Colonial America, the Independence of the Ukraine, and Soviet Historiography: The Personal Experience of a Former Soviet Americanist

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Editor's Note: During 1994-1995, Sergei Zhuk was a visiting Fulbright Fellow at the Philadelphia Center for Early American Studies. His perspectives on the historiography of the Middle Atlantic region, and on the nature of historical research in both the former Soviet Union and in Pennsylvania, should interest many of our readers. Many of us at the Center came to admire Sergei as a scholar and human being; we hope he will be able to return to finish his work.

I was born late in 1958, at the peak of “Khrushchev’s Thaw.” I spent my childhood in Vatutino, a small Ukrainian town of coal miners, named after a famous Soviet general, who was shot to death by Ukrainian nationalists during World War II. My hometown is located in the center of the Ukraine, in its agricultural area, the “homeland of our great poet Taras Shevchenko.” New coal (lignite) mines opened in Vatutino during the 1950s. That is why many political prisoners, freed after the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), moved to my town seeking jobs. Many of these newcomers were intellectuals, very educated and intelligent people. They spent their free time not in “pubs” and bars, but in Vatutino’s public library, where my mother worked as a librarian. Thus, my first experience as a child was connected to these people’s tales of the atrocities of the Stalinist regime, about the glory and misery of Ukrainian and Russian history.

My next memory as a child is of long lines of people at the food stores, waiting for bread. Everybody was cursing Khrushchev and his reforms. But even my mother, whose family had suffered from the Stalinist regime, could say nothing in support of Khrushchev because we ourselves lived very poorly in those days. My mother was raising her two sons without a husband (my parents were divorced). Her librarian’s salary was not enough to buy our food: our family dinner was usually tea, butter, and bread.

My next impressions of childhood concern books, a lot of them. I learned to read very early and spent all my time in my mother’s library. I read treatises of great historians of ancient Greece and Rome, historical works written by N. Karamzin, S. Solov’yov, V. Kl’uchevsky, and also old, dusty volumes from the shelves with the sign “To read here is forbidden.” These forbidden books included the Slavic Orthodox
At the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s one more cultural influence determined my tastes and interests. My elder brother, a physicist from Moscow, brought to Vatutino records with the music of the “Beatles,” the “Rolling Stones,” and the “Doors.” Since that time I’ve loved this music and continued to listen to it during my student days (my friends even gave me the nickname “Johnny,” because I was fond of John Lennon’s music). For our generation of the 1960s-1970s Anglo-American rock music became our own peculiar mode of self-expression and original way of socio-cultural protest against hypocrisy and official values, imposed and enforced by communist ideology. At the same time, my wish to understand the texts of rock songs, composed by the “Beatles,” “Pink Floyd,” “Genesis,” and “Supertramp,” stimulated my interest in English language and literature. Therefore, when I entered Dniepropetrovsk University, I decided to combine my love of history with my interest in English.

For the first time in my life, during my student days, I ran into outrageous injustice, hypocrisy, and evil. In the 1970s and 1980s I stopped believing in communism and the Soviet system of power. Since that time I have not trusted them any more. In the first place, I had to put aside my Ukrainian because at the Ukrainian University in Dniepropetrovsk, the official language for teaching was Russian. Any effort to defend Ukrainian culture was regarded as “bourgeois nationalism.” In the second place, I understood that our Soviet authorities considered a department of history as a place to train future ideological personnel of the Communist Party, not to train historical specialists. Communist functionaries at the University did not encourage honest research in history. Moreover, they cruelly punished it. Any deviation from the official methodology of “class struggle” was regarded as a serious sin. Two of my best friends, who attempted to investigate honestly the complicated events of the Stalinist era, were excluded from Komsomol and expelled from the University. Our authorities encouraged and maintained a system of espionage and tale-bearing among the students. They punished those of us who listened to “prohibited Western rock music.” Thus I was rebuked and deprived of a stipend by our Komsomol leaders for my enthusiasm for “bourgeois culture” (i.e. the “Beatles” and “Pink Floyd”). Such a suffocating atmosphere in Brezhnev’s era was conducive to hard drinking among students: we, mixing beer with vodka, red wine and white, sought to sink into alcoholic reveries. We tried to escape from reality into the world of daydreams and fantasy.

History for many of us (including myself) turned out to be a way of fleeing from real life. But, nevertheless, in those days it was impossible for a decent, well-
educated historian to study honestly Russian or Ukrainian history. That is why I decided to get away further from dangerous ideological spheres into the sixteenth through eighteenth century history of colonial America. First of all, such study helped me to learn English and other foreign languages. In the second place, I could, as a historian-professional, freely use any kind of sources on early American history without fear of speaking the truth and of the need to apply the Marxist theory of primary accumulation of capital. In the third place (having grown up on American literature) I was moved by normal human curiosity: I wanted to know the historical past of the American people, learn the new facts and new historical theories that had been used by American scholars in their research.

The overwhelming majority of Soviet historians did their research on the recent history of the United States. Such studies had been supported and financed by the Communist Party and the KGB. But I preferred a period of American history remote from either contemporary ideological struggle or the “political confrontation between capitalism and socialism.” Moreover, study of colonial history permitted me to connect my favorite medieval and early modern European history with the genesis of the United States as a socio-cultural phenomenon. When I began my research in 1978, it turned out that my perceptions and attitudes towards history were preceded by an old historiographical tradition.

