Communication, democracy, and intelligentsia

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Introduction

In the early 1990s, a group of Russian and American scholars teamed up to investigate the impact of Gorbachev's reform on Soviet society, focusing especially on the role the intelligentsia played in fomenting glasnost and perestroika. Results of this collaborative study were published in a volume *Russian Culture at the Crossroads: Paradoxes of Postcommunist Consciousness* (Shalin, 1996a). The contributors worked on the assumption that perestroika was an irreversible achievement, that distortions the reforms wrought in Russian society would be smoothed out over time. Today, this assumption appears overoptimistic. After nearly twenty years in power, Vladimir Putin dismantled key democratic institutions, badly weakened other, and established a personalistic regime that reversed many political gains brought about by his predecessors.

An international team assembled for the present project starts with the premise that we live in the age of counterperestroika. Our focus is still on the intelligentsia and its contribution to dismantling the Soviet system, but now we want to explore the unanticipated consequences of social change threatening the existence of the intelligentsia as a distinct group. Our team includes prominent scholars, writers, and civil rights leaders who illuminate the political agendas and personal choices confronting intellectuals in today's Russia. Contributors look at the current trends through different lenses, they disagree about the intelligentsia's past achievements and looming future, yet they all feel the need to examine its local and world-historical significance.

This essay aims to place the debate in historical context and elucidate its relevance to the field of communication studies. I begin with the communication-specific conditions fortifying democratic institutions and show how distorted communications have hobbled the Russian intelligentsia throughout history. Next, I review the social context within which the intelligentsia emerged, the special place it occupies in Russian discourse, and the acute distress counterperestroika inflicted on Russian society in general and public intellectuals in particular. After examining the systematic distortions that communication suffers in repressive societies, I zero in on the intelligentsia's role in modeling emotionally intelligent conduct and scrutinize the communication sphere as the condition of possibility for a viable democracy. I close this introduction with a brief survey of the articles collected in this volume and reflections on the prospects for a communication theory in the pragmatist key.

Democracy and the communication sphere

As John Dewey noted a century ago, democracy "rests upon persuasion, upon ability to convince and be convinced," upon "the improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion and persuasion" (Dewey 1916:134; 1939:102). Jürgen Habermas founded his *Theory of Communicative Action* on this insight. He took seriously the pragmatist notion that "freedom of inquiry, toleration of diverse views, freedom of communication, the distribution of what is found out to every individual as the ultimate intellectual consumer, are involved in the democratic as in the scientific method" (Dewey, 1939:102). Combining the pragmatism of John Dewey and George Herbert Mead with the sociological theory of Max Weber, Habermas isolated three forms of public discourse or value spheres that gradually secure their autonomy in the process of historical rationalization – theoretic/scientific, moral/practical, and expressive/aesthetic. Communications within each of these domains revolve around a peculiar

validity claim. Theoretic discourse concerns the truth of our propositions, practical discourse bears on the justice of our actions, and aesthetic discourse illuminates the sincerity of our feelings. Although these validity claims are intertwined with scientific, moral, and artistic discourses, they are not bound exclusively to these specialized spheres. In everyday life, we routinely assert facts, appeal to norms, and claim to be sincere, i.e., raise and settle validity claims concerning truth, justice, and authenticity. Along the way, we reproduce our normative, cultural, and private worlds, thereby laying the communication-specific groundwork for the operation of a given polity.

The crucial point Habermas makes from our vantage point is that validity claims remain largely unthematized in everyday transactions where they are redeemed not so much by recourse to reasons and arguments as through strategic action and the appeal to custom. It is the task of critical communication theory or universal pragmatics to render these unreflexive validity claims problematic, help settle them by rational, nonviolent means. The belief in "a noncoercively unifying, consensus building force of a discourse in which the participants overcome their at first subjectively biased views in favor of a rationally motivated agreement" is combined here with a keen awareness that communications remain "systematically distorted" in a repressive, media-steered society which keeps public discourse from realizing its full critical potential (Habermas 1981/1987:315; 1981/1987:256-82; Shalin 1992).

Building on these insights, I wish to posit that the intelligentsia plays a critical role in opening up communications, widening the range of participants in public discourse, and freeing social intercourse from the constraints nondemocratic political arrangements impose on the communication sphere. The struggle for glasnost predates Gorbachev's reforms by more than a century; it goes back to the 19th century Russian *intelligenty* who subjected repressive conditions to critical examination in the hope of enlightening their fellow citizens and achieving a thoroughgoing perestroika. Alas, their own communications were not free from distortions. Their belief in the power of pure reason to will into existence a just society proved unfounded. When opportunity offered, the radical intelligentsia didn't hesitate to restrict free communications and use violence to nudge society in the right direction. The habits of the heart acquired under the old regime hindered efforts to build a democratic society on a rational foundation. Pure reason, it turns out, couldn't shake its somatic-affective proclivities which contradicted its lofty declarations every step of the way. The struggle for power disfigured political agendas, bred cruelty, instigated mass purges, and cut short the lives of countless victims.

What the reason-worshipping intelligentsia failed to appreciate was that "'Reason' as a noun signifies a happy cooperation of a multitude of dispositions, such as sympathy, curiosity, cooperation, exploration, experimentation, frankness, pursuit – to follow things through – circumspection, to look about at the context, etc., etc." (Dewey, 1922/1950, p. 196). Or as one of Dewey's followers put it, "Another meaning of 'rational' is, in fact, available. In this sense, the word means something like 'sane' or 'reasonable' rather than 'methodical.' It names a set of moral virtues: tolerance, respect for the opinion of those around one, willingness to listen, reliance on persuasion rather than force" (Rorty 1987, p. 40). Looked at from this vantage point, pragmatist philosophy is the critique of disembodied reason and an attempt to rectify distorted communication. In this reckoning, reason must heed our emotional needs, sign itself in the flesh, and use suasion to achieve its cherished ends (Shalin 1992, 2004, 2007, 2011).

The Bolshevik intellectuals who seized power in October 1917 discovered these truths the hard way, paying with their lives for a blind faith they placed in disembodied reason. In the

late 1950s, Khrushchev began to restore some sanity to the communicative sphere. Reversing Stalin's disastrous policies of cleansing the political landscape from real and imaginary opponents, he allowed criticism of Stalin's excesses and tolerated greater artistic freedom. Such gains were short-lived, however. Khrushchev lost power, the stagnation era set in, and dissenting views came to be suppressed with increasing harshness. Mikhail Gorbachev took another stab at reforming the communication cesspool that was the Soviet Union, calling for glasnost and perestroika and pushing for modest market reform. Once again, it seemed like Russia was on its way to joining the expanding community of democratic nations. But when Boris Yeltsin transferred power to Vladimir Putin, the country began a long slide toward political and cultural authoritarianism.

That public discourse is systematically distorted in today's Russia is clear to many observers. It is evident in the spate of legislative acts passed by the Russian parliament constraining the range of truth claims allowed in public debate. It's perilous for anyone to question the annexation of Crimea, second-guess Russian interference in the Syrian civil war, or denounce the systematic use of torture in Russian prisons. Critics challenging the Russian intervention in Ukraine face charges of subverting the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation. Same sex relations are no longer criminalized in Russia today, but sympathetic discussion of gay and lesbian issues exposes one to prosecution under the statute criminalizing gay propaganda among minors. Investigative journalists publicizing extralegal persecutions of the regime opponents risk being accused of defaming the nation's penal institutions. Intellectuals willing to challenge the normative assumptions of present society are maligned as "fifth column" or "foreign agents" hostile to the native tradition. Those whose truth claims and value commitments clash with official ideology are routinely barred from TV, slandered in the official press, and deprived of state funding for their projects.

Alongside legal channels, the Russian government resorts to extralegal means of suppressing critical opinions. Physical attacks by thugs patronized by secret services or inspired by ultranationalists encourage self-censorship, silence critics, and drive some into emigration. Knowing that your personal safety and the safety of people around you is at stake compels public communicators to weigh carefully what they say and how they say it, which in turn casts doubt on the authenticity and sincerity of their speech acts. Even when public intellectuals find relatively free outlets for airing their views, they exhibit distorted patterns of communications – deploying pugilistic metaphors, questioning each other's motives rather than assumptions, and overlooking the gap between their words and deeds. Amidst these ill tidings, the intelligentsia has grown insecure, unsure of its past moorings and imminent future, with some of its members openly siding with the regime.

To understand these developments, we need to take a closer look at the formative period in which the intelligentsia crystallized as a political discourse, civic action, and embodied practice.

The intelligentsia as political discourse

The word "intelligentsia" signifies many things. It valorizes a critical attitude toward society, exults intellectuals committed to social reform, highlights personal qualities distinguishing members of this group, and marks longstanding efforts to figure out why Russia continues to lag the West in the political, economic, and social spheres.[1] The term's Latin root –

intelligentia – points to a generalized capacity to comprehend reality, physical or social, and plot a rational course of action. The nineteenth century German thinkers incorporated the term into their idealist philosophical system that placed an optimistic gloss on world history as the inexorable march of reason toward a perfect state where human agency reaches complete self-understanding, establishes a harmonious relationship with nature, and builds a model society of fellow human beings. Hegel exemplifies this train of thought, rather immodestly implying that in his philosophy the world historical spirit has reached its pinnacle and is poised to set aright whatever ails the human condition.

The nineteenth century Russian intellectuals took these idealist musings literally as they pronounced themselves to be at the cutting edge of *intelligentia* empowered to hasten the arrival of a model society. Those willing to shoulder this historical burden became collectively known as the *intelligentsia*, their individual members as *intelligenty*, and their moral sensibility as *intelligentnost*. The world-historical task confronting the intelligenty was labeled *perestroika* understood as social reconstruction accomplished through the politics of *glasnost* centered on freeing communications from state control, spreading enlightenment, and promoting civil rights and economic justice in the realm. Such were, and still are, the staples of the Russian discourse about the intelligentsia.

That Russia tailed the West at the time didn't faze the intellectuals who saw their philosophical sophistication and passionate commitment equal to the challenge. Distressed by the backward conditions in the country, its western-educated elites embarked on a mission of speeding up the lagging modernization – through education campaign if possible, and failing that, by wrestling civil liberties from the officialdom by more forceful means. Playing the world-historical spirit incarnate had its downside in a largely illiterate country governed by autocratic rulers. While confronting the Tsarist regime, the Russian intelligentsia developed programmatic commitments and honed attitudes that formed a distinct subculture. Among the more salient features of this subculture are (a) the demand to place public interests ahead of private concerns; (b) a critical approach to social institutions as either historically obsolete or progressive; (c) an assumption that critically-minded individuals must lead the uneducated masses; (d) a programmatic commitment to building an egalitarian society; (e) the fondness for cerebral schemes and neglect of everyday practice; (f) a gap between the public personae and ideal selves entertained in private; (g) a vision of art, literature, and public media as an essential means of shaping public opinion and stimulating radical change (Shalin, 1996, pp. 51-52).

Karl Mannheim offered a classic statement on the social functions of the intelligentsia in a series of essays written between 1929 and 1936 where he pointed out that "In every society there are social groups whose special task is to provide an interpretation of the world for that society. We call this intelligentsia" (Mannheim, 1936, p. 10). What makes its modern incarnation different is that its members no longer form a caste or are tethered to an estate, which allows intellectuals to serve a motley of political interests without being completely beholden to them. "Participation in a common education heritage progressively tends to suppress differences of birth, status, profession and wealth, and to unite the individual educated people on the basis of the education they have received" (Ibid. p. 155). Drawing on Alfred Weber's concept of "free-floating intelligentsia," Mannheim develops his theory of "socially unattached intelligentsia" as a distinctly modern stratum "recruited from an increasingly inclusive area of social life," ready to latch onto "the class in need of intellectual development," and engaged in the "competition for the favour of various public groups" while retaining the capacity to survey "the total situation

[from] a relatively complete conception of the whole" and achieve "the fullest possible synthesis of the tendencies of an epoch" (Ibid. pp. 12, 155-156, 159, 162-164).

