

IMAGES AND ATTITUDES : EAST EUROPEAN HISTORY AT THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION MEETING

East European history was represented at the 80th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, in San Francisco on 28-30 December 1965, by a session whose theme was "The Changing Image of Russia and the West in Eastern Europe." This topic, fusing psychological with intellectual inquiry, constitutes a much-needed departure from the usual concentration of Balkan specialists on political and diplomatic history. It undoubtedly reflects the growing interest of many American historians in employing psychological and ideological tools to examine the intangible and often obscure mainsprings of human behavior.¹

In the opening paper — "The Rumanian View of France" — Professor Stephen Fischer-Galati of Wayne State University cast a hard and often skeptical eye at the nature of the Rumanian relationship to France. He condemned as naive and over-simplified the standard portrayal of this relationship as a deep, emotional affinity based on a "common" origin, a similar, Latinized and rationalistic culture, and a liberal, nationalist political philosophy. Instead, he held that the Rumanian attitude toward France has varied considerably from one decade to another, from one social class to another, and even from one province to another. The cause of this variation, he argued vehemently, has essentially been political, not cultural or emotional, and is thus a logical outgrowth of the Rumanians' search for assistance in achieving their national aspirations.

The birth date of this relationship was the 1850's, with the accession to power of Napoleon III. In justifying his choice of dates, Fischer-Galati contends that the revolutionary "generation of 1848" was by no means wholeheartedly Francophil, many finding French political thought uncomfortably radical, while others were doubtful about the usefulness of French models for Rumania. Hence the support given by Napoleon III to Rumanian nationalism was the first major stimulus to Francophil sentiment, particularly since this support did not frighten the aristocracy through any ideological or political linkage with domestic reform.

Politics remained the real determinant of Rumanian attitudes towards France during 1866-1914, when the Rumanian state was consolidated and the

1. See the proposals of H. Stuart Hughes in *History as Art and as Science* (1964), and of William L. Langer in his presidential address to the American Historical Association: "The Next Assignment", *American Historical Review*, LXIII, No. 2 (January 1958), 282-304.

social structure grew complex. However, French influence now was rivaled by the German image of power and efficiency, an image deeply admired by many Rumanian industrialists, technicians, and businessmen. Liberal and nationalist intellectuals opposed this trend by looking to France for support in creating a Greater Rumania, primarily at the expense of Austria-Hungary, Germany's principal ally. Fischer-Galati suggested that this rivalry, becoming more intense as the World War approached, had overtones of a conflict between the aggressive, rationalistic, and profit-oriented world of the entrepreneur, and the romantic, emotional, and heroic realm of the nationalist intelligentsia.

The zenith of French influence was reached during the 1920's and early 1930's. Germany had been vanquished; the French diplomatic system appeared to guarantee Rumanian security; Rumanian opinion saw the land reform of 1918 and 1921, and the constitution of 1923, as the consequence, if not of French influence, than at least of a French example; and French cultural institutions and achievements were extremely attractive. But Fischer-Galati emphasizes that French popularity, though very strong among the peasantry, bourgeoisie, and liberal intelligentsia of the Old Kingdom, had no traditional roots among the Rumanians of newly-annexed Transylvania and Bessarabia, while the Hungarian and German minorities opposed it as they did much else emanating from Bucharest. Thus the appeals of Italian and German fascism in the 1930's did not fall on deaf ears, particularly since the French performance in both diplomacy and domestic politics prompted dismay if not contempt.

A final, fatal blow to French influence was dealt by the Communists after 1945. French cultural influence and institutions became a primary target in their drive to shift the Rumanian orientation from West to East. This attempt partially backfired: some Rumanians clung all the more fervently to the few remaining aspects of their French consciousness. But the difficulties of retaining contact with the Parisian heartland were insurmountable. Fischer-Galati further suggested that it is not merely police repression which has completely ended French influence. The decisive factor is rather the growing urbanization and industrialization of Rumanian life, the rise of new, technically-oriented classes embodying values, attitudes and life styles whose source can be found not in France, nor even in Europe, but in the very Mecca of the new mobile, consumer-goods society: the United States. Thus he finds a certain irony in the Rumanian government's current friendship for a France whose image no longer means much even to those few bourgeois or aristocratic survivors of the *ancien régime*, who "admit in fluent French that they would rather know broken English."

