Life is one, life is short — there is no time
to live and act not freely, pretending.

MERAB MAMARDASHVILI
From notebooks (1972–1984)

A. Kolesnikov, J. Lloyd
Learning to Live Free. Yuri Senokosov, Lena Nemirovskaya, and the Moscow School of Civic Education.
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Photos by Oleg Nachinkin; also photos from the personal archive of Yuri Senokosov and Lena Nemirovskaya
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Learning to Live Free is the history of late Soviet and post-Soviet Russia told through the lives of the two leading Russian intellectuals, Yuri Senokosov and his wife Lena Nemirovskaya, who founded the most ambitious project in the sphere of civic education, the Moscow School of Political Studies, currently known as the School of Civic Education. In 2014, the Putin regime declared the School a "foreign agent."

The book is about a Moscow girl, who came from a family of a high-ranking government official purged by the Stalin regime, and a boy from a remote Russian province, who grew up alongside exiled Chechens and German POWs. Both were able to overcome the fear of the Stalin era and the censorship of the late Soviet time and become free in an unfree country. They were destined to meet some of the best people of their time, including the most prominent philosopher of the Soviet period, Merab Mamardashvili, and the ecumenical priest Father Alexander Men, both of whom influenced their worldview.

Having become free, Senokosov and Nemirovskaya started teaching freedom to others at the end of the Soviet era, making civic education their mission. Hundreds of their students are still assimilating civic values and are prepared to build civil society, even under authoritarian conditions.

Andrei Kolesnikov
in collaboration with
John Lloyd

Learning to Live Free

Yuri Senokosov,
Lena Nemirovskaya,
and the Moscow School
of Civic Education

Translation by Leon Geyer

Riga
2022

Fear has returned to everyday life in Russia. This excellently written book by Andrei Kolesnikov is about the people who found a way to overcome fear during the Soviet years and refused to adjust to the new realities of Putin's time. They haven't turned into anti-Soviets. They have simply become free and remain free till this day.

***Andrei Soldatov, Irina Borogan**, Journalists*

Lena Nemirovskaya and Yuri Senokosov's life experience doesn't just point to the importance of freedom, but also to its intrinsic significance with no ifs, ands, or buts. Moreover, free people aren't just capable of self-expression and self-actualization; they also create an air of freedom around themselves, which affects others. The School that Lena and Yuri created helps people not only become more enlightened, but also more tolerant, understand other people better, respect their rights and freedoms.

***Alexei Makarkin**, Political Scientist*

This compelling book sets out the philosophical and political ideas underpinning a lifetime of inspirational work by Yuri Senokosov and Lena Nemirovskaya to promote responsible enlightened citizenship in Russia and beyond. A must-read for anyone interested in knowing what drives idealism and dedication to open and modern societies in a world beset by so many political, environmental and health hazards.

***Jack Hanning**, Secretary General of the Association of Schools of Political Studies of the Council Europe*

One may not look into the future with despair – the more so, with fear – and still be a free man. Freedom is impossible without communication – it is impossible in isolation, or behind an iron curtain. Lena Nemirovskaya and Yuri Senokosov built their life on this principle. On this principle they founded the School. The book is dedicated to this subject.

***Mikhail Fishman**, Journalist, Author, Anchor TV-Rain*

A modern society, free and prosperous, is made up of citizens who understand and accept responsibility for their actions. Lena Nemirovskaya and Yuri Senokosov have created a School of Civic Education, which has helped thousands of Russians become citizens and assume responsibility for their lives and country.

***Sergei Guriev**, Professor, Provost, Sciences Po, Paris*

This book is a fascinating biography of a couple and their creation, the Moscow School of Political Studies, an important institution in the last thirty years of Russian history. Understanding the need for Enlightenment, both as philosophy and concrete knowledge, Nemirovskaya and Senokosov developed the School's seminars as a combination of an intellectual "salon" and a modern platform for studies and exchange. The School had a centripetal effect of attracting young, gifted Russians and prominent lecturers, both Russian and foreign. Through the founders' involvement in the "intelligentsia", the readers get a chronicle of the intellectual currents and persons from Khrushchev's "thaws" in the 50s and 60s all the way to the dusk of Putinism.

***Michael Sohlman**, Executive Director of the Nobel Foundation (1992–2011)*

A GIRL FROM LACE HOUSE. A BOY FROM CHECHENGORODOK

Before she met Yura (Yuri Petrovich Senokosov), Lena (Yelena Mikhailovna Nemirovskaya) spent most of her life in the famous Leningrad Prospect building in Moscow, built by the architect Andrei Burov a year before the war began.

Lena was a girl from the Lace House: a U-shaped residential dwelling conceived as a typical concrete block building, but for the ornamental grates made of dyed concrete based on artist Vladimir Favorsky's sketches. They lent the building an air of elegance, turning it into an elite residence. Besides, it's people who make a name for a place, not the other way around. To rise to fame, the building ornamented like expensive lace lingerie just had to have the trendy, favoured by Stalin poet Konstantin Simonov, who took to walking the hallway on the fifth floor smoking his pipe, and the popular blondie actress Valentina Serova, among its residents.

The Lace House was devised to bear a faint resemblance to Boris Iofan's House on the Embankment, a gloomy building above the Moskva River, where Stalin's elite lived and were often arrested — hence its tiny kitchens, good enough only to heat up some food and grab a snack. After all, the newly engineered Homo Soveticus was to eat collectively, in public places. As a result, the apartments of Burov's house, scattered along ample hallway space, aren't highly prized on the secondary housing market — few people are willing to move into the atmosphere of late Stalin's Russia and look at the world through Favorsky's ornaments, which are simply masking the banality of the structure.

As for the Nemirovsky home routine, matriarchy — the kingdom of grandmas, aunties, and mom — reigned here. It was well organized despite social and political upheavals outside, despite the father's arrest in the late

1940s; the kingdom of comfort that can be found at homes of Jewish Moscow or Leningrad intelligentsia, or pretty much any families that make their home a counterbalance to reality, a way of resisting it. According to Alexei Simonov, his father Konstantin Simonov, "never ate at a table covered with a newspaper." That's how it was in the Nemirovsky family; they always, even in the worst of times, set their table with a white tablecloth.

At the very same time, a boy was growing up in the town of Belousovka, 100 kilometres from Semipalatinsk, up the Irtysh River in Siberia. The Senkosov family ran away from the Sverdlovsk region fearing the arrest of Yuri's father. A photo from the mid-1950's shows Yuri the tenth-grader in Ust-Kamenogorsk, where his family was living at the time. He is wearing a dandyish cap and ostentatious white pants. His choice of white pants goes all the way back to that time, and the elegant Senokosov puts on a pair of white slacks till this day.

It may've been in 1955, the same year when the boy who grew up in the Chechengorodok neighbourhood on the outskirts of Ust-Kamenogorsk among Chechen deportees (Chechens were moved to Siberia, Kazakhstan and Kirgizia by Stalin's regime in 1944 for «collaborating» with the Germans) and German and Japanese POWs, enlisted the help of his neighbour to tie up his drunk father who was beating his mom. He then left home and decided to go to Moscow for good by literally getting on the roof of the train.

The boy had always carried the aftertaste of war about him, even when it was over. On September 1, 1945, Yura went to school, while the tenth-graders were getting ready to go to war. A bit earlier, in March — April 1944, a slew of Chechens and Ingushes were brought to Eastern Kazakhstan. They took these people off trucks and left them at the square by the railway station on the snow that was yet to melt. They made a bonfire and sat around it singing. Yura and his peers ran to the square to take a peek.

In the summer of 1952, there was a conflict between the Chechens and guest workers, and the authorities essentially imposed martial law in the

town. Guardsmen drove Chechens, who were living in adobe houses, to the Irtysh River and forced them into the water. The wounded dotted the streets. People, who were looking at all of this from the roofs of their house, repeated the word "war" and continued living with the feeling that a war is certain to come. Any kind of war, maybe even a nuclear one.

Violence and the inability to be the master of one's own destiny — the feeling of unfreedom — vividly marked people's life at that time.

The German and Japanese POWs lived nearby behind the barbed wire. They played soccer with the boys on weekends and carved toys out of wood for them. On weekdays, they were escorted off to work, and he remembered one of them — a tall blond man, who was refusing to work.

A Chechen girl married a Japanese man despite the protests and threats from her community. They didn't speak each other's language, but lived peacefully, built a house, and worked in the garden. But the girl was killed by her kinsmen two years later, and the devastated Japanese man disappeared. Shakespeare's plots would pale in comparison.

In 1960, when as a student in the Moscow State University, Yura went to visit his parents in the summer, he witnessed the following scene during the train stopover in Novosibirsk. Armed soldiers were taking around thirty people off the train — these were three Chechen families that decided to come back home. By that time, he had already seen real life in the country, having visited the virgin lands of Central Russia with a concert brigade over his student vacation. But for the rest of his life he remembered the eyes of the Chechens, full of helplessness and humiliation. And this happened at the apex of Khrushchev's thaw.

What did the girl from Moscow's Lace House and the boy from Chechengorodok on the outskirts of Ust-Kamenogorsk have in common? Most likely, it was fear of war, injustice, and violence. They both came out of Stalin's overcoat or were coming out of it, rather. Shedding fear was what many of their peers had to deal with, a subject of reflection on oneself, the country, state structure and society.

However, the experience of coping with violence wasn't the only thing that helped these two people to endure several periods of Russian history. Loved helped as well. Decade after decade, fascinated with each other, they were working for the public cause — literally, *res publica*. They were creating civil society and managed to involve hundreds of rather well-known people in it, both in their country and the world at large. First, they did it in their kitchen on Kutuzov Prospect, in the building that faces the Hotel Ukraine colossus, which several generations of Soviet people remember for the ever-present line of people in front of the plumbing supplies store. Then their work continued through the seminars at the Moscow School of Political Studies (MSPS), the school they founded in 1992. After the start of the government campaign against the so-called "foreign agents," the school was forced to start operating as the School for Civic Education (MSCE). But when the atmosphere in the country took an even more dramatic change for the worse, the discussion again moved to the roundtable of Lena and Yuri Nemirovsky's old-fashioned Moscow apartment, and then to their new Riga apartment, closer to Europe. They emigrated to Latvia in 2019 when it was no longer possible to work in Moscow. It appears that the history of civil society has come full circle, but it is not over yet.

They have lived a few lives together. The ideas, values and people they met are unique. Their acquaintances boast a diverse range of biographies: some are legendary like that of Merab Mamardashvili, whose lecture recordings were circulated among the Soviet intelligentsia; some are very hard to believe, like that of the Italian interpreter Yulia Dobrovolskaya; some are tragic as in the case of the underground writer Vladimir Kormer; yet others are successful, like in film director Otar Ioseliani's example. Nemirovskaya and Senokosov equally comfortably enter the House of Lords, whose member, John Keynes' biographer Lord Robert Skidelsky, is their friend, as well as the School expert. They also come to visit the former Executive Director of the Nobel Prize Committee Michael Sohlman, who takes care of something in the kitchen and then brings a bottle of brownish-orange aquavit to the table.

These people and the atmosphere they created and have been creating, as well as the cultural codes they exchanged, will probably follow the fate of Atlantis. But the civil society — be it in kitchens, seminars, heads, or deeds — will remain, as will the value of civic education.

Yura and Lena assimilated the essences of the people they encountered, worked and made friends with. They came across mentors, people-conduits who opened doors and were turning points in their lives. The most important ones were a liberal clergyman, guide of the Russian intelligentsia Father Alexander Men, the philosopher Merab Mamardashvili, the writer Vladimir Kormer, the interpreter Yulia Dobrovolskaya. It's a rather telling professional pool, a small model for the School of Civic Education: a priest, a philosopher, a writer, an interpreter.

Having absorbed history and people, Senokosov and Nemirovskaya returned their understanding of the country to future generations and changed hundreds of people around them. That's as much as they could do in a quarter of a century the schools existed.

In addition to the kitchen and the living room, the seminar auditorium at the gaudy post-Soviet Golitsyno resort, countless meeting venues in Western capitals and Russia's heartland, the School published books and a journal, which played no less an important role. Senokosov is a natural-born publisher. Like a true bookworm, he dashes to a bookshelf, thoughtfully scans it for a brief moment, and then uses a book to illustrate an idea. He prepared so many excellent books and magazine issues for print, and by doing so, changed someone's ideological milieu. In fact, Yuri Petrovich's life refutes the Marxist maxim "social existence determines consciousness" and the Soviet proverb "the environment ate him up". The existence didn't lull but rather awakened his consciousness; he didn't submit to his environment, either — be it living in exile, proletarian settings, or communal quarters; instead, he worked to overcome it by simply applying his life experience.

A boy from Chechengorodok, who later become a guest construction worker in Moscow and a resident of Izmailovo workers' dormitory, compares the awakening of his consciousness to people's break with mythological thinking and the advent of what Karl Jaspers called the "axial age."

Their charismas are very different: Lena is authoritative in her own way, while Yura is delicate. Both of these approaches created the School. Even if the School physically disappears, it will not go away completely — it left its traces in the cultural segment of the nation, which will keep the country from sagging like a building maimed by countless renovations. Now it won't fall apart because the crucial civil society link is missing.

TO BE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE

What's a father's arrest for a child? A watershed event that divides life into before and after. It turns the outside world in a soulless force that nothing can stop, especially one's outlook on what goes on. How does it happen? Just like in Yuri Trifonov's, who was the main chronicler of the Soviet urban class and son of a repressed warlord, novel *Time and Place*, when a shivering boy stands on the train platform holding his dad by his finger saying nudgingly, "Will you come back by the 18th? You promised me! You promised me!" Then he and his mom are waiting for dad's telegram, but it doesn't arrive… The boy's father "never came back."

I first saw a picture of Lena's father in a photo insert of a Russian translation of a wonderful book written by the former British ambassador to Russia, Rodric Braithwaite — *Moscow 1941*. In it, a heavy-set, relatively young man, whose peaceful and homey countenance are in sharp contrast with his military uniform, is posing for a photographer while standing at his desk. The caption reads, "Mikhail Nemirovsky, the head of the Kransnopresnensky District Council during the war years." Engineer Nemirovsky worked as the deputy director of the Proletarian Labour metalwork plant before the war. The plant still exists in the former Krasnopresnensky District, on Shmidt Proyezd Street, near the former district Communist Party headquarters. Nina Vasilyevna Popova served as the first secretary of that party district committee from the start of the war. A woman in her early thirties, she started ascending the party and government ladder while still young. In post-war years, she was one of the most outstanding Soviet career women — the trade union leader, then chair of the Committee of Soviet Women, and finally the head of the Soviet Associations of Friendship and Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries. But back then, at the outset of the war, she was transferred to the Krasnopresnensky District Communist

Party Committee. Popova and the District Council chair Nemirovsky, who was heading the civilian defence force from the first days of the war, joined the Krasnaya Presnya underground committee — essentially a resistance brigade created in October 1941 in case Moscow would fall to the Germans.

The war was drawing to a close. Everyone survived, and Lena was returned to the Lace House.

When German POWs were marched through Moscow on July 17, 1944, that building on Leningrad Prospect was at the start of their route. Lena wasn't even six yet, but she remembered these "hapless people," as she calls them now.

The predecessors of current political propaganda operatives, those enjoying extra food rations and sporting high military ranks, blue epaulettes, and squeaking boots, have tried a bit too hard. The idea of the mass spectacle was to feed the hungry Germans, so that they have diarrhea along the way, and then roll out street cleaning vehicles. In a twisted attempt at humour, the operation was named The Great Waltz — an allusion to the very popular 1938 movie (released in 1940 on Soviet screens) about Johann Straus, his wife and mistress, starring Miliza Korjus, who incidentally managed to escape the Soviets by leaving Estonia for the US.

But the organizers of the 1944 event went wrong in one aspect. They were indeed able to showcase Soviet military might, although in violation of the Geneva Convention that prohibits insults and abuse of POWs. But they failed to accomplish their other goal, which was to incite the general public against the Germans. The victors looked at the humiliated and defeated enemy soldiers and felt no anger toward them. There was just this feeling of bitterness from seeing duped or just forcibly driven to the front, predominantly very young people, who were no different from our boys they were shooting at. At any event, they had no horns or hooves. The idea was to walk Nazis along the streets of Moscow, but Germans walked instead. Not much of a difference for the times, but a difference, nonetheless. In this sense the operation backfired. It humanized the "cursed horde," as

the German troops were referred to in a Soviet wartime song. The horde used to be anonymous, but suddenly tacked on tens of thousands faces of deceived and humiliated people. In the same way, Soviet citizens returning from German captivity would soon find themselves among the deceived and humiliated after being sent to Stalin's prison camps.

Mikhail Nemirovsky, an associate of Moscow district and city executives like Nina Popova, the future Communist Party First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev, and the future CPSU Central Committee Secretary Ivan Kapitonov, also ended up in a Stalin prison camp after the war. Someone unsuccessfully tried to intercede on his behalf. When Nemirovsky returned from the Gulag after Stalin's death, Kapitonov helped him get a job in one of Moscow's construction organizations.

What was life in the Lace House like after the war? On the one hand, Lena's father was arrested. Her relatives sent letters to Abakumov, Beria, and Stalin that never reached Abakumov, Beria, or Stalin. On the other hand, there was nothing particularly extraordinary about that: just like in millions of other families, and Yuri Senokosov's family as well, life proceeded as usual, ostensibly detached from grief and fear. In a sense, fear, injustice, arrests, and deaths were part of normal: only two of Lena's classmates had fathers who were alive and never got arrested. But, on the whole, Lena had a feeling that her life was different from others. Here is why.

Everyone lived in communal apartments, while she had a separate one. She was surrounded by aunties and grannies. Love reigned in the family. But she'd rather be an ordinary Soviet citizen than a Jewish girl from a "greenhouse" with a piano and original works of German philosophers. She'd rather not belong to a special group, which could be accused or "forgiven" for something at any moment, as Nemirovskaya's and Senokosov's friend, the late head of Memorial (an organization that preserved the memory of the repressed, now liquidated by the Putin regime), Arseny Roginsky once put it. It would've been better to be just like everyone else, be a part of something big and indivisible. This way one could be protected from the

outside world. When Lena's father was arrested, her grandma tore up Jewish books for exactly the same reason: to protect the family. Jewish books were part of being special and thus would compromise one's position. Besides, state-sponsored anti-Semitism started shifting into high gear at that time.

Then there was an all-girls' school, a melting pot of sorts, not particularly typical, but quite common throughout the entire Soviet era. Girls from working class communal apartments studied alongside kids of actors and poets, like Tatyana Okunevskaya and Yevgeny Dolmatovsky. The daughter of the Communist Party Propaganda Department head Georgy Aleksandrov, who later fell victim to a high-profile sex scandal, also attended the school. Among other famous students were the kids of a well-known Communist functionary Dmitry Shepilov, and the journalist Petr Lidov, whose sketch Tanya told the country the story of Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya (a saboteur executed by the Nazis, included in the pantheon of Soviet mythological figures worshipped). Other residents of the building constructed before the war for the *Pravda (The Truth)* newspaper, the main propaganda tool, employees, as well as writers' families from nearby Begovaya Street, also enrolled their daughters in this school.

The school left few special memories for Lena. There were two "nice" teachers there — in literature and math. She studied well, but wasn't a straight "A" student in this "pathologically Soviet" educational institution, as she likes to call it.

She had to learn to "understand things" even while in school: she couldn't choose a liberal arts calling because of her ethnicity; she had to pick a "solid" profession.

Chechengorodok offered a totally different outlook on the world, albeit solely in terms of living standards. Electricity first appeared there when Yura started sixth grade. Everyone was so happy that they kept the 150-watt light bulb turned on at all times — they even slept with lights on. The boy's ears hurt from electricity.

Childhood memory, and human memory in general, consists of flashbacks, happenstance or life-shaping ones. Some people — perhaps those who ran away from continuing repressions — were sometimes spending nights in the room behind the curtain. Feeling of squalor and emptiness in a schoolmate's room — his father didn't come back from the front. A few books by Dostoyevsky, who was still banned at the time, in a shoemaker's room — a feeling of semi-underground…

And after all of this, on July 14, 1955, the Alma-Ata — Moscow train arrived in the capital after a five-day journey, accompanied by popular Soviet composer Isaak Dunayevsky's Moscow Lights welcoming music. Two friends, the 18-year-old young athlete Yura Statsura and 17-year-old Yura Senokosov, a young man clad in twill pants and a tank top, came to conquer the capital. Arbat, Lenin Library, Kremlin… The step-dance masters decided to become actors, but failed — after all, 30 people were vying for one seat. They didn't get accepted to a clown school either. Then the friends decided to get recruited for a Spitzbergen expedition, but they didn't get in either, because of their age.

The next desperate move was to get drafted into the military. They tried, but age got in the way again. There was just one avenue left — Glavmosstroi construction authority, SU-73, workers' dormitory on 8th Parkovaya Street in Izmailovo, a 20-person dorm room, and construction sites. There were many of them in Moscow at that time: The Detski Mir toy store, the Luzhniki Stadium, the Taganka bath and laundry complex. Senokosov got hired by Glavmosstroi just in the nick of time — starting next year non-Moscow residents could no longer stay in the capital.

When you look at Yuri Petrovich Senokosov, a refined intellectual, it's hard to believe that you're dealing with a carpenter of the fourth category, a scaffolder, a man who earned a living as a folk dancer and travelled around the country with a student ensemble in the late 1950s. He tasted ethyl alcohol and frozen fish for New Year's celebrations on Dixon Island, saw tons of fish caught during the fishing season on Kamchatka's western

shore ("Moscow had no fish back then…"), performed on the Pacific Ocean cruiser and at the mountainous Tian Shan border outposts.

The construction brigade was small. In the winter, they battered frozen ground for a future excavation pit and set fires for the ground to thaw; in the summer, they did scaffolding work.

Then there was 1956, the 20th Communist Party Congress that denounced Stalinism, the Soviet invasion of Hungary, Alexander Fadeyev's, Stalin's main court writer, suicide. In 1957, some departments of Moscow State University (MSU) preferred to admit people with a worker's background. That's how Yuri Senokosov became a student of the MSU history department.

Yuri Petrovich recalls gloomy people who came back from labour camps (they studied in the university before being imprisoned). These men ate separately at the MSU cafeteria on Mokhovaya Street, where you could get free bread, tea, and cabbage. At that time, he didn't know that his future father-in-law would also come back from Mordovia camps in the mid-1950s. The people in the cafeteria kept quiet. Just like Lena's father did, not wishing to talk about the years he spent in the camp.

Here it behoves us to say a few words about the generation that came before Lena and Yura, about their parents' generation.

"One must be able to seize the day," Lena's mother said, most likely not knowing about the Latin expression "Carpe diem!", and about the fact that American writer Saul Bellow won the Nobel Prize for an essentially similar idea. She was a cheerful person who went by her first name, Polina, around the house and outside. Her speech was sprinkled with aphorisms, humorous and witty remarks, referred to as *khokhmas*, a word derived from the Hebrew word "wisdom," which is perhaps not accidental considering her Jewish origin. For instance, when she quit studying economics, she quipped, "This won't get me more men!"

She was the best friend of her son-in-law Yuri. Merab Mamardashvili liked to spend time with her and her girlfriends. She collected great

people's expressions about relations between men and women, but didn't accept Kant's work on the subject that her son-in-law brought her. "What did you give me? I didn't understand anything," she protested.

She was a public person, took care of the public hallway in the building on Kutuzovsky Prospect, where the family moved in 1975, fed dogs and pigeons. She looked somewhat critically at some of her neighbours, saying, "I hate the old people!" When she was taken out — forever, as it turned out — of the room facing the Ukraine Hotel, which later became a living room in Nemirovskaya's and Senokosov's home, she said, "let me put on some lipstick, and we can go."

She died at 90, surviving all the burdens the women of her generations were forced to deal with, including over five years of separation from her husband. An arrest of a loved one is quite a test. His return and reception are also not an easy task for anyone. Mikhail Nemirovsky kept silent. The fear lingered. He didn't like it when a copy of Solzhenitsyn's book found its way to their home. On weekends, before the move to Kutuzovsky Prospect, he would attend a church in Moscow's Sokol neighbourhood. He survived a stroke, a debilitating disease.

That generation had it worse than everyone else. It experienced all the stages of the Soviet era: a war and camps, illusions and their death, and a slow decay of the core idea that held the system in place. "They made intellectual, emotional, and physical sacrifices and saved the country," Lena says. "While their children, the "sixtiers", said no to violence."

Historical Context: The June 22 Effect

But we should start talking about coming of age, including Lena's and Yura's political coming of age, about their personal "velvet revolution," from something other than Stalin's death or the 20th Communist Party Congress. In fact, it was June 22, 1941 that played a crucial role in their lives. The date went missing from the list of most significant events in Russia's history, if it ever were on it in the first place. The events on this roster range from Gagarin's space flight to Putin's ascension to the throne. Victory Day ranks first, of course. But the day the war started is conspicuously absent. Moreover, in mass consciousness, continuously moulded by the propaganda efforts of all of the country's leaders, the day the war started detracts somewhat from Victory Day.

Of course, no one diminishes the significance of victory as the main event in our history, and the only date that consolidates the nation. But what's the price of this victory — the human price, first and foremost? What price did the country pay for it because it was unprepared for the other date, June 22, the day of the invasion of the Soviet Union by Hitler's Germany?

That's when even the most devout Soviet citizens started having doubts about the integrity of the Soviet regime. Stalin's disappearance in the first days of the war, followed by his address to the nation with pleading intonations: "Brothers and sisters, to you I address you, my friends," made many reflect on the regime's mistakes before the war. We read about it in Konstantin Simonov's *The Living and the Dead*. "My friends!" Sintsov kept whispering Stalin's words, <…> Did it need the tragedy of war to bring out of him such words and sentiments? What a wounding and bitter thought! Sintsov immediately chased it away." In *One Isn't Born a Soldier*, Simonov, in the words of his character, career officer Serpilin, imprisoned by Stalin and then brought back into the army service, states, "He had a strange feeling now that two neighbouring and different times existed simultaneously

back then. One was clear and simple; it had flights across the North Pole and revolutionary aid to Spain, <…> while right next to it — just take a step away — there was different time, scary and increasingly unexplainable with each passing day."

The day the war started and Victory Day have different philosophies. June 22 is a catastrophe, and a man-made one to boot. Here we have the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the annihilation of elite military commanders, and the lack of preparations for war.

As for May 9, all country leaders exploited it for their political gain. For Stalin, it was a personal victory. Leonid Brezhnev, the general secretary of the Communist party for 18 years, until his death in 1982, used the holiday to legitimate his regime — the Victory wrote everything off, while the war veteran generation was happy with public recognition and their place in society. Under Putin, the regime essentially heaped someone else's glory upon itself and got carried away with its PR-focused victory parades aimed to showcase Russia's rebirth.

May 9 allowed Stalin to convert his disgrace and animalistic fear into a personal triumph. Then, he quickly did away with wartime legacy, with the real victors. As the famous publicist Yuri Burtin wrote, the war was a time of… freedom. That's what Boris Pasternak also wrote about. "Although brightening and liberation, which everyone was waiting for after the war didn't come with the victory, as was thought, the harbinger of freedom was still hovering in the air all the post-war years, imbuing them with their only historical content." Everyone hoped for post-war liberalization: from prison inmates, who thought they would be freed following the victory, to those who saw Europe and its living standards, while advancing to the West according to the roadmap spelled out in famous Soviet singer Leonid Utesov's wartime song. Instead, the regime countered with unprecedented crackdown.

June 22 began with the Stalin phrase at 3:30 in the morning: "These are provocations by German military. Don't open fire!" The Soviet people

covered their leader, the ultimate expert in every science, for which he was very grateful. At a grand Kremlin reception on May 24, 1945, Stalin said "Thank you" to the nation in a toast, "Another people might have said to the Government: you have not lived up to our expectations; go away; we will set up another government, that will make peace with Germany and secure us tranquillity. But the Russian people did not take this path; they believed in the correctness of their government's policy and made sacrifices…" A month later, after the toast for the Russian people with their "clear mind, staunch character, and patience," at another reception Stalin drank to people "whose titles are scant, and rank is low. People who are considered screws of the great state mechanism, but without whom we, the marshals and commanders of all fronts and armies, are not worth a darn."

Soon, there was a sort of rally at the Central Aerodynamic Institute: young employees marched down the hallway, chanting, "we are screws; we are cogs." That caper went unnoticed. After all, this was a closed institution conducting classified work.

Security services were looking for the author of the poem about Stalin who wrote about "the tormented Russian people ecstatically leaking tears of adoration" after the "father's" toast, "forgiving him all his sins in advance." As it turned out, the authorship belonged to Alexander Zinoviev, a tank crewman and later a pilot with 31 operational flights, who was to become a renowned philosopher and writer.

After the Victory, Stalin started covering up his tracks, eradicating memory of the "June 22 generation" and the generation itself. The most glorious Marshal of the war Zhukov's fall from grace and the "Aviators' Case" (arrests of Air Force commanders and aviation industry managers in 1946) were just the beginning.

Stringent imposition of ideology in the political realm was a sharp contrast to the "time of freedom" that ensued after June 22, when the fight was not "for glory, but for life on earth," to use the poet Alexander Tvardovsky's words. People were defending their land, rather than the state and its

regime. In fact, part of today's war mythology comes down to equating the state and the country, which is completely removed from reality and cynically distorts the truth.

An apt example of this ideological freedom is Alexander Tvardovsky's classic poem *Vasili Tyorkin. A Book About a Soldier*. It makes no mention of Stalin, the Communist Party or Marxism and Leninism. Incidentally, this book managed to get the top Stalin Prize in 1946! Criticism of Tvardovsky started much later, when he was accused of "not understanding the role of the Party."

All in all, while "that longest day of the year," as Konstantin Simonov called it, did come to symbolize profound grief, it was also a symbol of short-lived freedom. Detached from its true significance, victory came to be used by the state and its leaders to justify their existence. As for comrade Stalin's gratitude to the Russian people and other system's "screws," it was forgotten.

NOT TO BE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE

Saying no to violence may seem deceptively easy, just like complex statements sometimes seem self-evident in science. But this "no" doesn't come out of the blue. It has to be fostered, especially in people who, like Lena, are naturally conflict-averse.

For starters, she had to overcome the inclination to be like everyone else and start making sure she is not like everyone else.

Lena needed solid college education and a clearly-defined profession. The Architectural Department of the Construction Institute fit the bill. She got accepted there in 1957, a year after Nikita Khrushchev denounced Stalin's cult of personality at the 20th Communist Party Congress.

"After birth, we get into a whirlpool of life, and when we try to figure the whirlpool out, it starts steering us toward being not like everyone else," Lena muses. "Say, dressing extravagantly. I started doing it while in college." A very important theme. Let's make a note of that to come back to it later.

Then Lena got married "all of a sudden" and had to take final exams and give birth to her daughter at the same time. And after this typical student marriage failed, she got divorced and worked in an organization with a solid name: "ProjectSteelConstruction."

All three years Lena was working as an engineer after graduation, she felt very sad. While riding the trolley, she would think that it must be nice to work as its driver, train conductor, do anything but not engineer these steel constructions. This, however, doesn't yet mean not to be like everyone else. She had to radically change her work sphere and social surroundings. For instance, she could go into art history or philosophy.

Lena got a job at the House of Friendship with People from Foreign Countries managed by her father's associate Popova, who we already alluded to. In the architectural sense, it's an even more famous and intricate

structure than the Lace House. The Arseny Morozov mansion is almost at the start of Kalinin Prospect, now Novy Arbat. Nearby are Granovsky Street (now Romanov Lane) — this was the residence of the Soviet leaders' comrades-in-arms, the Lenin Library, the Kremlin Hospital, and the Kremlin itself.

The Friendship House was the place where Yuri Senokosov once saw a girl dressed in all green, sitting at a green table and hosting a roundtable discussion with already well-known young people of that time. Among them were writer Fazil Iskander, poet Oleg Chukhontsev, extremely popular actor Andrei Mironov, director Mark Zakharov, journalist Yuri Zerchaninov… Yuri Petrovich says that he ended up there almost by chance, but he did remember the girl. It was Lena, although their real meeting only took place a few years later.

For a thinking Soviet person, in a system where nothing but the state and beyond the state existed, social circles turned out to be extremely important. There were no social networks back then, and the standing-room only Soviet-era *Aromat* cafeteria couldn't play the role of the modern-day *Jean-Jacques* café, which popped up almost on the same spot at the time of the mass urban Moscow protests against Putin in 2010s. Similarly, the Central House of Literary Workers and the Central House of Journalists couldn't give rise to civil society. But informal communication networks could. In the absence of the Internet and trendy coffee shops, those developed in apartments and kitchens; they served as proto-civil society, as well as platforms for civic self-education. And we aren't even talking about the dissident milieu, although many did have some contact with it, but simply about a circle of people that strove to think independently.

Of course, these circles — whether professional or interest-related — had their leaders, who created more communication and enhanced its quality.

These people were conduits to a new world. They educated, enlightened, and served as role models. Being around them and discussing things

with them was extremely important and flattering for a maturing individual. Being friends with them — if one felt as an equal — was especially valuable. Such people opened doors to new degrees of freedom, different life or lifestyle, to not being like everyone else.

These individuals were not necessarily teachers or older friends. It could have even been a friend of the same age. He or she wouldn't be less of a guru because of that. Yuri Senokosov's important social circles first included the MSU, and then the 1960s philosophers he was acquainted with — from Alexander Zinovyev, the future author of the anti-Soviet novel *Yawning Heights* (translated into English in 1979) and Yuri Levada, one the founders of Russian sociology, to Ivan Frolov, the liberal editor-in-chief of *Voprosy Filosofii* (*Problems of Philosophy)* magazine, and Boris Grushin, a well-known sociologist. Some of his friends also played this conduit role: Vladimir Kormer, Father Alexander Men, Merab Mamardashvili. We'll talk about their role a bit later.

Lena Nemirovskaya also had her circle of friends, which developed as an expanding universe. Even then, some of the seminars had a ripple effect. The 1965 seminar in the Georgian resort town of Bakuriani furnished a lot of new acquaintances among writers and filmmakers. Later, Lena's apartment in the Lace House became the scene of a fight between the famous Abkhazian writer Fazil Iskander and no less famous Georgian filmmaker Otar Ioseliani. Another circle was connected to *Yunost (The Youth)* magazine (one of the rare nests for liberal talented youth in 1960s) and included Victor Slavkin, whose plays were staged in the MSU theatre studio, Yuri Zerchaninov, the *Komsomolskaya Pravda (The Young Communist League Truth)* reporter who first publicized a story about Bigfoot in early 1958, and some others. This life wasn't secret, but one can't call it official, open, or allowed either. These people were searching for a way to live free.

The different circles could crisscross. In the 1960s, artists and musicians became their friends. Among them were the artists Francisco Infante, Eric Bulatov, Ilya Kabakov, the composer Alfred Shnitke. As for dissident

circles, their internal hierarchy didn't attract Lena. To her, they resembled an inverted version of the Communist Party Central Committee, the state turned upside down. It's especially true of the Solzhenitsyn circle. She thought it suppressed individuality, and an individual aspiring to freedom wouldn't want to leave one collectivist world to end up in another.

Lena became an independent person in those years. She became free and did so inside the system. "But I realized something else," she says. "I have to pay for this freedom." That had to be done individually rather than collectively. One had to learn to think beyond the concepts of a small group, absorb people, and change. Leadership and career weren't the goal. An individual had to be introspective, understand his or her abilities, and function outside of a small group, seeking to share something he or she understood. Quite tellingly, such companies didn't waste time on discussing the Soviet regime.

One may say that this desire to share your experience and understanding of your interests with others gave rise to the School, made up its nucleus — civic education the Soviet way. As Nemirovskaya herself describes it, "these were chances that were used."

Remaining flexible in her personal life, trying to avoid conflicts, Lena stopped being flexible in the public sphere. She acquired a way of thinking. "At 31 — 32, I started figuring something about myself, stopped shying away from my individuality. I no longer wanted to be like everyone else. I understood that I'm free."

Later this way of thinking was solidified thanks to communicating with Merab Mamardashvili, but Yulia Dobrovolskaya was first.

People-Conduits: Yulia Dobrovolskaya

Yulia Abramovna Dobrovolskaya, Lena's first conduit, said about herself, "My strength was passive resistance: nobody ever forced me "live by lies," think, write, and translate something I don't want."

Dobrovolskaya was a top-notch Italian interpreter and translator. Although, she started with Spanish, which she learned in a month after being ordered to do so. She then ended up working as an interpreter during the Spanish Civil War, a story right off the pages of Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. For many years since that time, persistent rumours circulated that Dobrovolskaya was a prototype of Maria, a character in the novel, and the writer's lover in real life. "…And he saw her tawny brown face and the yellow-grey eyes and the full lips smiling and the cropped sun-burned hair and she lifted her face at him and smiled in his eyes."

True or not, but love stories changed the course of Dobrovolskaya's life, sometimes radically.

Yulia Abramovna Bril was born in Nizhny Novgorod in 1917. She studied in the Languages and Literature Department in Leningrad (former LIFLI) and was a student of Vladimir Propp, the author of the famous *Morphology of The Folktale.* In 1937, the Defence Ministry selected several students who had to learn Spanish, which wasn't taught by her department at that time, in 40 days. Then they were to be sent to Spain as interpreters. Yulia Bril-Dobrovolskaya doesn't mention Hemingway in her memoirs, but she talks about a certain famous Spanish commander who was asking her to come to Mexico with him in1939.

During World War II years, Yulia worked for TASS, the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union. But before that she took a long and enigmatic route home. Those who knew her relate that she took part in the Italian Resistance, was a lover of a local aristocrat, then, concerned with her mother's

and brother's fate, had to return to the USSR in a roundabout way. Her brother the violinist was picked up by the authorities and sent to the front, where he was killed in the first days of the war.

…Many times when Yulia was walking to work, a car with government plates followed her — an alarming sign, indeed. Turned out it was General Alexander Dobrovolsky, who was tasked with transporting the Zeiss optics plant to the USSR after the war — at that time the Soviet government was taking entire factories out of defeated Germany. He fell in love with Yulia for her strut and started pursuing the object of his passions. A love affair ensued, but Yulia was taken to Lubyanka on false charges, as was always the case at the time, in its midst and then to serve her sentence in the Khovrin prison camp plant.

The head of the 2nd Defence Ministry Department in charge of optics and devices, Alexander Yevgenyevich Dobrovolsky went to the camp to propose to Yulia Bril. And that was after Stalin's powerful collaborator Lavrenty Beria himself told him, "Go find yourself a different wife."

In 1945, Dobrovolsky's future wife was amnestied. In a quintessential Hollywood plot, the enamoured general was waiting for her by the prison gate in his black ZIS automobile. Among her fellow camp inmates was a beautiful girl by the name Nina, who later married the outstanding astrophysicist Vitaly Ginzburg. The period when human dignity was flagrantly trampled on had been marked with amazing love stories, when for the sake of their feelings people risked not only their careers, but freedom and lives.

In 1946, Dobrovolskaya was invited to teach Italian in the Moscow Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Language. She and then the 68-year-old Sofia Guerrier, daughter of the famous founder of the first higher education institution for women, Vladimir Guerrier, had the following conversation:

"But I don't know grammar!" Dobrovolskaya admitted.

"Not a problem! Here is the Migliorini grammar textbook for you. You'll learn it today and teach it tomorrow," Guerrier retorted. Problem solved.

Later she was forced to leave the foreign language institute; her husband was demoted to director of a small plant, then restored to his previous position. Her circle included scientists like Lev Landau, and humanitarians like the poet Oleg Chukhontsev.

A difficult divorce from the jealous Dobrovolsky followed. He once found Yulia, who ran away from his never-ending depression, in the company of her friends. "We cried while hugging each other. He understood that I won't come back after my reaction to his proposal:

— Let's get into a car and ram full speed into a wall or a tree.

— Let's do it. Right this moment. I'm ready…

I haven't seen him since then — up until his funeral."

Yulia Abramovna taught at MGIMO, the University, which was preparing the diplomatic elite. She taught Italian to the TASS long-time Rome correspondent, Lena's and Yura's close friend, Aleksey Bukalov, who unfortunately also passed on already. In 1965, she assigned her students to translate Anna Akhmatova's interview to the Italian *Unita* newspaper after the poetess received the Etna-Taormina Prize. The department head G. "expressed hope that comrade Dobrovolskaya would acknowledge her mistake and redeem it with honest labour."

Comrade Dobrovolskaya snapped:

"Let me tell you this. We all have to bow down to Anna Andreyevna Akhmatova."

She then talked about Akhmatova being the "pride of our country." But the most important thing she said was:

"I am sure you all think the same way, but are afraid to say it. And I want to have nothing common with the provocateur G."

"Then I left, slamming the door behind myself. That's how my pedagogical work ended."

After that there was translating work. Dobrovolskaya knew all the Italian celebrities, from Renato Guttuso and Gianni Rodari to Federico Fellini and Umberto Eco. She married the Latin America scholar Semyon

Gonionsky. They lived in the same building as the popular Russian-Jewish writer, the author of the term The Thaw, Ilya Ehrenburg, on the fifth floor of 8 Gorky Street with the Dolgoruky monument looming behind their windows.

Their address became a symbol of freedom of communication for many intellectuals. It was a normal Soviet double life, which stemmed from the "intelligentsia's double consciousness," as the writer and philosopher who will appear in our narrative, Vladimir Kormer, called it: on the one hand Dobrovolskaya was a translator for the Soviet Ministry of Culture and the Society for French and Italian friendship; on the other, she and her home continued to attract people who were yearning to think free.

Gonionsky passed away in 1974, at the age of 57. It took Yulia a long time to get over it. She even had auditory hallucinations: she thought she heard the key turning in the keyhole and her beloved husband was coming back home.

The two people-conduits, who were to become witnesses at Yura's and Lena's wedding, crossed paths when Dobrovolskaya first saw the philosopher Merab Mamardashvili. She interpreted speeches by Italian guests at a literary conference in Moscow. It was 1971, and Umberto Eco was the head of the Italian delegation. They were talking about structuralism, and Dobrovolskaya was having difficulty finding adequate translation vocabulary. But a bold bespectacled man with prominent facial features came to the rescue. That's how she got acquainted with the idol of Russian intelligentsia, Merab.

At that time, Lena Nemirovskaya was preparing to defend her dissertation. Of course, she needed publications. But her article was thrown out of the journal that was very important to her defence after she refused the romantic advances of one of the editors. Yulia Abramovna, who patronized Lena, decided to ask Mamardashvili to publish the article in the *Problems of Philosophy* journal, the preeminent publication in the field. However, Dobrovolskaya couldn't just show up at the editor's office herself — that would arouse her husband's jealousy.

Lena, who Yuri Petrovich calls "not a bad-looking girl herself", thoroughly prepared herself for a rendezvous on Volkhonka Street, where the journal office was located. Her internal freedom manifested itself in her non-Soviet fashion style, but here she had to best herself. She put on high lace boots, which her girlfriend at *Mosfilm* studio procured for her. She also wore a peplum coat. Such a woman could hardly leave any conqueror of women's hearts indifferent. And she apparently succeeded this time, although they just discussed business. The deputy editor of the *Problems of Philosophy* was sitting in his small office, smoking *Gitanes* cigarettes, which he received from France. "The condition for publication is the quality of the article," Mamardashvili said. For some routine work reasons, he asked Lena to call after the New Year, on February 11, 1972.

Even though everyone in her home was sick at the time, Lena called Merab as agreed. He was brief: "I read it. Come." She had to come then. "I will call in the editor who will be working on this article," said Mamardashvlili. It was Yuri Senokosov. Lena remembered the last name because of an article on structuralism in the fifth volume of the Philosophic Encyclopaedia.

That's when Nemirovskaya started communicating with Mamardashvili and Senokosov. That's when both men started secretly, or rather implicitly, vying for Yelena's attention. But Merab didn't walk women home. In this sense, Yuri had an edge.

Relative to publication standards of that time, the article came out quite fast — in the June issue of the *Problems of Philosophy*, a prestigious magazine with a circulation of 39,000 copies. It was published in the Philosophy Abroad section in the issue that marked the journal's 25th anniversary.

Nemirovskaya's article was called "The Theory of Presentative Symbolism (To the critical analysis of S.K. Langer's semantic art concept)." Here is a quote from it. "Human reactions to the outside world are expressed through a symbolic network of language, science, art, religion. Symbolic activity is the "new key" to understanding human nature… Language is not the only way to articulate thought, and any thought inexpressible in

language is feeling. Hence, not every type of symbolism is linguistic… Symbol, in Langer's opinion, is the only means that allows human consciousness to be active… Langer… rejects interpreting presentative symbol as emotional stimulus. A work of art doesn't express feelings; rather, it exhibits them."

The editor started exhibiting "non-linguistic symbolism" toward the author of the article. On May 2, Yura and Lena went to the suburbs. They bought a kilo of apples, and for whatever reason travelled to Panki Station from the Kazan Railway Station. They were sitting on a hill munching on apples in anticipation of the hot Moscow summer of 1972.

That year, security services summoned Yuri in preparation for the arrest of Garik Superfin, one of the participants in the dissidents' *samizdat* magazine *Khronika Tekushchikh Sobytii (Chronicles of the Current Events)*, whom he knew. At the end of the year, a possibility of working at *Problems of Peace and Socialism (*or *World Marxist Review* in the English-language version*),* an international communist and worker's magazine based in Prague, opened up for Yuri. He had to undergo checks and a number of talks — but that's a separate plot, which we'll discuss later. That was the backdrop for Lena's and Yura's romance. To go work in Prague, one had to get married. Besides, this almost secret liaison had to come to its logical conclusion.

In August 1973, Kazakh scholars invited several *Problems of Philosophy* employees and authors to meet their readers in Alma-Ata. The meeting was followed by a bus trip to the academic resource on the Issyk-Kul Lake. Yuri Petrovich describes his impressions of the trip as unforgettable. An enormous lake surrounded by tall snow-capped mountains resembled a circus arena, which looked captivatingly colourful in the rays of the setting sun. When everybody went to sleep, powerful snoring pierced through the night. It came from the preeminent Soviet sociologist Boris Andreyevich Grushin, and his neighbours had to throw pillows at him to get him to stop. During the day, Merab and Yura got on a rowboat, made their way to the middle of the lake, and quietly enjoyed the tranquillity of the mountains.

They were simply there together. During that trip, Yura couldn't muster courage to tell the friend that he's going to marry Lena. Mamardashvili received the wedding invitation on August 28. Just like Yulia Dobrovolskaya, he was a witness as their marriage was registered.

The wedding took place on September 8. On the evening of that day, live crawfish brought by journalist Yuri Zerchaninov were crawling on the floor of the Lace House apartment.

Later, Dobrovolskaya and Mamardashvili became friends. One of the phrases that Merab addressed to Yulia was to become apocryphal. "In Spain, you were fighting for the right cause, which fortunately was lost."

Once, they all went together to the Black Sea town of Lidzava, not far from Pitsunda, the Republic of Abkhazia in Georgia, where the Senokosovs were vacationing every year. When they moved into the house, Yulia Abramovna immediately removed Stalin's portrait hanging in the room for some reason and put him under the bed. Then she got sick. Merab evaluated the situation and offered to put Stalin back to where he was. Dobrovolskaya categorically rejected it and continued being sick. As soon as Mamardashvili installed the generalissimo in his prior place, Yulia Abramovna got better.

But the shadow of the regime kept haunting her throughout her life. Although she was a translator of Italian literature and a simultaneous interpreter for almost all high-profile Italians who came to the USSR, Dobrovolskaya wasn't allowed to go to Italy. The most popular theatre director in the USSR, Yuri Lubimov, whose plays Yulia attended with the Italian guests, set up her appointment with Filip Bobkov, the powerful KGB general charged with working with intelligentsia. A month later, Dobrovolskaya was permitted to visit Italy.

