

# Readings in Russian Civilization

VOLUME II · IMPERIAL RUSSIA, 1700-1917

Edited with introductory notes by Thomas Riha

**Revised Edition**



***Readings in Russian Civilization***

# *Readings*

VOLUME II

IMPERIAL RUSSIA, 1700–1917

# *in Russian Civilization*

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTORY NOTES, BY  
THOMAS RIHA

SECOND EDITION, REVISED

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## CONTENTS      VOLUME II

	PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION		x <i>i</i>
	PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION		x <i>iii</i>
	ACKNOWLEDGMENTS		xv
18	RUSSIA UNDER PETER THE GREAT	JOHN PERRY	233
19	LOMONOSOV	BORIS MENSHTUKIN	238
20	CATHERINE THE GREAT'S "INSTRUCTIONS"		252
21	*THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION OF 1767		256
		SERGEI SOLOV'EV	
22	A JOURNEY FROM ST. PETERSBURG TO MOSCOW		261
		ALEXANDER RADISHCHEV	
23	MEMOIR ON ANCIENT AND MODERN RUSSIA		280
		NICHOLAS KARAMZIN	
24	THE DECEMBRISTS		295
25	APOLOGY OF A MADMAN	PETER CHAADAEV	303
26	LETTER TO GOGOL	VISSARION BELINSKY	315

\*Items added in 2d edition.

27	YOUNG MOSCOW	ALEXANDER HERZEN	321
28	WHAT IS OBLMOVISM?	NIKOLAI DOBROLYUBOV	332
29	GOING TO THE PEOPLE	KATERINA BRESHKOVSKAIA	344
30	*FROM A VILLAGE DIARY	GLEB USPENSKII	358
31	KILLING AN EMPEROR	DAVID FOOTMAN	368
32	A SLAVOPHILE STATEMENT	IVAN AKSAKOV	378
33	THE SLAV ROLE IN WORLD CIVILIZATION	NIKOLAI DANILEVSKY	383
34	THE FALSEHOOD OF DEMOCRACY	KONSTANTIN POBEDONOSTSEV	390
35	RUSSIAN LIBERALS	PAUL MILYUKOV	402
36	*INDUSTRIAL WORKERS IN THE 1880's		409
37	AN ECONOMIC POLICY FOR THE EMPIRE	SERGEI WITTE	416
38	THE NATIONAL PROBLEM IN RUSSIA	RICHARD PIPES	430
39	*THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE	NICHOLAS II	445
40	*THE GOVERNMENT'S DECLARATION TO THE FIRST DUMA		450
41	*WE NEED A GREAT RUSSIA	PETER STOLYPIN	456
42	MEMORANDUM TO NICHOLAS II	PETER DURNOVO	465

*Contents*

vii

43	THE NATURE OF IMPERIAL RUSSIAN SOCIETY	479
	CYRIL BLACK; HUGH SETON-WATSON	
	CHRONOLOGY	xvii
	CORRELATION TABLES	xxiii
	INDEX	xxix



# CONTENTS

# VOLUME I

- 1 THE RUSSIAN PRIMARY CHRONICLE
- 2 MEDIEVAL RUSSIAN LAWS
- 3 THE CHRONICLE OF NOVGOROD
- 4 \*THE DIG AT NOVGOROD *Valentine Yanine*
- 5 RUSSIAN EPICS
- 6 FEUDALISM IN RUSSIA  
*George Vernadsky; L. V. Cherepnin*
- 7 THE KURBSKY-IVAN THE TERRIBLE  
CORRESPONDENCE
- 8 IVAN GROZNY *Robert Wipper*
- 9 \*THE DEBATE ON IVAN THE TERRIBLE IN 1956
- 10 THE LIFE OF ST. SERGIUS *St. Epiphanius*
- 11 AVVAKUM'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY
- 12 THE RUSSIAN CHURCH SCHISM *Serge Zenkovsky*
- 13 THE LAW CODE OF 1649
- 14 \*MUSCOVITE-WESTERN COMMERCIAL RELATIONS
- 15 THE MONGOL IMPACT ON RUSSIA *George Vernadsky*
- 16 THE FRONTIER *B. H. Sumner*
- 17 THE PROBLEM OF OLD RUSSIAN CULTURE  
*Georges Florovsky; Nikolay Andreyev; James Billington*

## CHRONOLOGY

## CORRELATION TABLES

## INDEX

\*Items added in 2d edition.

