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HOMO IMPERII

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Critical Studies in the History of Anthropology

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HOMO IMPERII

A History of Physical Anthropology
in Russia | MARINA MOGILNER

University of Nebraska Press Lincoln & London

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Series Editors' Introduction

REGNA DARNELL & STEPHEN O. MURRAY

Marina Mogilner has produced a magisterial history of physical anthropology in Russia, a subject virtually unknown in the English-speaking world and equally marginal within the histories of Russian anthropology and Russian empire. Her previous book on this subject was published in Russian in 2008, with the historicist framework presented quite differently for an audience of practitioners more oriented toward positivist science than to the social construction of science. This revised English translation opens with an elegant manifesto on the need for reflexive critical studies in the history of anthropology that compare national traditions, institutional frameworks, and social networks of scholars.

“Race science” was a pervasive strand of British, French, German, and American anthropologies during the period covered by Mogilner’s narrative. Physical anthropology in Russia drew on ideas of modernity and cosmopolitanism circulating in Europe at the time but combined them in unique ways. Deftly employing the comparative method that lies at the core of anthropology as a science, Mogilner draws parallels that readers will be able to extend on the basis of their own practice within contrasting traditions.

Russian physical anthropology was deeply grounded in medicine and the natural sciences, with ethnological and linguistic studies relegated to the humanities. Thus the ties of physical anthropology to culture, prehistoric archaeology, and language that came to characterize the North American discipline never developed in Russia. The particular character of the Russian discipline emerged quite differently in four university contexts (Moscow, Kazan, Kyiv, and St. Petersburg) in response to local constraints and opportuni-

ties. Russian physical anthropology was neither static nor monolithic, but its changing priorities and internal factionalisms (what Mogilner calls “Russian irregularities”) are rendered intelligible by her meticulous attention to the details of local developments. Although Mogilner is a historian by training, her archival method is fundamentally ethnographic as well as broadly interpretive.

Discourses of racism were influential in the history of Russian empire as well as in the discipline of anthropology narrowly construed. The “small peoples of the north” colored local responses to questions of biological diversity in Russian regional and ethnic contexts, presenting a clear comparison to the plight of the Indigenous peoples of North America within U.S. and Canadian internal colonialism, a subject rarely raised in relation to European empires (with the exception of the internal presence of Lapps in Scandinavian nation-states). The parallels are especially cogent because the Russian empire, like the American one prior to World War II, had no overseas empire. The applications of ethnography to changing social and political agendas in each of these nation-states attest to the inextricability of anthropology from the society in which it is embedded.

Mogilner tells a tale of ongoing contemporary relevance. Post-Soviet Russia has not left behind the evolutionary racist baggage of its history. Resurgences of scientific racism in public discourse threaten both social cohesion and the integrity of anthropological research. The defamiliarization provided by the Russian case may serve to throw into relief North American myopia about our own anthropology’s failure to fully and finally discredit lingering attitudes of racism and their ostensible basis in “science.”

HOMO IMPERII

Introduction

The Science of Imperial Modernity

I have no doubts that in the future the importance of anthropology will be acknowledged ever more, and that with time it will occupy a more visible and adequate place among the subjects of study and teaching. The basics of this science should be mandatory for educating not only biologists, physicians, historians, and philosophers, but to some degree every educated person who recognizes the necessity and interest of a more profound, more scientific self-cognition.

—DMITRII ANUCHIN, “A Cursory Glance at the History of Anthropology and Its Tasks in Russia,” 1900

I want to begin this book, which can be defined as a cultural history of Russian physical anthropology, with a symptomatic episode of the reception of the earlier Russian version of *Homo Imperii* (published in 2008). The book came as a shock to several leading Russian physical anthropologists. They found unacceptable the idea that their very scientific discipline can be studied as an evolving intellectual construct embedded in the historical experiences of imperialism, colonialism, nation-building, modernization, and so forth; they dismissed the right of an outsider-historian, who had no formal training in biological anthropology, to write about “real science”; and they seemed to reject the very possibility that their scientific discipline constitutes a social field.¹ There is, of course, nothing new in the belief that only scientists should speak on behalf of and about science. This position has been deconstructed and criticized for decades by sociologists and philosophers of science. (I can only imagine how Russian defenders of science as sacred knowledge untouchable by any mundane considerations would

have reacted to the following thesis of a renowned sociologist of science, Bruno Latour: “in chapter 4 we see how Pasteur makes his microbes while the microbes ‘make their Pasteur.’”).² For better or worse, my book is written in a less metaphoric language than that of Latour, and I, just as Latour and other modern-day sociologists and historians of science, do not intend to blemish or discredit the object of my study when applying a deconstructivist social-historical analysis capable of exposing some hidden power mechanisms and social dynamic behind any scientific inquiry.³ To the contrary, in this book I try to reconstruct original paradigms and contexts of Russian race science. I follow my protagonists not only to their laboratories (very few at their time), university lecture rooms, and field expeditions but also to the medical clinics or newspaper editorial offices where they worked and to the streets where they participated in mass politics. I read their dissertations, scholarly articles, their popular anthropology published in newspapers, and even their letters. I try to understand why it was more important for Russian physical anthropology to receive Leo Tolstoy’s approval than that of the Russian imperial state. Neither the self-appointed custodians of traditions of Russian physical anthropology nor my colleagues-historians of late imperial Russia have asked these questions before. In some sense, I attempt to cure a specific amnesia of Soviet/Russian physical anthropology, which has completely forgotten its origins as a vanguard science of modernity, a scientific medium that promised to make sense of human diversity in the Russian empire, and a scholarly network whose representatives were involved in all spheres of Russian politics and public activism and discussed the most pressing cultural and social issues of the day.