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Since Peter the Great’s reforms, which had opened the era of modernization in Russia, the sciences and the humanities have been “state business.” The central government sanctioned and encouraged the development of sciences in the Russian empire. Thus, the Russian Tsar Peter established the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1725. Under the aegis of this Academy, the first Russian university was founded in Moscow in 1755. Such centralization and state influence on scientific activities have especially affected history, which was called upon to exalt the person of the tsar, to bring up the young generations as Russian patriots, the tsar’s faithful servants, and to ground imperial politics on historical facts. The historian became a servant of the state, and history a component and integral part of the Russian official ideology. A typical example of such an approach to historical scholarship was The History of the Russian State, written by the famous Russian writer N. M. Karamzin at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

After the defeat of the Russian noblemen-revolutionaries’ revolt (the famous Decembrist Uprising) in 1825-26 and publication of P. J. Chaadaiev’s “The First Philosophical Letter” in Telescope magazine in 1836, Russian intellectuals were divided on the merits of Russian and Western European history. P. Chaadaiev was the first Russian intellectual who criticized in public the historical development of his own country as an Orthodox Christian Slavic power. He set Russia against the progressive, dynamic West as a conservative, backward regime. One group of Russian intellectuals consisted of the Chaadaiev’s adherents, who regarded Western Europe as a
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model of historical progress for Russia. The other group, Chaadaiev’s opponents, idealized Russia’s historical past as a Slavic state and argued for the uniqueness and exclusiveness of the Orthodox Christian road for the Eastern Slavic nations. The first group was called the “Westerners,” the second the “Slavophiles.” The “Westerners” used the history of Western Christian civilization to theoretically ground their intellectual opposition to the tsarist regime.1 In the middle of the nineteenth century at Moscow University, the famous Russian historian-mediaevalist T. G. Granovsky taught the history of the Middle Ages in Western Europe. A lot of people (not only his students) visited his lectures, because he was trying to use his own historical material to explain the inevitability of the Western road for Russian civilization. As we can see, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries two main traditions had been shaped in Russian historiography. One was the “state business of history”, the “civil service” of historiography. The other was the “utilization” of the experience of Western history to explain future Russian development.

These two traditions survived both the Russian Revolution and the creation of the Soviet Union. Under the Soviet regime state control over history increasingly strengthened. The history of the Western capitalist countries had to lead to a theoretically inevitable destruction of capitalism (as a social and economic formation) and forthcoming victory of communism. From such a point of view, the history of the United States of America has been regarded as a history of the leading capitalist power, the main political enemy of the Soviet Union. The Communist Party demanded that Soviet historians find among the facts of American history only a confirmation of the truth of Marxism-Leninism and criticized any concept that contradicted this theory. Such a hard party directive, concerning study of United States as the main ideological enemy, did not promote serious research in American history. Before the 1960s there were no interesting scholarly works on United States history in the Soviet historiography (Efimov’s book, published in 1934 before the extreme period of Stalinization, was an exception to the rule).2

Soviet politicians were mostly interested in the contemporary history of the United States. In fact, colonial American history was buried in oblivion. Only in 1963 was the first book on colonial American history published in the USSR. Its author, A. S. Samoilo, a historian-mediaevalist from the Moscow Pedagogical Institute, found interesting material on early American history in the Moscow central libraries during his work for the chapters on the European colonization of North America for a multi-volume Soviet “World History” series. The liberalization of Khrushchev’s era allowed Samoilo to publish his results. Thanks to this book, for the first time, Soviet readers could get acquainted with such famous (in America) published collections of primary sources as those edited by Force, Jensen, and Stock, and with the classic books of famous American historians. Samoilo’s book was based on the Marxist-Leninist concept of the transition of American society from European feudalism to capitalism. It is interesting to note that to reach his Marxist conclusions Samoilo used mostly material from such classic and different works as those of Charles M. Andrews and Richard B. Morris.5 Samoilo’s book is a typical example of
writing on American history by the Soviet historians. They only used and applied material previously researched by American historians, but nevertheless criticized their American colleagues by labelling them with such words as “bourgeois falsifiers (forgers),” “servants (or prostitutes) of American imperialism,” and so on.

By 1966, at the Moscow Pedagogical Institute, V. F. Stratanovich had published a few articles and prepared his Ph.D. dissertation (for the degree in historical sciences) about the primitive accumulation of capital in British colonies in North America. By 1966, at the Moscow Pedagogical Institute, V. F. Stratanovich had published a few articles and prepared his Ph.D. dissertation (for the degree in historical sciences) about the primitive accumulation of capital in British colonies in North America. In contrast to Samoilo, Stratanovich limited the sources for his work to just a few famous American books, written by Andrews and Beard, without even mentioning those collections of documents cited by Samoilo.

Thanks to the era of “detente” in the early 1970s, Moscow libraries received a great deal of new American historical literature, and on the two hundredth anniversary of the American Revolution, many books on colonial and revolutionary history. The first serious research works on early American history resulted, being written by S. N. Burin and L. Ju. Sliozkin, colleagues at the Department of United States-Canadian History at the Moscow Institute of General History (the USSR Academy of Sciences) in the late seventies and early eighties.

One such work was Burin’s dissertation, published in 1980, devoted Burin’s dissertation, published in 1980, devoted to the study of social contradictions and conflicts in colonial Virginia and Maryland. This work was the first Soviet study of colonial American history, based on an analysis not only of the classic books of American historians, but on many collections of printed sources, the overwhelming majority of which were previously unknown to Soviet Americanists. Burin’s main merit was that he attempted (not just declared) to study the real social history of the American people in the colonial era. Notwithstanding its descriptive character and lack of original conclusions, Burin’s book differed from previous books of Soviet Americanists because of its tone of objective narration, respect for the opinions of American authors, and attempt to avoid “teeth crushing,” slashing, malicious criticism against the “bourgeois falsifiers”.

Burin’s book was received coldly by his senior colleagues, who preferred the habitual position of critics exposing those mistakes which had been made by American “bourgeois” historians. In 1983 G. P. Kurop’atnik reminded such young Americanists as Burin of their main task: to protect the Marxist-Leninist conception of history against American historians, the apologists of monopoly capital, who had been distorting historical truth. It is noteworthy that Kurop’atnik in his book about the “scientific concept” of early American history did not even mention new research work, done by Burin, his junior colleague from the same Department of the History of the United States and Canada at the Institute of General History.

