

traditional ways, the peasantry found ways to exact “its revenge, as it were, by compelling the regime further to strengthen its already imposing administrative-repressive machinery” (69). What had been a participatory and radically democratic regime in the first year of the revolution now metastasized into an autocracy with an exaggerated sense of what it could do.

While he was as critical of Stalin and Stalinism as any liberal or conservative, Lewin warned historians not to “‘over-Stalinize’ the whole of Soviet history by extending it backwards and forwards . . . a common practice that serves a variety of purposes—but not that of historical inquiry” (322). Lenin’s gamble that seizing power in Russia would spark a revolution abroad and provide international aid for the building of socialism in a peasant country did not pay off. “That Russia was not ready for any form of Marxian socialism was a self evident truth to every Marxist” (308). But when masses of new recruits came into the party who did “not know the difference between Marx and Engels and Marks & Spencer,” the way was open for a plebeian “propensity for authoritarianism” (291) to take over. This was no “failure of socialism,” Lewin wrote, “because socialism was not there in the first place. Devastated Russia was fit neither for democracy as Pavel Miliukov [the leader of the Liberals] understood it, nor for socialism, as Lenin and Trotsky knew full well” (309).

As a socialist, Lewin’s dominant emotion throughout was regret that things had not turned out differently, that the earlier promise of the revolution could not be realized given conditions outside the control of any leader or party. But at the same time his writing was not at all sentimental about the actuality of the Soviet system. Socialism remained an ideal—“ownership of the means of production by society, not by a bureaucracy. It has always been conceived of as a deepening—not a rejection—of political democracy. To persist in speaking of ‘Soviet socialism’ is to engage in a veritable comedy of errors” (379). This hippopotamus should not be confused with a giraffe! He summed up his own position on both the USSR and its historiography as “anti-anti-Communism.” His colleagues, even though many may have disagreed with his values and approaches, nevertheless recognized his extraordinary achievements and honored him with him the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies award for Distinguished Contributions to Slavic Studies in 2006.

Intellectual fashions come and go, and Lewin did not care much for more recent approaches to Soviet history, once coining the neologism “deconstruction” to denote his displeasure. He once signed a letter to me: “Misha (Director, Upside Down Studies Institute).” For many post-Soviet historians, Lewin’s insistence on preserving the idea of socialism as distinct from the Soviet system seems an irrelevant exercise. But his engagement with the history of social transformation unavoidably involved an evaluation of the worthiness of such an endeavor given the unpredictability of consequences. Values are a close cousin of even the most neutral, ostensibly objective historical writing, and it is naive as well as hubristic to think that historical interpretation can free itself from ethnic or political commitment or ideology in the broadest sense.

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## Robert C. Tucker, 1918–2010

In the tributes published this summer after the death of Robert C. Tucker on 29 July 2010 at the age of 92, one word that appeared with great frequency was “seminal.” Indeed, Bob Tucker made seminal contributions in a dauntingly wide array of fields and topics: Marx studies, Russian area studies, Sovietology, comparative communism, leadership studies, psychologically oriented biography in theory and practice, to provide an incomplete list. Perhaps this quality of Bob Tucker’s work is best brought out by a series of carefully thought-out, beautifully written, and still influential essays on the nexus between Russia and communism that appeared in *The Soviet Political Mind: Stalinism and Post-Stalin Change* (1971) and *Political Culture and Leadership in Soviet Russia: From Lenin to Gorbachev* (1987),

including “The Image of Dual Russia,” “Lenin’s Bolshevism as a Culture in the Making,” “The Dictator and Totalitarianism,” and “Swollen State, Spent Society: Stalin’s Legacy to Brezhnev’s Russia.”