It is neither reductionism nor the shameful mistake of an outsider to call Russian physical anthropology of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a “race science”—even if today’s physical anthropologists define the objectives of their discipline differently⁴ and selectively appropriate and construct “schools” from a rich and sometimes bizarre repertoire left by imperial physical anthropology.⁵ In the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, “race” was indeed a dominant epistemology, an instrument

that unlocked nearly all social, cultural, and political phenomena in the world, and Russian physical anthropologists participated in this universal discourse.⁶ Similar to their European and American colleagues, Russian physical anthropologists offered their scientific understanding of race and of the “natural history of humanity” to students of culture, social sciences, and politicians. They progressively saw their science as an applied one that produced instrumental knowledge about humans and their societies. It is indicative that anthropologists compared their science not to ethnography, philology, or folklore studies, but to new applied disciplines such as statistics, meteorology, soil studies, and demography, which required specialized training. Physical anthropology was thus a hybrid field of knowledge that exemplified the highest ambitions of modern natural and social sciences to uncover objective laws governing both nature and societal organisms and to influence both.⁷ Not surprisingly, many European physical anthropologists are regarded today as forefathers of modern sociology,⁸ while the history of anthropology (race science) is inseparable from the history of modern colonialism, nationalism, and the creation of the modern state—everywhere, except for Russia.⁹

Indeed, the persistent exclusion of Russia from the world of race science remains the most striking and long-lasting feature of the vanishing *Sonderweg* perception of its history. It is assumed that the “nonclassical” nature of the Russian empire and its equally “nonclassical” modernity¹⁰ made Russian intellectuals immune to “the racial obsessions of Western Europe throughout of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.”¹¹ Regardless of the emerging concern with racial thinking, especially among students of the Soviet period,¹² historians of imperial Russia still know very little about the role of race science in the empire, which, until its last days, used confession as the main category of official statistics.¹³ Postcolonial methodologies, so well tuned to interpret nuances of direct and especially indirect domination based (among other factors) on the perception of racial difference, cannot be self-evidently applied to Russia.¹⁴ Such an application is complicated by the blurred boundaries between this empire’s metropole and its colo-

nies, as well as between Russians and the *inorodtsy* (non-Russians) who for centuries lived in close proximity, often intermarrying and assimilating each other.¹⁵ The Russian autocracy was persistent in its refusal to share its “real” and discursive authority with modern elite social groups, thus preventing broad naturalization in the biological language of class and gender distinctions. While new practices of societal differentiation had been hampered by the imperial regime, a fundamental cultural distance between the upper social estates (and cultural elites) and the peasantry that represented the bulk of the country’s population persisted up to the beginning of the twentieth century. This sociocultural gap stood in the way of the homogenization of the population into the “social mass” of the “national body,” which was needed to enable racial imagination.

The catalogue of Russian irregularities can be continued. Yet, paradoxically, precisely these “nonclassical” attributes of Russian “empireness” made her uniquely suitable for the latest stage of revisionism in imperial studies initiated by British historians who show how colonial experiences defined political and social notions and practices in the metropole.¹⁶ A theme peculiar to Russian studies—self-colonization (or inner colonization)—is suddenly becoming a mainstream revisionism in the new imperial history of the British Empire.¹⁷ Similarly, the rejection of the framework of some generic European modernity and new studies in the field of Russian turn-of-the-century social history, which demonstrated the power of self-organizing networks of professionals and *obshchestvennost’* (active citizens), made Russian loci of modernity much more visible.¹⁸ In short, Imperial Russia is ceasing to be a case of “specific” or “failed modernity” and is emerging as a quite modern case of sociocultural heterogeneity and hybridity.

I do not argue that old historical paradigms were necessarily wrong while the new ones are right (although I do define my field of interest as “new imperial history”).¹⁹ My purpose here is more modest: I want to stress that the opposition between “classical” empires/modernities that “objectively” needed a category such as “race” to naturalize and justify political, gender, and social inequal-

ity, on the one hand, and “nonclassical” empires/modernities that managed without it, on the other, is not universal.²⁰ Having been blinded by the assumption of “nonclassical” Russian imperialism and modernity, sociologists of science and historians of the Russian empire managed to overlook race and physical anthropology in the Russian imperial past, even at the peak of interest in the history of race science in the European context! This fact alone is indicative of the power of our discursive projections.

The importance of empire as a historical context and intellectual framework for the newly emerged Russian physical anthropology cannot be overemphasized. As I intend to show in this book, for early Russian race scientists and the public that joined the anthropological network, their empire provided almost everything, from the rich variety of objects of study—“Europe” and its “Others” within common borders—to the stimuli to interpret anthropology as a universalizing frame for irregular imperial diversity. True, this empire was reluctant to offer its anthropologists unambiguous political support and to make physical anthropology an official science of imperialism, but why should the “archaic” and “autocratic” empire have behaved differently, like a state built on systematic and rational knowledge about its natural and human resources? For the Russian imperial authorities, operating within the particularistic system of governance—in which laws, social policies, degrees of religious tolerance, or application of “russification” measures varied for different population groups—the immediate value of specified “local” knowledge was more obvious than the universalizing pretensions of physical anthropology.²¹ At the same time, as it was, the Russian Empire endowed its anthropologists with a sense of the great mission that consisted in re-creating the “archaic” empire as a modern “empire of knowledge.” Therefore, in my version of the history of Russian physical anthropology, empire is both a context-setting category and a reality that was reflected by the race scientists and directly influenced them.