There is another personal story connected to Italy. It has to do with bringing Lena Nemirovsky's daughter Tanya there for treatment. Here is how Yulia Dobrovolskaya writes about it in her memoirs, "From about age of 16, Tanya was going downhill faster and faster. The doctors' diagnosis

The inseparables: Yuri, Lena, Merab. Peredelkino, 1980

Philosopher Alexander Piatigorsky

Father Alexander Men

Standing, from left to right, Yuri Senokosov and Father Alexander Men. The 1970s

Lena Nemirovskaya. A seminar is about to start. 2003

Left to right, Ernest Gellner, Yuri Senokosov, Yulia Dobrovolskaya, Lena Nemirovskaya, Tatyana Conrad (daughter of Lena and Yuri). Cambridge, the 1990s

Lena Nemirovskaya with Henry Kissinger at the School. 2006

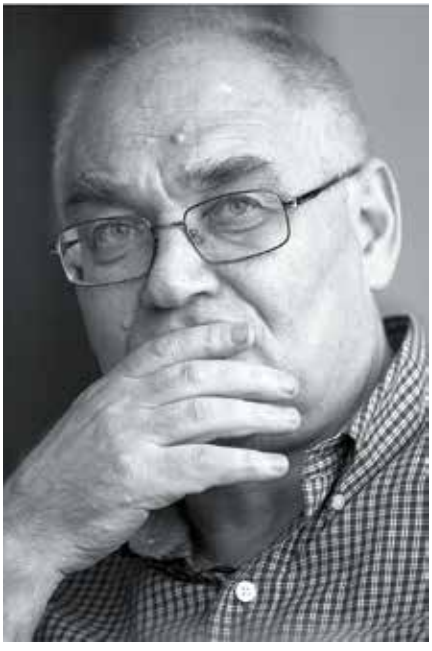
Lena Nemirovskaya with Margaret Thatcher. 2002

Anne Applebaum authored books on GULAG and Communist regimes in post-war Eastern Europe

Left to right, Vladimir Lukin, Richard Neustadt, Vladimir Ryzhkov

The School owes much to George Soros

Philosopher Ralf Gustav Dahrendorf was at the origins of the School

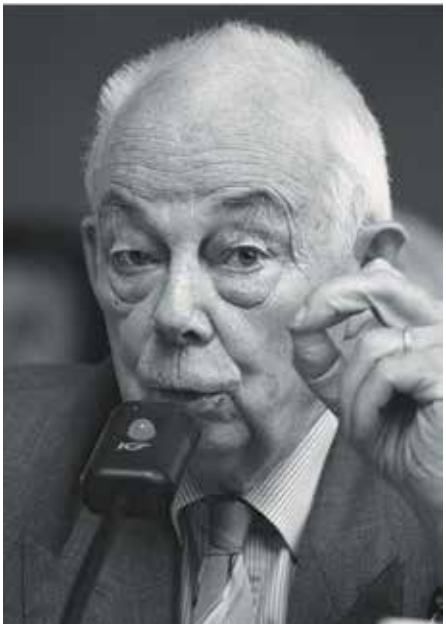


Sociologist Lev Gudkov

Michael Mertes, political advisor
to Chancellor Helmut Kohl

Ivan Krastev, Bulgarian political scientist

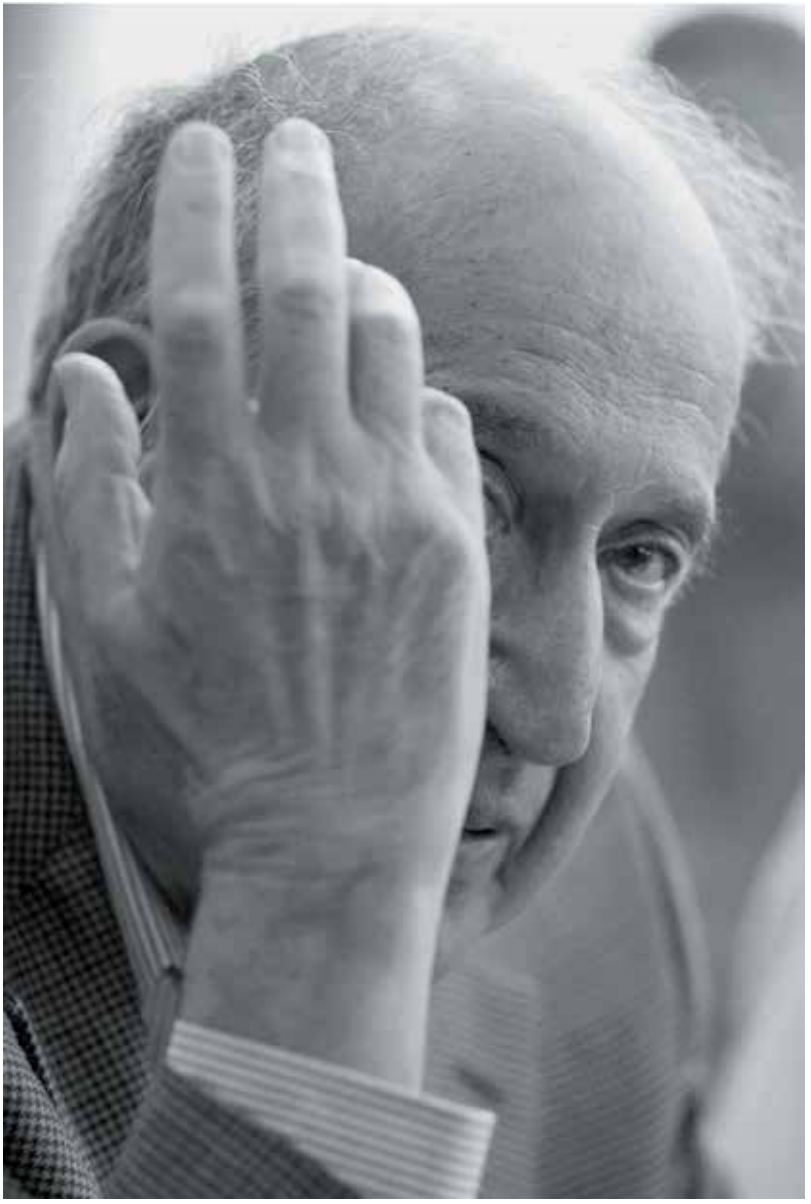
Christopher Coker, Professor at the LSE and a key expert of the School



François Michelin

Harold Berman, American legal scholar

Catherine Lalumière, as Secretary General of the Council of Europe, gave the start to the School project



Richard Pipes, American historian

Baroness Shirley Williams, founder of Britain's Social Democratic Party

Sir Bernard Ingham, Margaret Thatcher's Press Secretary, spoke before the seminars in Golitsyno

was Cushing disease, a terminal brain illness, and she was probably being treated with medication she wasn't allowed to take.

At that time, Genova University student Madi Gondolfo was learning Russian in Moscow. When she heard about Tanya's sentence, she immediately called her brother in Genova Quinta.

— Gianpiero, call all your friends. Somebody has to come to Moscow right away to marry Tanya. We have to take her to Genoa immediately and check her into a hospital…

In Genoa, Tanya was treated in San Martino, one of the best Italian clinics. She was discharged in one month….

We were seen by the head doctor:

— I can't understand how Moscow doctors could misdiagnose her so badly. Tanya has a typical psychosomatic disorder."

Later, Dobrovolskaya herself will need a fictitious marriage to leave the Soviet Union for good and settle down in Italy.

Yulia Abramovna Dobrovolskaya passed away in June 2016 in Tonneca-del-Cimona, Italy at the age of 98.

Historical Context: The Thaw

Ilya Ehrenburg's manuscript came out very soon after he brought it to the editors of *Znamya (The Banner)* magazine. It was first published in the May 1954 issue, and then as a separate copy with a modest circulation of 45,000 copies. It seemed that someone was testing the waters looking to see how the authorities would react. In December 1954, at the Second Congress of Soviet Writers, Ehrenburg's novel was criticized, and the writers stood up to honour Stalin's memory.

In his memoirs, Ehrenburg expressed some dismay over the fact that no additional copies of his novel had been printed, although the initial circulation was sold instantly. In Hungary, 100 copies of *The Thaw* were printed specifically for the Communist Party top brass. The new 1956 edition, sporting an elegant watercolour jacket, appeared after the June Central Committee decree on overcoming the personality cult and its consequences.

This essentially weak novel, albeit masterfully done as an industrial drama, actually has smiling people in it. The tyrant just passed away, and they are smiling, crying, and suffering because of forbidden love. They are tormented by their own servility. Plant staff is comprised of complicated characters, who constantly create, invent, and try something and have terrible arguments.

Ehrenburg introduces the positive and restless character of Jewish doctor Vera Sherer soon after Lidia Timashuk came up with her accusations against "killers in white robes" (based on the denunciations of physician Lidia Timashuk, the doctors who serviced top state officials were arrested — it was the last high-profile fabricated case of the Stalin era). In one of the episodes, she suddenly decides to spend a night with her 58-year-old boyfriend, whose daughter lives abroad. In the words of another character in the book, Yevgeny Sokolovsky, the chief construction engineer, who

doesn't protect his health and is afraid to confess his love for the doctor, "People straightened up now." In his *People, Years, Life* memoirs, Ehrenburg remembers the student Shura Anisimov who came to him in the spring of 1956, saying, "You know, the most amazing thing is happening now — people argue; what's more, absolutely everyone started thinking…"

Straightened up and started thinking.

This cautious and almost unremarkable novel was sufficient to lend its name to the entire era, one of the most productive periods in the country's history. Currently, Stalin is being brought into mass consciousness as one of the "lynchpins" and historical "anchors" that help us gain "correct" understanding of good and bad. But in the 1960s he was being removed from both mausoleum and the national psyche.

Similarly to Putin's regime, the authorities of that time were also trying to latch onto the past, but not to its dark pages. Rather, it romanticized and cleaned up the grey periods. Unlike the modern Communists, who have nothing left but Stalin and, paradoxically, the sign of the cross, the "mainstream" Communists of the time would never even think of bringing flowers to the vampire's grave.

Back then, no one was trying to fictitiously reconcile the "reds" and the "whites" — the regime clearly stated whose side it is on. But the "reds" were presented as kind knights moved by ideals rather than the lynchpins of traditionalism. After all, the lynchpins are about the past, while ideals take one to the future. The thaw really cleansed one's ideals, but for the sake of moving forward rather than for self-preservation.

The Khrushchev era PR campaign turned out to be very successful, declaring part of the history good, and juxtaposing it with the bad. Then the authorities proclaimed themselves to be the direct descendants of the good — especially the Revolution and the Great War. A win-win strategy.

But the thaw could also boast real achievements — those of the present, not the past. Today's public opinion views Yuri Gagarin's space flight as one of the greatest achievements in the country's history. But it came at

about the same time as the transfer of Crimea to Ukraine. How can these two events be reconciled?

True, Khrushchev screamed at the artists and called them "abstracticists" and another obscene word at the Manege exhibition in 1962. He criticized young poets and writers. But what incredible "abstracticists" these were! What poets and writers! You can still read them today. Even the early Vassily Aksenov, whose writings were adapted to communist realities, is immeasurably better than anything churned out today.

Let us reiterate. We are not talking about the specifics of Khrushchev's authoritarian and, in some respects, still totalitarian version of socialism, but about the spirit of the times.

The tacit social contract worked: one party agreed to the cleansed romanticized version of socialism without Stalin, but with Lenin (incidentally, that's how the remake of the thaw, Gorbachev's *perestroika* started), while the other allowed some expansion of freedom. And this proved to be sufficient to alter public mood and produce phenomenal quality of literature, art, cinema, and theatre, especially considering censorship conditions. That was the period when the cult of science emerged, and Western successes in science generated overall interest in the West.

That era had its style. Unlike the 1970s and the 1980s, people were trying to dress in more interesting and creative ways. That era had its popular music. In contrast to the unbearable vulgarity of today, pop music of the 1960s came with some naivete and tenderness, if you will. Popular songs produced a language that could be used to express normal human feelings rather than Communist propaganda chatter. The Soviet singer of Polish origins Edyta Piecha sang with a foreign accent; Maya Kristalinskaya penetrated your soul with words like "he came by and didn't notice;" Larisa Mondrus exposed her shoulders and legs up to the knee and — you'd never believe it — could actually sing!

Physicists, lyricists, "Little Blue Light" New Year's concerts, and even communism promised in the 1961 Communist Party platform were all part

of the positive agenda for the mainstream majority and rapidly growing urban middle class that was moving into small but separate apartments, making privacy possible.

The 1960s provided a dream. Soft power was the thaw's competitive advantage. As for hard power, the regime used it very clumsily as evidenced by the Caribbean crisis in 1962, when it brought the world to the brink of a nuclear war.

At the same time, the regime could feel completely secure, since the majority of the population shared its core ideological principles. But only because that type of society saw them as natural. People did believe we need the nuclear bomb, but only for the reason articulated in *Nine Days of One Year*, a movie starring popular actor Alexei Batalov. His character, a nuclear physicist, explains to his father that none of us would be alive now had it not been for the bomb. Such is the popular explanation of the fuzzy nuclear deterrence doctrine.

All of that reconciled people with the regime up to a point. But after 1968, the time of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the regime went into hibernation. Then the process of reconciliation continued; however, it was no longer based on common ideals; but rather on hypocrisy, mutual deceit, and indifference. Universal cynicism is what made the empire implode, more than the collapse of oil prices and the militarization of the economy. After all, the collapse of empires and regimes starts in people's heads.

The Khrushchev era lasted for only 11 years. It saw the 1956 suppression of the rebellion in Hungary, the 1962 Caribbean crisis, and the rapprochement with the US after the world was teetering on the brink of destruction. It witnessed the 20th Communist Party Congress and the slogan "Let's catch up and overtake America." There was the permission to print *One Day of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksander Solzhenitsyn, and the prohibition of Vassily Grossman's anti-Stalinist *Life and Fate* — the novel that prompted the chief Communist ideologist Mikhail Suslov to tell the author that its text can be published in 200–300 years. That time also brought us

apartment buildings nicknamed *khrushchevki* that gave the Soviet citizen some personal space. Then there was corn as a false messiah for agricultural development, propaganda of the Soviet regime during the 1959 "kitchen debates" with Richard Nixon (a series of impromptu dialogues between U.S. Vice President Richard Nixon and Nikita Khrushchev, held on July 24, 1959, at the opening of the American National Exhibition at Sokolniki Park in Moscow), and the crackdown on intelligentsia, all of the things embodied in black and white in the Ernst Neizvestny monument on Khrushchev's grave.

Khrushchev understood his historical role. One can say that he was drawn by history rather than made history himself. Here is how Khrushchev himself describes gaining his first-person status (as written down by one of his speechwriters, Fedor Burlatsky). "Beria sat down, sprawling on the chair and asked, 'So, what's on the agenda today? Why did we get together so suddenly?' And I'm pushing Malenkov with my foot, whispering, 'Start the meeting. Give me the floor.' He grew pale. I see that he can't open his mouth. I sprang to my feet and said, 'One issue is on the agenda. It concerns anti-party, schismatic activities perpetrated by the agent of imperialism, Beria. There is a proposal to remove him from the presidium and the Central Committee, expel him from the Party and put him on trial by military court. Who is for? And I raise my hand first. The rest did the same after me…"

That's the power-grabbing scenario. It's always that simple without Chekhovian subtexts. The subtexts can be found in conversations during walks around government dachas, while the plot against Stalin's chief executioner was being hatched.

The main by-product of Khrushchev's reign — perhaps against his own will, although he did accentuate the concepts of state for all its people and socialist democracy — is the appearance of the "children of the 20th Party Congress" cohort, who are responsible for promoting democratic traditions in the post-Soviet Russia.

UNIVERSITIES, TRUE AND IMAGINARY

Starting from 1958, during his summer and winter vacation, Yuri would leave his watch and overcoat at a pawnshop to travel around the country with the concert brigade. It wasn't just a way of living that Senokosov generally liked, but also a way to earn some money: in his second year, he was deprived of his student allowance and almost expelled from college for flunking a military training course. After his graduation, he received the military rank of a "trained private."

Also in his second year, the history student first discovered the *Problems of Philosophy* journal and was amazed at the language used in it: it was different, despite the presence of the ubiquitous Marxist-Leninist vocabulary. That's when he got interested in the philosophy of history. He wrote his master's thesis on the subject of Catherine the Great's Legislative Commission. Article 6 of the decree with which Catherine addressed the Legislative Commission in 1767 reads, "Russia is a European state." This could essentially be a slogan for the school that Senokosov and Nemirovskaya subsequently founded. Later, Yuri Petrovich will publish the Russian translation of Richard Pipes' work "The History of Civil rights in Russia — 1785." It dealt with the charters bestowed on the nobility and towns. These documents conferred rights on some social classes for the first time in Russian history.

What mattered most in Moscow University after the 20th Communist Party Congress was not the professors, but the circle of friends and the general milieu. The granddaughter of Nikita Khrushchev, Yulia Khrushcheva, studied journalism, while the daughter of the powerful Party leader Mikhail Suslov, modest Maya Suslova, was a history student. Mark Rozovsky, Alik Akselrod, and Ilya Rutberg founded and ran the MSU theatre studio "Our Home." Sergey Yutlevich, and later Mark Zakharov, were directors of the

Student Theatre. Young Mikhail Zhvanetsky, future beloved by the intelligentsia writer-satirist and his friends would come from Odessa. The famous 1939–1950s singer and actor Mark Bernes once performed in the MSU club on Gertsen Street, unsuccessfully. He was booed because both the tonality and content of his songs clearly didn't conform to the moods prevalent among 1960s college youths. "What does the motherland begin with?" one of Bernes' songs asked. For many young people like Yuri Senokosov it, in part, began with terror.

Undergraduate and graduate students were trying to understand their time and the history of their country. As we already established, the 1920s were being romanticized in the 1960s. This was the way to justify revolutionary fervour, adapt it to the expectations of change, and attribute morality to the revolution.

People tried to understand history and themselves through literature, cinema, and, to an even greater extent, through poetry. Yuri Petrovich says it happened because "there was no language for understanding reality." And it was impossible to describe it using the language of the *Pravda (The Truth)* newspaper. Hence the popularity of poetry and semi-iconoclastic memoirs like those of Ilya Ehrenburg. Senokosov remembers Andrei Tarkovsky bringing his film *Andrei Rublev*. After the screening, professional historians started criticizing the film for lack of objectivity and veracity. But what does objectivity have to do with it, Senokosov asked himself? How should it be expressed?

Even before being accepted to the university, trying to get to, using Boris Pasternak's words, "the very bottom of things," he started frequenting the Central Archive of Arts and Literature, where he copied Osip Mandelstam's poems by hand. He was also fascinated with wartime poetry, in particular with Pavel Shubin, the author of the "Volkhovskaya Drinking Song," which was sang to the tune of an even better known "Our Toast" song, but with no mention of Stalin. Trying to find out something about the poet who died in 1950, he secured an appointment with high-ranking dignitary,

editor and writer Alexander Chakovsky, who also wrote about Shubin and served in the frontline newspaper on the Volkhov Front. The two met, but Yuri learned nothing new after the meeting.

Senokosov wasn't the only individual trying to rediscover himself. The entire generation was seeking their place in life, ways to understand the reality and themselves. Generally, they did it by distancing themselves from their fathers' generation, although the "sixtiers" came from different age groups, as one of the prominent representatives of that generation, sociologist Boris Firsov, correctly points out. This is a socio-political generation rather than one defined strictly by age. But age played some role too. Vladimir Kornilov writes about it at the end of 1960 in his "Fathers and Sons" poem dedicated to the literary critic Stanislav Rassadin.

> Fathers say: Such is life, our children
> Fate absurdly render as apart
> To our death, we stood for our ideals.
> While you're only standing for yourself.
>
> We're like steel, and you are like an oxide.
> As if coming from another ore
> We grew up believing: being brutal
> Is a show of kindness at core.

A real rebellion — a generational one, if you will — took place in 1962 after Yuri graduated from college and was sent to teach history in the Altai region village school, over 100 km away from the regional centre of Barnaul. He didn't stay there for long, effectively escaping Moscow for the second time in his life, believing that he didn't leave Chechengorodok to end up in a faraway Soviet province again.

His escape was so fast that he left his passport with the school principal. Thus, he had no choice but go back to construction work. Six months later, when the principal realized that the "treasonous" history teacher would never come back, he angrily sent the passport back to Moscow's Central Post Office, poste restante.

Yuri Senokosov then began working in the Fundamental Library of Social Sciences (abbreviated as FBON in Russian) located on Znamenka (then Frunze Street), adjacent right to the Lenin Library.

Here is how Yuri described that period of his life: "I stayed in this library for around three years. It was an amazing place and an amazing time. Yes, after Khrushchev's "retirement," the thaw was over. But I just remembered the lines from my poem written on April 12, 1961, the day of Gagarin's space flight. 'The Sun was hot in blue abyss. The streams were chiming like streetcars. And flocks of doves amid sky bliss weaved spring embroidery like rugs. One breathed thirstily and lightly…' It was during that time, while talking to co-workers and readers and reading forbidden books in a special storage room, I realized why I want to be free."

The early 1960s was also a time when foreign magazines and scientific literature could be peer-reviewed and published as thematic volumes. In addition, at Ilyichev's order and in keeping with the decision made by the Central Committee, academic institutes started hosting methodological seminars. A few years later, these were prohibited, though. Here is why.

Senokosov's co-worker in the library was philosopher Grigoriy Pomerants, whose works were published in *samizdat* and distributed in intellectual circles. At one of such seminars in the Institute of Philosophy on December 3, 1965, Pomerants asked to speak about Stalin's personality cult. The next day the speech was discussed on foreign radio, and the seminars were shut down.

Of course, from the standpoint of self-improvement, the FBON was an excellent place, a real university — this job allowed one to read inaccessible texts written by Russian émigré authors. For instance, Senokosov discovered the works of Russian philosopher Georgy Fedotov (1886–1951) right at that time.

At the same time, at the invitation of his university friend Boris Oreshin, Yuri started to teach history in the famous Physics and Math School No. 2 located behind "Moscow" universal store. It was an incredible school in its

own right, boasting very unorthodox faculty, for instance, literary critic and human rights activist Anatoly Yakobson. Its students were no less bright: just take Vadim Delaunay, who would participate in the Red Square protest against the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia five years later. The school also hosted evening classes for the MSU math school. In 1972, the school was effectively crushed when its director and a number of teachers were terminated. But Senokosov didn't stay long in that unusual school either.

In spring of 1964, he found himself a circle of like-minded people. Then he met Mikhail Meyerson-Aksenov, a priest currently living in the US, Yevgeny Barabanov, a philosopher of religion, who subsequently participated in Solzhenitsyn's *From Under the Rubble* (1974) almanac, Vladimir Kormer, and Father Alexander Men. All of them were close to Father Alexander in one way or another, although not all of them could be called his congregants. Thus, a group that studied Russian philosophy and science came together, and Yuri Senokosov was the first to deliver the "grim chronicle" report on the Russian scientists who were killed, shot, and starved to death during the time of the country's Civil War. This "chronicle" was being published in the "News of the Russian Academy of Sciences" in the 1920s. He also went through all the *Bolshevik* magazine issues of the 1930s, which published lists of those sentenced to death. In order to eradicate violence, one had to describe and reflect on it first.

Senokosov and Barabanov visited the Lenin library to search for the early 20th century newspaper articles written by Nikolai Berdyayev, Sergei Bulgakov, Semyon Frank, and other Russian philosophers. At the same time, other group members decided to reprint their books published outside of Russia. That was Senokosov's first publishing experience, or to be more precise, that of religious samizdat, which Mikhail Meyerson was actively involved in at that time. Several times Yuri Petrovich went to the vicinity of the Sokol metro station where a trustworthy typist typed up five or six copies of books that she received from him. At almost the same time, the poet Alexander Galich would write, " 'Erica' can take four copies," referring to the typewriters used to disseminate *samizdat* literature.

People-Conduits: Alexander Men

Father Aleksander Men was brutally axed to death in the early morning on September 9, 1990. He was a symbol of the country's Christianity, non-official and non-nationalistic Russian Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy with a human face.

Bleeding profusely, Father Alexander was trying to find his briefcase in the grass, when a passer-by asked him who maimed him so badly. "No one, I did it myself," was the answer.

There was truth to that answer. Alexander Men attracted hatred as much as he attracted love. And the degree of hatred was such that the ecumenical priest could indeed say that he himself directed the fundamentalist fanatics' axe at himself.

The police unsuccessfully looked for the killers. Actually, they had no chance of finding the perpetrators because they couldn't get out of the old Soviet rut of looking for a commonplace motive. Outside observers of the investigation and trial were then totally incapable of figuring out why the suspects or defendants incriminated themselves.

It resembles Russian liberal politician Boris Nemtsov's murder in 2015. Investigators were also looking for a commonplace motive and quickly found scapegoats. The investigation dragged on for too long, which points to the investigators' professional incompetence or their overpowering political interests.

Father Men's murder is also somewhat similar to the murder of Galina Starovoitova, the democratic movement leader from the 1980s and 1990s. In that case, the police did find the murderer. But the motive wasn't entirely clear. Was it revenge for something abstract? A feeling of resentment connected to a particular statement? Envy?

Revenge and resentment are key words that we'll come back to later.

The resentment of insulted fundamentalists was probably what killed Alexander Men. They were insulted by his ecumenism, his fantastically productive educational work. They wanted to eradicate the source of the ecumenist scourge and enlightenment, the missionary work, if you will, which wasn't the strong side of the official Russian Orthodoxy.

It makes sense that Alexander Men was code-named "Missionary" in KGB reports. Incidentally, despite the surveillance, wiretapping, persecution, and searches, the priest didn't shy away from talking to KGB officers, believing that since they're also human, they need to be educated. In other words, he treated his oppressors as a Christian should.

The famous art historian Igor Golomshtok — not a religious person, but someone who fell under the sway of Men's charms — wrote quite frankly that Men was killed by the aggressiveness, intolerance, and resentment expressed by the fundamentalists, who can hardly be called Christians: "Men's ecumenism was heresy to the Orthodox church, and the Orthodox fear heretics — not only religious, but also ideological and political ones — more than they fear their direct opponents. I've recently read in a newspaper that Father Alexander's books were burned in the courtyard of a Moscow monastery. I have no doubts as to who initiated the September 9 events."

There is an important phrase in Igor Golomshtok's memoirs: "Men wasn't trying to convert me to any faith." He wasn't because he acted as an educator. Faith can't be forced upon people. Father Alexander's books are interesting and captivating, just as Mayne Reid and Jules Verne were for kids, because he made Christianity a fascinating historic and geographic journey, thus attracting people to faith rather than alienating them from it.

There was no contradiction between science and religion in Father Alexander's writings. Vladimir Kormer apparently described Father Alexander very accurately in his *Heritage*. Father Vladimir, a character in that excellent novel, in whom you can easily recognize Father Alexander Men, tells a person who comes to him, "Only science can save." Instead of

church literature, he recommends those who wanted to know more about Christianity and read something on the subject Nikolay Berdyaev's *Philosophy of Free Spirit* (Men was a true fan of both Berdyaev and Vladimir Solovyov) and James Frazer's book *The Golden Bough*.

With a few strokes, Kormer paints Father Vladimir so precisely that we see Father Alexander in front of us: "a corpulent man with a big head about 40 years old or even younger (Men was in his 30's at the time, but looked older — *A.K.*), who looked like the Assyrian king Assurbanipal."

Senokosov remembers that there was some logic to how Men arranged books in his library: symbolically, religious literature was placed higher than secular. Vladimir Kormer noticed that as well: "Evenly placed books gave away their owner's bibliophilic tastes. Right away your eye caught multivolume German and English religious dictionaries and encyclopaedias, but generally books were arranged according to their rank. Brockhaus was down below, with the Jewish Encyclopaedia alongside. One shelf up, one could find ethnography and anthropology, then history, then philosophy, and on the very top, there were religious studies and holy literature."

Kormer demonstrates how Father Alexander was trying to resolve the eternal dilemma faced by intelligentsia — whether to work under the Soviet regime or live "outside of normal conditions:" "We have to work and do our job well, — he said suddenly with some irritation, — and try to be decent people… But all this anti-cultural nihilism is extremely harmful." To a large extent, Merab Mamardashvili and others like him shared this position.

Senokosov recalls that he once asked to see Men for confession: "He refused to see me. I was offended." Later it turned out that the priest would've had to inform the authorities about this request and Yuri's employers — the Institute of Philosophy and the *Problems of Philosophy* magazine — would've been notified.

While serving as an intermediary between the heavenly and earthly, Men was too close to ordinary people. For him, there was almost no line between the divine and the human, or the divine and the human merged into one.

Men's involvement in his congregant's Yekaterina Genieva's life is quite telling. Genieva was an outstanding director of the Russian State Library Foreign Literature. In 1989, after a long struggle with the state, a renowned linguist Vyacheslav Ivanov was elected the library director (it was a true election, as was commonplace during *perestroika* years). The enormous amount of administrative work was a burden to Ivanov, so the decision was made to transfer the management of the library to Genieva. That's when she had a conversation with Father Alexander Men. He happened to be the man whose opinion on this matter could prove decisive.

"I have no time for administrative work," Genieva said quickly.

"Why not?" was Father Alexander's question.

"I'm a writer. I write."

"What are you, Leo Tolstoy?"

And then he uttered an essentially prophetic phrase. "Time will be granted to you." Indeed, it was. Genieva continued to work in that capacity for quarter of a century, up until her death right on the job.

Yuri Senokosov wasn't Men's congregant in a strict sense of the word; they were just friends. Father Alexander was a sort of a guru to him, as they say nowadays. Senokosov helped the priest by sending him literature for his work. But we could call him Men's follower in an ecumenical, broad sense, although he did address Men as a friend by his informal name Alik, rather than Father Alexander. They met a long time ago, at the 1964 New Year's celebration. The first question Yuri Petrovich had on the day of the murder, September 9, 1990 was "What for?" But the answer was clear: for his teachings, for his lightness, for his kindness, for his openness, for his popularity. For his humility — that morning, Father Alexander was in a rush to catch a 6:30 train to work, to the temple.

Of course, he wasn't the first clergyman to take up the role of an educator and missionary. Men himself remembers the post-war years, when on Sunday evenings Father Andrei Rastorguev taught the Gospels, and Father Alexander Smirnov, "thanks to his connection with security services,

received permission to set up a movie theatre-like screen in the Nikolo-Kuznetsky Cathedral and showed colour slides, taught the Sacred History, and explained the sacraments every Sunday night. There were so many people in the room that some fainted." But some time after 1950, this free-for-all came to an end.

According to Yuri Senokosov, Alexander Men was seen as an "ecumenist apostate:" "He was accused of meeting the Baptists and praying with them, as well as sympathizing with the Catholics. After some of his flock became disenchanted with Orthodox Christianity and joined the Baptist church, he was criticized for allowing that to happen."

Frequently asked about his take on Catholicism, Father Alexander generally answered: "It's fine. Our partitions don't go all the way up to God." He was never forgiven for being ethnically Jewish. The scholar of Russian nationalism and political Orthodoxy, Nikolay Mitrokhin, wrote that the person of Father Alexander elicited fears of Renovationism and Catholicism, "although [he]came from a born-again family with ties to the Catacomb Church" (i.e. Orthodox Christians who don't recognize the Soviet regime). Yuri Senokosov says that "'Russian patriots' constantly hounded Men with threats in the mail because he was Jewish."

One may say that Father Alexander was doomed. He attracted extremely different people and extended an equally warm welcome to all of them. The examples range from Alexander Solzhenitsyn, whom Men kindly found "charmingly primitive" to Alexander Galich. He was only about 30 when there was a "population explosion" among his congregants, as he himself described it. Orthodox neophytes who were looking for their place in Christianity and "pretty much anyone" were joining his congregation. Men remembers that his future avowed opponent, nationalist writer Gennady Shimanov, "came accompanied by seven maidens asking whether I am a Catholic." At the same time, Men was surrounded by perhaps the best people in the country. He led burial services for Nadezhda Mandelstam and Varlam Shalamov, married Alexander

Solzhenitsyn, went to Moscow almost every day, performed rites, spoke about Christ's life…

Later, nationalists and fundamentalists found their own spiritual leader. It was Dmitri Dudko, who, according to Nikolay Mitrokhin, subsequently became a spiritual advisor to the *Den* nationalistic newspaper, which was then renamed *Zavtra*.

That's how the schism, which the Russian Orthodox Church doesn't recognize, happened. It was between the nationalist, intolerable, and aggressive branch of Orthodox Christianity and the ecumenical camp — liberal and friendly, like Father Alexander himself. Two different factions took trains from the Yaroslavl Railway Station — one went to see Dudko; the other was off to visit Men.

But the schism wasn't only between the tentative "nationalists" and "ecumenists." In his article written for *From Under the Rubble* almanac in 1974, Yevgeny Barabanov talked about the schism between the church and the world: "One's own piety has become the main concern for a Christian. From such a perspective, the concept of Christian responsibility for the world's future inevitably loses any meaning." We end up with piety for the sake of piety. As a result, "the ideas of obedience and peaceful submission to external authority have proven to be especially popular. They opened the door to conservative conformism, not only in individual ethics, but in church life itself."

It's easy to guess what position Father Alexander Men took on this dichotomy.

Yevgeny Barabanov emphasized a few more important points, which are still relevant: "It's especially important today to overcome our fixation with pseudo-religiosity. Just because we attend church and know the order of the liturgy doesn't at all mean that we are the only ones who do ultimate good. In and of itself, our being with the Church is not an entitlement or a patent for salvation. Only God knows the secret of personal salvation." And one more metamorphosis: "all too often, converting to Christianity, to

Orthodox Christianity, simply means a change of ideology. But ideology — however true it might seem — is not capable of liberating a person."

Whereas in the 1960s and 1970s Father Alexander attracted a large but relatively local audience — his permanent congregants, neophytes, and the Moscow intelligentsia, in *perestroika* years he acquired a materially larger audience — the entire country. His books were published officially — not in samizdat or abroad — and enjoyed large circulations by late Soviet standards. His in-person appearances in all kinds of venues — from culture clubs to the Luzhniki Stadium attracted an enormous number of people. It's obvious that the fundamentalists weren't about to tolerate this kind of competition.

An icon and an axe have long been fixtures of traditional Russian homes, as James Billington's eponymous book informs us. Of course, an axe was there for peaceful purposes. As for an icon, sometimes it turned into an axe, a weapon of intolerance used against those who dared to think differently. Just like dogmatic official Marxism jailed the dissident true Marxists, the official church didn't accept those whose views were broader than the ritualistic aspects of faith.

To eliminate the victim, one first had to see him as a traitor who desecrates the sacred. That's what prompts and motivates the assassins of educators and politicians.

A quarter of a century ago, Yuri Senokosov said the following in an interview with Andrei Fadin for *The 20th Century and the World* magazine: "The justification mechanism is extremely simple. Before killing a person, one just needs to stop considering him a human being and call him, say, a traitor, or an enemy of the people, or a Judeo-Mason. This, in my view, is a manifestation of a paganist component in our culture… People believe in the "cleansing" ritual purpose of punishment… This is a paganist murder committed by those who continue to think that such things can actually somehow help to overcome the crisis that we find ourselves in now."

Historical Context: Resisting the System from the Inside — *Novy Mir* Magazine and Its Enemies

Fifteen years separated the first time the poet Alexander Tvardovsky was dismissed as most-popular Soviet literary monthly magazine *Novy Mir (The New World)* editor in 1954, and the ideological pogrom initiated with the help of the "Letter of the Eleven" written by nationalist writers ("What Is *Novy Mir* Advocating Against?", *Ogonek*, Issue 30, 1969). This historical segment managed to fit the thaw and subsequent "freezes," which culminated in Tvardovsky's second and last dismissal and death in 1970.

The events around *Novy Mir* perfectly illustrate the simple adage that history repeats itself. And it inevitably repeats itself as farce. Now it's a farce of self-censorship in the Russian media; back then, it was a tragedy of censorship. However, the *Novy Mir* story also presents an instructive case — that of consistent resistance, against all odds.

Now self-censorship helps to eliminate ideological extremes, so instead of the green media tree of the 1990s full of flowers and leaves, we end up with a dried-out, bare ideological oak coquettishly covered with plastic grape leaves. From time to time, intimidatingly aggressive official propaganda serpents endowed with some hypnotic powers emerge from behind this artificial wilderness.

In the 1960s, the Communist Party preserved the purity of its ideological platform, trying to find space between the democratic liberalism of *Novy Mir*, the hard-line conservatism of *Oktyabr (The October)* magazine, and the obsessive nationalism of *Molodaya Gvardiya (The Young Guard)*. But today we are dealing with the modernized system of ideological checks and balances that dates all the way back to Brezhnev's time but adapted to Putin's Russia that no longer bothers to alternate liberalism

and extreme nationalism as it did before the annexation of Crimea, instead presenting only bare straightforward aggression.

Back then, at the time of apparent unity, both the Communist Party Central Committee and the Komsomol leadership structures were home to Russian nationalists, liberals, and those promoting socialism with a human face. We witnessed the same situation in the pre-Crimean times, which now seem relatively innocuous: Russia was dashing toward the future in its cutting-edge crop duster sporting a liberal and hard-line wing, tilting to one side or the other, getting lost in the ideological fog due to the temporary failure of the navigation system. Subsequently, the plane was put on isolationist and "patriotic" autopilot supported by state-sponsored television and national-patriotic fervour on social media.

It's generally believed that the events around the denunciation of *Novy Mir* by eleven nationalist writers harmed only the magazine and the "sixtiers" as a democratic intellectual movement, a precursor of *perestroika* and reforms. But it was more complicated than that. The eleven Russian nationalists who endorsed this fruit of collective labour completed in the office of *Ogonek*'s editor-in-chief, the nationalist communist Anatoly Safronov, were in effect responding to the attack launched by *Novy Mir* publicist Alexander Dementyev, who accused the *Molodaya Gvardiya* writers of "Slavophilic messianism." The complexity comes from the fact that by assaulting *Novy Mir*, the regime was trying to maintain balance: while it eliminated the Tvardovsky team, forcing the writer to resign, the Central Committee Secretariat also removed the *Molodaya Gvardiya* editor-in-chief Anatoly Nikonov, derisively putting him in charge of the "cosmopolitan" *Vokrug Sveta* ("Around the World") magazine. Vsevolod Kochetov's *October* magazine was also disciplined for excessive conservatism (that was another double yellow line that one couldn't cross).

Nevertheless, *Molodaya Gvardiya* and *October* were organically close to the regime that sent its tanks to Prague, while *Novy Mir* remained a stranger. Therefore, the "letter of the eleven" put a final nail in the *Novy Mir*

coffin. A year earlier, in 1968, the authorities wanted to replace Tvardovsky with Vadim Kozhevnikov, an active regime loyalist who headed *Znamya* magazine for an astonishing 35 years. So, essentially, the fate of the liberal movement in ideology and culture had been sealed then. All their complaints about the Central Committee, liberals notwithstanding, the signers had to know or at least sense that. In this sense, it was a low blow. Otherwise, such regime loyalists as Simonov, Surkov, Isakovsky, and Smirnov wouldn't rush to *Novy Mir*'s defence.

Novy Mir countered with a refined and delicate editorial that accused its opponents of "undiscriminating ideological and artistic views, poor understanding of reality, bad taste, and lack of independent writing." But everyone clearly understood the debate's meaning, as well as the message of the *Novy Mir* piece. Even earlier, Vsevolod Kochetov, who continued editing *October* up until his suicide in 1973, said, "They pretend that they're aiming at aesthetics, but they're firing at ideology."

(In 1969, Zinovy Paperny came out with a parody of Kochetov's novel *What Do You Want Then?*:

"'Two concerns are gnawing at my heart,' Felix admitted frankly. 'German revanchism and American imperialism. Something must be done here, father. One more hitch. Have wanted to ask you for a long time. Tell me please, was there 1937, or 1938 that came right after 1936?'

'1937! Just fancy!' his father exclaimed evasively. His look grew colder, but the eyes warmed up…

'Sorry, father, it's me again,' said Felix while entering. 'So, what is it? Was there 1937 or not? I don't know whom to believe.'

'There wasn't,' answered the father in a tender fatherly way. 'There wasn't, sonny. But there will be…'")

The editor of *Novy Mir*'s Politics and Science section Yuri Burtin, who lived for the magazine and worshipped Tvardovsky, provided a good explanation of why the "patriotic" tilt was closer for many people than the Soviet regime itself. In the early 1990s, I often talked to Yuri Grigoryevich,

a somewhat dry, impeccably intelligent man of ironclad democratic principles. In one of the interviews he told me, "At that time, the restoration of the Stalinist regime was seen as *Novy Mir*'s main adversary. The longer we lived in peace, the weaker the system's main pillar — official Marxism — became. It has to be complemented, built up, rather than replaced. *Molodaya Gvardiya* and later *Nash Sovremennik* magazine have in fact become such a complementary pillar. It was never allowed to attack them in earnest… *Novy Mir* expressed an anti-totalitarian stand, while *Molodaya Gvardiya* became one of the ways to protect and preserve the system, lend it the air of additional solidity."

From Burtin's diary. The July 26, 1969 entry on the *Ogonek* letter: "Never before have they written about us in such way, 'It was the pages of the *Novy Mir*, where A. Sinyavsky (a writer who from 1966 served a term in a camp for publishing his works abroad under a pseudonym; from the trial of Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel and their public defence, it is customary to trace the history of the dissident movement in the USSR) printed his "critical" articles, alternating them with foreign publications of anti-Soviet lampoons.'" In the mid-1960s, Burtin sabotaged his own dissertation defence on Tvardovsky by publicly thanking Andrei Sinyavsky, who had already been jailed at that time.

Right after his resignation, surprisingly optimistic Tvardovsky was telling his colleagues that the Central Committee tasked the new editorial board with publishing a "quality" magazine. That meant they understood what level the liberal *Novy Mir* was at. But the people who followed Tvardovsky at the helm of *Novy Mir* were all quite mediocre, like Kochetov's deputy Vladimir Karpov (so the Central Committee proposals to merge *Novy Mir* and *October*, thus solving the problem, did amount to something). Again, all of this is a caricature reminder of the current times, when all media changes, which end up censoring the content and dumbing down the reader, viewer, and listener, are carried out under the guise of "quality" and "professional" journalism. Indeed, the new people will

be professional and produce quality work, but something at the core will disappear.

Yuri Burtin once showed me the "letter of the eleven," which was typeset in *Ogonek*'s trademark lean font, which outlived conservative editor Anatoly Sofronov and endured until Vitali Korotich, the magazine's *perestroika*-era editor. The same letters bearing the same number of typographic units would later be used to blow up the foundations of the Soviet regime. There are many more font types nowadays than there were back then. But sometimes it seems that the united and only possible font version seeps through all of them, soiling your fingers. The united font, the united style, the United Russia.

Technically, the *Novy Mir* story ended on February 9, 1970, when the secretariat of the Union of Soviet Writers decided to remove key magazine employees Vladimir Lakshin, Alexei Kondratovich, Igor Sats, and Igor Vinogradov from the editorial board. Tvardovsky's resignation predictably followed. On February 10, Alexander Solzhenitsyn was trying to convince the editor-in-chief to stay so that he and a handful of loyal co-workers can at least do something. On February 11, *Literaturnaya Gazeta (Literary Gazette)* printed the decision of the Union's secretariat on the appointment of the new ideologically correct functionaries to the magazine's revamped editorial board. The Central Committee Cultural Sector head Albert Belyaev would later admit that the Union's secretariat was sternly instructed to remove Tvardovsky.

On the 12th, Tvardovsky would write "Packing up things" in his work notes. The February issue of the magazine was created entirely by the old team, although the new editor, the former head of the *Khudozhestvennaya Literatura (Fiction Literature)* publishing house, Valery Kosolapov, signed it into print. That created an impression that the *Novy Mir* would retain its old contents. Yuri Burtin handed the new editor his resignation letter and also wrote to his colleagues that by continuing to work for the magazine "we become direct and very valuable accessories to the crime, a weapon in the hands of the organizers of the Stalinist coup."

…Tvardovsky was first removed from his editor's post for Vladimir Pomerantsev's article "On the Sincerity in Literature." Then the concept of "sincerity" morphed into the concept of "truth," which was of primary importance to the *Novy Mir* of the 1960s. Truth was more important to Tvardovsky than literature's artistic merits: he was always looking for factual material in texts and decried "belletrization," as he called it. For Tvardovsky, once the government's favourite poet and the author of the famed *Vasili Tyorkin*, struggle for truth eventually became struggle for freedom. (When at a public gathering Pasternak was asked which literary work on the subject of war he considers most important, he named *Vasili Tyorkin*. When some in the audience started chuckling, he angrily retorted, "I didn't come here to make jokes!")

By the end of *Novy Mir*'s Tvardovsky period, the assault on Solzhenitsyn, who catapulted the magazine to fame in 1962, had already commenced. Tvardovsky's poem "By Right of Memory" was banned by censors. It came out in the West in January 1970: in the Italian *Espresso* magazine, in *Posev*, a German Russian immigrant magazine, and in the supplement to the *Figaro*. "What am I? Who am I?" Tvardovsky wrote in his diary on January 16, 1970. "[Am I] *Novy Mir* editor-in-chief or the author of a poem printed in foreign publications and banned by censorship at home?" This situation was completely strange and uncomfortable to him, and he even agreed to speak out against foreign publications of the poem provided it would be discussed at the Union's secretariat. But all that came to naught.

Vladimir Lakshin, whom Tvardovsky saw as his successor, wrote that Alexander Trifonovich started seeing the magazine as his mission around 1960. After *One Day of Ivan Denisovich* was published, already in 1963 rumours of Tvardovsky's looming dismissal began circulating and a massive attack on *Novy Mir* was unleashed. On April 23, 1963, Lakshin writes down Tvardovsky's key words about the magazine's mission: "We lack proper understanding of the scale of the cause that we are engaged in. For contemporaries, proportions are always different than they are in history. Somebody

could consider chamber Junker Pushkin a third-rate character in the life of the powerful [head of the Secret Police] Benckendorff. But it's the other way around. Ilyichev (the Central Committee's secretary on ideology Leonid Ilyichev. — *A.K.*) will be forgotten, but we will remain."

In 1965, the year of *Novy Mir*'s 40th anniversary, the editorial board published its manifesto. Two individuals prepared parts of Tvardovsky's article "On the Occasion of the Anniversary." They were Vladimir Lakshin and Alexander Dementyev (the latter was removed from his position in 1966, along with Boris Zaks, which dealt a serious blow to Tvardovsky, while the former will continue working as the deputy editor-in-chief without ever being officially appointed to the position). Although the most critical parts of the article were revised by censors, it can be considered the editor-in-chief's aesthetic and political credo. It discusses Solzhenitsyn, criticizes "touching up reality," and claims that the truth the magazine publishes can't be used by the "enemies from the bourgeois world." "We welcome disputes, discussions, however sharp they might be… we are not going to avoid raising difficult questions and will be straightforward in our judgment and reflections. That's what we stand for." Subsequently, Tvardovsky was often called on the last sentence, which was actually deleted by censors.

Tvardovsky's experience teaches one to overcome the temptation to self-censor one's work due to political circumstances. One learns not to be afraid to write the truth ("the magazine pays greater attention to works that truthfully, realistically reflect life"). As early as 1963, in an argument with a high-ranking literary official Nikolay Gribachev at some important function, Tvardovsky stated that genuine realism doesn't require "socialist" as a modifier.

We must also understand that Tvardovsky's *Novy Mir* came with a number of aesthetic limitations. The editor-in-chief accepted only the prose that he liked. He wasn't a dissident and didn't like aestheticism, that's why *Novy Mir* didn't publish many strong writers, since their prose didn't suit the editor's tastes. For instance, Tvardovsky's treatment of Yuri Trifonov

was complicated despite their generally friendly relations and the fact that they were dacha neighbours in Krasnaya Pakhra. In December 1969, Tvardovsky still managed to publish the first of Trifonov's "Muscovite novellas" — *The Exchange*, but he failed to see it as a breakthrough in Soviet prose: moral conflicts among the nascent urban middle class of the late stagnation era didn't interest Tvardovsky much. As for office politics, there were tensions between the first floor, which housed rank-and-file editors, and the second, where Tvardovsky and the editorial board sat. Excessively controversial material supplied by the first floor were often a priori unpublishable, which inevitably caused painstaking issue publication delays. In fact, Solzhenitsyn's *The Calf and the Oak* was a work that would satisfy only the first floor. But a censored magazine couldn't behave as a dissident samizdat publication — in that case, it would've immediately been closed. But for Tvardovsky, as Burtin wrote, it was important to preserve the magazine "to continue the struggle."

For Soviet intelligentsia, *Novy Mir*'s blue cover was a symbol of freethinking and anti-Stalinism (from Burtin's 1969 diary, "Generally, *Glavlit*'s (the censorship governmental body. — A.K.) main concern was to make sure that everything that could be associated with Stalin's personality cult and its consequences is shielded from criticism.") The role Tvardovsky's magazine played in awakening public consciousness is no less significant — and as far as the scope of its influence, it is clearly greater — than uncensored literature and publications, which were accessible to a small number of people.

As it turned out, for Tvardovsky himself the magazine literally meant life. Soon after the magazine was crushed, he was diagnosed with late-stage lung cancer and passed away on December 18, 1971. Tvardovsky, for whom "truth" was synonymous with "freedom," entered history not as a government official in charge of literature, nor even as a wonderful poet — although he definitely was one — but as a great editor, who defeated censorship and self-censorship — the latter being even more important in the context of today's situation with Russian print media.

P. S.

There was a period in Yuri Burtin's life when his mouth was tightly gagged. It lasted for 16 years — from the moment he left the crushed *Novy Mir* up until the very beginning of *perestroika* and *glasnost*. But in 2003, Yuri Grigoryevich was again denied the right to express personal opinion — this time posthumously, three years after his death. An author of a high school history textbook, Igor Dolutsky, quoted a politically incorrect statement uttered by Burtin about the 2000 regime change in Russia. As a result, the text was shelved thanks to vigilant efforts of then Education Minister Vladimir Filippov. The quote describes Vladimir Putin's coming to power as "a coup d'état with a prospect of establishing authoritarian rule by the president."

Yuri Grigoryevich possessed an amazing moral compass and astute political intuition fostered by years of living under the Soviet regime. Burtin is usually considered a representative of left-wing liberal intelligentsia for his intolerance for any kind of *nomenklatura*, including a "democratic" one (he was the first to use the term "*nomenklatura* capitalism" in reference to Russia back in 1995). He also vehemently opposed the war in Chechnya and was close to the *Yabloko (The Apple)* party. But Yuri Grigoryevich's views didn't fit neatly into this rigid political niche — he was a more profound and complex person.

