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Victor von Striedter and I attended anatomy classes taught by Professor Tonkov who served concurrently as professor at the military medical academy. We took courses in biology from Professor Shimkevich, but these were very boring because he simply read aloud from his book and showed us slides which were nothing but reproductions of illustrations in his book. We also had courses in chemistry given by the well-known scholar Chugaev, and studied physics under Ioffe who later became a member of the Academy of Sciences.

News from the front was very bad, and in Russian cities food shortages resulted in the formation of long lines in front of stores that were almost empty inside. Those who at the beginning of the war had thought that a modern war would last only a few months realized that they had been badly mistaken. In December 1916 a very important event occurred. The notorious thaumaturge Rasputin, always a subject of rumors and discussions among the people, was assassinated. This act generated more rumors which were extremely damaging to the Tsar and his family. It was clear to everyone that things could not continue going on as they had. University students were, in general, a discontented lot, and many belonged to various revolutionary organizations. We medical students did not join such groups, however, because we had so much work to do, and falling behind meant expulsion.

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Illus. 12 Petrograd University

I was still attending the university in February of 1917 when the revolution took place. On March 15 the Tsar abdicated. I must confess that the magnitude and worldwide importance of this event was completely obscured by what was to me a personal tragedy. My dog, a fox terrier, having apparently eaten a poisoned mouse, died a few days before the revolution, and I was inconsolable. This shows how immature I was at the age of nineteen! I later regarded my dog's death as an omen foreshadowing the tragedy which was to befall the nation and the dissolution and ruin of my own extended family. It was as if someone wanted to say: "Be prepared! The real tragedies lie ahead!"

A new government was formed by A. F. Kerenskii, and for a short time order was restored and the war continued. The revolution in Petrograd seemed comparatively uneventful, and there were relatively few casualties. This was one reason why many newspapers called the revolution the least bloody in human history. This was a great mistake, for only eight months later the Bolsheviks staged another revolution, and the following civil war brought devastation and bloodshed without parallel in history.

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My first year at the university ended in May 1917, and we went as usual to spend the summer in our villa in Parikkala. That summer in Finland, goods were very scarce, for there was a food shortage and it was very difficult to buy anything in the stores. I rented my motorboat to a Mr. Fettig who was the director of one of the banks in Petrograd. He and his young wife lived in a very beautiful rented villa on Lake Simpele. They hired my friend Yrjö Loikkanen to operate the motorboat and to act as their pilot because Yrjö knew the lake and all the submerged rocks and shallow places. Meanwhile, the news from Petrograd was very bad. On June 3, 1917 a real battle took place in the streets of Petrograd between the Bolsheviks and the Kerenskii troops. This so upset Fettig that he liquidated all his property in Petrograd and transferred his money to a bank in Sweden. He stayed in Parikkala until the end of the summer. One day he came to say goodbye to us as he and his wife planned to leave for Sweden the next day. We never saw them again, and soon we realized how right he was in deciding to leave Russia.

Fettig foresaw the coming disaster, but the Kerenskii government did not. Instead of concluding a separate peace with Germany and proceeding to vitally needed reforms such as agrarian reform and labor legislation, it went on fighting a war which only brought defeats.

Summer was coming to an end. In August 1917 the Russian troops of the Viipuri garrison mutinied and drowned their officers in the Gulf of Finland. This was a very frightening event. In September we returned to Petrograd because my sister had to continue in high school and I had to resume my studies at the university. But as the university was hardly functioning at all, I quit attending classes, was promptly drafted, and found myself in the Semenovskii Regiment, one of the infantry regiments founded by Peter the Great.

Order still reigned in the regiment. We marched, went through our drill formations, and were to be sent to the front right after basic training. Our dispatch orders, however, were not carried out because on October 25, 1917 (i.e., November 7 according to the present Gregorian calendar) the Bolsheviks seized power in Petrograd. The night before this takeover, our regiment had been

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ordered to occupy all bridges across the Neva River and not to let anyone across. I was standing guard at the Troitskii Bridge (named "Trinity" after a nearby church) which several platoons of our company were to defend against the Bolsheviks. We heard some gunfire in the distance, but as nothing happened around the bridge, we were sent back to our barracks. Soon thereafter, I was assigned as a clerk to regimental headquarters. My new duties exempted me from basic training, but I found the work extremely boring. I resolved at that point in my life never to work in a bank, office, or store. Any work would be better than that!

Finally, in 1918 the old army was disbanded. When we went to get our discharge papers, the line was so long that I did not bother to wait to get mine. In the end this turned out to be a stroke of luck because my name never appeared on any list of former Tsarist army members. Thus I could always state on questionnaires that I had never been in military service. I must say that this kind of deception was unavoidable with the coming of the Bolsheviks. In order to survive, people had to conceal facts, to lie about their ethnic origin, their father's occupation, and many other personal details.

After my short and inglorious military career I decided to resume my studies at the university, but now realized that medicine was not for me. I was determined that no matter how grim the job market might turn out to be, this time I was going to enroll in the Department of Oriental Languages.

