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“Academic Détente”

IREX Files, Academic Reports, and “American” Adventures of Soviet
Americanists during the Brezhnev Era

*« La détente académique » : les dossiers IREX, les rapports académiques et les
aventures « américaines » des américanistes soviétiques pendant l'ère
brejnévienne*

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SERGEI I. ZHUK

“ACADEMIC DÉTENTE”

IREX Files, Academic Reports, and “American” Adventures of Soviet Americanists during the Brezhnev Era

Soviet Americanists’ participation in the US-Soviet exchange program became the most significant part of the relaxation of international tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States during the Brezhnev era, –noted historian Nikolai Bolkhovitinov, one of the pioneers of American studies in the USSR.– These Soviet experts in American studies, who traveled to America, contributed to the real “academic détente,” bringing back home not only the new documents and literature they discovered in American archives and libraries, but also human contacts and fresh impressions of friendly interactions with American people. Eventually all these Soviet visitors to America became leading Soviet experts in American studies.¹

Soviet Americanists became participants in the important cultural dialogue between Soviet and American societies, opening both societies to each other and widening their intellectual and cultural horizons. At the same time the Soviet scholars’ actions were monitored by the Soviet intelligence and representatives of various US federal agencies. Both Soviet and American intelligence and various academic and government agencies collected numerous files of precious information about these visits. Comparison of this information gives us a unique picture of cultural dialogue during the academic exchanges in the era of détente from two different points of view. During the 1990s many Soviet Americanists emphasized another very important aspect of the academic exchange program – the creation of a new international community of scholars. As Marina Vlasova, a Russian expert in US political history, observed, the détente of the 1970s

[...] was not only the Beatles music on Soviet radio, ABBA and Smokey concerts on Soviet television, or new Western blockbusters in Soviet movie theaters.

1. Interview with Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, May 21, 2001, Moscow.

It was also the first attempts at integration by Soviet scholars, especially experts in US history, politics and culture, into the international academic community.²

Using the documents of the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) from the Manuscript Collection of the Library of Congress, Soviet travel reports, personal memoirs, correspondence, more than seventy interviews, and concentrating on personal stories of Soviet Americanists, this essay explores the cultural dialogue between Soviet and American scholars, and also the role of Soviet Americanists in the Soviet system of knowledge production during the Brezhnev era (1964-1982).³

According to Michel de Certeau, in modern social systems of knowledge production such as communities of Soviet Americanists, “the imposed knowledge and symbolisms [by the Soviet ideologists] become objects manipulated by practitioners [the Soviet Americanists] who have not produced them.” In de Certeau’s interpretation, such practitioners usually subverted practices, and representations that were imposed on them from within, – not by rejecting them or by transforming them (though that occurred as well), but in many different ways. Practitioners of knowledge production “metaphorized the dominant order: they made it function in another register. They remained “other” within the system which they assimilated and which assimilated them externally. They diverted it without leaving it.”⁴ De Certeau’s ideas influenced recent scholarship about theories and practices of late socialism, and about discursive practices and identity formation in post-Stalin Soviet society, especially works by Slava Gerovitch, Alexei Yurchak, and Juliane Fürst.⁵ As these scholars explained, in Soviet knowledge production “authoritative

2. Interview with Marina Vlasova and Vadim Koleneko, Moscow, March 20, 1991. See also the memoirs: Georgii Arbatov, *The System: An Insider’s Life in Soviet Politics* (New York, 1992), 289-290, 292. Compare with the influences of cultural détente on provincial Soviet society in: Sergei I. Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dnepropetrovsk, 1960-1985* (Baltimore, MD, 2010); idem, “The ‘Closed’ Soviet Society and the West: Consumption of the Western Cultural Products, Youth and Identity in Soviet Ukraine during the 1970s,” in Marie-Janine Calic, Sabine Dabringhaus, Dietmar Neutzat and Julia Obertreis, eds., *The Crisis of Socialist Modernity: The Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in the 1970s*, (Göttingen, 2011), 87-117.

3. Besides Arbatov’s memoirs, I use Bolkhovitinov’s personal materials. The first attempt to analyze the origin of American studies in the USSR through his own autobiography was made by Bolkhovitinov in English in 1980: Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, “How I Became a Historian,” *Journal of American Studies* 14, 1 (1980): 103-114. After this first attempt of writing his autobiography, in the late 1970s, Bolkhovitinov returned to writing his memoirs (now in Russian) only during 1990 at the end of perestroika. He kept writing his autobiography for many years, publishing some excerpts in various collections and journals. (See N.N. Bolkhovitinov, “O vremeni i o sebe: zametki istorika [About Time and Myself: Notes of Historian]”, *Istoriki Rossii*. [Historians of Russia] Vypusk 1 (M., 1997), 67-80.) But the major text of his memoirs, which Bolkhovitinov proofread the last time in 2005, was never published. I use this text as a major source for this study: Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, *Vospominaniia* [Memoirs] (M., 2005) [unpublished, typewritten manuscript of 62 pages, which begins with the crossed title “Schastlivaia pora detstva” (The Happy Time of Childhood)] (hereafter - *Vospominaniia*).

4. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven Rendall (Berkeley, CA, 1989), 31.

5. See especially Slava Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak: A History of Soviet Cybernetics* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004); Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was*

discourse coheres around a strict external idea or dogma [...] and occupies a particular position within the discursive regime of a period,” while “all other types of discourse are organized around it.”⁶ Using ideas of this scholarship, especially a concept of interaction between authoritative and professional discourses, this essay explores how the participation in US-Soviet academic exchanges programs affected various discursive practices of the Soviet Americanists. This essay gives also a new look at the problems of western-Soviet cultural and academic dialogue after Stalin, offered recently by Robert English, Vladislav Zubok, and other scholars,⁷ concentrating on what English called the Soviet scholars’ efforts “to move their country toward broader integration with the liberal international community.”⁸

American Studies in the USSR and Academic Exchanges

Contemporaries noted that the Cold War confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union led to an intense “ideological offensive” when thousands of historians and social scientists in both countries became involved in area studies such as Soviet studies in the USA and American studies in the USSR. During the Cold War in the 1960s and the 1970s, the most important centers of the various area studies in the Soviet Union were those devoted to US history, economy, politics and culture.⁹ But in contrast to the American side of the Cold War story, where the US government and various corporations had funded college-based centers for Soviet studies as early as the 1940s, the Soviet centers of American studies were organized much later and only in the Moscow-based institutions of

No More: The Last Soviet Generation (Princeton, NJ, 2005), and Juliane Fürst, *Stalin’s Last Generation: Soviet Post-War Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism* (New York, 2010).

6. Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More*, 14.

7. Robert English, *Russia and Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War* (New York, 2000); Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War From Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2007); idem, *Zhivago’s Children: The Last Russian Intelligentsia* (Cambridge, MA., 2009); Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More*; and Andrei Kozovoi, *Par-delà le mur: La culture de guerre froide soviétique entre deux détentes* (P., 2009). See also the idealistic biographies of the major Soviet Americanists: B.D. Kozenko, “Igor Petrovich Dementiev,” in G. Sevostianov, ed., *Portrety istorikov: vremia i sud’by* [Portraits of Historians: Time and Fates], Vol. 4, (M., 2004), 143-156; A. Manykin, V. Sogrin, “Nikolai Vasil’evich Sivachev,” *ibid*, 422-436; A.Yu. Petrov, “Bolkhovitinov Nikolai Nikolaevich (1930-2008),” in Sevostianov, ed., *Portrety istorikov*, Vol. 5, (M., 2010), 163-177; B. Kozenko, I. Kurilla, “Ivanov Robert Fedorovich (1925-2003),” *ibid.*, 270-283; R. Ganelin, V. Noskov, V. Pleshkov, “Fursenko Aleksandr Aleksandrovich (1922-2004),” *ibid.*, 555-571.

8. English, *Russia and Idea of the West*, 126. Compare with the Soviet point of view in E.A. Dudzinskaia, *Mezhdunarodnye nauchnye sviazi sovetskikh istorikov* [The International Scholarly Connections of Soviet Historians] (M., 1978).

9. Christopher Simpson, “Introduction,” in Christopher Simpson, ed., *Universities and Empire: Money and Politics in the Social Sciences during the Cold War*, (New York, 1998), xvi. See also a good historical survey of development of the American centers for Russian and Soviet studies as the Cold War’s area studies centers in David Engerman, *Know Your Enemy: The Rise and Fall of America’s Soviet Experts* (New York, 2009).

the USSR Academy of Sciences. From the early beginning, in the United States various Russian and Soviet research centers were spread all over the country in a de-centralized fashion and were affiliated with different colleges and universities. All these American centers were professionally organized, well-funded, and they immediately became integrated in a so-called academic-national security complex, especially during the late 1940s and the 1950s.¹⁰

Paradoxically, the first professional Soviet centers of American studies appeared much later, only after Stalin's death, during the relaxation of international tensions and improvement of the US-Soviet relations. Institutionalization of the Soviet centers of American studies according to the directives of the Soviet state and the KGB began in special research institutes of the USSR Academy of Sciences only in the 1960s and the 1970s. But the real peak of popularity and wide spread of American studies in the USSR during the late 1970s and the 1980s was the result of individual efforts by local college professors-enthusiasts who created their own schools for studies of US history, politics, economics, and culture at the major universities in big industrial cities of the USSR.¹¹

In 1953, the Soviet government created the first special center for the "studies of American countries" at the Institute of History of the USSR Academy of Science. From the beginning this center united the experts in Latin American and US history. After the division of the Institute of History in 1968 in two separate Institutes – of World History and USSR History – the center for the "studies of American countries" was also divided. All specialists in Latin American history left the center. After this division the center was transformed in a new "sector of history of the USA and Canada" at the new Institute of World History [hereafter – IVI] under leadership of a former KGB/intelligence officer Grigorii Sevostianov. He was finally replaced in 1988 by Nikolai Bolkhovitinov, who was not connected to the KGB.¹² This became the normal institutional practice for leaders of all centers for American studies in the Soviet Union to be approved by the KGB, or to have

10. See about this in Engerman, *Know Your Enemy*, and in Simpson, ed., *Universities and Empire*, xx.

11. See a growing literature about the Soviet area studies during the Cold War, especially: Tyrus W. Cobb, "National Security Perspectives of Soviet 'ThinkTanks'," *Problems of Communism*, 6 (1981): 51–59; Rose Gottemoeller and Paul Fritz Langer, *Foreign Area Studies in the USSR: Training and Employment of Specialists*, (Santa Monica, 1983); V.M. Danylenko, *Ukraina v mizhnarodnykh naukovykh i tekhnichnykh z'iazkakh (70-80-i rr.)* [Ukraine in the International Scientific and Technical Relations, the 1970s – 1980s] (Kyiv, 1993); Marie-Pierre Rey, "Le Département international du Comité central du PCUS, le MID et la politique extérieure soviétique de 1953 à 1991," *Communisme* 74/75 (2003): 179–215; Piotr Cherkasov, *IMEMO. Institut Mirovoi Ekonomiki i Mezhdunarodnykh Otnoshenii. Portret na fone epokhi* [IMEMO, The Institute of World Economy and International Relations. Portrait on Background of the Epoch] (M., 2004); Vladislav Zubok, "Sowjetische Westexperten," in Bernd Greiner, Tim Müller, Claudia Weber, eds., *Macht und Geist im Kalten Krieg* (Hamburg, 2011), 108–135.