In 1989, Burtin published an excellent article entitled "The Achilles Heel of Marx's Historical Theory". While clearly being a product of Marxist school, Yuri Grigoryevich noted that Marxism had neglected "two levers of progress:" market and democracy. Burtin treated history with utmost caution, remembering that it has a tendency of repeating itself. History, indeed, completed a vicious cycle, so the current liberals have the same enemy as Tvardovsky's *Novy Mir* did. They are nationalists and revanchists. Back then, they were *Molodaya Gvardiya* and *Nash Sovremennik (Our Contemporary)* magazines. Today's revanchists and nationalists think exactly the same. Since communist worldview completely

exhausted itself, nationalist ideology came to replace it in the 1990s. Thus, we are witnessing the very same process that was occurring at the time of Tvardovsky.

Burtin was also silent in the 1970s because after the magazine's and Tvardovsky's demise, he saw participation in periodical press at the time of the ideological freeze as meaningless. Having become one of *perestroika* gurus in the second half of the 1980s, Yuri Grigoryevich quickly shed all illusions: in his view, Russia lost the 20th century, which was bound to bring about problems in the 21st century as well. Perhaps, that belief can explain the sharpness of his articles in the last few years of his life. That said, *Novy Mir*'s dry editorial style allowed to formulate one's thoughts clearly and precisely: "If society… isn't able to bring the state under its control, we will lose the 21st century," said Burtin, as always looking into the root of the problem.

UNIVERSITIES, TRUE AND IMAGINARY
(continued)

Senokosov effectively changed his line of work, which prompted him to apply for graduate studies at the Institute of Philosophy of the USSR Academy of Sciences. In 1965, he had to take a historical materialism exam supervised by Alexander Zinovyev, Yuri Levada, and Doctor of Jurisprudence Boris Mankovsky. Mankovsky then asked the student "How about prisons and prison camps — is it a base or a superstructure?"(according to Marxist theory, the basis is the material foundations of society; the superstructure is ideological and ideal) a question that perplexed the other examiners too.

While the examinee was thinking, Zinovyev laughed it off. But the question remained open.

At the institute, Senokosov was working on a dissertation in the philosophy of history. His faculty advisor, the author of Hegel's and Kant's popular biographies, Arseny Gulyga, made him a secretary of the aforementioned methodological seminar that featured Grigory Pomerants as a speaker. Yuri Levada, Boris Grushin, and Aron Gurevich, the historian-medievalist, who came from Kalinin for that purpose, were among its active participants. The seminar materials were published in a collective volume. All this provided first-rate philosophical, publishing, and organizational training.

Meanwhile, Senokosov's friends also interacted with dissidents, particularly with Peter Yakir and Viktor Krasin, as well as émigré activists like Metropolitan Antony of Surozh and Nikita Struve. Despite the apparent dangers illustrated by the Sinyavsky and Daniel trial, by his own admission, in the 1960s Yuri "lacked understanding of the fact that one needs to exercise self-restraint."

It's quite telling that, back then, just like during *perestroika* years, Russians explored non-Marxist thinking by studying religious philosophy.

Some also delved into the neo-Marxist Western "deviations" from the ever-living source or learned something from the critique of the "bourgeois" philosophical schools.

Another characteristic of the time is the shifting borderline between philosophers' official position and independent views. It seemed that the best philosophers and scholars of humanities that lived in the USSR or worked in the *World Marxist Review* journal in Prague, crossed that borderline in either direction a few times a day. True, one knew what line was not to be crossed, but learned to cross it relatively painlessly. Of course, one could've stepped out of bounds for emotional or intellectual reasons. In that case, an "ideological worker," who was often a Communist Party member, could've become an outcast and even an exile right away.

In this context, it's interesting that Senokosov did join the Communist Party: his older colleagues Arseny Guliga, a specialist in Hegel, and Yuri Levada insisted on it, justifiably noting that this is a necessary precondition for his dissertation defence. They also supplied the requisite recommendations. In the height of the Prague Spring, just a few months before the thaw finally turned into a freeze, Senokosov applied to the Krasnopresnensky District Communist Party Committee, providing a somewhat enigmatic reason: "I ask to grant me a membership in the CPSU because I want to build a new society." Actually, he was quite sincere back then. "But what did I mean?" Yuri Petrovich asks himself today, laughing.

In 1968, Senokosov introduced Vladimir Kormer to Yuri Levada. That's how the author of *Heritage* started working in Levada's Institute of Concrete Social Research, which was just established at that time and closed by the authorities a few years later. At the end of 1969, Senokosov brought Kormer to the *Problems of Philosophy* — they were looking for someone who could work in the foreign philosophy section. Yuri Petrovich had already been working there at the time — he started in 1968 after a five-minute conversation with Mamardashvili and a recommendation by the well-known philosopher Vadim Mezhuyev.

Yelena Nemirovskaya described these circles pretty well: they had sceptical minds but weren't cynical. Although sometimes critical minds and judgments could come across as cynicism, it wasn't the case. That generation had a hard time overcoming Stalinism while also trying to understand the purpose of attempts to build something new in literature, art, and philosophy. "I lived in all kinds of times," Lena says, "but without cynicism. One wouldn't find it in human relations or public life. Cynicism is a state of one's soul. You can allow yourself to have a sceptical mind, but not a cynical soul."

Working in the *Problems of Philosophy* was not only prestigious, but interesting, especially when it was headed by Ivan Frolov, who, despite his Communist Party membership, was deservedly called a liberal and a true specialist in the philosophy of natural sciences. Senokosov was tasked with increasing the diversity of the journal's authors by attracting real experts from various fields. It was a great but not easily attainable goal. To be more precise, it was essentially unattainable given the ideological restrictions imposed by the regime.

In 1969, Senokosov published his interview with the corresponding member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences Dmitry Likhachev, who would become popular during the *perestroika* years, about the "soul of culture," which signalled to other publications that Likhachev can now be published. In 1970, Likhachev, specialist in the Old Russian culture, would become an academician. Senokosov also interviewed other significant figures like philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin and philologist Vyacheslav Ivanov, idols of intelligentsia, but none of these conversations were publishable. Even the interview with mainstream philosopher Fedor Konstantinov failed to come out. What's more, in his creative fever, Senokosov went as far as trying to contact Martin Heidegger and Claude Levi-Strauss.

Some attempts at publication triggered unpleasant and difficult situations. Once Yuri Petrovich came to the famous old school philosopher Alexei Losev's Arbat apartment and asked the semi-banished thinker to contribute something to the magazine. Like in a Near Eastern fairy-tale,

Alexei Fedorovich opened a chest with manuscripts, pulling out an old 1920s edition of *The Philosophy of Name*. The article didn't make it through the editorial board, but it was impossible to explain to Losev that a lowly employee had no chance to influence the board's decision. Senokosov had to face a barrage of unpleasant verbiage, which was obviously very upsetting.

A meeting with Academician and the Nobel Prize laureate in chemistry Nikolay Semenov also ended in a failure. His son Yuri, a philosopher and Frolov's friend, helped organize the interview. Senokosov came to the scientist's Frunzenskaya Embankment apartment to discuss the possible article for the journal. A young secretary was present at the first meeting, which was unproductive. Semenov had just suffered a heart attack and checked out of the hospital. He was alone at the second meeting, and the conversation shifted to the possible text. The academician was interested in discussing how the melted Arctic ice could affect the ocean levels, which could in turn positively impact agriculture. Senokosov started questioning the premise, argued with the host, asked follow-up questions. Semenov grew visibly agitated. It was late evening, and he eventually showed his guest the door. "And I had to report on this assignment to the editors the next day," Yuri Petrovich reminisces. "I remember Merab laughed at it, but Frolov became tense."

When it came to an article by Academician physicist Petr Kapitsa, all three — Frolov, Mamardashvili, and Senokosov — paid him a visit. Yuri Petrovich remembers Kapitsa's genuine interest in Andrei Sakharov's publicly-expressed civic position and his description of how the Americans were dealing with their lag in space research in the 1960s. The journal also reached out to Nobel laureates, physicists, and mathematicians, asking them to record lectures for school students. These lectures were then televised, which popularized science and increased the prestige of working in these fields.

In the meantime, Yuri Senokosov was undergoing a personal drama. His first wife left the country, taking their son Oleg with her. As someone who respected choices of others, Senokosov didn't stand in the way of this decision.

Merab Mamardashvili, a most significant man in the life of Lena and Yuri

Businessman Serguey Petrov much contributed to the civic education in Russia

Political scientist Alexei Makarkin

Álvaro Gil-Robles, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, was at the School's origins. On the right – interpreter Alexander Kazachkov

Lena Nemirovskaya and Boris Johnson – Mayor of London, Foreign Secretary and expert of the School. Golitsyno, 2001

Political scientist Alexei Salmin

Evgueni Barabanov, friend and colleague of Yuri Senokosov since the 1960s

Yegor Gaidar. At a seminar in Golitsyno, 2005

Politician Boris Nemtsov

Mikhail Khodorkovsky spoke before the School on several occasions

Alumnus, moderator of seminars and expert of the School Andrei Zakharov

A British talk: John Lloyd and Shirley Williams

Dominique Moïsi and Diana Pinto, in the centre

Alexander Sogomonov, the first moderator of the School's seminars

Politician Vladimir Ryzhkov

English journalist Quentin Peel, right

Toby Gati, former US Assistant Secretary of State, friend to Lena and to the School.
At a seminar in Golitsyno

Former UK Ambassador to Russia
Sir Roderic Lyne

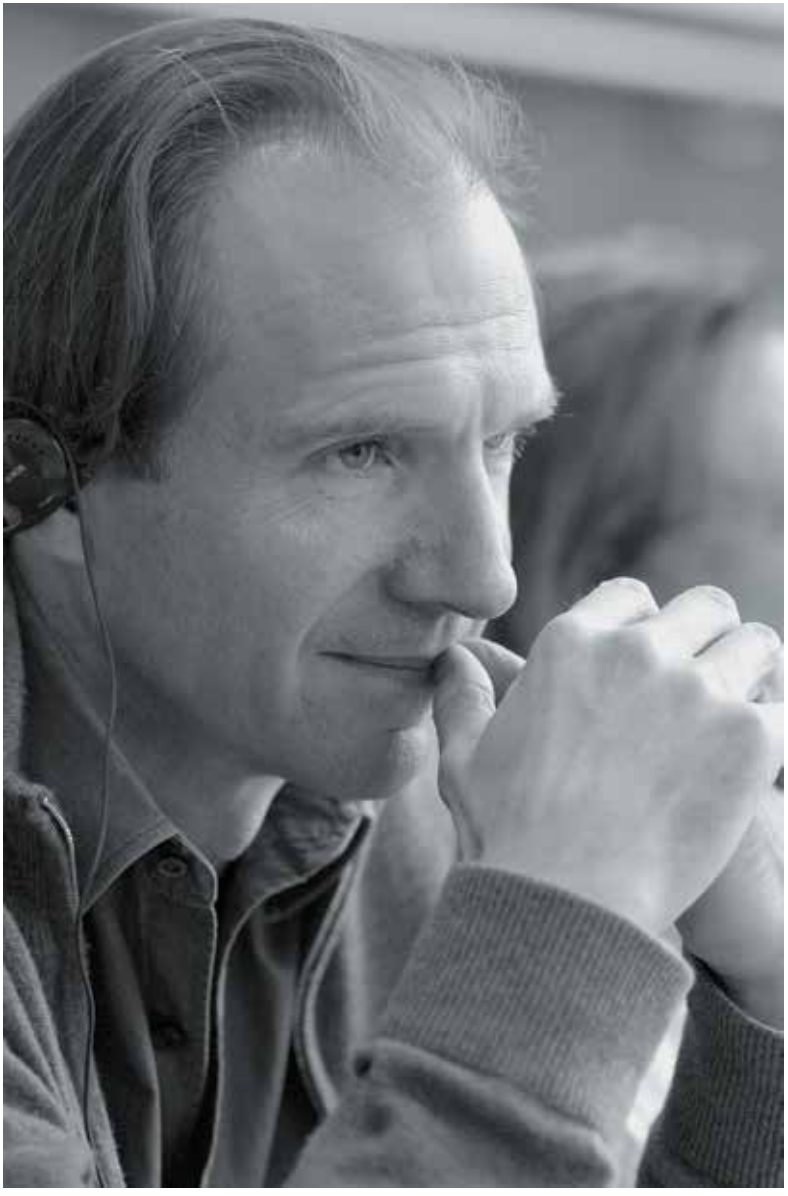
Franco-German historian Jutta Scherrer

British historian Geoffrey Hosking

Manuel Fraga, politician in Francoist Spain, who almost became a democrat

Arseny Roginsky, a founder of the Memorial Society, much loved by the entire School

Pilar Bonet, correspondent for El País in Moscow and friend to the School



English actor Ralph Fiennes in Golitsyno, 2013

But this is not the only important aspect. Silence of the protesters turned out to be more forceful than conversations and cries. It broke with the code of silence that bound people still paralyzed by fear despite the past thaw.

Paradoxically, it was silence that was an instrument for the *glasnost* demonstration — this term used half a century ago would later become a symbol of Gorbachev's *perestroika*. The demonstration was a way to overcome fear, and not only fear of authorities, but of aggressive regime supporters — one of the rally participants called them "automobile plant workers with bicycle chains," a precursor of today's pro-government activists: after all, today's security services and political manipulators merely mimic their predecessors; they never come up with anything new.

The KGB didn't understand the legal logic introduced primarily by Esenin-Volpin — security officers were irked by protestors' allusions to the Constitution. "We are talking to you seriously!" was their response. But they weren't the only party that underestimated the demonstration on the square. Many simply feared unnecessary casualties — these young people could really go to prison. Even the historian of the dissident movement, Cécile Vaissié, in her excellent book *For Our Freedom and Yours! Dissident Movement in the USSR* devotes a mere few paragraphs to the December 5 events.

Meanwhile, taking to the square and breaking silence gave civic activism an incredibly powerful momentum. After the rally, intelligentsia figures started openly signing appeals to the government, providing all their personal details. They didn't do it because they hoped for success; they just wanted to remain in peace with their conscience. Essentially, there was no need to create organizations, although they sprang up anyway. To use modern terminology, we are talking about social networks where every individual makes his or her own decision and voices his opinion openly, not from the underground.

The dissidents' attorney Dina Kaminskaya wrote that "it wasn't enough not to participate… Everybody felt this change in the moral climate; it lifted

people up in their own eyes." After that, starting from 1966, "every single act of abuse or violence on the part of the authorities generated public protest, a rebuke. This is a precious tradition, the beginning of people's self-liberation from humiliating fear and complicity with evil."

The authorities also came to their senses and started jailing dissidents. They found quasi-legal grounds for doing so, since the oddballs that took to the streets were in the grey zone — somewhere in between being law-abiding Soviet citizens and anti-Soviet activists who aim to undermine the regime as per Article 70 of the RSFSR Criminal Code. On June 8, the KGB head Vladimir Semichastny and Attorney General Roman Rudenko — who is as much of an icon to the current prosecutors as John Lennon to a Beatles fan — sent a secret memo to the Central Committee, proposing to complement Soviet criminal law with punitive articles that concern disseminating slanderous falsehood that besmirch the Soviet regime, but don't aim to undermine it.

That's right — after all, the righteous protestors ostensibly commented on the freedom-loving and democratic Constitution of 1936 and asked the state to respect and follow it. But the state craftily converted righteousness into criminality.

We could see a stark contrast in less than three years: preventive talks in December 1965 became violent crackdowns and subsequent imprisonment in August 1968. Such was the route from Pushkin Square to Red Square.

In 1967, after the third vigil at Pushkinskaya Square on January 22, 1967, which ended with arrests, just like the second December 5, 1966 rally, one of the underappreciated Russian 20th century poets, Natalya Gorbanevskaya wrote,

> "Oh, Passion Square, behold the rallygoers.
> The monastery bells toll no more.
> The snow covers empty track
> Among the throng's dispassion.

And he in cape, in chains, curls bowed.
Is still bemoaning his "cruel times?"

She didn't yet complete the track from 1965 to 1968 back then. She would in 1968, when she came out to Red Square with her baby in a stroller and a small Czechoslovak flag in hand.

"We opposed not the regime, but the regime's lies," wrote Andrei Sinyavsky's friend Igor Golomshtok, whose "improper" behaviour in 1966 first earned him a community service sentence to be served at his workplace.

Moral resistance against the regime threatens the system more than a purely political one. That's what in fact brought the regime down.

The protest against the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia carried out by seven human rights activists in August 1968, made one reframe Hamlet-like the Russian traditional question as "What do you want — democracy or sturgeon with horseradish?" Throughout the entire Russian history, people clearly chose sturgeon, even when it was nowhere to be found. A police officer from the 50th police precinct where the Red Square protestors were brought on a sunny Sunday afternoon said to one of them, the physicist Pavel Litvinov, "You fool, had you just been quiet, you would live in peace." Most Soviet people shared this position in the late 1960s, when the USSR was getting hooked on oil exports and a relatively prosperous Brezhnev stagnation era, untarnished even by the already weakened Aleksei Kosygin economic reform, was underway.

The protest started on Red Square's historic Lobnoye Mesto platform as the Kremlin clock struck twelve noon and continued for about one minute until people dressed in civilian clothes and military men who "happened" to stroll by started snatching posters from the protesters' hands and beating them. "Shame on you!" a passer-by told the protestors. And later that evening, one could hear stories about "a Czech woman with a baby (that is Nataly Gorbanevskaya) protesting at Red Square." Ordinary people just couldn't fathom that that some Soviet citizens could bring themselves to do such a thing and saw the rally as a ludicrous anti-Soviet act of hooliganism.

None of the act's participants expected to attract public sympathy and judicial leniency. Both Larisa Bogoraz and Pavel Litvinov talked about it during the trial. Everybody knew what awaited them, and everyone except Natalya Gorbanevskaya were sentenced to some prison time. They got Gorbanevvskaya, a mother of small children, a bit later in the 1970s, when she was put into a mental hospital. Actually, most of the protestors had families and children, which could've theoretically stopped them. In this sense, they were ordinary people (after all, they helped the eighth demonstration participant, student Tatiana Bayeva, get off scot-free by proving that she was arrested by accident). But this demonstration was an essential act of personal moral hygiene on their part. They weren't able to save the image of the Soviet Union, although they exercised the rights officially granted to them by the 1936 Constitution. (As we already know, human rights activists have always been excessively well-versed in Soviet constitutional, criminal, criminal procedure, and correctional labour law, and interpreted it literally). But they were indeed able to save the image of Soviet people, by demonstrating with their personal example that the era of complete unanimity is coming to an end.

These ordinary Soviet people — linguists Larisa Bogoraz and Konstantin Babitsky, poets Natalya Gorbanevskaya and Vadim Delaunay, electrician Vladimir Demliuga, physicist Pavel Litvinov, and art historian Viktor Fainberg — started the process of wearing down the monolith Stalinist granite of Soviet ideology. The act of heroism performed by seven people who cared about the questions of conscience and dignity prepared the ground for *perestroika*, reforms, and everything that has happened in Russian political history for the last twenty years.

The protestors held four posters in their hands: "Long live free and independent Czechoslovakia!", "Hands off the ČSSR!", "Down with the occupiers!", and the most famous one, "For our freedom and yours!" The last slogan, which was borrowed from the 19th century Polish liberation movement, contained the dissidents' central ideological message.

Czechoslovakia's journey to socialism with a human face seemed like a case to aspire to at the time; we wanted the same freedom as they had. (A historical irony has it that the new Czechoslovak president's last name was Svoboda — "freedom" in Russian. On that account, Soviet intelligentsia quipped, "What's freedom? — The recognition of necessity.")

The seven democrats were introducing a new, non-Marxist interpretation of freedom into people's worldview. With action rather than words, they defined the value of freedom, the freedom that one can go to labour camps and mental asylums for.

And then… there were defence attorneys.

To understand what role they played in the country's civil life, we'd need to go back to the history of the Russian Empire for a brief moment.

In March 1978, before the Vera Zasulich (revolutionary who shot Trepov, the St. Petersburg mayor, in 1878) trial, the Minister of Justice Count Konstantin Palen summoned the Chairman of St. Petersburg District Court Anatoly Koni, who was to hear the case. They had the following conversation:

"— Anatoly, Fedorovich, can you guarantee a guilty verdict for Zasulich?

— No, I cannot!

— What do you mean you cannot? … Impartiality… But in this cursed case, the government has a right to expect special favours from the court and you…

— Count, allow me to remind you these words, 'Your Majesty, the court delivers verdicts and doesn't do favours.'

— Oh, these are just theories."

Zasulich was acquitted, and Count Palen lost his position. But the Russian justice system after the Great Judicial Reform of 1864 was set up in such a way that Koni was able to retain his job.

In the same fashion, the Soviet regime demanded that judges, prosecutors, and defence attorneys have an understanding of "government objectives." It's hard to imagine that any of them would ignore their superior's

opinion and resist the accusatory propensity of Soviet justice system. We can see no examples of such behaviour, but for the case of Prosecutor Boris Zolotukhin, who left the prosecutor's office to become a defence attorney. But the bar association fired him as well because he insisted on an acquittal for Alexander Ginzburg, the creator of the *White Book* about the Sinyavsky and Daniel trial. But in the second half of the 1960s, Zolotukhin was no longer the only honest and fearless defence lawyer. That was the time when a small number of principled attorneys continued in Anatoly Koni's footsteps, refusing to consider the state's demands and political situation. These people were guided exclusively by law, which coincided with the birth of the human rights and dissident movement in the USSR. Dina Isaakovna Kaminskaya was one such attorney.

She stared doing defence work before World War II. It's quite telling that she began thinking about the system's injustice and the need to protect the downtrodden while interning at the prosecutor's office: "When I saw how people charged with petty theft and other small-time crimes live, eat, dress, I started doubting whether the state is fair in these cases, for it imposes such severe jail penalties on hungry people."

For many defence attorneys of that generation, the injustice they saw was the primary reason for choosing their line of work. The great Moscow lawyer Dmitry Solomonovich Levenson talked about how his choice of employment was influenced by his father's arrest and his NKVD neighbour's attempts to evict the family from their room: amazingly, there were some brave judges in the Moscow Municipal Court who reversed the decision to evict his mother and two of her children, which was made only because an employee of an omnipotent government agency required additional living space. "I decided to become a lawyer as early as the sixth grade to fight injustice and legal abuse," said Levenson.

While defence work could bring successful defence lawyers higher than average pay, they generally played a secondary role in trials, especially criminal ones. Quite often judges, prosecutors and investigators switched

to defence work after retiring. This situation persisted not only at the start of Dina Kaminskaya's career, but all the way to the end of the Soviet regime.

But for the defence attorneys who saw this job as their calling, it was an internal emigration of sorts: of course, it wasn't a dissident-like environment, but it was more liberal than other Soviet subcultures. For instance, a judge had to be a Communist Party member, while a defence attorney did not. The now forgotten term "mixed payment," when a client paid the attorney directly in addition to a fee charged by the state-owned law group, set this guild apart from other social groups that survived on fixed income.

Lawyers' professionalism caused them to have stylistic and political differences with the Soviet regime. Dissidents demanded that the ruling class respect its own constitution, and defence attorneys wanted the government to follow the letter of criminal and civil law.

Dina Kaminskaya remembers,

"Why, comrade defence attorney, do you only defend such people? And you're not even being appointed, you agree to it yourself…

What do you need it for? You'd be better off defending merchants (private trade was considered a criminal offense in the USSR. — *A.K.*) — it's much more profitable, but, most importantly, more peaceful, — was the question my law group colleague, an old, experienced attorney, asked me.

What could I answer them? That I agree to defend everyone who needs my help. That it's my job, my profession, and I see no reasons to decline to assist Gabay or Bukovsky, Litvinov, and Galanskov."

Dina Kaminskaya's personal views could echo her clients'. For instance, when defending Larisa Bogoraz, who protested the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia on Red Square on August 25, 1968, she fully shared Larisa's views on what the Soviet leadership was doing. But in court, she defended her purely on legal grounds, arguing that an individual has a right to express his or her opinion if it doesn't disturb public order. For the same reasons, Kaminskaya defended her first political client Vladimir Bukovsky, who participated in a peaceful demonstration on Pushkin Square in

January 1967. Dina Kaminskaya went about her life as if the country had a fair legal system. "In an unfree country, we lived as if it was free," she says. As a result, she had been pressured by the authorities and was eventually forced to leave the country.

Dina Kaminskaya didn't see judges as enemies. For her, they were either professional and decent or unprofessional and dishonourable. She also saw how instructions from above, requests from one's superiors, and deals made with one's conscience, eroded professionalism and dignity. "After the Red Square demonstration case, Lubentsova (Valentina Lubentsova is a Moscow Municipal Court judge who chaired the judicial panel during the 1968 Red Square protest trial. — *A.K.*) was often assigned political cases, but I didn't participate in them anymore. I just know from what my colleagues told me that trial after trial she had been ignoring not only disputable evidence, but also everything that clearly pointed in defendants' favour. At first, it didn't reflect on her conduct during regular criminal cases. But the habit of breaking the law she acquired during political trials finally caught up with her. Increasingly and ever more clearly, she manifested traits of a heartless bureaucrat, previously uncharacteristic of her."

Kaminskaya never turned her in-court statements into political presentation. She preferred purely legal arguments, even when discussing such inherently absurd charges as anti-Soviet activities or slander against the Soviet social order (Article 70 of the RSFSR Criminal Code — anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda; Article 190-1, 190-2, 190-3 — circulating intentional falsehood that besmirches the Soviet state and social order; desecrating a national emblem or flag; organization of and active participation in group activities that disrupt public order). But the concepts of criminal law and procedure — say, direct and oblique intent — still remained in effect, and so did Soviet citizens' constitutional rights and freedoms; no one allowed attorneys to forego legal analysis of their clients' acts (for instance, they could still argue that voicing one's opinion doesn't necessarily constitute slander against political order).

These were the glory days for Soviet defence attorneys, comparable to the era of great in-court speakers of the late 19th — early 20th centuries. Back then, the profession's heyday was directly linked with court reform. In the 1960s, it was the nascent public activism that required first-rate defence lawyers. Singer-songwriter Yuli Kim wrote a song called "Lawyers' Waltz," which reflected the Russian intelligentsia's attitudes toward attorneys who dared to defend dissidents.

> "A ray of light in the darkness —
> The truth of the Russian word.
> Our life will forever be shitty
> But let truth forever be heard!"

Dina Kaminskaya had no illusions as to her clients: "I remember once, after a conversation like this, I came back home and told my husband, 'You know, of course, they are very worthy and courageous people, but when I thought to myself, what will happen if they come to a power — I wouldn't want that.'" She had other motives for defending them: she was convinced that her clients were right on moral and legal grounds, even under the framework of Soviet law.

Kaminskaya's book is remarkable not just as a historical document. Nor is it a handbook for lawyers, although today's attorneys, who tend to settle cases rather than defend them, have something to learn from their colleague.

The behaviour of those who snatched people from the squares in 1967 and 1968 looks eerily similar to the actions of those shoving people in police vans after peaceful protests nowadays. Meanwhile, more than half a century separates these two periods. The behaviour of judges and prosecutors in today's Russian courts looks eerily familiar too, although courthouses appear more modern and comfortable now. But it's not about painting the façade; everything hinges on the professionalism and integrity of legal practitioners. Just look at the transcripts of the Bolotnaya Square and Khodorkovsky or Navalny cases. The facts differ, but the structure is absolutely the same. So are the outcomes: convictions that reek of government involvement.

People-Conduits: Vladimir Kormer

In 1968, after the invasion of Czechoslovakia, a group of people consisting of Yevgeny Barabanov, Mikhail Meyerson, Yuri Senokosov, Vladimir Kormer, and Father Alexander Men hatched the idea of publishing a series of articles to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the *Vekhi* (1909) essay anthology, with the participation of the best Russian philosophers of the time. This idea morphed into an article on the Soviet educated class, written by Kormer.

Three members of the group had their pieces published under pseudonyms in 1970 in Issue 97 of *Vestnik RSKhD* magazine, which was edited by Nikita Struve and published in Paris every three months. One of the articles, "Intelligentsia's Double Consciousness and Pseudo-culture", was written by Kormer under the pseudonym "O. Altayev." The articles were assembled under one the header of "Metanoia" ("Mind Change") and sent abroad by Yevgeny Barabanov, who effectively co-edited *Vestnik*.

Among other things, it was an anti-nationalist manifesto. For instance, one of the articles authored by V. Gorsky (that was Yevgeny Barabanov's pseudonym; the third author, Mikhail Meyerson, wrote under the name "M. Chelnov") was titled "Russian Messianism and New National Consciousness." It said, "Overcoming a nationalist-messianic temptation is Russia's primary goal. Russia won't be able to rid itself of despotism until it abandons the idea of national greatness." Almost half a century later, it's obvious that exploiting this temptation allows the regime in the person of the main ideologist of Russian isolationism to receive active or just conformist support.

Of course, nationalists rushed to counter arguments expressed in "Metanoia" articles. Publicist Gennady Shimanov, who was the first to respond, believed that all three articles must've been written by Alexander Men, although Father Alexander only learned about them after the fact. Alexander

Solzhenitsyn also joined the attack on the authors. He devoted part of his 1973 article "Repentance and Self-Limitation in the Life of Nations" to arguing against their ideas. This piece was published in *From Under the Rubble* anthology in 1974. One of the *Metanoia* authors, Yevgeny Barabanov's text "The Schism Between the Church and the World" also came out in the same anthology under his real name. When Solzhenitsyn found out that Barabanov was in fact behind the Gorsky article, he effectively severed his relations with the author.

In "*Obrazovanshchina* (the special term, invented by Solzhenitsyn for a well-educated, but conformist class) — The Smatterers" (an article from the same anthology) Solzhenitsyn was debating the author concealed under the pseudonym Altayev. He appreciated Altayev-Kormer's "beautifully polished" descriptions of six temptations faced by the Russian intelligentsia, which, despite all the differences between the current time and the events of fifty years ago, are still quite relevant.

Solzhenitsyn criticized the dwarfing of Soviet intelligentsia, its efforts to conform and enjoy life's comforts. He called this social class, which "lives by lies" to obtain an apartment, purchase a car, and provide comforts for one's family, "smatterers." Solzhenitsyn measured it by ethical standards, when socioeconomic ones would've been more appropriate. That's why he failed to see the "smatterers" as Soviet middle-class brought forth by urbanization. This group of people had typical middle-class needs, which Yuri Trifonov described in his *Muscovite Novellas* at about the same time. Unlike Kormer's dissident characters in *Heritage*, their moral dilemmas didn't stem from politics, but rather from everyday problems. For instance, in Trifonov's *Exchange* and *The Old Man*, these ethical questions came from what we would now call real estate transactions.

No question Kormer had a more sophisticated approach to the problems of Soviet intelligentsia than Solzhenitsyn. This is quite natural, since he wasn't merely a great writer; without being a professional philosopher, just by working for *Problems of Philosophy* ran by Ivan Frolov (essentially,

an anti-Soviet club masquerading as an ideological journal), Kormer tried to read Western literature and evaluate the reality from the perspective of global social science. Besides, he was never blinded by Russian nationalism, anti-Westernism, and messianism.

In his article, Kormer zeroes in on intelligentsia in a narrow sense, a unique category of people in the late 19th — early 20th century, "who were literally possessed with moral introspection directed at overcoming an abysmal disconnect between them and their own nation, between them and their own state." This "sense of collective alienation" was what made this group of people intelligentsia. In this sense, the class, which was called "creative" after the 2011 — 2012 protests, is an heir of the intelligentsia in a narrow sense of that word. But it can bear this name in a broad sense as well, since Kormer is talking about an educated segment of the population, those "engaging in intellectual rather than manual labour." Even broader, he refers to middle-class Soviet intelligentsia that "strives for affluence, prosperity, and sees nothing wrong with comfortable life."

The author is ruthless in his analysis of "material" principles of the educated class, but also warns against irony on that account, reminding the reader what terrible experiences this social stratum went through under the Soviet regime: "If he (a member of intelligentsia. — *A.K.*) no longer feels guilty before the masses, thank God — they are even. In the fifty-second year of the Soviet regime (the article was written in 1969. — *A.K.*), it wouldn't hurt for the masses themselves to feel guilty before the intelligentsia." Household names like "*vatniks*" or "anchovies" didn't exist back then, but today's debates about the nation divided into majority and minority echo what was happening with the structure of Russian society fifty or a hundred years ago.

The double consciousness of Soviet intelligentsia identified by Kormer proceeded directly from its position: it serves the regime and adapts to it because it wants prosperity; at the same time, it hates the regime and dreams of its collapse. This duality of the educated class resurfaced half a

century later in Putin's Russia. One dilemma it's facing is whether or not it's possible to collaborate with the regime. "Besides, the logic goes, 'if it's not them, someone else will take their place, someone less educated, less decent.' Party membership burdens the intellectual, but he doesn't know how to get out of this vicious cycle." A member of intelligentsia also imagines himself an educator, thinking, "Up there, they are actually waiting for his words to come to their senses, that it's the only thing they're missing."

An illusion of being able to educate the ruling class is closely related to "waiting for the thaw," one of the six temptations of intelligentsia that Kormer identified. Just like it happened during the tentative modernization of the president Dmitry Medvedev period, and is sometimes happening now, members of intelligentsia are "anxiously waiting and, with bated breath, zealously looking for something that supposedly portends these long-awaited changes."

Not far behind is a revolutionary temptation, which is less innocuous than waiting for the thaw. Kormer writes that intelligentsia has a soft spot for words like "collapse," "breakup," "here it comes" and the like.

Then there is a technocracy temptation, which Russia knows about not only from the times of Medvedev's "gadget modernization," when arming every Russian with an iPad was thought to automatically open the door to Europe. Kormer's words about government technocratization, which some officials like Sberbank chairman Herman Gref find quite dear to their heart, still ring true today, despite being written forty years ago. "Intelligentsia (the author includes government bureaucracy in this category as well. — *A.K.*) refuses to see that Evil doesn't necessarily come dressed in the dirty tatters of anarchy. It can come in the shining guise of a well-organized Fascist Reich. It won't just falter if the gigantic bureaucratic (or technocratic. — *A.K.*) machine is made more efficient.

Kormer also discusses the military temptation — jingoism that meets "the lure of national socialism and Russian imperialism"; the socialist

temptation that justifies straying from the normal path of development in the current context; and the "change of signposts" temptation — a belief that, satiated with different degrees of terror, the regime will naturally progress to a more humanistic one.

It's amazing that in dark Soviet times, with the onset of "velvet Stalinism" after the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Kormer doesn't just talk of these temptations, but essentially about the need to overcome them. One might ask what the intelligentsia could do that time — nevertheless, the writer is talking about its responsibility for the present, about it "clearly holding the fates of Russia and the entire world in its hands." In the context of Kormer's rigid sociological analysis, this is not some grand rhetoric, but a rational conclusion: by generating new temptations, which are in fact simply another spin on the old ones, intelligentsia or elites, if you will, are partly responsible for prolonging the country's dormant condition that Kormer calls "new Russian messianism."

Technocratic temptation is analysed in quite a mainstream but clever and sophisticated article jointly written by Yuri Senokosov and Vladimir Kormer in the July issue of *Problems of Philosophy* — the issue that also published Lena Nemirovskaya's article. It appeared under the rubric of "Social contradictions of capitalism and ideological struggle: recap of the 1960s" and was titled "From 'Technological Determinism' to 'Post-technocratic' Vision."

Generally, articles that criticized bourgeois ideologies also contained veiled references to the problems the Soviet Union faced. But this article took stylistically flawless conversation to a more serious level by assessing global trends and eschewing heated primitive debates with Western "falsifiers."

The authors made an interesting observation that Western sociopolitical thought went from one extreme to the other: it either buried capitalism and the West altogether or declared the post-war model to be ideal and capable of eradicating all social conflicts.

In particular, Kormer and Senokosov focused on the materials from the *Where Are We Today? (Wo stehen wir heute?)* anthology that was published in 1960 and featured such luminaries as Karl Jaspers, Martin Buber, Arnold Toynbee and others. In it, the crisis of capitalism was defined as a "value vacuum" with authors anticipating another, better historical period.

Among other things, Kormer and Senokosov discussed the technocratic temptation, albeit one triggered in the West: their article analysed the transformation of capitalism toward a state in which ideological conflicts in societies would disappear, and class conflicts would be reduced to a level "where resolving them would become technically possible." This is not a useless discussion at all, since post-war Western civilization had ostensibly reached its first "end of history" — a condition of overall prosperity, but then we saw the outburst of civic activism, a hippie movement, constructive alternativism, and counterculture. It means that "industrial-technological utopianism and scientistic illusions" don't eliminate conflicts. Hence "technocratic managerial calculations that the technological revolution would automatically solve all the problems of bourgeois society were invalidated." Such was the authors' conclusion that could be easily applied to Soviet society as well.

Here is one more quote from the article: "Robert Aron asks a question about the link between prosperity and social unrest in the bourgeois world in the 1960s: did the unrest happen despite economic growth, or, to the country, the growth triggered the unrest?" Essentially, that's what happened in recent years as a result of Russia's economy recovery: after demanding economic prosperity, the expanded middle class started demanding political democracy in 2011 — 2012, even though that demand proved to be short-lived.

Lena and Yuri Petrovich have a copy of the Paris edition of *The Mole of History*, a novel that won Kormer the Vladimir Dal Prize, but also forced him to quit his job in the magazine and threw him into KGB embraces. The

inscription in the book reads, "Tanyusha, Lena, Yura, whom I love. No one knows how much I love you."

Kormer was tall, handsome, and aristocratic. On his father's side, he was related to the famous playwright Nikolay Erdman; his father was a victim of Stalin's purges. Kormer majored in physics, was well-versed in math, technological revolution, and Western philosophy; he was an incredible storyteller and was considered an informal leader at the *Problems of Philosophy* after Ivan Frolov and Merab Mamardashvili left the publication.

After his *Mole of History* won the award, Kormer was bracing himself for possible imprisonment. Senokosov remembers him packing up for the long haul. He was a man of great literary ambition, who knew what he was worth and dreamed of overshadowing Solzhenitsyn. He tried to break through into officially recognized literature, sought chances to publish in *Novy Mir*, and arduously laboured on his main work — *The Heritage* — from the second half of the 1960s to 1975.

The novel is often compared to Dostoyevsky's *Demons*: it covers the entire dissident spectrum. But that's not the main point. *The Heritage* leaves an impression that its characters — as well as its readers — are trapped in a tightly closed container filled with social circumstances that they can't get out of. Social impasses are complemented by mental ones: the characters can't find their happiness in the underground struggle for democracy, nor in Tolstoyan experiments or Orthodox Christianity. Apart from some remarkable personalities — say, Father Vladimir, whom we discussed before, we see lies, ambition, dirt, hysterics, fornication, and insanity — absolute hopelessness all around.

Of course, such a book couldn't be officially published under the Soviet regime because it mercilessly condemned that regime — without excessive emotions and ornate descriptions. But the dissident circles didn't accept the novel, either. After all, Kormer portrayed their pettiness and banality, and did so without deliberate insults and caricatures, unlike Alexander Zinoviev in his *Yawning Heights*, who lost both his job and philosopher friends

after his book came out. Kormer's book complements yawning heights of communist peaks with meaningless journey toward hopelessness of opposition and escapism. A similar novel could be written about our desperate times if a similar portrayer were found.

But what a great master of style Kormer was. Here is a fragment of the last scene in *The Heritage*, which takes place near the famous Sokol church. It resembles a Bosch painting with all its incredible diversity, but instead of characters from the late Middle Age, we could see figures from the late Soviet era. "Long-haired wasted dudes roamed in packs, driving away passers-by with their terrible howls. Alkies extorted kopecks from pedestrians. One could hear girls' excited laughter. Elderly couples moved hand in hand with closed-off disapproving faces. Bearded neophytes walked absently and proudly. Eyes of intellectuals burned with passion. Toned police detectives rushed somewhere with serious faces, glancing at people with some disdain. Baffled gilded youths — the nouveau riche from movie actors' circles or children of the nouveau riche — shifted from foot to foot clad in furs and sheepskins… Then, from the crowd, as if from the maelstrom of time and depth of memory, emerged an ex-con, one of those that flooded Moscow after the 1953 amnesty, gold tooth in his mouth, slit cap they liked to wear at the time, white scarf, upright coat collar. Burying his head in his shoulders, he thievishly disappeared right away. Afterwards, two horrible-looking cripples materialized, tattered and crooked, God knows where they were the rest of the year; the legless one spryly jumping on his wooden leg sprinkled jokes and funny stories while leading his blind buddy."

This is perhaps an all too accurate Boschian-Bruegelian portrait of the Soviet social classes in the 1970s presented in a maximally concentrated but not a bit exaggerated form. This brief description of Soviet social stratification that appears to be done by a philosopher and a sociologist through the use of artistic devices was worth hundreds of alarmist reports that the best academic institutes of the time directed to the Central Committee.

In one of his articles, writer Denis Dragunsky brilliantly describes the impressions the next generation of intellectuals came away with after reading *The Heritage*, as well as the controversy that the novel generated. "In 1989, my friend Yuri Senokosov lent me the immigrant edition of Kormer's novel *The Heritage*. (It was somewhat different from the currently published edited version, which, in my opinion, also has a right to exist). It's not enough to say that I was captivated by this fascinating book; it's not enough to say that I read it two more times and would lend it to my family and friends, so that Senokosov had to remind me more than once to return it, but I kept asking for more time, saying that another person would soon finish reading or my daughter would be the last to read it. It's not enough to say that I enthusiastically accepted the offer to write a stage script for *Heritage* extended to me by theatre director Valery Fokin and Galina Bogolyubova, a playreader for the Sovremennik and Yermolova theatres). Unfortunately, this endeavour failed — partly, through fault of my own. I couldn't muster enough courage to make the novel into a play, to condense 600 pages to 60. It's now that I can — or rather, I believe I can — make any multivolume saga into a small stage play. But I lacked confidence then. I stuffed "more Kormer" into fine typescript, more of his unusual characters, more fascinating plot twists, and most importantly — more of his ideas, ideas, ideas… ideas about Russia, about Russian philosophy beyond borders and generations. I also wanted to insert more big and small traits of intellectual and dissident life, which — as one could feel even then — would soon disappear, evaporating in the air of change, the very change that made the publication of Kormer's works possible, but first allowed us to read the immigrant edition of his novel without fear of repercussions. Incidentally, I came up with a different title for the play: "Once Upon a Time, It Was Us." Fokin seconded it, but Bogolyubova objected. But it doesn't matter now. On the other hand, had I written a normally structured play "based on the novel," I would've been told, "Yes, all of this is very nice, but where is Kormer, where are his thoughts?" While working on the stage script, I met Yelena

Munts, Kormer's late wife. She showed me the author's copy of *Heritage*, which significantly differed from the novel published abroad (the author's copy was published in *October* magazine in 1990 and was largely used for the current edition). I was listening to her stories about Kormer, his ideas, designs, and dreams. I didn't manage to see Kormer alive (although I probably could) — all the more important these encounters were for me.

Thus, it's not enough to say that I spent a whole year of my life with Kormer and his novel. It's not enough to say that later I argued and sometimes even had a falling out with people who underestimated him. I remember a remark one literary scholar I knew made about Vladimir Kantor's novel *The Crocodile*, which, incidentally, describes Kormer's circle and Kormer himself under the name Kirkhov. "Come on, this is some Kormer-like stuff," he said dismissively. "You don't like Kormer?" I asked, raising my eyebrows. "Do you?" said he, also with his eyebrows raised. This portended an unpleasant conversation that would blend literary tastes, political preferences, religious convictions, and personal acquaintance with characters' prototypes. We both stopped talking and then cautiously changed the subject."

"Volodya worked diligently every day: he would write from 6 to 10 in the morning, then he would go to the journal's office and… have some drinks," Senokosov says with a smile.

Double consciousness marked almost all of Kormer's colleagues, since they were working in an ideological publication. Some in other close circles liked that, while others did not. Kormer's friend, Yevgeny Barabanov, was among those who did not. He chose the path of resisting the system very early on, tolerated no doublethink, expressed an unequivocal moral position, and acted as a *samizdat*'s author, distributer and living channel.

He helped Alexander Solzhenitsyn to transfer his manuscripts to the West and met Nikolay Struve during a trip to socialist Poland. He was a close friend of Father Alexander. Here is how Barabanov remembers Kormer in a letter addressed to me, "If I'm not mistaken, we were introduced in the 1960s. Then we would meet almost every day. I espoused the ideas

of Vladimir Solovyov, Berdyaev, and Georgy Fedotov, while he was into their critique. Both of us believed in staying away from ideology. Together, we got jobs at the Institute of Standardization and spent the few days we showed up there in intensive conversations on "philosophical" questions. Educated as a mathematician, V.K. wasn't a professional philosopher. He wanted to be a man of letters. He thought and processed life though the literary prism (as "material for a novel," "characters," etc.) And he remained a literary editor in *Problems of Philosophy*. We parted ways after he contributed a text to Agitator's Notebook propaganda magazine. I told him that both his position and his practice of justifying doublethink are cynical double-dealing, which became a norm for the alcoholics — "oppositionists" from *Problems of Philosophy*, but it's absolutely unacceptable for a *Metanoia* author. Now I'm only sad and regretful that I failed to see the significance of literaturolatry (worshipping and serving literature. — *A.K.*) that imbued the very essence of Volodya's internal life."

One can't say that Kormer has been completely forgotten, but the 2-volume collection of his writings that came out in 2009 had a circulation of only 1,500 copies. Most likely, this number accurately reflects the current active interest in the literary and philosophical works of one of the most remarkable and talented intellectuals of the 1970s.

At the end of the Soviet era, however, Kormer seemed to have been rediscovered not only by the dissident, literary and philosophical audiences, but by the reader at large. His main novel, *The Heritage*, was published in *October* magazine, and then in The Soviet Writer as a separate edition with a circulation of 50,000 copies (compared to 1,500 copies today). His main article — "Intelligentsia's Double Consciousness and Pseudo-culture" — was published in *Problems of Philosophy*, the magazine he had been working at for many years. Another article of his — "On Carnivalization as the Genesis of 'Double Consciousness'" — was printed in *Problems of Philosophy* a bit later. In it, it depicts revolution as carnival: "Observers wrote quite a lot about the carnival, theatrical character of the "youth revolution" [of

the 1960s]. Its participants also emphasized this carnival, theatrical moment as a distinct sign of a revolution of a new breed… In opposition to this opinion, many sociologists asserted — we believe, justifiably so — that any revolution possesses elements of carnival, since people's taking to the streets automatically assumes establishing familiar carnival interactions, signifies the triumph of the spirit of liberation (at least, from the routine), since major revolutionary acts — dethroning and crowning, repudiating the old hierarchical order and old moral norms, ridiculing and destroying sacred relics of the past, etc. — are directly related to carnival symbolism."

Then, the Soviet Union disintegrated, and the problems that tormented Kormer and his characters seemed to have lost their relevance (the writer died of cancer at the start of *perestroika*). Literary journals refused to print Kormer's unpublished works, stating that they were written long ago, although the best samples of his prose can hardly be matched by any contemporary writers. But two and half decades since the mass reader discovered this writer, Kormer has suddenly become eerily and stunningly relevant.

Historical Context: Personal Credit to Brezhnev

The era of Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev began. On his way to the top, he managed to beat several very influential contenders, including Alexander Shelepin, nicknamed "Ironclad Shurik." When Leonid Ilyich passed away on November 10, 1982, the clever head of the Kremlin medical team, Academician Yevgeny Chazov very quickly summoned the most obvious heir apparent — Yuri Andropov — to the scene. Otherwise, KGB Chairman Vitaly Fedorchuk and the Minister of Internal Affairs Nikolay Shchelokov would've gotten there first, unnecessarily complicating the power struggle, as it effectively happened after Stalin's death.

Nevertheless, the power transit claimed its victims here as well. Andropov quickly dispensed with Shchelokov, bringing the latter to commit suicide. Then he removed Fedorchuk from his position, transferring him to late Shchelokov's place. The "five years *(pyatiletka)* of lavish funerals" (or "funeral carriages race") ensued: Andropov passed on, but the old guard couldn't reconcile itself with his political will, preferring to keep things the way they were. Thus, they picked Brezhnev's aide, the dying Konstantin Chernenko, keeping the much younger Gorbachev out of power until the long-awaited change in March 1985.

But all historical details aside, the events illustrate what happens after the long absence of power rotation, regardless of whether the leader leaves a successor as Brezhnev did or doesn't as was the case with Stalin.

Lack of regime change through competitive elections inevitably brings about turbulence. It also eventually leads to economic stagnation. Those who see this historical pattern as an allusion to what's happening today are right.

In fact, Brezhnev's political biography is full of allusions. Modern Russia hasn't yet reached the point when senile Politburo members are carried into the auditorium for Cabinet meetings — a popular theme for

Brezhnev-era jokes — but that might be in store for us one day. We will be remiss not to mention the destructive effect of high oil prices and excessive military spending on elite and national psyche. What had been destroying Brezhnev's USSR is also consuming today's Russia, which has gained access to its favourite drug — high-priced oil.

As for military spending, it's not about to go down any time soon either. Russia is firmly entrenched in its hybrid confrontations involving NATO, Ukraine, the USA, the EU….

Propaganda efforts also require financing, just like they did in Brezhnev years. All of this, obviously, won't keep talents and brains in Russia. Most likely, we'll be seeing a repeat of Brezhnev years, when people from "our" East Germany dreamed of getting to West Germany at any cost.

A joke of that time went, "While visiting East Germany, Brezhnev had a crush on a local girl and promised to grant her any wish she made. 'Open the border between the FRG and the GDR,' she asked. 'You, naughty girl, said Brezhnev,' waving his finger, 'you want us two to be alone!'"

