

## The champion of the new Russian right.

# The Closing of the Russian Mind

BY LIAH GREENFELD

Since the early 19th century, Russian thought has tended to one of two forms: it has been Westernist or Slavophile. Both Westernism and Slavophilism are expressions of Russian patriotism, both are reactions to Russia's sense of inferiority toward the West. Westernists proposed to follow the West, in order to achieve equality with it, and eventually to overcome it. Slavophiles recommended forgetting about the West: it was a degenerate society, its virtues masked great vices, and Russia's apparent inferiority, its lack of political and economic institutions, was in fact an advantage.

These two currents have followed a cyclical pattern since they first emerged in the 1830s and 1840s. In moments of optimism, when restructuring society according to the Western model seemed possible, a Westernist perspective dominated. Russia would boldly announce its decision to change, and Slavophilism would retreat into the background. But the failure to change (for whatever reason) discredited Westernism, and Slavophilism surged to the fore.

In fact, Slavophilism and Westernism have often not been clearly distinguishable. The same people could be Westernists in one period of their lives and Slavophiles in another. The Westernizer Herzen (who ended as a Slavophile) wrote, upon the deaths of the Slavophiles Aleksei Khomiakov and Konstantin Aksakov:

Yes, we were their opponents, but very strange opponents: we had *one love*, but not *an identical one*. Both they and we conceived from early years one powerful, unaccountable, physiological, passionate feeling, which they took to be a recollection, and we a prophesy, the feeling of boundless, all-encompassing love for the Russian people, Russian life, the Russian turn of mind. Like Janus, or like a two-headed eagle, we were looking in different directions while a single heart was beating in us.

Westernism asserted itself in the Revolution of 1917. Slavophilism, which

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never died, was kept under wraps by the state committed to Marxism and intolerant of ideological confusion. At certain periods Slavophile sentiments were allowed more leeway than at others, and occasionally (during and after World II) they were even encouraged. It is important to remember that at all times Westernism in Soviet Russia was quite Slavophile anyway. Only certain expressions of Slavophilism (such as religion) were suppressed; other expressions (such as the veneration of folklore) were often cultivated. Meanwhile, the aggressively Westernist agenda of the Revolution—to establish world communism, with Russia as the leader of the Western nations—was allowed to die slowly. Who cared in the period of “stagnation” whether Russia was “a European state”?

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*Russophobia*  
by Igor Shafarevich  
(published by  
the Union of the Russian People)

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This changed with Mikhail Gorbachev. He has declared himself a Westernist. In his book, *Perestroika*, which appeared in 1987, he insisted that the “U.S.S.R. is a European State.” He also announced his resolution to catch up with the West, to achieve, as the Russians say, “world standards.” As part of his Westernizing effort, he instituted *glasnost*, which has meant, among other things, the resurrection of Slavophilism—at precisely the moment that Gorbachev set out to revitalize Westernism.

As Gorbachev encounters difficulties, his Westernism, any Westernism, becomes unpopular. (See “From Russia with Hate” by Walter Laqueur, page 21.) One of the most striking phenomena in the Soviet Union today is the vigor of nationalist sentiment everywhere in the vast empire. In Russia itself, it takes on an unmistakably Slavophile, xenophobic, and menacing form. In the last year, works that exemplify this new but not-so-new Slavophile thought have begun to appear in the official press. And the more frequently they appear, the more unrestrained their language becomes.

One of the most articulate examples of

this literature is *Russophobia* by Igor Shafarevich. Shafarevich is a famous mathematician, a corresponding member of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, a dissident writer himself, and—what is most disturbing—a founding member of the Committee on the Defense of Human Rights in the U.S.S.R. His book was written roughly a decade ago, and first appeared in samizdat in the last two years. Its significance was immediately recognized by readers of different persuasions, and in late 1988 and early 1989 it was published in installments in three émigré journals. It was offered as a welcome sign of national revival by *Veche*, the organ of the Union of the Russian People (based in West Germany and dubbed “the new black hundreds” by another Russian Orthodox publication in the West), and as a warning by two liberal publications with largely Jewish audiences, *22* and *Vremia i My*.