12. "Doklad akademika N.N. Bolkhovitinova," *Novaia i noveishaia istoria*, 2003, No. 6, 185; "Yubilei I.A. Beliauskoi [The Anniversary of I. A. Beliavskaia]," *Amerikanskii ezhegodnik* [The American Year Book] [hereafter – AE] 1995 (M., 1996), 13, 15. In 1970 the sector began publishing its periodical *Amerikanskii ezhegodnik*.

direct connections to this organization. The second Soviet center of the American studies was created in May 1967 as a special Institute of the USA at the USSR Academy of Science (it was re-named in 1975 as the Institute of the USA and Canada [hereafter – ISKAN]) under the leadership of Georgii Arbatov.¹³ Many prominent Soviet experts in US economy and politics, including Nikolai Inozemtsev, the first Soviet expert in American contemporary economic history, were employed by IMEMO (Moscow’s Institute of World Economy and International Relations, the USSR Academy of Sciences), the old center of the Soviet economic theory, closed by Stalin in 1949 and re-opened during the Khrushchev’s thaw.¹⁴

In 1958 the Soviet government permitted the first exchange of Soviet students and scholars with the United States.¹⁵ Till 1968 the major American organization, which administered the scholarly exchanges with the Soviets, was called the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants (IUCTG). In 1968 it was replaced by the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), an organization established at the request of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) to administer academic exchanges with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. IREX conducted the exchange programs together with the USSR Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education, and the Soviet Academy of Sciences.¹⁶ According to these programs, after 1968, 40 Soviet graduate students or young faculty spent one or two semesters in the USA each year, and 10 or more Soviet professors conducted research for periods of two to five months each year. Although the overwhelming majority of Soviet students and professors, who participated in academic exchanges, represented sciences or engineering, IREX tried to involve Soviet experts in the humanities and social sciences in its programs as well. As a result, IREX supervised a special

13. See various editions of the memoirs, written by the first director of this Institute: G.A. Arbatov, *Zatianuvsheesia vyzdorovlenie (1953-1985 gg.) Svidetel'stvo sovremennika* [The Delayed Recovery, 1953-1985. The Testimony of Contemporary] (M., 1991), 381-399; Georgii Arbatov, *Chelovek sistemy: Nabludeniia i razmyshleniia ochevidtva cio raspada* [Man of the System: Observations and Reflections of the Contemporary of Its Dissolution] (M., 2002), 132-147, and a chapter “The Institute: How We ‘Discovered’ America” in English in his, *The System*, 295-328. ISKAN had its own monthly magazine *SShA: ekonomika, politika, ideologiia*. [The USA: Economy, Politics, Ideology].

14. See how Arbatov described a role of a revived IMEMO: Arbatov, *Zatianuvsheesia vyzdorovlenie*, 73-74. Compare with Cherkasov, *IMEMO*, 81-138, 139-200, 201-286.

15. See especially “Soglashenie mezhdou SSSR i SShA ob obmenakh v oblasti kul'tury, tekhniki i obrazovania [An Agreement between the USSR and the USA about the Exchanges in the Fields of Culture, Technics and Education],” *Pravda*, 1958, January 29, no. 29, p. 6. See about this and following U.S.-USSR exchanges agreements in the books of those who organized these exchanges from the US side: Robert F. Byrnes, *Soviet-American Academic Exchanges, 1958-1975* (Bloomington, IN, 1976), 46-47, 48ff., and Yale Richmond, *U.S.-Soviet Cultural Exchanges, 1958-1986* (Boulder, CO, 1987), 2, 4ff. Compare with the Russian publications, especially A.S. Krymskaia, “K istorii nauchno-obrazovatel'nykh obmenov mezhdou SSSR i SShA v kontse 1950-kh – 1960-c gg. [About a History of the Scientific and Educational Exchanges between the USSR and the USA at the End of the 1950s – 1960s],” *Novishaiia istoriia Rossii*, 2011, No. 2, 99-106.

16. See about this in Byrnes, *Soviet-American Academic Exchanges*, and Engerman, *Know Your Enemy*, 139, 171, 246-248.

program of collaborative research, conferences and workshops between ACLS and the Soviet Academy under the bilateral Commission on the Social Sciences and Humanities, established in 1975. According to an administrator of these programs, about 80 Americans and 80 Soviets were

exchanged each year under the Commission's activities, usually for visits of about one week. Between 1958 and the end of 1985, some 2,000 Americans and 2,000 Soviets were exchanged under IUCTG and IREX programs.¹⁷

The dynamics and frequency of the visits to the United States dramatically changed during the Brezhnev era, especially in the period of détente of the 1970s. As contemporaries observed:

In 1961-62 we usually knew only one or two rare fortunate candidates from either Moscow University or the Academy of Sciences who visited America; by the end of the 1960s we had known at least five names among our colleagues not only from Moscow but also from Leningrad who traveled on a regular basis to the States; but after 1974 it was already common practice to send our Americanists from all over the Soviet Union, hundreds of them, – to the United States and Canada.¹⁸

“Yes, it is true,” confirmed the Ukrainian Americanist Arnold Shlepakov, “thanks to détente in the 1970s the first Ukrainian scholars went to America.”¹⁹ More visits (almost 600!) of Soviet Americanists were made during the Brezhnev era, especially during the détente period. One of these Soviet visiting scholars based at Columbia University, Aleksei Burmistenko, a young historian of American journalism from Moscow, even called numerous Soviet academic guests in the USA “the children of détente” in 1977.²⁰

During the Brezhnev's détente in the 1970s the new centers for American studies were organized at the Department of History of Moscow State University (hereafter, – MGU), in Leningrad and other industrial cities of the Soviet Union. According to the Soviet government's decision in 1973-74, the MGU department of history became a center for an establishment of Fulbright program in the USSR. In 1975, Nikolai Sivachev, from the same department, established the Scholarly Coordinating Council on American Studies at this university. In November 1978, under his leadership, a new Soviet center for American studies was organized there,

17. Richmond, *U.S.-Soviet Cultural Exchanges, 1958-1986*, 32.

18. Interview with Robert F. Ivanov, Moscow, June 25, 1991.

19. Interview with Arnold Shlepakov, Kyiv, Ukraine, April 28, 1990.

20. Library of Congress. Archival Manuscript Collection. International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) [hereafter – LC. IREX]. RC 19 (1976-77), F 7; *The Milwaukee Journal*, February 21, 1977. An essay about Burmistenko's visit (“Soviet Critic Finds US Press Ruthless”) in this local newspaper quoted him, calling himself “I am a child of détente.” Compare with English, *Russia and Idea of the West*, 125.

a so-called “laboratory of American studies” affiliated with a department of modern and contemporary history.²¹

In Kyiv, the capital of the Soviet Ukraine, under the leadership of Ukrainian scholar Arnold Shlepakov, a department of modern and contemporary history at the Institute of History of the Ukrainian Academy of Science was transformed into a new Soviet center of American studies during 1969-1978. In 1978, this center overgrew its small department and became a new institute of the Ukrainian Academy: – the Institute of Social and Economic Problems of the Foreign Countries.²² In November-December 1971, during the first All-Union symposium of the Soviet Americanists, 10 of 130 experts in US history were from Ukrainian institutions. By 1980, Shlepakov’s center for American studies in Kyiv united 15 specialists in US history, politics and diplomacy. Ukrainian historian Semyion Appatov at Odesa University prepared at least 10 experts in contemporary US history and diplomacy. At the same time, more than 20 experts in US history (including graduate students) worked at the Institute of the World History. By 1980, ten doctors of historical science, who were specialists in US history, were employed there. An overwhelming majority of these historians were officially affiliated with this Institute’s sector of history of the USA and Canada. By the beginning of the 1980s, this sector had 20 members, and a few Americanists were affiliated with other sectors of the same Institute.²³ Eleven specialists in the US political history worked under leadership of Sivachev at the laboratory of American studies at the Department of History of MGU. By 1976 the staff of ISKAN had grown to about 300 and by 1980 to more than 450. About half of these were researchers and half were support staff. Every year this institute accepted approximately 15-20 new postgraduate students. By the late 1970s, the staff of IMEMO numbered about 800, and at least 200 were experts in American studies. From 1964 until the end of the 1970s almost fifty experts in US history had been awarded with a rank of doctor of historical science. In 1991,

21. A.A. Porshakova, “Laboratoria istorii SShA v MGU [Laboratory of the US History in MGU],” *AE*. 1989, 256-265. In 1983 after Sivachev’s death, Evgenii F. Yaz’kov became a leader of this center. See also Yu.N. Rogulev, “Dvenadtsat’ let vzaimovyygodnogo sotrudnichestva (o professional’nykh svyaziakh istorikov-amerikanistov MGU s amerikanskimi kollegami) [Twelve Years of Mutually Beneficial Cooperation (About Professional Relations between MGU Historians-Americanists and American Colleagues)]” *AE*. 1986, 246-250. Compare with A.S. Manykin, ed., *Pamiati professora N.V. Sivacheva. SShA: Evoliutsia osnovnykh ideino-politicheskikh kontseptsii*, [In Memory of Professor N.V. Sivachev. The USA: An Evolution of the Main Ideological and Political Concepts] (M., 2004), see esp. 5-16.

22. Leonid Leshchenko and Ihor Chernikov, “Vsesvitnio vidomyi vitchyzniani uchenyi: Istoryk-miznarodnyk, organizator nauky i diplomat. Do 80-lit’ia vid dnia narodzhennia akademika NAN Ukrainy Arnol’da Mykolaivycha Shlepakova (1930-1996 rr.) [Internationally Famous Ukrainian Scholar: A Historian- Expert in International Relations, Organizer of Historical Scholarship and Diplomat. Celebrating 80-years Anniversary of the Academician of NAN of Ukraine, Arnold Mykolaievych Shlepakov (1930-1996)],” in S.V. Vidnians’kyi, ed., *Mizhnarodni zv’iazky Ukrainy: naukovy poshuky i znakhidky* [The International Relations of Ukraine: Scholarly Research and Findings] *Vypusk 19*, (Kyiv: Institut istorii NAN Ukrainy, 2010), 27-28. A majority of scholars affiliated with this Institute studied various problems of US and Canadian politics.

23. *AE*. 1972, 303-306, interviews with Shlepakov and with Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, May 21, 2001.

according to calculations of late E. Yaz'kov, at least 300 Soviet historians (all of them from Russia and Ukraine) studied US history. Technically speaking, more than half, 250 of the 400 Americanists at ISKAN in 1980 held degrees of either *kandidat* or doctor of historical science; even those who studied US contemporary politics were historians by training. At the end of the 1980s, almost 70% of all 1,000 prominent Soviet Americanists (including political scientists, economists, sociologists, philosophers, literary and film critics) were college professors who taught American studies in major universities of Soviet Russia and Ukraine, in big industrial cities such as Moscow, Leningrad, Kyiv, Odesa and Dnipropetrovsk. More than 60% of the Soviet Americanists employed by universities and colleges were located in Russia, - and almost 40% in Ukraine. By 1991 it was the largest community of professional Americanists in the world outside the United States. The Chinese Americanists, the so-called America Watchers, comprised the second largest, — after the Soviet community of America's experts, with almost 700 specialists concentrating in 15 college centers.²⁴

Soviet Preparation for Academic Exchange

From the beginning of the Soviet-US cultural exchange of 1958 until the peak of perestroika, the Soviet side followed the same practices of selection of the Soviet participants. With a very few exceptions, all Soviet representatives in these exchange programs were members of communist party. They were cleared by the KGB and agreed to collaborate with the Soviet secret police. Some of these representatives were the “undercover” KGB officers. As a rule, the overwhelming majority of the Soviet visitors were experts in engineering and science, only few of them were historians or represented humanities. Even during the peak of academic exchange in 1977 among 40 Soviet nominations (for research trip to the United States) only three specialized in the humanities: all others were scientists.²⁵

Officially, Soviet scholars went to America with the major goal to do their research and in some cases to teach, or deliver their lectures to American audiences. But to achieve this goal they had to follow a long, boring and humiliating process of application “for traveling abroad” and “thorough interviews” with so-called “international departments” (*mezhdunarodnye [Osobyje]otdely*) of their colleges and research institutions. The Soviet applicants who planned to travel to America had to be 1) “members of communist party, [this was especially required for

24. Calculations were made according to data from Gordon S. Wood and Louise G. Wood, eds., *Russian-American Dialogue on the American Revolution* (Columbia, 1995), 7; Barbara L. Dash, *A Defector Reports: The Institute of the USA and Canada* (Falls Church, VA, 1982), 7; Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, *SShA: Problemy istorii i sovremennaia istoriografiia* [The USA: Problems of History and Recent Historiography] (M., 1980), 340; my interview with Bolkhovitinov, May 21, 2001, and with Shlepakov. See also David Shambaugh, *Beautiful Imperialist: China Perceives America, 1972-1990* (Princeton, 1991), 277-278.

