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N. I. Konrad and the Soviet Study of Japan

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Nikolai Iosifovich Konrad (1891-1970) is probably most widely known today as the editor of the major Japanese-Russian dictionary, but Konrad's lexicographical work was only a small part of his scholarly career. He is described in the *Great Soviet Eocyclopedia* as the founder of the Soviet school of Japanese studies. His expertise was not limited just to Japan; he produced as well significant studies of China and wrote on questions of world history and culture. He was important as a scholar, an educator and a developer of scholarly institutions. In Soviet oriental studies he was a figure of the importance of John King Fairbank or Edwin Reischauer, or, in the role of cultural intermediary, of Arthur Waley. The career of Konrad parallels in a number of ways that of Serge Elisséeff, the Russian émigré who established the Far Eastern Studies Program at Harvard. Yet unlike some of these figures, no extensive biography of Konrad has appeared in Russian, and English-language scholarship seems to have ignored him.²

Konrad was born in Riga in 1891.³ His family was apparently Jewish, and his father was a white-collar worker for the railroads. Konrad seems to have had a good primary and secondary education. In 1908, he finished gymnasium in Riga, and as he says, he was one of the last to receive a classical education, which he cherished for the rest of his life.

In an interview with Konrad in the popular press, a journalist remarked that Konrad's interests developed under the influence of history. Certainly as we shall see, historical events did shape his career to a degree unusual for a scholar, at least unusual for a scholar at the present time. For a European or a Soviet citizen living in the first part of the twentieth century the extent to which the larger events of the world molded his life is probably not unusual. In any event, Konrad attributed his interest in the Orient to the Boxer Rebellion, which he read about in the popular press in 1900, when he was nine years old. From stories of the seige of Peking and the intervention, Konrad went on to read what he could of the geography and ethnography of China, which he found fascinating.

After the Boxer Rebellion, followed the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5, which sparked an interest in Japan. Konrad remarked that there was no widespread hatred of Japan as a result of the War, there was even a kind of sympathy for Japan, based on the fact that Japan had a constitutional government. Certainly this must have been a view which was limited to liberal, educated opinion.

The extent to which Russian events-the Revolution of 1905-affected Konrad is unclear. According to the article mentioned above, Konrad was supposedly impressed with the attacks on landlord houses, which were indeed unusually severe in the Baltic regions, and impressed and presumably angered as well by the hanging of those responsible. These remarks may be simply gestures towards Soviet pieties of the time, as there is little evidence that Konrad was an ardent revolutionary, although he later supported the revolution in power and adopted a generally Marxist historical theory. He apparently was never a party member. As an influence of another sort, Konrad mentions reading Pierre Loti, that prophet

of an exotic and eroticized Orient, but he claims that "Madame Chrysanthemum" did not attract him.

But we have jumped ahead somewhat in our story. In the fall of 1908, upon finishing gymnasium in Riga, Konrad entered the Oriental Department of the University in St. Petersburg. This decision set him apart from his friends, most of whom remained in Riga and went to the local Polytechnical Institute. He had decided to study the Far East, and the University in St. Petersburg was the best place in the country to do this. He wanted as well a broad, liberal education. He later remarked that he had no idea of what he would do with his oriental expertise.

At the University, in addition to his oriental studies, Konrad studied philology, ancient and European literatures, and philosophy. According to one account he was also stimulated by the vibrant cultural life of St. Petersburg in this period. His Japanese was gained not at the University, but at another institution, the Practical Oriental Academy. At both places he had the advantage of native Japanese language instructors.

From the beginning, Konrad's talents seem to have been recognized. In the first year at the University, he won a scholarship of 25 rubles a month, about \$12-\$13 in values of the time. Not a great deal, but enough to cover most of his basic expenses. This eased some of his worries over money. He had initially been prepared to support himself by tutoring in St. Petersburg, an occupation he had already begun while in secondary school in Riga.

By the time he finished the university in 1912, Konrad had discovered that most students of oriental languages entered the foreign service as translators with some Russian mission in the Far East. In addition to Konrad, two other students graduated in 1912. One, Baron Edgar Borisovich Uxkull, from a Livonian noble family, immediately became an attachée at the Russian embassy in Japan. He seems to have remained in Japan only briefly, a year or so. The other student, Martin Ramming, was a translator at the embassy from 1917 to 1923. For his part, Konrad said that the thought of accepting an official post was repellent to him, because, at least in his circles, the government was so unpopular. Although he does not say it, possibly his Jewish background prevented any appointment in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On graduation he had no idea what career to pursue, so he returned to his family in Riga and spent the summer there. Early in the fall of 1912, he returned to St. Petersburg and discovered that the Russia-Japan Society had funds to send two recent graduates to Japan to study topics of current interest. He and Ramming were chosen, and Konrad went to Japan for the first time, for a two-month visit to study Japanese education. He said that he was interested in education because Japan had introduced compulsory six-year primary education in the 1880's, something Russia still had not accomplished, despite plans for education reforms.

On the basis of this visit he prepared a lecture on Japanese education for the Russia-Japan Society and published his first article on the same topic in the *Journal of the Ministry of Education*, one of Russia's major scholarly journals. This first success resulted in a position teaching Japanese and Chinese language and ethnography at the Commercial Institute in Kiev for the 1913-14 school year.

After one year of teaching, he decided to return to research and in 1914 went to Japan, initially just for the summer, although he returned to Russia only three years later, in July 1917. In his absence, in 1915, he had been chosen "for preparation for a professorship" at his home university. Clearly this was rather different from being accepted for graduate study at an American university today. For one thing, Konrad had the commitment of eventual employment, for another, he had no prescribed program of study, but completed most of his work while in Japan. As Konrad said, this three-year stay in Japan made him a scholar. He learned things there that he could not have learned in Russia. He attended lectures at Tokyo University and studied classical Chinese philosophy with Takahashi Temmina. He visited Korea several times and China. While in Korea, he studied the Korean language. According to one of his students, Konrad eventually learned Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Mongol, Manchu and Tibetan, in addition to European languages.⁸

He returned to Russia in the fall of 1917. None of the accounts of his life indicate that he ever left Russia again, and this impression is strengthened by reading an article he later wrote on Russian travel literature. The inability to travel must have been a great handicap in his work.