At the same time, the Union of the Russian People published Shafarevich's opus as a book. Several months after the book's appearance in the West, a slightly shortened version of *Russophobia* was published in the pages of *Nash Sovremennik* (No. 6, 1989), which is the official organ of the Writers Union of the Russian Republic. Championing the piece, its editors wrote that the years that have elapsed since the completion of the essay in the early 1980s have not in any way diminished its relevance.

The goal of *Russophobia*, declares Shafarevich, is to explain the reasons for the emergence in contemporary Russia of a certain pervasive intellectual current: the hatred of Russia. Its emergence is marked, he thinks, by the appearance in samizdat of essays by two dissidents, G. Pomeranz and Andrei Amal'rik, at the end of the 1960s. Thanks to emigration during the following decade, *Russophobia's* center of gravity shifted to the West, where the views of its representatives are now expressed in the émigré press and inform “the majority of the works of contemporary Western specialists in Russian history.” (Of the latter Shafarevich cites only one example, *Russia under the Old Regime* by Richard Pipes.) The writings of Russophobes are pernicious, he says. They express “the ideology of an active, significant current. This current already dominates public opinion in the West. . . . At a certain moment it can exert a decisive influence on the history of our country.”

Shafarevich starts by refuting the claims of Russophobes with the help of “concrete arguments.” To the allegation that Russian history has been characterized by “slavish psychology,” he retorts that “Pushkin, for example,” thought

differently. He counters the observation that Russians are not sympathetic to other peoples and tend to blame "Tatars, Greeks, Jews" rather than themselves for the state of their society with the observation that hostility to foreigners is not peculiar to Russians. What is peculiar to them, rather, is spiritual independence, which compares well with some Western, allegedly liberty-loving nations. The claim that Russians love strong government is answered with historical evidence to the effect that the concept of a totalitarian state, far from being born in Russia, was created in the West (by Hobbes). Finally, Shafarevich refutes the view that the Revolution of 1917 represented a natural continuation of earlier Russian development, and was an expression of indigenous traditions such as "Russian Messianism," by pointing out that messianism was invented by Jews, while socialism was imported into Russia from the West by émigrés in the 19th century. "It was a payment, so to speak, for the entrance of Russia into the sphere of new Western culture."

Shafarevich then broadens his attack, questioning the veracity of the Russophobes. They point to the cruelties of Russian history. Why don't they consider the behavior of King David, of Cromwell in Ireland, of "god-fearing puritans" slaughtering Indians in North America, not to speak of American slavery, the French Revolution, and the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre? No, the suspicion of Russia conceals an ulterior motive. "We are here dealing . . . with journalistic propaganda. . . . All propaganda has a certain PURPOSE. . . . What is the purpose of all this literature, why does someone wish to perpetuate the view that *Russians are a people of slaves, admiring cruelty and groveling before strong government, hating everything foreign and hostile to culture, that Russia is an eternal seedbed of despotism and totalitarianism, dangerous for the rest of the world?*"

To answer this question, Shafarevich suggests, one has to look to the Russophobes' views of contemporary Russian reality and its future. Russophobes are entirely unsympathetic to Russian nationalism and stress the necessity of emulating the Western democracies. Shafarevich castigates Russophobes for simplifying social reality and reducing Russia's choices to "European democracy" or authoritarianism. He rejects the former. According to Shafarevich, democracy is

not natural. Transition to it was accompanied by a torturous and bloody cataclysm; evidently, some violence during the natural historical process is necessary. Such was the civil war in England. In France, civil war and terror were only the beginning. . . . Our attempt to institute this regime in February 1917 was unsuccessful.

In Germany such attempts, realized in the Weimar Republic, led, as a reaction to it, to National Socialism. . . . Plato has written that democracies degenerate into tyrannies. He, like Aristotle, believed that unlimited popular sovereignty cannot be considered a form of political regime at all. Edmund Burke, assessing the early stages of the French Revolution, wrote that unlimited democracy is as despotic as unlimited monarchy. Yet contemporary Western democracies are wholly guided by the principle of unlimited popular sovereignty: every decision accepted by the majority of the population is [considered] legal.