25. LC. IREX. RC 19 (1976-77), F 39.

historians and social scientists],” 2) approved by their employers (“with a research plan and an official recommendation, discussed by the department first, and then signed by their department chair, but also by the communist party and trade union chiefs”)²⁶, 3) recommended for “the research travel abroad by their departments to the USSR Ministry of Higher Education and the international department,” and, finally, 4) cleared by the KGB through the above-mentioned international departments, promising to submit their reports to the KGB officers immediately after their return from America. After this approval the names of Soviet candidates were sent to American organizations (like IREX, ACLS, Fulbright, etc.), which usually approved all Soviet candidates.²⁷

Paradoxically, two communist “founding fathers” of American studies in the USSR, Aleksei Efimov and Lev Zubok, who taught (after the Second World War) the most popular undergraduate courses on US History at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (hereafter, – MGIMO) for their future Americanists students, were never cleared by the KGB and were not allowed to go abroad because of their background. As it turned out, Aleksei Efimov, a former Russian naval officer and representative of the Russian Orthodox nobility, who published Soviet pioneering studies on the early American history, specifically about the genesis of American capitalism through the Civil War and the Reconstruction, and also the first Soviet standard textbook on modern history for secondary schools, was connected to “the whites” during the Russian Civil War and participated in counter-revolutionary activities in 1918-1920. Lev Zubok, a Jewish communist, the author of the first Soviet studies on the history of US working class and the history of US diplomacy at the beginning of the twentieth century, came to Russia after the civil war in 1924 from Philadelphia as a representative of the American communist movement. Unfortunately, he became a victim of anti-cosmopolitan, anti-Semitic campaigns during 1948-49. As a result of these “ideological sins,” the KGB denied the numerous applications for international travel by Efimov and Zubok during the 1960s.²⁸ Meanwhile their former MGIMO students, such young Americanists as Arbatov, Bolkhovitinov and Ivanov, were communists without “any ideological deviations,” and they were cleared by the KGB for their travels in America.

26. Arkhiv MGU, f. 9, op. 8, d. 1009, l. 13.

27. Citations are from Arkhiv MGU, f. 9, op. 8, d. 1009, l. 13-14, and *Vospominaniia*, 48-49. See also my interviews with former Soviet Americanists - Bolkhovitinov, Fursenko, Ivanov, Shlepakov and Leshchenko, and the American organizers of their visits – Yale Richmond and Donald Raleigh. Soviet side usually rejected more American candidates, then US hosting institutions. The most infamous cases of Soviet rejection were the denial of David Goldfrank’s (because of his religious topic) and Frank Sysin’s (because of his Ukrainian nationalism) applications.

28. See B. Kozenko, “Lev Izraelievich Zubok (1896-1967),” in G. Sevostianov, L. Marinovich, L. Mil’skaya, eds., *Portrety istorikov: Vremia i sud’by. Vol. 2* (M., 2000), 359-368; R. Ivanov, “Aleksei Vladimirovich Efimov (1896-1971),” *ibid.*, 369-381. I described in detail the story of Zubok and Efimov in my article: Sergei I. Zhuk, “Inventing America on the Borders of Socialist Imagination: Movies and Music from the USA and the Origins of American Studies in the USSR,” *REGION: Regional Studies of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia*, 2013, 2(2): 249-288.

The KGB usually approved the “clean” candidates’ research plans and itineraries (with the names of schools, library and archival collections in the United States.) Only after this approval could these candidates apply for foreign passports. The KGB officers from the international departments through the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs helped to get US visas and air tickets for the selected and approved candidates.²⁹ The most important requirement for all travelers abroad was the submission of a special travel report to the international departments (for the KGB). Besides a traditional academic report to the department chair, all visitors to foreign countries reported immediately to the KGB officers of their institutes (or universities) in a month after their return. This practice of collecting reports ended in Moscow only during perestroika in 1987, while in provincial universities in Ukraine, the local international departments still requested the final travel reports even in 1993.³⁰

Some Soviet candidates, being already approved by their departments for research travel, were rejected by the KGB, for their old “ideological crimes.” Another famous Americanist, Nikolai Yakovlev, a former student of Efimov and Zubok, the popular author of the Soviet biography of the first American president George Washington, was denied the privilege to travel abroad several times during the 1970s and the 1980s. As it turned out, during the late 1940s, Yakovlev was arrested together with his famous father, a Soviet marshal of artillery. Eventually Yakovlev was rehabilitated by the Soviet police, and he returned to academic work and joined the “American” sector at the Institute of History. Unfortunately for his academic career, the KGB began using him for their provocations, engaged him in writing books, glorifying the KGB struggle “with various anti-Soviet intellectuals like Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn.”³¹ Despite this collaboration with the KGB, Yakovlev still was not allowed to travel abroad.

A younger colleague of Sevostianov and Bolkhovitinov from IVI, Sergei Burin, who was a grandson of the Soviet historian-medievalist S.D. Skazkin, and studied a

29. As Fursenko and Leshchenko recalled later, “before a travel to America, the number one ideological enemy of the Soviet Union, it was a normal practice to interview the selected candidate by the KGB representative at the candidate’s teaching or academic institution to remind him about some behavioral moments in the country of our enemies. Only after this prophylactic conversation, a KGB officer could offer to this selected candidate a contract for the future collaboration with the KGB. It was the candidate’s right to accept or ignore this offer.” Both Fursenko in 1991 and Leshchenko in 2013 used the same phrases.

30. See my e-mail correspondence with Vladislav Zubok, June 9, 2013. He recalled that during his first travel to US in 1987, ISKAN’s administration stopped collecting travel reports. But I still remember that before and after my 1993 research trip to the USA, I was approached by the local former KGB officer, requesting a submission of my academic report to his office at Dnipropetrovsk State University.

31. See about a KGB’s treatment of young Yakovlev, when the Soviet police used him in their provocation against US Embassy in Moscow in 1949 in John Lewis Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life* (New York, 2011), 456-458. Compare with a very idealistic biography of Yakovlev in the essay by V. Pechatnov and S. Pozharskaia, “Nikolai Nikolaievich Yakovlev (1927-1996),” in Sevostianov, ed., *Portrety istorikov: vremia i sud’by*, Vol. 4, 522-533. I quote his book commissioned by the KGB: Nikolai N. Yakovlev, *TsRU protiv SSSR* [CIA against the USSR] (M., 1976), 7.

social history of colonial Virginia and Maryland, also became *nevyezdnoi* (without privilege to travel abroad). Being a MGU undergraduate student in the late 1960s, he used to draw various funny caricatures of the Soviet leaders such as Vladimir Lenin in his note book during the lectures. Once, by mistake, Burin left a page with his caricature picture of Lenin inside a book from the MGU library. A MGU librarian found this picture in the book, which Burin had just returned, and she immediately reported to the KGB about this. Burin was arrested, expelled from MGU and Komsomol. Only interference of his famous grandfather, academician Skazkin, saved Burin from the prison term. He was drafted into the Soviet army and only in the 1970s did he resume his academic career. After this experience, he was never allowed to travel abroad.³²

Scholars from the Soviet provincial centers for American studies also had restrictions for their travels to America because of the limitations in the centralized distribution of the vacancies for obtaining American travel grants. Since 1958, usually the first positions in the official “travel lists to America” (*raznoriadka na poezdku v Ameriku*) by the USSR Ministry of Higher Education and Academy of Sciences had been sent to the representatives of Moscow. Arnold Shlepakov, a Ukrainian historian of the working class immigration to the United States, applied for a permission to travel to America many times during 1962-64. Only in October of 1964, did he finally receive this permission. Meanwhile, during the same time, Muscovites from various Moscow centers for American studies, such as Sivachev, were included in the first positions in the “vacancy list” immediately after the KGB clearance.³³ This “discrimination” of provincial scholars continued through the 1970s. By 1980, nine from ten doctors of historical science, who were experts in US history at Moscow’s Institute of World History, had already visited the United States, while in Ukraine during the same period of time, only three from six professors of US history at “Shlepakov’s Institute” in Kiev were invited to participate in academic exchange with Americans. Overall, according to IREX files, from 1968 to 1980 almost 80 percent (479) Soviet visitors to America came from Moscow, and all of them, except four, were men. Among 50 Soviet candidates for the trip to the USA in 1982, 38 (more than 70 percent) came from families of the Soviet party and academic elite (like Bolkhovitinov, Shlepakov and Vlasova).³⁴

Another serious moral problem facing Soviet Americanists was collaboration with the KGB. Usually after the first travel abroad and submission of their travel reports, Soviet scholars were invited by the KGB officers for a “special conversation.” As some participants of these conversations recalled, Soviet

32. Interview with Bolkhovitinov, May 21, 2001, and interview with Sergei Burin, September 3, 1998, Moscow. Compare with Arkhiv MGU, f. 9, op. 8, d. 1009, l. 91-94.

33. See archival documents about these submissions in Arkhiv NAN Ukrainy, Opys 1-L, Otdel kadrov, [hereafter, – ANANU] sprava 1277, l. 54 (Shlepakov’s papers), and Arkhiv MGU, f. 9, op. 8, d. 1009, l. 14 (Sivachev’s papers).

34. Bolkhovitinov, *SShA: Problemy*, 339-340, and interviews with Ivanov, Bolkhovitinov, and especially with Leonid Leshchenko, June 26, 2013, Kyiv. In the files, I found the names of only four female Soviet visitors such as Irina Belivskaia and Marina Vlasova from Moscow.

Americanists had to play “various mind games” and follow their “strategies of survival” during these conversations accepting some KGB offers and rejecting others. The major goal of these games was to maintain good connections with the KGB to guarantee the future trips to America. Not everybody could follow the rules of such games. Breaking these rules could affect one’s entire academic career and, especially, plans for travel abroad.³⁵ The most important part of the “strategies of survival” was a correct adherence to all ideological requirements in the travel report by the scholar. This report had to reflect the major research and teaching goals of the travel and describe the major research centers, personal and scholarly contacts abroad, and main activities during the travel. The KGB reports also required a certain description of the political, economic and ideological (and since the 1970s cultural) situation in American society. Trying to ignore these rules was considered to be a serious “deviation.”³⁶

A typical case of such “deviation” from the “strategies of survival” was the story of Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, who joined communist party only in 1961, visited the USA for the first time in his life later than all his colleagues, from February through August of 1968, when he had already published two highly acclaimed books in the US history about the Monroe Doctrine and a “cultural diplomacy” of early American Republic and Imperial Russia, based on the original documents from the Soviet archives. Unfortunately for Bolkhovitinov’s academic career at IVI, in 1968 he rejected a KGB recruiting offer. As he recalled later, before his first travel to the USA, in his interview during January of 1968, a KGB officer had already mentioned to Bolkhovitinov the possibility for future collaboration. Bolkhovitinov pretended that he did not understand a nature of this offer, and after his return in Moscow in September 1968, he “forgot” to submit his report to “this KGB officer,” reporting directly to the Institute’s international office instead.³⁷

As a result of this strategic mistake, the KGB denied Bolkhovitinov’s access to any long-term research grants funded by the US government, and Grigorii Sevostianov, who represented the KGB control in IVI, and who was Bolkhovitinov’s supervisor, never allowed Bolkhovitinov to visit America longer than one month during the 1970s. Moreover, during his short trip to Alaska to a conference about history of Russian America in 1979, one of the Soviet visitors, A.N. Martynov, an official of the USSR National Committee of Historians, denounced Bolkhovitinov

35. I use phrases from my interview with Marina Vlasova and Aleksandr Fursenko, March 19, 1991, Moscow. See also Nekrich’s memoirs about travels abroad of Soviet Americanists from his Institute of History, and especially about the case of Lev Slezkine, who was denied to travel abroad: Aleksandr Nekrich, *Forsake Fear: Memoirs of an Historian*, (Boston, 1991), 135, 201. Even the people who were close to the KGB, like Arbatov, had problematic relations with this organization, and sometimes experienced real persecution by the KGB officers. See Arbatov, *Zatianuvsheisia vyzdorovlenie*, 269, 272-274.