# CONTENTS VOLUME III

- 44 \*TESTIMONY ON THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION  
*General Sergei Khabalov*
- 45 \*THE RUSSIAN VILLAGE, SUMMER 1917
- 46 RUSSIA'S ONE-DAY PARLIAMENT *Victor Chernov*
- 47 DAYS WITH LENIN *Maxim Gorky*
- 48 \*DOWN WITH FACTIONALISM! *Nikolai Bukharin*
- 49 THE HISTORY OF A SOVIET COLLECTIVE FARM  
*Fedor Belov*
- 50 A DAY IN MAGNITOGORSK  
*John Scott; Valentin Katayev*
- 51 SOCIALIST GOLD *John Littlepage*
- 52 THE SOVIET CONSTITUTION
- 53 ON THE CONSTITUTION *Joseph Stalin*
- 54 THE SOVIET SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT *John Hazard*
- 55 I SPEAK FOR THE SILENT *Vladimir Tchernavin*
- 56 THE PURGE TRIALS
- 57 \*THE BLOCKADE OF LENINGRAD *Dmitri Pavlov*
- 58 \*THE SECOND WORLD WAR *Grigori Deborin*
- 59 THE PARTY AND THE ARTS  
*Andrei Zhdanov; Nikita Khrushchev*
- 60 THE ADVENTURES OF AN APE *Mikhail Zoshchenko*
- 61 MY WORTHLESS AND VICIOUS FILM *Sergei Eisenstein*
- 62 THE DESTRUCTION OF SOVIET GENETICS  
*Herman J. Muller*
- 63 STALIN'S COFFIN
- 64 "PILFERING THE PEOPLE'S WEALTH"
- 65 FROM NEW YORK TO LOS ANGELES  
*G. Burkov and V. Shchetinin*
- 66 IS THE SOVIET UNION A WELFARE STATE?  
*Alec Nove*
- 67 \*STANDARD BEARERS OF COMMUNIST LABOR
- 68 \*SOVIET NATIONALITY POLICY  
*Bobodzhan Gafurov; Richard Pipes*
- 69 \*SOVIET RELIGIOUS POLICY  
*Liudmila Anokhina and Margarita Shmeleva; Harry Willetts*
- 70 \*ARE WE FLIRTING WITH CAPITALISM?  
*Evsei Liberman*
- 71 \*ON THE EVENTS IN CHINA
- 72 \*WHITHER THE SOVIET UNION?  
*Zbygniew Brzezinski; Frederick Barghoorn*
- CHRONOLOGY  
CORRELATION TABLES  
INDEX

\*Items added in 2d edition.

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

This new and enlarged version of *Readings in Russian Civilization* is the result of fairly extensive revisions. There are now 72 instead of 64 items; 20 of the selections are new. The first volume has undergone the least change with 3 new items, of which 2 appear in English for the first time. In the second volume there are 6 new items; all of them appear in English for the first time. The third volume has undergone the greatest revision, with 11 new items, of which 6 are newly translated from the Russian. It is the editor's hope that items left out in the new edition will not be sorely missed, and that the new selections will turn out to be useful and illuminating. The aim, throughout, has been to cover areas of knowledge and periods which had been neglected in the first edition, and to include topics which are important in the study of the Russian past and present.

The bibliographical headnotes have been enlarged, with the result that there are now approximately twice as many entries as in the old edition. New citations include not only works which have appeared since 1963, but also older books and articles which have come to the editor's attention.

The editor would like to thank several persons who have contributed to the improvement of the text. Some sixty professors answered a questionnaire sent out by the University of Chicago Press and suggested changes or improvements in the *Readings*. Most of these suggestions have been heeded, and the editor is grateful for this generous cooperation by his colleagues. Professor Josef Anderle should be singled out, since he offered particularly detailed comments and had been most helpful in the preparation of the first edition as well. Professors Richard Wortman and Richard Hellie suggested new documents and, in the case of Mr. Hellie, translated them as well. Howard Goldfinger, Sylvia Fain, and Walter Gleason helped with the translations.

Once again I should like to dedicate this new version of my work to my students at the University of Chicago and at the University of Colorado. They have made this enterprise not only a duty but also a pleasure.

BOULDER, COLORADO  
JUNE, 1968

THOMAS RIHA



## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

In selecting the readings for these volumes, I was guided by several considerations. The selection, first of all, was to be important for the period of Russian history under consideration. Second, it was to lend itself fairly easily to class analysis—if possible, by the discussion method. This meant that polemics were preferable to descriptions, though I could not, and indeed did not wish to, manage without the latter. The selection was to stimulate curiosity to the point where the reader would wish to pursue the subject further.

All things being equal, I tended to lean toward primary sources. Thus, of the final sixty-four items, forty-six, or 70 per cent, are of this nature. Nevertheless, this remains a book of readings, not a collection of documents. I did not want snips and pieces, no matter how important; each essay is intended to be of sufficient length to develop a point of view or an argument reasonably and sensitively. I wanted my selections to be readable; there is not all that much good writing in this often turgid field, and I made a deliberate attempt to hunt for those authors who took pride in their language and exposition.