No, says Shafarevich, even Russophobes cannot be so naive (so "mentally retarded") as to seriously desire the es-

tablishment of such a system. They must have another motive. This real motive is "the irritation bred by the thought that Russia can SEEK some ways of ITS OWN in history." Shafarevich accuses the Russophobes of a

desire to deny the possibility that the people will settle on a way of its own choosing (chosen not by secret vote, of course, but through its historical experience). They dream of transforming Russia into a mechanism, a robot deprived of all elements of life . . . and controlled by a program fabricated god knows where and fed to it. Democracy is this "program," the "controlling mechanism," which has no organic connection with this country.

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Apparently moved by his recent popularity, and by the general atmosphere of *glasnost*, to take the occupation of publicist seriously, Shafarevich articulated this idea in another essay that appeared in July in *Novy Mir*, the loudspeaker of *perestroika*. There, in a work titled "Two Roads to the Same Abyss," he likened Western democracy to the Stalinist period in Russian history, to which, in his opinion, it is at least equal in cruelty. (In the West, the cruelty is covert, and directed against foreign rather than native populations.) Instead of imitating this irredeemable regime, he proposes to return to the blessed world of agrarian society and the Russian commune. Reading this essay, one gets an eerie feeling of traveling 150 years backward in time. Shafarevich's Slavophilism is so authentic it could be mistaken for the original.

The ideas of the Russophobes, according to Shafarevich, reflect a philosophy. Should we consider society as an organism or a mechanism, as a living thing or as dead matter? The choice between these two alternatives, he says, "forms people of two different psychological types. Adopting the latter [as Russophobes obviously do], a person becomes a demiurge, a little god, and ultimately a rapist [*nasil'nik*]. It is thus that a society emerges, lacking all freedom, whatever democratic attributes this ideology might display."

It was Augustin Cochin, in his studies of the French Revolution in the early 20th century, who first discerned a specific social or spiritual stratum that he called the "Little People," which lived in its own world, separate and unconnected to the experience of the People as such. "One could say," writes Shafarevich about Cochin's idea, that this was "an 'anti-people' among the People." This "wonderful theory" explains how regimes are perverted, seduced away from the desires of the majority of the people. Apparently, in every period of crisis in the life of peoples, "Little Peoples" among them emerge, whose aspirations and values go against the aspirations and values of the People.

He turns, of course, to the "Little People" in Russia. They include members of the radical intelligentsia from the 1860s on and the Russophobes of today, among whom Shafarevich singles out Alexander Yanov, Pomeranz, and Amal'rik. All the characteristics of the "Little People," that alien body, that cancer in the organism of the nation, are manifest in their case. Shafarevich quotes from Pomeranz: "The place of intelligentsia is always in between destinations. . . . Spiritually all contemporary intellectuals belong to a diaspora. We

are nowhere complete aliens. We are nowhere complete natives." This, Shafarevich comments, "perfectly expresses the disposition of 'rootless individuals,' who compose the 'Little People.'"

The "Little People" of today are remarkably similar to those who existed in Russia at the time of the Revolution. Like Stalin and Zinoviev, contemporary Russophobes are most of all concerned about the problem of Russian "chauvinism." They compare current emigration with the emigration of "hope" before 1917, creating the myth that the dissidents who left were forced to leave, when in fact they begged for exit visas. Equally revealing of their true nature is

that amazing quality, that [they] all too frequently concern themselves with the problems of MINORITIES. Thus they are incensed about the question of freedom of emigration, which is pertinent perhaps only to hundreds of thousands of people. . . . In the area of nationalities, the fate of Crimean Tatars enjoys more attention than the fate of Ukrainians, and the fate of Ukrainians more than that of Russians. . . .

Who are these "Little People" in the heart of the Russian nation? They call themselves "dissidents" and "intelligentsia," but Shafarevich brushes these terms aside. How, he asks, can we regard as "dissidents," for example, such people as Yanov or Shragin, who, while they lived in Russia, were typical "workers of the ideological sector," or "especially R. Pipes"? How on earth, one wonders, is it possible to consider this Harvard historian one of the Russian "Little People"? The answer to this seemingly perplexing question is soon clear. A bond of blood links Pipes to other Russophobes: Pipes, though an American, is a Jew.