36. See a typical academic travel report by O.S. Soroko-Tsiupa, a MGU Professor of Canadian History, in Arkhiv MGU, f. 9, op. 8, d. 1011, l. 11-12, about his travel to Toronto, Canada during September 1966 – June 1967. Compare with ANANU, sprava 1277, l. 53-54, 64, and sprava 1198, l. 31-34.

37. Bolkhovitinov, *Vospominaniia*, 47-48.

to the KGB as “an intellectual with anti-Soviet feelings” who had “unsanctioned secret meetings with American scholars.”³⁸ As a direct result of this denunciation, Bolkhovitinov was not allowed to travel abroad until perestroika, when he went to the USA in late 1986. A few talented Soviet Americanists, like Bolkhovitinov or his young colleague from Odesa Vitaly L. Beloborodko, who rejected the recruiting efforts of the KGB, were punished by a ban to travel abroad.³⁹ Those Soviet Americanists, who were KGB officers, like Sevostianov, or who collaborated with this organization had no problems with getting permission for their international travels from the KGB.

American Hosts about Soviet Guests

The “adventures” of the Soviet Americanists in America were closely covered by the US organizations, responsible for the reception of the Soviet guests. After many months of waiting for the KGB approval, and being closely monitored by this organization at home, Soviet Americanists finally arrived in America and became a focus of close attention by the officials from IREX and other agencies, including the US Department of State. According to IREX files, 480 (80 percent) Soviet participants in academic exchanges program during 1968-1982, who represented the field of “American studies,” were official policy analysts of the Soviet government, and all of them came from the research institutes of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, such as ISKAN and IMEMO in Moscow. During the same period of time, almost 80 percent (483) of Soviet Americanists who visited the United States, using American research grants, were various official leaders (mostly academic *apparatchiks*) from the Soviet centers for American studies in MGU, ISKAN, IMEMO and IVI. Reflecting an obvious Cold War ideological bias, American observers were skeptical about the mission of these research centers, and characterized them in the IREX official reports as the “Spy Institutes.”⁴⁰

Soviet officials expressed a similar skeptic and suspicious attitude toward Americans at the beginning of these contacts. As ISKAN director Georgii Arbatov wrote in his memoirs, a “majority of our specialists [in American studies]” had yet to overcome “pervasive ideology ... [of] propaganda and fear.” Speaking for himself he recalled that, when named in 1967 the head of the USA Institute,

38. *Ibid.*, 47-48, 50, 53.

39. LC. IREX. RC 94, F 28, file of Vitaly Beloborodko.

40. LC. IREX. RC 237, F 13 (1977). See an IREX paper dated of September 20, 1977, with hand-written description of ISKAN as “a Spy Institute.” As David Godfrank from Georgetown University recalled, the entire situation with Soviet-American exchanges reminded him of the “Radio Erevan” joke he heard “about 35 years ago.” “Vopros: Are our academic exchanges with the United States reciprocal and equitable? Otvet: Yes, our academic exchanges with the United States are reciprocal and equitable. They send us scholars, and we treat them like spies; we send them spies, and they treat them like scholars.” Cited from Goldfrank’s e-mail message to me, August 29, 2013.

[my] knowledge was insufficiently deep [...] I had never been to the United States. I had no contacts or acquaintances among Americans [...] [but] harder to acquire than acquaintances [...] was a feeling for the country, a partly rational, partly intuitive sense that we could only acquire through regular professional contact with a wide variety of specialists from the United States and with representatives from government and business.⁴¹

American hosts, experts in Russian and Soviet studies, were always interested in collaboration with the Soviet scholars, trying to help them to integrate into the “improvised international community, created by the open opportunities of détente.”⁴² Sometime the American hosts even tried to ignore the “spy” background of their Soviet visitors, if they were official bosses from Moscow centers. American scholars flattered these guests in public, hoping to get official invitations to visit Russia or begin collaborative research projects with their Soviet visitors. Among various materials, some IREX files contain a very positive and sympathetic portrayal of Grigorii Sevostianov, a professional Soviet spy and intelligence/KGB officer, who during WWII conducted Soviet espionage in the Far East.⁴³ Through his KGB connections, Sevostianov became the head of the first American studies center in Moscow in 1968, “trying to suppress any fresh idea” among his Soviet colleagues, punishing those “liberals” like Nikolai Bolkhovitinov, “for an expression of their open-minded and too revisionist views on US history” in Moscow. As the head of this center, he became a popular Soviet guest in America. Paradoxically, this “KGB man,” and well-known “enemy of American imperialism,” known for his “offensive brutal anti-American” publications in the USSR, based mainly on

41. G. Arbatov, *The System*, 289-290, 292. Arbatov explained that as late as 1968 even he, director of the new USA Institute, still had not a single American acquaintance because “given the restrictions of the times [...] I didn’t even have the right to initiate such contacts.” See also English, *Russia and Idea of the West*, 148.

42. Two colleagues from the Department of History at the Johns Hopkins University, who represented fields of Russian History (Jeffrey Brooks) and US History (Jack P. Greene) expressed similar thoughts almost at the same time, in April 1999 during a conversation with me. Alfred Rieber (in 1998-99) confirmed this as well. As Norman Saul mentioned earlier, in 1975, “academic détente was part of [Soviet Americanists’] mission to this country.” See in LC. IREX. RC 228, F 18, p. 2.

43. See his publication where he describes his career in the Far East: G.P. Sevostianov, *Ekspansionistskaia politika SShA na Dal’nem Vostoke, v Kitaie, i Koree v 1905-1911 gg.* [The US Expansionist Politics in Far East, China and Korea during 1905-1911] (M., 1958). After this book, he stopped writing something original. But as head of “American” sector since 1967, he had mainly been editing the collective works of his sector’s colleagues. See an official Soviet publication, openly praising the professional background of Sevostianov as a Soviet spy/KGB intelligence officer before his academic career in 1950. It was published in the rubric “*Nauchnaia zhizn’* [Scholarly Life]” in *Amerikanskii ezhegodnik* during perestroika. See S.N. Burin, “K 75-letiiu akademika G.N. Sevostianova,” [Celebrating 75-years Anniversary of the Academician G.N. Sevostianov] *AE* 1990 (M., 1991), 211-215. After his “spy career,” in 1947 Sevostianov was sent by the KGB to the High Diplomatic School of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which he graduated with a freshly written *kandidatskaia* dissertation. He defended this dissertation in 1950, when he was recommended by the KGB to be hired by the Institute of History. In 1960 he defended his doctoral dissertation and was appointed in September of 1967 as an acting head of the sector of history of the USA and Canada of the same Institute. In April of 1969 Sevostianov was officially approved as a chair of this sector.

communist propagandist clichés rather than on serious analysis of historical documents, suddenly, was introduced by American hosts in 1974 as “a distinguished Russian diplomatic historian” and as “a scholar of excellent background, a man of great integrity and seriousness.” Many American colleagues of Sevostianov, such as Norman Saul from the University of Kansas, characterized Sevostianov as “a serious scholar” who “was well versed in American published material relating to his topic, thus enabling him to use research time more profitably.”⁴⁴ As it turned out, Professor Saul was interested in the Sevostianov’s immediate support for “expanding scholarly cooperation directly between the University of Kansas and the [Soviet] Academy of Sciences,” and “the possibility of joint conferences, joint publications, and teaching and research exchanges.”⁴⁵

All American visitors to the USSR, especially the American experts in Russian/Soviet history, culture and politics, depended on the good relations with the Soviet officials from the “spy institutes,” and eventually, on their official invitations to visit Moscow. That is why the IREX officials always supported and promoted the visits of such famous Soviet academic officials, connected to the KGB, like Sevostianov, or Georgii Arbatov. It was the principle of “do ut des” – “we give you our permission to visit the USA and expect you allowing us to visit the USSR to do our research there,” or “we do not pay attention to your KGB and Communist connections, and expect (instead) that you would invite us to the Soviet Union any time we need it.”⁴⁶

On August 27, 1973, IREX issued a special “Memorandum about Bilateral Travel Grant Request” to sponsor Arbatov’s to visit on January 9 through February 6, 1974:

The US Institute (ISKAN) has served as a useful intermediary in channeling visiting US scholars to other institutes within (Soviet) Academy hierarchy, but these visits have to date not provided satisfactory reciprocal opportunities for “Russianists” and Soviet specialists. We should like to discuss with Arbatov an expansion of our range of contacts and the formation of a bi-national agenda commission which would identify areas of mutual and parallel interest in order to facilitate consultation and collaboration.⁴⁷

44. LC. IREX. RC 21, F 17 (1974-75), and LC. IREX. RC 228, F 18, citation from a letter by Allen Kassof, December 26, 1974. Compare with my interviews with Nikolai Bolkhovitinov, Robert Ivanov, Aleksandr Fursenko and Aaron Ya. Gurevich (March 19, 1991) and their very negative relations to the “KGB general” Sevostianov; they characterized Sevostianov as “the worst enemy of American people,” as the “Soviet hawk of the Cold War.”

45. LC. IREX. RC 228, F 18, p. 2: “After consultations with faculty and administration and subsequent conversations with Dr. Sevostianov in Washington by myself [...], it was decided to extend a proposal for a joint Soviet-American conference on World War II to be held in Lawrence in the fall of 1976, including a joint publication of papers. The State Department and American Historical Association were also consulted in regard to this project, which was presented to Dr. Sevostianov by Professor John T. Alexander in Moscow in May...”

46. These phrases were mentioned by Vlasova, compare with interview with Donald Raleigh, May 16, 2012.

47. LC. IREX. RC 161, F 25, IREX Memorandum, August 27, 1973, and letter of Cynthia Scott, February 26, 1974.

As a result, on September 13, 1973, Allen Kassof from IREX wrote Arbatov an official invitation from IREX and ACLS to visit the USA with his wife, and to deliver a special public lecture (with a promised honorarium) at the University of Michigan, in Ann Arbor. After this successful visit on February 26, 1974, Cynthia Scott, IREX program officer, in her letter to Arbatov, reminded him about the successful results of his application for American funding for his trips, promised to support all his future visits to America and at the same time promised to bring in Moscow the list with nominations of American scholars for 1974-1975 academic year, and asked for a meeting with him in ISKAN to discuss this list of the future American visitors in the USSR.⁴⁸

The general evaluations of the visits by Soviet Americanists to the USA and discussions about pro and contra of this exchanges program were the major themes of IREX correspondence during the 1970s. The main idea of these documents was to justify the rationale for the exchange with the Soviet scholars. In some reports IREX officials were sincerely surprised with the rare cases of professionalism and academic honesty of Soviet Americanists.⁴⁹ A good summary of the American hosts' reaction to Soviet guests was expressed in a correspondence in 1976, by Eugene B. Skolnikoff, Director of the Center for International Studies at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (hereafter, – MIT), who wrote to Julia Holm from IREX,

[the Soviets] seemed to come with a very specific objective of learning about certain techniques in political science, and were relatively little interested in discussing anything else at all. Moreover, I did not have the impression that they were well-grounded in those techniques themselves, though I cannot speak with certainty on that point. The impression certainly was that they were there to get information rather than to have broader discussions. It was not clear to me either that they were sufficiently well-versed in the techniques they wanted to learn about to be able to assimilate very much of the information they seemed to be after... [p.2] I might add that my own recent experiences with Russian visitors have been so consistently unsatisfactory, and I have picked up enough similar comments from others, that I find myself increasingly less interested in receiving or meeting with Russian visitors unless I know them well and know that I can have a reasonable exchange of information with them. When Dr. Arbatov visited MIT recently for a small luncheon, I made this point very strongly to him and indicated that from my perspective US-Soviet academic exchanges would deteriorate very rapidly if the Russians continue to carry out their side as seems to have been developing in the last couple of years. He said he 'got the message' and would carry it back but offered no other commentary.⁵⁰