I had always been interested in languages, especially in the Finno-Ugric ones, but these were only taught at the universities in Helsinki and Budapest. By that time, however, Finland was embroiled in a civil war instigated by the Russian Communists. The Reds seized Viipuri, Helsinki, and many other cities, but the new Finnish government established itself in Vaasa, a relatively small town on the Gulf of Bothnia, and resisted. It was soon greatly strengthened by the Finnish volunteers that had been fighting with the Germans against Russia, and who now returned to defend their homeland. They were well disciplined, well armed, and had been tried in battle during years of service with the German armed forces. Most Finns were opposed to Communism, and these returning

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troops were joined by large numbers of volunteers. The Finns living in the northern part of the country were especially hostile to Communism because most of them were Revivalists and regarded Communism as an anti-Christian movement. In the spring of 1918 the Germans sent a brigade under the command of General von der Goltz. He landed in Southern Finland and, together with the Finns under the command of Marshal Mannerheim, defeated the Reds.

Finland's newly won independence proved to be my loss. I was now prevented from going to Helsinki to study. Since I was not quite sure what to do, I went to Petrograd University at the end of March or early April 1918 to consult Professor Rudnev, a professor of Mongolian. Because he had married a Finn, spoke Swedish, and knew Ramstedt very well, I regarded him as someone who could give me proper advice. I discussed my situation with him and, in view of the alleged affinity of Finno-Ugric and Altaic languages, I decided to compromise and make Mongolian my primary field of study.

Rudnev was a very pleasant man. Unlike many professors who treated their students in a polite but cool manner, he received me very cordially. From the very beginning he addressed me in the familiar form and, even though I was twenty years his junior, he addressed me as Kolya, a diminutive for Nikolai, and asked me to address him in the familiar form. Of course, I addressed him in the more formal way as Andrei Dmitrievich (i.e., Andrew, son of Dmitrii). He was very pleased to learn that I spoke Finnish and obviously realized that I was a promising student. He gave me his book on Mongolian grammar and told me to read it, memorize as much as I could, and to return exactly one week later. There was no time to waste so I immediately set to work. I mastered his grammar and learned the Mongolian alphabet. When I returned a week later, Rudnev asked me to read and translate a rather difficult tale. I still remember its title, *Jayidang qar-a ere üker-tü köbegün-ü tuyuji* (The Boy Riding a Black Ox). It was a Buddhist legend where the boy turned out to be a sage engaged in a philosophical disputation, answering all questions brilliantly. It was a very difficult text and, of course, many passages of my translation were incorrect. Such was the beginning of my Mongolian studies.

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Rudnev was satisfied with my performance, and I regarded him as a good teacher, for he did not lead his students by the hand but forced them to do much of the work themselves. Rudnev had two other students at that time. One of them was N. R. Pallisen, who wore a naval officer's uniform, but he soon dropped out and went to Southern Russia where the White armies, i.e. anti-Communist forces, were being formed to fight against the Communists. I never met Pallisen again, but I later learned that he had been in Yugoslavia, and after World War II moved to Germany and became a librarian at Marburg University, remaining there until his death in the early 1950s. The other student was A. A. Kolpakov. I was very thankful to him because he managed to find a job for me. Since scholarships were non-existent in those days, I had to find some means to keep body and soul together. I would have preferred working in the evenings so that I could pursue my studies during the day. Kolpakov worked at the Office of Supply which distributed food to the population of Petrograd, supervising the issue of ration cards and the transportation of flour, grain and other foodstuffs from various parts of Russia into Petrograd. In the job which Kolpakov had secured for me, I was to keep track of grain trains coming from Siberia and the Ukraine. I monitored a constant flow of telegrams which specified freight car serial numbers, the nature of their cargo, and their location at any given time.

Unfortunately, soon after my initiation into Mongolian studies, events occurred which separated Rudnev from me. One weekend Rudnev took the train to Viipuri, as was his custom, to visit his family. That happened to be the very weekend Mannerheim's armies cut the railroad line, and Rudnev could not return to Petrograd. I never saw him again. Many years later, when I was already in Germany, I wrote him a letter and got a very friendly answer from him. After my move to the United States we continued to correspond until his death in 1958. Rudnev could not teach Mongolian in Finland because there were simply not enough students interested in Mongolian; but since he was also an excellent musician, he became a professor of piano at the conservatory. When he died I was very sorry. He was a good friend and a fine person.

Anyway, in 1918, with Rudnev unable to return to Petrograd, I had to search for another teacher. I had heard of Boris Yakovlevich Vladimirtsov. Shortly after he returned from Southern Russia, I went to see him. The Kalmucks, who lived north of the Caspian Sea, had formed their own government and had invited Vladimirtsov to become their minister of education but he refused. That turned out to be fortunate for him, for after the anti-Communist governments in various parts of Russia had been toppled, collaborators were seriously punished by the victorious Bolsheviks.