We have arrived at the juicy part of Shafarevich's treatise. "The hatred against one nation is most certainly connected to the acute sense of one's belonging to another one." Thus he is moved to ask:

WHOSE national sentiments, then, are reflected [in Russophobia and the desire to make Russia a democracy]? For anyone acquainted with the reality of our country, the answer is beyond doubt. There is only one nation of whose concerns we hear almost every day. Jewish national emotions shake both our country and the whole world, influencing disarmament talks, trade policy, and international connections of scientists. . . . The "Jewish Question" has acquired an incomprehensible power over the minds of people, eclipsed the problems of Ukrainians, Estonians, Armenians, and Crimean Tatars, while the existence of a "Russian Question" is not recognized at all.

In a rhetorical turn, Shafarevich pro-

poses that we accept an equation between the "intelligentsia" and the "Little People." The Jews themselves stress that they are a central element in the Russian intelligentsia, he says, and triumphantly completes his syllogism: thus the Jews themselves acknowledge that they are the alien "Little People." He quotes Pomeranz again: "I would like to see even Israel not a purely Jewish State, but a refuge for every 'deportee,' for every person who has lost his motherland, a center of international diaspora." It is interesting to know who these "deportees" are, Shafarevich comments sarcastically; they are certainly "not the Arab refugees from Palestine. . . . The image of Israel as a capital or a Vatican, the haven of an 'international diaspora' of 'rootless' individuals, rather corresponds to the concept of the 'Little People,' which in our epoch finds itself under the dominant influence of Jewish nationalism."

But why are the Jews "imbued with such irritation, not to say hatred, against Russia, Russian history, and Russians in general?" The answer again is evident—so academician Shafarevich tells us—if we take into account "the problem that every work of Russophobe literature touches on, in one way or another: WHAT WAS THE INFLUENCE ON THE FATE OF RUSSIA OF THE UNPRECEDENTED INFLUX OF JEWISH NATIONAL FORCES INTO THE POLITICAL LIFE—DURING EXACTLY THE PERIOD OF THE GREATEST CRISIS IN RUSSIAN HISTORY?" Truly, Shafarevich says, history shows no other case in which members of the Jewish population of a country had such a tremendous influence on its development. America especially, warns Shafarevich (momentarily posing as a friend of the West), should heed the story of Russia's relationship with the Jews, for "in America . . . the 'lobby' of Jewish nationalism has gained such unaccountable influence that fundamental political decisions are affected by the interests of the numerically small Jewish population."

Shafarevich understands that the subject is delicate, but he does not flinch. He intends to resist a "deeply rooted, internalized inhibition," according to which "any thought that somewhere in some period actions of some Jews harmed other peoples, even any objective study which does not from the start rule out such possibility, is considered reactionary, not intellectual enough, impure." The Jews use anti-Semitism as a weapon:

Anyone knows that anti-Semitism is dirty, uncultured, that it is a shame of the 20th century (and of other periods too). It has been explained by barbarism, by the underdevelopment of capitalist relations—or, conversely, by the stagnation of capitalism—or else by the envy of the less talented toward a more talented na-

tion... But nobody has ever explained what one would think should be the starting point: What is it, anti-Semitism, what does this word refer to? In fact, the question itself is a victim of that inhibition: not to allow, even as a thought, that actions of some Jewish groups, personalities could have detrimental effects on others... [The Jews use] anti-Semitism exactly as a device to stir emotions, consciously ignoring logic.

Shafarevich will not be silenced by this cheap trick: he is going to say what he has to say, anti-Semitism or not.

What did the Jews do to Russia? For a start, they were overrepresented among those who opposed the old Russian czarist order. In the 1870s the situation was not particularly grave; the leadership of the radical group The People's Will included only four Jews, "which [naturally], after the assassination of Alexander II, led to outbursts of popular indignation, directed against the Jews." The situation changed in the 1880s, and after the Revolution the Jews could be found "in every corner and on all levels of power." "One is struck by the especial concentration of Jewish names during the most painful moments, among the organizers and executors of actions that changed life in a particularly abrupt fashion and contributed to the disintegration of historical traditions and the destruction of historical roots." The Jews were "amazingly" numerous among the personnel of the Cheka (simply defined, the organization responsible for shooting persons who failed to demonstrate sufficient sympathy toward the Revolution). The characteristic Jewishness of the Bolshevik executioners is most conspicuous in the execution of Nicholas II:

This ritual action symbolized the end of centuries of Russian history, so that it can be compared only to the execution of Charles I in England or Louis XVI in France. It would seem that representatives of an insignificant ethnic minority should keep as far as possible from this painful action, which would reverberate in all history. Yet what names do we meet? The execution was personally overseen by Yakov Yurovskii, who shot the Czar; the president of the local Soviet was Beloborodov (Vaisbart); the person responsible for the general administration in Yekaterinburg was Shaya Goloshchekin. To round out the picture, on the wall of the room where the execution took place was a distich from a poem by Heine (written in German) about King Balthazar, who offended Jehovah and was killed for the offense.

But the real significance of the Jewish menace, for Shafarevich, lies elsewhere:

The most fatal characteristic of this whole period, which may be attributed to the steadily increasing Jewish influence, was that behind purely liberal, Western or international phraseology hid anti-national tendencies... Both liberal and revolutionary activists of Jewish nationality were under the influence of mighty nationalistic sentiments... The thought that political turmoil may serve as an instrument for the achievement of national goals is not foreign to the Jewish consciousness.

Such Party activists (evidently Jews in spirit) as Bukharin or Stalin were known to insist upon what the former called "greater concessions to national movements."

In their hatred of Russia, and in their other liberal and Westernist sentiments, the Jews are moved by their own, Jewish, nationalism. But the question remains: Why do the Jews hate Russia so much? It is to this question that Shafarevich turns in the last part of his work. He believes that this hatred is "related to the faith in 'the Chosen People' and in the world dominance to which it is destined." The "most obvious reason" for it is, however, the "two-thousand-year-long isolation" of the Jews. This isolation, he says, was "not forced, but chosen voluntarily, long before the destruction of the Temple." Having chosen to live in such isolation, the Jews "conceived of the rest of the world as *tref* [unkosher], as a source of infection and sin... Well known are the pronouncements from Talmud... which from many points of view explain that a person of another religion cannot be considered human... [that non-Jews] are animals with human faces, etc., etc." "What an indelible trace such education, beginning in childhood and continuing for 20 centuries," he exclaims, "would leave in one's soul!"

Shafarevich proceeds to present expressions of Jewish "wickedness and rancor" toward other peoples throughout their history. That these are, quite obviously, reactions to the traumas of oppression and persecution, Shafarevich does not see. He is so blind to the historical truth, in fact, that he cannot spot it in the very examples he cites. For instance, "Martov [Tsederbaum], recalling the fear he experienced as a three-year-old child during a pogrom [the crowd was dispersed by Cossacks before it had reached Tsederbaum's house], reflects: 'Would I be what I became, if on the pliable young soul the Russian reality had not left its rough stamp...?'"

And so on, and so on. To compare the innuendos of Shafarevich to medieval anti-Jewish polemics would be almost to insult the latter. His style of anti-

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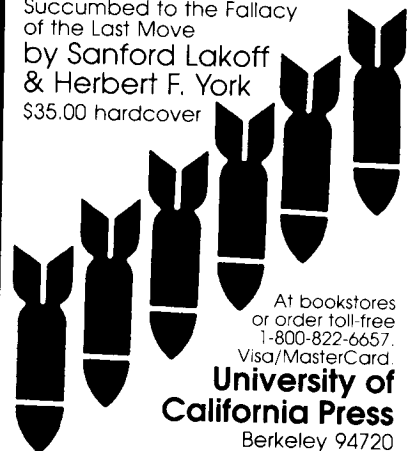
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Semitism would do credit to a Rosenberg; and indeed, at one point our Russian patriot is reminded that he has co-believers among National Socialists in Germany. This is the closest he ever comes to mentioning the Holocaust. "One has to listen frequently to the following argument," he says, "that many of the actions and sentiments of the Jews can be understood, if one recalls how much they had to experience. For example, some of Bialik's poems were written in reaction to a pogrom. . . . The question put this way hardly makes any sense. Does the humiliation of Germans by the Peace of Versailles justify the actions of National Socialism?" For our defender of human rights, the pogroms and the death camps were quite comparable to the German experience of humiliation by a peace treaty.