Physical anthropology promised to modernize the Russian Empire not only from the inside but for the outside world as well. Speaking in the language of race, participating in the international race dis-

course, and defining the subjects and objects of race analysis made Russia a European country and European empire. When physical anthropologists talked about a racial redescription of the Russian empire, they envisioned a network of specialists working in almost all corners of this empire according to a standard program and using standard instruments. These utopian laborers in the field of modern knowledge had to produce universal data that would be not only verifiable but also automatically suitable for European racial cartography—and putting Russia on European racial maps was a modernizing act by definition. Russian anthropologists obviously looked in the mirror of Western European experiences and knowledge, but they were also convinced that answers to many scientific problems of human natural history, racial makeup of the European population, racial mixing, and classifications were hidden in Russia. Not some European anthropologists but they, Russian scientists, held the keys to these problems. Through their anthropology, Russia was becoming not simply European—it was becoming quintessentially European. After all, the cradle of the Caucasian race was just a territory in Russian imperial possession.

Enjoying Russian empire as a “field,” Russian race scientists could participate with equal success in explicitly colonial anthropological discourses and in anthropology directed at Europe itself. They were critical of social Darwinism and less receptive to criminal anthropology. Yet, overall, the European science of race as seen from Russia was not racist, and colonial anthropology was not viewed as dominating the scene (probably in part because Russia itself bordered on the verge of European Otherness). Anthropology was rather understood as a universal, supranational language of modernity, a means to scientifically comprehend the laws of human progress and the success of civilization—something that the old humanist and particularistic paradigm of European culture, centered on self-referential textual traditions, was not able to do.²² The new scientific language better responded to the challenges of changing historical landscapes and perceptions of time and space, and to the demands of emerging proto-mass societies with their growing number of nonelite consumers of culture. By turn-

ing its attention to those who had been excluded from the high-brow “humanist” world of culture, physical anthropology was capable of providing a kind of knowledge about humans and societies that was not mediated by “texts.” The discredited old moralistic notions of “pure” aristocratic blood and upbringing were compensated for by “precise” biological concepts of social stratification. In the words of Paul Weindling, “individuality was removed from the moral sphere, and redefined in scientific terms with the individual subsumed in a ‘race’ (a category equivalent to a biological sub-species).”²³ These biologically defined and rationally cognizable individuals together formed a common social body characterized by certain racial traits.

Contrary to our present-day assumptions formed by a retrospective perception of the history of race science, which (as we tend to think) had logically led to Nazi atrocities, physical anthropologists in the nineteenth century tended to distance themselves from linguists, who constructed language families on cultural foundations, as well as from ethnographers, who stressed cultural peculiarities and differences (especially between the “primitive” and “civilized” European peoples).²⁴ Many European physical anthropologists reacted negatively to overt attempts at constructing racial hierarchies, to the “scientific” glorification of the Aryan race, and later on, to crude social-Darwinist schemes.²⁵

Russian physical anthropologists were most sensitive to this liberal ethos of the universalist anthropological paradigm (as they preferred to interpret it) and its new, much more democratic and egalitarian practices of professional socialization. Methodologically, their perceived anthropological “liberalism” included the monogenist view of human evolution and the universalist natural-science language of its description—as opposed to the polygenist views and the classifying and differentiating language of culture. Politically, this “liberalism” treated rational knowledge as the only precondition for any political action; it held a very cautious attitude toward scientifically unjustified state intervention in social politics; it propagated a moderate and generally optimistic political “evolutionism” and antiracist worldview.²⁶ In Russia, “race” not only

became a category of the opposition liberal discourse, while being virtually ignored by the state and state-sponsored science. Russian “liberal race” also proved to be the most influential academic and political concept when compared with other interpretations of “race” advanced by Russian scientists and politicians. It dominated over the colonial and nationalizing schools in anthropology that were equally alienated from the state. Different currents within Russian liberal anthropology shared a common agenda of rational reconceptualization of the empire, of finding an objective and universal language for its representation as a modern European state with potential for the future other than revolution or disintegration along national lines.

If “race” entered the Russian political language relatively late, on the wave of mass politics raised by the first Russian revolution of 1905–1907, in the Russian academic discourse it was actively present from the mid-nineteenth century. It coexisted and in a way competed for academic prominence with such categories as *plemia* (tribe), *narodnost’* as a more cultural, ethnographic, denomination of people, and a more politicized *narod* (people). In the Russian dictionaries of the 1860s, “race” figured as a synonym for *plemia*, as both were conceptualized through a limited number of external biological indicators such as the color of skin, hair, and eyes, body height, and so forth.²⁷ Thus understood, race became an integral part of popular as well as academic ethnographic discourses.