In 1978, a new book was published in Moscow on colonial Virginia and New Plymouth by L. Sliozkin, a senior colleague of Kurop’atnik and Burin, and a former specialist in modern Latin American history. But during his work at the Department of the United States History, Sliozkin had to change the subject of his research. In the 1980s he continued to do his work and published two new books on the history
of colonial Maryland, Virginia, and Massachusetts. In spite of the good literary Russian style of all his books, Sliozkin's ignorance of new publications and sources, his denial of recent American literature and new trends in American historiography, and his habit of avoiding original interpretations, were obvious. This methodology resulted in the situation where his "blind following" of the documents led him to the repetition of out-dated concepts from the beginning of the twentieth century. He used traditional Soviet scholarship to describe American history as the "development of American capitalism." It is astonishing that in spite of the Marxist declaration about the necessity to study human society, Sliozkin, a typical Soviet Americanist, did not write social, but political history, the study of political institutions in colonial America. Nevertheless, at the same time he criticized Burin, who had written the first book on the social history of early America in Soviet historiography. Sliozkin's thesis came to conclusions such as: "The bourgeois orientation of colonial development was borrowed from the mother country and it was especially marked in New England; but this orientation became linked to white slavery, that had substituted for necessary but scanty wage labor. Moreover, in Virginia such an orientation was distorted by the slavery and plantation economy. In Maryland this bourgeois development was distorted with elements of feudalism. But, nevertheless, all American colonies were moving in the same direction." Sliozkin's books were examples of an impressionistic, arbitrary, ill-shaped narrative rather than of serious historical research. I present these books and scholars as examples of the state of American historiography in the Soviet Union when N. N. Bolkhovitinov began to publish major works in the 1980s.

Now the most famous Soviet Americanist, a colleague of Kurop'atnik, Burin, and Sliozkin at the Moscow Institute of General History, Bolkhovitinov tried to sum up the results of recent early American historiography. His approach differed, for the better, from the books of his Moscow colleagues. In his analysis of new trends in American studies, Bolkhovitinov considered new research that appeared not only in the Soviet Union, but also in the United States. While Kurop'atnik and Sliozkin contrived not to notice the new work of Soviet and American historians living outside Moscow, Bolkhovitinov represented in his book the general development of Soviet historiography and gave his due to scholars not only from Moscow but also from Tomsk, Odessa, Dniepropetrovsk, and other cities of the USSR.

In the 1980s, notwithstanding the "consensus" Leninist theoretical framework of early American history as the transition from European feudalism to New World capitalism, Soviet Americanists began debates on the main problems of colonial history: the nature of American slavery, the essence of quit-rents in colonies, ideology and Enlightenment in early America, causes of the American Revolutionary War for Independence, etc. Burin's and Sliozkin's books were evidence of the reorientation of Soviet historians' interest in the study of the regional history of early America, mainly the history of the colonial South and New England. Unfortunately, the history of the middle colonies (New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania) was mentioned by Soviet Americanists only casually in general surveys of the United States. As a rule,
these abstracts of the middle colonies’ history were based not on the study of original sources, but on the material of old classic American books written by Bancroft, Channing, and Osgood. The most recent general Soviet work on American history was published between 1983-1987. The first volume was devoted to 1607 to 1877 and opened with chapters about the colonial period, written by Sliozkin. This large volume contained even more mistakes, distortions, and misrepresentations of facts than the first general Soviet work on American history, published in 1960. In the new book, the Marxist-Leninist concept of American history, based on the work of the American leftists Gus Hall, Herbert Aptheker, and Philip Foner, remained the same, but the narrative changed for the worse: from the verification and scholarly justification of historical facts to intuitively collected and arbitrarily interpreted material, exclusively political history. Furthermore, the author of the chapters on colonial history, Sliozkin, had a poor sense of direction in that material: e.g. in his opinion, New Netherlands, the first Dutch permanent colony on the Hudson River, was founded in 1614 (not in 1624). He represented Mennonites as Quakers; he portrayed the well-known “Negro Plot” of 1741 in New York as an armed rebellion of slaves against white colonists; he knew nothing about the “Keithian Schism” in colonial Pennsylvania and the “Great Awakening,” which he casually mentioned quoting such a “great” expert on this subject as Aptheker. But the greatest paradox is that in this general work of Soviet Americanists who declared themselves Marxists, devoted to the study of the common people, there is no social history of ordinary people, common folk, Indians, black Americans, and women. In this book, American history began not with the history of American Indians, the Native American population, but with the history of British colonists in 1607. This was the political history of white Anglo-Saxon Protestant Americans. Ironically, Soviet historians could have incorporated the new social history research of American historians which had flourished in the 1970s and 1980s. Such an approach to early American history was typical of Soviet scholars. In the Ukraine, V. M. Kalashnikov, Professor of History at Dniepropetrovsk University, repeated the mistakes of Sliozkin in his own study on the struggle of Indians with white colonists; moreover, he quoted books that he had never read, misrepresented facts, and so on. Kalashnikov’s work is a striking example of how provincial Soviet scholarship was in dealing with American history. The Soviet Americanists who worked at universities in Odessa, Dniepropetrovsk, and Tomsk tried to compensate for and supplement their ignorance of primary sources and new literature with a vituperative criticism of American “bourgeois” historiography. Historians wished to be more hardened communists than the General Secretary of the Communist Party himself. In Kalashnikov’s work there was more defense of the Leninist theory of history, more “teeth crushing” criticism of the “apologists of American imperialism,” than presentation of the historical facts themselves. The following is Kalashnikov’s characterization of the famous American historian Richard B. Morris: “The false chattering of Professor Morris about the Christian meekness of British colonial plun-
derers is especially clear, when you read very attentively the wrathful lines of such a work of genius as Marx's *Capital*, exposing the bloody history of the creation of the colonial system of imperialism."\(^{16}\)

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Professor Kalashnikov taught his course on American history in the same style for his undergraduate students (myself included) at the Department of History of Dniepropetrovsk University. Kalashnikov was the supervisor of my M.A. thesis (diploma research work) on early American history. According to his advice I began to study Nathaniel Bacon's Rebellion of 1676 in colonial Virginia as a manifestation of "acute class struggle" in early America. The result of this study was my M.A. thesis, written in 1981: "The Historical Sources and Historiography of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia." This work was based on analysis of such collections of primary published sources including Force, Andrews etc., and famous books dealing with the history of Bacon's Rebellion, written by Wertenbaker, Washburn, Morgan, and Carson.\(^{17}\) Of course, all these books were available only at the Moscow libraries, because in Ukrainian libraries we had no books devoted to the early modern history of the United States.