Vladimirtsov was an interesting man. First I will describe his outer appearance. He was extremely nearsighted, had a very unhealthy, grayish-yellow complexion, and he looked a little bit swollen rather than merely corpulent. He stuttered slightly and had a nervous tic. He frequently made sudden jerking movements of his head. As a scholar he was superior to Rudnev. He knew Sanskrit, Tibetan and Turkic, but only spoke Mongolian moderately well, a far cry from Rudnev who spoke it brilliantly. He was also well versed in the Western literature on Oriental subjects. He had graduated from the university in 1909 and had first gone to Mongolia and later to Paris to study under Édouard Chavannes, Paul Pelliot, the Abbé Rousselot, and the famous linguist Antoine Meillet. After a year in Paris, he shifted to London, where he was a frequent visitor to the British Museum, and personally knew Denison Ross and other famous British scholars of that time. He was witty and entertaining and had many interesting stories to tell about his experiences in Mongolia, Paris and London. I remember how one day he warned me never to assume that no one would understand you if you spoke in a rare foreign tongue. He illustrated this point by the following incident. He was standing in a crowded streetcar in Paris when it suddenly stopped and he was almost hurled down to the floor. After he let loose a stream of extremely vulgar Mongolian invective, a lady gently invited him, in Mongolian, to sit down in some space she had made for him. It just so happened that she had spent some time in Mongolia, probably as a missionary's wife, and Vladimirtsov felt mortified that she had understood his obscenities.

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At the university we read Mongolian texts, and the first one was the biography of the Mongolian saint Neyichi Toyin. He was a sixteenth-century Mongol, son of a prince, and had become a Buddhist monk and missionary as a result of the following occurrence. When Neyichi Toyin was about fifteen years old, he went with his father to hunt the wild horses which still roam across the Mongolian plains. These were not domestic horses that had become wild, but wild horses which had never been domesticated. His father shot an arrow at a pregnant mare and she collapsed. The arrow had pierced her belly and a foal fell out. The wounded mare kept licking and cleansing her newborn foal until she died. The foal did not survive, either. This made such an impression upon Neyichi Toyin that he decided to resign from this world and become a monk.

Rudnev was a full professor but Vladimirtsov was only a *dotsent*, something like an American associate professor. He was, in my opinion, much more scholarly than Rudnev, but he was younger and therefore could not be promoted, especially as there was no vacancy open for a full professor. On the other hand, Vladimirtsov was not as accurate and disciplined as Rudnev. He seldom adhered to his schedule and was always late to his classes. If he had a class at ten o'clock, he would arrive at eleven or even later, and instead of ending at twelve so that students could attend some other professor's lecture, he would go on lecturing until two so that his students often missed their next class.

Very soon I became familiar with his private life. While a *magistrant*, i.e. a candidate for the master's degree, doing research in Mongolia in 1909, he fell in love with a Mongolian girl and wanted to marry her, but a certain Burdukov, who was a merchant living in Mongolia and spoke Mongolian very well, dissuaded him. He pointed out that the nomad girl from a tent in Mongolia would be very unhappy living on the third or fourth floor of an apartment house in Petrograd, seeing only asphalt pavement all around, not to speak of the fact that her mentality made her absolutely unsuitable for marriage to a Russian professor. Vladimirtsov later fell in love with a young girl, Kapitolina Vasil'evna Vyatkina and wanted to marry her. This Vyatkina became an anthropologist and research scholar at

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the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences. For some reason she did not accept his proposal, and he remained single until 1919. In 1919 he married a graduate student from the women's university, Lidiya Melioranskaya who, incidentally, was not related to the well-known Turcologist P. M. Melioranskii. She later told me about how he had proposed to her. In 1919 the Academy of Sciences and the Hermitage Museum organized a Buddhist art exhibition in Petrograd. Various Buddhist images, statues of Buddha and art objects were exhibited, and lectures were given by such famous Buddhologists as Ol'denburg on Buddhist art, Shcherbatskoi on Buddhist philosophy, Otton Rozenberg on Buddhism in Japan, and Vladimirtsov on Buddhism in Mongolia and Tibet. The exhibition drew many people who were interested in Buddhist art and among those admiring the exhibits was Lidiya Melioranskaya. Vladimirtsov did not know her at all, but he looked at her, liked what he saw, approached her and said, "Excuse me, would you marry me?" She was taken aback by his forward manner and at first could not respond at all, but then for some reason said, "Well, of course!" After they had a chance to become acquainted, they actually did marry and later had two daughters and a son.