Parallel to this formal usage of race as a taxonomic category that helped to account for differences yet did not obstruct the building of cultural rather than biological boundaries or hierarchies between human collectives, another usage of race was taking shape. By the end of the nineteenth century, the articles on race in Russian encyclopedias were progressively composed by leading representatives of physical anthropology who were not satisfied with a general descriptive taxonomy embodied in the race–tribe pair or with artificial adjustments of race classifications to the purposes of ethnographic analysis. Instead they advanced a much more specialized definition of race as the basic category of the natural history of humanity. As such, the study of race required strictly scientific

and universal methods and was incompatible with a subjectivizing cultural approach. As the first Russian anthropology professor, Dmitrii Anuchin (1843–1923), explained on the pages of the *Encyclopedic Dictionary* of F. A. Brokgauz and I. E. Efron, only with the appearance of new scientific classifications based on a systemic approach to anthropological indicators (i.e., not on visual observations of a few descriptive physical traits) did it become possible to make sense of human diversity. Anuchin spelled out for the broad Russian public a few basics of modern race science: that “racial traits do not coincide with tribal and national”; that races should be differentiated from historically and culturally formed communities; and that only a monogenic theory of the origin of races is scientifically valid.²⁸ These were the scientific foundations for the construction of Russian “liberal race” and its anthropology.

Russian race scientists were positivists who produced “positive knowledge” (alas, to a great degree reconsidered by no less “positivist” later generations of physical anthropologists). However, they operated in a heterogeneous institutional, ideological, and scientific environment that required them to be inventive constructivists in defining their specific field of expertise, their object of study, and their language of analysis. Liberal Russian anthropologists preferred working with *mixed racial type* and rejected such essentializing terms as *Russian race* or *Russian physical type* as scientifically unsubstantiated and clearly borrowed from the language of practical politics. Their opponents, more nationally thinking scientists, used precisely these categories without reservations. Both positions were substantiated by the same pool of “objective” data, which tells much about the “scientificity” of anthropometric aggregations.

My inquiry into this diverse field of production and public dissemination of conflicting versions of knowledge about human diversity in the Russian empire was characterized (with disapproval) as “thick description” by my Russian critics.²⁹ I gladly accept this designation. My “thick description” of Russian physical anthropology of the nineteenth to early twentieth centuries starts in part 1 of the book with an inquiry into the “paradoxes of institutional-

ization” of this science in Russia. Physical anthropology strove toward normalization as a natural science and partially succeeded in this. At least, all necessary structural provisions were created for teaching university courses in anthropology if a university had a professor capable of offering such courses. In formal terms, Russian physical anthropology’s institutionalization closely resembled the German turn-of-the-century pattern of diffusing this science between university chairs, museums, and academic societies. The first Russian university chair of anthropology was set up in Moscow University in 1879—the same year that the first German chair was established in Munich with Johannes Ranke as its first occupant. Still, the Russian story was rather special, as the chair was endowed by a private enthusiast of anthropology, while the Moscow Imperial university got this money from the academic society that received the donation. Such power relations were characteristic of Russian anthropological institutionalization in general: the impetus almost always came from the educated self-organizing public, which was not necessarily directly connected with university education and official science. The network of anthropological societies played a crucial role in terms of spreading anthropological knowledge and getting anthropology institutionalized in the imperial educational system. The “strategic relativism” of the imperial situation conditioned different attitudes toward anthropology in different regions: from cautious support by the administration to the ban on any attempts to institutionalize anthropology officially.³⁰ Only the efforts of members of this self-organizing network of professional and amateur anthropologists compensated for the inconsistency of official policies toward the new science and allowed the establishment of an empirewide anthropological network. To account for this incongruity and variety of individual patterns, I will focus specifically on four paradigmatic cases:

the Moscow-based Imperial Society of Lovers of Natural Sciences, Anthropology and Ethnography and the Moscow University Chair of Anthropology—the strongholds of Russian liberal anthropology;

the Kazan University medical anthropology of the “living population,” which provided an alternative to the ethnography of the Russian civilization mission in the Volga-Kama region of the empire;

Kiev University professors’ failed attempt to register their Anthropological Society and get state approval for their anthropology of the Russian Aryan race. Being well aware of the mobilizing implications of Ukrainian and Polish ethnography in the southwestern imperial borderlands, the imperial officials in what is today’s Ukraine regarded the task of preventing ethnography’s rejuvenation within the science of anthropology as more urgent than that of racializing Russianness;

the colonial anthropology of St. Petersburg University, the Museum of Ethnography and Anthropology, and affiliated networks.

In the rest of the book this discussion continues at the level of scientific theories and paradigms of race science. In part 2 I start with the extremely interesting and original school of liberal anthropology of imperial diversity, which embodied the mainstream of Russian race science. This school clearly differentiated between race and nation and, in general, between “race” and “culture.” Its adherents studied both Russians and non-Russians, establishing not hierarchies but “degrees of kinship” and types of interaction. The existing imperial borders functioned as natural limits of their project, which resulted in locating a “mixed racial type” as a dominant type in the Russian empire. Moscow liberal anthropology was a science of modern imperialism that, curiously enough, rejected colonialism and experimented with integrationist scientific and (by extension) political and social models.