Well before Mannheim, Russian intellectuals entertained their own ideas about the intelligentsia (which might have influenced Mannheim) and the outsize role it plays in the native political tradition. Definitions varied. Generic ones typecast the intelligentsia as "rational, educated, intellectually developed segment of the population" (Dahl, 1882/1979, p. 46) or "the educated and thinking part of society, producing and disseminating humanity-wide spiritual values" (Ovsyaniko-Kulkovsky, 1911)[2]. Sympathetic observers admired the intelligent as "the critically thinking personality that understood itself as a possible and necessary agent of human progress" (Lavrov, 1869/1993, p. 51), whereas critics slammed "the so-called class of intelligentsia" as unpatriotic, presumptuous, and a superficially educated bunch "hostile to the healthy and autonomous development of the Russian people" (Dostoyevsky, 1876/1982, p. 334, 64). Tongue-in-cheek commentators poked fun at the intelligentsia as "a social stratum educated with the promise of working for the government yet left idle due to the lack of vacancies" (Gasparov, 1999). And the sociologically-oriented liberals defined the intelligentsia as "an ethically anti-bourgeois, sociologically classless, self-regenerating group distinguished by its ability to create new forms and ideals and willingness to implement them with an eye to achieving physical, mental, social, and personal emancipation of personality" (Ivanov-Razumnik, 1907/1997, p. 25).

Whatever attributes critics and admirers assigned to the intelligentsia, it took time to emerge as a self-conscious group, and there is still a debate on when the intelligentsia entered historical scene. The writer and journalist Petr Boborykin alleged that he brought the word into circulation in the mid-19th century, but it is telling that he waited half a century to claim credit for this feat.[3] He did so after the government suppressed a popular uprising in 1905, which brought in its wake a spate of publications, public forums, and vociferous debates in literary journals devoted to the problem of intelligentsia. In 1907, Ivanov-Razumnik published a two-volume study of intelligentsia, *History of Russian Social Thought*, that was reprinted four times in the next few years. In 1909, a group of intellectuals issued *Landmarks*, an influential collection of essays offering a conservative critique of the Russian intellectual tradition. The same year saw the publication of an edited volume *In Defense of Intelligentsia* whose authors took issue with the *Landmark*'s critique. And in 1910, a team of prominent liberal thinkers and politicians published a forceful rebuttal of the conservative attacks under the heading *Intelligentsia in Russia*. With the problem thrust to centerstage, the search was on for the origins of the intelligentsia as a discrete social formation, discursive practice, and moral force to reckon with.

While the term is associated with the Russian intellectual tradition, some historians credit Poland as a country where the concept emerged before it entered public discourse in Russia. Karl Libelt, Polish philosopher and public intellectual, "developed a coherent theory of the intelligentsia's role in national life" (Walicki, 2005, p. 3; Libelt, 1844/2014). In his treatise *On the Love of Fatherland*, Libelt valorized the Polish intelligentsia as an educated group championing traditional values and fighting the atheistic currents sweeping over Europe. This conservative emphasis ran contrary to the cosmopolitan and secular tendencies prevalent among Russian intellectuals. To counter the claim about the Polish provenance of the term, Russian historians zeroed in on an intriguing entree in the diary of V. A. Zhukovsky dated February 2, 1836, where the famous poet mentions "the best Petersburg nobility that the Russian European intelligentsia" represents (Zhukovsky, 1836/2004, p. 40). Alas, Zhukovksy's usage (which is

even older than generally thought[4]) has no moral or political implications central to the intelligenty.

Far better aligned with the discourse about the intelligentsia are the *Philosophical Letters* of Petr Chaadaev. Written in 1929 and published in 1836, these inspired epistles celebrated "universal reason," "universal intelligence," "one single intellectual force in the whole universe" driving humanity to its destiny (Chaadaev, 1836/1960, pp. 113,111, 149). The verbiage reveals the author's debt to German idealism, but his message was tinged with local flavor. Chaadaev laments the backwardness of his homeland, the dearth of people able to bring Russia in line with the world-historical spirit, yet he entertains hope that "the unique vision of the future granted to some chosen men" will compel the country to rejoin the world historical progress (Ibid. p. 201). Chaadaev is unapologetically snobbish about common folks. He insists that "the instincts of majorities are necessarily more egotistical, more emotional, more narrow," that "humanity could advance only by following its elite, by following those who have the mission of leading it," and that "human intelligence always manifests itself most powerfully only in the solitary mind, center and sun of its sphere" (Ibid. pp. 190-191). Another trait endemic to Russian political thought comes to the fore in his writings – the propensity to disembody reason and overintellectualize thought process: "[T]he human being should be understood once and for all as an intelligent being in abstraction, but never as the individual and personal being, circumscribed by the present moment, an ephemeral insect, which is born and dies on the same day, and which is linked with the totality of things merely by the law of birth and corruption" (Ibid., p. 191)

This disregard for flesh and blood humans resonates throughout the history of the Russian intelligentsia, especially on its radical flank. According to Vissarion Belinsky, "The death of the particular for the sake of the universal – such is the universal law… From now on, man is nothing for me; man's beliefs are everything. Conviction is the only thing that can unite me with people or turn me away from them" (Belinsky, 1840/1955, p. 81, and Belinsky, 1842/1966, p. 201). The longing for the ideal and contempt for the debased reality is the trait by which the intelligenty will be known to society. The Jacobine sentiments took a hold in the intelligentsia milieu. "People are so stupid that they must be led to happiness by force... I am beginning to love mankind à la Marat: to make the least part of it happy, I seem to be ready to destroy the rest of it by fire and sword" (Belinsky 1840/1955, pp. 81).

Alienated from their countrymen, buffeted by repressive laws, contemptuous of the government, Russian intelligenty developed a style that combined the ideal of public service with personal arrogance, an open-mindedness toward the world's latest intellectual trends with an intolerance to those who begged to differ, a willingness to sacrifice oneself for a noble cause with moralism and defensiveness. Politically, the intelligentsia looked to Europe for inspiration. Its agenda reflected the same stirrings of civil society that enfranchised ever-larger segments of the European population during the last three centuries. Demands that the rebellious Russian officers put forward in December of 1825 when they marched on Senate Plaza in St. Petersburg echoed the provisions of the Magna Carta that English noblemen forced on King John in 1215. Fortified and augmented through the ages, these demands would form the backbone of the Russian intelligentsia political program that envisioned a constitutional government, end to serfdom, parliamentary legislature, municipal self-government, peer-jury trials, open court deliberations, and administration transparent to the public.

From the communication standpoint, especially apposite here is the provision for free speech and transparency of state transactions, the insistence that "glasnost replace the secrecy in government affairs, which impedes the pubic, protects the government from scrutiny, and leads

to the abuse of power" (Lunin, 1839/1988, p. 167). To ensure that "unconstrainted glasnost exists not just as an indulgence but a duty guaranteed by the law," contended Decembrists, the constitution must provide for "civil liberties" and "freedom of the press" (Ibid. pp. 270, 146). Petr Vyazemsky bemoaned "the lack of glasnost" in Russia as early as 1822 (Vyazemsky, 1822/1963, p. 106).[5] Alexander Herzen elevated glasnost to the forefront of national debate, vouching that "our entire program can be reduced to the call for glasnost… Glasnost is the purgatory from which memory of the deceased enters history, the only immortality available to us" (Herzen, 1856/1957, pp. 312, 276). The title Herzen gave to his celebrated magazine published in emigration – *The Bell* – was an homage to "free speech" (*volnaia rech*) and "human rights" (*chelovecheskie prava)* as synonymous with unrestrained communication (Herzen, 1857/1957, pp.16, 40). The civil reforms implemented by Alexander II in the 1860's owed a good deal to the relentless campaign for glasnost waged by Herzen and his comrades.

Another term central to the intelligentsia discourse – perestroika – made its appearance at the time. In 1840, the foremost literary critic and public intellectual urged, "The entire public foundation of our age requires a painstaking review and radical perestroika" (Belinsky, 1840/1955, p. 133). A few years later, Herzen remarked that "from the time of Peter the Great we are in the throes of perestroika, searching for new forms, borrowing and copying, only to start over again a year later," and yet "the great labor of inner perestroika" still lies ahead (Herzen, 1858/1957. pp. 29, 250). In the 1870's, Pavel Annenkov (1882/1983, p. 364) glossed the rising demand in liberal circles for "the complete perestroika of society on the social democratic foundation." Note the term's double-edged thrust – perestroika binds the reconstruction of society to the reevaluation of values and treats the two as flip sides of the same coin.

One more concept occupies a prominent place in the Russian discourse about the intelligentsia – *intelligentnost*. Its connotations vary, but the common denominator is "moral imagination" and "emotional intelligence" as embodied virtues steeped in the human dignity the true *intelligent* accords to others and demands for oneself. In a country where for most of its history no one was spared from corporeal punishment and torture, the concept of personal dignity is freighted with special significance. "Corporeal punishment corrupts the punished and the punisher, robbing one of the feeling of personal dignity and the other of the ability to feel compassion" (Herzen, 1862/1957, p. 308). Throughout the nineteenth century, public intellectuals in Russia fought "the utter disregard for the human dignity" (Vyazemsky, 1830/1963, p. 210), urged to "guard zealously the human dignity [as] our goal" (Stankevich, 1836/1982), and lamented "the cynical contempt for thoughtfulness and human dignity (*la dignité de l'homme*) that makes you despair" (Pushkin, 1836/1951, p. 597). With time, the term would lose its political overtones and increasingly refer to the empathy, tolerance, and sense of decorum befitting the intelligentsia's offspring. Well brought-up people traveling in "the intelligent circles (*v intelligentnoi srede*)," counseled his brother Anton Chekhov (1912, p. 238), "respect human personhood, are quick to forgive, show soft touch, are polite to everyone and ready to yield."[6]

Intelligentsia, perestroika, glasnost, human dignity, people's plight, selfless leadership – such were the building blocks of the intelligentsia discourse. When it came to practice, the intelligenty didn't always follow their own advice, their conduct revealing a gap between word and deed inevitable in the harsh environs of Tsarist Russia where attempts to speak your mind were stifled by censorship and the willingness to act on liberal conviction brought you to the attention of secret police. The intelligenty committed to freedom in theory waffled in practice when confronted by the state apparatus armed with the ample resources of intimidation. Some

stood fast under pressure and paid with their liberty and even lives for their defiance; others gave up the fight and made peace with the regime; still others chose to emigrate as the last resort to safeguard their freedom and dignity. Public or private, communications remained systematically distorted in nineteenth century Russia, as its educated and morally engaged citizens cast about for the existence worthy of their ideals.