In the fall of 1917 and in 1918-the time of the Russian revolutions-Konrad completed his examinations for a masters degree in Japanese, Chinese and Korean philology. The masters degree would allow him to teach at the university level.

For purposes of comparison, it might be interesting to give a brief account of Serge Elisséeff's education and early career. Elisséeff, born in 1889, was only two years older than Konrad, but he was born into much more privileged circumstances. The Elisséeff were not nobles, but merchants who had become wealthier than most nobles in the liquor and grocery business. Consequently Elisséeff's education included French spoken at home, trips to Paris, private tutors and so on type of upbringing known to us from Russian literature. The Russo-Japanese war drew Elisséeff's attention to the Far East, as had been the case with Konrad. Elisséeff, under the influence of some of his tutors, university students, read Marx and was attracted to leftist politics.

As completion of his secondary education approached, Elisséeff was uncertain as to what he should pursue next. Originally he had been interested in painting but his instructors discouraged him from continuing. He was encouraged instead to pursue his interest in the Orient. In this he sought the most expert advice—he made an appointment to discuss his future with the leading Russian orientalist and secretary of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, Serge Oldenburg. Oldenburg encouraged Elisséeff to study Japan, and to do it not in Paris, as Elisséeff had originally intended, but in Berlin. After a year's study in Berlin, Oldenburg encouraged Elisséeff to go to Japan and continue his education there, at Tokyo University. This was a course of study that no westerner had ever attempted before, and it would have been difficult for any student who did not have the wealth and social connections of the Elisséeffs.

Elisséeff followed Oldenburg's advice. He went to Japan in 1908, and, with some difficulty, he enrolled as a regular student at Tokyo University. University officials were reluctant to accept Elisséeff, in part because he was a foreigner, in part because of his inadequate preparation, particularly in Japanese language.

Elisséeff remained in Japan for six years. He completed his undergraduate degree in four years, instead of the usual three, but earned an A- average. He remained in Japan for two more years, doing graduate work in Japanese history and art, and studying the Chinese language. A German scholar who read one of Elisséeff's papers on the poet Basho advised him that his research and writing skills needed development which he would not receive in Japan and advised him to return to a European University to complete his education. In the summer of 1914 he returned to St. Petersburg and, as an exceptional case was admitted to graduate study at the level of preparation for doctoral examinations. He successfully completed his examinations in 1915, which permitted his appointment in January of 1916 to the Faculty of Oriental Languages at the rank of *privat-dozent*. Award of the doctoral degree and higher teaching rank depended on completion of a dissertation. Among other distinctions, in 1916, Elisséeff was selected to be an official interpreter in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The revolutions of 1917 had a somewhat paradoxical effect on Elisséeff's career. The family wealth was gone, but he retained his academic position and in fact became an assistant professor and secretary of the Faculty of Philology and History at the university, an advancement of sorts. He was not sympathetic to the Bolsheviks and by late summer of 1920, decided to flee Russia.¹¹

Although none of the published material mentions that Konrad and Elisséff knew one another, it is hard to escape the conclusion that they were acquainted. Indeed it would seem that they were rivals, and that the extraordinary advance of Elisséeff's career at the University of St. Petersburg must have cast a shadow over Konrad's own plans, at least insofar as they were directed towards employment at his home university. Elisséeff's rapid advance at the University took place with the support of Konrad's teachers while Konrad was in Japan. Even if Konrad had been in St. Petersburg, he would probably not have been able to do anything to prevent Elisséeff from occupying a position for which he was preparing himself. Possibly knowledge of Elisséeff's success was a factor in Konrad's decision to study Korean while in Japan. This would give him a field of expertise which Elisséeff did not have. Konrad could of course have anticipated employment at another Russian university, so this conjectured rivalry is speculative, but it seems not improbable. We are on firmer ground when we note the degree to which Elisséeff's wealth, privileged upbringing and social connections advanced his career in comparison to Konrad's.

In 1918, supposedly for reasons of health, Konrad left St. Petersburg for Orël, where his parents had lived since 1915. Once more we can see larger events affecting Konrad's life. His parents had probably left Riga to avoid German invasion, and Konrad, whatever the state of his health, undoubtedly found it easier to avoid starvation in Orël than in St. Petersburg. A contributing factor to Konrad's departure may have been Elisséeff's appointment.

Before he left St. Petersburg in the spring of 1918, Konrad was asked to translate into Japanese two revolutionary documents, "The Appeal to the Workers and Down-trodden of the Whole World" and "The Appeal to the People of the East." Konrad later reflected that this was all that was necessary to show him the social goal and sense of his work as an orientalist. Whatever the significance of these gestures towards Soviet pieties, the revolution did mark a turning

point in Konrad's career, giving him opportunities for advancement which otherwise would have come much later in life, if at all. Assuming that his political interests previously went no further than the uncommitted leftist views of many pre-revolutionary students, we can see after the revolution a turn toward cooperation with the Bolsheviks and the development of a Marxist outlook.

While in Orël, Konrad was active in the organization of a proletarian university, of which he was the rector (head) from 1920 to 1922. In 1922, the university in Orël was reduced to a teachers' training institute, and in the fall of 1922, Konrad returned to St. Petersburg to resume his association with his home university. Elisséeff's emigration two years previously made Konrad's return to St. Petersburg possible.

In the academic world, as in the rest of Soviet society, the 1920's were a period of uneasy accommodation between the old and the new. The old institutions remained, with much of their previous staff. For a long period they managed to avoid accepting the program of the new regime. For their part the Soviets often tried to develop their own separate institutions. The new Soviet institutions did not prove to be very long-lived, and most of them passed out of existence in the 1930's as the pre-revolutionary institutions submitted to communist control. This was to a certain extent a conflict of generations as well as a political struggle. Immediately after the revolution, there were no Marxists of the Bolshevik stripe who had the training to assume control of Russian academic institutions. These people were produced in the 1920's and began to take control at the end of the decade.

To a certain extent Konrad was able to avoid the type of struggle which occurred in other scholarly fields. Konrad was willing to accept the revolution, and there were no Japan specialists already established in Russian academic institutions. In the eyes of others, however, he was considered to be representative of the old order. This seems a strange conclusion because of Konrad's relative youth, but he was categorized as part of the older generation because much of his academic preparation was completed before the revolution and because he was affiliated with the old university at St. Petersburg, an institution which was seen in the 1920's as resisting the new regime.