Vladimirtsov's lecture on Buddhism in Mongolia and Tibet was later published as a brochure. Its title read in Russian, *Buddhism in Mongolia and Tibet: A Lecture Held on September 31, 1919*. September has, of course, only thirty days. This error was typical of Vladimirtsov who was a very sloppy proofreader. Most of his works contain numerous misprints, but he always seemed more amused than chagrined when he discovered one. "Oh, here's another misprint!" he would happily exclaim. Another example of a misprint is his article on the Mongolian legends about Amursanaa, the famous rebel leader of the mid-eighteenth century. The name of one of the heroes meant, literally, Iron Heart. This name is usually translated into Russian as Iron Thought, but in Vladimirtsov's article it appeared as Iron Mouse, the Russian words for mouse (*mysh'*) and thought (*mysl'*) resembling one another. He never detected this misprint while reading the proofs, and his readers, of course, could never have guessed that the hero's real name was Iron Heart.

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Although Vladimirtsov became my teacher and I was very thankful to him for everything he did for me, I cannot help but mention that he was in one respect very different from Rudnev and all my other teachers. Everyone else supported and welcomed my plans of writing articles and presenting papers, but Vladimirtsov was not very pleased with such projects and always tried to dissuade me. When I published my article on Old Mongolian literary language in *Asia Major* in 1924,¹ Vladimirtsov was very displeased with its appearance, and even said that he had planned to write an article on this subject himself. I must say that even if he had such a plan, the subject is so vast that as many as twenty articles could have been written with no adverse effects on any of the authors. Science develops as a result of competition among different interpretations of the same subject, and out of this competition emerges the truth. Surely no single person could have done it all in one article.

Once later when I was working at the Asian Museum of the Academy of Sciences, my job being to register and catalog Mongolian manuscripts, I discovered some interesting materials which I laid aside in order to study them later at my leisure. Vladimirtsov came in and asked me where a certain manuscript of Saghan Sechen's history of the Mongols was. I answered, "It's right here. I've put it aside so that I can investigate its archaic language." Oh, I'm sorry," he said, "but you can't do that because I need it for my current work." Of course I handed the material over to him, but he obviously never touched it for he never wrote or published anything on that subject.

A still stronger example follows: One day in the early 1920s a Dagur by the name of Erdem Bilig came to Petrograd in order to study. The Dagurs are a Mongolian tribe speaking a very archaic, conservative dialect which resembles Middle Mongolian, spoken in the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries. I wanted to study the Dagur language which had never before been investigated, so I asked Vladimirtsov if I should do work with that student. "Oh," he said, "I would advise against it. It is a very uninteresting mixture of Mongolian and Manchu words. I already did some work with this man but gave it up." Consequently I never started working with Erdem Bilig.

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Several years later, during my second trip to Mongolia in 1927, I met the well-known Mongolian scholar Tsyben Zhamtsarano who was a Buryat originally from the Aga district and who had been a lecturer in Mongolian at St. Petersburg University during Tsarist times. Around 1910, however, he was stripped of his Russian citizenship and exiled to Mongolia. By 1927 he became the secretary of the Mongolian Learned Committee which later, in 1961, was renamed the Mongolian Academy of Sciences. Zhamtsarano told me that a group of Dagurs was living in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of the Mongolian People's Republic, and added, "These people speak a very archaic Mongolian language, and I think it would be a very good idea if you investigated it." I started work with those people without any qualms, feeling that I could not hurt Vladimirtsov since he had no connection with this group of Dagurs. I collected some very interesting materials which I published in 1930.² I gave Vladimirtsov a complimentary copy, and a short time later he told me, "It is an extremely interesting language. I would never have expected it to be so archaic." I thought to myself: "When I wanted to investigate that language back in the early twenties, was it not you who told me that Dagur was an uninteresting mixture of Mongolian and Manchu? Did you tell me the truth then?" Vladimirtsov, indeed, did not tell me the truth, and what his purpose actually was is anyone's guess. I cannot help but think that he was simply jealous that I might have written something as a result of my work with Erdem Bilig.

So this is how it was with Vladimirtsov. He was a brilliant scholar, but he also had his faults. Later on in 1929 he was elected a member of the Academy of Sciences, but he enjoyed his new position for only two years. He died at the age of 47 on August 17, 1931, when I was in the Selenga region of Buryatia. His sudden death was caused by his first and only heart attack. I must say that this was not too surprising, because Vladimirtsov led a very irregular life. He did not start his work day until ten or eleven at night and then worked until four or five in the morning. In order to stay awake he drank large quantities of very strong coffee laced with rum or brandy. He got up around ten every morning and around noon he went to the university or to the Academy of Sciences. He returned

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home for dinner around five. He was also a chain smoker, smoking up to two packs, each containing twenty-five papirosi. He also liked very hot, Japanese-style baths. While sitting in a bathtub filled with near boiling water, he would drink a bottle of hot port in order, as he used to say, to warm up from within. Such a life style eventually killed him. When I warned him of the dangers, he brushed my criticisms aside by saying, "Life itself is bad for our health."