Robert Charles Tucker was born in Missouri in 1918. His thesis work at Harvard University was interrupted in 1944 by World War II when he was sent to Moscow to serve as an attaché for the State Department. In 1944, he met his future wife Evgenia Pestretsova at a performance of Petr Chaikovskii’s *Queen of Spades*. Owing to a policy directly inspired by Iosif Stalin, Russians married to foreigners were not permitted to leave the Soviet Union, and Tucker was forced to stay with his wife until Stalin’s death in 1953, after which the policy was soon rescinded. These years gave Bob Tucker unparalleled direct experience of Stalin’s Russia and of the lives of ordinary Russians, as well as indirect but intense knowledge of the dictator himself. Looking back, Bob wrote that “never in my life have I experienced such intense elation” as when he learned of Stalin’s demise, for it meant the end of “one of history’s awful evil-doers,” the probable end of his own enforced stay in Russia, and “excitement that my hypothesis” about Stalin’s personal impact “would soon be tested.”

After returning to the United States, Tucker worked for several years for the Rand Corporation. In 1958, he became a professor of government at Indiana University, and from fall 1962 until retirement in 1984 he taught in the politics department at Princeton. At a 1988 conference in Princeton honoring him, his longtime mentor and friend George Kennan praised Tucker’s scholarship for “a seriousness of purpose, an historical insight, and a scrupulousness of method that have placed him in the highest rank, world-wide, of scholars in this field.”

Bob Tucker’s five former students from Indiana and Princeton whose names appear below have exchanged impressions and memories in the hope of giving a sense of his personal qualities as a scholar and teacher. What struck all of us was a combination of qualities that are usually seen as contradictory. A political scientist among historians and a historian among political scientists, Bob was an advocate of the broad comparative frameworks of social science as well as the most hands-on, taste-of-the-food area studies, and he forged a style that would appeal both to social scientists and to the educated public. He observed the current Kremlin politics of the day with perspectives gained from analyzing Soviet politics in the long sweep of history. A biographer of Stalin who used psychological theories to penetrate (as he put it) “the heart of darkness,” Bob nevertheless considered psychological speculations to be meaningless outside the historical context of real ideas and actual politics. The Soviet Union was for him (in the words of Michael Kraus) “a rich laboratory for interdisciplinary social science approaches, as well as history and political theory,” but it was also a society in which he had family and friends, a society whose human problems deeply concerned him. A fascination with abstract philosophical concepts such as Karl Marx’s “species being” coexisted in Tucker with involvement in real life issues, especially those arising from Soviet-American relations. (In 1958, Bob accompanied two-time presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson as adviser and interpreter on his visit to Moscow, which included a meeting with Nikita Khrushchev.)

Tucker backed up these intellectual interests with wide-ranging professional service. In 1963, he established and directed the Program in Russian Studies at Princeton, one of the first such programs to include undergraduates. In 1969, he began a six-year stint as chair of the Planning Group on Comparative Communist Studies sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies. A founding member, Tucker eventually also served as vice president of the International Society of Political Psychology. In 1989–90, he served as president of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS). In 1990, Princeton University conferred an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters upon Bob, a rare honor for one of its own faculty. In 1999, he was given the highest honor of the AAASS, the award for Distinguished Contributions to Slavic Studies.

In short, Bob Tucker was a fully rounded intellectual of the old school. Robert Sharlet remembers how “Bob would introduce an idea in a seminar, and hold it up ‘virtually’ for all to admire its various aspects, much like one would turn a fine diamond to study its facets.” As Stephen Cohen recalls, “whenever an idea suddenly came to him—and I mean whenever, even in the middle of an undergraduate lecture or seminar presentation—he stopped, took a small notebook out of his pocket, and jotted down the idea.” His sense of

intellectual adventure was lifelong. When his small book *Politics as Leadership* was published in 1981, he joked to Michael Kraus that it represented, at last, his dissertation in political science, giving him credentials to teach that subject. (His actual Harvard PhD thesis in philosophy became *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* [1958], a landmark study that helped to establish the unity between the young and the mature Marx.)

When we asked ourselves what parts of this rich *mélange* was the greatest intellectual influence on us in our own work, we naturally came up with various answers. For Bob Sharlet, it was Tucker's view of political culture as a multifaceted concept that helped to explain not only continuity but discontinuity, not only the power of prerevolutionary tradition but also the assaults on these traditions by transformational movements. Several of us—Michael Kraus, Lars Lih, Rob English—pointed to Tucker's concept of leadership, that is, the process whereby leaders authoritatively diagnose problem situations to mobilize a larger social group on behalf of change. Tucker's greatest influence on Steve Cohen was the idea of alternatives in history, specifically, the rejection of the conventional wisdom that everything in Soviet history followed with logical necessity from the "original sin" of the Bolshevik revolution.