In Chinese and oriental studies, other than Japanese, the political conflicts were much greater because there was an established pre-revolutionary generation of scholars who did not support the revolution and because, in the case of China, Chinese issues became involved in the party power struggles of the 1920's. Stalin's policy of strengthening Chiang Kai-shek at the expense of the Chinese Communist Party eventually enabled Chiang to destroy the Chinese Communist Party. This disastrous policy was strongly criticized by Stalin's opponents, including Trotsky.

The greater Soviet involvement in China meant that a group of China specialists developed who did not have a formal academic background, but whose expertise came from work in Soviet embassies and economic missions, the Comintern, journalism and so on. These people grouped themselves in Moscow, where they established the USSR Scientific Association of Oriental Studies (VNAB) and they put out a journal called *Novyi vostok* (The New Orient). Konrad was obviously not a part of this group, but he seems to have been to a

certain degree acceptable to them, since he published an article, "Problems of Japanese Feudalism" in *Novyi vostok* in 1923.¹⁷

From 1922 to 1938, Konrad's primary affiliation was with the University in Leningrad, where he held the Chair of Japanese Languages and Literature. This position, originally intended for Elisséeff, was the first such position in Russia, and so it remained until Konrad's own students moved to regional universities to establish programs there. From 1926 Konrad held the rank of professor, although he received his doctorate only in 1934. According to later Soviet practice, only his early appointment to the rank of professor is unusual. The doctor's degree is awarded to mature scholars, often in middle life. Konrad's wife, for instance, also a Japan specialist, received her doctor's degree in her late sixties.¹⁸ In addition to his position at the University, Konrad was chair of the Japanese language program at the Leningrad Institute of Living Oriental Languages. This institution, established in 1920, was to a certain extent the successor of the Practical Oriental Academy, from which Konrad himself had graduated. It was designed to give practical knowledge of a foreign language, the ability to speak and write. The new Soviet institution had a second purpose as well, to teach Asians Russian, mathematics and other practical subjects. In 1938 this institution was closed, perhaps because most of the faculty had been purged.¹⁹

In his teaching positions, Konrad developed the curricula and texts for the teaching of Japanese language and literature to Russians. Initially all courses were taught by Konrad, including Introduction to Japanese Philology, Introduction to Japanese Culture, the History of Modern and Medieval Japanese Literature, Elementary and Advanced Japanese. By the early 1930's, six or seven more faculty members had been added in Japanese studies, including history, although Konrad continued as chairman of Japanese Languages and Literature.

Leningrad University was the major center for the study of Japan in the Soviet Union, and in 1933, for the first time, sizeable numbers of students began to be admitted to the program. In that year 26 students entered the program as undergraduates. Under the Soviet system, students are not admitted to a university generally, but to a specific program, and it is expected that they will graduate in that program.

One of Konrad's students from the 1930's, E. M. Pinus, remembered him with particular affection. He treated students with great kindness and interest. He loved his subject matter. He encouraged his students to undertake serious translation work, sponsored publication of translations done by his former students, and he encouraged students' teaching careers.²⁰ Konrad's program seems to have produced a relatively small number of students in the 1920's in keeping with its limited resources. The students of the 1920's however went on to become the first generation of Soviet-trained Japan sppecialists. D. I. Goldberg, who became an historian, was Konrad's first graduate student. Nataliia Isaevna Fel'dman (1903-1976), who completed her undergraduate work in 1925, later became Konrad's wife.²¹ It is characteristic of the lack of personal information in Soviet biographical sources that the year of their marriage is never mentioned. By American standards, Konrad had relatilely few graduate students-as of 1961 he numbered among his students 9 doctors of philosophy and 21 candidates--roughly equal to the western Ph. D.-a total for his entire career of about 30 students with advanced

degrees.22

In the 1940's, after Konrad moved to Moscow, he held the Chair of Japanese Language in the Institute of Oriental Studies at Moscow State University. Here he continued his teaching activities, developing a course in oriental literature as a whole as late as 1958.²³

One of his former students states that teaching was the most important part of Konrad's career.²⁴ Certainly he was the father of the Soviet study of Japan, possibly more important in the Soviet context than was his onetime rival, Elisséeff, in developing Japanese studies in the United States. Virtually all Soviet Japan specialists are his students, or by now, students of his students. Certainly education and the organization of educational institutions were a concern of Konrad from the earliest stages of his career.

Of course universities do not constitute the pinnacle of scholarly life in the Soviet Union. The major scholarly body in the Soviet Union is the Academy of Sciences, which is primarily a research institution. This institution, one of the few to have a continuous existence which spans the revolution, managed to avoid Communist domination until 1929. There are degrees of affiliation with the Academy, the highest being full member which qualifies one as part of the intellectual elite of the Soviet Union. Members receive a generous income, preferential housing, access to restricted stores, and use of chauffeured cars. The Academy has under its control a whole series of specialized institutes and committees devoted to specific branches of research. The Academy remained at its original site in Leningrad until 1941, when it was moved to Moscow.

It is perhaps significant that Konrad became affiliated with the Academy as a "scholarly worker" in 1931, after the independence of the Academy was broken. He became a corresponding member of the Academy in 1934, even before he received his doctoral degree that same year. Corresponding membership is the second highest level of affiliation. Full membership came for Konrad only in 1958, the same year E. M. Zhukov, one of his own students who was a party member and had better political connections also became a full member of the Academy.²⁵

Konrad served on many committees and boards of the Academy, did editorial work for Academy journals and major serial publications. He was a major figure in the serial history, *World History*, somewhat similar to the Cambridge serial histories, and he was the initiator of the serial history devoted to world literature. Most of these accomplishments came in the post-war period. In the 20's, when Konrad was still in Leningrad, most of his work was focused on Japan.

Konrad wrote on all aspects of Japanese studies, publishing works on the development of Japanese feudalism, articles on and translations of classical Japanese literature. He and his wife were involved in the translation of modern, particularly proletarian Japanese literature. Konrad was interested in Japanese theater, and he wrote a number of articles on Japan for the first edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, including the section on Japanese history down to the Meiji restoration.