Aleksei Vasil'evich Burdukov, whom I mentioned earlier, was a man with a very limited formal education, but he had read very much and had a great interest in anthropology, folklore, and languages. He collected Mongolian stories, songs and other materials, and was a self-taught researcher. He sent his materials to Kotwicz and other well-known scholars in Petrograd, and some of his articles were even published in the journal *Zhivaya Starina* (Living Antiquity), the official organ of the Russian Ethnographical Society. After the revolution Burdukov moved to Petrograd and became a teacher of colloquial Mongolian, which he spoke fluently, at the Institute of Oriental Languages. In 1933 or 1934 when there were great shortages in Leningrad, he gave about two ounces of gold dust which he had brought from Mongolia, to a lady whom he knew quite well and who was on her way to Siberia to procure food. While she was buying food and paying with the gold, she was arrested by the police that were investigating black market operations. Under interrogation she revealed that part of the gold had belonged to Burdukov. Soon thereafter Burdukov was arrested in Leningrad and was told by the secret police that he would be released the moment he handed over all the gold in his possession. As he kept maintaining that he had no more gold, he remained in jail and soon his wife was also arrested. Eventually they decided to tell the police where the gold was hidden, and they wrote a letter to their daughter, Taisiya, telling her where to find the gold and asking her to hand it over to the man sent by the secret police. The daughter, who later became my secretary at the Academy of Sciences, did as she was instructed and her parents were released from jail. When World War II began, however, everybody who had ever been arrested was taken in again, so Burdukov was arrested by the secret police in July 1941 and this

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time disappeared forever. Many years later, after Stalin's death, Taisiya published her father's memoirs, and in the preface she described what had happened to him.³

To return from this excursus on Burdukov, who was closely associated with Vladimirtsov and later with me, I will finish characterizing my university professors. Another of my teachers was the Polish scholar Władysław Kotwicz. I took Manchu and Oirat, including Kalmuck, from him. He was quite different from Vladimirtsov, for he was very quiet and spoke with such a low voice that one could hardly hear him. He was sickly by nature, a hypochondriac, and missed many classes. One day I asked his daughter Maria, the librarian at the Institute of Oriental Languages, whether her father would come that day to the university, and she answered, "No. Yesterday Father stepped into a puddle of water and got his feet wet, and today he imagines he has a cold." This sort of thing happened quite often. Kotwicz lived like a hermit in a large unheated apartment, and his only companion was his daughter. Kotwicz's wife had died of alcoholism, and Maria had had an unhappy childhood. Kotwicz was a great scholar but a strange bird, as one might say, and I wonder how he managed to bring up his little daughter. Everything was very strange in his apartment. One day I was at his apartment, with a blanket on my shoulders because of the extreme cold, and we were reading an Oirat text, probably an epic. I do remember reading one with him but perhaps not on that occasion. At any rate, I suddenly heard a loud noise above my head. I looked up and saw a crow sitting on the stove. "Oh, that crow," Kotwicz said, "I found him in the street. The poor thing was dying so I picked him up, brought him here and now he is living with us." Kotwicz left Russia in 1923 to return to his native Poland. He died in Vilnius in 1944, soon after the Soviet army had occupied the city.

My professor of Turkic languages was Aleksandr Nikolaevich Samoilovich, of Ukrainian origin and a descendant of the hetman Samoilovich. He was jovial, debonair and friendly. He was fond of good food and wine, and he told many jokes. All in all, he was the exact opposite of Kotwicz. Kotwicz did not speak Mongolian or Kalmuck at all, and Vladimirtsov spoke Mongolian rather poorly, but

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Samoilovich had a perfect command of Turkish. He also spoke Uzbek and Crimean Tatar, and had a thorough knowledge of Turkmenian. His works were numerous,⁴ and he was an excellent and very pleasant teacher. With him I read the Altai Turkic texts collected by W. Radloff,⁵ the history written by Abu'l Gazi Bahadur Khan in the Chagatai language,⁶ and the memoirs of Emperor Babur which were published in a facsimile edition by Annette Beveridge.⁷

I also began to read Orkhon Turkic texts with him, but unfortunately Samoilovich was at that time hired by Karakhan, the deputy commissar of foreign affairs, and sent to Turkey. Later Samoilovich was also sent to Turkistan to help develop the culture of the Uzbeks and other nationalities of Central Asia. During the Great Purge in 1937 Karakhan was arrested and executed, along with such Uzbek leaders as the government chairman, Faiz'ullah Khodzhaev and the secretary of the central committee of the Communist Party in Uzbekistan, Ikramzade. These officials were accused of being traitors, nationalists, and collaborators with fascist organizations. In the summer of 1938, Samoilovich was also arrested and disappeared. This happened in the health resort Kislovodsk in the northern Caucasus where my family and I were also staying. In fact, we had visited him several times. One day when we went to visit him again, he was not there, and some other vacationers living in the same health resort told us that he had been taken at night by the secret police. He must have died soon thereafter. In 1978 a memorial volume for Samoilovich was published under the title *Tyurkologicheskii sbornik 1974* (Turcological Symposium 1974) which contains, among other things, Samoilovich's biography. It informs the reader of many details of his life but does not mention where, when, and how he died. It is indeed strange to read what he was doing in this or that year and note abruptly that in 1938 he died. Unfortunately, this has happened frequently in the Soviet Union. Rehabilitated victims of the Great Purge are often honored with memorial volumes which omit the last year of their lives or the circumstances of their deaths.