Then in part 3 I shift to the anthropology of Russian nationalism and its most charismatic representative, Kiev psychiatry professor I. A. Sikorsky, father of the renowned aircraft engineer. I accomplish this transition from the anthropology of “imperial diversity” to the anthropology of “imperial monotony” by comparing two scientific works written by the leaders of these two schools of Russian anthropology, who studied the canonical representative

of Russian national genius, the poet Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin (1799–1837). They both used Pushkin as a unique physical instrument measuring, in one instance, the racial capacity of Russians to accommodate Europeaness and, in the other, the power of the Russian race to absorb the physical elements of “lower” races without any harm to itself. The two interpretations of the “racial significance” of Pushkin serve as a window on the state of development of race science in Russia at the turn of the twentieth century and on the ongoing discussions about the directions of Russian imperial self-modernization. Russian racial psychiatrists of the St. Petersburg psychiatric school, who were much closer to Sikorsky in their views than other Russian race scientists, were also prominent in those discussions.

In part 4 I proceed to the trend in Russian physical anthropology that can be defined as the anthropology of multinationalism. Represented by nationally thinking non-Russian intellectuals, who explicitly aspired to use the scientific discourse of race to support claims of non-Russian nationalisms in the empire, this trend still very much depended on the methodology and conceptual apparatus of liberal anthropology. This fundamental dependence became a major obstacle for any practical attempts at putting anthropology in the service of nationalist movements. By incorporating their case studies into the general framework of imperial liberal anthropology, those physical anthropologists who studied individual nationalities as distinctive “racial groups” presented the Russian empire as a racial “salad bar” consisted of a variety of mutually related nations. In a feat of “affirmative action” philosemitism (which remarkably bordered on anti-Semitism in its implications), only the group of Russian Jewish physical anthropologists belonging to the philosemitic and inclusive Moscow liberal school was authorized to study “Jewish race” as a specific entity, apart from the general imperial racial mix. Tracing further this dialectics of nationalizing research agenda and relativizing pan-imperial methodological framework, we come to a very special kind of anthropology that, due to obvious political limitations, was possible in Europe on a more or less regular basis only in remote colonial settings. This

was the study of brains and skulls of the living population (as opposed to archaeological craniometry): the specificity of the imperial situation in Russia made this explicitly colonial subdiscipline an integral part of the racial study of the “metropole.”

Part 5 reconstructs a complex story of Russian military anthropology—probably the only branch of anthropology claimed by the Russian state or, to be more precise, by its reformist War Ministry. Russian military doctors were, in fact, well exposed to racialized medical practices and academic discourses. Until the 1910s, when the ideology of the Russian national army officially prevailed over the Army-as-Empire, they labored on the project of creating a modern and rationally organized imperial army that would be as efficient as an army of a European nation-state (or of a nationally homogeneous imperial metropole). In reality, they were assembling the ideal whole out of very diverse “biological material” to which they assigned stable racial qualities. They literally measured the relative fitness of each “physical type” or “race” and adjusted their medical norms of “fitness” so as not to exclude certain groups of the population from this all-imperial military “puzzle.” How exactly they did this is the subject of my investigation.

Part 6 deals with applied physical anthropology, which claimed direct and immediate relevance for social and political reforms in Russia. Specifically, I focus on sanitation anthropology and sociobiological discourses advanced by different strata within the Russian state and educated public. Of particular interest here are projects of modernizing the imperial society through scientifically governed metization. The anthropologically inspired imagination of some of the most advanced Russian race scientists went so far as to claim that the first Russian parliament—the State Duma—was an exemplary scene of racial miscegenation that unfolded on the basis of the Great Russian “race.” Criminal anthropologists and race psychiatrists used similar language when transferring a discourse of compulsory psychiatric treatment or social isolation onto some inferior imperial “races.” Some Russian criminal anthropologists would refuse to consider Caucasian mountaineers-prisoners of Russian penitentiary institutions as “degenerate,” on

the grounds that in terms of their own culture they represented all possible virtues. Others struggled with the more general question of who would rather be labeled as a degenerate and atavistic sociobiological group: a Caucasian *abrek*, a Great Russian prostitute, or a Jewish brothel keeper? In such adaptations of criminal anthropology, social, class, gender, ethnic, and biological otherness overlapped, exposing the total complexity of the Russian imperial situation, which resisted overt attempts to conceptualize homogeneous sociobiological entities.

Military anthropology, as well as the liberal, nationalizing, and colonial schools of Russian race science underwent important transformations in the years of World War I. Different race scientists allied forces responding to the challenges of political nationalism and the crisis of imperial order with its inconsistent and “unscientific” population politics. Yet imperial anthropology—all of its schools—very soon lost its apparent relevance for Russia as a modernizing country. After the revolution of 1917 and the civil war, the Russian empire as a “natural” setting for a liberal anthropology of imperial diversity was no more. Liberalism as an influential ideology and epistemology did not survive World War I, and its decline was a truly global phenomenon. The Bolsheviks’ radical modernism, anti-imperial rhetoric, and nationalizing policies seemed to require another type of “modern knowledge” about population.

I conclude the book with the evolution of the former imperial anthropology through the Soviet period. My version of the story of Russian physical anthropology is not teleological. As I try to show, Soviet physical anthropology reemerged after the Cultural Revolution of the early 1930s on completely new presumptions, and the price for this resurrection was the loss of interpretative power as a language of modernity. The terrible experience of World War II and the postwar colonial revolutions discredited old race science worldwide and inspired new reflections on the cultural and political foundations of racial thinking. However, none of these affected Soviet physical anthropology—it has never become a medium of or a participant in postmodern reflection on diversity.