Konrad's book-length works for this period (1920's and 1930's) include two translations, *The Ise Monagatari* and *The Heart* by K. Natsuma, five books on language and literature, including text books, and two works on Japanese history.

One was a popular study, *Japan*, *People and State* (1923), the other a series of lectures on ancient Japanese history down to the Taika reforms.²⁷ *Japan*, *People and State* was credited with exposing "the reactionary myth invented by Japanese aristocratic-monarchical historiographers of the divine origins of the imperial dynasty and the Japanese people which paved the way for the racist ideas on the special role of the Japanese in Asia."²⁸

Writing in 1967, Podpalova credits Konrad's article in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* with beginning a new era in the Soviet study of Japan. She says that the article was written on the basis of discussions conducted from 1929 to 1933 on social formations. These remarks appear to refer to the great discussions on the Asiatic mode of production which were conducted at this time. This complicated debate was waged in 1920's and early 1930's, and revived again in the 1960's.²⁹ The issue was whether the Orient had a characteristic form of social development, or whether it followed the same progression from primitive society to slave-owning, then feudal, capitalist and finally socialist society as Marx and Engels had outlined the stages of European history. The alternative, or one of the alternatives, to this five-stage theory was known as Asiatic society, or the Asiatic mode of production and it was characterised by state ownership of land, bureaucratic control of the economy and society, lack of social and economic development.

Employment of the Asiatic mode of production as a theory of social development led to a number of unfavorable conclusions about Soviet foreign policy in China as well as about the Soviet program of collectivization. Some of Trotsky's followers accepted the theory of the Asiatic mode of production. The world-wide validity of the five-stage theory, which was espoused by V. V. Struve, an influential Soviet orientalist of the older generation, became official dogma under Stalin. Most of those who supported the theory of the Asiatic mode of production were killed in the purges.

In spite of Podpalova's remarks, Konrad seems always to been on the edges of this debate, which in any event concerned primarily China. He certainly knew of it, since one of the main episodes, a conference in February 1931, took place at the institute where he worked.³⁰ The terminology Konrad uses in his article on Japanese history in the first edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* seems to derive from the debate, but the scheme he proposes for Japanese history basically follows the five-stage theory: primitive society existed in Japan to the 7th century when it is succeeded by slave society, beginnings of feudualism appear in the 9th century, and so on. This does not correspond to the theory which Konrad later came to espouse, and which predominated in Soviet studies of Japan, that Japan in the eighth century moved directly from the primitive to the feudal stage, skipping the slave stage.³¹ In any event, his views as expressed in the 1931 encyclopedia article are at variance with those which he expressed in the 1960's when he returned to this question in his role as one of the editors of *World History*.

There seems to be no connection between Konrad's development of a periodization for Japanese history and his later downfall. That is, his marginal involvement in the debate over social formations in the late 1920's and the early 1930's did not lead to his arrest, as it did for those who were identified as supporters of the Asiatic mode of production.

It is difficult to try to place Konrad in the treacherous political climate of the 1930's. While he does not seem to have joined the party, and he occupied himself primarily with scholarly projects, he clearly did adopt Marxist forms of thought and discourse. He also attempted to accommodate himself to the political requirements of the time and he seems to have been rewarded for this. We find an article entitled "I cannot conceive of my work without the participation of Communists," appearing in 1933. The following year he becomes a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences. He sponsors the translation of Japanese proletarian literature. In 1936 and 1937 he gives a series of lectures at the Institute of the Red Professoriate in Moscow. Perhaps needless to say this was a center for the ardent Marxist scholar. Konrad's periodization of Japanese history as set forth in his article for the first edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* corresponded to the five-stage orthodoxy-even before that orthodoxy had been established.

None of his accomplishments was sufficient to save him in the frenzied atmosphere of the late 1930's. Like many other orientalists, he was arrested in 1938. His arrest is never directly mentioned in Soviet publications, so it is difficult to determine why a man who had made notable efforts to accommodate himself to the Soviet regime, and who had made very valuable contributions to the development of Soviet academic life, suffered such a fate. He was in any event not alone. Poppe estimates that nearly half of the Institute of Oriental Studies attached to the Academy of Sciences in Leningrad was arrested, forty out of ninety members.³³ All those in foreign studies were suspect and a connection with Japan would be particularly dangerous since the possibility of war with Japan had become quite clear in the late 1930's. There is some evidence that Konrad was accused of treason: according to one account, V. V. Struve was interrogated by the secret police about Konrad, and he refused to declare that Konrad was not a spy, on the grounds that he did not know him sufficiently well.³⁴

Konrad seems to have been connected with the tragic case of Nikolai Aleksandrovich Nevskii. Konrad and Nevskii had been friends since their university days, when they had studied oriental languages together. They met again in Japan during the First World War. Nevskii married in Japan and remained there after the revolution. In the 1920's he decided to return to Leningrad, at the invitation of his friends there, including Konrad. While in Japan, Nevskii had become interested in Tangut, an extinct central Asian language which could be studied most successfully in Leningrad where a large number of Tangut documents had been collected. Nevskii had difficulty obtaining permission to return to Russia and finally arrived only in 1929. In the early 1930's he taught Japanese in Konrad's department at the university, and the two lived in the same apartment building.

Nevskii and his Japanese wife were arrested first, in October of 1937. Konrad's wife discovered their little daughter alone and crying in the Nevskii's apartment the morning following her parents' arrest. She was taken in by the Konrads and later adopted by them.³⁵ The Nevskiis were particularly vulnerable, she because she was a foreigner from a hostile country, he because he was married to a foreigner and had remained outside the Soviet Union for ten years following the revolution. Nevskii died in prison in 1945. It is hard to say whether involve-

ment with Nevskii brought about Konrad's arrest in 1938. It took very little to fall under suspicion, and since the accusations were groundless, it is hard to determine exactly why any particular person was arrested.

Konrad seems to have been in prison three years. Most accounts indicate that from 1941 he was chair of the Department of Japanese Languages at the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies. There is a blank in his bibliography from 1938 to 1944 however. Probably Konrad was unable to publish from 1941 to 1944 because of the disruptions of the war. He received a government award in 1945, the Order of Lenin, indicating that he was restored to favor.