Today's Russia is trying to split the Western World by welcoming the populist wave. The Brezhnev regime played very similar games. Valery Giscard D'Estaing was even called Brezhnev's "little telegraphist" *(le petit telegraphiste)* for his willingness to shield his partner. Nothing is new here as well. This is all too familiar.

Another familiar theme is the Russian elite's passion for uniting everyone on moral grounds. An attempt to create a law on the Russian nation is a poor replica of "the new historical entity the Soviet people," an ideological cliché invented in Brezhnev's time. This unity, as well as excessive distribution of state awards, which the current regime is starting to dabble in as well, generated some ironic descriptions at that time. People quipped, "the government issued a decree to award the entire Soviet people with the Order of the Hero of Socialist Labour." (Truth be told, unlike the current Russian leader, even Brezhnev didn't stoop to bestowing state awards on his associates' children).

Just like today, pervasive corruption and residences constructed in every corner of the country generated kitchen talk in bedroom communities of Brezhnev's time. Perhaps, a word of mouth was some equivalent of the current Navalny exposes. Jokes about the General Secretary's riches abounded: after visiting all of his residences, Brezhnev's mother tells him, her voice shaking, "Lenny, what are you going to do when the Communists return to power?"

Nowadays, political astrologists are trying to divine the members of the president's inner circle. Back then, people sought to make the same determination by looking at the leaders' line-up on the Mausoleum, even though it would make more sense to look at who is occupying which office on the fourth and fifth floors of the second building entrance on Staraya Square. Had they known that upon leaving Lubyanka after the main ideologue Mikhail Suslov's death, Yuri Andropov moved into Suslov's office, there would've been no doubts as to who the successor would be. Now the explicit and even tacit criteria are blurred, and much lower-ranking official have been occupying Brezhnev's office in the last few decades. The sense of hierarchy is no longer there.

The elites themselves are having a hard time finding their way amid the sea of rumours — after all, we are living in the era of fake news. There is no more Andropov, who called Gorbachev after the latter was appointed the Central Committee Secretary and told him to strictly follow the General Secretary's lead — the KGB chairman was concerned with the too warm of a welcome Prime Minister Kosygin extended to the new secretary.

Both the current and Brezhnev eras are times of bad equilibrium. According to game theory, in this state, no one wants to make the first step, lest his situation may get worse.

Therefore, even in mass consciousness, the Brezhnev era occupies a special place. While the fields of historical mythology are shaken by battles between bad Lenin and good Stalin, between Khrushchev who ceded Crimea to Ukraine and Putin who brought it home, Brezhnev is quietly

standing on his podium and reading the Olympic rings emblem as "O-O-O-O-O" (another popular joke of the period).

Everyone was happy to live by a clearly defined social contract, which read, "we pretend to work, and you pretend to pay us." Today it reads: we give up our rights in exchange for Crimea and the sense of being a great power. It wouldn't hurt, though, if people's disposable incomes kept growing too. The time has already come.

The regime is now personified by a single individual. We've been through that as well. Biting rhymes of Brezhnev times gave Leonid Ilyich personal credit for everything we've got: from hot girls in bed to goals scored on football fields.

But the Brezhnev era reveals that this too shall pass. And it's better to be prepared for the time of changes. Indeed, emergence of political jokes herald its arrival.

PERSONAL PRAGUE SPRING

Right at the start of the 1970s, a person by the name of Vladimir Yagodkin barges into our heroes' lives. He was an ideology secretary of the Moscow Communist Party Committee who hounded the liberal hornets' nest at Ivan Frolov's *Problems of Philosophy*.

This ideological hawk could boast downing a number of "enemy planes." He closed down the Nash Dom theatre studio at MSU, whose Communist Party chapter he headed. He helped to expel Yuri Levada from MSU's journalism department, where the future VTsIOM and Levada Centre founder taught sociology. Yagodkin also cracked down on the Physics and Math School No. 2 — the very same school where Senokosov once taught for a brief period. The attacks on the nucleus of professional sociology, the Institute of Concrete Social Research (ICSR), which resulted in the firing of the institute's well-established director Academician Alexei Rumyantsev, was his doing as well.

It should be understood, though, that Yagodkin wasn't the only source of all these ideological attacks — indeed, he wouldn't have been able to tackle all these entities and individuals by himself. His team included the notorious head of the Central Committee Science Department Sergey Trapeznikov, the Central Committee Secretary Mikhail Suslov, as well as Yagodkin's immediate superiors, first secretaries of the Moscow Communist Party Committee — first Nikolay Yegorychev, then Viktor Grishin.

Of course, the hawks were assisted by informants who aimed ideological weapons at the required target. Some acted spontaneously; others were trained, but their actions provided an impulse for these witch-hunt campaigns. From the diary of Anatoly Chernyaev (an employee of the Central Committee's International Department, future Gorbachev aide), February 21, 1974: "… the other day, I read a letter sent to Kirilenko by Suvorov, the head of the Communist Party chapter at the Institute of Philosophy.

Kirilenko directed Grishin and Yagodkin to see Suvorov. They did. And then attached an explanation to their letter.

According to Suvorov, the entire philosophical field is infected with revisionism, and not only the philosophical field… He mentioned Zamoshkin (the department head from the Lenin School) and Frolov (*Problems of Philosophy* editor, Demichev's former aide). At the bottom, he lists a group of about twelve people, on whose behalf he speaks, and asks that it be seen by Central Committee officials. In charge of this all is Academician Mitin — a lowlife and an informant from the 1930s, a plagiarizer who stole the works of the people he put in jail… Instead of putting this scoundrel to shame, Grishin and Yagodkin talked to him for several hours and then "reported" that the Moscow Party Committee had taken various steps to correct the situation on Moscow's ideological front. They heard reports from such and such institutes for such and such number of times, adopted such and such resolutions, examined such and such chapters, removed fived directors [including the aforementioned ICSR director Alexei Rumyantsev, who previously headed the Communist magazine, *World Marxist Review,* and even *Pravda*, as well as the Institute of Philosophy director Pavel Kopnin, who died shortly thereafter at the age of 49. — *A.K.*] But when Kedrov was appointed the new director of the Institute of Philosophy to replace the late Kopnin, no one asked their (Moscow Party Committee's) opinion. So now you (the Central Committee) deal with it. That's how the report ends. And in this form, Kiriyenko distributed it, along with Suvorov's letter, around the Central Committee Secretariat."

Yagodkin was a devout Russian nationalist. This devotion and almost Stalinist rigidity, which perhaps stemmed from it, helped him to combat dissent and even simple difference of opinion. But Brezhnev, alerted by his liberal speechwriters, eventually recognized the excesses of Yagodkin's ideological crusade.

Thus, Yagodkin's pressure failed to force Frolov's resignation, although Merab Mamardashvili did have to leave the publication. Senokosov left

even earlier, though. As we know, he married Lena in 1973, and a new stage of their lives was about to begin. Besides, he could no longer realize his potential working in the magazine that was under heavy ideological pressure. Kormer was the magazine's informal leader and working there fit his lifestyle. Frolov was tied up in a complex tug of war with his superiors. Meanwhile, Senokosov, with some help from his friends, received an offer to work in Prague, in the *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, known as PMS from its acronym in Russian.

Problems of Peace and Socialism was a peculiar publication. On the one hand, it was tightly connected to the Communist Party, or rather to a multitude of communist parties in all imaginable countries of the world. On the other hand, it was based outside of the Soviet Union, in Prague, one of the most beautiful cities in the world. True, it was part of "our" socialist Europe, but Europe, nonetheless. The magazine boasted a multi-ethnic and multilingual team. Its editors-in-chief occasionally came from renowned *nomenklatura* liberals, such as academicians Alexei Rumyantsev and Yuri Frantsev. All this created an air of freedom. Plus, the Czech language itself seemed like a language of freedom.

The PMS employed a few generations of Communist Party liberals, from Ivan Frolov, Merab Mamardashvili, and Yuri Karyakin to much younger Vitaly Dymarsky and Sergey Yastrzhembsky. Georgy Arbatov, Georgy Shahnazarov, Vladimir Lukin, Anatoly Chernyayev, Otto Latsis, and countless other liberal intellectuals worked there.

While working in Prague, Boris Grushin, as a true sociologist, visited all of its 900 pubs and wrote a book about them and about the inscriptions their patrons left on the walls. The title was *In pivo veritas* ("In Beer Lies the Truth"). Yuri Karyakin would sometimes stand on his head in his office, and the sight of his feet visible from neighbouring buildings really unnerved local security services. Merab Mamardashvili would practice French and Italian by talking to the Frenchman Pierre Belfroid. The magazine employees set all kinds of records, from drinking twelve mugs of beer

in one sitting to knowing the views of all significant Central Committee members from any given country on any given issue — the latter record belonging to Vadim Pechenev, who later become an aide to General Secretary Konstantin Chernenko. Communist seminars provided an opportunity to visit "real" Europe — Rome, for instance. Thus, working in Prague for the journal, which was housed in a majestic Austro-Hungarian building of the former archbishop seminary, was a dream of any intellectual somehow affiliated with the Communist Party.

Of course, this intellectual free-for-all was more characteristic of the 1960s. The degrees of freedom before and after 1968 differed greatly. Nevertheless, among Soviet intellectuals, the "Praguers" were primarily known for espousing in-system, and occasionally even anti-system, liberalism.

However, for the "Praguers," the freedom was still more internal than external, especially in the years of crackdown on political freedom. Yuri Senokosov started working for the magazine, which was run by Konstantin Zarodov after a year-long background check. Back then, anyone could be expelled from the magazine in the span of 24 hours, as happened to Otto Latsis for his work on Stalin. Several years before that, the same fate befell Vladimir Lukin for his inappropriate conduct following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. A telling fragment from his memoirs describes his swift expulsion: "I understood that anything could happen to us in Moscow. So, we flew out into a complete unknown; I had no idea where we'd land. But when we came out of the plane in Moscow, it was a good sign already: a representative from the Central Committee's international department came to meet us. That was a plus. When in Moscow, I promised myself not to call my friends and not to visit anyone for a week because I wasn't sure if there would surveillance and things like that… So, I thought let me wait and see. But the very next day, all my friends themselves started calling because it was reported on the radio that a group of disgruntled Soviets were expelled from Czechoslovakia; apparently, they even mentioned names."

Senokosov witnessed that story, which demonstrated that Moscow intellectuals had no fear. A few months later, *Problems of Philosophy* published Lukin's article, and Georgy Arbatov invited him to work for the Institute for USA and Canadian Studies.

Hot-headed and direct, Senokosov once told off the chief of the magazine's theory department, where he was working at the time. On another occasion, after coming back from a pub, Yuri started loudly talking about the Soviet regime and couldn't stop. After unsuccessfully asking her husband to halt his train of thought, Lena saved the situation by pulling the glasses off his face. Startled, he stopped talking.

After the conflict in the theory department, Senokosov tried to transfer to the critics and bibliography section headed by Yegor Yakovlev, who would become the editor of the Moscow News during *perestroika*. It didn't work out after Senokosov's review of the book on disarmament was found pacifistic.

Eventually, Yuri Petrovich ended up in Alexander Volkov's section, where he was tasked with interviewing international party leaders. This work proved to be no less interesting than talking with academicians and intellectuals, which he did for *Problems of Philosophy*. Here is a fragment from Alexander Volkov's memoir that featured Yuri Senokosov:

"In Prague, we had an event with Greeks, which I remember very well. It was a conversation between two highest-ranking Communist Party officials: the Greek Communist Party First Secretary Charilaos Florakis, and the Columbian Communist Party General Secretary Gilberto Vieira. We organized it during another big journal meeting. I probably remembered this episode primarily because of its humorous components.

Florakis is a legendary figure. He joined the Greek Communist Party in 1941 and fought against German occupiers in 1943–1944 in the ranks of the People's Liberation Party. During the Greek Civil War years (1946−1949), he held a number of command positions in the Greek Democratic Army; in particular, he headed the Army's First Division.

After the defeated communist brigades retreated from Greece, he spent some time in the USSR and Romania. On his illegal return to Greece in 1954, he was immediately arrested and sentenced to life in prison but was released in 1966 as a result of pressure from the popular movement. After the military coup in April 1967, he was the first politician arrested by the Regime of Colonels and had to serve another sentence until April 1972. In December that year, he became the head of the Greek Communist Party. And after the party was legalized in 1974 (it was outlawed for 27 years), his efforts helped to adapt it to the new conditions, so it could become an influential force in the country's political life.

When we offered Florakis to meet Vieira to exchange ideas and compare the problems that both parties were dealing with, he agreed right away. But Vieira didn't, and we couldn't imagine why. Then we decided to trick him into the meeting. During the lunch break, I started talking to Florakis by the coat check, where everybody went to get their clothes; I held him up, in other words. Meanwhile, our department employee Yura Senokosov met Vieira on his way there and steered him toward the spot where Florakis and I were standing. So it looked like they just happened to run into each other. I immediately said, "Comrade Florakis, here is Comrade Vieira. We offered you to meet with him for a discussion."

Since I wasn't the one who approached Vieira on that issue, it appeared as if I didn't know that he had declined the meeting; and since they didn't know each other, it would be natural for magazine employees to introduce them. I thought that a personal meeting like this would make it impossible for Viera to refuse to talk to his colleague. But it wasn't that simple. He flared up and said, "But I didn't agree to this discussion" quite angrily.

I thought Florakis understood the situation right away. A stout handsome man with grey hair and greying moustache, he embraced short and balding Gilberto by his shoulders and addressed him nicely, "Dear friend! You and I never surrendered to our enemies. We fought them tooth and

nail, but let's surrender to our Russian journalist friends!" Vieira relaxed and started smiling right away. He didn't feel like publicly disagreeing with Florakis.

After another plenary meeting, we sat down in a cosy room. We put a small table in the middle and a recorder and coffee cups on it. Florakis and Vieira sat across from each other; I ended up in the middle — with the former to the left, the latter to the right of me, and Yura across. For some reason I don't remember which one of the interpreters was there. The dialogue began. Florakis was the first to speak. "Does the past revolutionary experience teach us anything, or even more broadly, does history teach? And the conversation rolled on.

Sometime in the middle, while Vieira was speaking, Yura suddenly loudly slammed his coffee cup on his saucer. I twitched, but kept looking at Vieira. But a minute later, Yura got up and loudly closed the window for some reason. This time I looked at him with a surprised face, and he nodded toward Florakis. Then I turned to the left to look at our Greek friend and found him sleeping sprawling in his armchair. He was even snuffling a bit, his full moustache bobbing up and down with each of his deep breaths. What to do? I couldn't bring myself to openly wake him up. I extended my leg under the table and kicked Florakis. He opened his eyes and instantly and calmly said, as if he was carefully listening all along, "You're absolutely right, Comrade Vieira!" and even went on to reasonably explain why Vieira was right. Of course, Vieira felt insulted; I, for my part, was surprised that I didn't notice anything… There was no sign that something happened from anybody else, and the dialogue basically went well by the standards of those days."

Yuri Senokosov wore jeans to hist first magazine staff meeting. "Don't act like that," Zarodov told him. He had to come to meetings in a suit and a tie, especially given the fact that editorial board meetings attracted over 80 or more people from various countries. Where else could one see such a Communist Noah's Ark? South Africans, Indonesians, well-known

European Communists, and some insignificant small parties from some country like Holland, which no one in their country paid attention to — all of them came to Prague and were closely watched by the International Department of the CPSU Central Committee. And all of these parties gladly accepted money from their Older Brother. As for Senokosov, he did buy a suit to fit in among all this motley crew but didn't agree to a tie. No one ever saw him wear one. At the very least, I didn't…

All the freedoms aside, the magazine had an unmistakable ideological tilt. One of its employees, Lev Stepanov, remembers some inadvertent content analysis done by a printing press worker that confirmed this conclusion. "Prepared texts were translated and then reproduced with the help of a rotator operated by an old Czech for many years. At a party celebrating his retirement, this quiet unassuming man said that he would like to know the answer to a question that had been bothering him all along. He wanted to know what the word "stroogleh" meant? He explained that he'd come across this word about ten times on every page of the English-language text. So, what is it?"

Of course, he was talking about the word "struggle," a key word in the Communist vocabulary.

Many *PMS* employees definitely possessed the "double consciousness" Kormer talked about, and, basically, saw nothing wrong with it. Nevertheless, they were teetering on the brink: some could plunge into the dissident movement, while others soar to the heights of the Communist Party hierarchy. Philosopher Erich Solovyev, one of the brilliant MSU philosophy department graduates of the late 1950s, captured the situation beautifully in his caustic and accurate song. In it, the main character finds himself in the VPSh (the Communist Party's highest educational institution) and the KGB, expecting to see seasoned Communist propagandists there. Instead, he meets "red-cheeked left-leaning guys, with Togliatti and Thorez in their eyes, names like Garry, Arnold, and Gleb, and a healthy sexual desire to brag."

Now one often needs a reminder that the word "left" back then was synonymous with liberal. As for Togliatti and Thorez, or more importantly their followers — according to Senokosov — they didn't appeal to Arab Communist representatives all that much.

But despite all the drawbacks and the fact that PMS acted as an ideological sponsor of God (or Marx) knows what organizations, perhaps even terrorist ones, life in Prague in the 1970s really expanded one's personal human horizon. The city's intellectual environment was quite unsurpassed. Boris Grushin came to Prague for the second time then. Former *Problems of Philosophy* editor-in-chief Ivan Frolov replaced Georgy Shakhnazarov as the magazine's executive editor (both men would later become advisors to Mikhail Gorbachev). Translators, some of whom knew up to 20 languages, were employed by the magazine that was published in 34 languages and distributed in 75 countries. As Lena Nemirovskaya put it, PMS, including magazine curators from the Central Committee's Science Department, brought together "the progressive part of humanity which held official positions."

"They treated me well, but not seriously," Lena remembers. "In part, because I was estranged from that rational government thinking. Nevertheless, many of these people later worked on *perestroika*."

In Prague, Lena Nemirovskaya worked in the Soviet House of Culture headed by Viktor Grekov. It later turned out that he was a KGB operative who kept tabs on all the employees. This wasn't too difficult to figure out, though — a soft-power institution couldn't have it any other way. Nevertheless, Lena, a person who could establish contacts even in places where it was impossible to do so, immediately acquired a circle of friends similar to the one she had in Moscow. It included Czech freethinkers — artists, musicians, and actors. "We were pretty much the only ones who were friends with Czechs at that time," Yuri Petrovich recalls. Obviously, all this couldn't escape notice of Czech security services. "In Prague, I truly understood what great-power chauvinism was. I could feel on a

visceral level how much the Czechoslovaks depend on the Big Brother," Senokosov continues.

At the same time, the Senokosovs' world involved pubs, restaurants, books, semi-Soviet and completely un-Soviet friends and conversations, stores. "I fulfilled my feminist freedom there," say Lena, whose Westernized extravagance looked more natural in Prague than in Moscow. All in all, the capital of Czechoslovakia compensated for the homogeneity of living in the USSR. In a way, Prague fostered bourgeois tastes. This "recognized bourgeoisity," as Lena defined it, didn't necessarily have to be anti-Soviet. It was simply un-Soviet.

But, of course, it wasn't the most important thing. Despite the context generated by the 1968 events, Prague expanded Yura and Lena's social circle and further strengthened their freedom aspirations. "We preserved ourselves thanks to Prague," they conclude.

But man proposes, and security machine disposes. Czech security services reported the freewheeling couple. However, instead of waiting to be expelled from Prague, Senokosov resigned from his job at the magazine, apparently much to the consternation of security services. Shortly before that, he celebrated his birthday in Prague Castle at a reception for foreign Communist Parties' Central Committee members that featured the head of the Central Committee International Department Boris Ponomarev (a mere coincidence, of course). Upon Senokosov's return to Moscow, the authorities took away his passport, promising to return it once they find him a job.

As a result, Yuri Petrovich Senokosov became a man without a passport for the second time in his life.

This was a rather strange move because the employee of an ideological journal hardly posed a "threat to society," and if he wanted to remain abroad and flee Czechoslovakia for the West, he would probably not have returned to the Soviet Union in the first place. But the security services must've had their own reasoning.

For all intents and purposes, Senokosov's official career was over. Generally, after a stint in *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, intellectuals who earned the Party's trust would be appointed to good positions in academic institutes and journals, Communist publications, and even the Central Committee. Sometimes they could find themselves in Prague again, in a higher office. But what could one expect from a person who never learned to wear a tie, not even at a more advanced age. Ironically, Yuri Petrovich even managed to leave a tie he bought years later for George Soros' 85th birthday in his hotel.

Thus, Senokosov was destined to end up in a peculiar publication entitled *Obshchestvennye Nauki v SSSR* (Social Sciences in the Soviet Union), which published translations of Soviet authors for foreign readers. The journalist editor-in-chief intelligence officer, Iosif Grigulevich, was a peculiar person as well.

He was deservedly regarded as the preeminent specialist on Latin America. He was born in Wilna, and reportedly came from a Karaite family. He was a deep-cover intelligence officer and participated in an assault on the Worker's Party of Marxist Unification (known as POUM), which held an anti-Stalinist position during the Spanish Civil War. He was also involved in the killing of one of the party's leaders, Andres Nin, and was among the organizers of the unsuccessful attempt on Leo Trotsky's life. Grigulevich was also Costa Rica's ambassador to Italy, Vatican, and Yugoslavia under the name of Teodoro Castro. On top of that, he founded the Institute of Ethnography and the Institute of Latin America, and authored biographies of Che Guevara and Salvador Allende. Could it be his life story and place in Soviet hierarchy that prompted Vladimir Kormer to write his *Mole of History*, a novel narrated by a Communist Party official in charge of "revolutionary processes" in some small Latin American country?

Before the 1980 Moscow Olympics, which came in lieu of Communism promised for the same year by the Party program, the authorities tried to force Senokosov out of Moscow's 101-kilometer zone, just as it was done

with prostitutes and homeless people at the time. He was called into the District Military Committee for that purpose… But something more significant occurred soon thereafter.

"On a Saturday — not a working day — I was called into the journal's office located right above Losev's apartment on Arbat Street," Yuri Petrovich remembers. "A tall young man entered the room saying, "Can we take this man to Lubyanka?" "Well, this is our organization," Grigulevich answered understandingly. A ZIL automobile was parked outside with one more young man behind the wheel. From the Old Arbat, we headed for Lubyanka. Then one of them asked, "Maybe take him home first?" We turned onto Kutuzovsky, came up to the building; there were police witnesses standing by the entrance. We went into the apartment."

The search started with a vintage KGB cynical phrase "we'd like to take a look at how you live." They took all the Russian philosophers' books published in Paris. There were two printouts of Merab Mamardashvili's lectures on the desk — those were also taken. After that, Senokosov would come for questioning for three months, which yielded three volumes of case materials (in Yuri Levada's case, there was five). The charges had to do with distribution of anti-Soviet literature. At their makeshift gatherings, friends were trying to find a way out of this predicament. One idea helped.

A friend of Senokosov's, Oleg Chukhotsev had neighbours who left for Israel around that time. At his interrogation, Yuri said that he bought all the books from that family, which resided at such-and-such address. It was impossible to confirm or deny that fact, since the book owners had already left the country. But the address and last name were real. So, the case ground to a halt. Besides, the defendant was being stubborn: for instance, he refused to testify against Merab Mamardashvili. Senokosov also uttered a phrase that proved to be prophetic: "In less than ten years, these books will be published in our country."

And at the end of the same year, Yuri Petrovich was working on the publication of pre-revolutionary philosophical literature once prohibited in

the USSR. This project, which was supposed to come out as a supplement to the *Problems of Philosophy* magazine, was the brainchild of philosopher Anatoly Yakovlev, son of one of *perestroika*'s architects, Alexander Yakovlev.

All of this was happening as the Senokosovs had to save their daughter Tanya's health and send her overseas for treatment. Here the interrogation experience, or rather the reflections on it, led Yuri Petrovich to a conclusion that later helped Tanya in a difficult situation. While being questioned on the human rights activist Gabriel Superfin's case in Lefortovo in 1972, he felt the ultimate liberation from guilt: "Why the hell did I come in for questioning when I'm not guilty?" he thought then, while sitting before the KGB captain. "These are the effects of the terror the country went through; this is also the fear of people in power who want us to believe them that the regime was right." This acquired internal freedom really helped him on a psychological level. Tanya knew about it. On her journey to Italy, a customs officer at the Chop border crossing took away the New Testament Father Alexander gave her along with keys to her apartment and said, "You'll never come back here." But she didn't get scared. She'd later call Yuri Petrovich, saying, "Papa, I did what you taught me."

It was impossible for the Senokosov family to avoid run-ins with security services: Yuri was teetering on the brink of an arrest; their daughter Tanya was sent overseas; given her great communication skills, Lena, who worked at the Lenin Library at the time, must've also generated a lot of self-incriminating evidence. Indeed, once she was stopped on the street by a police officer. It happened right on the bridge that leads from Kalininsky Prospect (currently New Arbat) to Kutuzovsky Prospect and the building behind the Ukraine Hotel (they moved into the former communal apartment there after exchanging Yura's room and the apartment in the Lace House for it in 1975). Nemirovskaya, whose freedom-loving behaviour was directly expressed by her clothes, was wearing a long, striped coat, red jeans, and shoes of the same proletarian colour. The police officer supposedly didn't like the outfit. But Lena knows how to handle such situations — a

stunned police officer received a lesson in civic education and learned — perhaps for the first time in his life — that you can't just pick on a person for no reason. Besides, Lena informed him that Brezhnev's residence is around the corner, and a fight right under the General Secretary's nose won't look good. Having finished her monologue, Nemirovskaya simply ran off to her apartment, the very place from which prohibited literature was removed just a short while ago.

Meanwhile, Yuri Petrovich flew to Tbilisi to see Merab Mamardashvili — he needed some time to come to his senses after the search and interrogations.

Historical Context: Three Minutes of Silence

On the night of December 5, 1965, a bit after 7, a few dozen people showed up at Pushkin Square under the lights of the electric bulletin board on the old constructivist *Izvestiya* building. Not for long — for about three minutes — some of them quietly unfurled posters lettered with demands to respect the Soviet Constitution and conduct an open trial in the case of Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel.

The security services were well aware of the planned rally: the "Civic Appeal" written for the most part by Alexander Esenin-Volpin, the iconic poet Sergey Esenin's son and a mathematician who already served time twice before, was actively circulated; and one of the rally organizers Vladimir Bukovsky was preventively confined to a mental institution earlier, on December 2. Therefore, the posters were quickly destroyed, and over twenty people were taken in for questioning. These resembled preventive talks, though. The KGB didn't consider the rally at the square particularly important and released its participants. But soon it became apparent that the authorities were wrong.

The rally, which initially seemed somewhat of a cross between loony behaviour of some adults who took the text of Stalin's Constitution seriously and hooliganism of some youths high on testosterone, gave birth to the dissident movement in the USSR. Or to be more accurate, it made it public.

This was the first underground shock, which marked the beginning of a gradual erosion of the Soviet regime. Excessive military expenses and declining oil prices only exacerbated the breakup years later.

Taking to the square became the first public display of protest after the Trotskyist rallies in 1927, although the comparison isn't completely accurate, since the Trotskyists' efforts were part of a power struggle while no one was vying for power in December 1965.

Historical Context: Alexander Galich and His *Whispered Cry*

Russia's present public discourse and perceptions of reality increasingly hearken back to the events of 50, 60 and even 70 years ago. Not only does the country's current government act in a way that caricatures the behaviour of the Soviet regime, but the dissident discourse of the time also proves to be incredibly relevant. It's been more than four decades since Alexander Galich's death, but his songs can be used as an accurate commentary on the most hot-button issues in one's social network newsfeed.

In fact, home concerts with guitar songs acted as social networks back then. Highly prized tape recorders, scarce Xerox machines, reprinted and bound *samizdat* copies were used to spread the word. "Erica can take four copies" was one of Galich's most famous memes, referring to typewriters used to reproduce *samizdat* materials. Binding was done in special workshops, including even Lev Turchinsky's workshop at the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts.

The works' contents also resembled conversations that could be heard on today's social networks: lyrical and ironic exchanges or stories about real events that involved poems, recitatives, and guitar songs — after all, grand piano wouldn't do the trick here.

In addition to Alexander Galich's theatrical manner, listeners could enjoy Vladimir Vysotsky's cheeky pseudo-folk style and Bulat Okudzhava's delicate presentation. While guitar music didn't accompany Merab Mamardashvili's pleasant baritone during his lectures, he also could certainly be put on this social network presenters' list.

Galich spared his audience — he actually was a very kind and soft person, according to the memories of art historian Igor Golomshtok. He demanded no heroics from his listeners. It was enough for him that these

ordinary Soviet people could muster some courage just to listen to him, often with up to a hundred people crammed into a regular-size room. Yes, this was the very same Soviet educated urban middle-class that Solzhenitsyn called "smatterers" at about the same time for their efforts to adapt to the Soviet regime while showing it a middle finger from behind their back.

Galich had a totally different take on the situation. He thought that it's not fair to expect full-fledged resistance from 30 and 40-year-olds who are trying to create and support their families. They already read banned books, listen to foreign radio stations, and come to illegal concerts. They are as much part of the resistance as open dissidents. Galich called them "silent resistance," which is quiet but consistently ethical in their views. True, you can't break the government apparatus, but you're quite capable of listening to Galich in the privacy of your apartment.

Of course, this is similar to criticizing today's political regime or mocking statements that the regime's most fanatical disciples make in the media, all while sitting in a trendy café. But sometimes this ethical resistance suddenly finds its way onto streets and squares, perhaps without even knowing that it had predecessors — the people who came to Pushkin Square in 1965 with the "Respect the Soviet Constitution!" slogan, which is still incredibly relevant today, but for the word "Soviet," as well those who showed up at Red Square in 1968. Not knowing about the event, Galich wrote about these people a day before in his "Petersburg Romance," ostensibly dedicated to Decembrist protesters: "Can you take to the square, Dare you take to square, Can you take to the square, Dare you take to square, When the right time arrives?"

In the 1970s, Galich believed that the "ambivalent existence that we led back in the 60s is impossible today. The time for an open voice and an honest position has come." How similar this position is to Dina Kaminskaya's moral imperative! But he repeated that "by choosing freedom," he doesn't require his audience of silent resisters to do the same. He sympathized with his brothers in spirit, who had a hard time choosing open resistance for

various reasons: "A prison guard doesn't have to gag your mouth, if you do it yourself, you'd still lack air." Isn't that how the majority of Russia's educated middle class is living today?

That's exactly what Galich's first disc "A Whispered Cry," which came out in Norway in 1975, is about. It registers the condition of the minds and souls of Galich's thinking countrymen, and at times highlights their despair. A whispered cry is more horrifying than a loud scream, since in this case a person has to make an extra effort to restrain oneself.

Alexander Galich described the process of fully shedding his illusions in his 1973 book *The Dress Rehearsal*. There the 55-year-old man remembers his childhood and youth with the smell of snow in Moscow's Chistye Prudy neighbourhood. He also talks about his 1958 aborted play *Matrosskaya Tishina*, staged soon after the Sovremennik Theatre (then still a studio) appeared. Outstanding directors and actors Oleg Yefremov, Yevgeny Yevstigneyev, Galina Volchek, Oleg Tabakov took part in the final rehearsal. As for the play itself, it's absolutely brilliant in every aspect, including the author's notes. Take the Isaac Babel-like descriptions of loafing drunkards who "are peering into the starry sky with sombre distrust, their heads hoisted up" or passages like "A tall, large-framed woman quickly runs in, her face full of suffering and passion, dishevelled, with sneaky young eyes. This is the old woman Gurevich." Characters' lines are a concoction of writers Friedrich Gorenstein, Vasily Grossman, and Ilf and Petrov. Among them are quips like "Politics is for Englishmen and Poles," a precursor of iconic writer Sergey Dovlatov's phrase "Love is for military men and athletes."

In his memoir, Galich mercilessly painted his youthful convictions as "cowardly faith" and creative work as "romantic gobbledygook." It took a while for him to completely part with the image of a well-to-do and sought-after playwright and screenwriter, an author of screenplays for tremendously popular films like "Faithful Friends" (1954) and "Taymyr Is Calling" (1970), who had to practice doublethink to accomplish what he had. After his scandalous 1968 concert in Novosibirsk's Academgorodok,

he was prohibited from performing in public. At that concert, he sang pieces like "In Memory of Pasternak" and "Mistake" for a very large and young audience. The latter song features words "Where infantrymen laid their lives in '43, roams a hunting party in the blizzard." As Galich was singing the last line "Hunters trumpet," a light bulb exploded like a gunshot. "I thought someone had shot at you," said another singer, Yuri Kukin. "And I thought that the head of the regional Communist Party Committee had shot himself," Galich responded.

Soviet authorities finally lost their patience and expelled Galich from the Writers' Union in 1971. He was also expelled from the Cinematographers' Union in 1972 and forced to leave the country in 1974. The poet summarized the situation the authorities put him in with a phrase he heard from a mother of one of his childhood friends, "Monya, you will now fall off the tree and break your head, or you'll climb down right away, and I'll slap you on the face!" After all that, it was time for another social network of sorts, an unusual conversation accompanied with some guitar chords. It was called "At the Microphone — Alexander Galich" and was broadcast on Radio Liberty — first from Munich, then from Paris.

He had no mercy for the regime, so it stopped tolerating him as part of partially permitted crafty Soviet doublethink. Even his very first 1959 song "Lenochka" about a policewoman that married an Ethiopian prince was very much un-Soviet, albeit not anti-Soviet yet.

About fifteen years later, in his 1973 sketch *Landscape*, written shortly before his departure, Galich zeroed in on the prevalent state of a Soviet intellectual, whose stupidity and baseness has reached quite an alarming level.

He also expresses irony here, but by now it's completely anti-Soviet. Galich had different introductions for this short song, but he always had one of the Serebryany Bor residents explain how a "shit-o-meter" works: "So, if a level goes up, the weight goes down… While it hovers around two or three, it's okay, but once it gets to five or six, that's really bad — we have

to call the honey wagon from the city." At this point, the audience usually burst out laughing. Then comes a well-known verse included in all official Galich poetry anthologies. Essentially, it's about the role of the free press:

"In this world not all's vain
(Though it mayn't be worth a bit!)
Just so long as there are weights
To see the level of the shit."

Galich's poetry, plays, radio essays can be used to test our attitudes toward current events in the country. His lines "How many times have we kept silent, all in different ways, but in favour, of course — not against" echo Larisa Bogoraz's final speech at her trial, where she said that it was impossible to silently oppose the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia; any silence would be in favour of it. "We shall remember by name all those who raised their hand," Galich wrote. We indeed remembered, but who cares about it now… And here is what the writer had to say about the ostensibly complex but actually very simple construct of the authoritarian regime mechanism and adapting to it, "How simple it is to govern the country: just listen to the opinions of the higher-ranking comrades and tell them to the lower-ranking ones."

Shortly before his death, Galich recorded his last song in the Radio Liberty Prague studio. He introduced it by wishing his listeners a happy upcoming 1978 and saying that our homeland is rich in all elements of the periodic table but one — happiness.

Even if one doesn't consider "To Someone Else's Grief" a prophetic song, it still comes across as the author's goodbye. It has nothing about current events and no irony either. Rather, it sums up the life of a person who was always being saved from hounding and persecution by an image of a "boy with a reed pipe." Only once, on December 15, 1977, did it fail Alexander Galich.

"We have slept through misfortune and squandered a fortune of stranger,
Life is ending, and youth is beginning again
There's smell of wet grass, and tobacco smoke comes from the house
And without us, the act goes on… goes on.
Pain returns, for it has nowhere to go,
And the wind in the evening returns to its course."

People-Conduits: Merab Mamardashvili

Any or almost any conversation with Yura and Lena eventually converges on Merab Mamardashvili. He probably needed Senokosov and Nemirovskaya in Moscow as much as he needed his sister Iza Mamardashvili in Tbilisi. He had two support centres in two cities, and it's not accidental that on the day of the philosopher's death, Lena, who was looking for him at the Vnukovo Airport, called herself his sister — that's essentially the way it was. Merab spent most of his time with them — during his long stays in their apartment and their annual trips to the Abkhazian town of Lidzava, near Pitsunda, where they vacationed together for 17 years. Sometimes, Senokosov would become a bridge to important human contact, as it happened during a happenstance meeting between Mamardashvili and Father Alexander Men. The two people-conduits came together in the right place at the right time.

This also happened in Abkhazia. Lena, Yuri, and Merab went to a Pitsunda market to get some bread, cheese and wine. They came up to a café to drink some coffee and suddenly saw Alexander Men accompanied by the religion scholar Sergey Ruzer, who would later become a professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. "Alik," Lena called to Father Alexander then. "We all headed to Lidzava," Yuri remembers. "We entered the house, and Sergey, Lena, and I decided not to disturb Father Alexander and Merab. They sat down and started talking as if each of them was waiting for this encounter. They sat there till late at night. Since that time, when Merab showed up in Moscow, we went to Semkhoz Village, near Sergiev Posad, to see Men."

Senoksov would later write, "It was evident, and I am positive about it today, that a symbolic meeting between an outstanding philosopher and an outstanding clergyman was unfolding before our eyes. It's symbolic in

a sense that despite completely different life experiences, they understood each other right away at their first meeting."

These two seemed to contrast one another: focused and impassive Mamardashvili and open Men with laughter in his eyes. Both died soon after, in 1990. At the same time, plans for launching the School at the University of London were under way, and the philosopher and the clergyman were to participate. Indeed, the School could create the atmosphere that would allow strangers to communicate with one another — the atmosphere that Father Alexander and Merab Mamardashvili created during their respective sermons and lectures.

Mamardashvili is the only world-class Soviet public intellectual. He lived in the context of world philosophy, primarily in the French and Italian language environment, since he was fluent in these languages. He occasionally communicated in English as well.

He was sort of a pop figure to Soviet intelligentsia, perhaps due to his Socratic style, an oral tradition of passing down the philosophical knowledge. His lecture tapes travelled around as much as Okudzhava, Galich, and Vysotsky song records. But these singer songwriters can also be called public intellectuals because their creative work was a way to critically reflect on reality, alongside *samizdat* and *tamizdat* (Russian prohibited literature published abroad) publications. Similarly, Mamardashvili's lectures were an attempt at public thinking, just in a different form, without poetry and songs. In the context of the utter domination of rigid state ideology, which was one of the key reasons for the country's backwardness and provinciality, this independent behaviour was an act of opposition in and of itself.

As for Mamardashvili, he believed that criticizing ideology is an oxymoron: "Asking why ideology is noncritical is expressing an absurd moralist thought… the state's elementary, original function is to make sure that living together isn't hell… Ideology plays a similar role." In one of his Vilnius lectures on social philosophy, Mamardashvili pointed out that ideology is different from productive human thought, because by definition it's a

"glue for social structures, their adhesion through consciousness, through which a concrete social structure is reproduced."

The function of ideology is to "glue," hold, and protect the existing social order. While not accepting this order and remaining a free man, Merab Mamardashvili treated it with a cool analytical head, understanding the nature of Soviet state and social structure, knowing it from the inside, and studying it almost as if looking in from the outside as an unbiased scholar.

Incidentally, Mamardashvili considered "socio-political" thinking — both Russian and Soviet — socially utopian. He called it social alchemy that is incapable of adequately describing reality or learning lessons from history because all its premises and terms are predetermined, that is, doctrinally formulated.

Indeed, such a reality perception model is not conducive to "learning lessons." Any period of Russian history, including the current one, illustrates this phenomenon. This model, if spread by mass media, naturally turns into propaganda, strengthening social alchemy biases and postulates.

In a lecture given as part of the Modern European Philosophy Overview course presented at the Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography (also known as VGIK) in 1978–1979, Mamardashvili explained, "Look at molecular and other hidden movements and stirrings of the Russian cultural mass, and you'll see a strange thing: everything comes back to where it was, as if it hasn't been sixty or eighty years, we still have the same links and adhesions. Why this incredible immunity to everything that can and must be learned from history? Well, simply because this is alchemic rather than historic and social thinking; there is no room for refutation there. Alchemy is always right because its goal is not to describe and determine what the situation really is, but to eradicate and implement, eradicating its conditions through descriptive terms. Hence is the strength of contemporary alchemic thinking, amplified tenfold by information technologies."

That's how, by thinking freely under the conditions of unfreedom, Mamardashvili discussed Soviet ideology without ever naming it explicitly.

He then concludes in his notes, "Any ideology develops to a point when its efficiency is all about not letting one speak."

Reflecting on Proust in the mid-1980s was nonstandard behaviour, just like analysing the profound logic of Marx's *Capital* (the maximum of analysis allowed at the time) by the most advanced Soviet philosophers, including Alexander Zinoviev or Evald Ilyenkov, was thirty years earlier. For this ability to think — not in an anti-Soviet, but just in an un-Soviet way — Merab Mamardashvili was expelled from all of his jobs in Moscow, and had to spend the last ten years of his life — from 1980 to 1990 — in an unheated house on Chavchavadze Prospect in the Vakeh neighbourhood of Tbilisi, in a room with huge windows facing the courtyard.

Nevertheless, reflecting on Proust has become possible because in its focus on suppressing direct political dissent, the Soviet regime neglected profound thinking. It was not only possible to study Kant, Descartes, and ancient philosophy, but also to reflect on them.

Someone might've seen Mamardashvili as their rival. Others believed he must leave the country. But he didn't compete against anyone. Immersed in Descartes and Kant, he remained a citizen of the world at a time when it was impossible to be a citizen of one's own country — in a true sense of that word. "Why do I have to leave?" he would ask, genuinely surprised.

Mamardashvili called himself a metaphysicist, effectively saying: I'm dealing with most profound things; don't seek anything superficial and political in me. He was a loner, an individualist, who made it a point to not accept the underground, especially a collective one, believing that culture may only be open. "Respecting laws and not wanting to wear a distinct hat of some kind and go to protest rallies have always afforded and will afford one a chance to think free," he said almost testily while answering *Yunnost* magazine readers' questions in 1988.

He went against the mainstream here as well and refrained from participating in club and group activities (in this respect, he was similar to Vladimir Nabokov who didn't belong to any organizations except tennis

clubs, saying, "All I need from the state and public servants is personal freedom"). He wanted to look deeper and didn't need "scholastics" and "crushing fossils" to foster his thinking process. In 1989, Mamardashvili said, "Don't participate in it — neither "for" nor "against" — it will dissolve and fall apart by itself. One has to do one's own job, and to that extent it's necessary to recognize the right to individual forms of philosophical thinking."

"Doing one's own job" was his way of existence under the Soviet regime. He would also not sell out to the regime. "What does it mean to think honourably?" Mamardashvili asked in one of his Proust lectures on May 16, 1985. "It means not to generate any self-consoling deceptive conditions in one's thinking. Centuries-old global wisdom symbolically depicts this position with a metaphor of selling one's soul to the devil. After all, what does that mean to sell one's soul to the devil? Why is it considered the transgression *par excellence*? … It's one thing to commit a transgression, but another to justify it with a cause. Justifying a transgression with a cause is in fact selling one's soul to the devil, and nothing else." This statement certainly referred to those intellectuals that collaborated and still collaborate with dictators and dictatorships.

After the end of his stint in Prague at *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, Merab didn't return to the USSR right away. Instead, he went to visit his friend Pierre Belfroid in France, where he stayed for two months. This display of freedom naturally couldn't escape the eye of the KGB, whose officers told the philosopher, "We know that you consider yourself the freest person in the country." And that happened to be absolutely true. The only problem was that after this display of freedom, Mamardashvili wasn't allowed to leave the country for twenty years. He immersed himself in foreign languages.

The Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoly Adamishin was later lobbying for granting Merab an exit visa. Incidentally, he was a friend of Yulia Dobrovolskaya — another point where people-conduits' paths crossed.

Mamardashvili didn't fit into any groups: he was a loner with his own distinct thinking style, which, as it turned out during *perestroika* years, ended up being most adaptive to new times. When everyone around him was intoxicated with newfound freedom, dashing from one extreme to the next (from being superficially liberal to neophyte archconservative, as in the tragic example of Alexander Zinoviev), Merab remained one of the very few intellectually sober individuals).

In addition to this, he had been and remained a citizen of the world — not a Russian or a Georgian — just as befits a global-scale European tradition philosopher. Mamardashvili's anti-Fascism and anti-Stalinism went hand in hand with his anti-nationalism, which resulted in his conflict with the supporters of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the "democratic" Georgian leader of that time, deteriorating health, and eventual death in the waiting area of Vnukovo Airport — right after Lena and Yura took him there from their place. They later accompanied the coffin with Merab's body to Tbilisi.

In one of his Proust lectures, Mamardashvili quotes Robert Musil by heart. He would later find an exact quote but cite an Italian rather than Russian translation of Musil's *Man Without Qualities*. That was vintage Merab. He even occasionally corresponded in Italian with the French Marxist thinker Louis Althusser, just to practice another language — French was perfectly understandable, so the sense of playing with the language disappeared.

As per Merab Mamardashvili, ideology is emasculating the language, rendering it meaningless: "One can even formulate a law: any ideology in its immanent development arrives at a point when it's efficiency, or rational efficiency, no longer depends upon whether people share it or not. Why? Because it destroys the verbal realm, which is the only space where thought can be articulated and crystallized. This is simply a destruction of language."

Perhaps, this is why it was so important for him to frequently read, write, and speak the foreign languages that haven't be as impacted by almost semantically hollow ideology. He fled to other languages — in effect,

to another reality. Even Mamardashvili's appearance lost all its Soviet trappings when he was visiting his friend Pierre Belfroid in France. There he wore white jeans and a t-shirt, moved around more nimbly, and had a happy face, a simple happy face, not an ironic one like back in the USSR.

…The building that housed the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Science on Volkhonka Street was a spiritual place. As the topography of genuine Moscow changes, no one seems to notice the connection entire generations have with a particular place. Philosophy permeated the institute's old location, where one could see cultural layers with a naked eye. It's a rare case when even the new generations of philosophers recognize the official institution, part of the Academy of Sciences, as the highest authority. One of the reasons is the special atmosphere of the place, which has to be recreated now that the philosophers moved to another location. It boasted old squeaking floorboards on the inside and Chekhov's orchard on the outside. It was especially true about the Institute's backyard, where, thanks to chaotically intertwined leaves, a passer-by could suddenly find himself almost in a suburban dacha — in an oasis of the old Moscow.

That's where the *Problems of Philosophy* offices were when our main characters first met each other and Mamardashvili. The magazine propagated mainstream ideology while also expressing dissident views — a part of double consciousness that Kormer talked about. The magazine was called upon to instil Marxist-Leninist thinking standards, but liberalized consciousness while at it. That happened, in part, thanks to the magazine's employees, especially the team assembled by its editor-in-chief Ivan Frolov. That was the team that Yuri Senokosov joined after finishing his tour of duty at the Fundamental Library of Social Sciences. He started working directly for the Deputy Editor-in-Chief Merab Mamardashvili and was not subject to department hierarchy.

…Tbilisi, Vakeh neighbourhood, near the University. A Stalinist architecture building with a lively Southern flavour to it. The façade is very pretty, but the courtyard side of the building is in decrepit condition, as is

usually the case. A door with an intercom and the word "Iza" underneath one of the buttons — that's Merab's sister, Iza Konstantivovna Mamardashvili, the apartment's only occupant. The lobby entrance is old and shabby, just like many such entrances in the city. Unlike this neighbourhood, buildings that are even closer to the centre, on the streets that radiate from Rustaveli Prospect, are practically falling apart, but everything looks good inside. Here is what Mamardashvili wrote about it, "Dirty gates, dilapidated buildings, even rats, and crumbling walls — that's the outside view, but inside, comfortable apartments… This atmosphere reflects Georgian self-respect." Or could it be the inability or perhaps the impossibility of taking care of common spaces?

The apartment where the philosopher lived looks very modest, as if left behind in the 1980s. This creates a genuine feeling and an effect of his presence. Lights fall in a special way there, maybe because the ceilings are high, and windows are very large.

The window of an unheated room where he worked is open wide onto the courtyard. It feels like he's been here recently — not really stepped out, but simply went away. Enrst Neizvestny's drawings hang on the wall alongside Kant's portrait. Books look like the room's occupant just opened them — lines underlined; margins covered with notes. There are citations to articles and lectures by actor, playwright, and poet Antonin Artaud and Belgian literary critic George Poulet, who among other things worked on Merab's beloved Marcel Proust. Works by Italians and Frenchmen. The Great Italian Dictionary…

Iza spreads out good-looking time-tested churchkhela on a large old semi-circular table ("winter food," she says). It must be taken to Moscow, along with tkemali and walnut jam. The room where their late mother slept, which leads from one office to another, houses old vinyl records, including those Merab brought. But a record player is missing. "I read the records," Iza laughs. She reads many other things too, including contemporary Russian prose, which very few Muscovites read. She shows me the

family library with old volumes of Tynyanov, Herzen, Ostrovsky, many of the same books that my parents left me. We agree that it's almost impossible to read *My Past and Thoughts* in its entirety because no one has that much time. Indeed, it's great that Iza is so busy that she has no time for Herzen's writings.

A scion of Russian and Georgian aristocratic culture, dry and stern-looking Iza is actually warm, kind, and witty. She teaches Russian to two Georgian girls who love Russian literature. She treats them as equals, and perhaps that's the reason they keep coming to her. Besides, they are definitely attracted by a house in which the philosopher's spirit lives on. "If in this house a spectre lived, he left this house. He left it," Brodsky wrote. But the spectre certainly didn't leave this house.