1

Paradoxes of Institutionalization

1. Academic Genealogy and Social Contexts of the “Atypical Science”

The diffusion of biological thinking into the sphere of human sciences was a process immanent to modernity. In the nineteenth century, Darwinian evolutionism offered a powerful epistemological frame for combining the historical perspective on the development of humanity with the new scientific ideals of precision, understanding, and systematization, with the search for universal laws beyond the sacral domain. In Russia, the “Darwinian revolution” paved the way for the triumphant rise of anthropology. For decades to come, evolutionism and physical anthropology would remain inseparable, resisting the pressure of cultural diffusionism, on the one hand, and temptations of extreme versions of social Darwinism, on the other.

The pre-Darwinian epoch of Russian science was geographically and institutionally connected with St. Petersburg—the Russian imperial capital and home of the Russian Academy of Sciences established by Peter the Great in 1724. The academy changed its name several times before 1836, when it became the Imperial St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences. Through the first half of the nineteenth century, Petersburg academicians, both Russian and foreign-born scholars, dominated the natural sciences as well as philology and history. In 1845 they founded the Imperial Russian Geographical Society (IRGO) encompassing the fields of geography, statistics, and ethnography. The society’s Ethnographic Division was from its very inception oriented toward the cultural paradigm, which modern historians tend to explain by the nonclassical “empireness” of Russia. They point to the fact that Russian *inorodtsy* “did not live across the oceans in strange and formidable cli-

mates,” but coexisted with Russians for centuries, and their names “appear in historical documents all the way back to the Kievan Primary Chronicle,” while their elites were absorbed into the Russian nobility. Therefore, Russian ethnographers of the Imperial Geographical Society chose to build their science “around the notion of *narodnost*’—the distinct features endowing every nation with its unique and unmistakable identity.”¹

The specificity of the Russian empire certainly played its role in the formation of the dominant scientific discourse, but its importance should not be overemphasized. As Vera Tolz has recently shown, the preexisting concept of Russian specificity influenced historical interpretations of the foundational debates that took place in the IRGO Ethnographic Division in the way that overstressed the aversion of early ethnographers toward biological explanations of human differences. Tolz offered a fresh reading of the classical text that for decades served as the basis for the influential theory of Russia’s immunity to racial discourse: the paper, delivered by the former professor of aesthetics at Moscow University, Nikolai Nadezhdin, at the meeting of the Geographical Society in November 1846.² Nadezhdin, as historiographic wisdom went, offered a model of studying “Russian nationality” (*narodnost*’) as defined by its cultural and spiritual manifestations and thus saved Russian ethnography from obsession with races and hierarchies typical of western ethnology and anthropology.³ Tolz decided to check the validity of this long-accepted interpretation by revisiting the original paper, one of those often quoted but rarely read texts in Russian intellectual history. As her close reading revealed, Nadezhdin in fact divided ethnography into “physical,” with the focus on bodily sphere, and “spiritual” (*psikhicheskuiu*), with the focus on spiritual sphere. In his view, ethnography of Russians and non-Russians equally had to consider the color of skin, hair, eyes, the form of skulls, and other physical indicators. “Furthermore, Nadezhdin tended to agree, albeit with caution, with the perception that there was a link between biology and culture, which permitted putting peoples in (not necessarily permanently existing) hierarchies,” writes Tolz.⁴

Nadezhdin's main opponent at this IRGO meeting was one of the most famous Petersburg naturalists, a founder of comparative craniometry (together with Anders-Adolph Retzius), academician Karl Maksimovich Baer (1792–1876). Baer was an ardent anti-Darwinist, and in this respect he was quite representative of his academic milieu. His vision of humanity as divided into breeds/races was static, it lacked any chronological vector, and thus poorly corresponded to the early nineteenth-century romantic ideal of evolving national organism. Baer's anti-Darwinism must have added validity to Nadezhdin's arguments that merged the German Romantic tradition of Schelling and Herder with elements of biological determinism.

In any case, the ensuing reorientation of the Russian scientific community toward Darwinism undermined the symbolic and real power of Petersburg academicians like Baer, who had built their reputations during the pre-Darwinian period. The mobilization of scholars around the new paradigm and the expansion of natural sciences into the field of human sciences had revolutionary consequences, including a partial transfer of academic authority from Petersburg to a rival center of Russian scholarship, Moscow.⁵ This transfer was influential concerning the fortunes of emerging Russian physical anthropology.

The first Russian-language articles dedicated to Darwinian theory appeared in the *Herald of Natural Sciences* (*Vestnik estestvennykh nauk*) published by the Moscow Society of Explorers of Nature.⁶ In 1863, a group of Imperial Moscow University professors left the ranks of this society. Interested in the most advanced scholarship, they set up the Society of Lovers of Natural Sciences, Anthropology, and Ethnography (*Obshchestvo liubitelei estestvoznaniia, antropologii, i etnografii, IOLEAE*).⁷ This society became the patron for the emerging disciplines embracing evolutionist epistemology that lacked full-scale academic recognition. As Nathaniel Knight noted in this regard, the choice of a slightly archaic term, “lover” (*liubitel'*), signifying both admirer and dilettante was not accidental. It hinted at the nonelite, democratic spirit of a new model of scholarship that was to encompass ethnography and physical anthro-

pology.⁸ A different understanding of modern science and its tasks by the new Moscow society made possible an expansion of natural sciences into the sphere of disciplines that studied humans and their cultures.

