

book, that a distribution of the state grain reserves could have saved as many people from starvation as he calculated. It also turned out that help was actually being distributed fairly early to starving communities in 1933. Conquest himself did not explicitly argue that Stalin had planned genocide against the Ukrainian peasantry. However, interest groups in Canada and the USA used his data to promote this interpretation of events in 1933 Ukraine, and even held official memorial ceremonies of this genocide. In later debates with the British historians Robert W. Davies and Stephen G. Wheatcroft, Conquest explicitly, in writing, denied that he ever regarded the 1932-1933 events in the Ukraine as premeditated “genocide”.

On the whole, the plethora of evidence on the 1932-1933 famine in the Soviet Union has now widened to such an extent that it is possible to sort out the better from the less reliable testimonies collected in Conquest’s book. The theme itself still has, no doubt, a high degree of relevance, since the Ukrainian political leadership has decided to legally formulate a certain interpretation of events, and to make it illegal to pronounce other interpretations in the Ukrainian republic.

TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, Robert Conquest and a whole cohort of Soviet specialists in Great Britain and the United States were themselves unwitting victims of the propaganda image of the Soviet Union that they had created in the early Cold War period. The perceived threat of further communist advances into Europe and Asia called forth an enormous information flow, directed both at the “captive peoples” under communist regimes and at their own citizens in the West. The dominant description of the Stalinist era showed 5-10 million peasants as victims of collectivization in 1930-1931 alone, followed by the famine in 1932-1933 and the Great Terror wave in 1937, all adding up to such astronomical figures that a rational analysis of the components could be dismissed as “Gulag-denying” just as horrendous “Holocaust-denying”. The Soviet police state’s attitude to and handling of the Stalin question in the 1970s continued to provide support for the dominant perspective on Soviet communism. Too much credence was then given to testimonies and assessments by the “dissidents”, the lucky few Soviet citizens

who dared to voice independent views on social questions and on history, or the exiled writers who were free to publish as they wished in the West.

The early Cold War descriptions evolved and took on a more sophisticated form with time. But even in the mid-1980s, most textbooks on Soviet history used at American universities were impregnated with clichés from Cold War propaganda. As a further consequence of the Cold War conditions of studies of the USSR, many of the agendas for research into the former Soviet Union that were formulated in the 1990s by Western scholars reflected their prejudiced images. We have had to wait another decade for a true, scholarly, more dispassionate attitude towards the grim historical realities that were indeed hidden for all, behind the Iron Curtain.

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A sense of moral superiority. Russian intellectuals

**Laurie Manchester
Holy Fathers, Secular
Sons. Clergy,
Intelligentsia and
the Modern Self in
Revolutionary Russia.**

Northern Illinois University
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THE RUSSIAN INTELLIGENTIA emerged historically as an outcome of the paradoxes of modernization. The *intelligenty* were “the offspring of the Petrine service nobility imbued with Western education and cultural values and dedicated to the service of the community’s welfare”, Marc Raeff claimed.¹ According to Raeff, they had no possibilities of expressing themselves freely and playing an active role in society, which turned them against the state that had created them. This highly regarded theory has been challenged – or rather broadened – by Laurie Manchester, an Arizona State University professor, in her latest book. In this work, the problem of the intelligentsia is seen from an entirely new perspective. The focal point is the emergence of the “modern self”, and Manchester takes *popovichi*, secular sons of the Orthodox priests, as role models of “self-made” modern men.

Manchester’s work is extremely interesting not only for the new definition of the intelligentsia offered, but also for the insights she gives into the closed clerical estate, and for her presentation of its little-known cultural heritage. The study itself is based on the personal writings of *popovichi*: autobiographies, unpublished diaries, correspondence with their families, even suicide notes. The scope of the research is quite impressive – Manchester analyzed the personal writings of 203 *popovichi* that were scattered across various Russian archives.

IN THE FIRST CHAPTER of the book, Manchester deconstructs myths and prejudices concerning the clergy and their offspring. The hostility toward them was reinforced by the closed character of their social estate. Most of the prejudices had to do with their alleged ignorance, depravity, greed, and drunkenness. The lack of knowledge about the clergy was an underlying cause of the tendency to turn them into the “proximate other”, argues Manchester. In contrast to reigning popular opinion, shared by Herzen and other famous Russian intellectuals of noble origin, Manchester depicts the clergy as the only social estate in Imperial Russia that enjoyed independent courts, as well as its own institutions and educational system.

The clergy’s view of other social

Continued. A sense of moral superiority

estates, however, was itself not without generalizations and superstitions. They considered themselves to be a sacred estate, whereas other estates were seen as sinful and corrupt. The most evil of all was the nobility, and the reason for this was their incompetence in performing the duties that were imposed on them – and for their misuse of the power they were given as Russia’s ruling class.