In the Andrews collection, *Narratives of the Insurrections*, I found interesting documents on Jacob Leisler's Rebellion in colonial New York. Then I read Reich's book about this event and the documents of Leisler's administration from Edmund O'Callaghan's *Documentary History of New York*. By 1982 I had already finished my article on the social history of Leisler's Rebellion. In contrast to John Murrin's and Thomas Archdeacon's opinions, I considered this revolt not as an ethnic movement against "Anglicization," but the struggle of ordinary colonists (Dutch and British settlers) against restrictions on their business activity, imposed by colonial administration. It was a real surprise for me that this article was accepted by the editorial board of the Moscow magazine *Novaia i noveishaia istoria (Modern and Contemporary History)*. Then I sent my work on the history of Dutch and Swedish settlements in North America (New Netherlands and New Sweden) to *Voprosy istorii (Questions of History)*, the main magazine of Soviet historians. That material was also accepted.\(^{18}\)

All this was unbelievable for me, because in those days I had no job at the University. I worked as a secondary school history teacher and as a disc-jockey in various dance halls. Moreover, by this time I had been dismissed from the technical school because of my "ideological unreliability". I was the teacher in charge of the school discotheque, and my students prepared a wonderful notice about an upcoming dance. The trouble was that the students had little paper to use for their announcements so they used a huge poster with a picture of Lenin on the reverse side. Unfortunately, on the day of the discotheque, a special group of the "Communist Party's control" visited my school. At first, they were surprised by the text of that notice with such "bourgeois" names as the "Beatles" and "Abba." Then they found the face of the communist leader on the same poster and regarded this as a sacrilege, the profanation of a sacred image. Their indignation came to a peak when
they saw in my office American books, including volumes written by "dangerous enemies of Marxism," such "bourgeois forgers" as Max Weber and Talcott Parsons. Of course, after this scandal I was discharged with disgrace.

But then suddenly my publications in the prestigious Soviet historical magazines opened the door for me to take a post-graduate course at the Institute of General History of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Moscow. Bolkhovitinov, who knew my publications and supported them as a member of the editorial board, agreed to supervise my dissertation. I was a lucky post-graduate student, because my advisor, Bolkhovitinov, was a unique figure in Soviet-American studies. The overwhelming majority of Soviet Americanists, especially those who often went abroad, were either KGB agents or informants of Soviet secret police. Historians who consented to collaborate with the KGB not only could visit Western countries, but also advanced their professional careers. Bolkhovitinov, author of serious studies on Russian-American relations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and on recent American historiography, preferred to be an honest and decent historian. He rejected any kind of cooperation with the KGB. So all his actions were under its surveillance and for more than ten years he was not allowed to visit foreign countries. Only during Gorbachev's perestroika did Bolkhovitinov begin again to go abroad. He even visited the United States after the liberalization of KGB control. Bolkhovitinov real-

![Image of Professor Nikolai Bolkhovitinov](image-url)

*Courtesy of Moscow Magazine, No. 6 (1994)*
ized that it was necessary for me, a young Americanist, to contact other American scholars. That is why, in spite of strict KGB rules, he organized in January, 1985, my first meeting with my American colleague Marcus Rediker of Georgetown University, now at the University of Pittsburgh. In those days I was writing an article about sailors and pirates of colonial New York and it was very important for me to meet my colleague, who wrote *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, the most important book about the Anglo-American maritime world of the eighteenth century. I remember that we met secretly, being afraid of the KGB shadowing us, at the Lomonosov Monument on the Moscow University campus. Then Bolkhovitinov drove us to his house, where we could talk about our professional problems. The paradox was that we kept in secret from the KGB our meeting with a leftist, neo-Marxist historian, who publicly criticized American capitalism. But nevertheless, if the KGB had found out about our meeting, Bolkhovitinov would have been dismissed from the Academy of Sciences immediately.

Bolkhovitinov directed me toward the new American literature. He advised me to read not only classic works, but also books of such "new social" historians as Zuckerman, Greven, and Lockridge. He gave me from his personal library the interesting collection of articles on *Colonial British America*, edited by Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole. I read this book in one week and under its influence I rewrote completely the first version of my dissertation. Bolkhovitinov then began to organize the first collection in the USSR on early American history for the Public Historical Library in Moscow. Thanks to his connections in the United States this library also received such historical periodicals as the *William and Mary Quarterly*, *New York History*, and the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*. Later I continued Bolkhovitinov's tradition and helped the historical library in Moscow choose and buy in the United States important books and printed sources on early American history.

Doing my research on the social history of colonial New York, I found at the Moscow libraries interesting collections of printed sources, such as the series *Original Narratives of Early American History* and multivolume editions of Edmund O'Callaghan and Charles Lincoln. I received some published sources through the international loaning book service in Moscow libraries. By 1986 I already had copies of collections of documents, edited by A. Van Laer, J. Cox, Jr., H. L. Osgood, and even seven recent American Ph.D. dissertations on the history of colonial New York from University Microfilms at Ann Arbor.