A month later, Julia Holm answered to Skolnikoff, explaining that

[...] of seven letters I received back (about Soviet visitors), five were positive. Those five letters came from professors who do not frequently receive Soviet

48. Ibid.

49. LC. IREX. RC 187, F 13: Sergei Plekhanov's file, praising his erudition.

50. LC. IREX. RC 228, F 45, letter by Eugene B. Skolnikoff, June 22, 1976, pp. 1-2.

scholars and thus might have more patience and lower expectations than scholars like yourself who see a regular parade of Soviets. There is also a feeling in much of the correspondence that [academic apparatchiks] serve as laboratory specimens – “so this is how a *shishka* acts, talks, and dresses in the mid-70’s...” – but not as intellectual counterparts... Unfortunately the evaluations that came back this year [about Soviet visitors] were alarmingly poor – the majority of the Soviet scientists were quite obviously here as a reward and not to do research... I mention this because the problem of – let me be frank – hacks coming disguised as scholars, plagues all three exchanges I run.⁵¹

In general, American hosts were very skeptical about intellectual potential and scholarly contributions of the Soviet Americanists who visited their country. Till mid-1970s they called these Soviet visits “a kind of academic tourism,” and they expected that more serious Soviet researchers eventually would come to visit as well. Overall they were not interested in Soviet Americanists coming to American universities. As one expert in East Asian Studies from Harvard University complained to IREX in June of 1975:

The Academy of Sciences of the USSR has sent us a succession of people who ask questions, but have nothing to offer. They are not historians, but seem to be intelligence specialists, and are not of intellectual interest to us. Meanwhile, our proposal that an historian of interest to us should visit Harvard from their Institute of Oriental Culture of the Academy of Sciences has been bypassed and disregarded for three years past. If the Soviets expect intellectual interchange with us, they should send people competent for the purpose.⁵²

Unfortunately, the majority of Soviet visitors were academic or college apparatchiks rather than serious researchers. IREX reports left many portrayals of such Soviet functionaries. All of them contain the similar characteristics:

1. Bombastic, 2. Arrogant, 3. Impolite (arrives without announcement to meet people), 4. Doesn’t pay hotel bill, 5. Doesn’t arrive for appointments made for him, 6. Speaking out of order, 7. Rejected a [American host’s] complaint that information in data sheets was not correct, 8. Rejected a complaint that Soviets ask for too much money, 9. Rejected complaints that Soviets participants only learn, bring little of value to American universities.⁵³

51. LC. IREX. RC 228, F 45, letter by Julia Holm, July 14, 1976, p. 1-2. Another problem, which IREX officials began complaining after 1975 was the KGB trying to stop the serious researchers from going to the USA: “Support for dissidents among American scientists is growing steadily and I am very curious to see if their actions might not positively affect the quality of scholars coming here.”

52. LC. IREX. RC 228, F 54, letter by John K. Fairbank, June 27, 1975. On May 12, 1975, IREX Memorandum recommended to finance (from 3-4 weeks) visit of talented Soviet sociologist, “which would promise to lead us beyond the kind of academic tourism which [existed in early years].” See in LC. IREX. RC 161, F 29.

53. LC. IREX. RC 91, F 1 (1963-68). See Folder: “Trip to USA of P.I. Shitov, from Department of Foreign Relations, Ministry of Higher Education, March (4-27) 1968”. He went to visit

More than 60 percent of all IREX reports during the Brezhnev era had direct complaints about bad English language and research skills of Soviet students of American studies. Usually American hosts could praise (in 40 percent of IREX files) Soviet Americanists, specialists in US economy, politics, diplomacy and culture from ISKAN and IMEMO, but very rarely Soviet historians, whom they “found [sometime] charming people,” but [they] could not “see that visits [of Soviet historians] accomplished any intellectual purpose,” because Soviet guests “prosecuted no significant research here [in America].”⁵⁴ Even Aleksandr Fursenko, a Soviet historian, the most respected by his American colleagues, was criticized in the IREX reports for the same reason. Thus in his letter from November 15, 1979, Professor Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. from the City University of New York, wrote to IREX, answering to an inquiry regarding the visit of Fursenko and his research topic about “Evolution of US politics in the 1970s,” and complained at the end,

I have seen him on his previous trips and suppose I will see him again this time. But I cannot forbear passing on to you my strong impression that these meetings are a total waste of time. Fursenko, though a nice fellow, is not a historian. He is a Soviet propagandist, totally impervious to evidence at odds with his stereotypes, and it is a misuse of money to send him (or for that matter any other Soviet “historian” of contemporary affairs) around the United States.⁵⁵

Despite their constant complaints about “the ideological bias” and “preconceived notions” of Soviet visitors, American hosts always emphasized the political and cultural significance of these exchanges. In January 24, 1975, Marshall Shulman from Columbia University in his letter to IREX positively evaluated visits of two scholars, Yuri Mel’nikov, a sector head at the Institute of the International Workers’ Movement, USSR Academy of Sciences and Vladimir Zolotukhin from ISKAN:

I consider both visits to have been useful. As it happened, I met with both men in Moscow afterwards, and both expressed warm appreciation for their reception here, and said that the trip had been valuable for them. I have no doubt that their desire to reciprocate made my own trip more productive. I have known Dr. Mel’nikov for many years. He is a thoughtful man, and a serious scholar. He has made several trips to the United States, and they are reflected in the differentiations he makes in his writings... Dr. Zolotukhin is the head of a section in the Institute of the USA, and he arranged for me to meet with members of his section in Moscow to discuss the role of the US Congress in the determination of foreign policy. From the discussion, I derived some valuable insights into their perceptions of US political life. The quality of his

colleges and universities in the USA where Soviet students stayed. See a special hand-written note with the complaints about Shitov’s visit from IREX representatives.

54. LC. IREX. RC 21, F 68, letter by Donald Fleming from Charles Warren Center at Harvard, April 6, 1976, about a visit by Igor Dementiev. The similar unenthusiastic report about E. Yaz’kov’s visit is placed in the same folder under F 85.

55. LC. IREX. RC 187, F 25, letter by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., New York, November 15, 1979.

observations also reflected the value of his experiences in the United States. It is my belief that it is in the United States interest to have Soviet analysts of the US as knowledgeable as possible, to reduce the risk of dangerous miscalculations and unnecessary misunderstandings.⁵⁶

According to the official American documents, the American hosts clearly understood the role of those Soviet Americanists from ISKAN, IMEMO and other Moscow and Kiev centers, who were the Soviet policy analysts and the official advisers of the Soviet leadership. For IREX administration and the US State Department, those Soviet “power people,” like Arbatov, were the “important connections” to the Soviet political leaders. During the 1970s, a majority of IREX exchanges, involving Soviet Americanists (almost 80 percent), funded the Soviet policy analysts with discussions of arms control, and other diplomatic issues in the US-Soviet relations. Moreover, IREX administration supported those Soviet research projects, which could provide Soviet leadership with precious information about the situation in US politics, economy, society and culture, with the goal “to reduce the risk of Soviet dangerous miscalculations” in the “growing arms race.”⁵⁷

According to the Soviet policy analysts, who were active participants in IREX programs, they tried to bring this message of “their American hosts” to Leonid Brezhnev and other Soviet leaders. Through their personal ties to leadership, Americanists from IMEMO and ISKAN gave Brezhnev realistic recommendations about careful and reasonable politics of reducing the risks of arms race. Unfortunately, after 1979 “their efforts to convince Brezhnev [to listen to their analysis after their visits to America] came to naught due to the latter’s near-total mental incapacity and the attendant devolution of power to Defense Minister Dmitri Ustinov and the military.”⁵⁸

A minority of Soviet Americanists (less than 20 percent), participants in IREX programs, were Soviet experts in US history. American hosts also supported financially this category of Soviet visitors. According to IREX reports, “this exchange of scholars, if it can be carried on more broadly, would be a great asset in building better [and closer cultural and intellectual] relations between the United States and Russia.”⁵⁹ IREX administration tried to support the research projects of the Soviet historians, but also their “academic connections” to their American colleagues, American experts in Russian studies – “Russianists” and “Sovietologists.” From a technical point of view, establishing of such connections was important for helping the Soviet visitors with their adjustment to American

56. LC. IREX. RC 228, F 17, letter by Marshall Shulman, January 24, 1975.

57. Look though the entire IREX file for the Year 1975 with recommendations to provide the Soviet analysts with all necessary information about US economy. LC. IREX. RC 228, F 17. I quote a phrase “Soviet powerful people,” from my interview with late Richard Stites, November 18, 2008, Philadelphia.

58. See Arbatov, *The System*, 202, and English, *Russia and Idea of the West*, 163-164, 165.

59. LC. IREX. RC 31, F 26, p. 2.

realities. American Sovietologists, who knew Russian language and culture, became the first natural “interpreters” of American life for the Soviet guests, experts in US history. As a result, Soviet Americanists had more friendly relations with American Sovietologists than with the local US historians.⁶⁰ Moreover, later on, the Soviet visitors became instrumental in obtaining the official invitations to the USSR for their former American hosts. It was the official policy of IREX administration - “to encourage the involvement of both Soviet and American scholars in the international, mutually beneficial, academic projects.” This policy worked, and all Soviet Americanists, participants in the academic exchanges program, tried to “organize the official invitation for their former American hosts.”⁶¹

Soviet “Discursive” Discoveries of America

According to American documents, the most talented Soviet Americanists who spent major time of their visit working hard at the American libraries and archives were a few Soviet enthusiasts of US history, politics and culture who came to the USA already prepared for serious research work and “had already done their homework.”⁶² The American “experience” of these Soviet Americanists affected their entire academic career, shaping their research priorities, interests and discursive strategies in presenting material they discovered in the USA for publication in the Soviet Union.

One of these Soviet Americanists was Nikolai Sivachev, a graduate student from MGU’s department of history, who began his academic career as a participant of US-Soviet student exchanges program during 1961-1962. The American administrators of this program noted that this Soviet student of US history took classes at Columbia University, “through serious application, made even greater strides in English” and successfully studied the U.S. presidential election of 1936 under a supervision of his adviser, Professor Richard Hofstadter.⁶³ This experience triggered Sivachev’s interest in political history of the New Deal and social history of US labor. Under influence of his advisor, a conservative American political historian, Sivachev concentrated on a history of the political elites in US during the 1930s. When he returned to Moscow, he added Marxist analysis to his archival findings, defended his Soviet *kandidatskaia* dissertation, and prepared his study of political struggle during the US elections in the 1930s,

60. Both Sevostianov and Bolkhovitinov (from IVI) became close friends of the American expert in Russian history, Norman Saul. Sivachev (from MGU) became a friend of the American historian of Soviet Russia Donald Raleigh. Sivachev’s student, Vladimir Sogrin (from IVI), still is a good friend of Norman Saul and has close friendly connections with Alfred Rieber, an American historian of Imperial Russia.

61. Interview with Yale Richmond, May 9, 2012.

62. I use the phrase coined by Professor Alfred Rieber from the University of Pennsylvania from: LC. IREX. RC 21, F 113, letter by Alfred Rieber, May 31, 1972, p. 1.

