for a number of years.

From Solzhenitsyn's letter to Krasnov:

Finally, I read with great interest - your article about Osipov. I didn't know a lot of details here and it's generally interesting to imagine the life of another generation whose student days were 20 years later than mine. And for the Western, your article is useful, but it is absolutely hopeless to arouse their sympathy in America for the Russian national cause.

Solzhenitsyn did not accept the state award from Yeltsin. And he sharply condemned the gangster privatization and the dirty grab for property. I am sure Osipov would have agreed as Solzhenitsyn was among his favorite thinker.

<https://likorg.ru/post/v-n-osipov-k-100-letiyu-a-i-solzhenicyna>

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