My dissertation, finished in 1987, was written within the framework of the Marxist-Leninist concept of American capitalism. Nevertheless, my conclusions were not about institutions or politics, but about social history. They were based on an analysis of original (unknown to Soviet Americanists) historical sources and the new American scholarship. In my work I tried to trace the history of all social conflicts during the first fifty years of British rule in colonial New York. These conflicts were: the strikes of cartmen, coopers, and bakers after 1667; Leisler's Rebellion of 1689-1691; the mutiny of New York's garrison in 1700; the riot of the sailors-privateers in
1705; the uprising of German settlers against the colonial administration on Livingston Manor in 1711; and the slave revolt of 1712. Among the diversity of social contradictions (ethnic, religious, etc.) I distinguished as basic those which had determined colonial progress and were connected with property and wealth distribution, with relations between culture and power. The principal conclusion of my work was: "The social development of colonial New York at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century was shaped by the struggle of the bourgeois trend of private enterprise in the activities of the colonists against various restrictions to further deepening of that tendency . . ."21

After finishing my dissertation, I returned to Dniepropetrovsk University as a lecturer on medieval history. I then decided to continue the study of the social history of the "middle colonies." Since my post-graduate course in Moscow, I had begun to read the philosophical, sociological, and anthropological books which had been cited by my favorite American authors in their interpretations of American history. So I acquainted myself with the works of Nietzsche, Weber, Durkheim, Parsons, Foucault, Derrida, and especially Clifford Geertz, E. P. Thompson, and Immanuel Wallerstein. During this period, which coincided with Gorbachev's perestroika, some interesting books were published by medievalist Moscow historians A. Gurevich and Ju. Bessmertny, who were popularizing the ideas of the French "Annales" historical school among the Soviet reading audience.22 Gurevich and Ju. Afanas’ev edited the first Russian translations of Bloch’s, Fevre’s, and Braudel’s books. Since 1989 Gurevich has edited the first Soviet historical-anthropological yearbook, Odysseus: Man in History. Many young historians (including myself) discovered in these books new ideas of real human history, the opposite of the domineering orthodoxy of Soviet historiography. From 1987-1990 we young Soviet historians tried to give our intellectual opposition institutional shape, namely the Soviet Association of Young Historians. I was elected as a Member of the Moscow Executive Board of this organization and simultaneously President of the Dniepropetrovsk Association of Young Historians. But in 1990 our association disintegrated. Some of my colleagues turned into politicians (such as S. Stankevich and E. Kozhokin in Moscow). Some became businessmen, and the minority of young historians (like me) continued to do their research. All this experience influenced me to turn my attention to socio-cultural, anthropologically-oriented history. My reorientation was also affected and defined by my participation at the Moscow international conference of Americanists in 1991.23

Bolkhovitinov asked me, his former student, to present a paper for this conference based on the results of my research, taking into consideration new approaches and methodologies in contemporary American studies. On the eve of the conference I delivered my material on early American history for Bolkhovitinov’s colleagues at the Department of United States History. I was surprised when afterwards the overwhelming majority of these Americanists rebuked me for my "revisionism," idealization of Max Weber’s methodology, and ignoring economic problems in early America. Even after the conference, where my paper was well-received by my
American and German colleagues, Sliozkin and Kurop’atnik insisted on excluding my article from the book devoted to that conference’s proceedings. I had to remove my critical remarks about Kurop’atnik’s and Sliozkin’s books from my article before it was approved by my Moscow counterparts. Simultaneously, my criticism of the Soviet Americanists was excluded from another of my articles about Max Weber’s ideas that was published in *Voprosy istorii.*

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I, as a majority of Soviet intellectuals, expected that *perestroika,* the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the independence of the Ukraine would change the life of our scholars for the better. But it turned out that I was wrong. To preserve their power and political position in the Ukraine, former communist leaders became Ukrainian nationalists. These politicians strove to conserve old (communist) methods of government and management, which resulted in the cultural isolation of the Ukraine, the breaking of economic ties with Russia, hyperinflation — in short a real economic catastrophe. Now it is impossible for scholars to survive in this situation. In 1994, the salary of a full professor at a Ukrainian university was $10-20 per month, when a kilo of cheap sausages cost $1, a winter coat $200, a paperback book of 300 pages $37. During the last two years at least half of my students stopped their study and research at the university. They now make money applying their knowledge of English in business.

Moreover, instead of communism, Ukrainian authorities now foist a nationalist ideology on Ukrainian scholars. New university curricula and syllabi for departments of history emphasize the ancient Aryan origin of Ukrainians from the Tripol’ie tribes of the Bronze Age (2500-1800 B.C.), and proclaim the cultural superiority of Ukrainians over Russians. Now even in Russian-speaking Dniepropetrovsk you can see slogans: “Russians and Jews get out of the Ukraine.” You can read about a special military Fascist group of the “Ukrainian Self-Defense,” which is planning to clear the Ukraine of all non-patriotic elements. The same authorities of our university who had criticized me for my enthusiasm for “bourgeois culture” now criticize and rebuke me for giving lecture courses in the Russian language, and complain of my “connections with Moscow.” But I cannot give up these connections because my brother, a lot of my friends, and my Americanist colleagues live in Russia. In the Ukraine there are only three specialists in American history, while in Russia there are more than thirty. Living under such circumstances it is difficult to remain a normal Americanist historian. I could not survive as an Americanist without the help and support of my German and American colleagues. Thanks to grants and stipends from Germany and the United States for my research, I try to continue studying and teaching colonial American history.

While teaching the lecture course on early American history at Dniepropetrovsk University, I ran into a very difficult problem: how to develop a suitable synthesis for colonial American history. It was impossible even for my clever
Ukrainian students to orient themselves to the somewhat narrow specialization and excessive fragmentation that have plagued recent early American historiography. In search of a synthesis I read works written over the last ten years to generalize data on early American history: books by John McCusker and Russell Menard, Bernard Bailyn, Patricia Bonomi, Donald Meinig, Jack P. Greene, David Hackett Fischer, and Jon Butler. Nevertheless, Ukrainian students who came to my classes needed another kind of historical synthesis that would connect a history of their own native country with the colonial (very distant from them) history of America. Being a member of the special research group "German Studies in Ukraine," I found at the Moscow and Dniepropetrovsk Archives interesting documents related to the American Quaker colonial experience by organizers and participants in the Mennonite colonization of the Dnieper River region in the Ukraine at the end of the eighteenth century. Hence I developed the notion of a socio-cultural synthesis for the comparative history of the Western world-system's expansion into North America and Eastern Europe.