The intelligentsia as civic action

The discourse about the intelligentsia left ample room for disagreement over the best means of achieving its mission. In the first half of the nineteenth century, liberally-minded intellectuals hewed closely to Hegel's motto, "Everything that's real is rational, everything that's rational is real," interpreting it conservatively as an injunction to wait patiently for the conditions to ripen enough for Russia to advance toward a higher stage. By the middle of the century, the intelligenty adopted a radical stance, interpreting Hegel's maxim as a demand to elevate the nation to a more rational state decreed by reason, i.e., to secure civil liberties and justice by any means necessary. "Toward the end of the reign of Nikolai II," observed Herzen (1860/1958, p539), "all people sincerely and deeply loving Russia reached the conclusion that only by force can one wrestle from Tsars people's human rights, that only the rights won this way can endure, and that any right granted from above can be readily taken back."

In 1861, the century old institution of serfdom crumbled, and the new Tsar initiated reforms in education (1863), civil procedure (1864), local administration (1865), and municipal government (1870) which met some of the intelligentsia's demands and started Russia on the path toward political modernization. But the progress was too slow for the radical wing of the intelligentsia whose members embarked on a campaign to whip the peasantry into an open insurrection against the still oppressive conditions. In 1866, Dmitry Karakozov unsuccessfully tried to murder Alexander II. Several more assassination attempts followed, and in 1881 the firebrand from the populist organization People's Will finally managed to kill the emperor with a homemade incendiary device.

Bitter debates about the prospects for civil society in Russia split the intelligentsia into warring factions, some pinning their hopes on gradual parliamentary reforms, others embarking on a revolutionary course. For all their differences, the intelligenty agreed on the vital role that the enlightenment achieved through propaganda play in preparing the masses led by moral leaders to assume the reins of power. Any form of public communication could be fashioned for this purpose, including literary fiction which "isn't something that makes [us] forget life's worries, not a sweet daydreaming in comfortable chairs after a fat meal – no, from the standpoint of the public, literature is *res publica*, a public cause, a great deed, the source of moral joy and exaltation" (Belinsky, pp. 715-716). Hence, the keen attention paid to the latest poetry and novels, essays on politics in popular magazines, and clandestine manuscripts circulated among the intelligenty. When the authorities caught up with the authors of what we now call *samizdat* (self-publishing), the reprisals swiftly followed.

Raising unauthorized truth claims regarding the facts became more perilous in the second half of the nineteenth century, and so was debating the Tsarist regime's moral legitimacy and normative foundations. To block unofficial disclosures about the country's conditions, the state issued a decree according to which "no one has the right to conduct ethnographic explorations in or collect any evidence about Russia without an explicit permission of the government, which

authorizes the collector to gather specific facts and states exactly what materials the designated person is empowered to obtain. Such permits could be issued only to a person in whom the government has its complete confidence."[7] Questioning the wisdom of state policies and the legitimacy of the Tsarist regime brought swift reprisals. The government effectively ignored its recently reformed legal procedures and routinely violated the defendants' civil rights by practicing torture and tolerating inhuman prison conditions. To the free thinkers casting aspersion on the nation's history, the head of the secret police had this advice: "Russia's past was superb; its present is more than magnificent; and when it comes to its future, it defies the most audacious imagination. This is the vantage point from which one ought to contemplate and write about Russian history" (cited in Ovsyaniko-Kulikovsky, 1911).

Noxious patriotism was a major factor distorting communications in the Russian empire. Its insidious effect came to the fore after the Tsarist troops violently suppressed the Polish uprising of 1863. This is when the educated class grew vociferously nationalistic and Slavophilism took wing. A. S. Khomiakov, K.S. Aksakov, I.V. Kireevsky and other prominent slavophiles who started as avid Westernizers drifted away from their Europeanizing heresies and turned against their comrades in arms, accusing them of being blind to the native tradition's superior strands. The indiscriminate appropriation of foreign ideas and abstract political theories was overdue for correction,[8] but what started as a search for a more balanced view of the nation's history in the European context turned into a bitter resentment of liberal practices originating abroad.

In his youth, Dostoevsky belonged to the Petrashevsky's circle of freethinkers, for which he was sentenced to death (the sentence was commuted). After spending four years in a penal colony, the writer grew more conservative and later in life emerged as an avid supporter of the imperial regime. Some ambivalence toward the intelligentsia lingers in Dostoyevsky's writings, e.g., when he refers to the truly "Slavic intelligentsia" and "the new, previously unknown strata among the Russian intelligentsia that finally starts grasping their own people and soil" (Dostoyevsky, 1876/1983, pp. 115, 26). More typical are Dostoyevsky's attacks on the "Europeanizing intelligentsia" that "overlooked the beauty of our folk, its kindness, courage, sober-mindedness (in rescuing the little ones), its allegiance to the government, and its uncommon feeling of personal dignity" (Dostoyevsky, 1877/1984, p. 201). The late Dostoyevsky developed a vehemently illiberal outlook, praising "the true freedom without which the Russian man does not, and never did, fathom himself – the freedom to honor the Tsar as a father to whom he confides his wants and sorrows in the sure knowledge that the father will always hearken to him" (Dostoyevsky, 1880/1990, p. 48).[9]

The new nationalism sweeping the land soured the educated strata on the liberal intelligentsia. His defense of Poland against the Russian invaders cost Herzen much of the moral capital he had accumulated as publisher of *The Bell*. Gravely disappointed yet undaunted by the rising conservative tide, Herzen continued to defend the rights of Poles to govern themselves. "You can't attain freedom in your own country while tightening the noose on your neighbor's neck; you can't demand rights for yourself and at the same time oppress other people to gain material advantage and fulfill your national fantasies" (Herzen, 1862/1957, p. 252). "I fear patriots because their self-serving egoism and covetous love of their own tribe reeks of the hatred toward others… For eighteen centuries Christianity has been weeding out this pagan virtue, but in the end its efforts came to naught, for it pointed to the fictitious homeland in heavens. It is up to socialism to finish the job by removing earthly boundaries" (Herzen, 1860/1958, p. 20).

With the reactionary climate taking a hold and the government coming down hard on free thought, the intelligenty with financial resources and prospects abroad set their eyes on emigration as a way out of their predicament.[10] Condemning "the lackeys of glasnost and rhetorical slaves eager to cheer the government, even when it spouts outright lies," they convinced themselves that "nobody with the sense of personal dignity can remain in Russia" (Herzen, 1860/1958, p. 251; Herzen 1849/1955, p. 320). Those left behind saw as self-serving the rush to leave the homeland at the time of dire need. It didn't help when freshly minted immigrants told everybody willing to listen that Russia was "a country in which people turn against each other like animals and are eager to play the part of an executioner and torturer" (Ibid., p. 251n). Seeking freedom abroad entailed great personal risks. The newcomers' prospects in the land of liberty were uncertain. Up close, Europe failed to match their expectations, and the disillusionment with the individualist bourgeois culture set in. "We are foreign in this world, we live here but this is not our home," explained his decision Herzen (1862/1959, p. 100). "With every year, every new event we grow more distant from the milieu where we are condemned to live because of our creed. We remain outside of Russia only because free speech is impossible there, and we believe in the necessity to speak freely. Life abroad is not *partie de plaisir* for us but a sacrifice, an enormous sacrifice we offer to our cause."

"Autocracy, Orthodoxy, Populism," the slogan introduced in the 1830s by the education minister S. S. Uvarov, made a comeback in the second half of the nineteenth century, signaling the new restrictions on public discourse. Among the options available to the intelligenty was going underground and laying the groundwork for a polar uprising; retreating into an intellectual cocoon and becoming an immigrant in your own land; or collaborating with the government in the hope of softening its rough edges and changing it from within. One imperative the liberal intelligenty ensconced in Russia faced was finding a strategy for covering up their true beliefs and camouflaging their cherished identities.

The intelligentsia as embodied practice

To understand the Russian intelligentsia style, we need to examine what Habermas tagged "sincerity claims" – the identity-maintenance practice that requires a moral being to redeem one's identity in the flesh. Wearing a counterfeit persona in public while entertaining subversive thoughts in private is a phenomenon taxing the historical agent's self-presentation skills. The heavy facework involved in such performances takes a toll on the self-appointed proxies of progress facing a dogged opposition from the retrograde powers. Experts from the Third Department investigating political crimes didn't make it easy for the intelligenty to uphold their liberal views. Out of public view, they extracted confessions from the intellectuals, sometimes forcing them to say more than was prudent and to incriminate their friends and colleagues. Some cracked under pressure and did public penance while continuing to reassure themselves and their comrades about their true allegiance. Those who shunned illicit activities personally still felt traumatized by the agony of the victims caught by the secret police and their failure to do anything about the plight of their friends. The labor of reconciling the cognitive dissonance between one's public persona and private beliefs scarred the intelligenty, who left behind traces of betrayals and double dealings.

Witness Alexander Pushkin, once a flamboyant poet-rebel "tired of depending on the good or bad digestion of one superior or another... All I crave is independence" (Pushkin,

1824/1951, p. 763). Toward the end of his life he evolved into a courtier who entreated the Count of Benckendorf, "If the emperor wishes to use my pen, I would be eager, according to my abilities and with requisite precision, to fulfill his highness's will... I offer my magazine to the Government as a tool for shaping public opinion" (Pushkin 1831/1951, pp. 631, 656). In the same spirit, Chaadaev dispatched a letter to the secret police headquarters denouncing a publication in *The Bell* that lauded his philosophical letters (which earned him the official verdict as "madman"). One simply "must save one's skin" – this how Chaadaev explained his defensive actions to a friend once he felt save to do so (cited in Berlin, 1978, p. 15). Meanwhile, this double life burrowed into the fabric of embodied agency, molding its somatic-affective proclivities. "Where is the man who would be strong enough not to end up hating himself, living in eternal contradiction, always thinking one thing and doing another," lamented Chaadaev. "What causes this terrible ulcer which is destroying us?" (Ibid., p. 60). These prescient words offer a painful gloss on the dangers of separating pure reason from its corporeal casement.

A striking symptom of the intellectual's sprit in distress is a compulsive resort to irony and sarcasm which are deployed to disclaim one's odious public persona or disparage someone else's phony claim to selfhood. Irony, parody, and travesty are more than literary tropes conveying stock meanings; they are also emotionally charged performances proliferating at critical junctures of history when repressive social conditions hobble direct speech and call for indirection.[11] Russian history abounds in examples. Pushkin's contemporaries remember him as an irreverent young man ever ready to hurl caustic comments about officialdom: "At the governor's [mansion], on the streets, at the plaza, he was always eager to explain to anybody that he who did not want to change the government was a scoundrel. His conversation was replete with cursing and sarcasm, and even his courtesy was punctuated with an ironic smile" (Dolgorukov, 1822/1974, p. 350). Pushkin was famous for biting epigrams, wicked satires, and all-purpose cynical remarks (some of his best works, including "Eugene Onegin," can be read as a parody). There is plenty of pathos and noble diction in his writings, but the sublime and the cynical readily comingled in his everyday speech and writing.[12]

No one mastered ironic skills and understood their corrosive effect better than Alexander Herzen. A brilliant pundit, he deployed irony against his opponents with exquisite precision, his liberal invectives reaching their targets in the farthest reaches of his homeland. But Herzen also knew that irony and sarcasm were the weapon of the powerless and disenfranchised, that practicing glasnost from a safe distance is no substitute for direct political action. Inner freedom gets you only so far, and when conjoined with political bondage, it devours your emotional core.

> Perhaps this very detachment, this inner freedom combined with external slavery, robbed our lives of warmth and humane attachment and imbued our existence with brokenness that suffused our days with imperious irony… Liberalism exposed the chasm in all its nakedness; the sickly consciousness of this chasm breeds irony and skepticism that mark the modern man and help him sweep the remnants of past idols. Irony conveys the disappointment that logical truth is not the same as historical truth, that aside from dialectical development, truth has its passionate and contingent side, that in addition to reason truth also has its romance (Herzen, 1863/1959, p. 103, 117).