I owe Samoilovich a great deal. I wrote my first book, a Yakut grammar, because he had asked me to write it. The Yakut

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publishing house had wanted a grammar and originally asked him to write it, but since he was too busy, he asked me to do it instead. The book appeared in 1926.⁸ Samoilovich was also the one who suggested that I read a paper at the first Turcological Congress in Baku in 1926. He was quite different from Vladimirtsov, who never encouraged me to write anything or to present papers at meetings of learned societies. I liked Samoilovich very much, and I missed him greatly after his disappearance.

My other teacher of Turcology was Sergei Efimovich Malov, the son of a Russian Orthodox priest. Malov was in his forties, much older than Vladimirtsov. He spoke Turkic languages fluently but with an atrocious pronunciation. Vladimirtsov used to ridicule him by saying a bear had stepped on Malov's ears. Malov, however, had a perfect theoretical grasp of the Turkic languages. He was a long-time co-worker of and the aide to the famous Turcologist Radloff. Malov knew Ancient Uighur better than anyone else in the world. He wrote excellent works about the languages of the Yellow Uighurs and other nationalities.⁹ He spoke a Northern Russian dialect which pronounced the unstressed o (=ə) as o whereas in most parts of Russia, educated people do not pronounce it this way. He was also rather eccentric. He never used the telephone because he was afraid of it, explaining that "something could suddenly jump into my ear." When he left a room where the lights were on, he would say, "Let's blow out the electricity," as if it were a candle. When he was at somebody's home, he drank wine only at the very beginning of the party because he explained, "My wife might notice that I had some wine and would command, 'Open your mouth and breathe out, you old devil! You certainly have been at it again!'" With Malov I read Ancient Uighur, specifically *Altun Yaruk* (The Sutra of the Golden Beam) as well as Modern Tatar texts. Malov died in 1957 when I was in the United States.

My third teacher of Turcology was P. A. Falev, a young man with whom I studied Osmanli Turkic and Nogay, the latter being a language he had personally investigated. I also read with him the Kazakh epic *Edige* which had been published in Arabic script. Unfortunately these studies did not last very long because he died of

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spotted fever after a journey to Turkistan in 1921. This disease was widespread in Russia at that time. Falev had gone with a group of students to Turkistan where the students were to do practical work under his supervision. He caught the disease on his return to Petrograd and died.

I also studied Tibetan under the famous Sanskritologist and Tibetologist Fedor Ippolitovich Shcherbatskoi.¹⁰ I read with him the Tibetan text of the Sanskrit work *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, written by Śāntideva. He was a very learned man and a good teacher, though perhaps a bit too demanding. His great weakness was women. He was a notorious ladies' man and behaved toward them in a brutal way, quite contrary to what one would expect of such a great scholar. I suppose that all women were just objects to him, and he had no other use for them. Once the permanent secretary of the Academy of Sciences, Ol'denburg, sent a lady stenographer to Shcherbatskoi's home to do some work with him. In no time at all she came running back, disheveled and crying that she would never go there again. A lady friend of my first wife, Nataliya, told her that once she was sitting at a dinner party next to Shcherbatskoi when he started to paw her legs and thighs. Only after she whispered to him, "Leave me alone or else I'll scream," did he stop.

Shcherbatskoi was, however, a courageous and honest man and he never hid his true beliefs. He hated everything that the Soviets called democracy. I remember that at a meeting of the Oriental Society of the Soviet Union, which bore the name of the Collegium of Orientalists, Professor Konrad, the well-known Japanologist, was presenting a paper on democratic institutions in ancient Japan. During the subsequent discussion Shcherbatskoi asked him, "Tell me, Professor, what do you call democracy?" Konrad replied, "When people have the right to meet and discuss matters, and to vote and elect," to which Shcherbatskoi retorted, "Indeed! So any fool was permitted to say whatever was on his mind." The effect of his remark was that of an exploding bomb, and everyone was afraid that Shcherbatskoi would be arrested. It is worth noting, though, that outspoken people like he were never touched by the secret police. Another man with this kind of courage

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was the great physiologist Pavlov. He was very religious and in his institute refused to treat every fifth day as a day of rest and instead insisted on celebrating Sundays.¹¹ He had even an icon hanging on the wall of his laboratory. The Soviets could do nothing against him because he was so famous.