What unites all these specific influences is Bob Tucker's insistence on discovering how historical actors perceived the world in their own terms. In his two-volume biography of Stalin—*Stalin as Revolutionary, 1879–1929: A Study in History and Personality* (1973) and *Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above, 1928–1941* (1990)—he applied this approach even to a man he had good personal and political reasons to loathe. In this way, Tucker avoided the common danger of turning political culture into something that closed off historical alternatives. In his view, the political culture and elites of the Soviet Union had changed radically over the years, due partly to large-scale forces but also to individuals facing real choices. This approach led to a 1975 conference in Bellagio, Italy, that gave rise to *Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation* (1977), a collective volume edited by Tucker that constitutes a landmark in the study of Stalinism as a distinct historical era.

Bob was extremely gratified by periods of political and social reform in the Soviet Union. Steve Cohen recalls how the Twenty-second Party Congress in 1961 led Tucker to instantly recast even his undergraduate lectures during his last year at Indiana University. All of us remember his excitement about Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika, which he analyzed in "To Change a Political Culture," an essay from 1987 that identified the processes working both for and against transformational leadership in a way that today seems more prescient than the more conventional social science approaches of the time.

Bob's commitment to discover how historical actors defined the situation inspired a scholarly and pedagogical contribution that should not be overlooked: his two anthologies *The Marx-Engels Reader* (1972) and *The Lenin Anthology* (1975). Both became widely used classics due to their broad and judicious selection of texts, combined with landmark introductory essays. In this way, they provided students and general readers the best entrée into the worldview of Marx, Engels, and Lenin.

All of us vividly remember our first meeting with Bob Tucker and look back on it as a turning point not only in our professional but also in our personal lives. Becoming Bob's student also meant entering the orbit of his family: his wife Zhenya and his daughter Liza (who worked as a Moscow correspondent for *Newsweek* and the *Wall Street Journal* during 1989–1991). Those of us who knew Tucker during his Princeton years remember with special fondness Bob and Zhenya's home at 44 Hartley Avenue, where we were privileged to participate in what Rob English called "an intellectual nexus and old-world salon." Perhaps Bob's personal influence was greatest on Steve Cohen and Rob English, since Bob was responsible not only for the topics of their first books (Nikolai Bukharin in the case of Steve, elite reformist thinking for Rob) but also for an entrée to Russian society that became (as Steve Cohen put it) a "second *rodina*" for them as it was for Bob. And by marrying Liza, Rob English further deepened his attachment to the Tucker family.

Bob could be something of a worrier. Lars Lih remembers Bob giving him a copy of his typescript for the second volume of his Stalin biography for safekeeping in Boston. Bob had more than one copy in Princeton, but he wanted one to be held out-of-state, just to be sure. The fact that Bob asked for help in this way is indicative of a quality that struck all of us, namely, Bob's rapid acceptance of his former students as equals, as comrades in research, and as true friends.

Bob's high sense of scholarly standards was sometimes reflected in smaller things. In his days at Indiana University (1958–1961), recalls Steve Cohen, "Bob carried a pocket watch, which he tapped repeatedly with a pencil when we approached the time limit for our presentations. It was unnerving; we all feared that pocket watch and pencil in front of Bob at the table." Lars Lih remembers Bob asserting that no scholarly book should be over 250 pages—a standard, alas, which neither Bob nor Lars always lived up to. These were only the surface manifestations of a profound sense of scholarly integrity that was as natural to him as breathing.

Robert C. Tucker's passing marks the end of an era in which such a towering figure in American Russian studies could combine what might never again be combined: great command of the language, broad knowledge of the entire sweep of Russian history, cross-disciplinary methods, and direct experience of several Russias, from high Stalinism to the post-Soviet period. His contagious sense of scholarship as an intellectual adventure, fearless questioning of accepted verities, and scholarly integrity ensures that Tucker will continue to influence multifarious fields of study through his books, his students, and his example.

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