While the sting of ironic self-presentation was directed at the conservative tradition and its stalwart defenders, its victims were often people in the ironic agent's inner circle, friends and relatives who bore the brunt of caustic remarks and off-putting actions. The urge to lash out held

back in public found its unintended targets in private quarters where the disgruntled intelligenty could vent their irritability indiscriminately. Lofty pronouncements of freedom fighters didn't always match their high-handedness and overbearing manners in everyday life. Sloppy habits and unscrupulous behavior, especially among the intelligentsia recruited from lower social strata, permeated the liberal intelligentsia circles. To be sure, ethical lapses attributed the intelligenty struggling to live up to their ideals were exaggerated by their detractors, but the subterraneous existence and muddled moral calculus disfigured many a life dedicated to the cause of glasnost and perestroika.

With emigrants pining abroad for the lost homeland and intellectuals back home casting about for a viable resistance strategy, the soul-searching among the intelligentsia continued into the early twentieth century when the reactionary politics finally ran its course and the rising labor unrest jolted the country from its stagnation. Popular uprisings swept over Russia in 1905 and continued through 1907 when the government, initially willing to compromise with the workers on the barricades, moved to quash the rebellion. Realizing that they overplayed their hand, the intelligentsia retreated. Some went abroad, others faced charges of sedition, all were sucked into recriminations about the causes of failure and dimming prospects for political reforms.

A group of religiously-minded intelligentsia called for a spiritual renewal. Once left-leaning, these intellectuals ditched their earlier sympathies and coalesced around a pathbreaking volume *Landmarks: Essays on the Russian Intelligentsia* in which they took the liberal intelligentsia to task for losing touch with Orthodox Christianity, the linchpin of Russia's political tradition binding the people to their rulers and furnishing the only viable foundation for a slow, steady progress. According to the critics, the revolutionary intelligentsia staked their hopes on the false premise that the moment the wretched political institutions crumble, the common folk's humanistic impulses will take over. This is wrong, the Landmark contributors contended, human nature is sinful, no political arrangements can remedy its defects. Spiritual perestroika must precede institutional changes if the latter are to embody the right values and endure in time.

As the volume's editor stated in the preface, our "common platform is the recognition of the theoretical and practical primacy of spiritual life over external social forms, for it is a person's inner life and not the self-contained political order that is the creative power at the heart of human existence and the foundation for effecting social change" (Gershenzon, 1909a, p. 4). In a series of probing essays, the authors went on to catalogue original sins and ordinary failings plaguing the intelligentsia, the flaws that must be rectified before a lasting renewal becomes feasible.[13] The intelligenty demonstrate "their utter disrespect for law" (Kistyakovsky, 1909, p. 101), practice "the idolatry of the people and the proletariat" (Berdiaev, 1909, p. 6), succumb to "nihilism and reject absolute values" (Frank, 1909, p. 156), exhibit "overconfidence in their abilities and the intolerance toward dissent" (Bulgakov, 1909, p. 45), are "sexually dissipated by the time they enter college" (Izgoev, 1909, pp. 187, 189) and riven by "sectarianism, alienation, and the hatred of the state" (Struve, 1909, p. 135).

This criticism, which owed a good deal to Dostoyevsky, is well taken insofar as it zeroed in on the distortions afflicting communication patterns among radical reformers. Perestroika in society at large is bound to fail unless it alters the habits of the heart. All too often, the intelligent "would rather be out there in the world saving the people than do the hard work at his own home" where "poverty, disarray, and squalid conditions rein" (Gershenzon, 1909b, p. 84). But as the liberal opponents of the *Landmark* platform were quick to point out, it is the political system that distorts relations between human beings, strips them of their dignity, and fosters

pernicious habits. "[O]ne could not help meeting with disbelief and incredulity this call: be a human being, have faith, learn to love," inveighed Ivan Petrunkevich (1910, p. 6), "for the inevitable answer is that it is because I treat myself as a human being and feel solidarity with all other human beings that I find it necessary to foster the [political] conditions without which human dignity is degraded. It is because I love and have faith that everything that concerns my personal life recedes into the background." Another contributor bristled at the thought that the best the intelligenty can do is to cultivate public virtues under the autocratic conditions, patiently waiting for the civic spirit to form before taking up political action. The newly elected legislature authorized by the authorities in the wake of the 1905 revolt had already made a difference, boosting glasnost and encouraging civility: "As its influence grows, the sectarian character of [the intelligentsia's] ideology will weaken, its content diversify, its goals become more specific, its immediate task become more concrete, its pragmatic qualities improve, and its public activity acquire continuity and organization and become more systematic" (Miliukov, 1910, p. 92).

Substantial as they are, the differences between these two intellectual enclaves should not be exaggerated. What strikes me in revisiting this debate is how the Landmarks authors refused to juxtapose themselves to the intelligentsia. They undertook their task not "from the heights of unassailable truth," not to "disparage the Russian intelligentsia" (Gershenzon, 1909a, p.3), but to further the common cause for which "the heroic intelligentsia valiantly fought in the last half a century" (Izgoev, 1909, p. 209). Both Landmark authors and their liberal opponents welcomed political reform in Russia. Each side extolled civic virtues and strove to account for Russia's historical conditions.[14] Symptomatic, also, is the praise that both sides lavished on Anton Chekhov, who is commended for his nonpartisanship, commitment to civility, and willingness to ameliorate mundane conditions in practical situations. Chekhov resolutely refused to join either camp, distancing himself from the radical intelligentsia and reactionary patriotism.[15] He broke with the tradition that valorized pure reason with its unearthly ideals and indifference to means and embraced embodied reasonableness as a pragmatic strategy of achieving a sane society free from distortions befouling human interactions. "My sacred creed is human body, health, wit, talent, inspiration, love, and absolute freedom, the freedom from violence and lies whichever form the latter might take" (Chekhov 1888/1956, p. 263).

Meanwhile, a radical group of intellectuals led by Vladimir Lenin broke away from the mainstream of Russian intelligentsia and set its eyes on a violent revolt that drained perestroika of its civic spirit and vitiated glasnost as an ideal of free discourse.

The intelligentsia in power

Much is written about the Soviet intelligentsia that need not be repeated here.[16] In keeping with our agenda, the discussion will focus on the Bolsheviks' relationship with the intelligentsia, the distortions communists wrecked on the communication sphere, and the coping mechanisms contrived by the educated class.

That Lenin came from the intelligentsia milieu and imbibed its values is beyond doubt – the high regard he had for Herzen, Chernyshevsky, Lavrov, Mikhailovsky, Plekhanov and other luminaries in the intelligentsia pantheon attests to that. It is equally clear that his attitude toward the liberal intelligentsia soured over time to a point where he gave up on perestroika as a social reconstruction accomplished through enlightenment and reform. Instead, he now preached the

gospel of militant revolutionism which downgraded civil liberties to the status of useful tools to be retired as soon as they softened the old regime.

In 1898, the reform-minded intellectuals gathered in Minsk and established the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. The RSDLP platform included the then standard liberal demands for "the unlimited freedom of conscience, speech, press, assembly, and [labor] strikes and unions,"[17] which Lenin endorsed without hesitation. Five years later, at the second congress, the party leaders reiterated their commitment to basic freedoms to be allowed across Russia – but not inside RSDLP.[18] The Bolshevik doctrine Lenin imposed on the party directed the minority to follow the majority's lead. As a matter of fact, Lenin rarely managed to sway his comrades to rally behind his views (in 1905, the party dropped the Bolshevist provision), and he openly defied the majority opinion when it suited him. After Lenin's faction seized power in October of 1917, he re-imposed the Bolshevist stricture curtailing free speech, at first limiting it to the left-wing parties and later denying all political organizations unaffiliated with the Bolsheviks the right to present publicly their platforms and opinions. In 1921, a fellow party member asked Lenin if the social revolutionist party should be granted the freedom to air their views, to which Lenin replied, "We are not ready to commit suicide" (Lenin, 1921/1970, p. 81).[19]

About the same time, the RSDLP leaders moved to limit internal party deliberations. The Sixth Party Congress held in 1921 endorsed "democratic centralism," an organizational blueprint for party building that restricted free speech among card-carrying members.[20] The new communication doctrine sanctioned internal debates in the runup to party elections but obligated the minority to submit to the majority views thereafter. Attempts to question the regnant policies were now proscribed as "factionalism." The opportunity for dissent was further undercut by the arrangement that allowed the party bosses to blackball candidates running for lower-level offices. An innocent sounding provision for "periodic cleansing" of the dead-wood members proved especially deadly once Stalin consolidated his power and used this plank to purge his opponents from the party rolls.

Although the intelligentsia had mixed feelings about the revolution, key cultural authorities – Aleksander Block, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Valery Bryusov, Sergei Esenin, Nikolai Klyuev, Boris Pilnyak, Isaak Babel – endorsed the Bolshevik coup in the hope that it would advance social justice.[21] Very soon, however, the highhandedness of Bolsheviks alarmed the intelligenty who sided with Maxim Gorky's charge that "Lenin, Trotsky and their cronies have already been poisoned by power. Witness their shameful attitude toward freedom of speech, the individual, and the sum total of rights for which democracy fought for so long…. We must stop the process that leaves the intelligentsia physically and spiritually exhausted. It's time to realize that this is the nation's brain never more needed than today" (Gorky, 1917/1971, pp. 102, 244) To this upbraiding Lenin responded with his famous quip about the "pathetic intelligenty, lackeys of capitalism who pride themselves on being the nation's brain whereas they are really its shit" (Lenin, 1919/1965, p. 48).[22]

The reference to the intelligentsia as rotten to the core, to wit, an excrement, evolved into an enduring meme. Some of Lenin's associates expressed more conciliatory sentiments about their former allies,[23] but they all mistrusted the intelligenty weaned on the bourgeois values as unreliable partners in class struggle. "Information must be gathered by all departments and funneled into the department of intelligentsia," directed Felix Dzerzhinsky his subordinates (1922/1993), "there must be a file for every intelligent."[24] According to Lunacharsky, "The more lacking in ideas the person is today, the more valuable he is. It is not good if a technical specialist, say, some engineer, has many ideas, for these ideas distract a person from his work.

But if he has no ideas, we could let him work right away" (cited in Kostikov, 1990a). "We need the intelligentsia cadres that are ideologically trained in a certain way," wrote Nikolai Bukharin, another close associate of Lenin. "Yes, we shall mold intelligenty, we shall manufacture them as if on an assembly line" (Bukharin, cited in Kostikov, 1990b).

Fast forward to March 12, 1938, and you find the author of the last proposal mouthing a different line at a show trial where he was forced to confess being the enemy of the people, the very embodiment of a rotten intelligent he had proposed to "mold" according the party specifications:

> I admit that I am guilty of treason to the Socialist fatherland, the most heinous of possible crimes, of the organization of kulak uprisings, of preparations for terrorist acts and of belonging to an underground, anti-Soviet organization... The severest sentence would be justified, because a man deserves to be shot ten times over for such crimes... I am kneeling before the country, before the Party, before the whole people. The monstrousness of my crimes is immeasurable especially in the new stage of the struggle of the U.S.S.R. (Bukharin, 1938, pp. 768, 775).