At certain crucial points I made a deliberate effort to bring a Soviet point of view into play. This I found to be not only healthy for argument's sake but sometimes quite enlightening in its own right. I carried this principle into the bibliographies as well. These were intended to provide a few guideposts to those who might wish to investigate an individual problem. Paperback editions were indicated because they might lead to the building of small private libraries. One could, these days, build quite a respectable collection of paperbacks on Russia.

I tried to give each period of Russian history its due. The order of selections will be found to be approximately chronological, though in a few places items are grouped topically for the sake of convenience. Each volume concludes with a general assessment of the period where more than one point of view is presented. It was my hope that Russian civilization would thus be given certain stages and a definable shape. If the general contours turn out to be approximately accurate, my aim will have been achieved.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks are due, to begin with, to the College at the University of Chicago, which conceived of the Russian civilization course and gave it elbow room to develop. Donald Meiklejohn, Warner Wick, and Alan Simpson were sympathetic initiators and tolerant supervisors. For a colleague they provided Meyer Isenberg, whose warm participation was essential to the first years of the enterprise and who always reminded me of the aims of general education. Chicago's Russian specialists—Michael Cherniavsky, Leopold Haimson, Arcadius Kahan, and Hugh McLean—gave their time to make improvements in the selections. Richard Hellie, Jean Laves, and Marianna Tax Choldin acted as able assistants. Elizabeth Ireland and Wells Chamberlin first suggested publication. Michael Petrovich inspected the volumes and made valuable suggestions. Ruth Jensen piloted the manuscript through its many stages over three years and proved to be the ideal secretary. Last, but most important, my students at the University of Chicago supplied the curiosity and enthusiasm which is their valued hallmark. To them these three volumes are dedicated.

THOMAS RIHA

CHICAGO



# 18

## RUSSIA UNDER PETER THE GREAT

By John Perry

Beginning in the fifteenth century and down to the present, Western technicians have gone to Russia in search of employment. Often they were hired by the government to help modernize the country. Peter the Great hired more of them than any previous ruler. Below is a passage from the account of one of them who served in Russia as a hydraulic engineer for fourteen years, 1698–1712. He had been hired by Peter during his historic embassy to London.

The work is filled with enthusiasm for the potential riches of Russia, respect for the labors of the great Tsar, and condemnation of the backwardness of Russia's population. Perry's rather disappointing experiences are representative. It should be remembered, too, that he was not entirely innocent in his dealings with the Russians. His book exerted a good deal of influence at the time of its appearance; Voltaire used it as a source for his own two-volume *History of the Russian Empire* (1759).

For a brief sketch of Perry, see Peter Putnam (ed.), *Seven Britons in Imperial Russia, 1698–1812*. Another account of Anglo-Russian encounters is M. S. Anderson, *Britain's Discovery of Russia, 1553–1815*. A contemporary of Perry, Charles Whitworth, wrote *Account of Russia As It Was in the Year 1710*. For a biography of Peter, see Vasily Kluchevsky, *Peter the Great* (paperback), and the much larger *Peter the Great* of Eugene Schuyler. For an analysis of the Soviet view of Peter's reforms, see Cyril Black, *Rewriting Russian History*. For nautical matters during this period, see Sir Cyprian Bridge, "History of the Russian Fleet during the Reign of Peter the Great," *Publications of the Navy Records Society* (London), Vol. XV (1899). Voltaire, who saw Peter in Paris during the second of the Emperor's visits to western Europe, wrote a *History of the Russian Empire under Peter the Great* which was commissioned by the Empress Elizabeth. The reader should also consult the *Memoirs* of Peter Henry Bruce, who served in Peter's armies from 1710 to 1724.

### AN ACCOUNT OF RUSSIA, PARTICULARLY OF THOSE REMARKABLE THINGS DONE BY THE PRESENT TSAR

In the year 1698, his Tsarish Majesty being then in England, making his observations of our arts in building and equipping out our fleets, among several

artificers etc. whom he was then pleased to entertain, I was recommended to him

From John Perry, *The State of Russia under the Present Tsar* (London, 1716), pp. 1–13.

by the then Lord Marquis of Carmarthen, Mr. Dummer (then Surveyor of the Navy), and some others, as a person capable of serving him on several occasions, relating to his new designs of establishing a fleet, making his rivers navigable, etc. After his Majesty had himself discoursed with me, particularly touching the making of a communication between the river Volga and the Don, I was taken into his service by his Ambassador Count Golovin, who agreed with me for the Salary of 300 pounds sterling per annum, to be paid me, with my travelling charges and subsistence money upon whatsoever service I should be employed; besides a farther reward to be given me to my satisfaction at the conclusion of any work I should finish.