The post-war period was notable for the greater attention Konrad gave to Chinese studies. In 1945 he produced a translation of Sun-tzu into Russian. Since this is a military manual, and a Chinese one at that, it seems to reflect some kind of response to the war, as well as an avoidance of Japanese topics which may have been responsible for his arrest. In his introduction, Konrad is very careful to avoid any discussion of the possible application of Sun-Tzu to the military strategy of modern Japan and China, although he states that Sun-tzu was part of the military curriculum in both countries. He also notes that of the Japanese commentaries on Sun-tzu, he is using only the commentary of Ogyu Sorai of 1750, although he knows later commentaries.³⁶ Konrad's increased interest in Chinese topics after the war probably reflects the Communist victory in China and the greater interest in and accessibility to China, in comparison to Japan.

In 1952, Konrad was required to write an article applying Stalin's work "Marxism and Linguistics" to the development of the Chinese and Japanese languages. This approach allowed Konrad to "discover a series of specific peculiarities in the development of the Chinese national language which are connected with the heroic anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle of the Chinese people, a struggle which was completed with the creation of a new democratic China under the leadership of the Communist Party and its head, Mao Tse-tung." In the body of the article Konrad makes much use of the valuable insights of Stalin into linguistic development. The bibliography of Konrad's works issued in 1967 lists three such works published in 1952 applying Stalin's genius to oriental linguistics. These works are no longer listed in the bibliography published in 1978.

With the death of Stalin, Konrad emerged as one of the senior scholars in the field of oriental studies. We find him publishing an article in 1956 which lays out the future course for the development of Soviet oriental studies.³⁹ The article contains a good deal of the party line of the time, but also includes the interesting notion that the study of east and west should be conducted on the same principles: European standards should not be canonized. For Konrad this became a central concept. Konrad believed the Soviet Union, because of its geography and adherence to Marxism was the best place for this approach to develop.

He became an academician in 1958, the pinnacle of the career of a Soviet scholar. As noted above, this came late for Konrad; he became an academician at the time his own pupils were receiving this honor, a delay in recognition undoubtedly caused by his arrest in 1938. In the late 1950's, and for the rest of his life, Konrad, without abandoning any of his earlier interests, begins to turn his attention to questions of world history and the development of world culture. This is connected with a number of positions in the Academy of Sciences, and his

editorial responsibilities for the series World History and History of World Literature.

Konrad in his later years was a supporter of the program to open up the Soviet Union after Stalin's death, to remove the strictures which had been imposed on intellectual life, and in some measure, to redress the crimes of the Stalin period. We find him interceding with the authorities on behalf of dissidents. We find him criticizing the concept of socialist realism, at least as it had been applied in the Soviet Union. We see him calling for increased ties between Soviet culture and the rest of the world. He is part of such an exchange in his correspondence with Arnold Toynbee which began in 1967 and continued until Konrad's death in 1970. He inspired the publication of Kant in the Soviet Union and urged the translation and the publication of such philosophers as Bergson and Husserl.⁴⁰

His most public attack on the Stalin period came with his rescue and publication of the work of Nikolai Aleksandrovich Neveskii, his colleague and friend who died in the purges. Konrad gathered together the uncompleted work of his friend, put it into publishable form, and it appeared in two volumes in 1960, one volume a series of articles on Tangut philology, the second a dictionary of Tangut. As a result of Konrad's efforts, Nevskii was posthumously awarded the Lenin Prize in 1962, the highest Soviet award for scholarly accomplishment.⁴¹

Konrad himself received two Orders of Lenin, and a state prize for editorial work on the *Great Japanese-Russian Dictionary* (1970) in two volumes, on which his wife and others also worked. In 1969, he was awarded Japan's highest award for foreigners, the Order of the Rising Sun, second class. No other Soviet citizen had previously been given this award.

In spite of Konrad's position at the pinnacle of Soviet scholarship, he was not, in his last years, immune from attack. In August of 1970 the monthly journal *Inostrannaia literatura* published a vigorous and sarcastic attack by L. Eidlin on Konrad's concept of a Renaissance in Chinese cultural hisory. According to one account, this was allowed by the editor of the journal, N. T. Fedorenko, because Konrad had attempted to stop Fedorenko's appointment as corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences, which came in the same year Konrad himself was given full membership. Certainly Fedorenko's accomplishments were primarily in the realm of the government and the party. In the 1960's he was the Soviet representative in the United Nations, and he held important party posts as well. Konrad's unhappiness over Eidlin's article supposedly precipitated a heart attack and he died at the end of September, 1970. When Eidlin and Fedorenko appeared at the funeral ceremonies, Konrad's widow demanded that they leave. 42

Judging from the memorial volumes, the obituaries, and the publication of several collections of his works posthumously, Konrad was held in affectionate regard by most of those who knew him. He was esteemed as a scholar and a teacher, and a humane individual. His career illustrates the difficulties such an individual could have in the politicized world of Soviet scholarship.

To turn from Konrad's career to his works, we find that the most interesting features of his writings concern general questions of historical development. Konrad's ideas are closely connected, and examination of one feature of his thought leads immediately to another. All of Konrad's views fall into a Marxist framework, though he is not really an orthodox or dogmatic Marxist. For

purposes of analysis, I will begin with Konrad's view of Japanese historical development, then go on to his notion of the role of Oriental studies, and finally discuss his notion of the processes of history generally.

I have already made some mention of Konrad's views on the historical development of Japan. This is an issue which he turned to first in 1923, in an article entitled, "Problems of Japanese Feudalism." ⁴³ In this article Konrad suggests that feudalism existed in Japan from 1192 to 1867, and that a patriarchal/ clan society existed until the seventh century. The implication is that a slave society existed in the intervening period, although Konrad is quite circumspect in his definition of these periods. The significance of this article is that we see Konrad describing early Japanese history in Marxist terms. A similar, but much clearer account of Konrad's early views on the periodization of Japanese history is to be found in his article on early Japan in the first edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia, issued in 1931. In this account we find Konrad applying to Japan the standard, or later to become standard, Marxist analysis: Japan had a primitive, clan-based society until the seventh century, when a slave-owning society began to develop, which characterized the seventh and eighth centuries. This was followed by the development of feudalism, which begins in the ninth century, and lasts until the Meiji Restoration. The ninth to the twelfth centuries are a period of transition, during which slavery dies out, and the full feudal period begins in the twelfth century. The feudal order begins to decline in the seventeenth century.