Shafarevich concludes that the Jewish manipulation of the national fate of Russia—that is, their desire to make it a Western-type democracy—will inevitably lead to "the new and the last catastrophe, after which, probably, nothing at all will be left of our people." In these conditions, the call to the Jews "to make the choice between the status of aliens without any political rights and citizenship based on the love of the fatherland," he says, acquires new actuality. (Of course, "the love of the fatherland" excludes democratic aspirations.) Words and ideas are powerless to fight the Jewish Westernist threat. But all is not lost. Remaining faithful to "the unique experience of the people" can help.

Shafarevich's position is not new. It was Hegel's, and the Romantic political philosopher and German nationalist Adam Mueller's, in the early 19th century; it was championed by the Slavophiles Kireevsky, Khomiakov, and Aksakov. But it is striking to see it advocated by an ostensible champion of human rights at the very moment when Russia declares its determination to rejoin the free world. Shafarevich calls for a return to autocracy—to the strong organic state without Marxism:

The spiritual image of the people is formed during many centuries, during which the traditions of social existence, organically connected, are forged—and only if it is based on [those traditions] can the historical evolution create stable forms of life, natural for this people. . . . If following the advice [of the Russophobes] we abolish the role of the state . . . the result could only be the speedy and complete disintegration. . . . [T]he state evidently should for a long time play a great role in the life of our country.

Shafarevich's treatise closes with a paean to "the People":

A People is one of the most wonderful phenomena and enigmas of our Earth. . . . Belonging to one's People makes a man partake in History, in the mysteries of the past and the future. . . . [Through it] he can sense . . . the significance and higher meaning of the earthly existence of humanity and his role in it. . . . In many ways it is beyond the powers of our comprehension, but frequently it is affectingly defenseless before our thoughtless intervention. . . . We have said what the People gives to man. Man, for his part, creates forces which strengthen the People and secure its existence. . . . When this two-tiered process decomposes, the same thing that happens in nature occurs: the habitat turns into a dead desert, and the man dies with it. Concretely, the interest in the fate of one's country vanishes, life becomes meaningless. . . . men turn into alcoholics or drug-addicts, women cease to bear children, the People becomes extinct. . . . This is the end to which the "Little People," constantly trying to destroy everything that supports the existence of "Big People," pushes us. Therefore the creation of the weapons of spiritual defense against it is a question of national self-defense.

There is more to *Russophobia*, of course, than its revolting anti-Semitism. Still, as in many other cases in history, the hatred of the Jews, expressed here by a Russian dissident, may acquire significance for the community of nations in general. For *Russophobia* is an expression of an important part of the Russian intellectual elite, of some of the movers and shakers behind the contemporary transformation of Russian society. It is a sobering occasion to consider some of the choices that Russia faces, choices often eclipsed in the excitement around Gorbachev. After all, a sudden urge for democracy experienced en masse by a huge society that lacks democratic traditions would be something of a miracle. This is not to say that miracles do not happen. But surely we cannot count on them. Igor Shafarevich, it is clear, detests communism. Is this good or bad? Does this make him an ally? Will the alternative to the falsely internationalist communism of the Soviet Union be the openly national socialism of Russia? •

## The Fall of Economic Man

BY GEOFFREY HAWTHORN

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Economics is about how people make choices, the economist James Duesenberry remarked in the 1950s, and sociology is about how they don't have any choices to make. It was a deceptive complementarity. The sociologists whom Duesenberry had in mind talked of norms. It was norms, they claimed, that explained what people did. The best evidence for norms, however, was what people did. It was not, therefore, a compelling claim. In the 1960s, partly for this reason—and partly

because it was the 1960s, when sociologists, like others, only more than most others, wanted to do better than gloss the surface of life—the talk turned to "structures." These were thought of as facts, mental or material, that were deeper and more enduring than convention, and even more constraining.

In Paris, indeed, it was said by some that people were no more than points at the intersection of structural forces, that structures actually defined what they were. (The idea lingers there still, though now the putative structures are