For this kind of synthesis of the history of colonization in British America and the Russian Ukraine, I stress the importance of culture and consciousness. I combine these in the concept of "ethos," which permits the connection of socio-economic realities to cultural-anthropological aspects of the development of both individuals and social groups. In my concept of "ethos" I include such elements as the "system of moral values," "style of life," and "orientation of culture." My methodology is based on concepts of Max Weber and Clifford Geertz, who treated culture as a system of public symbols through which the members of a society communicate their world view, value-orientations, and ethics to one another and to future generations. I also use the ideas of Michel Foucault about epistèmes and discourses and neo-Marxist concepts of "cultural hegemony" and "moral economy." I also base my conclusions on the interpretations of Weber's concepts in the works of the Polish scholar M. Ossovska. I employ as well ideas of "cultural dialogue" to interpret the Russian culturologist M. Bakhtin, who wrote that the essence of human history is an intensive cultural dialogue (not just a combination of monologues). This kind of dialogue took place in areas of colonization, especially during the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries, when new business undertakings of migrants and a new capitalist culture had been shaped in traditional cultural frameworks. I designate such areas of intensive settlement in British America and the Russian Ukraine as "zones of colonial capitalism of the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries." In my opinion, the socio-cultural progress of all these zones was determined by the first groups of settlers, who created the original matrix of interaction that would affect inhabitants of such zones for generations to come. I consider the ethos of these groups as the "initial" socio-cultural patterns, whose subsequent evolution created the contours of colonial social history.

I argue that the most important elements within these early patterns were:

1. The model of military expedition, which laid a foundation for "noble" (gentry) colonization, and established the manorial system of power in colonies, based on the labor of slaves and tenants;
2. The model of "moral economy", connected to common folk's traditions of "inner colonization" in Europe, traditional localism, which had been based on the power of community (neighborhood) and family;

3. The "charismatic" model, connected with the orientation of certain religious (ethno-confessional) groups (Quakers, Mennonites, Baptists, etc.) to restore the "Kingdom of God" in the New World environment. These groups of ascetic Protestants followed ethical programs which legitimized many kinds of work, honesty, and promise-keeping in business, trade agreements, etc. I consider the history of early America (including the most typically "American" region of colonization—the "middle colonies") in contrast to the colonial Ukraine. In America, a process occurred which levelled the socio-cultural extremes (charismatic: e.g., of Puritans and Quakers; ethnic: e.g., of English and Dutch; racial and so on). Various social groups adapted to each other, instead of being absorbed or integrated into each other.

Nowadays we post-Soviet historians live in similar metaphorical situations, where we need to overcome the fanaticisms of communism and nationalism, and obtain the "levelling of the extremes." Today, when the former Soviet country and the former Soviet community of scholars are disappearing, few people in Russia and the Ukraine are interested in historical truth (especially truth about the historical past of foreign countries). The financial hardships of our Americanists who live outside Moscow have been aggravated by the absence of literature and information, which have been traditionally concentrated in Moscow. Now it is impossibly expensive for ordinary historians to visit Moscow libraries for their research work. In the national independent republics, including my Ukraine, the quantity of research in American history is decreasing and its quality becoming lower and lower. It is a real paradox, but before 1991 the control and advice of Moscow Americanists promoted and stimulated a high level of American studies in the other republics. Now each republic has the right to judge and award Ph.D. dissertations in American history. You can imagine how little a scholar can write without sources and literature. But lack of expertise in American history will result in wrongful, distorted knowledge of this history among specialists and statesmen, and create an incorrect image of the United States among post-Soviet citizens. Meanwhile, we historians from the former Soviet Union are now living in a situation where there is a different levelling of the extremes: through poverty, hunger, and humiliation. We are thinking not about the search for new historical paradigms, but about the search for food and clothing. We are gradually forgetting early American history because we are not reading American books now. We are just trying to survive.

* * *

Being an Americanist in the Soviet Union was a nuisance. I couldn't go abroad and continue my research work at archives and libraries in the United States. Before 1991 any foreign travel by Soviet scholars was under the control of central authorities in Moscow. They only allowed abroad loyal communist scientists, whose
research would fortify the defensive capability of the USSR: i.e. physicists, chemists, and mathematicians. Before perestroika only Americanists from the Institute of the United States and Canada, or lecturers and students from the department of modern and contemporary history at Moscow State University who had been approved by the KGB, went to the United States, through American programs such as the Fulbright and IREX. Americanists outside Moscow had no access to those programs. Even during perestroika Soviet participants in those programs included more than fifty Muscovites and only two "provincial" Americanists, who were permitted to visit the United States before 1990. (I don't dispute the level of the Muscovites' schooling and training: the majority of them knew English language and American literature better than we, their colleagues from provincial Soviet universities.) After defending my Ph.D. dissertation in Moscow I couldn't get permission for financial support for my visit to the United States using those state programs of international exchange in which Muscovites had participated. (By the way, after official application for my visit to the United States, I became a center of growing attention from KGB agents, who tried to negotiate with me about my future collaboration with the Soviet secret police. It's noteworthy that the same officer of KGB, who had controlled our student lives in the 1970s at Dniepropetrovsk University, criticized us for our "bourgeois theories," and attempted to recruit us as his secret agents during the 1980s, is now defending Ukrainian national security against "friends of Russian imperialism," such as Sergei Zhuk, during the 1990s.)

Sergi Zhuk (far right) with historians Amy Hart Bushnell (in white) and Jack P. Greene and Irina Zhuk.
Unexpectedly, I did obtain financial support for my research abroad not through the Soviet state, but from the German John F. Kennedy Institute for American Studies at the Free University in Berlin. After my paper's presentation at the Moscow conference in 1991, Professor Knud Krakau from the Kennedy Institute, who liked it, came up to me and suggested that I apply for a fellowship there. It seemed unbelievable, but, nevertheless, I sent my documents to Germany. To my great surprise I was awarded a stipend not by the "socialist Germans" from the former GDR, but by "capitalist Germans" from West Berlin. So in October, 1991, I got the opportunity to finish writing my first book on colonial America, which I did not complete in the Ukraine, but in Germany. (By the way, in 1992, because of the precarious financial situation in our Dniepropetrovsk University, its lecturers did not receive a salary for three months. Professor Krakau and his colleagues from the Berlin Free University sent us packages with food and medicine. These packages helped our families to survive in the dire straits of those horrible months.)