This article was written before Konrad had done extensive study in early Japanese history. In studies which Konrad first developed in the mid-1930's, and which were published then and later, he reached the conclusion that slavery did not constitute a fully developed stage in Japanese history. Slaves at the very most constituted 15% of the population and probably less.⁴⁴ Konrad concluded that Japan therefore went from the primitive communal form of society directly to the feudal stage, with the transition in the eighth century. This view is most clearly expressed in Konrad's article on Japanese history in the second edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, issued in 1957, and it has become the orthodoxy of Soviet Japanese studies.⁴⁵ Skeptics might question the usefulness of a periodization which found Heian and Tokugawa Japan to be fundamentally similar. Noteworthy is Konrad's willingness willingness to change his theoretical structure when it does not accord with the facts.

Konrad's formulation leads to the question of how Japan was able to avoid passing through the slave stage of development. This is a question which Konrad did not answer in any detail in the context of Japanese history, nor, since such questions were dangerous in the Stalin period, did Konrad propose an answer until he became involved in the production of the multi-volume *World History* in the 1950's. 46

At that time Konrad concluded that slavery was a necessary part of the *world* historical experience, but not part of the historical experience of *all* societies. In fact, in only ten societies did slavery as a fundamental social formation exist. These societies included Egypt, ancient Greece and Rome and ancient China. The reason other states were able to avoid the slave stage is explained by varying rates of historical development and the effect of foreign influence. If a society is at the primitive stage of development, but is influenced by a society at the feudal

stage of development, it would be impossible for the primitive society to adopt the less advanced stage of slavery; it would instead adopt feudalism. In regard to the Far East, Konrad writes, "In the seventh century, China, which was at a high level of feudal development, held a leading place in East Asia. For the Japanese people connected with countries in this part of Asia by a certain community of historical life, it was simply impossible to go over then to slavery." More generally, "In conditions of international community, backward peoples either lose an independent place in world historical life and even entirely disappear or they try to reach the advanced level attained within this community." No doubt this formulation is open to criticism on many points. Soviet thinkers could be unhappy about the deviation from the five-stage model. Considerations other than the purely economic-national consciousness-seem to have crept into the development of society. The more empirically minded will be unhappy with the residue of Marxism or positivism.

Konrad criticized traditional studies of the Far East, or orientalism from the standpoint of world history. For Konrad, the Orient did not form a distinct category of study. This was an attack not only on the notion of the Asiatic mode of production, but also on the basic Eurocentrism of Marxist schemes of social development. "The Marxist standpoint regarding social-economic formations was founded upon the data of European history, and only in passing did it touch upon data of Eastern (principally ancient) history for which insufficient data were available at the time, and in many cases they were inaccurately interpreted." Konrad does not reject the Marxist categories, but "The important thing is to become imbued with the idea that the modelling of such general categories should be done on the material of both West and East....The mission of orientalists is to supply material for this process of overcoming eurocentrism."48 These views are exceptional only in the Soviet context where their importance is to be found in their freeing of oriental studies from the tightest strictures of traditional Marxism. Konrad's approach allows the Soviet scholar to study the Orient primarily on a factual basis. This approach to oriental studies Konrad urged as early as 1956, in the immediate post-Stalin period, but it received its fullest development in an article originally published in 1965.49

For all his denunciation of eurocentrism, Konrad himself is irrevocably tied to the stages of European history as outlined by Marx and Engels. That feudalism is a world-wide phenomenon could only be expected in the Marxist contest, but Konrad is particularly fond of the notion that the Renaissance, which he understands to be the period of transition from feudalism to capitalism, also appears throughout the world. He devotes most attention to the idea of a Chinese Renaissance which he dates to the Sung dynasty. Konrad however does not very clearly define the ending point for this Renaissance, a point on which he was severely criticized. For Konrad, a common point of the Renaissance wherever it appears is the development of humane systems of philosophy, specifically in China, neo-Confucianism.

Konrad suggests that in addition to feudal culture and the Renaissance, the Baroque and the Enlightenment also had worldwide dimensions. The argument for a worldwide Barogue and Enlightenment is never thoroughly developed.⁵⁰ These are stimulating ideas which could possibly provide a basis for some interest-

ing comparative research on specific individuals or periods, but probably few would accept Konrad's universal application of this scheme.

In regard specifically to literature, Konrad noted: "The decisive condition for the appearance of literatures of the same type is the arrival of various nations at the same stage of socio-historical and cultural development and the proximity of the forms in which this cultural development appears." Konrad clearly sees cultural similarities arising from similar stages of historical development.

While Konrad's ideas were new and stimulating in the Soviet context, their originality would seem to be an open question. The Soviet discussions of social development regarding the Asiatic mode of production encouraged Japanese Marxists to consider the same issues with reference to Japan, at approximately the same time-the late 1920's and particularly in Japan, the early 1930's. Konrad's main points can be found in the writings of the Japanese theorists who participated in this attempt to fit Japanese historical development into a Marxist scheme. Konrad's views seem close to those of Hayakawa Jiro, who also suggested that Japan under Chinese influence essentially bypassed the slave stage of development. In the 1930's these ideas spread widely among Marxist thinkers in Japan. Konrad's periodization for early Japanese history is close to that developed by Tsuchiya Takao in 1934. The rejection of Orientalism, another prominent feature of Konrad's thought, was also expressed in the course of these Japanese debates.⁵²

The notion of a Chinese Renaissance beginning in the Sung dynasty was suggested by the Japanese Sinologue, Naito Konan before the Second World War, although the discussion of the Sung dynasty in terms of a Renaissance similar to the European experience is found only in the works of Japanese historians of China published in the 1970's. This was after Konrad had elaborated his own ideas on the subject. Naito seems only to have alluded to a Chinese Renaissance: in the words of Naito's English language biographer, "Naito never explicitly compared Renaissance Europe with Sung China....." Such a comparison is central to Konrad's approach.