This confession came on the heels of the first constitution – a.k.a. Stalin's Constitution – adopted on December 5, 1936, by the nation's highest deliberative body that guaranteed Russian citizens "(a) freedom of speech, (b) freedom of the press, (c) freedom of assembly and meetings, (d) freedom of street processions and demonstrations."[25] There was a catch, though. The preamble to Article 125 enumerating these rights stated that the latter can be exercised only if they "further the interests of the working people and strengthen the socialist system." This provision made a mockery of the intelligentsia's commitment to free speech, positing in effect that you can say whatever you want, as long as you glorify the socialist state and praise its leaders. Stalin's constitution marked the transition to a communication order where systemic distortions became the norm, public discourse was hopelessly corrupted, and dissenting opinions ruthlessly repressed. Nadezhda Mandelstam, the widow of the country's leading poet waisted in the GULAG, captured the perverse glasnost which usurped the place of its prototype:

> People gifted with a voice faced the worst possible torture. Their tongues were ripped out and they had to praise their master with the bloody stump. The desire to live was irrepressible, and it coerced people into this form of self-annihilation just to extend their physiological existence. The survivors were as dead as those who had died (Mandelstam, 1970, p. 219).

Along with Bukharin, thousands of party functionaries perished in Stalin's campaign to rid the party of independent members posing a threat, real or imaginary, to his autocratic rule. The first to go were public intellectuals willing to dump glasnost as a bourgeois right that outlived its usefulness after workers had seized power – Radek, Pyatakov, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rykov, Rakovsky. Repressions didn't stop with the party brass. They spread throughout the country, affecting rank and file party members and ensnaring all social strata caught in a campaign to fend off uncensored opinion and unsanctioned action. Those who survived the successive waves of terror resorted to the familiar tactics of mimicry, self-repression, and ironic detachment.

Already in early 1920s, Ilya Erenburg "looked on everything as if he were a stranger," recalls Nadezhda Mandelstam (1990, p. 19), and "hid himself behind ironic omniscience. He

already figured out that irony was the weapon of the helpless." Vladimir Mayakovski wistfully mused about his determination to "step on my own song's uncovered throat." Yury Olesha, who wrote a novel about the "rotten intelligentsia," regaled his own struggle to get along with the new regime: "I seize my own self, reach out to strangle that part of myself which suddenly balks and stirs its way back to the old days. I wish to stifle that second 'self,' and the third self, and every 'self' that comes to haunt me from the past" (Olesha, cited in Belinkov, 1976, p. 264). Self-identity ceased to be a matter of personal choice under the Bolshevik rule. In public, but also in private since someone was always prying into your life, Soviet citizens strained to cut a figure bespeaking loyalty. Outside observers no less than identity bearers had reasons to suspect the sincerity of such self-claims.[26]

Osip Mandelstam called himself "a Bolshevik without a party card" (Mandelstam, 1989, p. 148), but who can be sure on which occasion he was sincerer – when he slammed the Kremlin ruler in a bitter verse "We hardly feel the land beneath our feet" or praised him in his powerful "Ode to Stalin"? What was Mikhail Zoshchenko thinking when he polished Lenin's hagiography or travelled to the Baltic-White Sea Canal to observe political prisoners laboring to atone their ideological sins? Had Yury Olesha dissimulated when he celebrated the happy family of Soviet people and joined the campaign against the pernicious music of Dmitry Shostakovich? Skepticism is in order about Mikhail Bulgakov's assurances to the NKVD that he had "sunk strong roots in Soviet Russia" and could "no longer imagine himself as a writer outside [his homeland]" (Bulgakov, cited in Chudakova, 1993). Anna Akhmatova, whose husband was executed and son languished in the Gulag, was under duress when she had composed verses extolling Stalin's leadership. And Nikolai Bukharin could hardly mean it when he praised the archenemy at his show trial, "the whole country stands behind Stalin, he is the hope of the world, he is a creator" (Bukharin, 1938, p. 778). The inauthenticity of such self-claims is staggering, and yet they are the norm in societies stifling free communication.

Three years after Stalin's death Nikita Khrushchev launched his anti-Stalinist campaign. Once again, the nation heard the calls to "increase glasnost, free exchange of information, and respect civil and political tights" (Sakharov, 1975). "Glasnost, honest and unabridged glasnost," avowed Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1975, p. 541), "such is the first condition of every healthy society, including ours. Whosoever does not want glasnost for our society is indifferent to his homeland and thinks only of himself. Those who don't wish glasnost in our society have no desire to cure its ills but to drive them deeper inside to fester." The intelligenty who remained silent for decades, regained their voices and exercised creative imagination. They wrote poetry and prose damning Stalin's cult of personality, experimented with nonrepresentational art, atonal music, abstract ballet. The generation of the sixties – *shestidesiatniki* as this remarkable cohort would be called – produced works of grit and enduring value. Political dissidents, religious activists, nonconformist artists, along with liberal historians, sociologists, and economists hurried to take advantage of the reforms ushered by the new regime. A new understanding was dawning that unshackled communications are indispensable to sane existence, that glasnost is the condition of possibility for civil society.

The party ideologues figured as much, alas. In 1963, they staged a coup that deposed Khrushchev, reversed his reforms, and reestablished control over the communication sphere. The new party leadership led by Leonid Brezhnev succeeded only partially. The seeds of glasnost planted during the "Thaw" had sprang roots, and two decades after Khrushchev's ouster, the country was jolted from its slumber by a generation of leaders who didn't personally

experience Stalin's terror and were eager to prevent Russia from falling further behind its Western rivals.

The intelligentsia under perestroika

In retrospect, it seems noteworthy that the call for glasnost in this luminous age had not been accompanied by the demand for perestroika. The reason, I think, was a still potent conviction among many intelligenty that socialism represented a noble cause, albeit perverted by the power elites indifferent to the founders' ideals. Hence, the search for "true Leninism, "unadulterated Marxism," and kindred "isms" which inspired even the opponents of the regime like Andrei Sakharov. It took the violent suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968 and the crackdown on the liberal currents back home for the intelligentsia to start questioning the Leninist dogma of a one-party state. Meanwhile, the "stagnation era" ushered in by Leonid Brezhnev placed a fresh burden on liberal intellectuals who had to guard their true sympathies from the secret police while nurturing the new generation of nonconformists.

The ethics of survival attracted much attention among the intellectuals who debated the best ways of harnessing intellectual resources while waiting for another stab at liberal reform. Scholarly seminars, literary colloquia, semiofficial music clubs, underground political forums proliferated, led by the trusted leaders willing to pass on the repressed tradition to the new generation. "The enlightenment must precede [political] renaissance," reasoned Efim Etkind (1977, p. 247). "The first task is to teach, educate, enlighten. To participate in this centrally important – indeed the only relevant activity in our time, we should be ready to conceal thoughts, yield and maneuver, of course within the morally acceptable limits." Yuri Levada, a Soviet sociologist who suffered political reprisals for his liberal views while serving as head of the party organization at his research institute, made a similar argument. Using the unassailable example of Vladimir Lenin, Levada noted that the future militant atheist had earned the top grade in a mandatory religious fundamentals class: "A certain formal conformism is necessary for a person who is at odds with his society yet is obliged to live in it. Otherwise, he would be unable to realize his ideals and agenda" (Levada, 1968, p 29-30).

Pavel Litvinov, the grandson of Joseph Stalin's foreign minister, and his friends had no patience for such homilies – they demanded human rights here and now. Acting as though glasnost was their birth right, this generation of dissidents gathered information about political arrests, exposed inhumane prison conditions, and chronicled the struggle for political and religious freedom. On August 25, 1968, Pavel Litvinov, Larisa Bogoraz, Natalya Gorbanevskaya, Vadim Delaunay, and Viktor Fainberg assembled at Red Square to protest the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia. For their defiance, the dissidents faced beatings, secrete trials, and imprisonments meted out by the state which had no intention of giving up its monopoly on mass communication. And which never stopped monitoring private interactions for signs of ideological heresy.

Meanwhile, another option became available to those unwilling to wait for better days – emigration. Beginning in the 1970s, Soviet citizens claiming Jewish decent were able to take that route, with tens of thousands leaving the country in the next two decades. Everyone else burdened with a liberal conscience had to figure out how to survive in the land of ripe socialism. A recourse to ironic detachment – not an option in Stalin's Russia – was once again a possibility. Many used this gambit that allowed moral agents to act semi-decently in the immoral world

without paying too high a price for their nonconformism. All that, presumably, while waiting for another day to fight.

That day arrived sooner than anybody imagined. When a sense of hopelessness seemed at its highest, Mikhail Gorbachev, the communist party general secretary, called for glasnost and perestroika. The liberal intelligentsia threw its full support behind the reform.[27] For a few years, the country seemed ready to break with its repressive past and start a new and yet all too familiar chapter of history, reliving "the age of glasnost and action" once proclaimed by Alexander Herzen (1860/1958, p. 311). Liberal intelligenty who heeded Gorbachev's clarion call took it beyond what he intended. They bristled at the idea that the communist party alone can carry the burden of perestroika. Multiparty politics seemed to liberals a better guarantee of success than Gorbachev's avowal of good faith.

Notable in the current reform cycle was the insistence on the inseparability of glasnost and perestroika, on the necessity of institutionalizing dissent as a foundation of liberal democracy. "One of the conditions of honesty and directness that our time demands," posited Sergei Averintsev (1987), "is putting an end to the situation where we confuse the dissenter (*nesoglasnyi*) with the enemy. The intelligentsia must nurture in itself the culture of dissent (*kultura nesoglasiia*), the culture of debate. I am talking not just about weak tolerance but true respect for the opponent."

It's revealing, also, that unlike the shestidesiatniki, the intellectuals spearheading reforms were keenly aware of the historical kinship between the current perestroika and the intelligentsia's past struggles. The debates about the place of intelligentsia in Russia's history reached the intensity unknown since the *Landmarks* called for a spiritual renewal. Andrey Voznesensky underlined the affinity between the past and present reformers united in their determination to harness Russian culture for the pending reconstruction: "A spiritual revolution is stirring in our land, a life and death struggle for a new thinking against the still powerful inertia of the past. This is not a cultural revolution, but a revolution by Culture.... Born again is the old Russian word glasnost, the word that makes active repentance a norm and that goes back to Tolstoy whose ideal of fighting evil with active conscience has such resonance today" (Voznesensky, 1987).

The valorization of the intelligentsia as a moral agent rather than a partisan group is one more sign of the continuity with the early twentieth century intellectual awakening when Chekhov sought to recast intelligence as embodied practice. For Dmitri Likhachev, "an unschooled peasant can be called an intelligent, but the same cannot be said about a ruffian, even if he is burdened with intellect, scientific degrees, and official honors.... For 'Russian intelligent' designates a soulful, moral, rather than cerebral, category. Better put: unless movement of the heart precedes movement of thought, a person cannot be called an intelligent" (Likhachev, 1988).

The imperative of realigning words and deeds was another hallmark of perestroika. Following your conscience takes guts when negative consequences are sure to follow. "We still lack courage to say, 'the king is naked.' And this is despite the democratic foundations of our society which requires glasnost, and therefore the freedom to defend one's views. The final judge in any dispute should be the argument, yet it is power and connections, I am afraid, which often decide the matter" (Dudintsev 1987).