Incidentally, Brodsky was jealous of Mamardashvili's relations with an Italian Slavicist, Mariolina Doria de Zuliani, whom the poet was in love with, the very same girl he described as "the kind that keeps married men's dreams wet." In his characteristically rough manner, he mentioned the philosopher in his famous "Embankment of Incurables" essay, where for some reason Brodsky called him a "highly paid dolt of Armenian extraction," erring in all three characterizations. Mariolina herself swore that she and Mamardashvili were just friends, which could be the case simply because Merab was then engulfed in one of the main love affairs of his life — the one with a Latvian Jewish woman, Zelma Khayt.

Yuri, Lena, and Iza have been friends since 1979. They met while vacationing in the Baltics. Iza's brother didn't tell his sister much, so she didn't know much about his Moscow friends. I witnessed that touching scene: Lena and Iza hold hands descending the humped streets of Tbilisi from Mtatsminda Hill down to Rustaveli Prospect.

Lena and Yuri note that while living in Tbilisi, Mamardashvili was becoming more Georgian, but a few days after coming back to Moscow, he gradually became the old Moscow Merab, a citizen of the world of Georgian origin.

He displayed his Georgian streak in his relations with women. He didn't generally give them flowers, didn't walk them home, and apparently quite easily left those he grew tired of. Conflicts between a man and a woman puzzled him. Once he appeared at Nemirovskaya's and Senokosov's door after one of his permanent paramours, the screenwriter and film director Natalya Ryazantsenva, didn't let him in. "She chased me away," he said, perplexed. His long love affair with Natalya started in 1974 ("It's like we took a vacation from life and organized a festival," she would later write in her memoirs of Merab). Mamardashvili was hurt by the sudden emigration of his biggest love, Zelma.

It's not like he was running away from steady relationships with women. Lena and Yura characterize them as smart and decent, and Mamardashvili himself treated them well. Why not be friends with women like art critic Paola Volkova, who organized his lectures at VGIK, or Annie Epelbuen, who became a serious French literature scholar and interpreter, who brought Merab jeans, real French Gitanes cigarettes and letters from Althusser? Or how about Italian literary and theatre critic Silvana Davidovich, whom he called in Rome from Paris, having been finally allowed to leave the Soviet Union after a long hiatus. "Wouldn't you like to have a dinner in Paris with me?" he asked her.

Rather, he avoided possessive women and wanted his paramours to be friends with each other. He writes about it in his *Psychological Topology of the Way*, "Proust with pen in his hand followed the frantic pace of his passion and concurred it. We'll further see Proust overcoming the main thing about love that yanks a loving person out of human connection, namely the possession mania." And another quote, "He understood that we are terrifying in our love if we want to possess."

But that's the exact trap he fell into. A long-distance relationship, trips to Riga that date back to 1959 to see his beloved, a woman who was much older than him. Her leaving for Israel without a notice or call — Ernst Neizvestny told Mamardashvili about it after the fact — really hurt him specifically because he was the possessor in the relationship.

His Proust lectures are dedicated to Zelma Khayt and Pierre Belfroid; the latter prompted the philosopher to read Proust in the original language. Lena Nemirovskaya is probably right when she says that "the stress stemmed from Zelma, from her departure. Then this stress awakened inspiration, which in turn spurred Merab to read Proust in relation to his experiences…" and not to part with his Gallimard edition volumes of Proust.

Mamardashvili's face and head seemed rough and simple to sculpt at first glance, but the sculptor Yelena Munts, Vladimir Kormer's wife, had difficulty fashioning it…

…I discuss Lana Gogoberidze's film with Iza. In it, she talks about her generation, about her mother's and uncle's arrest… Iza's face stiffens: she starts saying that Lana's father — Levan Gogoberidze, who held a slew of government positions in Soviet Georgia, may also have been involved in Stalinist crimes. She adds that she can't be sure about the role of her own father, who was a professional military man, a commissar in a rifle division.

Similarly, Merab Mamardashvili could become brusque and uncompromising and get all worked up when discussing Stalin or the Nazi Regime. He was as uncompromising about Zviad Gamsakhurdia's ultranationalist policy. His moral compass simply didn't allow for any other position. His words about the Georgian civil conflict have become classic. He stated that the truths are higher than the nation, and if the people follow Gamsakhurdia, he will go against the people. Communication with his people have turned into a real drama. Philosopher Erich Solovyov compared Mamardashvili with Peter Chaadayev, who said, "Love of the fatherland is certainly a beautiful thing, but there is one thing better than that; it's the love of truth."

The sister loved her brother silently and conscientiously without asking anything in return. Merab discussed possible emigration from the USSR with her. Iza was raising his daughter in the 1970s and making sure he could peacefully and comfortably work on his philosophy in the 1980s.

They grew so close over those years that the question "And you?" seemed perfectly natural to him. He was asking her if she could follow him, leaving Tbilisi, where she spent all her life working as a schoolteacher.

Even though Georgia seemed like the only place left where Merab could live and work, life there wasn't a bed of roses. Here is a fragment of Senkosov's letter to art critic Boris Groys dated January 1982 "On the same day, [after they said good-bye to Groys, who was emigrating from the Soviet Union — *A.K.*] I flew to Tbilisi in the evening. Warm weather, smiling faces, Merab, table talks, all this for almost twelve days gradually liberated me from what had happened before, from fatigue and worries, but I continued to remember you and feel sad.

Now that more than a month went by, the poignancy of saying goodbye to you and the sadness related to it became less pronounced; new events came up: Merab had a heart attack (at present time, he is home, thank God — resting in bed)…"

Death became a fixture of life. Once in 1981, the philosopher came to his lecture late, saying that he saw Descartes in a dream and started bleeding from the mouth when he woke up. Descartes himself also saw prophetic dreams, as we know from Mamardashvili's *Cartesian Reflections*.

At some point, Yuri Senokosov saw a prophetic dream too. He wrote to one of his correspondents about it, "… the dream that I saw in August 1990 — that's roughly a month before Father Alexander Men's killing on September 9 and a little over three months before Merab's death on November 25.

Imagine a construction pit — deep and dazzlingly brightly lit, like with bright sun in midday — and myself in this pit. I see it clearly, although I'm wearing glasses, and I understand that I went blind and am being led on a leash by a dog that's clearly blind too because it's also wearing glasses.

I don't know where it's leading me; I can only see that all of this is happening in the bright light and I, apparently because I don't understand, start to groan loudly or even scream, as the scared Lena, who woke me up, told me.

When Father Alexander had been killed and then Merab died, I began thinking that it wasn't just a dream, but a premonition or some other feeling that suddenly arose in me that both of my guides — let's call them this — will soon leave me.

What is it? Knowledge or premonition of a blinded body or a signal from the mind (consciousness) that saw it clearly? On the eve of Father Alexander's death — I can even tell you precisely, 12 hours before his killing, since it was on the evening of September 8, at about 6 o'clock — a pigeon flew into the room where I was lying half asleep (I felt terrible that whole day; what's more, after taking a bath in the morning, I put on red jeans and a black shirt that I bought fifteen years prior and had never worn before). The pigeon landed under the table. It occurred to me that something might've happened to mom (she was sick at the time). I picked up the pigeon, looked into its eyes, came up to the window, and let it go.

Of course, the fact that I wore red and black could be considered cultural convention, but then again — this time my body was making some ostensibly conscious movements, while my mind was asleep. In space or in the conscious sphere, everything had transpired already, but I learned about it later."

"I couldn't come to my senses for two years after Alik's murder and Merab's death," Yuri says.

For Senokosov, Mamardashvili, whose lectures he taped right from the 1978–1979 VGIK cycle, was an impression. It's an impression in a sense that Merab himself defined as follows, "Let's remember the difference between impression and perception: an impression is something that Proust modifies with the word "eternal" — eternal impression. An impression is a blow that the world deals us with an encounter with a large event or a small man, a small piece of hawthorn or a really small pastry — whatever. I warned that elements of even the biggest of events are the same as elements of our dark and modest lives with which we are dealing in our personal, inconspicuous and unnecessary things."

A person's life is comprised of impressions. For Senokosov, a true intellectual adventure full of impressions that make him happy — and I've never really met a person who is so altruistically happy about some else's intellectual gift as Yuri — began in the second half of the 1950s, during Khrushchev's thaw. Back then, Yuri, the history student dissatisfied with fact-laden history instruction, started attending lectures at the MSU philosophy department, and after that, was involved in publishing work for many years, trying to share his impressions and a happy feeling of surprise with others.

That's what prompted him to record what Merab said. He occasionally recorded their friendly conversations, going as far as taking his recorder to a Lidzava beach. There, in the wind that also remained on tape, they talked about subjects that interested them both. But it all began with an impression. Mamardashvili could surprise. "Even when speaking at a *Problems of Philosophy* editorial meeting, Merab framed an assignment like it was his in-depth presentation," Yuri Petrovich remembers. A few years later, he started recording Merab's lectures to preserve impressions. First, he used a recorder brought from Prague, then some cutting-edge device given to him by the Italian journalist Demetrio Voitic, which broke down from overuse several years later.

VGIK lectures were the first ones recorded. Nemirovskaya and Senokosov came to the auditorium by about 9 am; the audience generally included 20 — 30 people, among them future Culture TV channel director Sergey Shumakov and film director Alexander Sokurov.

Tapes were scarce, that's why old recordings often had to be erased. A lecture had to be transcribed overnight, so a new one can be recorded in its place. This practice lasted until *perestroika* times when tapes became more available.

Of course, Yuri wasn't the only one recording. Little by little, the lectures travelled beyond Moscow proper, and Mamardashvili's baritone could be heard in other parts of the country. People in Leningrad and Riga, students of Vilnius and Tbilisi universities also knew about him. Some

recordings were less accessible, for instance, his lecture in Rostov-on-Don, where he was invited by the president of Rostov University Yuri Zhdanov, the son of Stalin's comrade in arms Andrei Zhdanov and former husband of Svetlana Alliluyeva.

Sometimes Mamardashvili recorded his thoughts himself; at other times, Yuri Petrovich recorded their conversations, effectively interviewing Merab and then transcribing the recordings. "I got a hang of it," he remembers. "Although, of course, it's not easy to decipher philosophical lectures; where do you put a period in a complex statement? I inserted two copies into a typewriter for lack of paper. This went on for ten years…"

In 2002, Senokosov gave all the recordings to Mamardashvili's daughter Alena after a conflict he had with her and no longer publishes anything. His name isn't even mentioned in new editions.

Mamardashvili's first book published by Senokosov was *How I Understand Philosophy* that featured Francisco Infante's figures drawing on the black cover. It came out in 1990, when the philosopher was still alive. Mamardashvili liked it very much and eagerly presented it to friends and colleagues.

"Not everything that Merab said I completely understood back then. I thought I understood. But the actual meaning started to open up later," Senakosov admits. Understanding followed impression…

Incidentally, the artist Francisco Infante, a son of Spanish political immigrants born in the village of Vasilyevka in the Saratov region, also came up with the logo of Moscow School of Political Studies, encrypting two key concepts — "Lena" and "School" — in it.

Effort is one of the key categories of Mamardashvili's philosophy. "Life is an effort made in time." For him, "man first and foremost is a constant effort to become a person" and "a person doesn't exist, he becomes." He defines culture as an "effort and at the same time a skill to practice life's complexity and diversity." The same is true of history. All of this places responsibility on an individual not to become a barbarian. To not become

a barbarian, one again needs to exert an effort: "A person only figures as an element of order when he is in the state of maximal exertion of all his strengths." On the opposite extreme of civilizational effort, as per Mamardashvili, is not only barbarianism, but also nihilism.

In order to understand, formulate, learn lessons, one needs to make an effort. Consciousness undergoes changes only when "*work has been done*." Nothing comes from out of nowhere. For example, European history had an "instance" of representative democracy, which could've led nowhere. However, work has been done, and democratic institutions have developed and strengthened as a result. But in Russia, "articulated form of expression, discussion, and crystallization of public civic opinion never happened to emerge." So these potentially civic states that "every Russian person experiences individually" never translated into public opinion or institutions.

Merab Mamardashvili would also conclude his 1981 Vilnius lectures on social philosophy with an explanation of the importance of personal effort. In fact, he emphasized that the effort should be personal "because no one but you can understand; you must be the one to understand." Therefore, philosophy is 'an individual form of existential personal experiment."

Of course, a person finds oneself "in the midst of the world," as the poet Arseny Tarkovsky wrote. But nothing would be accomplished without "individuation" and personal effort; barbarianism would always prevail over civilization.

The Senakosovs' Moscow apartment had a small room to the left of the hallway. This is Yuri's office. Merab Mamardashvili generally spent the night in a different room. But on his last visit, he slept on a little sofa in the office for some technical reasons. "Here is where he last slept," said Senokosov several years ago still with despair in his voice, pointing to the couchette. Then he instantly breaks into a smile remembering Merab's improvisational quips like "Tsvetaeva is a dresser with feelings," "Vasily Rozanov is a Montagne with a shopping bag," and "Aristotle's iron butt."

…We are standing in the hallway, as always lingering over last-minute conversations — people always remember something important when everything seems to have been discussed and it's time to head for the door. Lena suddenly starts saying that she couldn't read Merab after his death — it was too painful; his epoch was too close in time. "Besides, for me, his lectures are not philosophy; it's life." She adds that now, when an entire other life has passed since Mamardashvili's death, when a lot, if not everything, changed, many things have essentially come back, and Merab has suddenly become very relevant.

THE SCHOOL AS A EUROPEAN PROJECT: ORIGIN AND MEANING

The Moscow School of Political Studies grew out of people and books, as well as from Lena and Yura's ever-expanding circle of friends. They attracted everything thinking, reflecting, writing, doubting, thought-producing, and prepared to share the thoughts with others. In fact, both of them had charisma, as if they weren't just people or family but an institution. This institution had been taking shape for decades, pulling new generations of intellectuals, educators, and students into its orbit.

Actually, the School wouldn't be the educational institution it is today if it had been shoved underground, reduced to a dissident or semi-dissident state. It had to have open doors and an international outlook right from the start. After all, education can't be strictly national. Education requires translators, so Senokosov and Nemirovskaya involved brilliant simultaneous interpreters and fiction and non-fiction translators in the School's work.

Linguistic diversity is an important element for dialogue and philosophical expression. It's indispensable for education, whose end goal is to produce a citizen of the world. Only in that case, can one become a true citizen of his country, a subject of history, and a source of power, rather than an ordinary person, cannon fodder or a pawn in election games.

But starting in 2012, Russia no longer had the need for civically-minded people. And after 2014, civic engagement was declared an enemy of the Russian regime. Civic education first became undesirable and was later deemed dangerous.

I always considered the School's original name — The School of Political Studies — somewhat odd. This name would later serve as an excuse for finding faults with the organization and declaring it a foreign agent.

Michael Sohlman, Ex-Executive Director of Nobel Foundation, and a co-founder of the School

Journalist Alexander Arkhangelski

Economist Vladislav Inozemtsev

Leon Conrad, a leading tutor of the School

Passionate about the School.
Lord Robert Skidelsky and
journalist Andrei Kolesnikov (below)

British politician and School expert Keith Hampson, standing

Sir Rodric Braithwaite, former UK Ambassador to Russia and a long-time Chairman of the School's Advisory Board

School team members Marina Skorikova and the Shmelevs, Alexander and Svetlana

Interpreter Mark Dadian

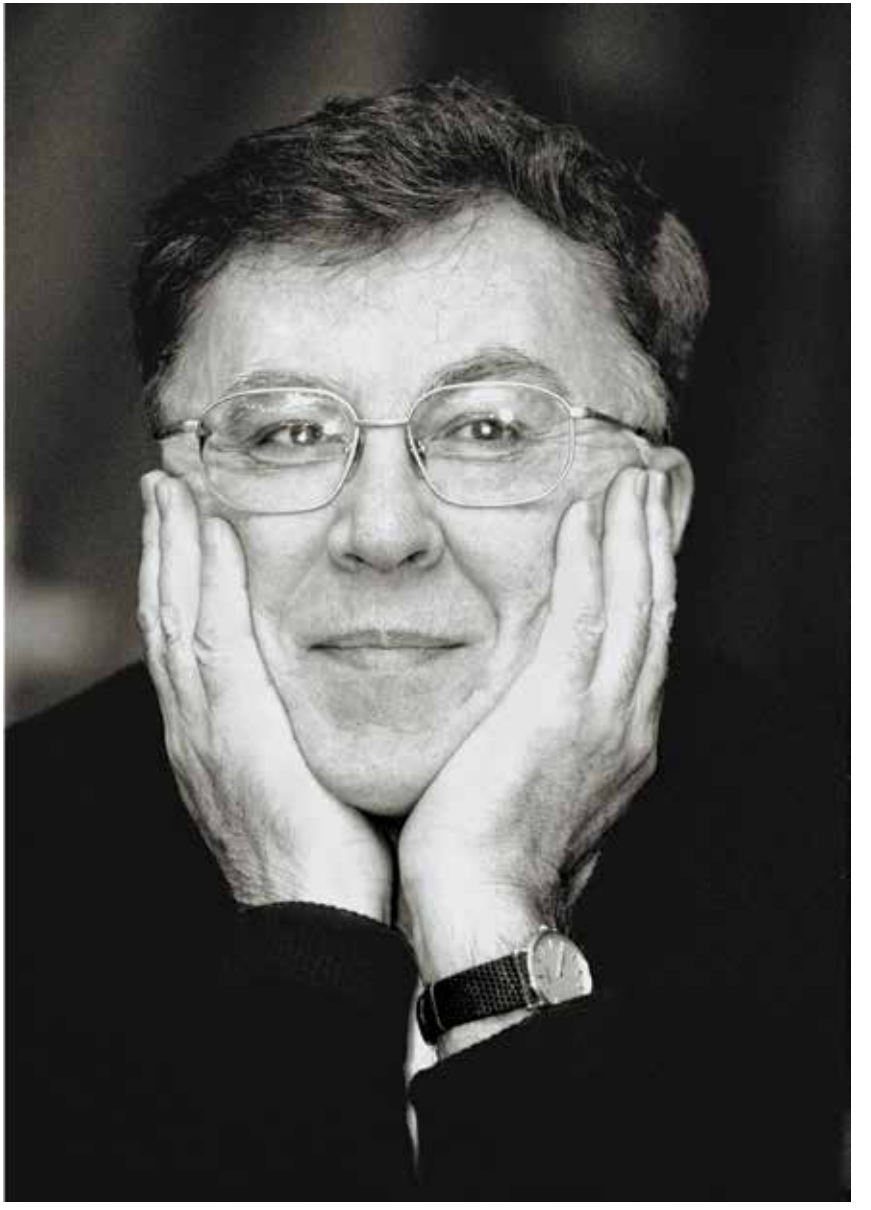
Photographer Oleg Nachinkin

Journalist Mikhail Fishman

School team member Anastassia Gontareva

Lyudmila Alexeyeva, a moral compass

A day at the School. Sociologist Yuri Levada is in the centre



Yuri Senokosov. The Thinker

Lena Nemirovskaya. *Culture Matters*

Lena Nemirovskaya awarded with the Order of the British Empire, 2003
Sir Roderic Lyne is at the rostrum. Sitting left to right on stage, Kakha Bendukidze,
Sir Rodric Braithwaite, Lena Nemirovskaya, Yuri Senokosov

Awards of the School

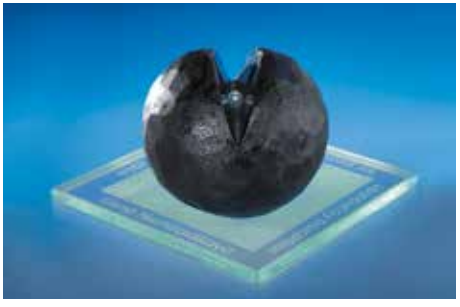
Ordre national du Mérite (France)

Cavalier's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland

Polish Medal Bene Merito

Yegor Gaidar Award

The Council of Europe's Pro Merito Medal



Hiroshima Foundation Award for Peace and Culture

Order of the
British Empire

Elizabeth the Second, *by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Her other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith and Sovereign of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire to Yelena Mikhailovna Namirovskaya*

Greeting

Whereas *We have thought fit to nominate and appoint you to be an Honorary Officer of the Civil Division of Our said Most Excellent Order of the British Empire*

We do *by these presents grant unto you the Dignity of an Honorary Officer of Our said Order and hereby authorise you to have hold and enjoy the said Dignity and Rank of an Honorary Officer of Our aforesaid Order together with all and singular the privileges thereunto belonging or appertaining.*

Given *at Our Court at Saint James's under Our Sign Manual and the Seal of Our said Order this Second day of June 2003 in the Fifty-second year of Our Reign.*

By the Sovereign's Command.

Grand Master

Grant of the Dignity of an Honorary Officer of the Civil Division of the Order of the British Empire to Mrs. Yelena Mikhailovna Namirovskaya

Programme Co-ordinator of the School
Inna Berezkina

Granddaughter Katya, at a tender age

Senokosov answered the question about the name's origin with another question: "What do you prefer: live and work or fight and die?" He went on to answer his own question," If you prefer living, then you have to think about such personal psychological conditions as revenge, resentment, fear, guilt, envy. Any authoritarian regime successfully exploits these conditions to suppress freedom, but democratic regimes expect that people will educate themselves if given freedom. During *perestroika* years, we believed these Kant's words about democratic regimes, just as we valued political and other studies." That's how the name Moscow School of Political Studies came about. It was suggested by Petr Shchedrovitsky, son of philosopher Georgy Shchedrovitsky, and one of the people behind the School's creation.

After this explanation, Senokosov elaborated on his answer in a letter.

A Letter to the Author. On Citizen and Civic Education

Question: Is a [political] demonstration a place for an intellectual?
Umberto Eco: No, it wasn't a place of an intellectual. It was a place of a citizen. A singer, a soccer player, or a novelist is better known than the rest of the citizens. And he may and must take advantage of his status to achieve socially important goals. So, I wasn't there as an intellectual. I used my status as an intellectual to speak as a citizen.

Dear Andrei,

I am sending you an answer to your question. I already responded in part by saying that when creating the school, we didn't really give much thought to how to name it, believing that studies — not only political and economic, but more importantly, meetings between young people from different Russian regions and national and international experts will help us to realize the School's motto, "Civic Education to Civil Society". We believed that civil society and its core, the human rights advocacy groups, exist in Russia. So we would want to invite civic activists to our seminars as well. But as it turned out, it wasn't all that simple, especially after the school was added to the "foreign agents" list.

So, why is civic education important at the time of globalization? What's a citizen?

As we know, the Earth's population is rapidly growing. It was 1.6 billion people in 1900, and it's over 7 billion today. Accordingly, human impact on the natural environment and people themselves is growing. A number of global problems point to that: climate change, the socioeconomic rift between developed and developing countries, and its consequences for developed countries — growing influx of refugees, populism, aggression, threat of a third world war. The complexity and depth of problems caused by globalization is evident, considering that their solutions require state

cooperation on both regional and global levels. And we certainly need to subscribe to the principles of the rule of law, democratic governance, and the open market.

At the School, we believe that these principles shouldn't be forgotten at least insofar as they originated in Europe, our common homeland, where ideas that started the globalization process were formulated in the 17th century. I mean Adam Smith and his famous phrase about the market's invisible hand from *The Wealth of Nations*, as well as Immanuel Kant who said in his Enlightenment Tractate, "It is more nearly possible, however, for the public to enlighten itself; indeed, if it is only given freedom."

Today we can confidently say that these ideas illuminated the way for economic and political development of European society, which was trying to overcome its spiritual immaturity caused, according to Kant, not by lack of intelligence, but rather by the lack of resolve and courage to use it and understand that it's not nature that makes the man, rather, the man makes himself. Because the purpose of enlightenment is not only about spreading knowledge, but also about developing human intelligence.

Why is it then that this enlightened mind turned out to be so near-sighted, and the modern world fell hostage to menacing global problems?

The Enlightenment motto *Sapere aude*! (have courage to use your own intelligence), in my view, clearly contains a paradox worth reflecting on. Upon reflection, we will discover that when we are thinking, we are not thinking with our own intelligence, since this is some invisible property, which we nevertheless possess and use. Hence, as per Merab Mamardashvili, who was an heir to the spirit of the Enlightenment, a person gets this "property" (intelligence) as a gift, and everyone has it. But not everyone understands it; some bury their talent in the ground. If one doesn't bury it, we can say, he or she has a definite talent of personality, which is singled out as a special ethical and cultural phenomenon, since a human being is looking for some value beyond the obvious. One is looking for justice, truth, honour, good, freedom, which can't be passed directly from

person to person, but requires understanding — a personal conscious effort and courage to use one's own intelligence. When this happens, paradoxes, aphorisms, metaphors and phrases, similar to the ones cited above, are born.

Because, truly, what does the phrase "market's invisible hand" mean? It seems clear at first glance. It points to a certain process that contains a paradox and an answer at once: when people pursue their *private interests*, their actions are determined by a certain force that works for the public good.

So, the enigma is still there, if we remember that besides private interests, there are other collective means of achieving public good, such as reforms, *perestroika*s, and revolutions. The question is which approach is more effective? Individual or collective? Democratic or authoritarian? Clearly, both are successful in their own way, but, as we know, the former is efficient thanks to scientific discoveries, technical inventions, and market economy, while the latter is propelled forward by government power and reverse engineering. This characteristic of the second approach definitely inhibits democratic development for various reasons. I'll name but one of them — the principle one — rejection of freedom that results in freedom being substituted with so-called choice. What do I mean?

Of course, democracy presupposes a realm of freedom that no one — be it the monarch, the people, a party, business, or the president — has a right to nationalize or privatize completely. There is a place for everyone in a democracy. And if so, of course, some choice must exist; after all, we often believe that a person is only free when he has a choice. Hence a conclusion: the more choices, the more freedom a country has. But is that really the case if we keep in mind that human choices are unpredictable? One, for instance, can choose to become a terrorist, or people as a whole or security services can make a radical choice, which leads to terror by the state.

Consequently, the empirical definition of freedom clearly contains an internal contradiction. That's why we will turn to another definition,

formulated by Mamardashvili, which is premised upon the disciplined mind rather than an ability to choose: "Freedom is a phenomenon that occurs where there is no choice. Instead, there is something that contains necessity in itself, something that serves as necessity of itself."

Essentially, European thinkers during the time of the Enlightenment were gravitating to this latter definition of freedom, while reflecting on civil society and human rights. In fact, all of this was their reaction to an absolutist form of government under which the supreme power belonged to one individual who could manage the freedom of others. As we know, the famous Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, a political manifesto of the French Revolution put an end to this order. Personal freedom, freedom of speech and religion, people's equality before the law and respect for private property were declared to be inalienable human rights.

The Declaration effectively summed up the preceding stage in the development of European society, when people strove to curtail absolute power. The 1689 English Bill of Rights that set forth "the rights and liberties of the subject" and other legal and political documents (nobility and city charters, etc.) all point to this process.

However, the philosophy of freedom that inspired European advocates of the Enlightenment in the 18th century sought rights for a citizen who is no longer a "subject."

They wrote that one may and must talk about rights, since people are perceived to exist through interaction with one another. A right means nothing outside these interactions. Then they asked a question: how can free beings coexist — after all, this is the purpose behind every right. The answer was that human coexistence is only possible if, for the sake of compromise, everyone limits his or her freedom to such an extent that freedom of another remains intact. Freedom of one individual is limited by the freedom of another, thus freedom of another is a precondition for one's own freedom.

Thus, freedom and right are two basic concepts connected to the history of European liberalism and the emergence of civil society.

Is there a connection here with the "invisible hand of the market" and "the public that will enlighten itself if it is only given freedom?" Of course, there is, and a very direct connection too.

Let me first cite an example related to the market.

Essentially, at the same time when Adam Smith wrote his "Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations," an Englishman James Watt invented the steam engine, which played a great role in the transition towards machine production and the Industrial Revolution. Obviously, it happened thanks to the market, or rather to the combination of private enterprise and industrial enlightenment. I'll discuss that a bit later; for now, let me just point out that ten years before Watt, a Russian, Ivan Polzunov, also developed a design for the steam engine and then built a steam-powered machine for manufacturing needs, but passed away a week before its test run. However, another brilliant mechanic and inventor by the name of Ivan Kulibin lived in Russia at about the same time. He believed that steam engines could be used on river vessels, but didn't directly deal with them, preferring to work on so-called "water-walkers" with wooden wheels. Moreover, he was willing to distribute blueprints for his invention free of charge and consult "those wishing to use it." But no one wished to use it for some reason, in contrast to England, where James Watt had three consecutive partners and sponsors during his many years of work on improving the steam engine. So by 1780, the company he and his third partner Matthew Boulton founded had produced 40 steam engines. What's more, the state treasury played no role in it; it was all done through the private initiative of the inventor, his partner, and buyers-entrepreneurs.

But Russia lacked these three factors, and "it caused Kulibin's projects to remain on paper," as a modern historian put it. Pavel Milyukov explained why they were lacking in his *Studies on the History of Russian Culture* at end of the 19th century: "Our craft and machine production didn't develop organically out of home production because of the growing demand by the

people: it was created late by the government that was motivated by the idea that there is a need to develop national industry.

… In a country that lacked capital, labourers, entrepreneurs, and buyers, this form could've been supported through artificial means only." To be more precise, state intervention without prior work by the "invisible hand of the market" was necessary.

The transition from manual to machine labour, from craft production to mass production, that began in Europe in the last third of the 18th century and became known as the Industrial Revolution, would obviously have been impossible without the 17th century Industrial Revolution and industrial enlightenment, which was as important for the success of the Industrial Revolution as the *laissez-faire* principle. In turn, industrial enlightenment wouldn't have been successful without social infrastructure connected to education, personnel training, and investments that guarantee the implementation of technological innovations under free-market conditions. From that standpoint, the development of non-imported domestic technological innovations started in Russia much later than it did in England and was interrupted by WWI, which, as we know, led to a catastrophe for the country.

In this connection, here is the second example that relates to Kant's phrase about "the public that will enlighten itself if it is only given freedom." It seems to jump out at us, since, as we know, the goal of the Socialist Revolution in Russia was to liberate workers and peasants from exploitation, but the process was accompanied by a propaganda of violence and mass terror. In other words, local traditional means were used, in addition to industrial technologies and innovations. But the goal was accomplished: socialism was built, and everyone became a "citizen," exactly what the poet and entrepreneur Nikolai Nekrasov dreamed of in 1855:

> Who then is he who is no senator,
> No orator, leader of men,
> No king, nor hero, nor plantator,
> But is his land's true citizen?

* * *

You may not be a poet
But a citizen must be.

In 1929, another poet of ours proclaimed,

"As
the most valuable
of certificates
I pull it
from the pants
where my documents are:
read it
envy me —
I'm a citizen
of the USSR!"

(Vladimir Mayakovsky)

Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, Revolution — all these concepts, as we remember from school, reflect human society's transitions from one historical era to another. But we rarely reflect on the fact that during these transitions most people are trying to find a social equivalent to the unclear and unstable state of their souls. In the first half of the 20th century, after the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Robert Musil wrote his famous novel *Man Without Qualities* about this phenomenon. In the second half of the 20th century, Osip Mandelstam's wife Nadezhda wrote on the same subject in her memoirs that in the USSR of the 1930s "for an enormous number of neophytes, there were no other values, trues, and laws, but those that were required here and now and were called class ones for the sake of convenience... Great many words disappeared from use — honour, conscience, and the like. It was not that difficult to debunk these concepts once the recipe for debunking them was discovered." But that's a separate subject.

Let me simply reiterate that in Russia, after the reign of Peter the Great, the transition of society towards Europe took two centuries and ended with the era of totalitarian slavery as a result of the Bolshevik takeover. I'll now return to the question I raised previously: in such a case, in addition to the market, what is the connection between the concept of freedom and the formation of civil society?

I think an answer to this question is evident for a European: successful economic development and the emergence of civil society would've been impossible without something that we now came to call the separation of powers.

It should be remembered that before this term appeared in John Locke's *Second Tract of Government*, there was the Magna Carta (1215), with the help of which the English barons forced their King to acknowledge that *he is first among equals*. In other words, the separation of powers wasn't Locke's objective; for him, it was a *fait accompli*. He simply memorialized the use of the main elements of the rule of law and democracy that had already existed in his country at the end of the 17th century. And after Montesquieu's work *The Spirit of the Laws* appeared at the end of the 18th century, not just the term but the very principle of the separation of powers was recognized in many states.

Same is true of the concept of enlightenment. Kant's tractate also in effect summed up the accomplishments of the European intellectual movement in the 17th and 18th centuries, whose participants were striving to understand how government should be organized and structured to guarantee the preservation of freedom.

"A greater degree of civil freedom," the philosopher wrote, "seems advantageous to a people's spiritual freedom; yet the former established impassable boundaries for the latter; conversely, a lesser degree of civil freedom provides enough room for all fully to expand their abilities. Thus, once nature has removed the hard shell from this *kernel* for which she has most fondly cared, namely, the inclination to and vocation for

free thinking, the kernel gradually reacts on a people's mentality (whereby they become increasingly able to *act freely*), and it finally even influences the principles of government, which finds that it can profit by treating men, who are now *more than machines*, in accord with their dignity."

This last paragraph of Kant's essay, along with Locke's treatise on government and Smith's "invisible hand," leave no doubt that, having embarked on the path of industrial and social development in the second half of the 17th century, Europe started transitioning toward liberating public forces and talents. By creating various associations and parties and reforming political institutes, enlightened Europeans were seeking to organize public life in a new way.

However, at practically the same time (as the rural and urban population started becoming increasingly destitute in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution), an opposite school of thought began gaining strength in European culture — the Marxist philosophy of class struggle and dictatorship of the proletariat.

I am talking about it to demonstrate how far Russia and the West diverged at some point in their understanding of not only democracy, but the preceding intellectual tradition that stems directly from it. Specifically, it's the tradition of believing in reason, with one caveat. Locke, Smith, Kant, and other thinkers of the Enlightenment believed in liberty and reason, but Locke's reason differed from that of Kant's. The Lockean reason stems from experience and contains nothing but experience, while the Kantian reason proceeds from the critique of experience.

That's an important distinction if we remember Kant's expression "Physics is not an experimental science, it's a science for experiments." One may have engaged in scientific experiments for as long as one wished, just like the alchemists did, but these experiments wouldn't have brought one closer to an understanding of what science really is until Newton had discovered laws that provided the framework for accurate mathematical

analysis of any physical experiment. And we may say the same about Locke, for whom "war of all against all" was no longer a natural social state, since he believed that society is regulated by legal norms that determine human behaviour and are dictated by reason. In his defence of law, Locke appealed to personal interest. In contrast, Kant didn't believe in the "alchemic" right of solely personal interest, outside of the "moral culture within us," and was talking about moral (categorical) imperative as a goal of a reasonably justified action. In other words, morals are a calculus of sorts that are used to measure public relations between people. Therefore, one might assert that only moral law, which is independent of outside reasons, makes one truly free. In the context of today's reality, Kant's conviction that people will enlighten themselves seems naïve, as does Adam Smith's belief in the market's "invisible hand." However, we shouldn't forget that ideas expressed by these thinkers rested not on blind faith in freedom, but on quite reasoned postulates that accounted for the characteristics of human nature that predetermined man's economic thinking and his sphere of living as a whole. Specifically, the ideas rest on the human inclination to exchange services and fruit of one's labour, as well as on human tendency for hospitality rather than just enrichment. Let's hear what Adam Smith himself had to say.

"A revolution of the greatest importance to *public happiness* was in this manner brought about by two different orders of people who had not the least intention to serve the public. To gratify the most childish vanity was the sole motive of the great proprietors. The merchants and artificers… acted merely from a view to their own interest, and in pursuit of their own pedlar principle of turning a penny wherever a penny was to be got. Neither of them had either knowledge or foresight of that great revolution which the folly of the one, and the industry of the other, was gradually bringing about."

Meanwhile — continues the author of *The Wealth of Nations* — since this order of development contradicted the natural course of life, it was

inherently unstable. Why was there a contradiction? Because an individual is able to freely pursue his personal interests — and he realizes it at some point — only if he doesn't violate the laws of justice, which is one of the main human virtues. In this case, his behaviour is in sync with the forces exerted by the "invisible hand."

And what is a virtue? According to Plato, as stated by Socrates in *Gorgias*, it's a special order of soul that allows one to maintain dignity toward oneself and others. And according to Kant, it's moral solitude in pursuit of one's duty, which arises from the act of thinking, when the infinite is experienced and manifested in finite, the timeless (eternal) in transient, and absolute in relative. Since morality is absolute, our treatment of it should be relative. Hence, a human being has a chance to rise to the level of an independent individual, capable of independent thinking, that is, of being more than a citizen of solely one sovereign country and of being more than an intellectual as suggested by Umberto Eco's answer to the journalist's question "*Is a political demonstration a place for an intellectual*?" No, it is a place for a citizen, who uses his status to achieve socially important goals.

So, who is this citizen? And what socially important goals can we be talking about in the context of globalization? Should a citizen also possess virtues in this context, apart from professional qualities and scientific, artistic, organizational abilities and talents? I mean people on a wide array of the professional spectrum, especially given the fact that there are always well-known and influential figures among them. Some are little-known and non-public, but nevertheless influential in their professional environment. So, the question about virtues ostensibly disappears.

Let's look, for instance, at the virtue of responsibility, since when using expressions like "civic responsibility" and "professional responsibility," we generally don't see any difference between them. Nevertheless, it exists, because civic responsibility as a virtue is indivisible, unlike professional skills and talents, which can be outstanding, mediocre, or humble. Consequently, it presupposes not only professional talent and interest, but being

personally involved in life around us, not being indifferent. One should also have dignity, intellectual honesty, conscience, persistence in defending what he believes in and values. It is citizens with these qualities that stand on a morally solid ground that can be described with words like "That's what I stand by and can't have it any other way," "I can't keep silent," and "Live not by lies." They simply can't act otherwise, so they use their professional status and place of a citizen to achieve such socially important goal as freedom.

Historical context: Gorbachev

A new stage in Lena and Yura's lives started when it seemed that life was coming to end, or rather, that it would proceed as usual, with no changes. The Mikhail Gorbachev era began.

"I was knocking on the doors of history, and they opened. They opened for those for whom I've been toiling." For more than a quarter of a century since the USSR's red flag was brought down from the top of the Kremlin Palace, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev had been trying to come to terms… Come to terms with the nation, and with himself. Perhaps the nation didn't even notice that the doors to the world of freedom really opened for it, and that Gorbachev was the one who did it. Or, perhaps, freedom is such a complex social vehicle to manage that it's easier to declare it the root of all evil, than actually use it.

In November 1987, at the joint celebratory session of the Communist Party Central Committee, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, the Secretary General Mikhail Gorbachev delivered a speech dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

The speech bore a somewhat unorthodox name: "October and *Perestroika*: Revolution Continues." In its third year, *perestroika* was equated to a revolution. In fact, it wasn't a propaganda-driven exaggeration, or an attempt to fill Gorbachev's transformations with 1917 romanticism. At least, that wasn't the only message of the metaphor. Gorbachev and his team indeed started realizing that they had been making a revolution for two and half years. And that's what was actually happening.

Gorbachev's stunning popularity, which few remember nowadays, stemmed from a surprise factor followed by hopes. On April 23, 1985, a new General Secretary ascended the podium at the Central Committee plenary meeting. Unlike the previous leaders — Brezhnev, Andropov, and

Chernenko, who became fixtures of the period dubbed "five years of lavish funerals" — he could perambulate without outside assistance. But not only that: he recently turned 54, was full of energy, and could speak clearly and substantively without reading from a piece of paper.

The entire nation was in a state of absolute shock. What he was saying wasn't as important as how he was saying it. It was this delivery that many saw as an ironclad sign of impending radical changes.

A Soviet leader of this kind shocked the West as well. Having given freedom to the citizens of his own country, he spared the rest of the world from fear. And the world responded with "gorbymania," the adoration of the Soviet leader.

He was hardly prepared for such a turn of events himself. Trying to live up to unrealistically high expectations in the Soviet Union and in the world at large, Gorbachev very soon understood that he wasn't just a reformer, but a leader of a revolution that would change the world and even end history, in Francis Fukuyama's terms. And for the "end of history" to occur, Gorbachev would have to go. He would have to abandon the mantle of the head of the empire that would cease to exist on December 25, 1991. Radical changes would prove impossible within the borders of the empire that Gorbachev was trying to preserve, believing it to be possible until the very end. The new life turned out to be incompatible with socialism, which Gorbachev wanted to put a human face on — a moustache, a goatee, and a bald spot. Lenin's face, that is.

Yuri Andropov played some role in Gorbachev's life. Despite being head of the KGB, he had quite a "civilian" reputation. For the Communist Party-affiliated intellectuals, Andropov remained the figure that could potentially herald changes — his trusting, albeit not always simple relations with people like party liberal intellectuals Georgy Arbatov and Alexander Bovin, pointed in this direction. Of course, his rigidity, fierceness and sudden bouts of unflinchingly orthodox thinking disappointed at times. He cracked down on any anti-Soviet activity and truly believed

that any problem can be solved by tightening discipline and increasing criminal penalties.

Upon becoming the General Secretary — a position he attained with help from the old-time Minster of Foreign Affairs Andrei Gromyko; the latter receiving the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet position in exchange — Gorbachev would try to overcome the Andropov paradigm almost right away. In other words, he would start thinking well beyond "strengthening discipline." However, Gorbachev's anti-alcohol campaign — a momentous event for his image making — was still conducted in an Andropov-like fashion: if drinking impedes development, let's prohibit drinking and destroy the vineyards.

Gorbachev's trap became evident right away. It was overly optimistic expectations, different for each political clan and social group. On March 18, 1985, Anatoly Chernyayev, who was later to become Gorby's assistant wrote in his diary: "Hopes and expectations are way too high! But the juggernaut that must be moved is enormous, the temptations to walk the beaten path are myriad, and the problems and genuine obstacles to solving them are countless!"

Names of months are often used to mark historical events and trends. For instance, people who lived during the Soviet era can easily understand the concept of "*October*," which marked all seven decades of the Soviet regime. "April" became a symbol of Gorbachev's *perestroika* after the April plenary meeting of the Communist Party Central Committee, which separated the era of gerontocracy from the period that would soon be named *perestroika*.

In May 1985, the General Secretary would travel to Leningrad, where he would talk to the people up close! "Everyone will need to restructure, everyone!" he would say in the cradle of the October Revolution, using the Russian derivative of the word *perestroika*. Indeed, Gorbachev would start *perestroika* from his own persona, which wasn't easy at all for the Soviet *nomenklatura* member. He would come back to this thought many times in

the future: after all, he could've simply reigned for a few years; instead, he staked his name on the game of history by daring to introduce change. Here is what Gorbachev himself wrote about it: "The impulse for change should come from above. Since I found myself on the very top, a lot depended specifically on my choice."

At the end of 1986, the Secretary General took a short break from foreign policy and economic agenda (a decision to allow joint ventures with foreign partners was already made, and the law on private entrepreneurial activity was passed): on December 23, Academician Andrei Sakharov returned to Moscow from his exile to Gorky. It was an act of symbolic importance — a turn to democracy.

The "acceleration" (uskoreniye) slogan was very soon forgotten. The word "democracy" continued to be modified by the adjective "socialist" for quite a long time. Meanwhile, the words *perestroika* and *glasnost* enriched global vocabulary.

Glasnost was making quick strides. In 1987, American reporter Eugene Methvin used the term "Gorbachev's dilemma" in his *National Review* article. The General Secretary couldn't help but let the *glasnost* genie out of the bottle — such was the logic of *perestroika*, but the very same *glasnost* could undermine the foundations of his own power. Gorbachev understood it himself: "It *[glasnost]* was an essential and indispensable weapon of *perestroika*. But it — because of the very nature of "Russian freedom" — has also harmed *perestroika* a lot." In other words, it undermined the power of the General Secretary.

Many years of struggle to publish the anti-Stalinist novel *Children of the Arbat*, written by the prominent Soviet writer Anatoly Rybakov, reached their apex in the summer of 1986. After complicated manoeuvring, the magazine *Druzhba Narodov (The Friendship of Peoples)* editor-in-chief Sergey Baruzdin announced in the journal's *October* 1986 issue that the novel would be published in 1987. Such audacity was unheard of. That same *October*, the leader of the Politburo hard-line faction Yegor Ligachev

mentioned the book at the Politburo meeting. "I want to find out who gave permission," he said. According to Gorbachev's aide's records, the Secretary General argued that it's "the artists themselves and their unions rather than the KGB or the Central Committee" that should be evaluating works of literature. The journal started publishing *Children of the Arbat* in the spring of 1987.

Gorbachev tried to ensure that economic reforms be confined to the socialist framework. For instance, he publicly criticized the economist Nikolai Shmelev for his famous *Novy Mir* article "Advances and Debts," in which he allowed for a possibility of unemployment in the Soviet Union. He wasn't decisive enough, for which he later blamed himself. He for one didn't accept the proposal to reduce budget expenditures, including military ones, put forward by the Central Committee Secretary Nikolay Slyunkov, who wasn't a reformer at all. Inconsistencies in preparing the real reform strategy led to the fact that the program documents contradicted each other and couldn't be implemented. Nevertheless, whatever he did in the economic sphere had tremendous significance simply because any steps to promote private enterprise had to be big and important. What did it mean to allow three (just three!) owners of a small business to be registered as cooperative? It was a revolution in public consciousness. In the past, such people were criminally persecuted, as were individual entrepreneurs.

Reality has exceeded all expectations: the nation that seemed to have been sluggish and un-enterprising suddenly discovered colossal internal resources and started entering the marketplace incredibly fast. It turned out that the entrepreneurial gene that had been dormant in our people since the 1920s, after the NEP (New Economic Policy since 1922 allowed elements of the comparably free market for several years) policies were thwarted, didn't disappear and the culture of free enterprise returned in an instant.

Apparently, having allowed for private initiative, Gorbachev got frightened of his own far-reaching moves. He slowed down reforms and started drowning himself in compromise. Prime Minister Nikolay Ryzhkov, who

opposed price liberalization, was dismissed. His successor Valentin Pavlov discredited the government with a very sloppy and unpopular monetary reform and eventually became one of the coup organizers. By the end of President Gorbachev's rule, the budget deficit had reached 20 per cent, and the country couldn't pay interest on its foreign loans.

Yet it was a different country already. Without supporting capitalism, Gorbachev prepared citizens of several nascent independent republics for the transition to the market economy.

Right at the outset of *perestroika*, Gorbachev started creating his own team. Its key players were: Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov, Andropov's pick for the Central Committee Secretary in 1982 and subsequently Gorbachev's pick for Politburo member; Yegor Ligachev, hyper energetic and rigid former Tomsk Regional Communist Party Committee First Secretary, whom Gorbachev put in charge of the Central Committee Secretariat; and Alexander Yakovlev, a communist intellectual, who spent to 10 years in exile as the Ambassador to Canada (he returned to the USSR in 1983 and was appointed director of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations). Gorbachev held Yakovlev out as a symbol of the liberal wing of his *perestroika* team. In 1985, he became the head of the Central Committee Propaganda Department, and only then did he become the Central Committee Ideology Secretary and a member of the Politburo.

Ligachev and Yakovlev were in effect two heads of the Russian imperial eagle, very much forgotten during the Soviet era, in that they were looking for different directions. As a result, they became symbols of the conservative and liberal wings of *perestroika*, co-existing in one body — the Gorbachev team.

In part, Gorbachev needed this duopoly for political purposes — as his press secretary Andrei Grachev notes, he could "play" both Yakovlev and Ligachev like a piano, alternatively pressing black and white keys.

All in all, understanding political, ideological, and bureaucratic balances is essential for interpreting Gorbachev's behaviour during *perestroika*.

When someone was slowing down reforms, he was becoming more radical. But when the events got ahead of him, he could slow down and come across as a conservative. However, he couldn't stop the free flow of history that he himself let out in the open.

In some sense, Gorbachev was the president of the entire world, a man who changed its map and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1990 (a result of "Gorbymania"). However, he was incapable of being the president for the peoples of the fifteen Soviet republic, since he didn't risk running in the popular election, wasn't confident enough, and therefore didn't enjoy full legitimacy as President — unlike popularly elected presidents of Soviet republics, Russia in particular. Boris Yeltsin — his ally on democratization and opponent on all other issues — was people's president, while Gorbachev was not.

His *nomenklatura* nature manifested itself after the failed coup against him: upon coming back to Moscow from his seclusion in Crimea, he went straight to his government dacha instead of going to see the defenders of the Russian parliament, people who were ready to sacrifice their lives for *perestroika*. He remained indifferent in a situation when his party, the CPSU, was agonizing, and his administration employees might've well been eaten alive by the mob, when the Central Committee building was being sealed. No, he didn't defend his guard.

Admittedly, they became estranged from him. In fact, almost everyone else did too: those he turned away from, but later returned to his team, like Alexander Yakovlev; his own appointees who betrayed their patron by becoming the coup organizers; his supporters who subsequently proceeded farther on the path of the county's democratization or, to the contrary, then saw Gorbachev as a radical destroyer. So, Gorby was becoming increasingly lonely.

Gorbachev was expanding the degrees of freedom — both in economic, foreign, and domestic policies, — believing that he may control the process that "got underway," as he himself liked to describe it. But social changes were happening at lightning speed, and the President could hardly keep up with them or catch his breath.