At the same Moscow conference I met and became acquainted with a remarkable person, Jack P. Greene, professor at the Johns Hopkins University. By that time I had translated (with my expanded comments) his book *Pursuits of Happiness*. . . . I offered this translation for publication at the Moscow "Progress" Publishing House. (Unfortunately, after the collapse of the USSR in 1991, the Russian authorities rejected my translation because I was a Ukrainian, a citizen of a foreign country. Moreover, looking for profits in the world of the free market, Moscow publishers preferred to publish various American editions of pop culture: comics, pornography, horror tales, etc., but not such "scholarly" books as Professor Greene's monograph.) Of course, it was natural for me to be interested in meeting the author of my favorite books on colonial America. In Moscow during our conversation, Greene advised me to apply for a Fulbright grant to make my dream of visiting the United States come true.

Remembering that conversation, I came to the American embassy in Kiev in May, 1992. American officers directed me immediately to a Russian-speaking clerk of the United States Information Agency, who explained to me that my wish to apply for a Fulbright fellowship was commendable, but . . . . And she (as a typical representative of the Soviet bureaucratic system) frankly confessed, that my chances of obtaining a Fulbright stipend were very poor, because I was so young and my list of publications was not so impressive and long as the resumes of my senior colleagues from Kiev University. Even after the declaration of Ukrainian independence, centralizing trends in the new Ukrainian bureaucracy remained the same, Soviet ones. During the first year of existence of the Fulbright program for the Ukraine, the USIA's application forms were available only for scholars in our capital city Kiev (as they had been previously for Muscovites). Only later were a few of these forms sent to Ukrainian provincial universities. Furthermore, documents from the American embassy and the USIA were sent to Ukrainian universities too late, and then these papers were kept by the universities' authorities for a long time under their control. As a rule, ordinary scholars (like me) learned about these Fulbright documents only
after deadline dates. Conversations with the Russian clerk in the American embassy just confirmed my doubts. Unfortunately, I could not obtain more information during my first visit to that embassy.

You can imagine my surprise when in the summer of 1992 I received an official invitation from Peter Onuf, Professor at the University of Virginia, to visit the United States, using financial support from the USIA. Professor Onuf, according to the advice of Jack Greene, proposed that I take part in the conference on “Jeffersonian Legacies” in Charlottesville. So in October, 1992, for the first time in my life I visited the United States. The USIA financed my visit and provided me with air tickets. This was especially important because I could not have obtained these tickets without $1,000 in cash in Kiev’s atmosphere of corruption and bribes. For an ordinary historian with a salary of $10 per month, this sum was unreal. I remember the astonishment and indignation of the same Russian clerk, who now had to prepare a visa and tickets not for a distinguished senior scholar from Kiev University, but for me, an unknown young historian from a “small provincial” university. Moreover, she had trouble finding me to inform me about my American visa. As usual, I spent September with my students not in the university’s classroom, but in farmers’ fields, assisting them in harvesting. Our Ukrainian government directed our students to villages during harvest time. This is an element of our educational system (future intellectuals should have to work like the peasants to stay close to common folk). That’s why information about my visa and tickets reached me in a small Ukrainian village, from which it took me two days to arrive at the picturesque American town of Charlottesville.

Here, at the conference devoted to Thomas Jefferson, I met the authors of books which I had already read at Moscow libraries: Gordon Wood, Joyce Appleby, Stephen Innes, Rhys Isaac, and again Jack Greene. What surprised me most of all were the simplicity, accessibility, democracy in personal contacts, sociability, and cordiality of my American colleagues. This was amazing for me, especially in comparison with the scornful arrogance and snobbery of my senior colleagues, co-citizens from Moscow, Kiev, and Dniepropetrovsk. Even now it is hard for me to imagine that I can mix as an equal, talking and drinking with senior scholars from Kiev or the Moscow Academy of Sciences.

Another surprising thing for me, as I remember, was the accessibility of any kind of printed information at American libraries. Here I could, using the system of open stacks, choose from the shelves any book or journal, written in any language, on any topic, without any restrictions or prohibitions. Usually in Moscow libraries I was allowed to call and reserve only three or five books at a circulation desk. It took two to six (in some places 24) hours to receive those books. Moreover, until 1990 the majority of American books and also such magazines as the American Historical Review were concentrated in special secret library collections under the control of the KGB. Such books were not permitted (and as a result, not available) to the ordinary reading audience. But in America everybody can read everything.

After my research at libraries in Charlottesville, Washington, and Baltimore, for
In November, 1992, I began to study original manuscripts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Philadelphia, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. It was a tremendous experience for me. I had been used to various restrictions and limitations, prohibitions to copy documents at the Soviet archives. But here in Philadelphia I could get immediately any document I wanted. I could obtain copies of necessary documents on the same day, without days and weeks for permission to copy as in Moscow.

My colleagues from the University of Pennsylvania, Richard S. Dunn, Michael Zuckerman, and Wayne Bodle helped me adapt to a new cultural environment in Philadelphia. They invited me to take part in the seminars of the Philadelphia Center for Early American Studies at their university. During these seminars I became acquainted with for me a new form of historians' intercourse. Instead of papers in the traditional form of a boring lecture, the Philadelphia Center's seminars turned out to be serious discussions of crucial problems of early American historiography. Participants in these seminars received two or three weeks in advance the text of the debated paper. They then read and seriously prepared themselves for the debate. (For me as a foreigner it was especially important to read an English text before the discussion.) Such seminars were serious and democratic, because during these sessions all participants were equal: senior scholar or young graduate student. Careful, thorough, and meticulous discussions of presented papers occurred. Such discussions helped authors to improve the texts of presented papers and participants to enlarge their knowledge of debated problems.