This injunction to align one's words and deeds concerned the courage to confront your own past. Many intelligenty who took Gorbachev's perestroika to heart showed little civic spirit in the bygone years when they had voted to approve the party policies or remained silent as their

braver colleagues stood up to party ideologues. The desire to reconcile the past and present selves triggered a heated polemics about the line where acceptable compromise morphs into moral cowardice.[28] The inconsistency between the newly avowed selves and past identities generated much anxiety and recrimination, as nosy critics unearthed the words and deeds that proved embarrassing to the freshly-minted defenders of glasnost.[29]

Not all intelligenty were willing to part with their past selves or apologize for their retrograde beliefs. Karl Mannheim had important things to say on this subject in his analysis of the adaptive responses available to the disillusioned intelligenty. In addition to a group of true believers who redouble their commitment to a dying utopia, Mannheim distinguished three other categories of intellectuals responding to an ideological crisis. One group "which was cast up at the same time that its utopia was discarded, becomes skeptical and proceeds, in the name of intellectual integrity, to destroy the ideological elements of science" (Mannheim 1936, p. 259). That's what many scholars and public intellectuals did in the heyday of perestroika.

Another typical response to the disenchanted world is found among intelligenty who conjure up some glorious, usually imaginary past. This "group takes refuge in the past and attempts to find there an epoch or society in which an extinct form of reality-transcendence dominated the world, and through this romantic reconstruction it seeks to spiritualize the present" (Mannheim 1936, p. 259). Ultra-patriots, orthodox communists, religious believers extoling the Russian spirituality would fall into this category – all of them frequently uniting in a common opposition to reform.

One more adaptation mode mentioned in *Ideology and Utopia* refers to the intelligentsia that "becomes shut off from the world and consciously renounces direct participation in the historical process. They become ecstatic like Chiliasts, but with the difference that they no longer concern themselves with traditional political movements. They take part in the great historical process of disillusionment, in which every concrete meaning of things as well as myths and beliefs are slowly cast aside" (Mannheim, 1936, pp. 259-260). This type of adjustment to the disenchanted present was popular among the conceptualist artists who delighted in playing with the official communist symbols, overextending them to a point where they would lose their meaning and provoke laughter (Epstein, 1995; Shalin 1997a; Lipovetsky, 2008, 2011). Young professionals who refused to pursue their careers and chose to take up unassuming jobs like night watchmen or heating maintenance workers shared some of the same sensibilities.

All the intelligenty who felt numb after years of covering up and nurturing their bruised selves were prone to cynicism, their disappointments showing up in excessive irritability and sarcasm. Contemporary observers decried that era's "slovenly irony" (Rassadin, 1993), "total ironism" (Polyakov, 1993), "the endless jocularity and the coy and empty irony" (Shvedov, 1992) pervading the pages of literary magazines and everyday life.

For all its discontents, perestroika saw the flourishing of culture without an analogue in Russian history. The print runs of trendy newspapers, political weeklies, and thick literary journals skyrocketed, as the public reached out for works banned under Soviet censorship. Art exhibits and theater productions, one more daring than the other, captured the nation's imagination. The opportunity to visit once forbidden places thrilled Russian travelers starved for world culture.

The new freedom to opine on any subject and air one's views had its dark side. It triggered venomous attacks from the ultra-nationalistic groups which had been kept in check under the communist regime committed to internationalism. Another source of worry was the continuously deteriorating economic situation. With the world oil prices collapsing, the Russian

economy took a nose dive. The market reforms initiated by Gorbachev sputtered, leaving the disgruntled population to wonder if the remedies designed to cure economic ills were worse than the disease.

The growing popular discontent emboldened party bureaucrats to act against the reformist government. In August of 1991, the party conservatives aided by the KGB declared a national emergency and detained Gorbachev at his summer resort. Perestroika supporters flocked to the Parliament to defend the newly won freedoms, and after the army refused to fire on the demonstrators, the coup leaders gave up their designs. Gorbachev was released from his confinement, but his dogged insistence on the one-party rule doomed his political career. His rival, Boris Yeltsin, didn't make the same mistake. He seized the day by colluding with regional leaders to break up the Soviet Union into 15 independent states. This radical more turned Gorbachev into a president without a country, sending the founder of perestroika into early retirement.

For nearly a decade, the new leaders struggled to sustain the reform movement. They pushed forward unpopular reforms, made shady deals with powerful oligarchs, cut corners during the elections – all in vain. The momentum was irrevocably lost. With runaway inflation wiping out people's savings and food shortages ravaging the population, Boris Yeltsin had enough. On December 31, 1999, he abruptly resigned his post, naming Vladimir Putin as acting president. Three months later, the nation backed Putin's presidential bid in an election which started the country on a new course. Two presidential elections later, Russia was in the throes of full-fledged counterperestroika.

The intelligentsia in the age of counterperestroika

Few observers predicted which way Mikhail Gorbachev would be headed when he assumed the mantle of the party general secretary on March 11, 1985. Nor did his call for glasnost and perestroika issued a year later convince his fellow citizens that he was ready to embark on serious reform. His clumsy attempts to cut alcohol consumption and tighten the discipline in state enterprises bode ill for the future. Such was the powerful engine of glasnost, however, that it propelled the social reconstruction beyond anyone's expectation.

Vladimir Putin's career followed a different trajectory. Preparing for his first presidential election, Putin positioned himself as a moderate candidate eager to assure the public of his liberal credentials with these carefully calibrated statements: "I am not a dictator," "we are part of western European culture," "[ours] is the path of democratic development," "we have to preserve local government and a system of election for governors," "the demands to confiscate and nationalize property [are wrong], this definitely isn't going to happen" (Putin 2000). Within a few years, it became clear that such promises couldn't be taken at face value, as the newly elected president proceeded to throttle glasnost and reestablish one-party control over communications.

Why Vladimir Putin, once a close associate of the liberal St. Petersburg mayor, changed his course is beyond the scope of this essay.[30] My concern is with the systematic manner in which he dismantled the institutions essential to free discourse and the impact of his counterreforms on the intelligentsia.

The first sign that Russia was sliding back into an authoritarian mold was the clampdown on nongovernment media. A civil society with robust public communications that sprang to life

in the late 1980s under Mikhail Gorbachev and matured in the 1990s during the presidency of Boris Yeltsin has been in retreat ever since Vladimir Putin consolidated his power. In June of 2000, Putin gave his first state of the nation address where he contended that the Russian information sector is comprised of "state media" and "anti-state media." This division left little room for nongovernment and independent reporting organizations. Barely a few months into his presidency, Putin moved against Vladimir Gusinsky, head of *Media Most* and owner of the first private TV channel in Russia who had the misfortune of siding with the Primakov-Luzhkov ticket against Vladimir Putin in the presidential election. Arrested on trumped up charges, Gusinsky was intimidated into selling to *Gazprom Media* his holdings. Soon after that, the government wrestled control over the state-owned ORT network from one-time Putin ally and a potential rival Boris Berezovsky. The relatively independent TV-6 channel came next, driven out of business after relentless attacks from the pro-government media (Albats, 2001).

Facing no resistance from the courts, Putin deployed a range of tactics aimed to promote friendly coverage and undercut oppositional news services. Direct subsidies, targeted tax breaks, and lucrative advertisement orders awaited businesses with favorable coverage of state policies. Dissenting outlets had to contend with accreditation denial, unfriendly tax-audits, boycotts by advertisers, license revocation, barriers to attending official events, and spurious charges of abetting extremism. The latter offense was added to the penal code after the Federal Assembly passed the Law on Fighting Extremist Activity in 2002. It covered a poorly defined range of materials deemed dangerous to the public order. Mere possession of extremist materials exposed the user to legal liability, and so did quotes from offensive sources by unrelated content providers. In 2006-2007, the Russian Parliament amended the Law by extending the category of "extremism" to statements that might offend national pride and ethnic sensibilities and single out state bureaucrats for unfair criticism. Convicted offenders faced up to three years in prison and a ban on their publications. In 2008, the presidential decree established Roskomnadzor, an agency overseeing "licensing and permit issuing; control and supervision in telecommunications, information technology, and mass communications." Among the news outlets accused of extremism under the new regulations were such well-known organizations as *Gazeta.ru*, *Pravda.ru*, and *Kursiv* (Azhgikhina, 2017; Gainutdiner, 2017; Eremenko, 2015; Fishman, 2017; Freedom House, 2017; Orttung and Walker 2013; Polyakova. 2017; Slavtcheva-Petkova 2017).

In 2012, the Russian Parliament approved a federal law that created a state registry of web sites harmful to children's health and development (№ 139-FZ), which empowered Roscomnadzor to block the blacklisted sites and punish their host providers if the latter failed to remove offending content. A year later, anti-gay propaganda law came into effect (№ 135-FZ), which promoted "traditional family values" and prohibited advocacy of "non-traditional sexual relations." Several more punitive measures were adopted in 2013, including a bill making it a crime to offend the religious sensibilities of fellow citizens (№ 136-FZ) and an amendment to article 280 of the criminal code that criminalized "calls aimed at violating the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation" – the provision used against critics of Russia's decision to annex Crimea. An earlier counterterrorism law was amended in 2014 to compel bloggers serving more than 3000 visitors to register with Roskomnadzor, making all "information dissemination organizers" subject to the same strictures as mass media without offering small operators comparable benefits. In October of 2014, Parliament amended the Mass Media Law to limit foreign stakes in media businesses to 20 percent, with additional amendments passed the following year requiring publishers and broadcasters to report to Roskomnadzor funding from "international sources." 2015 was also the year when legislators passed the Data Storage Law

(№ 242-FZ), requiring website operators and service providers to store Russian users' personal data. In the next two years, a spate of draconian laws and amendments were approved, the most notorious among these being the "Yarovaya Amendments" that obligated service providers to save for six months all content passing through their domains and furnish security agencies with deciphering keys for all encoded information (Eremenko, 2015; Gainutdiner, 2017; Freedom House (2017), Orttung and Walker 2013; Polyakova. 2017; Slavtcheva-Petkova 2017.).

Putin's clampdown on glasnost followed the general blueprint used by Lenin. Both leaders deftly used the institutions of free speech during their ascent to power; once firmly in control, they moved to reestablish a one-party monopoly on the media market and drive the opposition out of mass communication. The assault on glasnost is harder to carry out today when the Internet dominates communications, but the security apparatus is catching up with the holdouts and reining in the recalcitrant intelligentsia. Liberal intellectuals are confronted with the familiar choices – resist the state control and face retribution from the authorities; withdraw from public life or depart from Russia altogether; work on the margins of glasnost tolerated by the government and explore the limits of a reasonable compromise. Those who chose the last route must be prepared to practice self-censorship in covering LGBT rights, anti-government demonstrations, the annexation of Crimea, or Russian mercenaries abroad.

Articles assembled in the present volume explore the impact of counterperestroika on the intelligentsia and various modes of adaption to the current oppressive conditions in the Russian Federation. The authors who prepared this report, noted public intellectuals working inside an outside Russia, don't see eye to eye on the place of intelligentsia in Russian history or its imminent future. Yet they find this topic of signal importance, for it illuminates the plight of the intelligentsia not only in Russia but also in other parts of the globe.

Andrei Piontkovksy and Leonid Gozman articulate contrasting perspective on the subject, the former stressing the unseemly role that the intelligenty played in Putin's ascent to power and the latter extolling the intellectuals' opposition to his authoritarian rule. According to Piontkovsky, "the intelligentsia, or as its representatives prefer to call themselves these days – 'intellectuals' [have] betrayed the ideals of Andrei Sakharov" and "bear the responsibility for bringing Putin and his KGB thugs to power and fostering 'bandit capitalism.'" In the past, the intelligentsia played a positive role, especially during its formative years when its members came chiefly from the nobility, but it has since morphed into the "post-intelligentsia" which has lost its moral compass. For Gozman, the "Russian intelligentsia [is] the best thing…that Russian culture has to offer." It is a group that "suffered the most from the fall of Communism," and though the intelligenty might have lost their moorings, they still serve as a moral beacon for fellow citizens. The personal stance committed intellectuals are going to take remain central to the country's democratic future, for "the transition to a European type of society will never happen without the intelligentsia."