Another professor I remember from my university years was the Semitologist Pavel Konstantinovich Kokovtsov. He was undoubtedly a great scholar and a very honest man. In 1911 a trial took place in Kiev in which a certain Mendel Beilis, who was Jewish, was accused of having committed a ritual murder of a Christian boy by the family name of Yushchinskii. Kokovtsov announced that he would like to participate in the trial as an expert on Judaism. Whereas all the other witnesses insisted on Beilis's guilt, Kokovtsov rose to declare that the Jews never committed ritual murder and indeed that their religion forbade any kind of murder. He stated that no blood was ever put into the dough for matzohs because blood would contaminate the matzohs, making them unkosher. He demanded a thorough investigation. The blood traces on the wallpaper in Beilis's room turned out to be simply filth, and the most important witness against Beilis was a prostitute, named Vera Cheberyak. She had been intimidated by the police who threatened to force her out of business if she did not testify against Beilis. The investigation also revealed that among the boy's real murderers were a member of a reactionary group and a customer of Vera Cheberyak.

In the anti-Semitic climate of Russia Kokovtsov's action demonstrates that he was a courageous, honest and decent man. He was, however, also a rather odd person. For example, when he was young he went to Palestine to study, but turned back as soon as he reached Istanbul. His excuse was that in Istanbul he had seen branches from trees lying on the streets where the wind had blown them down. He reasoned that "if such things happen in Istanbul, just think what it must be like farther on in Palestine." On another occasion, Vladimirtsov met Kokovtsov on a bridge crossing the Neva River in Petrograd. Kokovtsov was wearing one hat and carrying another in his hand. Vladimirtsov asked, "Have you bought a new hat, Professor?" "No," Kokovtsov replied, "this is an old hat but

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several days ago I saw a man walking here and the wind carried off his hat. I thought that the same could happen to me, so I now carry a spare hat with me." Kokovtsov was a bachelor and he was very much against marriage. In his opinion, a scholar should not marry because marriage interferes with his work. Thus when his student M. N. Sokolov wanted to marry, Kokovtsov said, "Don't get married. If you really need a woman, you can always go to a brothel." Sokolov, however, disregarded his advice, married, and was consequently in Kokovtsov's disfavor for a long time. Sokolov, incidentally, as well as another of Kokovtsov's students, A. P. Alyavdin, were the sons of Russian Orthodox priests, and this might be the reason why both of them were arrested in 1937 and disappeared forever. Kokovtsov tried to have them freed but without success. Kokovtsov died at an advanced age during the winter of 1941-42 while Leningrad was under siege.

One man who did not have too many eccentricities was the famous Orientalist Vasilii Vladimirovich Bartol'd.¹² He was a fine scholar and known all over the world but he was most unattractive in his appearance, being crosseyed and lame. He had once fallen from a horse while riding in Turkistan and broken his leg. The leg had not been set properly, and he remained lame for the rest of his life. Moreover, he stuttered very badly and it was almost impossible to understand him, a fact that could lead to disaster during examinations. He would flare up in rage whenever anyone asked him to repeat a question. When I was taking my final examination in the history of Oriental Studies in January 1921, he asked me three questions. I answered the first two instantly and very well, but when he asked me the third question, he began to stutter so badly that I could not possibly understand what he was saying. I dared not ask him to repeat it, so I pretended to be thinking it over and then finally said, "I'm sorry, sir, but I can't answer this question. I don't know." He then smiled and explained to me the route which Rubruck had taken in 1253 to 1255 from Europe to the Great Khan in Mongolia. I already knew all the places on Rubruck's itinerary, had even made a map of his trip, and could have answered the question easily. Still, I passed the examination with flying colors. I learned that knowledge

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and ability alone will not always lead one to his goal, but often skillful diplomacy is also needed. Later I shall mention other means which I had to use in my life, such as lying to the Soviets and Nazis.

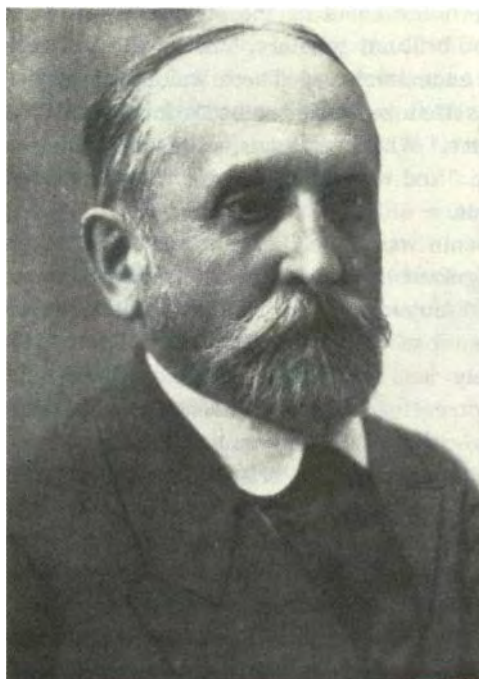
One of the great scholars and outstanding servants of the nation was Sergei Fedorovich Ol'denburg, the Permanent Secretary of the Academy of Sciences (Illus. 13). I had first met him in 1919 when I attended the Orientalist meetings which he often chaired.¹³ I have already noted some of the strange characteristics of other Orientalists and brilliant scholars, but I must say that Ol'denburg did not have such eccentricities. There was nothing strange about him except perhaps that he was absolutely incapable of appreciating a joke or anecdote. Whenever anyone finished telling a joke, Ol'denburg would ask, "And what happened then?" because he had, as usual, missed the point.