63. LC. IREX. RC 68, F 36, p. 25.

which was published as a book in 1966.⁶⁴ During the same visit, using various American archival collections, Sivachev also collected the new material about the American working class movement during the New Deal reforms in 1933-36. As early as September of 1964, he finished his new book manuscript, which was discussed and approved for publication by his colleagues from the MGU department of modern and contemporary history.⁶⁵ In October of 1966, using his American materials, Sivachev delivered a report to his colleagues about his new research project, which opened a completely new topic for Soviet historiography: – “labor legislation in the USA.” I. Galkin, chair of the department, was so impressed by Sivachev’s report that he “immediately proposed to request a recommendation from the Ministry of Higher Education [...] to send Sivachev again for a half a year research trip in America.”⁶⁶ As a result of this recommendation, Sivachev visited the USA a second time in November of 1967 as a Soviet official in charge of the Soviet exhibition “Education in the USSR” supported by official letters of recommendation from the Soviet leadership, including one signed by his official “supervisor,” L. Bazhanov, a “KGB man” from the USSR Ministry of Education.⁶⁷ Starting in late 1967, Sivachev visited the United States on regular basis; eventually he became the most famous and the most respected Soviet academic visitor in America, especially during the era of détente. American scholars contrasted Sivachev as a talented researcher to other Soviet “not very interesting visitors, who were curiosities but not serious scholars.” As they reported to IREX, Sivachev “impressed everybody very much with his knowledge of American institutions.”⁶⁸ After his American visits and intensive archival research, Sivachev prepared two book manuscripts about labor and government relations in US history before and during WWII.⁶⁹

By 1975 Nikolai Sivachev became the best representative of Soviet Americanists in all the exchanges programs of the détente era. Sivachev also was a good scholar,

64. The result of this visit was the first (kandidatskaia) dissertation, published later as a book: Nikolai V. Sivachev, *Politicheskaia bor’ba v SShA v seredine 30-kh godov XX v.* [Political Struggle in the USA in the Middle of the 1930s] (M., 1966).

65. Arkhiv MGU, f. 9, op. 8, d. 917, l. 2, 8. Even the Soviet policy analysts, who were present, praised this manuscript.

66. Arkhiv MGU, f. 9, op. 8, d. 1009, l. 14.

67. See about this in LC. IREX. RC 68, F 36, p. 23, 25, and letter of L. Bazhanov, November 28, 1967. Compare with my interviews with Bolkhovitinov, Yale Richmond and Donald Raleigh, and Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain*, (University Park, PA, 2003), 43-44. Sivachev’s colleagues spread rumors about Sivachev’s establishing official KGB connections during this visit to the USA in 1967. (Interview with Robert Ivanov and Igor Dementiev, March 21, 1991, Moscow, IVI, USSR Academy of Sciences).

68. LC. IREX. RC 21, F 113 (1972), p.2.

69. LC. IREX. RC 21, F 39 (1976); Nikolai V. Sivachev, *Pravovoe regulirovanie trudovykh otnoshenii v SShA* [Legal Regulation of Labor Relations in the USA] (M., 1972), idem, *Rabochaia politika pravitel’sтва SShA v gody vtoroi mirovoi voiny* [Labor Politics of US Government during WWII] (M., 1974). His major findings were summarized in his last book: *SShA: Gosudarstvo i rabochii klass: (ot obrazovaniia Soedinennykh Shtatov Ameriki do okonchaniia vtoroi mirovoi voiny)* [The USA: The State and Working Class: From the Origin of the United States of America to the Second World War] (M., 1982).

a serious historian-researcher, and a very good psychologist who understood very well what the American partners expected from the Soviet guests. In contrast to his image of a “pedantic boring university professor” and “orthodox communist ideologist” for his Soviet students and colleagues, Sivachev projected a very different image of himself for his American colleagues. For Americans he always looked optimistic, smiling, open-minded, humorous and ready for discussions, trying to avoid any ideological debates and distancing himself from the explicit communist propagandist clichés.⁷⁰ As one American host praised Sivachev’s research and communicative skills in 1975,

[...] Sivachev [...] steers away from Sovietologists in general (his field is US internal politics) but has been good with me because I provided him with connections (with VIPs) he couldn’t establish otherwise – and took his pictures posing with these VIPs which he values a great deal. He is relatively young, ambitious, extremely hard working, especially for a teaching professor, in collecting archival and bibliographic data; he knows what he wants and has a great deal of determination ... on his part, he was very considerate in not taking too much of my time, and quite informative about general intellectual trends in Moscow. A stout Russian nationalist (although a Mordovian, ethnically), he was a curious contrast with the more ideologically oriented visitors ... Since his first visit to the US he has developed rather broad connections (once he was a house guest of Eleanor Roosevelt, and knew my friend Henry A. Wallace) but remained a rather modest sort. There is an authentic strength in this fellow, and he will go far in my judgment.⁷¹

Using his new American connections during the 1970s, Sivachev obtained a contract with the University of Chicago Press to publish a book in English about the history of US-Soviet relations. So he contacted Nikolai Yakovlev, another talented Soviet historian-Americanist, *nevyezdnoi*, but very prolific writer, who collaborated with the KGB; he invited him to be a co-author of the American book. Through this contact with Yakovlev, Sivachev received the official KGB permission for collaboration with this American publishing house. Then, using IREX funding, Sivachev spent six months in 1978-1979 and two months in 1980 reading the proofs of their book and collecting material on American labor-government relations. In 1980, Sivachev not only published the book in the USA, but also served as a Visiting Fellow in the Department of Government at Dartmouth College.⁷² Moreover, Sivachev helped many his MGU students to establish the necessary connections in America and obtained official invitations and funding by American hosts. So Sivachev had supervised a research work of Vladimir Sogrin since 1967, assisting him with obtaining the new literature on the history of ideology of

70. Various people, like his former MGU students Vladislav Zubok and Marina Vlasova, and his American colleague Donald Raleigh, noted this.

71. LC. IREX. RC 21, F 17, Vladimir Petrov’s letter of February 3, 1975, p. 2.

72. LC. IREX. RC 180, F 66 (1978-80). Nikolai Sivachev and Nikolai Yakovlev, *Russia and the United States: U.S.-Soviet Relations from the Soviet Point of View* (Chicago, 1980).

political elites in the USA. Finally, in 1979 Sivachev directed Sogrin to the topic of the American War of Independence and its ideology. He recommended his former student for IREX funding. As a result of Sivachev’s “American connections” and his research visits in the USA, Sogrin wrote his pioneering studies in a history of American ideology, which incorporated the original American material, suggested by Sivachev as early as the late 1960s.⁷³

Another famous Soviet Americanist, Nikolai Bolkhovitinov, a historian of Russian-American relations during the late 18th through the 19th centuries, began visiting the United States in 1968. Bolkhovitinov came to America with the established reputation of a serious historian, visiting the major research centers and archival collections on the East and West coasts, giving public lectures, meeting his American colleagues and impressing them with his erudition and knowledge of the material. Moreover, Bolkhovitinov was one of the pioneers of the concept of “people’s diplomacy” in the international history of diplomacy, which attracted American specialists in US diplomatic history. As Bolkhovitinov explained his concept in 1980,

In the past historians of international relations very seldom studied socio-political, scientific and cultural ties. Their attention was centered on inter-state and, first and foremost, diplomatic relations, on the activity of prominent statesmen, famous generals and diplomats, tsars and presidents. This left out of the history of international relations the principal element, the *people*, as represented by the finest, most educated and active personages – scholars, public figures, men of letters, journalists. I see my main merit in trying to overcome this shortcoming and to study relations between Russia and the USA in their fullest dimension, comprehensively, including the history of trade, socio-political, scientific and cultural ties, the history of Russian America, the business contacts of Russian “promyshlenniki” (fur traders) and Boston merchant-sailors, and other connections.⁷⁴

During Bolkhovitinov’s visit of 1968, the historians from Harvard University decided to translate his book in English and publish it in the United States, and Robert Webb, editor-in-chief of the prestigious *American Historical Review*, after attending Bolkhovitinov’s lecture about American studies in the USSR, decided to publish this lecture in his journal.⁷⁵ Through the entire 1970s, American hosts

73. LC. IREX. RC 187, F 48 (1979). See about a recommendation of Sogrin for MGU graduate program in Arkhiv MGU, f. 9, op. 8, d. 1009, l. 93. Among his books see: V.V. Sogrin, *Istoki sovremennoi burzhuaznoi ideologii v SShA* [The Roots of Contemporary Bourgeois Ideology in the USA] (M., 1975); idem, *Ideinye techenia v Amerikanskoj revoliutsii XVIII veka* [The Ideological Currents in the American Revolution of the 18th Century] (M., 1980), and idem, *Osnovately SShA: Istoricheskie portrety* [The Founders of the USA: Historical Portraits] (M., 1983).

74. Bolkhovitinov, “How I Became a Historian,” 111.

75. Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, “The Study of United States History in the Soviet Union,” *American Historical Review*, 74, 4 (1969): 1221-1242. See Bolkhovitinov, *Vospominaniia*, 47-48, 50, 53. See also his official academic report about his visit in the USA in 1968:

expressed their respect for such a decent and competent historian as Bolkhovitinov, and kept inviting him to visit America. As Professor Jack P. Greene from Johns Hopkins University noted, "I think the only one serious Soviet scholar of modern US history, who visited the United States during the détente, was Bolkhovitinov."⁷⁶

Because of his conflict with the KGB, Bolkhovitinov was not allowed to spend more than a month annually visiting the United States during the 1970s. Despite this conflict, the KGB was unable to stop Bolkhovitinov visiting America. By 1976, in both Soviet and American archives, he collected rare important documents, illustrating the establishment of Russian-American diplomatic relations over the course of 1807-1809. Due to the diplomacy of détente, both Soviet and American diplomats and political leaders frequently referred to these documents about the beginning of Russian-US relations. As a result, the US Department of State and the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs commissioned the official publication of these documents.⁷⁷ Therefore, Bolkhovitinov's research attracted the attention of Soviet and American diplomats, and he was invited to lead the project of these documents' publication. Bolkhovitinov's books were translated and published in English in the United States, and finally he became one of the editors of the documentary publication sponsored by the Soviet and American governments.⁷⁸ Bolkhovitinov brought a huge collection of documents and American dissertations on various issues of US history, and deposited this collection in Moscow libraries. Moreover, he always tried to help his *nevyezdnye* colleagues, bringing the copies of important documents from US archives. In this way he brought copies of documents on the seventeenth century Virginia

N.N. Bolkhovitinov, "V arkhivakh i bibliotekakh SShA: nakhodki, vstrechi, vpechatleniia [In Archives and Libraries of the USA: Findings, Meetings, Impressions]," *AE*. 1971, 329-340, compare with his essay: "O vremeni i o sebe" 73-74.

76. Interview with Jack P. Greene, September 15, 1998, Baltimore. See how American historians praised Bolkhovitinov: Marcus Rediker, "The Old Guard, the New Guard, and the People at the Gates: New Approaches to the Study of American History in the USSR," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., 1991 (October), vol. 48, 580-597; John T. Alexander, "Catherine the Great and the Rats," in Samuel H. Baron and Cathy A. Frierson, eds., *Adventures in Russian Historical Research: Reminiscences of American Scholars from the Cold War to the Present* (Armonk, NY, 2003), 54, 56, 58; Donald J. Raleigh, "A Journey from St. Petersburg to Saratov," *ibid.*, 145. See also the best biographical essay about Bolkhovitinov in Russian: B.N. Komissarov, "As otechestvennoi amerikanistiki (k 70-letiiu N.N. Bolkhovitina)," [A Century of the Russian American Studies (Celebrating 70-Years Anniversary of N.N. Bolkhovitinov)] in A.O. Chubarian, ed., *Russkoe otkrytie Ameriki: Sbornik statei, posviashchionnyi 70-letiiu akademika Nikolaia Nikolaievicha Bolkhovitina*, [The Russian Discovery of America: The Collection of the Essays Devoted to 70-years Anniversary of Nikolai Nikolaievich Bolkhovitinov] (M., 2002), 8-33.