Several authors concur that Russia's backward conditions have much to do with the emergence of a social strata self-identified as the intelligentsia. The latter takes upon itself a crippling burden of lifting the people from their deplorable state, fighting the bureaucratic class, and building a civil society, but it is presumptuous for the well-educated intelligenty to think they are duty-bound to "help people articulate their interests, which they are deemed to be incapable of understanding on their own." Equally problematic, according to Lev Gudkov, is the premise that "a complete overhaul of the corrupt and inapt government is required to bring about a just society." Such overfull categories as "intelligentsia" and "people" are historically

grounded abstractions doomed to disappear once Russian society becomes internally differentiated and stratified.

Mikhail Epstein sees the problem of intelligentsia as emerging wherever tradition meets modernity. "In cultures where the power of reason – *intelligentia* – has clashed with traditional mentalities, the historical need for a special thinking class has arisen as an instrument of the active socialization of reason." In the Russian context, the intelligent faces harsh odds and cuts a tragic figure insofar as it represents an "intellect unassimilated, rejected by society, eager to sacrifice itself for the sake of achieving its social destiny…" The intelligenty are prone to practice "the idolatry of the people" rather than remain true to the task of critical reflection which spares no sacred cows, including mythic constructions like "Russian people." Both categories – "intelligentsia" and "people" – are chimerical, Epstein concludes, but unlike Gudkov and a few other contributors who are ready to bid goodbye to the intelligentsia, Epstein presents an argument that "burying the intelligentsia would be premature," that it "has a vital role to play, and not only in Russia but in America as well," and that "its members can make a decisive contribution to the unification of humankind."

Starting with the premise that "forecasts about the imminent demise of Russian intelligentsia have proved premature," Gasan Gusejnov traces the personal trajectory of key figures in the Russian intelligentsia pantheon, some eager "to sell their services to the official authorities," others "still in self-criticism mode, agitate against the reigning powers and official establishment or sport a decidedly apolitical attitude." He takes on a trendy distinction between the intelligent as a person embodying "the ideal of a Russian richly endowed with empathy, the ability to put oneself in the shoes of the suffering people" and the intellectual as "someone using knowledge and skills to accomplish whatever technical task one is assigned to do." The conclusion Gusejnov reaches is that no bright line separates these two groups. Professionals valuing expertise may exhibit the classic intelligentsia sensibilities in faraway countries where they took refuge from Russia's cruelties, while trained humanists manage to stifle their humanitarian urges and help the imperious authorities disseminate "fake realities." He finds particularly alarming the xenophobic tendencies among the former intelligenty. Nowadays, the "new Russian intelligentsia reveals a strong affinity with the rightwing movements in Europe and America," while the "racist sentiments and rightwing rhetoric are rampant among the diaspora intelligentsia in Israel and U.S.A."

Mark Lipovetsky draws attention to the "trickster" – a beloved figure in Soviet lore who cons the authorities and evades the official homilies to achieve his private ends. There is a reason why Ostap Bender, a literary invention of Ilf and Petrov, had so many sculptures erected to honor this character in the Soviet Union. There are many others: Khulio Khurenito and Benia Krick, Krovyev and Behemoth, the old foggy Shchukar and Vasyli Terkin, to mention just a few tricksters Lipovetsky brings up in his essay. The author shows a darker side of glorified conmanship which "legitimizes and elevates Soviet cynicism, its deceptive survival strategies for navigating a shadow economy" and which at the same time bred cynicism "endemic to the Soviet intelligentsia [whose] members were close to power and enjoyed the privileges accorded to the elite while at the same time positioning themselves as critics, opponents, and main victims of the system." Lipovetsky draws a distinction between "reactionary cynicism" and "postmodern anti-essentialism," the former deployed by the post-soviet intelligentsia selling is services to the extant powers, the latter representing the original "postmodern constructivism or antiessentialism which exposes binary oppositions as anything but natural and eternal, shows

them to be historical constructs rather than national mentalities, products of specific cultural processes."

Alexander Genis is also concerned about the extent to which postmodernist rhetoric penetrated public discourse in contemporary Russia where the conservative forces "fashioned deconstructionist philosophy into a propaganda tool – servile in content, hypermodern in form." Starting with the philosophical premise – "There are no facts, only their interpretations," postmodernists use it as a weapon of mass distraction which helps cover their shady practices and keep skeptical inquiry at bay. "This philosophical fancy devolved into a nightmare once it began to colonize everyday life where postmodernism emerged as a potent tool of political propaganda." "The cure from this postmodernist phantasmagoria," Genis argues, "is commonsense. It may fail in quantum mechanics or new metaphysics, but it is indispensable in politics. Common sense tells us how to sort real facts from alternative, truth from half-truth, real news from fake news, serious journalism from the latest barrage of loud tweets."

Natalia Ivanova and Liudmila Ulitskaya use literature as a lens through which they survey the intellectual and moral landscapes in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia. Ivanova details "the trend toward partition, division, and divergence" among Russian writers who are no longer content with being members of one "Writers Union," continuously subdividing into rival literary groups based on their political and moral sensibilities. Noting that the "history of the Russian intelligentsia is a story of schisms, starting with the split into Westernizers and Slavophiles," Ivanova documents her conclusion that "the schism among intellectuals and the creative intelligentsia intensified after Crimea and Donbass." This schism is evident in some 600 competing literary prizes bestowed today on Russia writers, in the confrontation between "state-sponsored patriotism" and the creed favoring "free society and individual freedom," in the battle inside the Russia PEN Club between the supporters and opponents of the state policies in Ukraine. Some of the present divisions, Ivanova suggests, might be generational and cyclical, although the depth of current rancor is concerning.

Whereas Ivanova examines institutional aspects of literary process, Liudmila Ulitskaya concentrates on its personal side – on the reader as a quintessential figure in the annals of Russian intelligentsia. "I am talking about the process itself – passionate, tense, intelligent, and difficult reading. And dangerous, too, because reading in Soviet Russia could get you kicked out of college or cost you a job. It could even land you in jail. Reading was a risky endeavor; it required courage, or at least willingness to keep at bay one's fear. In a way, it was a heroic deed." Ulitskaya resurrects the history of her own reading that started with the books on her parents' shelves and eventually lead her to the clandestine literature which spelled serious trouble (Ulitskaya lost her a job because of her involvement with samizdat). Following her own reading trajectory, Ulitskaya reconstructs the history of Soviet intelligentsia, highlights its propensity for self-destruction ("the Russian intelligentsia committed suicide…in the 1920s and 1930s"), and ponders its uncertain future.

Victor Shenderovich reviews several definitions of intelligentsia, including the forecasts of its imminent demise ("only the laziest have since refrained from dancing on the bones of the intelligentsia"). After that, he takes up a thorny issue of a reasonable compromise the morally-driven person can strike in cooperating with the government. He parts company with those who foreswears any dealings with the authorities. Insofar as they result in better conditions for cancer-stricken children or prisoners kept in cruel conditions, compromises are welcome. The problem is with "moral obligations and moral constraints," contends Shenderovich. "Among these constraints is the necessity of maintaining distance from the authorities. One doesn't need

to stand in opposition, necessarily. You can work with the government (Chekhov helped with census-taking), you can advise (Likhachev gave it a shot). You can even support them, if your convictions permit it, but don't get in line for the crumbs they dole out." Shenderovich is willing to grapple with the controversial history of his teacher, Oleg Tabakov, who supported the invasion of Ukraine. Shenderovich reminds us that Tabakov has done much to nurture a young generation of actors. "I understand his strategic goals. Yet his strategy seems deficient to me," concludes the author. "He didn't do anything for himself. Beloved by free Prague, the darling of Havel and Kundera, the man who had played Khlestakov in Prague and not in Russia as he was destined to do, Tabakokov was the darling of the 'Prague Spring' in February of '68. That's where Czechoslovakia and Russia intersected at the point of culture, the golden boy of all these people and all of Prague. And then they insisted that he endorse [the invasion of Czechoslovakia]. He tried to dodge the question – he spoke about this later himself, yet he didn't manage to dodge it. So, Havel and Kundera returned the gifts that he had given them. They sent them back and then he tried to dodge the Crimean question, as the occupiers from a different country came. These were his people too."

Sergei Iourienen recounts his life story, which starts with the author as the youngest author inducted into the Russian Writers Union and ends in Paris and Munich where he settled after defecting from the Soviet Union in 1977. Iourienen reflects on the price the intelligenty pay for secreting themselves in comfortable niches reserved for Soviet intelligenty, the experience captured in Andrei Voznesensky's line, "We had our shame removed like an appendicitis." To his surprise, the West didn't spare him from the familiar moral dilemmas. In the Free World, "Each emigrant 'wave' showed hostility to the next one. The First Wave, comprised by those born before the Bolshevik revolution, inveighed against the Second, spoiled by the Soviet upbringing, and both bristled with animosity toward the Third that followed Khrushchev's "Thaw." [The] last wave brought in its wake, if not a miniature version of Stalinism as some hotheads claimed, then certainly the hierarchical mentality endemic to the Soviet Writer's Union, with its signature confrontation between the western-minded 'cosmopolitans' and nationalist/Orthodox believers or "'pochvenniki.'" Iourienen's essay is more than a biographical sketch. It is a meditation on our times when we are "witnessing the intelligentsia abandoning its historical mission, morphing into the post-intelligentsia or specialists engaged in intellectual work."

In my own paper, I review the basic adaptation strategies deployed by the post-Soviet intelligentsia, as it struggles to find a via media between the imperative of self-preservation and the commitment to perestroika through glasnost. The discussion focuses on the rationale behind each life course, be this collaboration with the regime, fighting the established order, withdrawing from public life, or emigrating from the country. Given the concerted effort that Vladimir Putin made to recruit nonconformist celebrities into state-sponsored public organizations like the Presidential Council on Human Rights, Culture Ministry Public Council, Interethnic Relations Board, the liberally-minded intellectuals must weigh the effectiveness of their participation in government-sponsored ventures against the reputational damage they are bound to sustain. As members of the Presidential Human Rights Council, the intelligenty can bring to the administrators' attention the facts of suppression of independent media or the imprisonment of dissidents on trumped-up charges. But aren't they also pressed into service as fig leaves on Putin's vertical of power? Where is the point at which the accommodation with the authorities ceases to be a legitimate compromise and becomes a bona fide cop out? What are the

lessons about Russian society and the human predicament that we can learn from the history of the Russian intelligentsia?

Such are the questions contributors to this volume ponder in their far-reaching and personal essays. It is my hope as the editor of the present collection that readers will find these questions timely and instructive.[31]

Conclusion

This introductory essay is based on the premise that pragmatist philosophy can illuminate the subject matter of intelligentsia. Following Charles Peirce, John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, and Jürgen Habermas, I set out to examine the intelligentsia from the vantage point of pragmatist communication theory according to which "Society not only exists by transmission, by communication, but it may be fairly said to exist in transmission, in communication" (Dewey, I916/1966:4). The pragmatist perspective conceives communication as an embodied process that exceeds the discourse production proper and calls for a systematic juxtaposition of symbolic-discursive signs with somatic-affective indexes and behavioral-performative markers – three basic signifying media corresponding to the Peircean taxonomy of symbolic, indexical, and iconic signs. This approach goads us to examine a meaningful occasion across signifying media, as it is registered in the way we are "talking the talk," "walking the walk," and "rocking the rock." "No social modification, slight or revolutionary, can endure except as it enters into the action of a people through their desires and purposes," contends John Dewey (1933, p. 318). A communication theory consistent with this premise stipulates that "Rationality, once more is not a force to evoke against impulse and habit. It is the attainment of a working harmony among diverse desires" (Dewey, 1922/1950, p. 195-6). Adherents of pragmatist hermeneutics[32] ought to heed this warning: "Men who devote themselves to thinking are likely to be unusually unthinking in some respects, as for example in immediate personal relationships" (Dewey, 1922/1950, p. 198).