Clearly many features of Konrad's thought were anticipated by Japanese scholars, and while he cites their work on specific points, he does not credit them with developing the general conclusions he has adopted. Despite his isolation from Japan, it is hard to believe that Konrad was unaware that similar theories had been developed by Japanese scholars.

Part of the explanation for the lack of references to the work of others may lie in the type of writing in which Konrad's generalizations appeared: encyclopedia articles, lecture notes never formally published in Konrad's lifetime, articles for the non-specialist reader. This type of writing does not require strict citation of sources. Many of these conclusions seem to have been widely accepted in Japanese scholarship, and perhaps Konrad could feel that he was simply transmitting commonplaces to his reader. Even so, the reader is not made aware that Konrad is writing as a cultural intermediary rather than an original thinker.

Konrad summed up his thoughts on history in an article titled in English "The Substance of History." In this article, Konrad applied the Marxist historical scheme to the entire globe, tracing the development of slave societies, feudalism, and capitalism in both Europe and Asia. Thus disparate parts of the globe underwent the same historical development. To paraphrase Konrad, the major

historical features of Han China and the Hellenistic world were identical.⁵⁴ The transition from one stage of society to the next is effected by revolution. Each stage is characterized by the appearance of a major thinker who anticipates the development of the next stage of history. Two such figures would be Augustine and Nagarjuna, for example.

The fundamental similarity of historical development everywhere is strength-ened by cultural diffusion. All history is the story of progressive improvement, although Konrad does mention the pessimistic outlook of Spengler concerning European civilization. One senses that Konrad feels a good deal of sympathy for Spengler's views, though he openly embraces a Marxist optimism. In this summation, Konrad returns to his favorite concept of humanitarian philosophies arising both east and west. The essay closes with a vision of continual improvement of the human situation, though humanity may, in the solution of existing problems, create new ones which in turn will be surmounted. He notes "we are unable to foresee what forms and kinds of evil may appear in the future, after the existing ones disappear."55

In an interview given in 1969, after noting the happiness of old age, Konrad continues, "Now I approach everything with a tranquil certainty of the victory of the humanitarian principle and I would very much like to have this tranquility remain to the end. Of course this tranquility is not an indifference to everything, and it is not without protest: it is enveloped in a slight sadness. Yes, and is anything else possible for a person who has seen and survived all that history has given us for the past seventy years?"⁵⁶

Within the Marxist context, I think it is possible to characterize Konrad as a relatively undogmatic thinker. He accepts the basic Marxist categories, but generally insists that facts must be considered and theory adjusted to account for them. He is not wholly consistent in this approach, and the greatest exception is his notion of a Chinese Renaissance.

Konrad is important in helping remove the severest dogmatic strictures on Soviet scholarship and in urging an end to the isolation of Soviet intellectual life from the rest of the world. Probably he is most important in his role as father of Soviet Japanese studies and as a person who generally provided a better understanding of Japan in the Soviet Union. In this respect we can point specifically to his training of Japan specialists, to his development of textbooks and curricula, to his translations and lexicographical work. On the theoretical level he developed the basic Soviet periodization for Japanese history, and he urged the establishment of Oriental studies on the same basis as study of Europe. As noted above, many of his concepts do not seem to be original, and he is more important for his presentation to a Soviet audience of ideas developed in Japan, than as an original thinker.

Konrad's career itself is interesting. His experiences before the revolution, the development of his career after the revolution, his downfall in the late 1930's, his survival, and his activity in de-Stalinizing Soviet intellectual life are probably not in fact typical, but I think we can say they are symptomatic, and lead us to a better understanding of the Soviet academic elite in the mid-twentieth century.

NOTES

- 1 Great Soviet Encyclopedia (New York: Macmillan, 1976), vol. 13, p. 369. A translation of the third edition. Other reference works mentioning Konrad include: Prominent Personalities in the U. S. S. R. (Metuchen, N. J.: Scarecrow Press, 1968), ed. Edward I. Crowley, p. 296; S. D. Miliband, Biobibliograficheskii slovar' sovetskikh vostokovedov (Moscow: Glavnaia redaktsaia vostochnoi literatury, 1977), pp. 268-71. Information about Konrad from these sources will not always be cited specifically in the rest of this paper.
- 2 One of Konrad's major collections of articles, *Zapad i vostok*, did find an appreciative reviewer in Abbott Gleason, *Kritika*, vol. 5 no. 3 (Spring, 1969), pp. 1-6.
- The main source for Konrad's life down to 1920 is his own brief memoir, N. I. Konrad, "Kogda i kak ia stal vostokovedom," Narody Azii i Afriki, 1967, #5, pp. 237-41. This is supplemented by A. E. Gluskina, "Nikolai Iosifovich Konrad," Problemy vostokovedeniia, 1961, #1, pp. 217-25; and I. S. Braginskii's foreword to Istorikofilologicheskie issledovaniia: sbornik statei k semidesiatiletiiu akademika N. I. Konrada (Moscow: Nauka, 1967), ed. M. B. Khrapchenko.
- 4 Vladislav Kovalev, "Beg vremini," Smena, 1969, #17, pp. 14-5.
- 5 Braginskii, op. cit., p. 3.
- 6 Gluskina, op. cit., p. 217.
- 7 George Alexander Lensen, Russian Diplomatic and Consular Officials in East Asia (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1968), pp. 43, 51. Uxkull lived in Berlin during the Second World War; Marie Vassiltchikov, Berlin Diaries, 1940-1945 (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), pp. 51, 120.
- 8 Problemy istorii i teorii mirovoi kul'tury : sbornik statei pamiati akademika N. I. Konrada (Moscow : Nauka, 1971), ed. B. B. Piotrovskii, p. 87.
- 9 N. I. Konrad, *Izbrannye trudy: literatura i teatr* (Moscow: Nauka, 1978), pp. 414-431, one of several volumes of Konrad's works published after his death. This volume contains the most recent, though incomplete bibliography of Konrad's works.
- 10 Information on Elisséeff comes from Edwin O. Reischauer, "Serge Elisséeff," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 20, nos 1 & 2 (June, 1957), pp. 1-28.
- 11 Nicholas Poppe, *Reminiscences* (Bellingham, Washington: Western Washington University Press, 1983), p. 81, gives another version of this.
- 12 Gluskina, op. cit., p. 217: Konrad, "Kogda i kak", p. 241.
- 13 Konrad, "Kogda i kak," p. 241.
- Gluskina, op., p. 217; M. I. Kagan, a friend of Mikhail Bakhtin, was unhappy with Konrad's performance as rector. Kagan was a faculty member at the university and reasons for his unhappiness are unknown. K. Nevel'skoi, "M. N. Bakhtin i M. I. Kagan (po materialam semeinogo arkhiva)," *Pamiat'*: istoricheskii sbornik, vol. 4 (Paris, 1981), p. 258.
- 15 G. Podpalova, "Fifty Years of Soviet Historiography of Japan (1917-1966)" in the pamphlet series *Fifty Years of Soviet Oriental Studies* (Moscow: Nauka, 1967), p. 4.