77. See Bolkhovitinov, *Vospominaniia*, 50-51, 52, 53.

78. Nikolai Bolkhovitinov, *The Beginnings of Russian-American Relations, 1775-1815* (Cambridge, MA, 1975); *idem*, *Russko-amerikanskie otnosheniia, 1815-1832* [Russian-American Relations, 1815-1832] (M., 1975); *idem*, *Russia and the American Revolution* (Tallahassee, FL, 1975); *Rossia i SShA: stanovlenie otnoshenii, 1765-1815: Sbornik dokumentov* [Russia and the USA: Formation of the Relations, 1765-1815: Collection of Documents] (M., 1980); N.N. Bashkina, N.N. Bolkhovitinov, J.H. Brown et al., eds., *The United States and Russia: The Beginning of Relations, 1765-1815: Collection of Documents*, (Washington, D.C., 1980).

in 1976 to Sergei Burin, who was not allowed to travel abroad, and who was writing his dissertation about the social history of the English colonies Virginia and Maryland. Using his connections in the Library of Congress and other American libraries, Bolkhovitinov also organized a subscription of various American historical magazines for central Soviet libraries.⁷⁹

All the Soviet historians-Americanists who were active participants of the academic exchanges not only incorporated the new findings of their American colleagues in their own scholarship, but also began the publication of their own analysis of the major developments in US history writing and of the contemporary trends in American historiography.⁸⁰ Overall, during the 1970s, after their visits to America, Soviet Americanists-historians produced a variety of new research topics in US history: a comparison of the 18th century American and French Revolutions and American revolutionary ideology (A. Fursenko and Sogrin); the agrarian question and farmers' movement in the 19th and early 20th centuries (G. Kuropiatnik and E. Yaz'kov); the Civil War and Reconstruction (R. Ivanov and A. Blinov), American “Progressives” and liberal “reformers” (I. Beliavskaia and Sogrin); the anthropological history of American Indians (Yu. Averkieva and A. Vashchenko); history of immigration in America (A. Shlepakov and L. Leshchenko); the traditionally popular themes of American working class history (I. Krasnov, V. Mal'kov, B. Mikhailov and Sivachev) and “diplomacy and ideology of US imperialism” (I. Dementiev and A. Fursenko).⁸¹

At the same time, Soviet Americanists followed certain “discursive strategies” in publications of the results of their research in America. The Soviet state both tried to control professional Americanists and needed their expertise, and this resulted in a tangled and paradoxical structure of discourse. State and party officials promoted those practices that fit the contemporary political agenda, while Americanists sought legitimation and support from those in power. Tensions within both official political discourse and professional Americanists' discourses produced a considerable room for maneuver and negotiation. According to Slava Gerovitch, Soviet Americanists developed their various discursive strategies

[...] in an attempt to adapt their knowledge to the current political, socioeconomic, and cultural situation, and to influence this situation at the same time. Such discursive strategies had to be flexible enough to take advantage of the tensions within public discourse. On the other hand, in order

79. Interview with Sergei Burin. Using the material, brought by Bolkhovitinov from America, Burin eventually defended his dissertation in 1978: S.N. Burin, *Sotsial'nye protivorechiia i konflikti v Virginii i Marilende (1642-1676)*: [Social Contradictions and Conflicts in Virginia and Maryland, 1642-1676] Avtoref. dis. kand. ist. nauk (M., 1978).

80. The best study of the new trends in US historiography was written by Bolkhovitinov as a result of his research trips to the USA, *SShA: Problemy istorii*.

81. See the best summary of the Soviet history writing about US history in: Bolkhovitinov, *SShA: Problemy istorii*, 339-378. Compare with another survey: N. Sivachev and I. Savel'eva, “American Labor in Recent Soviet Historiography,” *Labor History*, 18, 3 (Summer 1977): 407-432.

to keep up with sociopolitical changes, professionals would have to frequently modify these strategies.⁸²

For many Soviet Americanists, who visited America, the safest discursive strategy in presenting their American findings was accepting the authoritative (ruling) discourse of orthodox Marxism,

[...] not searching for truth, but merely attempting to document a preconception [of Marxist ideology]. As some Americans noted, some of their Soviet guests visited libraries and archives [in the US] not for the kind of serious and prolonged study [...] but basically to indicate in [their] preface that [they] had visited a large number of American libraries and archives. [Our] impression also was that [they] sought quotations, lists, and information of that kind to buttress conclusions [they] had already reached.⁸³

This strategy, which I call “conformist,” became the most popular among a majority of Soviet Americanists. Unfortunately, the depth of understanding of the United States among the older generation remained very shallow. A majority of these first professional Soviet Americanists were burdened by the Marxist belief system, image structures, and categories of analysis. They suffered from a great deal of cognitive dissonance and simply looked for evidence to confirm their preconceived images of how the United States functioned.⁸⁴

Another strategy was developed by Soviet Americanists who resented propaganda clichés of the Stalin era and the official Cold War discourse. These Americanists frequently turned to what some scholars called “internalist” historical narratives as a means of both analysis and self-protection. That is, they tried to avoid any serious analytical approach that could be presented as non-Marxist theoretical deviation by the ideological censors and instead emphasized the inner logic of the historical development of the United States.⁸⁵ Some Americanists, like Bolkhovitinov, began to gravitate toward an internalist approach, their main concern became “objectivity,” meaning an effort to ground their narrative in hard facts from archival documents rather than in purely ideological or speculative interpretations.⁸⁶ For this reason, Soviet Americanists took to filling their works with “factological” material and made little or no attempt to analyze and interpret it. This strategy was politically safe, and at the same time the author could demonstrate some

82. Slava Gerovitch, “Writing History in the Present Tense: Cold War-era Discursive Strategies of Soviet Historians of Science and Technology,” in Simpson, ed., *Universities and Empire*, 189-228, 190.

83. LC. IREX. RC 229, F 15, Ivan M. Krasnov’s file, letter by Robert F. Byrnes, May 23, 1972. Ibid, RC 21, F 113.

84. Compare with the similar developments among Chinese Americanists in Shambaugh, *Beautiful Imperialist*, 283.

85. I follow here a logic of Slava Gerovitch, “Writing History in the Present Tense,” 199.

86. See the similar developments in American historiography in Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession*, (New York, 1988).

personal intellectual independence by disregarding Marxist-Leninist interpretive clichés. The ideological censors of the day could not point to “bias” in a research work, in which there was no explicit analysis and facts “spoke for themselves.” An attentive reader, however, could find the author’s “subjectivity” transferred from the analytical to the factological level, “revealed in the selection of evidence and construction of historical narrative.”⁸⁷

Another discursive strategy, commonly practiced by the Soviet Americanists, was to use criticism of recent Western scholarship as an introduction of the new ideas to the Soviet reader. According to contemporaries, titles like “Criticism of Recent Concepts of Bourgeois Falsifiers” served more than once as an umbrella for discussion of scholarly ideas that would otherwise be inaccessible in printed form in the USSR. As Gerovitch noted, “this particularly paradoxical discursive strategy permitted Soviet historians to mask their disagreement (with one another) by the lack of criticism, while downplaying their accord (with some Western colleagues) by the presence of criticism.”⁸⁸ During the 1970s and the 80s many young Soviet Americanists enjoyed reading various Soviet critical surveys of “bourgeois falsifiers,” published by Moscow scholars, including so-called *Referativnye sborniki INION* [The Synopsis of the Recent Western Scholarship: Collections by the Institute of Scientific Information], trying to find a precious information about modern theoretical approaches in Western historiography and social sciences. This “critical” discursive strategy became the most popular especially among Americanists from ISKAN and IMEMO. As contemporaries noted, Soviet intellectuals “benefited from a proliferation of Russian-language reviews of Western scholarship. Continuing a practice begun in the early 1960s, an overall critical orientation permitted such works to pass the censors while conveying much about Western theory as well as the reality of Western political life.”⁸⁹ Some Americanists still remember how, in the 1970s, they began a serious study of US political science with reading such “critical anti-American” literature, written by the recent participants in IREX academic exchanges programs. For the class discussions about American political system, Sivachev and his students used different editions of such books, which eventually became the “Soviet classics of anti-American political science.”⁹⁰

87. Gerovitch, “Writing History,” 199-200.

88. *Ibid.*, 200-201. As contemporaries recalled that such “critical” reviews and analyses “served as a ... means of familiarizing researchers with [Western thought and practice] [...] In many cases such works were written for the purpose of disseminating this information, employing a critical orientation as a cover to obtain consent for publication.” See in Vladimir Shlapentokh, *The Politics of Sociology in the Soviet Union* (Boulder, CO, 1987), 16.

89. See in English, *Russia and Idea of the West*, 129. For many Americanists, like Arbatov, their work as translator-reviewers of foreign-language political and economic work for various Soviet reference editions was “instrumental in shedding dogmas about the West.” See Arbatov, *The System*, 34.

90. See the most popular among Moscow Americanists books, written by the Soviet participants in IREX programs: V.G. Kalenskii, *Politicheskaia nauka v S.Sh.A. Kritika burzhuznykh kontseptsii vlasti* [Political Science in the USA: Criticism of Bourgeois Concepts of Power] (M., 1969) and Iu. Zamoshkin, ed., *Amerikanskoe obshchestvennoe mnenie i politika*, [American Public Opinion and Politics] (M., 1978). Marina Vlasova mentioned this fact in her interview.

The most important version of the “critical” discursive strategy was so-called strategy of the “critical recommendations and advising.” In this way, Soviet Americanists used their criticism of the recent American scholarship and American realities with the goal to offer practical recommendations about Soviet historiography, social science, politics, culture, economy and diplomacy. During the 1970s and 80s, the researchers from ISKAN and IMEMO, who just recently returned from the USA, prepared published recommendations for Soviet political leadership about various economic, political and diplomatic problems, using American economic and political experience.⁹¹ After visiting America, Americanists-historians, such as Bolkhovitinov and Sivachev, recommended Soviet scholars to study and use the new research methods of the recent American scholarship, especially the works by the representatives of so-called “new social,” “new economic” and “new political” histories.⁹² The recent visitors to America organized the All-Union conferences, promoting the new research methods of their American colleagues in the USSR, but also supported the academic career of their talented students like Sergei Stankevich, who studied US presidential campaigns, using the approaches of American “new political historians.”⁹³

According to contemporaries, the most important advisers in the process of buying US films and commenting them for the Soviet audiences were those Soviet experts who worked in ISKAN. They not only published highly-acclaimed books about US cinema during the 1970s, but also submitted their recommendations about the most popular and “progressive” American films to Soviet leadership.⁹⁴ As a result of ISKAN Americanists’ “advising strategy,” in 1974 *Soveksportfilm* released six US films, in 1977 twelve American films among the 63 films released

91. I refer to *Prognozy razvitiia avtomatizatsii proizvodstva v mashinostroenii v SShA* [Prognosis of the Development of Automation of Production in Machine-Building in the USA] (M.: ISKAN, 1978), and many other documents, such “the untitled internal institute document reviewing ISKAN’s main policy recommendations of 1968-79,” provided by a former ISKAN Deputy Director Sergei Plekhanov to Robert English in July 1991, quoted in English, *Russia and Idea of the West*, 156. See also a detailed description of various “analytical reports,” submitted by ISKAN Americanists to the Soviet government in Barbara L. Dash, *A Defector Reports*, 10-12.

92. See discussions of the new methods in Sivachev’s research in *Arkhiv MGU*, f. 9, op. 8, d. 917, part 1, l. 8, and Bolkhovitinov, *SShA: Problemy istorii*, 22, 23 ff.

93. See about this strategy of advising in the list of activities during the 1970s in L.V. Shut’ko et al., eds., *Nikolai Nikolaevich Bolkhovitinov*, (M., 2002), 4-6, 44-52. About Stankevich’s research see S. Stankevich, “‘Novaia ekonomicheskaia politika’ administratsii R. Nixsona v 1971-1974 gg.,” [New Economic Policy of Nixon’s Administration in 1971-74] *AE* 1986, 5-23.