In line with these injunctions, I have examined the phenomenon of intelligentsia as political discourse, civic action, and embodied practice, focusing especially on the distortions that the communication process suffers in repressive societies where moral agents are forced to subsist under uncivil conditions while trying to recreate a civil society. By focusing on the misalignment between the ways we sign ourselves in words, in actions, and in the flesh, I took the discussion beyond political theories which leave in the shadow the somatic-affective underpinnings of political systems. To understand why such misalignments become systemic in undemocratic polities, we need to explore "democracy [a]s an embodied process that binds affectively as well as rhetorically and that flourishes in places where civic discourse is not an expedient means to be discarded when it fails to achieve a proximate goal but an end in itself, a source of vitality and social creativity sustaining an emotionally intelligent democratic community" (Shalin, 2004, p. 407). Public intellectuals are more than talking heads trading ideas – they are flesh and blood human beings whose somatic performances feed into the reproduction of historically specific life worlds and political systems. Differently put, the hermeneutical circle is not short-circuited on discursive products; it runs through our bodies, gets tangled with emotions, and engages intellectual resources as much as our bodies, feelings and self-identities. Recent research in neuroscience and neurosociology supports this conjecture by furnishing evidence that our neuronal circuits and affective markers are informed by, and in turn

reinforce, the reigning patterns of interaction and communication disorders (Damasio 1999; Franks 2010; Shalin 2017a, 2017b).

The story of the Russian intelligentsia reprised in these pages advances a line of inquiry into the democratic process qua embodied communication. It demonstrates what happens when communications are muffled in the name of patriotic duty, religious piety, loyalty to a leader, or some other supposedly higher priority. Nationalism, religious extremism, and the cult of a strong leader are sure to result from such misguided priorities, which disfigured civic life in the times of Tsars and which continue to foul public discourse in the age of Vladimir Putin. What Alexander Herzen had to say on this subject hasn't lost its relevance today: "We love Russia and Russian people, but we won't succumb to patriotic cupidity or give in to crazy Russomania. This is not because we are some faceless cosmopolites, but because our love for homeland is not fed by some chimeric dreams and is free of tribal solidarity" (Herzen, 1863/1959, p. 294). Herzen's warning to the revolutionists indifferent to the means they deploy in the fight against injustice is every bit as timely: "We were born to destroy, our business was to weed and tear down, and for that purpose we had to negate and ironize – but even now, after we struck fifteen or twenty blows, we see that we built nothing, educated no one. The consequence – or, to put it bluntly – punishment – is evident in the people around us, in the relations inside our families, and most of all, in our children" (Herzen, 1869).

I invite readers of this volume to bear in mind these admonishments as they explore the papers collected therein and reflect on the fate of Russian intelligentsia in the age of counterperestroika.

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References

[1] The literature on the intelligentsia is vast. Here are just a few landmark collections and monographs of special interest for this project: Miliukov (1902); Ivanov-Razumnik (1907); *Landmarks* (1909); *Intelligentsiia v Rossii* (1910); *Iz pod glyb* (1974); Berlin (1978); Pipes (1961); Raeff (1966); Gella (1976); Nahirny (1983); Gleason et al. (1985); Shalin (1996b); Words, Deeds and Values (2005).

[2] Unless otherwise indicated, here and elsewhere in the text translations from the Russian are by the author.

[3] "*Vekhi* authors gave this term, which I deliberately introduced into Russian journalism in 1866, entirely different meaning than I did when I had defended the Russian intelligentsia from its detractors at the end of the twentieth century' (Boborykin, 1909, p. 9). See also Boborykin (1906).

[4] Zhukovky's diaries (1822/2004, p. 361) contain an even earlier reference to "an evening spent in the circle of Riga intelligentsia."

[5] "If glasnost existed in our press," Vyazemsky wrote in his notebook, "Pushkin would never have dared to sing praises to [the general] Paskevich and his victories" (1822/1963, p. 214).

[6] A three-page summary of what it means to be *intelligentnyi chelovek* that Chekhov dispatched in 1886 to his brother Nikolai is a fine example of the qualities expected from the intelligenty at the turn of the twentieth century (Chekhov, 1882/1912, pp. 237-240).

[7] Cited in Herzen (1860/1958), p. 411.

[8] "*The feeling of superiority among the educated* that marred even the solid minds of that wonderful decade represented the dark side of our Westernism" (Annenkov, 1882/1983, pp 415-416).

[9] Konstantin Leontiev went even further than Dostoeyvsky in glorifying autocracy and the state monopoly on violence: "What is personal liberty? Isn't it something worse than socialism?… Suddenly you can't beat up anybody. Oh, no! To eliminate violence from history is the same as to blot a color from the cosmic rainbow." (Leontiev, 1878/1993).

[10] Here is a characteristically ambivalent statement by Alexander Pushkin (1836/1951, p. 586 and Pushkin 1826/1951, p. 208): "What a devil's jest to force me, with my mind and talent, to be born in Russia!... Of course, I loathe my homeland from head to toe, though I feel annoyed when a foreigner shares with me this feeling. But you, who is not on the leash, how can you live in Russia? If the Tsar granted me freedom, I wouldn't stay a month around here."

[11] All literary genre must be understood not only as a repertoire of tropes, figures of speech, and other literary conventions but as embodied forms feeding on the lived experience and deployed in practical situations (see Shalin, 1997a).

[12] Many Russians know by heart the verse that the love-stricken Pushkin addressed to Anna Petrovna Kern, "I still recall that magic moment when you appeared before my eyes." Experts are familiar with the less exulted remarks referring to the same person, "yesterday, with god's help, I finally f….d Madam Kern."

[13] "For all those who subscribe to this idea, which in my deep conviction, has religious roots, it must be clear that the Russian intelligentsia needs a radical perestroika of its social-economic worldview. I think that such a perestroika is already under way" (Struve, 1908/1993, p. 207).

[14] A close look at the westernizing intelligentsia reveals a more nuanced approach to Russia's problem than their critics allowed. "Our ideal, the ideal of Belinsky, our church and homestead where we honed our views, was the Western world with its science and revolution, with its respect for human dignity, with is political freedom, artistic riches and unconquerable hope" (Herzen, 1863/1959, p. 103). But the European-minded intellectuals also identified a distinctly national component in their political program, "Russian socialism…which is rooted in our soil and peasant life, in the existing forms of land use and field cultivation, in the communal ownership and communal self-government, and which along with the working cooperatives aims at economic justice promised by socialism and supported by science" (Herzen, 1860/1960, p. 193).

[15] Critics hostile to the intelligentsia cause are apt to cite this invective: "I do not believe in our intelligentsia, mendacious, sanctimonious, hysterical, bad-mannered, lazy – do not believe it even when it complains and pines away, for its oppressors come from its very depth. I believe only in separate individuals, whether they are intelligenty or muzhiki, for they are a real force, even if a small one." (Chekhov, 1899, p. 305). However, they tend to ignore positive references that Chekhov made on numerous occasions about the liberally-minded professionals, especially in the provinces. "The intelligentsia here is very nice and interesting. And most importantly-honest" (Chekhov, 1892/1956, p. 593).

[16] See for example *Iz pod glyb* (1974); Shatz (1981); Shalin (1996b, 1996c); Abbott, Kenez, and Stites (1985); Novikova and Sizemskaia (1993); Kochetkova, (2015).
[17] The First Congress of RSDRP, http://istmat.info/files/uploads/50972/1_sezd.pdf.
[18] The Second Congress of RSDRP, http://kpss.su/2sjezd.pdf.
[19] Lenin offered this explanation for his decision: "The demand for 'free press' gained a great momentum in the Middle Ages, and it continued to play a major role until the nineteenth century. Why? Because it reflected the interests of the progressive bourgeoisie. [However], free press anywhere in the world where capitalism reins is the freedom to buy newspapers, to buy writers, to bribe, buy and fabricate 'public opinion' for the benefit of the bourgeoisie… Freedom of the press in the RSFSR, which is surrounded by its bourgeois enemies, would give free reign to the bourgeois political organization and its lackeys, menshvicks and social revolutionists… We are not ready to commit suicide, and therefore will not allow this" (Lenin, 1921/1970, p. 79).
[20]The sixth Congress of RSDRP, http://istmat.info/files/uploads/51183/6_sezd.pdf.
[21] Here is the answer Alexander Blok gave to the question "Can the Intelligentsia Work with the Bolsheviks?" "It can and it ought to, [for] the intelligentsia hears the same music as the Bolsheviks. The intelligentsia has always been revolutionary. The Bolshevik decrees are the symbols of the intelligentsia. [The latter's] bitter feelings about the Bolsheviks are a superficial phenomenon, and they are beginning to pass away" (Blok, 1918/1962, p. 8).
[22] It's curious that Lenin's assessment mirrored the language of the ultra-conservative Konstantin Leontiev who also condemned our "shitty intelligentsia" (Leontiev, 1880).
[23] Lunacharsky rejected the complaint that the Bolsheviks had abandoned the intelligentsia cause. "[You] cannot expel Bolshevik-infelligenty from the intelligentsia and dismiss the great role it played in the history of this 'order'" (Lunacharsky, 1932/1980, p. 107-108).
[24] The reeducation program aimed at the intelligentsia was a necessity insofar as the state had a dire need for the educated cadres of technical specialists and natural scientists to jump start the economy. The same was not the case with the humanists and social scientists, some of whom were placed on the ship and told to sail away and never come back. On August 31, 1922, Pravda printed an article marking the occasions that was titled "The First Warning."
[25] Constitutions of the Russian Federation, http://constitution.garant.ru/history/ussr-rsfsr/1936/red_1936/3958676/chapter/7ccf1f5439bb68fc593de20e309a7853/.
[26] Osip Mandelstam, wrote his widow, "always tried to make up his mind freely and check his actions against reality, but even he was not an entirely free person: the noise of time, the noise of life conspired to suppress his inner voice: 'How could I be right if everybody thinks otherwise'" (Mandelstam, 1990, p. 231).
[27] According to Nathan Edelman (1989), "There is no doubt that the intellectuals' support for perestroika is virtually unanimous."
[28] See Shalin (1990, 1996b).
[29] See the interviews with the Russian intellectuals collected in the "International Biography Initiative" archives, http://cdclv.unlv.edu/programs/bios.html
[30] See Shalin (1997b, 2007b, 2015).
[31] I wish to thank Sara Buzadzhi who rendered into English and furnished first drafts of the papers written for this volume by the following authors – Epstein, Gozman, Gudkov, Iourienen, Ivanova, Piontkovksy, Shenderovich, and Ulitskaya. The rest of the papers, along with the final versions of the translations, were prepared by Dmitri Shalin.
[32] See Shalin (1992a, 1993, 2004, 2007a, 2008a, 2010). Principles of pragmatist hermeneutics are formulated in Shalin (2007-2014), 'Theses on the Concept of Biocritical Hermeneutics," http://cdclv.unlv.edu/archives/articles/shalin_bh_theses.html