He liberalized the economy, allowed individual entrepreneurial activity, joint ventures, cooperatives, and enterprises, based on the cost accounting *(khozraschyot)*, but didn't dare to go beyond a socialist framework, or rather believed that it would be wrong. He also couldn't accept the inevitability of unemployment and free prices.

Having let the *glasnost* genie out of the bottle, where it's been kept for decades by the Stalin and Brezhnev regimes, Gorbachev probably had no idea that in keeping with his beliefs on what people have a right to know about, he would stand in the way of revealing the truth about the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and the Katyn massacre.

Revelling in the adoration from the global community, Gorbachev could hardly imagine that happenstance events and grassroots initiative would break down the wall that separated the West and the Communist world. "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall," Ronald Reagan urged. But it wasn't Gorbachev, but the process he set off that crossed Checkpoint Charlie.

The Communist Party had to have fallen apart completely for Gorbachev to understand the need for repealing Article VI of the Soviet Constitution, which proclaimed the "leading and guiding role" of the CPSU. Only then did he realize that he has to move away from his party status, becoming the President instead of the General Secretary.

Being an experienced bureaucratic player, he clearly lost in the political game against Yeltsin. He believed that he could still move forward while surrounding himself with staunch conservatives. That's what he believed up until they staged the coup.

So, at some point, he was left alone in his struggle, trying to act as a puppeteer while all the strings to his puppets snapped.

But when he realized that his victory — the liberation of the country — spelled his personal defeat and the end of his grand political career, he left with dignity as one of the greatest political leaders in history.

"I consider it vitally important to preserve the democratic achievements which have been attained in the last few years," Gorbachev said on

the day of the dissipation of the Soviet Union, December 25, 1991. "We have paid with all our history and tragic experience for these democratic achievements, and they are not to be abandoned, whatever the circumstances, and whatever the pretexts. Otherwise, all our hopes for the best will be buried."

Mikhail Gorbachev always repeated that he was lucky — not everyone gets an opportunity to pull a huge country out of the swamp it's been stuck in for almost a century. However, it's a colossal burden as well. "I actually don't know any happy reformers," he liked to say.

This is absolutely true. Never mind that his post-*perestroika* life was tough because he was misunderstood by his own people, the people that, as he stated in his December 25, 1991 address, were yet to learn to use their freedom, the main fruit of his revolution.

What's most important is that he gave us this freedom. The rest is up to us.

THE SCHOOL AS A EUROPEAN PROJECT: ORIGIN AND MEANING

(continued)

The School grew out of books, including books written by people who became living sources of Nemirovskaya and Senokosov's approach to education. Of course, it grew out of books that Senokosov promoted and distributed. It definitely grew out of Mamardashvili's lectures, Kormer's novels and articles, Father Alexander's sermons and writings — generally, from everything produced by the intellectual community in the 1950–1980s.

But that's not all. Several more people made a significant contribution, among them: Ernest Gellner, Isaiah Berlin, Ralph Dahrendorf, and George Soros. Their intellectual, organizational, and financial activities gave impetus to the new kind of education, which was in sync with the times. But they had roots as well. Dahrendorf can trace his ideas to Karl Popper, who wrote the book Open Society and Its Enemies while living in remote New Zealand during World War II. The Open Society became the phrase that can refer to the School as well.

Ernest Gellner was a frequent guest at Lena and Yura's living room salons. He was born to a family of German-speaking Jews from Czechoslovakia, studied in England, and became a famous English humanitarian, who came back to Prague, the city of his youth, at the end of his life as the head of the Centre for the Study of Nationalism. Like Ralf Dahrendorf, he had close ties with the London School of Economics. Incidentally, Dahrendorf is not an Englishman either; he is German. Just like Gellner, then fifteen-year-old Dahrendorf had some experience fighting against the Nazis: the future author of 28 books spent time in a Nazi camp for distributing anti-Nazi fliers.

This crew of post-war intellectuals produced amazingly powerful intellectual work. Take Gellner's book *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals*, whose title openly alludes to the above-mentioned Popper's work. The book came out shortly before the professor's death, after which flags were flown at half-staff at Cambridge. It's dedicated to none other than "Lena and Yura Senokosovs."

Like Mamardashvili, Gellner lived with the Senokosovs for long periods of time. It's strange that staying in the apartment seems to lack trappings of routine living. There are simply festive get-togethers, conversations between the best people in the country and the world, photographs of relatives and Mamardashvili. Then there are books — books that Yuri juggles. He published, preserved, and reprinted them; he used them for special occasions and for their original purpose.

People would turn into books. Senokosov published Gellner as the School's business card, as its intellectual currency. *Conditions of Liberty* is in fact the most important book from the standpoint of the educational project, for it contains a definition of civil society. Describing Gorbachev's era, Gellner wrote that it required a new ideal or slogan: "Now a new ideal or counter-vision, or at least a slogan-contrast, was required, and appropriately enough it was found in Civil Society, in the idea of institutional and ideological pluralism, which prevents the establishment of monopoly of power and truth, and counterbalances those central institutions which, though necessary, might otherwise acquire such monopoly."

Ernest Gellner had a prophetic interest in nationalism, Muslim culture, and understanding authoritarian regimes. One would be hard-pressed to extrapolate his analysis to today's events; only the philosopher himself could do that, but he died in 1995. However, the evolution of nationalism (which hardly ever coexists with liberalism — the late 1940s and the late 1980s are notable exceptions), the nature of conformity to totalitarian regimes (Gellner demonstrated that it's natural for the public to conform and quickly change positions as a result of changed social order

and political regime), the absence of intellectual pluralism in Islam, are all important for understanding the processes happening today.

Gellner considered authoritarian and even totalitarian order "normal" or at least historically prevalent (in his wake, Douglas North called such orders "natural states," while Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson talked about "extractive institutions"). Moreover, such orders don't emerge only because dictators impose them on people under the threat of violence. "More often people are convinced that the existing order is generally just," Gellner wrote in his *Conditions of Liberty*. "To believe otherwise, thinking that you got trapped in an unjust social order is simply inconvenient. It's more likely that people will consider themselves sinners than blame the social order that they are living in. The sense of personal guilt is preferable to hate for the universal order. We like accepting and approving of our universe."

Meanwhile, civil society is much harder to accept because it's a more complicated construct with its political decentralization, economic pluralism, freedom of ideas, scepticism, irony, self-irony, and "sober, instrumental assessment which doesn't see the political regime as anything sacred."

The same logic is at play when Gellner compares the ideas of nationalism and civil society. "Sleeping Beauty of ethnicity can, alas, often be awakened with the gentlest and most tender of kisses. The Sleeping Beauty of Civil Society may be much more deeply and genuinely desirable (although, of course, it's a matter of taste), but to wake her effectively is the devil's own job."

Ralf Dahrendorf is a bit younger but is essentially from the same generation (*Flakhelfer-Generation* is a generation of adolescents and youths born in 1926–1929, indoctrinated through the Hitler Youth movement and employed mostly as Luftwaffe helpers or in anti-aircraft defence. Some of them, like Günter Grass, who was called up to an SS division, even had to spend some time at the front. This generation, later called "the sceptics generation" or "the generation of 1945," was responsible for the intellectual

renaissance of the new Germany. Apart from Grass, it boasted such thinkers as philosopher Jurgen Habermas, essayist Hans Magnus Enzensberger, sociologist Niklas Luhman, and Ralf Dahrendorf.

George Soros essentially hails from the same milieu, from the post-war intellectual melting pot, but from those on the receiving end of the German offensive. A Jewish survivor of the Nazi occupation of Budapest, he became a student at the London School of Economics. One of his professors was Karl Popper — hence the name for his Open Source Foundations. Decades later, when the Russian authorities were expelling Soros from Russia, along with his unique civic education philanthropy that fuelled several system-building institutions, from the Library of Foreign Literature to the Higher School of Economics, they were also expelling the intellectual tradition he founded.

Gellner introduced the Senokosovs to Dahrendorf. They were staying in Oxford for three days at the end of 1989. On December 14, Andrei Sakharov died. They mourned the loss at Dahrendorf's place, which wasn't far from Sir Isiah Berlin's house. Conversations with Berlin later became an important part of Lena and Yura's life. Senokosov would later publish the Russian translation of Dahrendorf's book *After 1989. Morals, Revolution, and Civil Society*. In it, the professor stated, "1989 was as important a date as 1945. It was a watershed."

Dahrendorf was studying class and social conflicts all his life, considering them the driving force of history. But, according to him, only democracy can resolve and diffuse conflicts. As per Dahrendorf, striving for economic prosperity and protecting civil rights were in conflict, even though the latter is "a guarantee of a nation's material well-being." He called it a conflict between "resources and claims:" the class living in "the world of accessible benefits" doesn't always recognize the "legal claims of others."

He was a giant standing upon the shoulders of giants. In his work *Modern Social Conflict*, he quotes Popper, "We can return to tribalism, but if we want to remain human, we must move forward, toward civil society."

The post-war model of reassessing old values, building a new global architecture, and moving toward the establishment of new institutions as a framework of Western civilization, became one of the sources of reflections about the future School. Its founders decided to educate young people in post-Soviet Russia on the meaning and substance of universal values. This had never been an easy task in and of itself, but in the aftermath of the total suppression of civil society and the crisis of universalism in the Western world, particularly in Europe, it became even more difficult.

"When the West opened up to us," says Lena at one of the School's seminars, "we looked at it as consumers. We didn't study this world and didn't understand why some of its ideas had become universal. Capitalism was always criticized in the Soviet Union. Therefore, the search for lost universalism and the attempt to offer a way of rethinking or, if you will, re-establishing its values became the subject of our reflections."

This theme was always present at the School because, for a number of subjective and objective reasons, it happens to be a European project. To explain how it came about, we need to take a few steps back into the time when, following the search and interrogations, the Senokosovs returned to a regular life of Moscow intellectuals. Regular, except for the fact that they lived as if the Soviet regime wasn't around.

The first half of the 1980s — "the five years of lavish funerals", the empty grey time of despair — got underway. Yuri continued to work at the magazine headed by the plainclothes Latin American scholar. What other options did he have, anyway? The interrogations stopped, and the friends' get-together on how to help Senokosov had already taken place. Galina Starovoytova, the future well-known democratic politician, who's been looking for an attorney for Yuri, said, "If they got to Senokosov already, things in the country are pretty bad."

Lena was working at the Lenin Library. Life followed the "library — home — Yura — library — Tanya" pattern. Detached from her family, Tanya first lived in Italy, then in London. For many years, the Senokosovs

called her on the phone from a call centre at Pushkinskaya Square, where the famous Lira Café soon sprang up. Another call centre was on the Arbat, in the building across from the Prague Restaurant. The conversation had to be scheduled a week in advance and lasted a few minutes.

"We were in our 40s already. We thought, that's how we will be living the rest of our lives," Yuri says. But then *perestroika* started. Gradually, gravitational pull that brought people into Lena and Yura's family circle had become twice as strong. In the late 1980s, Senokosov was invited to edit "From the History of Domestic Political Thought" book series, which was a supplement to the *Problems of Philosophy* magazine. And prior to that, in 1987, when George Soros just appeared in Russia and started supporting local culture, Yuri was invited to participate in the revamping of liberal arts education: he was tasked with looking for authors who would be willing to participate in a contest for writing a philosophy textbook.

Where can one find works of Russian philosophers? At the YMCA Press in Paris, of course. So, Senokosov immediately goes to Paris to see Nikita Struve. The scion of an old Russian immigrant family, grandson of the famous Peter Struve, very cautiously greeted the guest from the still Soviet Russia, which was not yet fully trusted at that time.

Obviously, Struve couldn't know about the invisible connection between himself and "the man from the USSR," who came for texts that he wanted to publish in the Soviet Union. In 1974, YMCA Press published a swamp-green-cover book with orange lettering "*From Under the Rubble*." It featured texts written by Senokosov's close acquaintances and, most importantly, his friend Yevgeny Barabanov's article and Alexander Solzhenitsyn's writings. But in a matter of years, in the fall of 1990, thanks to the strides' made by Gorbachev's democratization, I managed to buy an authentic *From Under the Rubble* volume for 25 roubles at the no longer existing Academia store book department on Tverskaya Street, from old Yan Yanovich, the most diligent and pedantic bookseller known throughout intellectual Moscow.

Back in 1989, Senokosov insisted on visiting Paris to meet Struve. He took some books from him and even got Sergiy Bulgakov's unpublished manuscript. The manuscript was missing several pages, though. Perhaps, that's how Struve was testing his guest. Senokosov called Paris, asking to send him the missing pages. They were sent — apparently, as a sign of trust.

During that visit, Yuri happened upon Lev Shestov's 1939 work *Kierkegaard and Existential Philosophy* in one of Paris' second-hand bookstores. An altruist, Senokosov values the publication of a book above all. He has always been looking for people who could apply their interest and knowledge to publishing a certain philosopher's work in the best possible way. Hence, this book was prepared for print by Anatoly Akhutin in 1991, when Senokosov was leaving his work on the supplement to the *Problems of Philosophy*.

In 1989, Lena and Yura took another step in the direction of the School. They initiated the creation of a modern art magazine (two draft issues were prepared). Powerful intellectuals participated, but the idea failed for financial reasons. However, Yuri and Lena again demonstrated their ability to attract people that can adequately work in the educational sphere.

They continued moving toward Europe, and a kind of a proto-school emerged. Interestingly, Senokosov and Nemirovskaya can't really answer how it came about. "Well, somehow people came. Someone gave addresses and foreigners showed up," they say. Gravitation at work again.

And some foreigners these were: Claude Lefort, a preeminent French political philosopher, a student of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, known for his debates with Jean-Paul Sartre and a fundamental work on Machiavelli; François Furet, the president of the Saint-Simon Foundation, a historian and the author of the book *Interpreting the French Revolution*; Pierre Rosanvallon, future member of the French Academy of Sciences; Helene Carrere d'Encausse, member of the French Academy of Sciences.

Along with Furet, Lena and Yuri organized and hosted an international seminar under the name "Tocqueville and the Future of Democracy"

in Moscow in February 1993. Rosanvallon's book *The Society of Equals* written in the early 2000s, which analyses the phenomena of equality and inequality, as well as institutes of redistribution and solidarity, is dedicated to the memory of Claude Lefort. Another work of his, *Democratic Legitimacy*, which talks about the crisis of representative democracy and the emergence of new forms of legitimacy by way of civil society, was also published by the School in Russian in 2015. In that publication, the publisher was already labelled as a "foreign agent" NGO.

The book dwells on the characteristics of modern democracy and rulers' legitimacy, which would hardly please Russia's current political regime. "The function of elections has been whittled down: elections are simply the process by which we designate those who govern. They no longer provide a priori legitimation for policies to be enacted later.… The interests of "the greater number" can no longer be identified as readily as in the past with the interests of the majority… Society nowadays manifests itself as a long litany of minority conditions. "People" has become the plural of "minority… The diminished prestige of the electoral process is the only aspect of this decentring. In *Counter-Democracy* I described the emergence of new forms of political investment: the people as watchdog, the people as veto players, and the people as judge."

To validate its legitimacy, it's not enough for the government to be elected, it also has to demonstrate its competence, Rosanvallon claims.

At some point, Furet suggested that Lena and Yura take Lefort to Red Square, since "he has never seen it." After running on cobblestones from St. Basil's Cathedral to the Historical Museum and coming back to the Kremlin's Spasskaya Tower, Lefort exclaimed, "Turns out it's small, and it has changed the world." Senokosov would later publish the Russian translation of Francois Furet's book *The Passing of An Illusion*, which is essentially about the square's strange and deceptive attraction that embodied the communist idea.

British historian Geoffrey Hosking, who has been passionate about Russian history his entire life, also became a subject of the Senokosovs'

gravitational pull. In December 1990, he helped organize a conference at the University College of the London School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies. It wasn't yet a seminar of the Moscow School of Political Studies, but Nemirovskaya and Senokosov's seminar, nonetheless. The planning of the conference took a while. It was to feature presentations of Alexander Men and Merab Mamardashvili, but they weren't able to attend. The participants included Lev Aninsky, Yevgeny Barabanov, Andrei Smirnov, Leonid Ionin, Galina Starovoitova, Vladimir Kornilov — the cream of the intellectual elite. The literary critic Lev Aninsky later accurately described the impressions of the School's average expert invited to its sessions and panel discussions in European cities: "Since the sessions were planned and conducted with to-the-second accuracy…, it was possible to see something besides the London University tower only with the help of a time-tested method — by playing hooky. That's what I did: looking at my watch's second hand, I escaped from a session I dared to miss and came back to a session I didn't dare to miss — and during these few seconds, I managed to make it to some sites within my maximal reach: Trafalgar Square, Buckingham Palace, the Parliament, the Tower."

A year and a half later, there came a second "pre-School" seminar in Caux, Switzerland, conducted under the auspices of the Moral Re-Armament movement. Its participants delved into Soviet history to better understand the future. Yuri Karyakin talked about a possible publication of a "library of repentance, a library of confessions." Len Karpinsky, famous journalist, badly beaten by the Soviet ideological authorities, and son of an «old Bolshevik", discussed "intellectual conscience." He didn't quite predict the return of intellectual dishonesty, but anticipated that things would get difficult: "The future generations are yet to tackle the problem of lies and mythology and make a lot of effort to recognize and overcome lies." Yevgeny Barabanov presented an accurate diagnosis for a society that tested alternatives to communism for the first time. This diagnosis tells a lot about the mass consciousness and its turn to totalitarianism: "Pluralism, freedom,

democratization, economic initiative presented themselves on our soil as lawlessness, moral relativism, as menacing signs of moral and ethical savagery. But at the same time — in response! — they triggered demands for a new order, a strong government, a unified worldview, a common value system that confers a special status on the privileged realm of collective identity". Political scientist Alexei Salmin analysed the nature of "Soviet" things and essentially predicted the future nostalgia for the USSR.

One of the School's first graduates, democratic politician Vladimir Ryzhkov, who still retains close ties to Lena and Yuri, remembers Alexei Salmin as one of the key figures for the School: "The School expert that most impressed us, the first attendees of the Moscow School of Political Studies (MSPS), was Alexei Mikhailovich Salmin. He was with the School from its origin and spoke at its very first seminar in 1993, at the Lesniye Dali resort around Moscow. Different kinds of people were there: members of the first State Duma, regional politicians, young journalists. We were extremely active, ambitious, politicized, and at the same time *mute*. We didn't quite understand what the outstanding Western experts were telling us. At that time, none of us were familiar with that language, those concepts and meanings. Years had to pass for the distance to shorten, and we were able to think and speak the same language as Western politicians and intellectuals.

Salmin had been speaking at the School's seminars for many years — up until his death in September 2005. He was a member of the MSPS board of directors and one of the people who to a great extent shaped the face, the style, and the highest intellectual level of the School. In the 1990s, no other Russian expert commanded such an authority and generated so much interest among students as Salmin.

In the 1990s, Russia was building democracy, but what did we know about democracy? Salmin was one of the few Russian scholars who understood democracy not just instrumentally, but also philosophically. One of his major and classic books *Essays on the Making of Modern Democracy* is of international importance.

I remember well his fundamental lectures on the difference between political systems, republicanism, parties and party system, different electoral system. We have now mastered these academic areas, but back then Salmin was the only person who really understood them. Salmin introduced us to the problematics and the ideas of his beloved Tocqueville. He demonstrated all the subtle differences between rights, laws, legalism, and legitimacy. He unveiled the problems of freedom before us. Salmin explained to us why the Soviet state was illegitimate, why it undermined the continuity of Russian history. He explained how the problems of restoring legitimacy, property rights and legal system had been resolved in post-Nazi Germany and post-Communist Eastern Europe. He was convinced that we wouldn't be able to build a solid Russian state without resolving the same problems in our country.

Salmin put our heads back in their proper places. He introduced Soviet young people with very peculiar and narrow education in humanities to classical global philosophical and social ideas, including the work of contemporary thinkers. It seemed that there was not a single important book in whatever language that he hadn't read. One of his topics was federalism as a condition for preserving the freedom, diversity, and integrity of Russia.

Salmin was concerned with Russia's future. He saw what a complicated path lay ahead for Russian democracy. He spoke of the struggle between old and new institutions, about the fact that the old institutions (army, church, bureaucracy, security services, prosecutors, unreformed courts) can with time consume and malignantly alter new democratic institutions (parties, parliament, local government, free press, federalism, civil rights and liberties, and the young Constitution itself). Alas, that's exactly what happened in the 2000s. Today it's worth it for us to return to Salmin's legacy, think alongside him what to do with all of this now.

Salmin was a true representative of the Russian intelligentsia — sophisticated, soft, smiling, joking, laughing. He spoke in a velvet voice, with

precision and metaphors, so it was a real pleasure to follow his train of thought. He wasn't a pompous orator, but a captivating one, a Socratic school type. After his lecture, one wanted to think, read, and analyse things further.

Salmin had a beloved wife Masha and two wonderful daughters. When the wife died of a grave illness, Salmin really pined for her and was almost always deeply depressed. I sometimes visited him in his dark office on Luchnikov Lane, and we talked at length about politics, society, books. He continued writing, edited the *Politeia* magazine. But soon after his wife's death, his grief consumed him too."

In between the seminars, there was another important step toward finalizing the idea of creating the School: Nemirovsky and Senokosov participated in the French *Belvédère* almanac under the caption "The European Review." *Belvédère* was a supplement to *L'Express*, one of the most popular and influential weeklies in France. Lena was one of the members of its editorial board — off-staff consultant on the problems of the Soviet Union. This was still 1991, the USSR's ultimate year. Actually, the issue on Russia came out in January — February 1992 already. A series of materials was named: "Russia: A Call to Europe." Experts and journalists who would continue to be active in the coming years contributed their articles. Lena herself did; among others were the Latin America specialist Tatyana Vorozheykina, and one of the most controversial intellectuals for some time affiliated with the future Putin regime Gleb Pavlovsky, also Len Karpinsky.

How did Nemirovskaya happen to be so close to the French L'Express project? And why did the School grow out of it?

In October 1990, they got acquainted with a historian and French American writer Diana Pinto by pure chance, and not even through a face-to-face meeting. At the same time, there were talks about possible collaboration with the new journal. At the end of the same year, the Senokosovs went to London to visit their daughter Tanya and met the journal's editor-in-chief Jerome Dumoulin, who offered Lena a job at *Belvédère* — the

Soviet Union was in vogue back then, and everybody was trying to understand what was happening there. At the start of summer 1991, the Senokosovs were in Paris and told Pinto and her husband Dominique Moïsi, who, like Jerome Dumoulin, was once a graduate student of Raymond Aron, about the idea of the School, and handed them a couple of pages with the project description.

When a coup happened in the Soviet Union in August that year, the French editors were urging Lena to write an article about the event. After long cajoling, they finally convinced Lena to reflect on her experiences of opposing the coup. Her text "A Letter from Moscow" was published in the fall issue of *Belvédère*. It was very successful, was reprinted by European newspapers, making Lena "instantly famous," as she herself recalls.

But even before the "letter" appeared, Dominique Moïsi called the Senokosovs with the news that would prove important for the future school. "Tomorrow Madame Catherine Lalumière, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, is coming to meet Yeltsin. She will be talking to him for about an hour and a half, and then she has an evening free. We would like you to meet her… But please don't confuse the Secretary General of the Council of Europe with the Chairman of the European Parliament, nor Strasbourg with Brussels."

Doctor of Public Law who held various positions, including that of a minister, in the government of President Francois Mitterrand and Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy, Catherine Lalumière was elected the head of the Council Europe in 1986, which fortunately coincided with Mikhail Gorbachev's ascent. Their cooperation gave rise to the now unfairly forgotten concept of the "Common European Home."

Madame Lalumière is a sight to behold. She is elegant, majestic, and warm at the same time. At 80, she still demonstrates her resilience. Madame Professor, and later Madame Minister, was truly beautiful.

So, it is eight o'clock in the Senokosovs' apartment (maybe that's where their tradition to receive guests at that time comes from?), then it's

eight-thirty, then nine… "As a person from the Soviet non-existence, I was shocked," Lena remembered. "No, I always knew a lot about clothing ensembles, but that red scarf… A classic Frenchwoman entered the apartment, on top of that an intellectual, a Catholic… I was out of breath for the splash she made." A few more people, members of Lalumière's delegation came with her. The conversation revolved around important and relevant questions of the time — democracy, the Baltic countries. Yuri discussed French philosophy and Descartes — subjects that are close to him, in some ways, thanks to Mamardashvili. In the wee hours of the morning, when the guests were about to leave, someone who was accompanying the General Secretary asked him for the "pages about the School" that Dominique Moïsi told them about.

Ten months later, Lena was urgently invited to Strasbourg to see Lalumière. It first seemed that their conversation was purely theoretical. When the meeting was over, and Lalumière walked Nemirovskaya to the door, Lena saw her old acquaintance Vladimir Lukin, then the Russian Ambassador to the U.S., in the reception area. In his presence, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe (CoE) informed Nemirovskaya that the School would become a European project. At that time Russia wasn't yet a CoE member, therefore this was almost a personal project for Lalumière.

The fact that Strasbourg's cooperation with Russia started with Nemirovskaya and Senokosov's project influenced Russia's image in the 1990s. It helped Russia to accede to the Council of Europe, as Catherine Lalumière stated numerous times. Talk about a person's role in history!

In December 1992, against the backdrop of Russian political drama with the fall of the Yegor Gaidar government, the Moscow School of Political Studies was registered as a Russian non-governmental organization — under the auspices of the Council of Europe. Its first seminar took place in the *Lesniye Dali nomenklatura* resort located at the very end of Rublevo-Uspenskoye Highway in early April 1993. The attendees — over 30 young people from Russian regions — were amazed at the level of the School's

experts, while the experts marvelled at the level of the attendees, whose ranks including the politician Vladimir Ryzhkov, future speechwriter for the Russian president Larisa Mishustina, parliament member, subsequently the editor of the *Neprikosnovenny Zapas* magazine, and perhaps the best moderator of MSPS sessions, Andrei Zakharov.

On the whole, the School grew out of the idea of building a Greater Europe and disseminating European values. True, it's been around for over two decades, but it's actually much older if we treat it as a European project that was also founded on the intellectual tradition of the Soviet counter-elite. In 2014, when the School was about to lose its legal status in Russia, Senokosov and Nemirovskaya came up with an idea of renewing European values in the spirit of post-war revival sentiments, when the Council of Europe itself came into existence. They conceived of a European conference, or rather a forum under the name of "In Search for Lost Universalism." It first assembled in Berlin in October 2015. Talking about universalism in the context of Mamardashvili's statement "There are many cultures, but one civilization" could hardly change something in Europe, at least not right away. However, any changes in global history start with a conversation — as a rule, a philosophical one.

In April 2013, at the Golitsyno seminar, a traditional venue for the School's Russian sessions (when they were still possible) Catherine Lalumière said, "At that time [the post-war years], the founding fathers of the European construct wanted to reconcile Europeans to build peace. This was quite a complicated enterprise, because throughout centuries Europeans constantly fought among each other. But the founding fathers wanted to build a new peaceful Europe, having experienced the totalitarianism of the 1930s and the horror of war. At the same time, they were trying to attain irreversible peace, so that Europe doesn't descend into totalitarianism and barbarism again. Therefore, the European construct had to be developed on the basis of values and political philosophy principles… Gradually, all the members of the Council of Europe accepted the new values."

The founders of the School have always devoted great attention to this post-war European spurt. So, it's not coincidental that it translated and published the works of the founding fathers of the new European order — Robert Schuman's *For Europe* and Jean Monnet's memoirs *Reality and Politics*. The thinking, philosophy, and values of the 1940s and 50s suddenly became incredibly relevant in the post-Crimean era and after the effective break between Russia and the West.

Let's analyse this aspect in greater detail; then, it will become clear why the ideas that the School focused on are relevant today.

According to the Robert Shuman declaration — a document of paramount importance to the European consciousness — close industrial and trade ties between Germany and France would make a war on the European continent impossible. That's exactly the significance of commerce that mitigates wild political instincts, as Charles Montesquieu first pointed out. The renowned economist Albert Hirschman focused on the same phenomenon in his work *The Passions and the Interests*, referring to *doux commerce* (literary, "sweet" commerce — that is, commerce that has a calming and soothing effect.) In fact, practical steps toward an united Europe started with this call for French and German joint coal and steel production.

It's very telling that Russia made a serious step toward its isolation from the Western world through commerce when it got involved in the sanctions race. (Prior to that, it lost an opportunity to borrow in the West, which triggered investment shortfalls.)

This stiffened policy complemented the hybrid war that was already raging in the southeast of Ukraine. Full-scale non-hybrid war was looming on the horizon specifically because the regime neglected "sweet commerce," a staple of middle-class prosperity, and the reason why the relatively cheap market basket of an average Russian was filling up.

"De-Westernization" of consciousness was also facilitated by the psychological justification of war, which was partly provoked by the fact that Vladimir Putin took Crimea without a single shot, just like Catherine the

Great once did. Hence an illusion of the triumphant lightness of war, which is totally absent from the present-day European culture. Democracies in the post-industrial world don't go to war against each other. War contradicts *doux commerce* principles, although our ruling establishment subscribes to a different view, believing that survival is ensured through the struggle for markets by any means necessary, including military intervention and infringement on a country's sovereignty.

Absolutizing sovereignty and speculating on this concept for propaganda purposes is a tell-tale sign of isolationism. At the end of World War II, one of the future architects of unified Europe, Jean Monnet, thought that the main post-war danger for the continent lay in "restoring Europe that consists of sovereign states susceptible to temptations of protectionism." It didn't mean that Monnet advocated for eliminating sovereignties, but the fetishization of sovereignties would've had serious adverse impact on Europe, its economy, politics, and revised European values. In that case, Europe simply wouldn't have been able to shed the economic, political, and psychological legacy of the world war.

"If the countries of Europe take the position of isolation and confrontation," Jean Monnet wrote, "it will again become necessary to assemble armies. Under peace treaty conditions, some countries will be allowed to do, while others won't be. We are already armed with the experience of 1919 and know where it leads. Alliances between European states will be created, and we know what they are worth. Military expenditures will halt or slow down social reforms, and Europe will again start living in the state of fear." Incidentally, back in the 1920s, Russian philosopher Lev Shestov noted in his work entitled *Postes clavium* that if European nations hadn't allowed themselves to be pulled into World War I, "the entire Europe would've turned into paradise" during those lost years.

The work of the Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain *Man and the State*, which Yuri Senokosov cites in his book *Power as a Problem*, stems from the same post-war revision of key values and concepts. A Thomas

Aquinas scholar and one of the authors of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, Maritain asserted that "Two concepts — "sovereignty" and "absolutism" — were forged together on the same anvil. And one of them should be cast aside." He understood sovereignty as an absolute power of a monarch without respecting people's right to self-government and government accountability. Under a sovereign ruler, people are subjects rather than citizens.

A dialogue between the émigré Josef and his buddy, the old Communist N., from Milan Kundera's novel *Ignorance* is an apt illustration of how "patriotism" and "sovereignty" evolved (the novel came out in 2000, but the events take place in the first few years of the Velvet Revolution when exiles were able to return to Czechoslovakia):

"National independence has been an illusion for a long time now," said N.

"But if a country isn't independent and doesn't even want to be, will anyone still be willing to die for it?"

"Being willing to die is not what I want for my children… Dying for your country — that's all finished. Maybe for you time stopped during your emigration. But they — they don't think like you anymore."

"Who?"

N. tipped his head toward upper floors of the house as if to indicate his brood. "They're somewhere else."

The School expert Michael Howard wrote about this phenomenon in his book *The Invention of Peace*, noting "reluctance common to all Western urbanized societies to suffer heavy losses" and calling this period "post-heroic." But it's hard to captivate the world with this idea, when the very same world considers death for the Prophet heroic and compares obscure killings on Donbas fields or in the Syrian desert to soldiers' heroism in World War II.

The present-day situation is exacerbated by the crisis that gripped Europe. Challenges of immigration, radical Islam, terrorism, right and left-wing populism and increasingly complicated relations with Russia are

testing the strength of Western democratic values. Europe's main conflict has to do with a global population aging trend: the shrinking labour marker requires more and more migrant workers, but their expanding cultures are foreign to the local population. Right-wing parties are gaining popularities. Euro-scepticism and anti-immigrant sentiments are on the rise. Then there are reactions to these threats, to an uncertain future, to the conflicts along the North — South and West — East lines. As Hannah Arendt wrote in her essay on Karl Jaspers, "human solidarity is quite capable of becoming an unbearable burden, and it's no surprise that an ordinary reaction to it is not enthusiasm or the drive to revive humanism, but political apathy, isolationist nationalism, or a desperate rebellion against any regime."

But so far, despite all these challenges, the resilient European values have managed to sustain the foundations of democracy, rule of law, and market economy.

True, modern Europe is no longer the world of Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman; it's not even the world that emerged after the collapse of the Berlin Wall. But core Western values remain the safety net that protects Europe from fundamentalism and populism — at least for now.

This confluence of ideas brought forth the project of the School's Berlin Forum. "We are not forming coalitions of states, we are uniting men," said the architect of unified Europe Jean Monnet. On August 18, 1966, he made an incredibly simple but also a very profound entry in his diary,

"Freedom is civilization.

Civilization is rules + institutions.

This is true because human development, rather than glorifying the homeland — whether big or small — is the main purpose of all our efforts.

1. It's a gift to be born (as a human).

2. It's a gift to be born in our civilization.

3. Will we really restrict this gift with national barriers and prohibitive laws?"

People first, governments next. Education first, its fruits next — these fruits would be the appearance of millions of Russian Europeans, Russian

patriots, for whom Russia's prosperity is not about war and isolation, but about Russia being open to the world and attractive to ideas, people, and investments. The new détente may start with civil society, not governments. Russia is capable of returning to the civilization to which it belongs. Governments will follow people. Someone just has to start this process.

"Save people, not companies," the economist Lester Thurow once said. The same also applies to civil society. People become Europeans first, since there can't be no institutes without people. And it will be impossible to clearly see how these institutions can't be revamped unless European and Russian civil societies demonstrate their focus on civilizational unity and political democracy.

This is exactly what Merab Mamardashvili called "European responsibility" while speaking at the International Symposium on Cultural Identity in Paris in 1988, when he was finally allowed to leave the country. As if predicting today's problems and the new identity crisis, Mamardashvili talked about the fact that one shouldn't take being European for granted, as the continent natives, natural representatives of Western civilization, might have thought at the time. European identity has to be refreshed on a regular basis. While being preserved, it also needs to be recast through a joint "effort." "Europe does not have an age — it is always being born. That's what Europe's responsibility is about, the European responsibility toward itself."

This short speech by Mamardashvili is incredibly profound, in part, because he spoke as a person who was born and came of age in a country that wasn't free, a person who was looking at Europe — its existential risks in case it loses its ability to make an "effort" — from the outside: "Europe is the form in which one sees clearly that the living organ, the organ unique to a human being, is history. The Renaissance, in my view, is history as a living organ."

He then went on to talk about something his country was missing — civil society. "This is what was "reborn", and upon which civil society constructed

itself. We, whose bodies are less developed, who lack the complexity and structure of civil society, understand that it is precisely this, which we are missing. It is only possible to acquire it by historical means, that is to say we can only begin, commit ourselves to the effort and sustain this effort."

Now, a quarter of century later, a question of making an "effort" amid the European responsibility and identity crisis is relevant again. Today Europeans are facing challenges of mass foreign migration and war on terror, dealing with the fact that Russia doesn't respond to soft power exerted by Western civilization, seeing how the members of the European Union and other fundamental structures of the Western world, which ostensibly absorbed Western values once and for all, started rejecting them, having succumbed to the temptation of ultra-right populism.

How to make the post-war "efforts" of the late 1940s — early 1950s work again? Can we again embrace universal values — not just on paper, but in practice? These were the questions asked at the "In Search of Lost Universalism" forum attended by many European intellectuals, including Bulgarian political scientist Ivan Krastev, for instance.

Here is how the organizers of the forum explain its purpose and origins:

"The Berlin Forum starts from the presumption that there are many cultures — but one civilization, and it needs to be constantly refreshed. After the devastation caused by the Second World War, important new international organizations were founded, including the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights, the World Council of Churches. A universal perception of justice emerged, reflected in key international documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Social Charter, and the European Convention on Human Rights.

Citizens in Europe and around the world were empowered by this universal energy and the civic spirit embodied in the 1955 Russell-Einstein Manifesto, which laid the foundation in 1957 for the Pugwash movement.

The Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs is still active today as a forum for scientists working for peace. The Manifesto also led to the Non-Aligned Movement (1961) and to the formation in 1968 of the Club of Rome, also concerned with global problems. The same ethos underpins the Helsinki Final Act as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (1975), the signing of the Maastricht Treaty (1992), and the establishment of the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights in 1999.

The Forum is designed to rejuvenate the spirit of global civics. Today Russia is increasingly being viewed through the prism of the Cold War. But Russia, a country with a unique and proud culture, is broader and deeper than the imposed limitations. Millions of Russians are seeking to become part of universal civilization. We invite you to join us."

In her speech at the First Forum's plenary meeting in 2015, Catherine Lalumière spoke about the confusion of the modern man who loses his bearings as a result of globalization and free flow of information. The values that are considered universal now — say, human rights — "weren't considered natural or universal when they were about to emerge. After passing through numerous development stages (Greek philosophy, Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, Habeas corpus, Magna Carta, the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Men), this concept became Europe's supreme value, fortified and protected by law, embodied in the institutes created after World War II…"

That 80-year-old woman talked about the value of openness that has to struggle against the current trends of secrecy, as well as about civic education — the only means of nurturing a citizen.

Then came the speech delivered by Yuri Senokosov, the ideological founder of the Forum — a philosophical lecture, which is totally uncommon for any type of conference or seminar. Many eyes and hands reviewed its draft: as a result, the final text became much shorter and simpler, since it was meant as an oral presentation. It was very important for understanding the ideological origins of the subject at hand. So, it's better to cite some fragments than try to summarize and interpret.

"MANY CULTURES, BUT ONLY ONE CIVILIZATION"

"Philosopher Merab Mamardashvili authored the expression, which graces our programme: "many cultures, but only one civilization." The unusual phrase first appeared in an interview of 1989.

The phrase was not accidental. While the Soviet Union was breaking up, free-thinking people reacted to the political turbulence. It was then that Merab Mamardashvili famously said at an international presentation in Paris: "You, people of the West, and we, coming from the East, stand in one and the same historical point… quite similar to the one where we found ourselves after the First and the Second World Wars… we are still confronted with the same danger and share the same responsibility." «Europe has no age, it is constantly at birth. That is how we should consider its responsibilities."

Let me also quote from the 1989 interview of M. Mamardashvili: "I believe that contact between cultures is impossible. What I do call a contact, however, is what one may conventionally call civilization — not to make a disparaging distinction between civilization and culture. On the contrary, I suggest that there are many cultures, but only one civilization. The civilization represents contact. But in the strict sense no contact between cultures is possible. Especially this concerns cultures, which evolved far from the axis of the world religions."

Contact between cultures was not possible in principle before the Axial Age or *Achsenzeit*, as Karl Jaspers might have said, who introduced the term in his *Origin and Goal of History* to denote the period of ancient history during about the 8th to 2nd centuries BC.

But why has contact been impossible after the Axial Age? It is because cultures spark at contact like wires under high voltage. Let us make a

reservation; after the invention of the electric current transformer and relay protection, wires stopped sparking, and the electrical equipment set to function properly.

By drawing such analogy, I wish to say that contact between cultures becomes possible with the advent of social transformers, if we cling to the term a little longer, which perform a civilizing function. By solving diverse problems in different historical times, the Europeans (at least, the philosophers and the physicists among them) achieved identical results in industry and in the social field. They conjured up constructs, which allow projecting the natural light of reason and the artificial light, the machine-generated energy.

They say that human life is a mystery, and the key to it is to be found in the Axial Age, closely related to the life of several personalities both in Europe and in Asia. In this age the world witnessed the concurrent rise of person-centred moral teachings (Confucius and Lao-Tse in China), religions (prophets in Palestine, the Upanishads and Buddha in India) and schools of Greek philosophy. This was an age, Hanna Arendt writes in her essay "Karl Jaspers: Citizen of the World", when mythologies were repudiated or used as basis of great world religions with their notion of one transcendent God; when man became conscious of Being as a whole and of his own singularity compared to all other beings; when he experienced absoluteness in the face of selfhood and began thinking about consciousness. In brief, people started to develop new, highly individualized aspects of life. How was it made possible?

It was made possible thanks to the discovered human ability to transcend one's natural, empirical state, to exceed one's bounds.

I am not referring here to a state of going «beside oneself», when man loses his mind; I am referring to that unconventional status when we permeate our natural constraints, while retaining mental lucidity. But whereto do we egress? The answer has been known from the Axial Age: the egress is towards God, the Good, the Infinite, the Void. Different concepts were

devised to describe this abstraction (empty set in mathematics, space in physics, and social space in social studies).

A contact or an act of understanding is exclusively personal. It embodies the civilizing principle, which is blocked by cultures for various reasons and through different means, as it happened, for instance, in the USSR, where the Bolsheviks were full of confidence that they could start writing history from scratch.

So, what is it that makes people of differing beliefs, opinions and religions strive for implementing such abstract notions as public good, justice, freedom, and democracy?

One moving force is our consciousness of the imperfect human nature, susceptible to deception, envy, guile and violence. Another locomotive of change is our common sense and, with the intuitive sense of belonging to single human species, our hope to deter violence at times of crisis and conflict through personal and collective effort.

The truth is subject to communication. Or, the truth resides where one "self" relates to another "self' existentially, on the level of feelings. So even though the truth is not supported by anything, this does not mean that the truth does not unite people. Otherwise, philosophers and theologians would not have written their treatises, and artists and poets would not have created works of perennial beauty. And supporters of differing «truths», people of various ethnic backgrounds would not have aspired to resolve conflicts, discussing problems of economics, environmental protection and health care at international conferences.

However, daily life is remote from purely intelligible ideas. We speak a natural language, which invariably urges us to search for answers to questions, which animate us in the realm of the perceived and not in the realm of the notional (where we understand what we perceive).

I emphasize this to return to Jaspers and remind ourselves that the concept of communication is central to his philosophy of history: in the sphere of existential, Jaspers maintains, truth and communication are identical.

This leads me to a conclusion that communication posited by Jaspers and contact put forward by Mamardashvili refer to the same notion. The truth remains unperturbed, Mamardashvili said. The truth, he assumed, is not supported by anything, but it holds together everything else in the world. Specifically, the truth solders history in continuity, in history's civilizational, conscious aspect. This aspect is conscious in the sense that the prefix *con* — in the word consciousness indicates a dimension of the invisible. Or, put otherwise, it indicates the relation of verbalized knowledge (from Latin *scio* — know) to an insightful state of being, which was causative in acquisition of this knowledge. Thus, the Russian word *soznanie* interlocks with consciousness in English and the Romance languages. There we discern a clear mark of some primary metaphysical act, which shapes human personality and, at the same time, isolates man as a unique moral phenomenon in ethics and culture. A moral act does not follow directly from the concept of morality, otherwise it would have been easy for people to act morally. However, people act morally not because they correlate, in the moment of acting, the notions of good and evil, and resolve that good would certainly prevail. No, they act morally as does biblical Job. The notions of good and conscious are not determined by anything. That is why the knowledge of good is not transferrable in a mechanistic way, however often we repeat: "act according to conscience," "be truthful," "do not kill."

"I know that I know nothing"— so Socrates, himself a consummate master of grammar, logic and rhetoric, expressed his philosophical creed. Verily a drama of human freedom consists in this intense desire (because the emphasis is on the first know of the statement) to hold on to something that opens up on the border of the unknown. This drama is played out in relation to every person's capabilities and efforts for a creative life. Through it he or she retains composure within the civilization, which inherited the spirit of antiquity and of the Christian religion.

Humankind is a collective mythological inertial body, which absorbs the flashes of history, Merab Mamardashvili once said. One should

construe our acts of understanding as a moment of history, a personal contact. Through contact we enter history's continuity. A contact which transcends a long period of time is what we may call civilization.

Therefore, spiritual and intellectual communication between people is inevitable. Civilization persists as a uniting force. Only through communication and civic self-consciousness do we wake up to the civilized world or, in other words, to civil society, which today is virtually free of borders. Or else these borders are becoming conventional thanks to the Internet and mass communication. Civil society and civic nation, having emerged once in the form of social and cultural phenomena, as did empire in the past ages, continue to exist. In our time the idea of an "empire" subsists through science and business on the global scale. It is a natural process, not unlike the development of civil society. The problem of developing countries, including Russia, is to enter the global process of "translation" of the civics into the language of rational understanding of universal values and global interests".

IS IT POSSIBLE TO KNOW SOMETHING YOU DIDN'T LEARN?

It's the time of rising populism and nationalism. Speaking at the Second Berlin Forum, Catherine Lalumière noted that many countries are now impacted by populism, which many political leaders are taking advantage of. They are winning elections and referenda, believing that they can do anything without bearing any responsibility. "In this situation, it's hard for a genuine and sincere democrat to oppose the "will of the people." So, what to do? As in other similar cases, only education and an appeal for reason may cure the disease. Education, education, and education! Without education, we will be unarmed and won't be able to oppose the demagoguery and populism that are rising in our countries today."

Senokosov and Nemirovskaya come from the so-called "frightened generation," which fit right in between those who suffered the wrath of the regime and those who didn't. Hence, they were trying to overcome the generational fear, in no small measure with the help of their ideas, publishing projects, and the School. In a sense, they were being born again, gradually shedding conformism and a passive take on reality. It's not accidental that in his book *Power as a Problem*, Senokosov quoted the following words of Vladimir Vysotsky:

> And for long time to come we'll still take every light for a fire
> For a long time to come every boot's creak as omen we'll hear
> Children's war games will keep bearing names so old yet untiring
> And the people, we still will divide into heathen and dear.

Indeed, it's hard to become and remain a free man after all of this. Senokosov explained, "my generation was yet to be born, so that ethical and moral foundations of our life may have a chance to re-emerge."

The very same processes were happening to the generation of wartime and post-war Germans. Hans Magnus Enzensberger is a bit older — he comes from the Dahrendorf-Gellner generation, experienced the war as a teenager, was a member of the Hitler's Youth — but he described similar sensations in the early 1990s. "I happened to be born here in Germany, and even fifty years later, I see myself squatting in the basement wrapped in a blanket. Even today, I can tell the barking of an anti-aircraft gun from the shrieking of a bomb falling from the sky." Enzensberger sees the "completely innocent peaceful civilians" as a social base for dictatorships: "Nazis would've never seized power without these people's exuberant support. Only someone blind can think that this statement is only true about Germans."

I observed Senokosov thinking out loud on many occasions. Sometimes, he'd grasp his head with both of his hands while leaning with his elbows against the living room round table. His thoughts are always a hypertext with a multitude of references, historical and cultural notations, topical inserts, and lyrical digressions. But the narrative inevitably returns to its stem, and the conclusion suddenly becomes obvious and transparent.

For instance, why did Merab Mamardashvili say that "freedom is a phenomenon that occurs where there is no choice. Freedom is something that contains necessity in itself, something that serves as necessity of itself"? How can one decipher this paradoxical idea? And what does this understanding of freedom have to do with the School?

Here is what Senokosov thinks. After all these stories with the KGB, the search, and interrogations, he strongly felt that he was innocent and therefore shouldn't be accountable to the security services. His fear just vanished. In fact, fear is not the most accurate word here; he no longer felt guilt. "It was an acme of sorts; my mindset just turned upside down. It got me thinking: why did I even come here in the first place? Why do I have to answer these people's questions if I'm not guilty? Now I know for sure that "whatever isn't forbidden is allowed." It's forbidden to steal, kill, and lie. But

it's allowed to live free. Freedom and life. True, any person has a freedom of choice, for instance, one can become a government official, but then he becomes dependent on the rules, superiors, ideology, and whim. He is also bound by the law, which he must strictly follow and implement, even if the law contradicts common sense. So, it turns out that one can have freedom to choose even in a totalitarian system, but he would still be dependent. In this sense, inmates who worked in prison design bureaus were free but dependent at the same time. Only functioning public institutions can provide independence."

So, this formula — "freedom, independence, and institutionalization of this condition" — in fact describes what Mamardashvili referred to as "something that contains necessity in itself."

"When we started school, we didn't quite understand it," says Yuri, "we were just interested in being part of the process. It was a game of sorts." Those in Russia who joined the School as experts or just a part of its intellectual community also didn't understand its higher purpose. My affluent people with liberal views were curious about the idea of the School and its international experts. But their own thoughts on authoritarian modernization unpleasantly surprised the School's first Western experts.

The MSPS founders now believe that everyone was interested in new ideas back then, especially when they were expressed by previously inaccessible Western experts. For their part, the Western experts were interested in the new young Russian audience, thirsty for all kinds of knowledge.

Lena says that it's impossible to replicate the intensity and scale of the first seminars nowadays: "It would be simply unthinkable to gather all these experts in one place in the Moscow region today. And it's not just because Carrer d'Ancos, Gellner, Hosking, Moïsi, Pinto, and Rosanvallon found themselves under the roof at the same time, but also because it's impossible to relive this tension and passionate desire to bring Russia back into the European fold. This desire of reunification, this hope for mutual return and common future were felt on both sides back then."