Unlike in the Petersburg academic circles, natural scientists in Moscow were in the vanguard of synthesizing a number of disciplines on the common evolutionary platform. They saw in physical anthropology the logical culmination of the expansion of evolutionism into the sphere of knowledge about the natural world, including humans. This idea was explicitly formulated by the thirty-year-old (in 1863) initiator of IOLEAE, Moscow University zoology professor Anatolii Petrovich Bogdanov (1834–1896).⁹ Bogdanov said that anthropology “made evolution a social force of large magnitude,” while the concept of evolution enabled anthropology to generate “fertile ideas of both a scientific and an ideological nature.”¹⁰ Characteristically, the first elected IOLEAE chair was the Moscow University geology professor and evolutionist Grigorii Efimovich Shchurovskii (1803–1884), whose first presentation to the society discussed the importance of human fossils for understanding the path of evolution.¹¹

Bogdanov pigeonholed ethnography in a humanistic paradigm, which, as such, satisfied enlightened curiosity,¹² but was scientifically inferior to anthropology—the science that logically evolved in the course of the progressive “historical development of our knowledge.”¹³ This science was not the eccentric “hobby” of a group of secessionists—“courageous people,” as Bogdanov called them, who were not afraid of paving new ways in scholarship.¹⁴ “Neither incident nor the partisanship of a circle (*kruzhok*),”¹⁵ he insisted, “but the very historical development of our knowledge and improvement of methods of studying humans brought about our task to study the anthropology of Russia.”¹⁶ Indeed, as one historian perceptively remarked recently, “Unlike other learned societies which were created to promote science, IOLEAE was established to promote Russia.”¹⁷

In addition to the traditional academic *Proceedings (Trudy)* and *News (Izvestiia)* of its Anthropological Division, the Moscow IOLEAE

published a less formal and more popular *Diary of the Anthropological Division* (altogether, three volumes, twenty issues) from 1890 to 1893. Until in 1900, the Moscow anthropologists lacked financial resources for launching a regular mass anthropological periodical. Eventually, they accumulated funds and started the *Russian Anthropological Journal* (*Russkii antropologicheskii zhurnal*, *RAJ*)—a novel periodical that addressed not only the academic community but also the broader educated public not necessarily connected with official science. *RAJ* became an effective instrument for professional communication and building an empire-wide anthropological movement. Given the historical context of the first decades of the twentieth century, which witnessed three revolutions and two wars, *RAJ* is striking for its remarkable endurance: with a few interruptions it continued from 1900 to 1916 and then from 1924 until 1929. The pages of *RAJ* chronicle almost all stages of the evolution of Russian physical anthropology. This journal defined the field in academic terms and framed it as a social movement. It supported some branches of anthropology and marginalized others. Last but not least, it provided a “foundation myth” for Russian race science.

This myth denied Russian anthropology of any pre-Moscow past that would connect it to the “headquarters” of Russian ethnography—the St. Petersburg IRGO.¹⁸ The anti-St. Petersburg ideological stance even made the leading Russian anthropologist, Moscow University professor Dmitrii Nikolaevich Anuchin (1843–1923), turn down the title of Academician of the Imperial Academy of Sciences because this would require his moving to Petersburg.¹⁹ A recognized luminary in anthropology, geography, zoology, and ethnography, Anuchin authoritatively claimed that ethnography had never studied “the physical characteristics of [human] tribes.”²⁰ Only once did he ambiguously praise the IRGO Ethnographic Division for “occasionally collecting physical anthropology data.”²¹ Presiding for many years over IOLEAE and exercising a major influence over *RAJ*, Anuchin, more than anyone else, is responsible for spreading the belief that physical anthropology could not emerge without embracing Darwinian evolutionism (and hence could not

develop from Russian ethnography). Moscow anthropologists insisted that their science was replanted into Russian (Moscow) soil directly from Europe, without any prior domestic “ripening” in St. Petersburg, suggesting that IOLEAE was a Russian analogue of the French Anthropological Society (founded in 1860).²² The acknowledged fact that, by the time IOLEAE was founded, only Bogdanov had sufficient anthropological knowledge did not threaten the coherence of the foundation myth.²³

Due to the explicit desire of Moscow anthropologists to frame their race science as European, new, and disconnected from the local tradition of elitist scholarship, and thanks to the discursive medium of *RAJ*, Moscow figured as the major locus of Russian anthropology even after two new anthropological learned societies were established in St. Petersburg: the Russian Anthropological Society at St. Petersburg University (1884/8) and the Anthropological Society at the Military-Medical Academy (1893). Their activities were always overshadowed by those of Moscow anthropologists and members of the Moscow academic network.

In this semiofficial and semirecognized yet very “European” and very “modern” discipline of physical anthropology, reputations were built both inside and outside of formal academia. Moscow anthropologists used the democratizing ethos of the new science to mobilize support and resources and influence the order of things in official academia. While Petersburg anthropological societies remained just circles of selected scholars, the Moscow IOLEAE Anthropological Division with its journal and its public drive became a network organization and a social movement. This network was all-imperial in the most democratic sense: it was all-inclusive, it prized diversity, and it provided opportunities for para-academic careers to those who were denied this right by the official academic hierarchy. The career of one of them, Alexander Danilovich (Aron Girsh Donov) El’kind (1868–1921), serves as a model case of alternative anthropological institutionalization. El’kind was a medical doctor who in 1912 successfully defended his dissertation at Moscow University, “The Jews: A Comparative Anthropological Study, Mostly Based on Observations of Polish Jews.”²⁴ By 1914, El’kind

was the number two person (after Professor Dmitrii Anuchin, his academic adviser) in the hierarchy of the Russian anthropological movement. As one of a few race scientists with anthropological dissertations, he was promoted to the position of secretary of the Moscow Anthropological Division and the editor of *RAJ*.²⁵ At the same time, being a Jew, El'kind had no chance of getting a job at Russian universities or making a formal academic career: for him and hundreds like him, Christian baptism was the only way to overcome the existing legal restrictions.