In 1994, I visited the United States again, now with my family. During that year, being a Fulbright Visiting Scholar affiliated with the University of Pennsylvania, I was also awarded fellowships from the Library Company of Philadelphia, John Carter Brown Library, and Haverford College. In 1995 I was awarded a grant from the Huntington Library. All these stipends (especially the extension of my Fulbright grant through the kindness and care of my CIES supervisor Laurie Calhoun) gave me the opportunity to visit different American universities and colleges. I could compare various levels of communication and discourse of American historians at Yale and Brown Universities, at the OAH meeting in Atlanta, and so on. My meetings with American scholars resulted not only in my intellectual growth but also in the growth of my personal collection of books on early American history. (So, thanks to Emma Lapsansky, Haverford College presented me with a gift for my students at Dniepropetrovsk University: more than fifty rare books of the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, including works of Fox, Penn, Story, Chalkley, and Woolman. Richard and Mary Dunn presented me with the five volumes of the Papers of William Penn and other multivolume series of documents on colonial American history. And a company, the "Sabre Foundation, Inc." promised to ship all 149 books to the Ukraine free of charge.)

After my talks and debates with my American colleagues during seminars, conferences, and lectures I realized that the main defect, which influenced all American historiography, was the lack of a world-history perspective. That's why, not without
reason, the best sociocultural studies of colonial America, written by Bailyn, Greene, and D. H. Fischer, stressed the cultural links of American history with its "immigration seeds" from the Old World. But, unfortunately, the overwhelming majority of American historians, specialists in early American history, prefer to study narrow themes of local history, limiting their subject of research with strict chronological and spatial restrictions. It seems to me that such an approach is the result of the peculiar American mentality: Americans want to know and perceive information about their own locality first, about a township or neighborhood (their closest community), next about a county, then about a state, and at last, about the country as a whole. The localism and parochialism of historical perception and narrowness of understanding of historical progress are serious defects of most recent American historiography. That is why since 1992, the Organization of American Historians has begun to involve foreign Americanists such as myself in its activities. But the paradox is that this cooperation and collaboration have remained one-dimensional and one-sided. The ideas and theoretical approaches of foreigners are being applied to strengthen the same America-centered vision of world history that had been formerly distinctive as the "isolationist" historiography of the United States.

Living for one year in the United States and working for nine months in the historical center of Philadelphia was an unforgettably wonderful experience for my family. My wife Irina, who had visited Germany with me in 1993, marveled at the simplicity, democracy, cordiality, and openness of Americans in contrast with obvious restraint and hidden hostility to foreigners demonstrated by Germans. In the Ukraine my family has no telephone, car, or computer; even our small two bedroom apartment we must share with one drunkard, our neighbor. But in America we could afford to have everything we wanted. My son Andrei was awarded a scholarship from the Friends Select School; his first semester in America he was enrolled in the best private school of Philadelphia free of charge. The summer of 1994 he spent at the wonderful RISE summer camp at the Moses Brown School in Providence, Rhode Island, also free of charge. My family visited various states of the American East and Pacific coasts (from Georgia to Massachusetts and California), and spent weeks staying with the American families of our new American friends: Mennonite farmers from Lancaster County, Quaker intellectuals from Chester County, Presbyterian ministers from Rhode Island, and professional historians in Philadelphia. My wife confessed to me that the United States was the first country in which she felt herself free and didn't feel like a "legal alien" (as in Germany). My son felt himself at home in America, because he could read his favorite books in American libraries by A. Chekhov in Russian, Taras Shevchenko in Ukrainian, and Mark Twain in English. He could listen to his favorite music by Tchaikovsky, Mozart, Vivaldi, or "Queen"; or he could look at his favorite Egyptian mummies or medieval knights at the Metropolitan Museum in New York and the Fine Arts Museum in Philadelphia. He began to play the piano as well. Actually, his intensity of intellectual life in the United States was deeper than in his native country, the Ukraine, where his parents
Sergei Zhuk and his son Andrei at the University of Pennsylvania
had no money to visit Kiev's museums and theaters.

The main result of our family's visit to America was the collapse of our post-Soviet stereotypes. Traditional Soviet and post-Soviet propaganda inculcated in the mass consciousness of our people two images of American reality: 1) The United States was a "capitalist paradise," "the Promised Land" for those who could make money; 2) The United States was the "Kingdom of Evil," which through its culture spoiled the world. It was planning to subordinate all mankind to its economy and politics, and then to destroy all the nations of the former Soviet Union. Even nowadays nationalist and communist ideologues support such images among Ukrainian citizens. But after our visit to America we've begun to love the American people; now it's hard for us to imagine our American friends to be our enemies and "devils incarnate". I hope that our personal experience will help create a positive, true image of the Americans, who have preserved their democratic traditions and humaneness over the centuries. We'll miss especially our best American friends, our real spiritual American family, which we've found in the warm, hospitable house of historians Mike Zuckerman and Shan Holt, who shared with us not only their lodgings and meals, but their hearts and souls.
Notes
(All Russian and Ukrainian titles have been translated into English in the notes.)


9. L. Ju. Sliozkin, *The Origins of American History, Virginia, Maryland and New Plymouth, 1606-1642* (Moscow, 1978); his new books were published under the same title, with different subtitles: *Massachusetts and Maryland, 1630-1642* (Moscow, 1980); *Virginia and Maryland during the English Revolution, 1642-1660* (Moscow, 1989).

10. Sliozkin, *Massachusetts and Maryland, 1630-1642* (Moscow, 1980), 331. In the 1990s Sliozkin continued his series of "impressionistic" books. He has finished *The Origins of American History: Roger Williams* (Moscow, 1993) and plans to write a book on William Penn.


23. For more details see M. Rediker, "The Old Guard."


26. For an example of Ukrainian research work, written without reading the new American literature, and with many errors, see S. Belonozhko, "The Anglo-French Rivalry in North America during the Seven Years' War (1756-1763)" (Ph.D. diss., Dniepropetrovsk State University, 1992).