- Podpalova, op. cit., pp. 4-5. 16
- Konrad, Izbrannye trudy: literatura i teatr, p. 438. 17
- "N. I. Fel'dman-Konrad," Narody Azii i Afriki, 1976, no. 3, p. 248.
- Poppe, op. cit., pp. 71, 138-9: Problemy istorii i teorii...., p. 82.
- Problemy istorii i teorii....., p. 85. 20
- "N. I. Fel'dman-Konrad", p. 248; Problemy istorii i teorii....., p. 82. 21
- Gluskina, op. cit., p. 220. 22
- Problemy istorii i teorii....., p. 86. 23
- Ibid., p. 81. 24
- Miliband, op. cit., p. 570. 25
- A. E. Gluskina, "N. I. Konrad", Narody Azii i Afriki, 1970, no. 5, p. 251. 26
- See bibliography in Konrad, Izbrannye trudy: Literatura i teatr, pp. 438-40. 27
- Podpalova, op. cit., p. 6. 28
- Podpalova, op. cit., pp. 7-9. On the Asiatic mode of production, see Karl A. Wittfogel, Oriental Desposism: A Comparative Study of Total Power (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957): Stephen P. Dunn, The Fall and Rise of the Asiatic Mode of Production (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), and V. N. Nikiforov, Vostok i vsemirnaia istoriia (Moscow: Nauka, 1977) 2nd ed. which has a useful English summary, and Joshua A. Fogel, "The Debates over the Asiatic Mode of Production in Soviet Russia, China, and Japan," American Historical Review, vol. 93 no. 1 (Feb. 1988), pp. 56-79.
- Dunn, op. cit., p. 9: Problemy istorii i teorii...p. 88. 30
- Podpalova, op. cit., pp. 7-11: Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia, vol. 65 (Moscow: Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1931), pp. 611-634.
- Konrad, Izbrannye trudy: literatura i teatr, p. 440; Problemy istorii i teorii 32, p. 84; Podpalova, op. cit., p. 40.
- Poppe, op. cit., p. 136. 33
- I. Voznesenskii, "Tol'ko vostokovedy", Pamiat': istoricheskii sbornik no. 3 (Paris, 1980), p. 434. This is a review of Miliband, op. cit.
- Poppe, op. cit., p. 135: Problemy istorii i teorii....., p. 82; E. I. Kychanov, Zvuchat lish' pis'mena (Moscow: Nauka, 1965), pp. 95, 97, 98, 103-4, 106, 128.
- N. I. Konrad, Izbrannye trudy: sinologiia (Moscow: Nauka, 1965), pp. 10-11. 36
- Foreword to Uchenye zapiski Instituta vostokovedeniia, vol. 4 (1952), p. 4.
- Istoriko-filologicheskie issledovaniia, p. 15. This volume contains an early bibliography of Konrad's works. Konrad, Izbrannye trudy: literatura i teatr, p. 442.
- N. I. Konrad, "O putiakh razvitiia sovetskogo vostokovedeniia," Voprosy 39 iazykoznaniia, 1956, no. 5 (Sept. -Oct.), pp. 1-9.
- R. I. Pimenov, "Vospominiia", pt. I Pamiat': istoricheskii sbornik no. 3 (Paris, 1980), p. 117: N. I. Konrad, "Oktiabr' i filologicheskie nauki", Novyi mir, 1971, no. 1, pp. 208-18: N. I. Konrad, Izbrannye trudy: istoriia (Moscow: Nauka, 1974), pp. 270-82; Problemy istorii i teorii....., pp. 45-7, 159.
- 41 Problemy istorii i teorii....., p. 16; Kychanov, op. cit., p. 129.
- 42 L. Eidlin, "Idei i fakty", Inostrannaia literatura, 1970, no. 8 (August), pp. 214-28: Voznesenskii, op. cit., pp. 434-5. Eidlin and Fedorenko also make an appearance in the affair of Voinovich's apartment: see Vladimir Voinovich, The Ivankiad (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), pp. 27-8, 30-1.

- 43 N. I. Konrad, "Voprosy iaponskogo feodalizma," *Novyi vostok*, no. 4 (1923), pp. 349-364.
- 44 Konrad, Izbrannye trudy: istoriia, pp. 45, 52, 93.
- 45 Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 2nd ed., vol. 49 (Moscow: Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1957), p. 596: Podpalova, op. cit., pp. 10-11.
- 46 Nikiforov, op. cit., p. 185.
- 47 N. I. Konrad, West-East: Inseparable Twain, Selected Articles (Moscow: Central Department of Oriental Literature, 1967), pp. 30-1.
- 48 *Idid*., pp. 16, 24, 27.
- 49 Idid., pp. 7-28; Konrad, "O putiakh razvitiia....."
- 50 Eidlin, op. cit.: S. L. Utechenko, "Edinstvo mirovogo istoricheskogo protsessa i ideia gumanizma", *Vestnik drevnei istorii*, 1975, no. 3 (Aug., no. 133), pp. 172-80.
- 51 Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia, vol. 3 (Moscow: Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1966), col. 709. This entry on Konrad was written by his wife.
- 52 Germanine A. Hoston, Marxism and the Crisis of Development in Prewar Japan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 148, 156-60.
- Joshua A. Fogel, Politics and Sinology: The Case of Naito Konan (1866-1934) (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1984), p. 209.
- 54 Konrad, West-East, p. 204.
- 55 *Idid*., pp. 206, 240.
- 56 Kovalev, op. cit., p. 15.