Soon after my contract was made, the Tsar going from hence to Holland, took me along with him thither, and after I had made such observations as I had there an opportunity to do, I was sent directly to Moscow, with orders for my being immediately dispatched from thence into the province of Astrakhan, about a thousand versts (or Russ miles) beyond Moscow, to survey a work, which his Tsarish Majesty had before designed, and another person been employed upon for the making of the abovesaid communication for ships of war as well as trading vessels of burden, to pass between the Caspian and the Black Sea, by way of the said two great rivers, the Volga and the Don. The first of which rivers, after running between 3 and 4000 Russ miles through the Tsar's country, falls into the Caspian Sea; and the other, after running near half as far, falls into the Black Sea.

The distance of which communication between the said two rivers is about 140 Russ miles by way of two other small rivers, the one called the Lavla, which falls into the Don; the other the Kami-shinka, which falls into the Volga; up-

on these small rivers sluices were to be placed to make them navigable, and a canal of near 4 Russ miles to be cut through the dry land where the said two small rivers come nearest together; which work, if finished, would be of very great advantage to the Tsar's country, especially in case of any war with the Turks or the Crimean Tatars, or with Persia or any of the countries bordering on the Caspian Sea. A draught of which intended communication, I laid down.

The said work was first begun by one Colonel Breckell, a German, who was a colonel in the Tsar's army, and who had the reputation of a very good engineer as to fortifications, and the like; but he very little understanding this business which he had taken upon him, and having unaccountably designed the canal, and the first sluice which he placed being blown up, that is having given way at the foundation, and the water taking its course underneath, at the first shutting of the gates, he therefore, upon his coming to Moscow the winter following, obtained a pass to be given as for one of his servants, whom he pretended to send for necessaries for the work, and himself went off with the said pass, and made his escape out of the country.

The Tsar had advice of this whilst he was in England and therefore he was pleased to send me immediately forward to examine whether the work was practicable or not. Accordingly I went and surveyed it the same year. His Majesty was pleased to order me to take it upon me, and to begin the canal in a new place, that I proposed as more practicable for it.

Upon which work I was employed three summers successively, having demanded 30,000 men for it, but never had half that number, and the last year not 10,000 men given me, nor the necessary artificers and materials that were wanting, sufficiently provided. Of which I

every winter, at my return to Moscow, gave a list into the Tsar's own hand, setting forth the necessity of being better supplied with what was wanting. But the Tsar having about this time lost the battle of Narva, and the war with Sweden being like to continue, which required more immediate supplies of men and money; in the latter end of the year 1701 I received orders to let that work stand still. I was sent to do another work, at Voronezh. And Prince Alexei Golitsyn, who had the government of the province of Astrakhan, where the work was situated, was displaced by the Tsar from his command, for his having discouraged the work, and not having supplied me with the necessary men and materials; for which the said prince ever after became my irreconcilable enemy, and by his interest (being allied to the greatest families) influenced the next lord, under whose command I afterwards served, very much to my prejudice.

Besides the general dislike which most of the old boyars had to all new undertakings which the Tsar, by the advice of strangers, engaged in, beyond what his predecessors ever had attempted to do, one occasion which made the Lord Golitsyn particularly dissatisfied with the said work, was this: after the aforesaid Breckell had unskillfully fixed his first sluice, which upon the first trial of the waters gave way, fearing the dangerous consequence that might fall upon him in an arbitrary government, deserted as aforesaid, and afterwards writ a letter of complaint to the Tsar against the said Lord Golitsyn, alleging that he had not been supplied with necessaries for the work, and particularly complained of the ill usage that he had received from the said Lord, who was then an enemy to the work, and who had struck him with his cane, and threatened to hang him. This happened whilst the Tsar was

abroad; and the Tsar having accused the said Lord, on his coming home, as not having discharged the trust that was reposed in him, he thereupon became irreconcilable to the work, and made reflections upon it, as a thing impossible to be done by the hands of men. He represented it as burdensome to the country by the number of men that were employed in it, and used all his endeavors to have had it given over as impracticable, declaring it as his opinion that God had made the rivers to go one way, and that it was presumption in man to think to turn them another.

As soon as I arrived in Moscow, by order as aforementioned, I petitioned for my salary that was then due to me, and which I was in hopes to have received, having as yet not been paid a penny of it, but only my subsistence money.

At this time my Lord Apraxin (whom the Tsar had a little before sent to supervise the said work, and who had then the chief inspection of building the Tsar's Navy, and is since made Lord High Admiral) was pleased to discourse me concerning his Majesty's ships at Voronezh, which being built of green timber, were in a very short time so decayed that they were ready to sink in the river. I told his lordship that there was a method which I believed might be put in practice upon that river, or somewhere near it, without careening, or the least straining of the ships, to place them upon the dry land to be refitted by damming up the course of the river . . . which his lordship told me would be a very acceptable service. Assuring me that I should be better assisted with men and materials than I had been with Prince Golitsyn; and that he would not only justly pay me my wages but that he would be my Patron, and help me to all my arrears which I then petitioned for, as soon as I had done this work which