She then focuses on a problem that appeared at that time: "The rift between cultures was evident right away. We were acting as if there was still *perestroika*, since it was important to enter public space." "*Perestroika* is pain, outcry, despair," Yuri adds. "We were still stuck in this "liberation" struggle, while we had to move forward already." "So, what's next? No one really thought about it," Lena continues. "True, there were still elections left after *perestroika*. But then sociologists and political strategists took over the elections. Money, which didn't even exist as an institution under socialism, moved to the centre-stage. Even intellectuals who started doing business — people on the level of Kakha Bendukidze (Russian-Georgian businessmen, one of the authors of the Georgian economic miracle) — didn't fully understand that independent institutions are the key [remember the idea of fusing freedom, independence, and their institutionalization. — *A.K.*], didn't understand the significance of human rights.

Therefore, it's not accidental that we could almost never receive funding from Russia. Not because those who had the money feared something — at least, this was not the case in the 1990s — but because there was lack of understanding. First and foremost, they didn't understand the phenomenon of independence. After all, one has to reach a certain level to be in opposition too. And to reach that level, one has to understand the importance of political competition, which should be independent of the ruling regime.

That's what it meant to live in the absence of civic culture, in kitchens, not knowing that life could be different, not understanding that happiness and comfort is not what the West, which everyone paid so much attention to at that time, is all about. Nevertheless, the "everyone is equal before the law" maxim works there, and public institutions are independent and effective. And that's where dignity and trust come from and are pragmatically understood as a life strategy."

"In the course of *perestroika*, we understood," say Yuri, "that real history inevitably leads to the outward manifestation of everything that a human

being possesses: his stupidity and intelligence, cruelty and kindness, craft and deception, suspicion and openness. Essentially, we agreed that all this (struggle of passions, realizing ambitions, seeking thrills) has its place in the independent press, mass media, parliament, business, art, and literature. However, as economic and political chaos ensued, naturally, not everyone agreed with that, including security service officials. Their perception of the changes of the 1990s generated hostility to democrats inside the country and the liberal West as a whole, which increased with Vladimir Putin's ascension to power. I didn't pay much attention to that before, believing that since everything in the world changes, sooner or later the changes that got underway would have a positive effect on Russia as well. But then witch hunts commenced, and it became clear that etymology and semantics of certain words in the Russian culture also matter, especially when the country is in search of its cultural code, and even the President participates in the process. In the course of this search, the federal parliament adopted a law on "regulating the activities on non-commercial organizations that serve the function of foreign agents." On the basis of this law, our school was one of the first to be put on the respective registry by the Justice Ministry, since "it shapes public opinion seeking to change the existing system of government," as was officially stated in a certain television programme.

In this respect, I got interested in the phrasing "seeking to change." I didn't notice before that the Russian words for "change" and "treason" have the same root — "*izmenenie*" and "i*zmena*" respectively, which is not the case in other European languages, in English, for instance. But in the Russian language, the word "change" (*izmenenie*) has been interpreted as "treason" (izmena) since the time of Ivan the Terrible up until today.

Here one unwittingly remembers the fate of Galileo and Copernicus, who changed the worldview that preceded them and were persecuted as a result. Evidently, the Russian leadership decided to return to those times in the 21st century, believing that this is how the country's cultural code should look like."

Marx once listed "bookworming" as his favourite occupation. Senokosov's pastime is broader: he rummages through books and journals and publishes them. First, he brings them from every possible place. For instance, after returning from his Prague stint at the *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, he brought photocopies of the Russian philosopher Semen Frank's books that he made in the Slavonic Library in Prague. He virtually acts as a human scanner. Actually, his job at the Fundamental Library of Social Sciences suits him well. Bibliography is very familiar and dear to him. Working under Arseny Gulyga's supervision and acting as a secretary at his methodology of history seminars, Yuri composed a bibliography on the subject that interested him the most — namely, the philosophy of history. It was published in 1969 in the *Philosophical Problems of History* almanac. Among its authors were such luminaries of the time as Arseny Gulyga, Aron Gurevich, Yevgeny Plimak, Anatoly Rakitov, Yuri Levada, Piama Gaydenko, and Igor Kon.

Attempting to publish a magazine during *perestroika* years and working on a supplement to the *Problems of Philosophy* all stem from the same passion for bookworming. The School allowed Senokosov to publish pretty much all he wanted, and the selection of books overlapped with the selection of MSPS experts.

It's hard to imagine what he didn't publish — even a tiny accordion-book citizen's manual was his doing. This very convenient and practical book tells people that there is the European Court for Human Rights where they can appeal for help.

The first issue of a magazine that Senokosov has been editing for nearly three decades now came out in 1995 under the name "The Journal of Moscow School of Political Studies." It later morphed into the *Obschaya Tetrad (The Writing Book)* magazine. Here is what the editor wrote in the foreword to the first issue, "In one of his poetic addresses Horatio says: to kill a man, a bandit gets up before dawn. Won't you wake up to save yourself? Should one act like a fool waiting until the entire river flows past him before he

crosses to the other side? Isn't it better to start organizing one's life than wait for it to end? Those who started have done half of the work already. Dare to think. *Sapere aude!* Muster your courage!"

Audacity and mental effort are both the School's motto and its raison d'etre. The same foreword continues, "Is it possible to know something you didn't learn and think about? About the state that can command respect for its strength rather than hatred for its abuses. About the government that accomplishes its goals not out of fear or mistrust of its own people, but because it knows how to maintain public tranquillity. About the need to be free to publicly use one's intelligence in all walks of life."

But in Russia, everything worked out in exactly the opposite way.

The first issue whose texts were grouped under the heading "Transforming Russia and the West" were prefaced by a statement from Ernest Gellner: "Intellectual life requires appropriate infrastructure. A salon that was closely connected to the culture of the Enlightenment sprang up in the 18th century; its famous *Encyclopaedia* is inseparable from Baron Golbach's Thursday gatherings. Then the salon was complemented by the estate. In the 20th century, the estate partially lost its significance. It was replaced by formal conferences financed through a foundation rather than personal funds. The salon itself started functioning on a narrower economic basis… For me, nothing better embodies the intellectual buzz that accompanied and outlived *perestroika* than the famous Lena Nemirovskaya and Yura Senokosov salon housed in their relatively modest apartment by the Moscow River… Inside the apartment, one could discuss political, philosophical, and aesthetic problems. When proper conditions were finally created, the above-mentioned invaluable conversations could be transferred into the public realm as a series of conferences, roundtables, and seminars."

As early as July 1994, in the very same first issue of the magazine, Dominique Moïsi, who supported the idea of the School right from the start, formulated the key issues facing Europe so accurately that they could be repeated 21 years later at the First Berlin Forum. European identity used

to be simpler to define: "In many ways, today's Europe is a product of the Soviet threat. In the past, we knew who we were: we defined it in negative terms, since we knew perfectly well who our enemy was." Redefining Europe in post-Soviet times has proved to be problematic. Moïsi talked frankly and pointed to one of the problems, which happened to be a ticking timebomb for Russia's integration into Europe: "Since I'm not a diplomat, I propose discussing the issue in the following light. We're telling you openly, 'Yes, you're in Europe. Yes, you are an essential component in our cultural fabric. But we don't want your EU or NATO membership. We need to find other ways to accept you as a European state.'" Europe has failed to find these ways in the following decades. But truth be told, Russia did nothing to help look for them…

In the end of 1999, a seminar in honour of Lena Nemirovskaya took place in Stockholm under the name "Russian Roots of Russian Democracy." The General Secretary of the Council of Europe Daniel Tarschys, delivered an address there. Russian democracy boasts its own roots: first, it's the institutional legacy of medieval Russia exemplified by the popular assembly known as Veche; second, Russian political thought — Tarschys alludes to Kurbsky, Pososhkov, Golitsyn, and Tatishchev here; third is the reform projects of the second half of the 19th — early 20th century; fourth is the body of dissident literature, fifth, paradoxically, is the communist tradition itself with its idea of freedom, as well as the period of the thaw. "Some idea or institution are not good or bad because they appeared in a certain country," said Tarschys. "Hasty constitutional projects sprang up in Russia just as they did in Sweden, Switzerland or Swaziland; at any event, most of these projects have complicated genesis. Nevertheless, it's important for a country that is trying to strengthen its democratic institutes and procedures to rely on its own history. Therefore, looking back into Russia's past, let's see not only autocratic but democratic traditions as well."

Part of these traditions — if not their roots, at least their foliage — is the Nemirovskaya and Senokosov School.

People-Conduits: Elective Affinity

Lena sums up the experiences she has had so far. "In twenty years, I finally graduated the School myself." Before that, she received schooling from Merab and Yura: "They have taught me to distinguish things on the individual level, while the School enabled me to do the same on the public plane. And it's not a place that I belong to." Then she got a piece of paper from somewhere. It sports familiar handwriting belonging to one of the School's key experts, Lord Robert Skidelsky, and the words "Elective Affinity. Goethe from Robert Skidelsky."

This is what the School is built on. The term comes from the title of the Johann Wolfgang von Goethe novel, although the great German used it in a somewhat different sense. Nevertheless, the phrase is very accurate in and of itself. Those who found themselves inside the School's gravitational pull generally stayed there forever, thus "electing affinity" with it.

This is true of the School experts too — Skidelsky himself would enter the Golitsyno resort building like his home (the School had conducted most of its Moscow seminars there before the problems with the foreign agent status began). The Lord, a devout follower of Keynes, has been with the School for many years. He is Professor Emeritus at the University of Warwick, a brilliant polemist, tireless publicist and the author of the 3-volume biography of John Maynard Keynes, for which he was created a life peer (Senokosov published the Russian translation of the biography in 2005). He is part of the "elective affinity," along with the giants that were with the School in its first years (the last one in this cohort, Ralf Dahrendorf, passed away in 2009), and is among the key figures that assisted the School intellectually and organizationally, like Michael Sohlman, John Lloyd, Ivan Krastev, and many others.

Speaking at the Hiroshima Foundation for Peace and Culture award ceremony in Stockholm in 2006 — Lena was awarded the prize that

year — Sohlman aptly described her ability to create the right atmosphere for the leading world experts. "The question is: what makes all these busy people come and spend their time, sometimes not in the most comfortable conditions? (I remember the summer session in Golitsyno, when the ruthless sun raised the temperature in the auditorium to sauna-like conditions!) There are lots of reasons. An opportunity and pleasure to meet the special young Russians is one of them. But the deciding factor is Lena's unstoppable force of conviction that this is important for you — important to make a personal contribution to furthering knowledge of political history, social system and economic development of Russia and the rest of the world; a conviction that the knowledge that emerges through dialogue is important for the future of Russia."

Lord Skidelsky was one of key figures at the School's 20th anniversary reception at the House of Commons, chaired by the agile and incredibly personable Speaker of the House John Bercow (prior to that, a discussion featuring David Miliband was held in the House of Lords). A day earlier at a bookstore near the Westminster Abbey, I bought a book entitled *How Much is Enough* by Robert and Edward Skidelsky (the Lord's son actively cooperated with the School, co-editing the *Russia on Russia* journal that the MSPS was working on in the early 2000s). Back then, I didn't yet know that suit and tie aren't Lord Skidelsky's usual attire. He much prefers jeans and sneakers, loves discussions between the School's sessions, and constantly carries his laptop around, which he uses at the dimly lit bar of the Golitsyno resort. But sitting at the bar is no longer possible…

As was mentioned already, the very first seminar was held in April 1993 at the Lesniye Dali retreat managed by the Russian President's Administrative Directorate (in the past, it belonged to the Council of Ministers of the USSR). That's where the mutual attraction between the amazing experts and the wonderful audience first took place. It's a rather modest place, albeit in a prestigious location — subsequently, the pro-Kremlin Council on Foreign and Defence Policy gathered there. Incidentally, not only the

British and French Ambassadors, but also the Russian Foreign Ministry was among the organizers of the first seminars. The activities of the future foreign agent actually began under its auspices. But from the second seminar on, the location was in Golitsyno, which had more modest living arrangements (although the Lesniye Dali main building wasn't much better in those years), but it was more convenient to the School's administrators, who also wanted to give the seminars a permanent home. That's when George Soros started supporting the School, among the first people to do so along with the General Secretary of the Council of Europe.

I started working with the School as an expert only in 2010, but I've been to Golitsyno countless times, all of which were productive. Once I had to speak in almost complete darkness, but for the light that came from laptops and cellphones — someone turned off the resort's electricity, whether accidentally or deliberately. One time, I even lived in Golitsyno for the entire course of the seminar, thus escaping renovation work in my apartment. On one occasion, I participated in a panel discussion with the British actor Ralph Fiennes; on another, I found myself alongside the novelist Ian McEwan. Only Lena and Yura are capable of organizing such a feast for the soul. With every visit to the cafeteria, I'd find myself in Yuri's embraces, as well as in the middle of a multilingual conversation with some unexpected guests.

Fiennes and McEwan, just like all of the School's English-speaking guests, were heard in Russian thanks to Russia's best interpreters and translators. One of them was Viktor Golyshev, who translated many volumes of English and American prose. The late poet and translator Grigory Dashevsky also pitched in. English interpreters Mark Dadyan, Mikhail Zagot, Natalya Petrova, Italian interpreter Gennady Kiselev, and Spanish interpreter Alexander Kazachkov have been working for the School for years; they became part of the School's environment, and the experts feel comfortable around them. However, with each passing year, more and more people in the audience choose not to use their headphones.

The first person I was introduced to during my first visit to Golitsyno was Toby Gati. It was done with flair: as soon as I entered the Soviet-looking hotel lobby, I saw Lena excitedly talking with some bespectacled black-haired woman. "Let me introduce you. This is Clinton's former adviser." A nice beginning, indeed.

Later, Toby, who served as the Assistant Secretary of State under Clinton, would present me a book about Zbigniew Brzezinski written by her husband John Hopkins University Professor Charles Gati. I'd see her again at the School's 20th anniversary celebration in London in the company of the Russian parliamentarian Vladimir Pligin, who had to review all the repressive laws put forward by the Putin regime. We must give him some credit for trying to help the School, albeit unsuccessfully. Another School graduate, parliament member Irina Yarovaya, who has become one of Russia's most prominent reactionary politicians, must've also found herself in a difficult situation when the procedure to declare the School a foreign agent commenced. But who knows, maybe she's had no qualms about it at all.

In one of her old interviews, Tobi Gati explained the principal difference between the American and Russian political classes. It hinges on freedom and influence of the press: "We could also mention the "shaming factor." In the US, we call it the "*Washington Post* test." If you have the slightest doubt about the deal you're about to make, ask yourself what you are going to do if the *Washington Post* will write about your behaviour tomorrow. People don't like when newspapers write about their dealings. If a country lacks tradition of journalistic investigations, the rich and influential individuals may get away with their dirty deals. That's why the free press that you can't buy good or bad articles from is so helpful. Almost everyone is afraid that his or her unbecoming behaviour will become public."

In Russia, no one is afraid of such publicity, nor does the country have a similar publication, whose articles would lead to repercussions for those at the very top. The country has a different political culture, although such political cultural was only artificially created in the last fifteen years.

I once told Toby Gati that I had read the entire three volumes of Henry Kissinger's memoirs. She gave me a sour look that expressed how she really felt about this symbol of Realpolitik. Kissinger also spoke at the School, albeit after some vacillation and a few calls to Lena — he was afraid to offend Putin (that was still when the direct repressive measures against civil society hadn't begun). The speech, in fact, triggered a wave of conspirological accusations from the School's detractors.

Brzezinski also served as the School's expert, although not in Golitsyno, but at another event organized by the School. Then he gave the School his book with an autograph that read, "I hope that we are past the time when my autograph would have to be ripped out of the book." He was alluding to the story he was told about his book *Between Two Ages: America's Role in the Technetronic Era*, which was passed to two young people, Kormer and Senokosov, in 1971 with a gift inscription from him. Kormer had to tear this page out of the book — he was anticipating an arrest and search at that time, and the book from a U.S. "hawk" could've become grounds for serious criminal prosecution. Incidentally, Brzezinski spoke at the School's 10th anniversary celebration when it received a congratulatory message from Russian president Vladimir Putin.

Lena Nemirovskaya also attracted another star, Richard Pipes, to the school. This is another story of her overpowering charisma and almost "tyrannical" charm. The prominent historian saw her at Harvard and right away asked why Russian translations of his books didn't attract much attention in Russia. "Dick, in front of you is a person who read your books while facing risk of an arrest for their possession. Do you need any more recognition?" Lena said to him. He visited the School two months later and continued doing so many times afterward. The School published his two-volume work on Peter Struve in 2001. Speaking at a School seminar in 2003, Pipes concluded his presentation in the following way, "Russian liberalism was much weaker than Bolshevism and reactionary conservatism. The reason for it is that liberalism can only be successful when it develops from below.

In Russia, the pressure from below wasn't strong enough since it lacked civil society. I believe the problem is still relevant for Russia today." In 2010, he offered some perceptive insights on one of his key ideas that freedom is impossible without private property and its protections: "I first came to the Soviet Union in 1957. What struck me then is that the people I met lacked a sense of personality. It seemed to me that it had to do with the fact they had no property."

… Lena leaves the living room and comes back with the legendary coat that she was wearing when a police officer tried to arrest her on the Kalinin Bridge (currently the New Arbat Bridge). The long garment with white and yellowish stripes was made in Poland but brought from London — just imagine such a thing back then! Lena is getting ready to leave for her endless errands, while I linger to continue talking to Yuri. Interestingly, the coat she is wearing now looks very much like that, historical one. Complementing her outfit are red glasses, a read watch, and a fancy striped hat. Youth and provocation just don't leave this woman. Forty years ago, she'd also dye her hair green, with brilliant green dye, of course.

That's how she demonstrated her freedom, the freedom, which in Senokosov's logic, can only work in conjunction with independence.

Tall and handsome Michael Sohlman speaks strikingly soft Russian, and his manners are just the same. Even Russians don't speak such genuine Russian anymore. I told Michael's daughter Eva, who doesn't speak the language, about this quality of her father. She confirmed this observation, saying that others also notice that Sohlman's Russian is too proper. The former executive director of the Nobel Foundation, who resigned this position because of his age, speaks unaccented Russian, but there is something about him that gives away his foreign origin — his manners, respectable air of deliberation, and this grammatically and lexically proper aristocratic Russian.

The word "aristocratic" is quite appropriate here because Sohlman's mother, nee Zinaida Yarotskaya, came from a family of Russian nobility that

owned an estate in Crimea. When asked if he wants to get the estate back (a question he thought about before the Russian annexation of Crimea), Sohlman responded that he can barely handle the lawn on his land plot in a Stockholm suburb.

By the way, this plot is located on land that belongs to the Swedish royal family. Its tenant has a right to live here even after his resignation because of his past position as the Nobel Foundation Executive Director. Indeed, it's a position of truly royal scale. The manor located on royal land — an idyllic Swedish landscape — is a mere wooden house, resembling a Russian suburban cottage. The only noticeable feature is a motorboat perched in the yard, which is not even fenced off. Grandson of Alfred Nobel's aide and executor Ragnar Sohlman and son of the Swedish Ambassador to Russia Rolf Sohlman, graduate of Upsala University and Executive Director of the Nobel Foundation for almost two decades is busy about his kitchen. Brownish-orange Norwegian aquavit sits atop of a small dining room. After dinner, guests sip strong tea in the host's simply furnished office complete with the *New York Review of Books* on a coffee table.

The member of the Swedish Academy of Sciences and Board of Directors of the Stockholm Institute of Transition Economy studied in the famous Moscow School No. 110 from 1951 to 1954 (alongside Marshal Budyonny's son). Over the years, the school boasted many illustrious students, such as Alexei Batalov, Andrei Sakharov, Natan Eidelman, and Andrei Sinyavsky. But Sohlman has not a trace of anything Soviet about him: after School No. 110, his father sent him off to Sweden. So, the almost Moscow kid became Swedish; only that amazing velvety Russian survived.

Sweden in general, and Sohlman in particular, certainly contributed a lot to the School — by providing support and platform, as well as intellectually, because the Stockholm School of Economics and the Stockholm Institute of Transition Economy are serious institutions that are very suitable for partnering with the MSPS.

The blue and yellow, almost ascetic, and Soviet-looking auditorium of the Stockholm School of Economics is a historical place. Initially, it was the Stockholm Student Union auditorium, which was taken over by students during the revolutionary May of 1968. Sohlman humorously described events of that time to the School audience, "Even Olof Palme, the Educational Minister at the time, came to see them here. Then they decided that their own home was not a heroic enough of a site and tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to occupy the opera." One can even find a photo online featuring much more relaxed students than those in the Sorbonne, who are patiently listening to a really young and smiling Palme — listening with some interest, perhaps even respect.

Scandinavian presence in the School's Board of Directors isn't limited to Michael Sohlman. There is one more Swedish-speaking member of the board — former Finnish Ambassador to Russia Rene Nyberg. One can see his quick, slightly-tilted frame at all significant intellectual forums around the world. He knows and reads everything. Everyone gets a charge of his energy when communicating with him and feels that this impeccable-looking aristocratic gentlemen is talking exclusively with him or her. Despite some accent, which doesn't sound Finnish at all, his Russian is amazing and flexible, befitting Tolstoy's description of the Russian language as great and mighty. Swedish and Finnish were languages of Nyberg's childhood, as was German — he graduated from a German-language school.

The diplomat's business card says "Rene Nyberg, Ambassador" — plain and simple. It also features a little drawing of a bespectacled man in an impeccable blue suit, white shirt, and a red tie reading a newspaper. That's Rene Nyberg for you. Indeed, he reads pretty much everything there is to read: "When I was working in Moscow, I occasionally asked at meetings, "Have you read this in today's *Kommersant* Daily? And what do you think? No one has. Only me." By the way, Nyberg, who also served as the Finnish Ambassador to Germany considers *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* to be the best newspaper around. He's got style, but he's also got taste.

In the 1970s, Nyberg first worked in the Finnish Embassy in Moscow, then in the General Consulate in Leningrad. He was almost kicked out of the Embassy for publicizing Ernst Neizvestny's letter to Finnish president Urho Kaleva Kekkonen, in which the sculptor asked the Finnish leader to help him leave the USSR. In general, he was too actively involved with non-conformists, especially artists like Krasnopevtsev, Rabin, and others. Nyberg admits that he really started understanding what the Soviet Union was about only while working in Leningrad, where he continued to perfect his Russian.

Of course, Nyberg got lucky with the time when he was appointed the Finnish Ambassador to Moscow. But he wrapped up his standard 4-year term in office in 2004 when the first Mikhail Khodorkovsky case was unfolding.

Sohlman and Nyberg could grace any board of directors. They are tall and handsome Scandinavian men, with the air of aristocracy about them. Besides, their roots are from Russia. Just like Sohlman, Nyberg has a connection with the Russian Empire: that's where his Jewish mother comes from. Rene wrote about his family, which was quite popular in Finland. When he started studying his family line, he found out that his cousin on his mother's side is none other but Alexander Kushner — not the worst of Russian poets by any stretch. During Nyberg's stint in Leningrad, he happened to live pretty close to his cousin, not knowing anything about him.

A scion of a noble family, elegant and tall Ernst-Joerg von Studnitz is no less aristocratic. He worked at the German Embassy in the USSR in 1969–1973, a very peculiar and promising time period. He served as Germany's Ambassador to Russia from 1995 to 2002 and the chairman of the Russian-German Forum. This man has been a professional at building bridges all his life, especially in the post-Soviet time. His efforts earned him a prestigious Yegor Gaidar Foundation award for Outstanding Contribution to the Development of International Humanitarian Ties with Russia. At one of the School's seminars, he made a very

insightful observation on Russia and Germany: "Our countries are experiencing similar difficulties in resolving the issue of new borders after the defeat of Germany and the breakup of the Soviet Union. Post-war German history points to the fact that the ideas of German domination went up in smoke. Similarly, Russia is experiencing a difficult transition period after the breakup of the Soviet Union. Both Germany and Russia lost vast territory that originally belonged to them. But the events of the 20th century have taught us that revisiting the border issue inevitably leads to wars and unthinkable human losses. Demands for the return of the old territories are self-defeating. Modern life and the joint efforts of Western European powers demonstrate that borders are increasingly losing their importance, becoming mere demarcation lines, separating one administrative district from another. Borders and passports can no longer stand in the way of human communication."

Von Studnitz is also good at asking precise questions: "…upbringing is generally understood in terms of preparing a useful member of society. But doesn't it contradict the concept of freedom? Who or what determines a person's utility today? Isn't it the economy that requires capable skilled labour force, since it's the only way to withstand competition? Hence, the demands for children to strive for success as early as primary school in order to get into better colleges and secure high-paying jobs, which puts excessive strain on them right from the early childhood. It would be fair to ask how compatible these requirements are with nurturing freedom, and whether such a system of upbringing in fact suppresses freedom? Of course, the winners of this often ruthless school and college competition attain consumer status perceived as freedom. But is it real freedom when most contenders drop out of the race, and just a minority achieves economic freedom? Is society really interested in promoting a limited number of people to leadership positions, while shifting the overwhelming majority of people into the care of a welfare state? This raises the question of a more balanced upbringing and educational system, which would be more suitable for the ideals of freedom."

Alvaro Gil-Robles is on the School's Advisory Board, just like Robert Skidelsky. The MSPS published a book of his entitled *Parliamentary Control of Administration: Institution of Ombudsman*. Gil-Robles was a human rights representative in Spain (Defensor del Puebla de España, literally — "the defender of the people of Spain"), the author of the national ombudsman law, then the first Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe during the seven "Biblical" years. These were very difficult years, so he knows something about life that others don't, although you would never tell by his peaceful professorial looks complemented by professor's suits and exquisite moss green or brown-coloured ties.

When the School started having problems in Russia, Alvaro Gil-Robles knew what had to be done. He had to help the School to continue educating. That's how the School started to run its seminars in Spain. They take place in the north of the country, in Segovia, a mystical city with diverging narrow streets, the Roman Aqueduct, and Alcazar Fortress. They are also held in Andalusia in the south, in the college town of Baez, where Alexander Kazachkov, Gil-Robles' brilliant interpreter, taught us to correctly pronounce the word "*jerez*" and order it too, using the word "*fino*" understood by every local.

Gil-Robles is the son of a right-wing politician, who was not right-wing enough for General Franco to tolerate him in Spain, but too right-wing to be in the same political boat with the Republicans. At one Golitsyno seminar many years ago, he said "Power and ethics are antagonistic terms. Just like oil and water, they don't mix."

There is a long history behind this phrase, history of a man who was born outside of his ancestral home, in Lisbon. That happened because of his father Jose Maria Gil-Robles, a lawyer and Catholic politician who founded CEDA, the Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Rights in 1933. But he never joined the Falange Española, emigrating to Portugal. The son followed in his father's footsteps: he lived outside of his homeland — in France, spent some time in prison, and became a lawyer. Having become a

member of Spain's Constitutional Court at 36, Alvaro Gil-Robles chose the hardest path — that of ombudsman. That essentially left him friendless, but for King Juan Carlos I (Gil-Robles Sr. was once a member of the council for Juan de Borbon, Juan Carlos' father).

That's why Alvaro Gil-Robles "talks of democracy with poetic passion, as if about a calling," to quote Lena Nemirovskaya. How else can a person who, in his own words, "worked with pathologies for many years" talk about it? The ombudsman saw the effects of the dark side of human nature almost every day in the years when some parts of post-Soviet Europe looked like a mixed-up and burning jigsaw puzzle. What helped him along was humour and optimism, which he calls his "survival weapon." Gil-Robles admits that "values of solidarity in Europe have been destroyed" and "power and abuses go hand in hand," but believes that "this must be combatted." His position is that "democracy is not just words, but a form of life that must be sustained every day."

The 33-year-old Alvaro completed his book on the ombudsman phenomenon and the importance of this institution for strengthening democracy in 1977. But even now, when the professor at the Compultense University of Madrid (incidentally, his alma mater) is in his 70s, he continues this everyday struggle for democracy by supporting the School.

In his interview with Michael Fishman, Gil-Robles detailed his work in Chechnya, "The Commissioner represents the Council of Europe; Russia is a member of the Council of Europe. First and foremost, I pursued the humanitarian approach — protecting human rights. The main thing is to end the armed conflict as quickly as possible, and then do everything in my power for the civilian population and the victims of the conflict." In this respect, he offered an interesting insight on Akhmad Kadyrov, who he spoke with for hours "about different things:" "If both of us belonged to the Christian world, I would say he was a great humanitarian."

What's Gil-Robles's take on the current political regime? In answering this question, he simply stated what he thought about the "undesirable"

NGOs' law and the work of the man who signed it: "A politician who enjoys broad support doesn't need such laws. To the contrary, he could've engaged in a dialogue with these organizations, which would've strengthened him a ruler."

Such is the opinion of a man who devoted his life to strengthening the institution of the ombudsman, the people's defender, the defender of human rights — the values that mean close to nothing in today's Russia. That makes him a quintessential "foreign agent." He is a friend of the King, and Senokosov and Nemirovskaya's friend to boot.

Alvaro Gil-Robles served some time in jail on the Canary Islands. He says he was put there by Manuel Fraga Iribarne, Franco's right-hand man and one of the most brilliant politicians in the Caudillo's inner circle. Later, when the Moncloa Pacts were signed in 1977, Gil-Robles and Fraga shook hands. Years later, slightly embarrassed, Lena told Alvaro that Fraga became the School's expert and even invited its attendees to Santiago de Compostela. At that time, Fraga was serving his term as the president of Galicia's regional government, spending a total of fifteen years in that position, from 1990 to 2005. Just like Gil-Robles, he received excellent education, subsequently serving as the Minister of Tourism and Information in the Franco government. He took credit for weakening censorship and opening the country up to the outside world. He penned the slogan "Spain is different" and established the Parador hotel network, which can still be found in historical buildings, thus contributing to the Spanish tourist infrastructure.

Fraga was a true politician, a *homo politicus*. He loved to be part of the process. In May 2002, in his late 70s, he told the School participants, "Such is a role of a politician — to form the ruling majority and make concession to the opposing minority… If a politician can't give people a dream, he won't accomplish anything." Incidentally, in 1964, he was the one to author a slogan "Twenty-five years of peace," which justified quarter of a century of the Caudillo rule. The Franco regime was in power then, and he served the Caudillo as part of a team of technocrats, who were trying to turn Spain

into a normal European country and prompt the Caudillo to peacefully transfer power to King Juan Carlos I.

When Manuel Fraga became the Minister of Information and Tourism, another proponent of gradual change, Gregorio Lopez-Bravo, was appointed the Minister of Industry. Together they wrote Franco's 1963 New Year's address without a single mention of Freemasons, elaborating on the country's economic achievements and prospects instead. Truth be told, at the very same time, the Information Minister discredited himself by justifying the execution of the "unabashed murderer," communist politician Julian Grimau. Starting in 1964, he was trying to push through the new law on the press, which the Phalangists and Franco didn't like, but it was nonetheless adopted in 1966. Later on, one of the dictator's close associates claimed that the efforts of the Information Minister created an impression that Spain is "stagnating politically, has a monopolistic economy and social injustice. The press exploits pornography for commercial purposes… Bookstores are filled with literature that promotes atheism and communism."

At the end of the Caudillo rule, Fraga, who was dismissed from his position of the Minister of Tourism and Information, retained informal influence (Juan Carlos even recommended that Franco appoint him prime minister). He belonged to the so-called *aperturistas*, the elites that sought the democratization of their country. The veteran of Spanish politics called himself "liberal conservative" and claimed that any democracy should be "organic" because it's connected to the public. In the same Golitsyno lecture, he told the audience about the factors that contributed to his country's transition to democracy, while also obviously trying to exculpate himself: "In Spain, the state wasn't trying to destroy civil society, as it happened in the USSR, perhaps that's why the transition period in Spain went more smoothly. We retained private property; we eliminated censorship still under Franco, when I was the Minister of Information. Our international standing facilitated domestic change. [Fraga was referring to good relations with the U.S. — Spain retained a U.S. military base, as well as ties with

international financial organizations, which were helping the technocratic economists in the government in their efforts to open up the country. — *A.K.*]. We also learned a lot from the Portuguese Revolution of 1974, which really shocked the Western world. Therefore, we were more cautious and deliberate in our work. Besides, we had a middle class, albeit a less developed one than in other European countries. It's also important that Spain was relying on the institution of monarchy."

In quite an advance age, Fraga founded the People's Alliance Party, later renamed the People's Party. He was succeeded by Jose Maria Aznar, who then became the Prime Minister. In connection to this, old Fraga liked to tell a joke about himself:

In heaven, Franco meets a recently deceased politician and asks him who rules Spain now. "Aznar" was the answer.

"Oh, I remember Aznar. This is probably his son?"

"No, his grandson."

"And who is in power in Madrid?"

"Ruiz-Galardon."

"Oh, son of my acquaintance."

"No, grandson."

"And who is in charge in my native Galicia?"

"Fraga."

"The grandson of the Fraga I knew?"

"No, Fraga himself!"

If Franco had asked what Jose Maria Robles was up to, he would've found out that both of his sons became politicians — Alvaro and Jose Maria Junior, who was even the head of the European Parliament at some point.

As for Fraga, Franco's former minister once told Lena, "In heaven, Franco is probably thinking, 'What are you doing, Fraga?' And I'm walking around Golitsyno!"

This is how Golitsyno became a forum for two outstanding Spanish politicians and might've even reconciled them.

St. James (*Santiago* in Spanish), one of Jesus's disciples and the older brother of John the Apostle, is considered a patron saint of Spain, *Reconquista*, and travellers. A boat with his remains miraculously travelled across the Mediterranean and got around the Western edge of Europe, ending up at the mouth of the Rio Ulla. For centuries, his relics have been kept at the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral. Thousands of pilgrims — from Francis of Assisi to Pope John Paul II — made a long journey to see the saint's crypt and relics. A thurible called *Botafumeiro* is suspended from the dome on the roof of the church. It's the largest thurible in the world, which is about human size and weight. The swinging object exudes incense, which doesn't just create mystical atmosphere, but also somewhat cleanses the air of the odour exuded by the pilgrims. In 1998, the beautiful Cathedral witnessed an amazing scene: standing in front of the pilgrims, a Russian woman pronounced something resembling a speech or a prayer-like sermon. Never before has the Cathedral had such contact with the Orthodox Christian world. In fact, the woman wasn't even an Orthodox Christian. She practiced no religion and was ethnically Jewish. Her name was Lena Nemirovskaya.

The phantasmagorical story was instigated by Manuel Fraga Iribarne. He notified Lena about the speech a day before the event, and did so indirectly, through the interpreter Alexander Kazachkov. The night before the service, Lena and Yuri began to panic: what could they possibly say from the "pulpit," in an almost literal sense of the word? What can they preach in front of the Catholics who walked to the temple via Camino de Santiago, also dubbed the Milky Way? Won't it be too great of a responsibility to speak in a Catholic shrine on behalf of the "Russian world" (the first Orthodox service would take place in the cathedral six years later)? How not to go wrong with the choice of ideas and tone? How not to make things worse? What good tidings could be brought from Russia? How should the presentation be structured? In what genre? In the wee hours of the morning, Lena called the hotel room of one of the key Russian experts Alexei Salmin, and tried to convince him to speak on behalf of the "Russian world." "Lena,

if this mission happened to be entrusted to you, you should be the one to carry it out. Nothing happens by pure chance." At 5AM, Nemirovskaya fell asleep for half an hour. With three hours left until the speech, she had to get up after so little downtime. Just as it happens with regular families, the couple was trying to decide who's going to take a shower first. "How long can a person stay in the shower — 10 to 15 minutes," Lena remembers. "Yura went to the bathroom, and when he returned, I had to deliver my presentation already."

Here are a couple of phrases from the draft of the speech:

"Saint James the Apostle,

This morning, on Wednesday, June 10, I thank you that I'm here and ask for your blessing and guidance…

I represent men and women from Russia and Georgia who came to the Galician-Russian seminar.

There, in faraway Russia, people are going through tough challenges and living a difficult life. People often lack mutual understanding. Differences and disagreements eclipse one's mind and weaken one's heart.

Saint James, here, in this temple, I beseech you to enlighten my soul and the souls of those who forget that all differences are reconciled only by way of dialogue and love…

Help us, those who came to you, to follow the narrow path of mutual understanding and respect, so that Christian tolerance would become reason for our existence, tuning our hearts toward love for the truth and man."

Of course, at the start of each of the recent seminars, when the humiliating status forced upon the School inevitably reminds one of the loss of the Golitsyno venue, Lena gives credit to those who have been with the School from its founding. She always explains her main idea again, especially to new members of the audience. She keeps trying to bring both new and old prominent experts to the School's sessions, panels, and plenary meetings. So, the "newbies" like Hakan Altinay and Ivan Krastev could be sitting alongside famous British journalist John Lloyd and Helmut Kohl's former

advisor Michael Mertes, who were with the School during its formative years. These people comprise the School's core and have now also become its added value, since their opinions take on additional weight during the new turbulent times.

Opening a seminar for journalists in Oxford, Lena mentions Ralf Dahrendorf, who once served as a warden at Oxford's St. Anthony's College. The conference participants have gathered in a modern building of the nearby St. Anne's College. Its manicured English lawn can be seen out the windows. Nothing changes here for centuries, apart from the delicate construction of new buildings. The audience can't hear warm wind gusts outdoors while Lena prefaces her friend's John Lloyd's presentation with her musings on the most important subject — that of freedom and civil society: "For our purposes, we have come with the term "society of citizens" instead of "civil society." It is an individual space, individual life… A person has a hard time managing his freedom; he can only take as much freedom as he can handle…" (Evidently, this contradiction between civil society and society of citizens is actually the difference between democracy and liberalism, which Ortega y Gasset have noted in his *Invertebrate Spain*: "Democracy answers the question: who should exercise political power?" His answer is "Political power is to be exercised by civil society." Liberalism answers an entirely different question, which is "What should be the boundaries of political power, regardless of who possesses it. The answer is "Political power — whether it's exercised autocratically or by the people — shouldn't be unlimited, so any state interference should be checked by the rights bestowed upon an individual." Thus, we can clearly see an effort to restrain the state here).

Further, Nemirovskaya elaborates on the statement "democracy is an empty space" — a paradoxical idea that Senokosov likes to repeat. "We have an empty space before us, and we are the only ones who can fill it," Lena says. She can't let go of painful reflections on the regressive steps the state and society have taken in the past few years, so she shares them with her

new audience, "Why did everything change so quickly? This is our defeat. We didn't maintain the positions that we were supposed to maintain. And that happened because we knew little. Our seminars exist so that we can know and understand more. It's not a test, a skill, or training. It's enlightenment, an invitation to make an effort to understand the world."

John Lloyd currently serves as the chairman of the School's Advisory Board, shouldering this burden in the most difficult of times for the School. Oxford is his place. That's where he works as a Senior Fellow at the Reuters Institute of Journalism. In fact, John was one of the Institute's cofounders. Prior to that, he worked for the *Financial Times* for many years (he still writes for the FT, while also contributing to *Reuters* and *La Repubblica*). He served as Moscow Bureau Chief for the FT, which yielded a voluminous and well-written book on Russia at the crossroads entitled *Rebirth of a Nation. An Anatomy of Russia.* It first came out in England in 1998.

The tall Scotsman has always been with the School. He even celebrated his 70th birthday with the Senokosovs in London, at their daughter Tanya's house. This closeness dates back to his meeting Lena in the late 1980s. "They suffered a lot of distress in their life, the least of which was my speaking Russian during our lengthy evening conversations," Lloyd wrote in his book on Russia. This is certainly an exaggeration. John's Russian is quite good, and he can even lecture in it. When Lena and John met at a party, he spoke only English. Then he disappeared for some time, but upon his return, he already spoke the language of the country he was to live in. It turns out that he went to London to take an intensive Russian course. There he hardly ever took off his headphones, constantly listening the language he was learning. After six months of living in the country, Lloyd could conduct interviews in Russian already.

The Senokosovs and the Lloyds became friends. John's wife, Marcia Levy, also happens to have some Russian roots: in fact, her grandma comes from Kremenchug, just like Lena's. Lloyd even organized a trip there. After

Marcia — the mother of Lloyd's son Jacob, an actor at London's Globe Theatre — was no longer married to John, she remained within the Senokosovs' gravitational pull. A professional judge, she spoke about the distinctive characteristics of the English justice system at one of the Golitsyno seminars.

"What always struck me about John was his being open to people and ideas, his active friendliness," says Lena. "He knows everyone, and everyone knows him. Once, when Ralph Fiennes was staying with us, he ran into John while leaving the apartment. Both were speechless. They knew each other well, but didn't expect to meet in Moscow in the same place."

Human gratitude is probably the feeling that survives the longest. Two years before the fall of the Iron Curtain, when it wasn't that easy to call London to talk to Tanya, John occasionally invited the Senokosovs to his office so that they could get in touch with their daughter. The Italian journalist Marco Politti did the same.

"You don't forget such things," says Lena.

One more Englishman who was important to the School is Sir Rodric Braithwaite, Chairman of the MSPS Advisory Board from 1993 to 2012, and the U.K. Ambassador to the USSR and Russia during the critical time for the country, from 1988 to 1992. Yura and Lena helped the Ambassador and his wife Jill navigate the world of Moscow intelligentsia. But their relationship went beyond that. They were together during the August 1991 coup d'état.

In his memoirs, *Across the Moscow River. The World Turned Upside Down*, the Ambassador described the events of those days in great detail: "Jill rang from the Senokosovs' apartment. She had met them outside the White House and heard the cheers when it was announced that the Prime Minister [British PM John Major — *A.K.*] had telephoned Yeltsin, and again when Shevarnadze came into the building… The next day Jill admitted that instead of observing the curfew she had gone with the Senokosovs to the defenders on the barricades."

Due to his international recognition, Sir Rodric's name is extremely important for the School. He helped build bridges between Margaret Thatcher and Mikhail Gorbachev and participated in improving the West's relations with the Yeltsin-Gaidar government in the hardest and most critical year of liberal reforms. Unlike many Western diplomats and government officials of the day, Braithwaite understood the necessity of supporting the Gaidar government. On January 11, 1992, he sent a telegram to London: "This might be the last best chance for economic reform and hence political stability in Russia. If Gaidar were swept away we could soon find ourselves back with voodoo economics, and an authoritarian leadership trying to divert popular discontent against a foreign (Ukrainian? Western?) enemy."

Perhaps, this understanding had something to do with the fact the Braithwaite's predecessor as Great Britain's Ambassador to Russia, George Buchanan, happened to leave his position in January 1918(!). Subsequently, London only appointed Ambassadors to the Soviet Union. But what's more important, the future Chairman of the School's Advisory Board was well-educated, knew Russian well, and had experience of working in Jakarta, Warsaw, Moscow (back in the 1960s), Rome, Brussels, and Washington. After serving in the USSR/Russia, Braithwaite was John Major's foreign policy advisor. His interests are very broad: he served as Governor of the English National Opera and Chairman of the Royal Academy of Music. In 1994, the former Ambassador was appointed Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St. Michael and St. George.

Mikhail Gorbachev heaped praise on Braithwaite's memoirs, writing that if everyone understood Russia as well as Her Majesty's Ambassador, "history would've treated us more favourably." But Sir Rodric's bibliography also includes two systematic non-fiction works on the history of defending Moscow in 1941and the Soviet involvement in Afghanistan — no Russian researcher has dealt with the subjects so thoroughly. A Russian translation of his book *Moscow 1941: A City and Its People at War* was published by then Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov, who even wrote a foreword to it. The

second book, *Afgantsy. The Russians in Afghanistan 1979-89,* was also published in Russian, two years after the original.

Jill Braithwaite, the Ambassador's wife, who died of cancer rather young, shared the entire geography of her husband's diplomatic service. Later in life, she got interested in archaeology, becoming an expert in Roman pottery.

The scale of these two individuals, who couldn't withstand the gravitational pull of the Kutozovsky Prospect apartment and the School, perfectly matched the goal of civic education that Lena and Yura set for themselves: let best of the best share their worldview.

"If a Bulgarian starts talking about universal values it means that there is something wrong with them," said Ivan Krastev at the October 2015 Berlin Forum. He then told the audience a joke about the shortest Jewish telegram: "Start worrying. Details to follow."

His *New York Times* articles are always brilliant; his presentations are witty and precise. Lena and Yuri often visit him in Vienna, where Krastev works at the Institute of Human Sciences. He knows and reads everything. No wonder he even brought a book to the hotel bar where I and journalist Vitaly Dymarsky, son of famous sports commentator Naum Dymarsky and a student of my mother's at the famous French-instruction Moscow School No. 2, were waiting for him. This time he was reading Ira Katznelson's book on the New Deal that spanned from FDR to Dwight Eisenhower. A simply dressed man holding a thick, slightly worn-out paper book looks a bit unusual in a Berlin hotel bar, although one can hardly be surprised by anything these days.

At the Forum, in the Bosch Foundation auditorium on Französische Straße – a space with a cosmopolitan and globalist transparent ceiling, Krastev is talking about the crisis of a cosmopolitan and globalist worldview. We used to ask how to manage globalization. But now the question is how to respond to retaliatory strikes on globalization. Untethered communication faces restrictions now. Open borders are up against border walls. Krastev believes this to be a result of globalization that favours the elites.

This view is debatable. In many countries, middle classes did benefit from globalization, but it's true that the gains weren't significant enough to prevent social rifts. As for US-Russian relations, Krastev views them differently from others: "In the 1970s — during the Cold War — the French political scientist Pierre Hassner used the term "competitive decadence" to describe the rivalry between the US and the USSR. It meant that each of the superpowers was facing serious internal problems, but the country that would be worn down by them later was more likely to emerge as a winner. We can see something similar about the relations between Russia and the West today. Each of the parties is experiencing serious domestic problems but is constructing its foreign policy in hopes that the rival will collapse first."

Here is how his sceptical mind treats the protest movements' euphoria: "Finally, we were being seduced by the "Silicon Valley effect": our social ideas and strategies were shaped by the utopia of technological progress rather than historical experience. Stuck on our faith in technology, we've failed to recognize the weaknesses of the new protest movements and misjudged their social influence. It's possible to stage Twitter revolutions, but it's impossible to have Twitter government, and many of the new protest movements are now paying a high price for their anti-institutional ethos."

When Krastev talks about someone or something — be it at international forums or in the Senokosovs' living room round table — he does so as a natural scientist. He evaluates the logic on each side, as well as the sides' weaknesses and complexes. Ivan's other advantage is being Bulgarian. He lived in Bulgaria during the Soviet era, which means he knows the set of problems the post-Soviet world is facing today. It's also important that he is fluent in Russian and knows the psychology of his research subjects.

Feeling ashamed of one's country, or rather its leadership, provides an emotional and ethical reason for participating in the dissident movement. The seven people that showed up at Red Square in August 1968 in protest against the Soviet invasion in Czechoslovakia wanted to show the

world that not everyone in the Soviet Union supported the invasion, that there were still people who were ashamed and wanted to apologize to the victims.

Ludmila Alexeyeva wasn't at the Square that day, but felt just like the people who were. Four decades later — in August 2008 (history's tragic symmetry!) — she apologized for her country and its leadership, but this time she was addressing Georgians rather than Czechoslovaks. Tbilisi was hosting a seminar of the Georgian School of Political Studies, and the Moscow School had funds for one ticket only. So, Lena Nemirovskaya asked Lyudmila Alexeyeva to go. The authority and influence of the oldest human rights advocate befitted the occasion: Georgian intellectuals were to hear an apology from a legendary Soviet dissident. But these were also words of consolation: Russia is not just its government. It's also the people who are ashamed of the decision to invade the territory of a neighbouring sovereign state. While listening to Alexeyeva, the Georgian seminar participants were crying.

Alexeyeva was over ten years older than Yuri and Lena, but they were children of the same generation sharing the same life experience and a slow journey to finding their real self. The war, Stalin, the 20th Communist Party Congress are all the trappings of that generation. The "social networks" in the form of gatherings at homes and apartments were one of the ways to awaken civic and political consciousness. It makes perfect sense that at one of the School's seminars Alexeyeva admitted feeling as if she had known Senokosov and Nemirovskaya from the years of her youth, although they actually only met in the 1990s after Lyudmila's return to Russia from the United States. Even their sentiments toward the same events were similar. Little Lena pitied the captive Germans marched through Moscow on July 17, 1944. Looking at the same file of POWs, young Lyudmila was angry at herself for being incapable of sharing the wrath of her fellow countrymen. "I couldn't call these Germans "scum," I didn't want to hang or strangle them with my own hands," she remembered.

They belonged to the same generation — the generation of Khrushchev's thaw. The future School founders could've easily repeated Alexeyeva's words about herself, "we had no leaders or mentors, we could only learn from one another." The most important thing that this generation did was to "struggle for individual freedom from the state." But it all started from the struggle for one's own freedom.

Among the dissidents, Lyudmila took up the role of an organizer. She was instrumental in founding the Moscow Helsinki Group and *A Chronicle of Current Events* periodical. For her part, Lena was an organizer in the educational sphere, which was the next stage in the development of civic consciousness. This process involved more people, but was still individually oriented, just like human rights. After all, a human being is not some mass, but a separate entity. And it's these separate entities that comprise civil society.

"We had no second or third echelons of resistance," outstanding human rights activist Larisa Bogoraz once wrote in a letter to Alexeyeva. Civic education is capable of creating such an echelon defence of human rights, as well as democratic and civic institutions.