When Lenin was alive, i.e., until 1924, Ol'denburg's authority was fully recognized by the Soviets. He met Lenin on a few occasions, such as discussions of the Academy's budget and food supplies for scholars, many of whom were starving. Lenin always listened to him attentively and whenever possible, Lenin always fulfilled Ol'denburg's entreaties. In 1922 Ol'denburg and Shcherbatskoi were permitted to travel abroad and organize the exchange of information and publications. There, in Paris, Ol'denburg met his son, Sergei Sergeevich, who had played an important role in the Constitutional Democratic Party (commonly abbreviated in Russian as KD) and who had emigrated after the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks. After his return from Paris, Ol'denburg again met Lenin. After they had concluded their business, Lenin asked him: "Did you visit your son while in Paris?" and when Ol'denburg said that he had, Lenin replied: "I fully understand you." This episode shows how immensely more human Lenin was than Stalin who would have severely punished Ol'denburg.

Another excellent scholar and teacher was Lev Vladimirovich Shcherba, a general linguist with a specialty in Russian languages and its history.¹⁴ He was a friendly person who often invited his colleagues, graduate students, and promising undergraduates to parties held at his home to celebrate Tat'yana's Day (January 18) on

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which day St. Petersburg/Petrograd University had been founded in 1818. Like Samoilovich, Ol'denburg and Bartol'd, Shcherba seemed to be well disposed toward me.



Illus. 13. Sergei Fedorovich Ol'denburg

One of the first scholars I met, right at the beginning of my university studies, was Nikolai Yakovlevich Marr, who was famous as an excellent philologist and connoisseur of the Armenian and Georgian languages.¹⁵ The son of a Scottish gardener and a Georgian

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woman, he spoke Georgian like a native, because it was his mother tongue. Later in the twenties he became famous as the creator of his "new linguistics," according to which the vocabulary of all languages in the world consisted of various combinations of four original elements. At the beginning of this craze, Vladimirtsov attended most meetings of Marr's seminar and I joined Vladimirtsov. Later, however, both of us realized that Marr's seminar had nothing to do with linguistics. It was merely a forum for his own ravings, so we stopped attending these meetings. In spite of this, I remained on friendly terms with Marr who was certainly a gentleman and a decent and honorable person. His followers and adepts were, however, mostly scoundrels who denounced as counterrevolutionaries and anti-Marxists those who disagreed with Marr. It is greatly to Marr's credit that he himself managed to extricate quite a number of people from the clutches of the secret police. As a half-Georgian and speaker of excellent Georgian, Marr got acquainted with Stalin and conversed with him in the latter's native tongue. He was certainly in Stalin's great favor.

Another of my teachers was Lev Yakovlevich Shternberg, the professor of ethnography. He was to play yet another role in my life which I will discuss in more detail later on.

These were the great persons in whose shadow I was working at the university. Unfortunately, there were also some people who were not so good. To this category of human refuse belonged Evgenii Dmitrievich Polivanov, a brilliant linguist and author of first-rate works on Japanese, Turkic, comparative Altaic linguistics, and other subjects.¹⁶ Immediately after the October Revolution he became the deputy minister of foreign affairs under Trotskii. One of Polivanov's first acts was to evict two very elderly professors from their homes at the official residence apartments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These two unfortunate men were V. A. Zhukovskii, professor of Iranian studies and director of the School of Oriental Languages at the Foreign Ministry, and Professor N. I. Veselovskii, an Asian historian. Veselovskii was old and in poor health and, having been literally thrown out into the street during winter and having been forced to leave all his personal property in

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that apartment, he very shortly caught pneumonia and died. Zhukovskii also died soon after his eviction. Polivanov's colleagues regarded these evictions as acts of personal revenge. Polivanov was also an opium addict, an alcoholic, and a dissolute person. When living in the university dormitory he often caroused and brawled and once tried to break into the bedrooms of female students. There was a lot of yelling and screaming while he was trying to get past the barricaded door of the girl's section of the dormitory. The Russian novelist Veniamin Kaverin, who at that time was a student of Oriental languages, described Polivanov as the prototype for the main character in his novel *Skandalist* (The Scandalmonger).¹⁷ Later Polivanov moved to Uzbekistan and eventually for some time did research and teaching in Moscow. There he collided with Marr's followers, attacked Marr's theory in his publications, before returning to Uzbekistan. He was arrested there in 1937 and died in jail, unable to withstand being suddenly deprived of drugs. His death was a severe loss to the scholarly world, for in spite of his evil habits, his atrocious behavior, and cruelty toward several people, he was an excellent scholar. I once compared him to a jewel dropped into a cesspool: even when it becomes filthy and polluted, a jewel is still a jewel.

Having discussed some of my professors, I shall now proceed to describe the living conditions after the revolution.