After leaving their clerical estate for secular careers, *popovichi* were intent on overturning Russian society. However, the image of these intellectuals, as for example presented in Ivan Turgenev’s *Fathers and Sons* or in *The Devils* by Fyodor Dostoevsky, does not fully reflect the cultural changes that occurred in Russia in the post-reform period. Manchester observed that “[t]he ‘new men’ of the 1860s – whom all *popovichi* came to represent – were indeed rebelling against noble-dominated intelligentsia of the 1840s, but these men were not their fathers”. Their “holy fathers” were the *popovichi*’s consciously chosen role models.

THEIR OWN CLERICAL heritage remained an ideal for them. They were defining themselves throughout their lives and reestablishing links with the community they came from. According to Manchester, this act of making choices, of evaluating the tradition, choosing whether to stay religious and what to believe in, marks *popovichi* as modern subjects. Besides, what made *popovichi* act as modern subjects was their self-education or their being self-made men, as well as their ability to express critical thought, which they brought acquired in seminars. Manchester does describe, however, the brutality of life in the bursa (a “collective term for both primary and secondary levels of ecclesiastical education, at the church school and seminary”); nevertheless she points out that later in life *popovichi* fashioned themselves as martyrs, not victims of violence. The process of introspection encouraged by the clerical manuals and Orthodox tradition was the engine of a striving for self-perfection.

Nevertheless, single-mindedness of purpose seems to be the most characteristic feature of *popovichi*: none of them could but pursue just one goal, be it political, professional, or personal. In the domain of personal life – love could only be a perfect, divine sentiment; in science – *popovichi* were so dedicated

to their scholarly careers that they became actual founding fathers of Russian academia; and finally in politics – most of them were “above the political”, believing to know better the way toward progress or salvation than any political party.

The study presented in the book makes it evident that *popovichi* remained a subgroup within the Russian intelligentsia and at the same time also exerted a powerful influence on the character of other *intelligenty*. In order to explain this coexistence, Manchester points out the proximity of some of the objectives *popovichi* and nobles shared, first of all the dedication to service and the welfare of the community (for *popovichi*, this derived from a secularized conception of the calling for the ordination). Moreover, *popovichi*, like the nobility, were influenced by Western ideas, for instance the concept of romantic love. As for other non-noble members of the intelligentsia, *popovichi* shared their anti-aristocratic feelings.

It was the sense of moral superiority that gave *popovichi* a dominant position, as a role model, within the intelligentsia. It wasn’t simply because they were born into the sacred estate that they felt a moral supremacy over the nobles, but also because they belonged to traditional (or “authentic”, as opposed to “imitated”) culture, and were brought up alongside the *narod* (the common people, folk or masses).

The clerical model of values was defined not by contrast with the West, but with westernized nobility. The dispute between Slavophiles and Westernizers was a discourse within the noble culture, hence, *popovichi* were little (if at all) interested in the question of the nation’s cultural achievements and its stature in relation to other nations.² They did not feel the need to define their national identity or answer the question of what the “Russian way of life” was, since they perceived themselves as representatives of genuine Russian *narod*, something the noble intelligentsia knew nothing about. Manchester argues that the *popovichi* did not take any side in that noble-dominated discourse (p. 213) – as the example of Sergei Soloviev shows.

THEIR HIGH IDEAS WERE met with rather lowly reality, authoritarianism, an essentialist vision of other social estates, a patriarchal model of education, a sense of superiority – and all of this contributed to the new, anti-materialistic and anti-pluralistic discourse (p. 215). Manchester does see the potential for violence in the *popovichi*’s ethos, but does not equate the *popovichi*’s cultural background with the Orthodox tradition. Such a connection leads to the conclusion that after the revolution, the Orthodox confession was simply replaced by the faith in the final conclusion of the Communist ideal, she contradicts the interpretation of the origins of Russian Communism popularized by Nikolai Berdaev. However, there are some analogies between *popovichi* and Bolsheviks. It seems that these similarities could be the subject of further clarifications.

In his autobiography, Andrzej Walicki wrote that in the 1950’s he considered the Slavophile-Westernizers

dispute to be the real melting pot of ideas, a starting point for understanding Russian culture, which was diminished by Soviet scholarship. Therefore, bringing the Slavophiles-Westernizers debate “back” into scholarly discussion was to him an antidote for mendacious Soviet version of history. Since then, the field of Russian intellectual history has been dominated by research on this topic, which is still considered a central issue in Russian intellectual history. However, both Slavophiles and Westernizers were of noble origin and little attention has been paid so far to the non-noble educated elite. As Manchester points out, the word “popovich” was not in use until very recently. Hence *Holy Fathers, Secular Sons*, which is dedicated to the phenomenon of *popovichi*, offers an entirely new perspective for Russian cultural studies and the history of the Russian intelligentsia.

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