In contrast to the broad, impressionistic fashion in which Professor Fischer-Galati presented his theme, Professor Michael Petrovich of the University of Wisconsin dealt with "The Russian Image in Renaissance Bulgaria (1780-1878)" in a detailed, systematic fashion, relying on concrete, explicit evidence as well as logical analysis to sustain his views. But differences in methodology apart, his general thesis is essentially similar to that of Fischer-Galati. Petrovich contends that, despite a genuine, deeply-felt tradition (unique among the peoples of Eastern Europe) of cultural, religious, and, to a lesser degree, political affinity with Russia, the Bulgarians were by no means "the ever friendly and dependent little brothers of Imperial Russia," and that many Bulgarian nationalists had grave doubts regarding Russian policies and intentions for many years, even decades, before the Russo-Bulgarian conflict of the 1880's. Thus Petrovich, like Fischer-Galati, asserts the primacy of politics over cultural or psychological affiliations.

The first systematic contact between Russia and the Bulgarians came only after Russia reached the Black Sea in 1774, and especially after a Bulgarian merchant colony was established at Odessa. This colony was well suited to act as an intermediary, explaining and interpreting Bulgarian aspirations to the Tsarist government. And these aspirations were greatly stimulated by the wars of 1806-12, 1828-29, and 1853-56, during which Russian armies showed their superiority over the Turks. Believing that liberation was at hand, the Bulgarians responded enthusiastically, providing information and supplies, and even forming armed detachments of volunteers. The results were gravely disappointing: Russia considered only her own national interests at the peace conferences, and the Bulgarians received nothing. Fearing Turkish vengeance, some (over 100,000 in 1830) migrated to Bessarabia or the Danubian Principalities as the Russian armies withdrew. These disappointments were compounded by the corrupt and incompetent behavior of Russian officials in Bulgaria, the hesitant, ambivalent attitude of Russia toward the Bulgarian drive for a separate church, and Bulgarian anger at Russian sponsorship of a population exchange (in 1861) entailing the planting of Crimean Tatars on Bulgarian soil while Bulgarians from Vidin were relocated in south Russia. Moreover, defeat in the Crimean War brought an end to Russia's legal position as protector of the Balkan Christians, the Great Powers making themselves collectively responsible. The net result of these failures was a pronounced disillusionment with Russia among the younger generation of the 1860's. This was fed by the writings of Herzen, Dobrolyubov, Pisarev, and Chrenyshevsky, led to a distrust of Pan Slavism and of official Russia, and found expression through the formation (in 1866) of the so-called Bulgarian Secret Central Committee. While the older generation (grouped around the Benevolent So-

ciety of 1862) continued to view Russia as their potential savior, the young men of the 60's looked to their own resources or to the West, but less and less to Russia.

The political disenchantment with Russia never spread to the cultural field. There, a competition which began in the early 1830's between Greek and Russian literature and learning resulted in victory for the Russian cause by the 1850's and 1860's. This competition stemmed not only from the Bulgarian search for aid in asserting their new-found nationalism, but also from the attraction which Russian higher schools, organized on a Western model and conveying Western ideals, concepts, and values, exerted when compared to the highly classical, traditional, and scholastic Greek educational system. Moreover the Slavic orientation of Russian education insured against the absorption of Bulgarian students into an alien culture; Petrovich contended that this was a real danger for those Bulgarians who were attracted to Hellenism while studying in Thessaloniki or Athens. The competition was resolved when the Russian government began granting scholarships first to a few, then to many Bulgarian students. Since the Turks monopolized all bureaucratic posts, most of these students became teachers upon returning home, spreading a knowledge of the Russian language, literature and learning throughout Bulgaria. Thus, Petrovich concluded that Bulgaria was brought into the world of European learning and letters.

The crisis of 1875-78 brought a temporary revival of Russophil sentiment among the Bulgarians. The old, almost moribund hopes that Russia would liberate her Bulgarian cousins were fulfilled beyond all expectation in the Treaty of San Stefano. But the Treaty of Berlin was a great disappointment to the Bulgarians and Petrovich implied that many vented their feelings on the Russians, no less shocked than themselves, but forced by the other powers to accept the Treaty. Thus even liberation had a sour aftertaste for the Bulgarians, and this disillusionment helped pave the way for continued friction between Russia and the Bulgarians during the 1880's.