One of Lyudmila Alexeyeva's lectures at the School was entitled "The Generational Relay Race." Essentially, those who saw civic ignorance and lack of education as the root of problems in post-Soviet Russia took the baton from Soviet-era human rights activists. But the baton was passed to the member of the same generation — the thaw generation. Alexeyeva continued her struggle for human rights and civic education in Putin's Russia — both as a member of the Presidential Council for Human Rights and the School's permanent lecturer. It was a very peculiar struggle, but a struggle nonetheless, even if it shifted from Moscow squares into Kremlin office interiors.

In the summer of 2010, an insulting portrait of Alexeyeva was displayed at Seliger, the pro-Kremlin youth forum. In spring the same year, some nationalist thug hit her over the head. Putin's tepid civility and Medvedev's

liberal inclinations didn't insure Lyudmila Alexeyeva against calculated violence at the hands of a special police unit, which made no allowances for her age and gender. On December 21, 2010, wearing a *Snegurochka* (Snow Maiden) costume, Lyudmila came out to Mayakovskaya Square for the Strategy 31 rally, a non-party-affiliated precursor of the Bolotnaya Square demonstrations. There the old woman sustained a powerful hit on her heels — the same method Soviet security services used to take out political demonstrators. Their Russian successors upheld this grim tradition.

Overt struggle in every possible place while ignoring insults, boorish behaviour, and violence is what always characterized Alexeyeva. She commanded great respect and worked tirelessly at a very advanced age. She was a true moral guiding light.

Being ready to lend a helping hand every single minute and using her common sense were among Alexeyeva's other characteristics. These traits made her reaction and speech very human, which is not so easy to come by in this day and age of boilerplate official language mixed with belligerent rhetoric.

For instance, when talking about proposals to eliminate the death penalty moratorium, she told it like it is, "Do you imagine how many people will be deprived of their lives after unjust, obscurely-motivated verdicts? ... Especially if our courts are to decide who should or should not live?!..."

It's hard to imagine that Russia's big business would suddenly rush to help the disenfranchised NGOs even in more vegetarian times, but Alexeyeva refused to accept it and urges wealthy Russians to donate money to NGOs.

Her reaction to the war in the east of Ukraine was also very telling. She didn't condemn or express her outrage, nor did she start explaining causes and effects. "I start crying hysterically," she says.

As for her opinion on the Bolotnaya Square case, she again displayed her human reaction: "I really ask of you, and this is my urgent request: please come to court as much as possible."

"Civil society is whatever is not government" was a definition Alexeyeva offered in one of her School lectures. It seems like government involvement has really grown in recent years. The state increasingly penetrates ordinary people's private life and space. But it provokes the growth of civic consciousness and its diverse manifestations. This, in turn, causes conflict. Nevertheless, civil society will probably have to live through it, utilizing the experience passed down by both Alexeyeva and Nemirovskaya.

In an interview before being awarded the 2013 Gaidar Prize, Lena said there should be no heroes when it comes to developing civil society; there should be citizens instead. "But one person may indeed be a hero." And here is this only hero: Lyudmila Alexeyeva.

Ludmila Mikhailovna passed away in December 2018.

Historical Context: The Dead Possess the Living

In May 2016, someone leaked the contents of the Presidential Economic Council meeting. Responding to Alexei Kudrin's delicate suggestion that correcting the economic situation might require reducing the degree of "geopolitical tension," Putin said something to the effect: we may lag behind economically, but we have thousand-year-old history and don't sell our sovereignty.

It's not like anyone offered to buy it, though. As the joke goes, we can sell everything but our banner; but the banner may go as well if the price is right.

The Russian President basically paraphrased the old Soviet construct memorialized by the bard Yuri Vizbor's song, "But we are making rockets, we dammed the Yenisei River, and even in the sphere of ballet we are ahead of the entire planet."

The eternal Russian "but we" is a concoction of inferiority and superiority complexes. In it, spirituality trumps pragmatism, and spiritual bonds are more important than human rights. We'd rather stick to our path of dependence, exploiting the "but we" argument and substituting it for development. This rhetoric persists although rockets don't take off anymore, their constructors are branded traitors and jailed, you'll be hard pressed to find someone who read Tolstoy, and some especially advanced Internet users believe that it was Catherine the Great who handed Crimea over to Ukraine! Yeah, we are really proud of our history!

The Upper Volta with rockets — the Soviet Union's derisive moniker — miraculously morphed into the Upper Volta with iPads, albeit not import-substituted ones. The GDP growth numbers are replaced with the number of years of our history. And the worse the economy does, the more spies, traitors and extremists are incarcerated.

In the end, historical narrative triumphs over domestic and foreign policy: there was a great era; we inherited it, which makes us legitimate (the regime can't boast any other achievements but historical ones anyway). I recently saw a poorly drawn portrait of Yuri Gagarin on the side wall of a not yet fully razed five-story building in a drab Moscow bedroom community. Beside it, there were words "Yura, we redeemed ourselves!" and the contours of Crimea. They might as well have sent a message to the legendary hockey player Valery Kharlamov: "Valera, we won the bronze at the World Championship in Moscow!" The Soviet hockey coach Anatoly Tarasov energized his 1940s-born players by having them sing the communist hymn Internationale. Then they got on the ice and thrashed everyone. What will energize us now?

We don't have an easy relationship with history. The people who used to learn the *Short Course of the Communist Party History* by heart and now use state-owned TV channel documentaries and talk shows as their history textbooks can easily lose memory altogether. Once, the very old mother of the poet Boris Slutsky met the relatively young and attractive widow of writer Alexei Tolstoy at a sanatorium and remarked, "Sofya Andreyevna doesn't look all that bad," mistaking her for Leo Tolstoy's wife who died decades ago. That's pretty much how we look at our thousand-year-old history.

The regime derives its legitimacy from the past. It's got the Great Patriotic War, Gagarin, and — in somewhat of a contradiction with the first two items — Stalin, the cowardly tyrant who was flattering the Russian people in his May 1945 toast for not kicking him out in 1941 but defending him instead.

The autocrat must've understood something about social contract theory: judging by his historical toast, he realized that people have a right to rebel when faced with incompetent government that had endangered the existence of the entire country.

Social contract theory has made great strides since the times of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Stalin. First, the government offered people the

"oil-induced prosperity in exchange for not interfering in the autocratic rule" formula, which has now transformed into "thousand-year-old history for a consent to go hungry." As a substitute for actual food, the regime offers a lunch special consisting of a dish that restores one's pride in the country's greatness and a rejuvenating "Russia is getting on its knees" vitamin drink.

One can hardly call this an even exchange. But appeals to history coupled with a besieged fortress sovereignty is worth a mass on Mount Athos, which has replaced the Communism Peak in Russia's new value system. Besides, the peak is named differently now and is located in independent Tajikistan, where the president can now be elected an unlimited number of times. Just like in Russia.

An aside about elections: our elections are rigged and controlled; the ruling regime discredits opposition, pressures, prosecutes and publicly denigrates opposition leaders. Here we also stay true to our history, our eternal path dependence. The School expert Anne Applebaum cites a case in point in her *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe, 1944–1956*. On November 4, 1945, the Independent Smallholders Agrarian Party won 57 percent of the vote in Hungarian parliamentary elections, while the Communists came in with only 17 percent. But Kliment Voroshilov, the Soviet government official responsible for Hungarian affairs, said that it doesn't mean anything. He believed that since the pro-Communist working class shoulders the greatest burden of rebuilding the country's economy, it deserves greater representation in the parliament. Then terror against the winners ensued, ensuring the full representation of the working class.

Thousand-year-old history goes hand in hand with refusing to sell sovereignty. But what do we really sell? Oil and gas. What are our other commodities? Threats. We intimidate the West with our strength and scare people inside the country with the West.

Current Russian elites privatized the heroics of the Great War, elevated themselves to level of the government that helped to win that victory, and

imbued the modern post-heroic age with a heroic purpose: those who will defend the country from the fifth column at home and the enemies abroad will be hailed not just as heroes, but the heirs of history.

A lot has changed since pre-Putin's Russia. Death for abstract sovereignty has become possible.

Why abstract? Because no one is threatening our political sovereignty. After all, it was Russia who took over Crimea, wasn't it? And can the idea of protecting Russia's sovereignty justify the death of Russian troops in the Donbas?

As for economic sovereignty, it was limited to begin with due to the internationalization of present-day market economy. Let me remind that the architect of unified Europe Jean Monnet thought that the main post-war danger for the continent lay in "restoring Europe that consists of sovereign states susceptible to temptations of protectionism." The same temptation — not only in a purely protectionist sense, but also in terms of political isolationism — has now plunged Russia into economic, political, and psychological depression.

The fetishization of sovereignty also has a mythological aspect. The goal is to protect the power of the current leader and his elite. It's done through political PR campaigns myths that have no connection to the real world.

We may call Russia an ideocracy or even logocracy because it's not as much ruled by ideas as by words — verbal messages like "thousand-year-old history," "sovereignty," "traitors to the nation," "spirituality," "Crimea-is-ours," "import substitution," and "spiritual bonds."

Economic pragmatism implies rejection of artificial constructs. But economic pragmatism won't prevail in Russia because these artificial constructs allow the regime to rule and desperately hold on to power at the expense of ordinary Russians.

History is repeating itself. "Back then we were living with delusions of persecution and grandeur," said Soviet poet David Samoilov about the

late Stalin era. It appears that Russian history may be up for endless repetition: we are again the strongest, but only because we realize how weak we are. Then we feel the need to explain our weakness away and point to some enemies outside the country aided by the fifth column on the home front.

The madness has returned after a very brief respite, the time when the peak of anti-Western hysteria seemed to have been behind us, and civil society had been fully crushed by repressive legislation, especially the law on foreign agents. Moreover, it came back with all its respective attributes, including the rhetoric that conjures up the images of the late 1940s. One can hardly find a government official who doesn't talk about "intensifying protest activities organized both by opposition forces and foreign centres."

It's long been observed that mass insanity possesses huge numbers of people instantaneously. We do what everyone else is doing: everyone runs, and so do I; everyone reports their neighbours to the authorities, and so did I. You arrested, terrorized, supervised, and penalized people? "I was just following orders." Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes survive on such comfortable proximity to the mainstream. The mechanics of this process have been known for a long time. Here is how Hannah Arendt describes them: "It was even more frightening to see how easily all the segments of German society, including the old elites unharmed by the Nazis, who had never affiliated themselves with the ruling party, agreed to cooperate." Human skill to adapt hasn't changed for ages. Hence the basic conditions for autocratic rule: mass indifference, adaptation, and conformity.

Losing one's humanity through conformity is a one-way street: the law on undesirable organizations is now being added to the law on foreign agents. Soon it was the turn of an expanded interpretation of the law on extremism. The law on enlightenment can stop enlightenment. And more restrictive legislation is certain to follow.

The events follow another archetypal scenario — Pushkin's *Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish*, in which the greedy old woman demanded more and more from the obliging goldfish until the frustrated fish took back all her gifts and left the woman empty-handed. History is repeating itself again and again. "People who shot at our fathers aim at our children," sang the Russian rock musician Boris Grebenshchikov. And now their heirs are aiming at our grandchildren.

People-Conduits: Elective Affinity
(continued)

I've always liked smokers and sympathized with those who quit — when they see a cigarette, they get this confused childish expression on their faces. Smokers are sort of dissidents now. But if a smoker is a dissident himself, as well as a former prison inmate and a student of Yuri Lotman, the charm he possesses in my eyes is infinite.

The chairman of the Memorial International Historical and Civil Rights Society (now liquidated by the authorities) Arseny Borisovich Roginsky, was possibly the School's most successful expert, lecturer, and speaker. At any event, in all the years I've been with the MSPS, I've never witnessed such a stunning, almost celebrity-like recognition from the audience. On occasion, he even received a standing ovation, just as Communist Party leaders once did. His speeches were an amalgam of genuine emotions and dry deliberation. He upheld the highest ethical standards, was willing to take on the system, and never gave up. His high education went hand with hand with his irony — at times biting, at times good-natured. As a student of the famous semiotician Yuri Lotman at the University of Tartu, he was a witty intellectual educated in the traditions of the Tartu school. His humour could be rough and would eventually turn into the rational seriousness of a former prison inmate. Roginsky was all that. Both his audience and his colleagues were competing to get on his good side.

It might've been easier for me to get closer to Roginsky than some others for several reasons. First, my wife Maria smokes, which made her his frequent conversation partner. Second, he liked our son Vasya, a serious adolescent growing up to become the "severe young man" from Yuri Olesha's play. Finally, Roginsky served time in the same penal colony as my

grandfather, in the Vozhayol settlement in Russia's Komi region. He believed it could've even been the same barracks, since they were built back in the 1920s. They were there a few decades apart, though. My "still armed Menshevik" Grandfather David Taub did his time from 1938 to 1946, the year of his death. For his part, Soviet dissident Arseny Roginsky, who happened to be born in the Arkhangelsk region town of Velsk, where his father was exiled, stayed in prison from 1981 to 1985.

My favourite Roginsky story also has to do with tobacco: it's about how he wanted to quit smoking but didn't. It was prohibited to smoke in solitary confinement, where Roginsky was placed for bad behaviour — so he had a lucky chance to finally kick the habit. But inmate solidarity got in the way. "So," continues Roginsky, lighting his *Parliament Night Blue*, "the wall of my cell suddenly started wiggling and quite a large hole appeared in it. Then a cup of *chifir*, matches, a pack of *Prima* cigarettes floated into the room. So, I didn't quit smoking."

Roginsky was somewhat younger than Nemirovskaya and Senokosov but, like in case of Lyudmila Alekseeva, it's the same generation and the same social circle, where everyone was teetering on the brink of going to jail. When I wrote an article about Vladimir Kormer, Arseny said to me, "it's good that you remembered Volodya." It's a small world.

Roginsky never harboured illusions about any regime. I was surprised to find out from him that state security archives weren't really unclassified, even in the 1990s. Thanks to him, I found a case file on my grandfather — Arseny referred me to the State Archive of the Russian Federation. It turned out that a modest, single volume, hastily slapped together case, which was all too typical for the times of the Great Terror, was declassified only in 1999. For some reason, up until that time it was being kept in the Moscow Region FSB archive.

Rarely did the authorities act as an ally and a helper. On those occasions, Roginsky was willing to cooperate — for example when choosing and erecting the monument to the victims of political repressions in

Moscow. But he kept his distance and common sense. He was always ready to take up defence, knowing that nothing good could come from the government. He knew that both from his personal experience and as a professional historian who studied the *Narodnaya Volya* organization and the *Esers*, the Socialist Revolutionary Party. His cosy Memorial office was more of a space for a historian than an office of a human rights activist. He went out for a smoke in the courtyard of the building where the singer Leonid Utesov used to live. Incidentally, another School expert, writer Denis Dragunsky, also lived there in his youth.

Once, I was working in the lobby of a modest Brussels hotel, waiting to check into my room, when I suddenly felt someone's intense look — it was Roginsky. But wherever we were — be it a bar in the remote Spanish countryside, a courtyard on Moscow's Karetny Ryad Street, or the steps of a Brussels hotel — our conversations were similar: we talked about essential things and smoked (even I sometimes asked Roginsky for a cigarette — it was impossible to talk otherwise). These minutes were always very important to me.

Here is the article Senokosov wrote about Roginsky and the Memorial. It's entitled "What's Thinking?"

"In 1957, the Strugatsky Brothers' novel *Roadside Picnic* was published in the Soviet Union. Its main character is frantically looking for the most important words at the crucial point of his life. He is trying to understand something most significant; he is thinking. "An unaccustomed exercise, thinking, that was the trouble. What was «thinking» anyway? Thinking meant finding a loophole, pulling a bluff, pulling the wool over someone's eyes — but all that was out of place here."

Of course, it's out of place. But those who lie also use their intelligence and therefore may say that they're thinking when citing arguments and ideas to justify their behaviour. Similarly, a thief who robbed someone may agree with the reason or excuse for his robbery.

So, what is thinking?

Answering essentially the same question formulated differently, Kant's contemporary, Montesquieu, wrote, "I would consider myself the happiest of mortals if I could make it so that men were able to cure themselves of their prejudices. Here I call prejudices not what makes one unaware of certain things but what makes one unaware of oneself."

What makes one unaware of oneself is, of course, not questioning one's intellect. Only through questioning can one determine what intellect is, since thinking is not natural to us. Nature gives us instinct, but thinking is something we learn through experience in order to explain what happens in the outside world and understand it. We do so not just by listening to others, but by learning ourselves. We learn to understand ourselves, since only through understanding oneself, can one understand others. Then, knowing that everything in our life is interrelated and rife with prejudices, it becomes clear that lies and malice always find a reason and an excuse, but no reason exists for doing good and intelligent things. Good deeds and common good are done because one can always find people that consider them, as well as freedom, inherently valuable. In this sense, they are reasonless. Becoming aware of them, as well as becoming aware of justice, starts with a surprise, while becoming aware of evil starts with the fear one experiences. But in both cases, awareness certainly presupposes freedom that is not reduced to a choice. In this respect, let me cite Russian poet Maximilian Voloshin, who in the late 1920s said the following about the tragic consequences of the Bolshevik Revolution: to describe an era, it's not enough to live through it, one also has to forget it! After all, the process of forgetting something is in fact the process of internalizing it.

I believe this paradoxical statement that internalization requires forgetting rather than remembering has direct relation to freedom — but freedom not as a choice, when you're incapable of changing anything anymore, but as an alteration of memory about evil, when you have a chance to understand that you can impact outside reality only through your own free development and education.

That's what I see as the purpose of activities of the Memorial and the work of its stuff — working with archives, educating, organizing contests, protecting human rights, helping people to rid themselves of "the fascination with evil."

To be free today means to live up to the principles — natural human rights, economic freedom, private property, universal equality before law, separation of powers, legal political opposition — that are being invented at a risk and with persistence, and are then acquired by the masses on an individual level and at the level of physical skill, by trial and error. That's the only avenue through which the society of citizens emerges. These citizens are able to think critically and can overcome temptations of cultural fundamentalism, political violence, indifference, and neglect of social sphere — since all of us, by definition, want to be happy, successful, love and be loved, and be free."

In December 2017, Arseny Roginsky died after a long bout with illness. He was one of the few people who understood the enormous role that Stalin as a person, myth, and brand has played in the past and present of our country. "Take Stalin out of our lives, then theft and mayhem will disappear on their own," he was known to say. You may call it an oversimplification. But maybe we could try one more time — after Khrushchev and Gorbachev — but this time in earnest, and see what's going to happen?

Roginsky was one of those people who felt free under any circumstances. The regime considered him an anti-Soviet activist, but he was simply outside of the Soviet regime, a patriot of his torn country, a defender of its private memory from the state's monopoly "right" to violently erase memories of crimes and brutality.

Even the fact that Roginsky heavily smoked till the end of his life and drank coffee at night to help him fall asleep can be seen as a principled effort to maintain internal freedom.

I talked to Arseny Borisovich on the phone from the Senokosovs' apartment about a month and a half before his death. Despite being very sick for

almost a year, his velvety, slightly raspy voice remained the same, and his reflections were as always ironic and serious at the same time. He told me quite seriously that we would soon meet in Moscow. That was exactly how he consoled his friends in his final court statement in 1981. "Please don't worry about me. Soon we'll be able to write letters to each other. As a matter of fact, time flies fast."

You're absolutely right, dear Arseny Borisovich, it flies very fast…

Roginsky never witnessed how the state cynically destroyed the memory of the nation by liquidating the Memorial for «violating» the law on foreign agents. But it is impossible to eliminate national memory, and Arseny Roginsky himself always believed that it was necessary to fight to the end. This was the logic of the behaviour of an old political prisoner.

Senokosov calls Michael Mertes Misha. One of the School's godfathers, Dominique Moïsi introduced him to Lena and Yura in 1993. Mertes was working as the chief speechwriter for German Chancellor Helmut Kohl; later, he would head the Department of Political Planning. The actual meeting took place in Bonn, in the building the federal chancellor's office occupied at that time. The first thing that struck Lena there was a Henry Moore sculpture installed outside the building during Helmut Schmidt's tenure. Chancellor Schmidt didn't really like his residence, saying that it has the appeal of the Reine Savings Bank. Then, already inside the building, she was impressed by a corpulent man moving in her direction. He happened to be incredibly friendly. Upon closer observation, she realized it was Helmut Kohl.

"How can I help you?" Mertes, whose second-floor office offered a view of the same Henry Moore sculpture, asked Lena with a charming smile. "Come to speak at our school," Lena said, and hasn't regretted it a single time. Son of the German diplomat Alois Mertes, who was once a State Minister in the German Foreign Ministry, Michael Mertes spent some time in the 1960s in Moscow and Paris, where his father worked. A graduate of the London School of Economics, he translated Shakespeare and John Donne

into German, represented the North Rhine-Westphalia in Bonne and the Conrad Adenauer Foundation in Israel, authored Helmut Kohl's speeches — in short, he exceeded every expectation and also became a close friend of the School's founders.

His first lecture delivered in May 1994 would later become part of a book put together by Senokosov. It's entitled *German Questions — European Answers* and was published only in Russian. The book opens with a very important epigraph taken from one of Thomas Mann's post-war speeches, where he talks about the need to progress toward "European Germany rather than German Europe." That's what Mertes's entire work is about: "When I was first invited to a Moscow School of Political Studies seminar in May 1994, I wanted to tell my Russian colleagues about how we, Germans, had been overcoming our Nazi past… The only thing required here is patience. Now I will add that, apparently, any developing democracy needs something that may be called "civil religion" — that is, general agreement on acceptable and unacceptable forms of conflict resolution."

It's an incredibly profound book written by a man of European-German culture who came of age during the time of a mature FRG, the country whose identity — in addition to the economic miracle — consisted of rejecting *Sonderweg*, Germany's special path. Perhaps, the book owes its depth to the fact that as an advisor to the person who unified Germany, Mertes combined theory and practice — sociocultural analysis of Germany and participation in making crucial decisions at the turn of the 1990s. Indeed, Mertes is a man of action. For instance, Germany's Holocaust museums appeared in large measure thanks to his efforts.

I talked to Michael Mertes only once — first at a restaurant, then in the Senokosovs' room at Berlin's Sylter Hof Hotel located in the same exact place where Adolf Eichmann's office was housed during wartime years (yes, the very same Eichmann from Hannah Arendt's *Banality of Evil*, a co-author of the Final Solution of the Jewish Question). Not knowing who this pleasant, respectable gentleman dressed in jeans and a sweater was,

I first mistook him for an Israeli, since he was talking about Israel as if it was home. But he simply lived there while heading a branch of the Adenauer Foundation in that country. A year or two later, I heard his speech at the Berlin Forum dedicated to universal values. He drew our attention to the fact that the very concept of universal values is an oxymoron — it's contradictory by definition. Then he unexpectedly turned to the state's significance in maintaining democratic values, arguing that a normally functioning "recreated" state with rule of law is capable of playing a positive role here. In today's world, no supranational structure can do that.

I would compare the scale of his book to Hans Magnus Enzensberger's writings. Some of its fragments also reminded me of the best places from Thomas Mann's correspondence. Mertes has a fine appreciation of the essay genre — he gave his brother Klaus, who worked as a director of a network of Jesuit schools, Father Alexander Men's book *Son of Man*, which Klaus subsequently helped to publish in German.

The German Question is an exciting journey through the secret crannies of the German intellect, an intellectual detective story about the adventures of the German idea complemented with historical decorations. Historical allusions force Mertes to consistently return to nationalism and the national mythology of various time periods. Kohl's speechwriter dissects the German culture as if in an anatomical theatre, extensively demonstrating how the decision to unify the divided country was made.

The German lessons are directly related to Russia, especially when Mertes analyses collective memory, since our country's modern political existence is to a large extent informed by its past: "Individual and collective identities are primarily determined by how we perceive ourselves. Interpretation of the past is part of such self-perception. Hence, the understandable desire to make our real perception of ourselves correspond to the ideal one. General reflection on the past is a central element of national identity," Mertes writes. "Dictators around the world know that controlling people's memory is tantamount to controlling the people." Trying to assign the

blame to someone is not a good sign, since "democracy is about not assigning the blame to those on the outside." While splintered memory is searching for a basis for national identity, "no government has a right to impose any of its own interpretations of national history on people."

Reading Mertes offers important insights. It's instructive to remember relatively recent history — at the very least in the context of the European migration crisis and the growth of ultra-right sentiments. Nowadays, few remember Oscar Lafontaine, Helmut Kohl's adversary at the turn of 1990. Meanwhile, his rhetoric exploited what Mertes called "West-German prosperity chauvinism" — only that his campaign targeted East Germans rather than immigrants from the Middle East.

History rarely teaches. But history does explain a lot.

MSPS is an international phenomenon — schools in its likeness were created in many countries, mostly in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The Association of Schools of Political Studies under the auspices of the Council of Europe is registered in Strasbourg with Catherine Lalumière as its president.

Many of the current heads of the Schools are Yura and Lena's former students — say, Armaz Akhvlediani, who is in charge of the Tbilisi School. That School has a firm and clear organizational structure; it's stuffed by young motivated European Georgians, who nevertheless hold onto their cultural roots. The special ties this particular school has with its Moscow counterpart preserves Merab Mamardashvili's memory. Armaz is also very supportive of Merab's sister Iza Mamardashvili. Tbilisi has always been, and still remains, a second home for Lena and Yura.

The Altai School of Political Studies is a similar phenomenon. Vladimir Ryzhkov talks about how this regional project evolved: "When I joined the very first cohort of MSPS students in 1993, I was working as the Lieutenant Governor of the Altai Region. At 26, I was the youngest lieutenant governor in the country. In December 1993, I was elected a member of the first State Duma from Gaidar's Choice of Russia bloc. At about the same time, in Lena

and Yura's kitchen, we came up with an idea to conduct the School seminar in the Altai Region. I volunteer to organize everything. We hosted our first Altai seminar in the summer of 1995. Gennady Burbulis and Alexei Salmin were its star Moscow experts; Ernest Gellner was the leading Western thinker. Gellner walked with a cane. With its help, he strolled around the shore of the picturesque Lake Aya in the Altai Mountains. Burbulis and I were excitedly chasing a soccer ball around the bumpy filed of the neighbouring pioneer camp.

These were liberal times, so the students were the heads of city and district administration, members of the Altai regional legislature, party leaders, scholars, community activists. Such a thing is impossible anymore.

Since that time, the Altai school has become a tradition. We've been hosting annual summer political science conferences in Barnaul for nearly 30 years in a row.".

The School has quite a steady pool of participants. The key figures of the past years — those who made a difference for the MSPS in the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s — are still actively involved with the School. They help the School with its European seminars and act as presenters themselves. Among them are Evgeny Gontmakher, Tatyana Vorozheykina, Nikolai Petrov, Natalya Zubarevich, and many others. However, Nemirovskaya and Senokosov are still looking for new experts and find them. "New people have always appeared in the right time, naturally," says Lena.

In recent years, the School has acquired a number of well-known lecturers, most of whom are in their 40s: Maxim Trudolyubov, Fedor Lukyanov, Kirill Rogov, Mikhail Fishman, Boris Grozovsky, Vasily Zharkov. New lecturers can come from different age groups too: Dmitry Travin is in his late 50s, Denis Volkov is in his late 30s. Thanks to Lena and Yuri, you have a chance to meet amazing people whom you haven't met for quite a while. For instance, I had to go to the other end of the world — the School's Oxford seminar — to meet my former Izvestiya office mates (back when it was still a real newspaper). These were investigative reporters Irina Borogan

and Andrei Soldatov, the authors of *The New Nobility*, a book about the KGB and the FSB. They also wrote another book — The *Red Web*, which is about the government's use of the Internet as its tool. These are not academic publications; they cover such contemporary while also traditional themes as spies, wiretapping, and networks, and shed some light on yet another sphere of confrontation between the state and individual freedom, which is very important for understanding modern reality.

At that seminar, I also had a rare chance to see Sergei Guriev in person, not on Skype. Just like many other new and old experts, he simply can't refuse Lena's invitation to talk. It was a very short meeting, since Sergey had to deliver two more lectures at universities, but very important for everyone, nonetheless. At a certain point, I've started bringing my son Vasya to the seminars. The young man was interested in Borogan and Soldatov's lectures, since they covered the online world, which would interest any young person. He also paid attention to Sergei Guriev, one of the most intelligible lecturers on economic subjects. The professor of economics told Vasya, who turned fifteen a day before, about Adam Michnik's decision to join the Polish dissident underground at the same age. I wouldn't really wish such a fate for my son, but meeting and listening to Guriev at his age is quite enriching. And now it's possible only within the School's framework.

Why did all these people start actively cooperating with the School? Why did this "elective affinity" come about? Why did such different people — both Russians and foreigners, businessmen and journalists, sociologists and economists, politicians and diplomats — eagerly work with the School, and didn't do so for remuneration or even for the idea, but out of joy and hope? Why did the School's circle emerge? Why do even those who are now distant from the School remember it? Understanding all the limitations of their educational efforts and the difficulty of their job, Lena and Yuri continue doing it. They keep asking themselves these questions and treat the results of their efforts as a sort of miracle.

"Whence came this attraction, the natural flow, the absence of barriers in communication with previously unfamiliar people who'd become friends for years to come?" Senokosov muses. "I can't remember now how our friendship with, say, Ernest Gellner, who was staying with us for over three months, started. I remember how he, on his own volition, typed up his text for the first issue of our magazine while lying on the couch here. For a week, Ralph Fiennes was living with us — that's when our friendship started. We had to deal with the language barrier; I was communicating with him mostly through gestures and exclamations. The daughter of the former British Ambassador Roderic Braithwaite gave our address to him.

Or take another close friend of Lena's and mine — Harold Berman, an outstanding legal scholar from the U.S. Remembering him, I'm still amazed by how a person his age — he died in 2007 when he was 89 — was able to regularly appear at our seminars dressed in his light grey suit for the last ten years as if distance between Atlanta and Moscow didn't mean much. Focused and open to communication, he acted as a role model of civic and personal responsibility. Seminar participants saw and felt that he loves Russia and is interested in it not just as a legal scholar. Lena and I knew about his old family ties with pre-Revolutionary Russia; we knew that he had served in the US Army during World War II and heard about Stalin's repressions and terror back then, but that didn't affect his attitude toward modern Russia. As a citizen of the world, he believed that history plays a role in the evolution of law in addition to ethics and politics. He wrote about it in his book *The Interaction of Law and Religion*, which the School published: 'Our collective universal memory of the two world wars constitutes the historical foundation on which moral and political elements of the emerging rights of the humankind are built."

Indeed, what made Gellner, who got around on crutches and broke his arm a day before flying to Moscow for the School's very first seminar, still come to the Lesniye Dali resort and give a lecture there? Same goes for

Berman. They had no contracts, no obligations, but simply a friendly disposition and a desire to understand Russia.

Most importantly, the Senokosovs' Kutuzovsky Prospect apartment became the second home for many of these people: for Gellner, Fiennes, Braithwaite. Anne Applebaum lived here for several months, working on her book *Gulag: A History*. In it, she thanks her wonderful "Moscow hosts for their friendship, their hospitality, their wise suggestions, and their food."

"Everyone wanted to help us," Lena remembers. "It seemed interesting and important to everyone."

And what motivated François Michelin, worldwide tire manufacturer, who flew to Golitsyno — on his private jet! — for just one night in order to present there and talk to the youth? Why did Dominique Moïsi keep recommending new experts for the MSPS? What the School was doing must've really interested him. What force attracted Pilar Bonet, who has been working as an *El Pais* correspondent in Moscow since 1984, to the School? It's love for Lena and Yura, who refer to Pilar as a "sister, and even more." Why do the entrepreneur and former State Duma member Sergei Petrov and former Russian Finance Minister Mikhail Zadornov support the School? Lena and Yura are really grateful to Alexander Voloshin, a former chief of the Kremlin Administration, who has been the head of the School's Board of Directors for over ten years now. Why did the best European minds find it necessary and enjoyable to become the School's experts and stay with the institution?

"Everyone wanted Russia to become modern European country," Nemirovskaya says.

Perhaps, this is Yura and Lena's main accomplishment: they successfully transplanted friendly conversations and studies of reality from their kitchen on Kutuzovsky Prospect into a wider space. Naturally, one might ask what is going to happen once all these people at the core of the School leave? But the newcomers change or rather complement the old guard, and the School lives on.

As an illustration of the School's generational diversity, here is the incomplete list of participants in one of the latest seminars in Golitsyno in July-August 2014, before the School was declared a "foreign agent:" Anatoly Adamishin, Michael Sohlman, Andrei Zakharov, Sergei Petrov, Lev Gudkov, Mikhail Zadornov, Leonid Gozman, Jeffrey Hosking, Vladislav Inozemtsev, Irina Yasina, Dmitry Zimin, Ekaterina Shulman, Igor Mintusov, Neil MacFarquhar, Dmitry Trenin, Boris Makarenko, Kszysztof Zanussi, Cecile Vessier, Mikhail Fedotov, Arseny Roginsky, Vyacheslav Bakhmin, Tamara Morshchakova, George Satarov, Elena Panfilova, Robert Skidelsky, Lyudmila Alekseeva, Vladimir Voinovich, Andrei Babitsky.

It was very hot that August, but lively and fun, as always. At that time, Lena received a Polish award — The Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit, and we were discussing how to best translate the name of the Polish order into Russian.

What wonderful faces we have seen…

The Schools boast excellent graduates, and not only from the very first cohort. They are a very diverse bunch, in general and in terms of their career paths. And they have so many great stories to share: Margaret Thatcher asks Vladimir Ryzhkov, "What's your occupation?" "I'm a politician," was his reply. "And I'm a chemist," Thatcher retorted.

At the same time, there were so many disappointments. "When many of them dashed toward the ruling party, it was to be expected, but it wounded us, of course," Yuri remembers. "And the law on foreign agents, which is killing the School, was also initiated and supported by some of our graduates."

Meanwhile, right after the law was passed the concerned Dean of the Economics Department of Moscow State University, Alexander Auzan, and writer and television host Alexander Arkhangelsky asked, "What are we going to do now? "And that's really worth a lot, the fact that the two brilliant School experts took this event so personally," says Yuri.

At the same time, Lyudmila Alexeyeva was earnestly trying to convince the jury for the Yegor Gaidar Prize to choose Lena for their award from among two other illustrious contenders, Oleg Basilashvili and Liya Akhadzhakova. All to support the School!

"It's too late now," says Yuri, repeating Merab Mamardashvili's phrase which means that everything had already happened before us. He continues, "bad and good, evil and noble [all of that had happened already]. We are in the stream of life, where we find ourselves after birth, not knowing who we are. And when we are trying to figure this stream and ourselves out, that's where our responsibility begins. It's our second birth — the formation of personality capable of overcoming fear, guilt, revenge, insult, envy."

Moral support is very important, but so is physical support. Take Alexander Sogomonov and Andrei Zakharov, who are playing a special role in the School. When I still didn't know much about the MSPS, they seemed like good luck charms to me. They are totally different from each other. Sogomonov is lively and emotional, while Zakharov conceals his emotions behind his aloof and ironic facial expression. For many years, they've been contributing to the atmosphere around the School, moderated presentations, and hosted roundtable discussions. "We would come up with a format and invite a person who would be right for it," Senokosov explains. The School's formats have essentially existed for decades now. To a large extent, their longevity can be attributed Sogomonov and Zakharov's ability to adequately manage them. Here we should give credit to Lena and Yura for their personnel choices. For instance, they remembered Sogomonov when the need for professional moderation arose. "I think I first saw Sasha in 1989 at a conference on Pitirim Sorokin in the Institute of Sociology. His presentation was so powerful and interesting," Yuri remembers.

Speaking at the joint seminar the School and the Memorial held in March 2016 Arseny Roginsky mentioned that the crackdown on independent organizations started with bringing the media under government control. In 2004 — 2005, when the regime began to fear "colour revolutions,"

NGOs became the next target. The Soviet regime was always afraid of group activity, and the current regime suffers from the same phobia. In 2005 — 2012 NGOs were gradually squeezed out of the public space through stricter monitoring and more complicated accounting requirements. That was the period in which many smaller organizations that couldn't withstand administrative pressure were eliminated. And with the start of the new political cycle in 2012, over thirty politically motivated repressive laws have been passed. One of them was the foreign agent law.

"Prison inmates have a saying 'we don't give a f… what the cops say about us,'" explained Arseny Roginsky. However, a prison camp holds a limited number of people. But when they declare you a foreign agent in front of entire country, it's terribly humiliating."

Another pressure instrument is the ambiguous interpretation of the term "political activity," which marks an organization as a foreign agent. When the Council on Human Rights asked the Justice Ministry to provide a specific definition of this concept, it was provided with the broadest possible interpretation.

The government had battled the Memorial for quite a while, demanding that the organization change its charter. Then they dispensed with sophistries and simply declared it a foreign agent. And a few years later, in 2021, they liquidated it.

The MSPS became the first organization to be inspected by the prosecutors' office in 2013 after the new law went into effect. Why was an educational organization targeted, as opposed to a human rights advocacy group? Roginsky had a clear answer to this question: "People's heads, intellect, worldview is where the frontline is for the regime."

The inspection was led by a female prosecutor in her 30s. The School's office looks very modest. The bookshelves as lined with books published by Senokosov. Not a single, most-biased sleuth would've been able to independently formulate how the School harms the state, provided the state operates in according to the democratic Constitution of 1993. Even

Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulated the School on its 10th anniversary, noting that "Here in the School these young people have the opportunity to listen to world-class experts, and to engage in free-ranging discussion with them about the most pressing problems of political and economic life. All who participate in the School's programs acquire not only knowledge, but new and reliable friends as well. Today the School is a centre for mutual enlightenment, for strengthening the values of democracy and public service, for nourishing respect for the law, and for developing new ideas."

I couldn't have said it better myself. How much has changed since then. Practically everything!

Here we come to the crux of the matter, not only to the issues the government has with NGOs, but to the very essence of the structure of the Russian political regime that had taken shape by 2012. Upon finishing her inspection, the prosecutor asked, "Explain to me please, if you're so good, why are you not state-sponsored?"

This state-centric approach is what Russian political life is all about: everything from the state, everything for the state, everything by the state, and nothing but the state.

The School didn't give up. It was trying to survive, making efforts not to be included on the foreign agents' registry. Obviously, all of that came to naught.

Declaring the School a "foreign agent" is absolutely illegitimate. Because the very law is anti-legal, it's a part of the growing authoritarian legislation (including Putin's amendments to the Constitution). Therefore, you can't respond to it by legal means. Of course, when your former students and even members of your governing structures stab you in the back, it's impossible to mount an adequate defence. Here might makes right. The mighty believe in the scorched earth policy against uncontrolled public activity and seek to drive civil society underground. When the School was still trying to fight for ridding itself of the foreign

agent status, then Human Rights Commissioner Vladimir Lukin, and the Council of Europe Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland, talked to Putin about the School. "We'll deal with it," he said. And that they did…

Nevertheless, civil society in Russia is impossible to eradicate. Even if they close everything down and pour concrete over it, the sprouts of civil society will get through, evading repressive legislation, albeit with some losses. The underground civic community will give life to new legitimacy, the process inevitable when the state loses its legitimacy, as the School expert Pierre Rosanvallon maintains.

* * *

Lena and Yuri, living after the persecution of the School in Riga, Latvia, are constantly on the move. Of course, new communication technologies, especially in the pandemic time, are very important, but the School founders prefer the clearest means of communication — interacting face-to-face. Perhaps, the School has been around for so long and enjoyed such success specifically because they don't avoid getting on planes, coming to visit, talking, discussing organizational, substantive, and, if you will, philosophical details. They're using the most basic mobile phones, something like the smallest Nokia — you won't even find them nowadays. Gosh, I wonder where they get all the strength. In the face of the incredible disappointments of the last few years that seem to undo most of their life efforts, where does this ability to never give up come from?

What keeps them afloat? Do they just think that it ain't over till it's over? Is it generational? In which case, these people are probably among the strongest in their generation. Perhaps, that's why people gravitate toward them and the School. And the School's story is the story of Lena and Yura, of their growth and free existence under any political regime, of their love, support and awe of each other. It's a story about their generation and its accomplishments — the School being among the best of them. The school lives on in its books, ideas, graduates, experts, and the lights above the

Senokosovs' round living room table in their former legendary Moscow apartment, and the current kitchen in the apartment in Riga.

Enlightenment is certainly about light, including the light given off by people. Everyone who ever communicated with Lena and Yuri was "filled with light," to borrow Joseph Brodsky's line. But enlightenment is also a burden, a rock, if you will. It falls into the water causing ripples that seem to vanish with time. But it's not really the case. In this life, nothing vanishes.

What keeps them afloat? It's their freedom. They've learned to live free.

IN LIEU OF AN AFTERWORD:

A few questions to the founders about the people and ideas associated with the School

Q: The School has been through tough times over three decades, which apparently wasn't what you anticipated following Francis Fukuyama's expectation of a successful end of history. Substantial differences over various periods of your project notwithstanding, what was the fundamental outcome of the School's work for the past years?

A: We would describe this outcome in two words: confidence and understanding.

First, we are confident that the School has turned out well. And we, its founders and many participants, are not the only ones that need it. Indeed, there is also a need for it beyond Russia. Our principal message is still the same as in the past. We believe that humanity, gripped by the current crisis, requires universal laws that are capable of breathing a new life into universal values.

Second, we maintain faith in the relevance and importance of education. Specifically, we stick by two mottos that the School has:

"**Civic Education for Civil Society!"**

"Our objective is to foster thought processes for people who are, so to say, alive rather than rely on the creation of artificial intelligence."

Third, we understand that today all of us — people on the Planet Earth — no longer live in the traditional chronological framework of the 21st century, but rather in the eternal present that may disappear if we continue to measure time in terms of the past and the future. Our goal is progress toward the application and acceptance of universal laws; the goal is

moral values embodied in rights. In other words: while law obligates, rights allow and create opportunities.

Q: The School is the work of many people, primarily those humanitarian thinkers involved in its foundation and development over the first few years of its existence. There are many of them, and our book talks about that. Who are the most important ones?

A: The most important ones are the philosopher Merab Mamardashvili and Father Alexander Men. Both of them were supposed to participate in one of the first seminars organized by the School. It took place in December 1990 at the University of London. But Father Alexander was killed on September 9 and Merab passed away on November 25. Among those who helped us create the School, and to whom we are infinitely grateful for the School's continuing existence, are Alexei Salmin, Yuri Levada, Aleksandr Sogomonov, Diana Pinto and Dominique Moïsi, Catherine Lalumière, Ernst Gellner, Jeffrey Hosking, Rodric Braithwaite, Giampiero Borghini, Michael Mertes, Baroness Shirley Williams, John Lloyd, Alvaro Gil-Robles, Michael Solman, and Toby Gati.

Q: The School enlightened and educated; meanwhile, what did the School's participants teach you?

A: They didn't exactly teach us but rather confirmed what we had already known well when we were creating the School at the age of 50. We have seen how truly difficult it is in our country to be reborn and become mature; in other words, how hard it is to see, hear, or perceive the outside world while remaining free.

Over time, we understood that — upon going back to their home regions — our School graduates couldn't help but reckon with the habits and lifestyle of their fellow countrymen. This is even more true of existing government agencies, institutions, and organizations, where some of them wanted to work and advance their careers. Alas, the government enacted

repressive laws against NGOs declaring them foreign agents. True, some of them indeed got some help from foreign foundations. After all, international foundations, both private and government-sponsored, were created in the post-WWII world to overcome the war's devastating effects and foster public initiatives and civic non-commercial organizations. And their assistance remains essential today. As we watch current events across the globe — the departure from fundamental liberal values even in democratic countries, the wishes of certain states to use new technologies to establish total control over people, the triumph of economic objectives and neglect of human rights — it's hard to miss the fact that the need for civic education goes well beyond Russian society.

Q: The School is a European project. What do Europe and European values mean to you?

A: It is a European project, indeed. Therefore, remembering that the birthplace of philosophy is Europe, we are placing greater emphasis on the beginnings of history rather than its end.

In one of his lectures, Merab Mamardashvili said that *there is nothing more important than understanding thoughts that give the first impulse to history.*

We believe that understanding and upholding such thoughts is especially important today, at this time of unparalleled crisis. Let's remember that the Ancient Greek word "crisis" *(κρίσις)* meant "decision," "outcome" and was derived from the verb "krino" *(κρίνω)* — "determine," "choose."

We judge actions, not people — in other words, conditions rather than their bearers, as Merab put it. Let God judge people. Why is this the case?

Because, as an old maxim goes, our faith in God should be so complete that there will be no hope left that He participates in our affairs. Because we are the ones committing evil acts when we lose our human essence. And the only way to overcome evil is to return to the common good and reason, as has often happened in European history. That's what return to

understanding actually means, the return to understanding the universally obvious language of life and death. At the same time, we should regain trust — the foundation of reason.

There is no doubt that with the latest scientific and computer revolution at the end of the 20th century, humanity embarked on a dangerous path of creating virtual reality, an imitational digital environment that could come to replace the objective reality and physical environment that we are used to. To be more precise, the reality of consciousness may be replaced by virtual consciousness. In the words of Australian philosopher David Chalmers, this change poses a great danger, since the virtualization of reality becomes an instrument of activating the archaic preconscious.

Chalmers understands the preconscious as a rudimentary state of consciousness that is no longer instinctive, but still lags behind both developed reflexive consciousness and a mythological one. Nevertheless, it's capable of simulation or exploiting the products of developed consciousness. In the context of virtualization, it's practically impossible to distinguish between the preconscious and conscious without making an intensive intellectual effort. Chalmers notes that the preconscious operates like a virus.

Q: Over the period of these thirty years, and indeed throughout your entire lives, you have acted as free people and tried to foster the feeling of freedom and the taste of freedom in your students. But after a brief period of democratic progress and market economy, the country plunged into pure authoritarianism.

You are disappointed, of course, but I wonder what's your main disappointment? Why did it prove impossible to turn Russia into a democratic country? Will education allow us to bring our country back to the path of civilization in the future by building a society of real citizens and a state that respects civil rights and serves the interests of civil society?

A: There was no disappointment, but we have come to a realisation that it's impossible to turn any country, not just Russia, into a democracy without free political and economic competition.

Could it have been done without life experience accumulated over two or three generations? Of course not. And as a result essentially another "physical experiment" was conducted and a negative result was obtained. Because this is not how life experience is learned. It should be acquired under conditions of freedom and is grounded in legal rights and the rule of law. While for the physical experiment, it only requires appropriate technology and calculations. An experiment is **performed**, and life experience is **learned**. Basically, the same experiment involving the virtualization of reality is being conducted now in Europe and beyond, and humanity must either learn from it or commit collective suicide.

Let's get back to the famous expression that Russia can't be understood with intellect alone. It's especially difficult to understand Russia because over several centuries the Russian people had been dependent on the state, living under its constant watch. While people didn't lose hope, they unwittingly started interpreting their vices as virtues and treated the states' behaviour as good. But this shouldn't be an obstacle to understanding Russia's problems in the context of existing European values of freedom and democracy.

As our School Manifesto states, the purpose of civil society is to preserve the liberal democratic characters of the countries in which it exists.

In authoritarian states of today, civil society emerges through struggle with repressive legislation and corrupt bureaucracy.

An authoritarian state is incapable of transitioning to a different phase unless there is a civic moral and legal foundation in place.

The purpose of civic education is to assert values of life and develop human abilities to understand the events around us. This is the only thing that can guarantee the survival of human beings as a species in the 21st century which is rife with technological, pandemic, and political challenges and threats.

The School of Civic Education is a place that formulates value-driven approaches to economics, politics, and social relations. Its participants discuss values behind democratic foundations of society under the slogan "We are not forming coalitions between states, but union among people" — a phrase uttered by the European Union architect Jean Monnet.

Our School is a place for discussions and reflections about the meaning of human life in the era of the Internet and growing demand for enlightenment. Its goal is to build bridges between leaders that belong to different cultures but share similar generational and professional backgrounds and commitments.

The School is international, and it can't be otherwise by definition, or it would simply lose its purpose. Hence, every seminar the School hosts is guided by international considerations.

The growth of authoritarianism in the modern world necessitates adding seminars on enlightenment to the programmes assisting democratic development.

There is no single comprehensive response to the modern global challenges of climate change, the pandemic, or arms race. To get close to such an answer, we first need to realize the importance of closer cooperation and communication among people on regional and global levels. That's why the School exists.

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About the Authors

Andrei Kolesnikov is a political journalist and the senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He sits on the board of the Yegor Gaidar Foundation. Kolesnikov authored several books, including *Speechwriters, Anatoli Chubais. Biography, The 1970s and Earlier, The Idea of a University, Cold War on Ice, and Dialogues with Yevgeny Yasin*, and a prize-winning biography of the Russian reforms architect Yegor Gaidar (co-authored by Boris Minaev) *Yegor Gaidar. The Man Who Is Not From Here.*

John Lloyd is a journalist, presently contributing editor to the *Financial Times* and Director of Journalism at *Reuters* Institute. He is a member of the editorial board of *Prospect*, and a columnist for *La Repubblica* of Rome. He has received awards for journalism, including Specialist Writer of the Year at the British Press Awards, and Journalist of the Year at the Granada's What the Papers Say Awards. His books include *Loss Without Limit: the British Miners' Strike* (with Martin Adeney, 1985), *Rebirth of a Nation: an Anatomy of Russia* (1998), *What the Media Are Doing to Our Politics* (2004), *Reporting the EU: News, Media and the European Institutions* (with Cristina Marconi, 2014), and *The Power and the Story* (2017).