94. Unfortunately, the recent scholarship about Soviet film consumption ignores the influence of détente and a role of the Soviet experts in foreign films’ acquisition in the USSR. See, e.g. Kristin Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time: How the Soviet Union Built the Media Empire That Lost the Cultural Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 115-120, about coverage of foreign films and western movie stars in a magazine *Sovietskii ekran* [Soviet Movie Screen] from 1960 to 1965. And no mentioning of détente at all! Compare with the most popular books about US cinema, prepared by the Soviet Americanists during that period: Viacheslav Shestakov, *Amerika v zerkale ekrana: Amerikanskoe kino 70-kh godov* [America in the Mirror of a Screen: American Cinema of the 1970s] (M., 1977); *Na ekrane Amerika* [On the Movie Screen – America] Collection edited by I.E. Kokarev (M., 1978); A.S. Muliarchik and V.P. Shestakov, eds., *Amerikanskaia khudozhestvennaia kul’tura v sotsial’no-politicheskom kontekste 70-kh godov 20 veka* [American Artistic Culture in Social and Political Context of the 1970s] (M., 1982).

from socialist countries and 67 movies from capitalist countries; and during 1979-82 an average of eight US movies annually.⁹⁵ In 1976, Soviet ideologists sponsored a special conference with a participation of ISKAN's experts to discuss the problems of American cinema and US feature films, appropriate for the Soviet audiences.⁹⁶ During this conference, Viacheslav Shestakov, a Soviet historian of US films, who was funded by IREX for his research trip in US in 1974-75, delivered a special report about the recent “democratic progressive” trends in Hollywood and recommended the leaders of *Goskino* buy films by Francis Coppola, Martin Scorsese and other “talented” American film directors. Yuri Zamoshkin and other Soviet participants of IREX programs joined Shestakov in his criticism of “lack of professionalism” of those Soviet film critics, who “rejected all, even anti-capitalist progressive, American films as mere bourgeois propaganda.”⁹⁷ After 1979 with an access to the new American video tape recording techniques, the experts in US cinema, such as A. Muliarchik and Shestakov, organized special shows of new US movies at ISKAN on a regular basis. These Americanists played an instrumental role in the mass release of the majority US movies in the Soviet Union during the Brezhnev era.⁹⁸

Soviet Americanists employed flexible discursive strategies to convey the desired meaning without violating the constraints of the then politically acceptable language. According to some scholars, Soviet academic discourse was “not as a container of a particular ideology or theory, but rather as a mechanism for advancing a certain agenda via disciplinary knowledge.”⁹⁹ In practice, Soviet Americanists mixed various discursive strategies together. But the strategy of “critical recommendations” usually became the most prominent in their discursive practices after their frequent research visits in America.

95. *Sovetskii ekran*, 1971, No. 24, 19; 1972, No. 24, 17; 1974, No. 24, 17; 1977, No. 24, 17; 1979, No. 24, 15; 1981, No. 24, 15; 1982, No. 22, 15; *Iskusstvo kino*, [Art of Cinema] 1980, No. 6, 192. See about the influences of American movies on the Soviet audiences during the Brezhnev era in: Sergei I. Zhuk, “Zapad v sovetskom ‘zakrytom’ gorode: ‘chuzhoe’ kino, ideologiya i problemy kul’turnoi identichnosti na Ukraine v brezhnevskuiu epokhu (1864-1982 gody) [The West in the Soviet ‘Closed’ City: Western Films, Ideology and Problems of Cultural Identification in Ukraine during the Brezhnev Era (1964-1982)].” *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, [New Literary Review] 2009, No. 100 (6), 548-565.

96. See about this conference in Valerij Golovskoi, “Amerikanskoe kino – “za” i “protiv” (konferentsia 1976 goda).” [American Cinema – pro and contra (A Conference of 1976)] idem, *Eto bylo nedavno... Izbrannye publikatsii za 30 let* [In Days of Yore: Selected Publications for 30 Years] (Baltimore, MD: Seagull Press, 2010), 156-163. See also his essay, “Amerikanskie fil’my na sovetskikh ekranakh (1957-1980) [American Movies on the Soviet Screens, 1957-1980].” Golovskoi, *Eto bylo nedavno*, [In Days of Yore] 169-177.

97. Golovskoi, “Amerikanskoe kino,” 161, 162-163; LC. IREX. RC 228, F 43, “about visit of Viacheslav Shestakov (Nov. 1974-April 1975) from the Institute of Cinematic History and Theory of the State Committee for Cinematography,” and RC 237, F26: about visit of Iurii Zamoshkin from ISKAN, Nov.-Dec. 1977.

98. See my e-mail correspondence with Vladislav Zubok, May 28, 2013 and Golovskoi, May 8, 2013. Golovskoi recalled how a chair of the Goskino F. Ermash and other representatives of Soviet administration discussed a possibility of Soviet release of US movies *The Godfather* and *Apocalypse Now*, which were shown for the “selected audiences” in Moscow during the end of the 1970s. See in Golovskoi, “Amerikanskoe kino,” 158-159.

99. Gerovitch, “Writing History,” 217-218.

Overall, the longer Soviet Americanists stayed in US, the more positive impressions of America they developed and brought back in the USSR. They improved their English language speaking ability and communicative skills, and gained professional experience as experts in US history, politics and culture, “not only working at the American archives and libraries, but also participating in everyday life of ordinary Americans, going shopping, watching ‘sitcom’ series on American television, and the new Hollywood blockbusters in American movie theaters.” After frequent visits to the USA and long staying there in the 1970s, many Soviet Americanists recalled how they “developed great admiration for the West, for the United States [...] respect for the country, its strength, its people.”¹⁰⁰ All Soviet Americanists noted how important the personal contacts with Americans were for their own “discovery” of America and the construction of their mental images of American society and culture. Both Bolkhovitinov and Fursenko acknowledged that living with Americans, in their homes, in the student dorms influenced them more than just their business, academic, relations. Bolkhovitinov recalled how in 1968, staying in the dorm of Cornell University, he spent the nights talking with local students, discussing political and cultural problems such as the Vietnam War and music.¹⁰¹ He came to America “with preconceived notions about the internal crisis in American capitalist society,” and he eventually realized that these notions were wrong. He saw “how talented were these young members of American society” and “how they were capable of critical self-analysis and self-government.” “They were more self efficient and self-reliable than our Soviet youth,” recalled Bolkhovitinov after witnessing American college students “organizing their own meetings, dancing parties and keeping order and respect for human dignity for everyone without any hierarchical distinctions, which were typical for Soviet society” in those days.¹⁰² Soviet guests were impressed not only with good conditions of life and research in America, but also with optimism, energy and individual initiative of ordinary Americans. Both their reports to their Soviet administration and the reports of their American hosts reflected this positive reaction. As one American host noted in 1973 that Soviet Americanist A. Fursenko was overwhelmed not only with research capacities in US colleges, but also with his cordial reception by Americans, which led to “mutual understanding”:

The greatest mutual benefit, I would judge, came from Mr. Fursenko’s stay at my house. We have known each other for 16 years and corresponded on professional matters. He knows that I know something of the hidden aspects of Soviet life and treat them with some compassion; he knows I will not be critical of his country. He also appreciated being taken into my family and receive an inside view of

100. I quoted my Interview with Robert F. Ivanov, Moscow, June 25, 1991, and English, *Russia and Idea of the West*, 150. Another Soviet Americanist who became a diplomat noted, “You start to resemble the people, the country, where you work, and this was especially so for those who worked on the USA. It took a higher level of professionalism and culture, and such experience changes your outlook.” *Ibid.*, 298.

101. See his official report: Bolkhovitinov, “V arkhivakh...” 329-340, compare with his essay: “O vremeni i o sebe,” 73-74.

102. Bolkhovitinov, *Vospominaniia*, 50-51. See interview with Bolkhovitinov, June 2, 2001, Moscow.

American society, without embellishment or ostentation. He in turn freely shared with us his family problems (though my wife did not convert him to women’s lib). At any rate, we managed to establish and to deepen a basic human trust between us which transcends all differences of nationality and ideology. He is a sincere person, genuinely interested in understanding American realities without ideological blinders, though a patriotic citizen of the Soviet Union and conforming to its politics. He considers it his mission to bring American realities closer to the Soviet public, rejoicing over the current détente in Soviet-American relations.¹⁰³

The discursive practices of Soviet scholars reflected not only their research work in America, but, first of all, their “face to face communication with American colleagues as well.” As some scholars noted later, “these personal ties and this intellectual cross-fertilization, together with détente’s exposure to foreign life, powerfully abetted the rise of a global outlook during the era of stagnation.”¹⁰⁴

Conclusion

Academic détente as the entire relaxation of the international relations during the Brezhnev era had a very limited and elitist character, especially for American studies in the USSR. According to the available documents, no more than 600 Soviet Americanists visited the United States during this time, and almost 80 percent of these Soviet academic visitors were representatives of academic and state officials, with only 4 female scholars (less than 1 percent). So it was predominantly male community of Soviet visitors. Sometimes, the talented and young Soviet scholars could manage to get to America as “supporting assistants” (*soprovozhdaiushchie*) of Soviet state apparatchiks. The most typical cases were the “American” visits of young Sivachev in 1967 as “an assistant” of the official from the USSR Ministry of Education, and of Shestakov, “assisting” V. Baskakov, director of the USSR Institute of Cinematic History and Theory of the State Committee for Cinematography during their official visit in 1974. The social background of Soviet visitors also reflected the elitist character of Soviet academic détente: – more than 70 percent of Soviet researchers in America came from families of Soviet intellectual and party elite, and almost 80 percent of them represented the research centers (such as ISKAN and IMEMO) from only one city – Moscow.

Overall, the discursive practices of Soviet Americanists fit the Soviet authoritative discourse. But after their American visits, many, especially young Soviet researchers, added to the prevailing “factological” discursive strategies their new scenario of “critical recommendations and advising.” They criticized their American counterparts, but at the same time, they advised Soviet leadership about

103. LC. IREX. RC 21, F 109, letter by Theodore Von Laue, May 15, 1973, pp. 1-2. “Poor man: his visit in the U.S. was so hectic, too much to be observed and digested! I wonder how he feels now, back in Leningrad, with all his presents and his memories...”

104. Interview with Leshchenko, June 25, 2013, Kyiv; English, *Russia and Idea of the West*, 128.

American politics, economy and culture, and also popularized American realities, cultural products, theories and approaches among ordinary Soviet audiences. Unfortunately, Soviet Americanists' "advising practices" also had limited and uneven character during the Brezhnev era. Soviet leaders used the ISKAN and IMEMO policy analysts' advices and recommendations about US policy and diplomacy up to 1979. Not until perestroika did Americanists resume their active "advising" functions for Soviet politicians. Soviet leaders also ignored major recommendations of Americanists about dissemination of US cultural products in the USSR. Only limited number of US movies from the lists recommended by ISKAN experts was selected by Goskino for showing in Soviet movie theaters. The most recommended (by Americanists) films, like *The Godfather* and *Apocalypse Now*, were never released in the Soviet Union. Soviet historians also had limited success in promoting the new theoretical approaches from America. Their publications were censored, and they were punished by bans for their travel to America for the slightest "ideological deviation."

But in a longer historical perspective, Soviet participation in academic détente was successful. Soviet Americanists began their own participation in creation of an international community of scholars, becoming the partners in academic exchange with their American colleagues. They established good relations not only with American experts in US history, politics and culture, but also with American specialists in Russian/Soviet studies. To some extent, participation of Soviet Americanists in this international community would not only shape the development of American studies in the USSR, but also influence Russian studies in America. After visiting America, Soviet Americanists became hosts for American guests, experts in Russian studies, building strong personal connections with them – Bolkhovitinov with Norman Saul, Sivachev with Donald Raleigh, Vladimir Sogrin with Saul and Alfred Rieber, etc. Eventually, through these personal connections Soviet Americanists and their American colleagues created an important academic international network, which involved their students as well, and which survived the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Paradoxically, as a result of expanding this network during the 1990s, not only American Sovietologists benefited from these connections, but the entire field of Russian studies in America became influenced by former Soviet Americanists, students of Arbatov, Bolkhovitinov, Sivachev and Fursenko. Using this network, these former Soviet scholars, like Vladislav Zubok (an expert in Carter's presidential campaign), Sergei Plekhanov (a scholar of American political science), Andrei Znamenskii (a specialist in history and anthropology of American Indians) and myself (an expert in social history of colonial New York and Pennsylvania) moved to North America and now teach Russian history and politics there.

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