Owing to the sudden illness of Professor Stanley Zyzniewski of the University of Kentucky, Professor R.V. Burks of Wayne State University undertook to discuss the "Polish View of Germany" as well as to comment on the papers of Professors Petrovich and Fischer-Galati. In actuality, Burks dealt not only with the Polish image of Germany, but with the Polish image of Russia as well, the two being (in his view) inseparable, and to some extent functions of each other. As a supplement to his generalizations on Poland, Burks introduced data concerning the Hungarian image of both Germany and Poland.

His evidence was taken exclusively from questionnaires recently administered by West European public opinion research institutes to 1492 Polish and 312 Hungarian travelers.

In general, Burks took the position that one nation's image of another reflected far more clearly the internal needs of the imageholding nation than it did the physiognomy of the nation beheld. He argued that this generalization was attested to by the papers which Petrovich and Fischer-Galati, relying on a skillful use of traditional historical analysis, had given, and that it was further proven by the work of the public opinion researchers. The fact that both historical analysis and public opinion research when applied to the question of images produced similar results suggested that students of recent history could in part substitute the findings of opinion polls for the study of popular literature, the newspaper press, and the like, and thus save time without sacrificing analytical accuracy. The use of such data by historians was doubly important since the study of images may well offer a convenient way to investigate such important imponderables in the history of Eastern Europe as national sentiment and ideological changes among the populace as a whole.

More specifically, Burks contended that the public opinion data on the Polish image of Germany probably reflected Polish concern for retaining the Oder-Neisse territories. This he inferred from the fact that dislike of Germany, East or West, was extremely high regardless of the age, education or political orientation of the respondent, whereas dislike of Russia was much less intense in general, and particularly so among those with higher education, those born after 1944 (who therefore had no political experience except that of a Russian-imposed tyranny), and among those with Communist sympathies. In short, the immediate Russian domination of Poland, is seen as less dangerous than Germany's threat to the Poland of the future.

The data provided by traveling Hungarians revealed, on the contrary, the differential effects of the uprising of 1956. Most Hungarians viewed Germany as a friendly nation. But Hungarians with higher education, those who lived in urban areas, as well as those who were Communist-oriented, showed much greater interest in Poland than had those with primary education, rural residence and anti-Communist feelings; these latter were scarcely interested in Poland at all. It seems reasonable to believe that the educated city-dweller was interested in Poland as a country which had managed to combine a degree of liberty with a despotism imposed from abroad, whereas the rural Hungarian with primary education still looked to Germany as a power ultimately capable of liberating him from Russian Communism. In short, the uneducated rural population of Hungary remains unreconciled, even after the events of

1956, whereas the educated urban population is now prepared to compromise with the Communist state.

The examples which Burks presented indicate once again that the international position of a nation, its aspirations for independence, progress, and the like, are far more important in shaping its image of another nation than any qualities which the latter may possess. Thus it is the longing of the Hungarian rural population for an end to Communism which turns them toward the United States, rather than any assertions by the American government that it will indeed act in their behalf. Similarly, the shock which the Serbs experienced over the Treaty of San Stefano in 1878 stemmed from their own readiness to disregard the abundant evidence that Russia pinned her hopes on Bulgaria, not Serbia. The attitudes and images held by the public are clearly of small importance so long as political parties are not sufficiently powerful to seriously influence the making of foreign policy. Ferdinand in Bulgaria and Milan Obrenović in Serbia demonstrated how little public opinion, attitudes, and images of other nations count so long as the sovereign can successfully control the political situation. The connection between the public opinion and the foreign policy of the Eastern European countries has hardly been investigated; perhaps this approach would bring a new dimension to the study of the diplomatic history of this region.

Carnegie Institute of Technology

LEONARD BUSHKOFF
(and R. V. BURKS, who
summarized his own paper)

CHATHAM COLLEGE SYMPOSIUM ON THE SOVIET UNION IN WORLD POLITICS

On 15-16 April 1966, a discussion on "The Soviet Union in World Politics" was held at Chatham College in Pittsburgh. The faculty and students who attended from various colleges and universities in the Pittsburgh area were addressed by three prominent specialists: Professor Marshall Shulman of Tufts University, Mr. Louis Fischer of the Institute for Advanced Study, who dealt with "The Sino-Soviet Conflict"; and Mr. William Griffith of the Center for International Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who spoke on "The Soviet Bloc." Since Mr. Griffith's paper in particular is of interest to Balkan specialists, an attempt will be made to summarize it.

Unfortunately, such a summary can only do scant justice to what was an