The degree of inclusiveness demonstrated by Moscow anthropology may have been higher than that in Petersburg and comparable to provincial regional networks, but it was not a uniquely Russian phenomenon. As has been shown by historians of European race science, “anthropology displaced the elite, academic ‘mandarin’ with a group of enthusiasts organized by professionals but incorporating contributions even by untrained amateurs. The discipline challenged not only the intellectual project of academic humanism but also the social structure of the academic humanities and the distinctions between professional and popular science.”²⁶

Russia did not partake in the classical “mandarinian” university culture and had no tradition of unconditional prestige of an elite university humanities education.²⁷ To the contrary, the weight of natural sciences here was always high and the Russian intelligentsia’s belief in the power of objective knowledge was comparable only with their belief in the power of the word. Until the early twentieth century, the culture of intelligentsia informal networking, both legal and illegal, based on the affinity of ideas or ideological opposition to the regime, had compensated for the absence of a modern-type party and civic participatory politics.²⁸ The democratization of sources and locations of scientific knowledge, and of forms of its production and consumption, which in the European context are often interpreted as attributes of bourgeois culture, in Russia had more to do with the culture of ideological intelligentsia-driven self-mobilization. This likely explains why “anthropological exhibitions,” though formally successful with the public, eventually proved to be less crucial for the development of Rus-

sian anthropology than the activities of anthropological societies connected into a network, the circulation of *RAJ*, the systematic organization of anthropological sections at major professional and scientific conventions, the popularizing of anthropology in the general press, and other forms of more or less traditional intelligentsia “politics.”

Exhibition as a form of representation of anthropological knowledge was definitely a part of the “European science” to which Russian anthropology wholeheartedly belonged.²⁹ It was also a part of European bourgeois modernity, a form of “Victorian cultural ideology,” as George Stocking called it.³⁰ As such, anthropological exhibitions provided visual proof that European civilization, cultural norms, and moral values embodied the highest point of evolution, the triumph of rationality over nature.³¹ Here, the scientific quest for universalizing narratives representing humanity happily coincided with the turn-of-the-century mass cultural desires and phobias. Exhibitions were, so to speak, spaces of direct communication between the new sciences and the broader public. The format of such communication allowed the function of expert authority and control (which revealed itself through the formulation of the principles of organization of expositions, the selection of artifacts, and the arrangement of their display) to combine with the democratizing function of making the language of culture and civilization accessible to the masses and, eventually, open to further interpretations. It seems, however, that Russian experts themselves were not in full agreement over the logic and scope of their authoritative civilization narrative, while the “broader” Russian public was literally too “broad” and diverse to constitute the ideal “bourgeois” consumer of new knowledge. In addition, large-scale exhibitions comparable in scope to European exhibitions and fairs could not take place without the official sanction of the Russian autocratic state, which itself had no unambiguous vision of its civilizing role in the empire.

All of these complexities were revealed during the very first IOLEAE exhibition initiative. Anatolii Bogdanov conceived the idea of the Russian anthropological exhibition based on his impression

of the Crystal Palace exhibition (Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Continents), which took place in London's Hyde Park from May 1 to October 15, 1851.³² The young Russian zoologist and craniologist visited it in 1859, after the structure of the "crystal palace" and the exhibition had been moved to Sydenham in southern London. He noticed the disappointing absence of the Russian empire from the exhibition's narrative: Russia's cultural achievements were not represented there, and her "primitive" peoples were equally absent from the anthropological display.³³

Bogdanov's own project of the exhibition, elaborated in 1864, took as a model the Anthropological Section of the Crystal Palace exhibition, yet the main emphasis was on representing "Russian tribes" as a part of global human racial diversity. To this end, Bogdanov planned to display copies of the mannequins from the Crystal Palace.³⁴ These plans failed because of technical obstacles and problems with reproducing the powerful civilization narrative of the London exhibition in Russia. The anthropological narrative of the Crystal Palace was structured not evolutionarily but geographically,³⁵ which meant that "primitive" races and "primitive" cultures were exhibited in their natural geographic environments, while Europeans were entirely exempt from this context. For the Russian team of scientists, the transfer of the British colonial model presented a double challenge. First, the initial idea to demonstrate global anthropological diversity failed. Therefore, they decided to "scale down" the representation of worldwide human diversity to a presentation of the Russian empire as a microcosm.³⁶ This decision raised the second problem of differentiating the Russian "microcosm" on the British model, into the normative metropole and exotic peripheries. It turned out to be a big problem to withdraw from the display of the human microcosm of the Russian empire the physical type and ethnographic culture of the ethnic Russians who lived alongside and amid imperial inorodtsy. To further complicate the task of emulating the British example, a group of pan-Slavist intellectuals proposed to include in the same exhibition the types and artifacts representing the Slavs of Eastern Europe, and this initiative was supported by the Russian author-

ities. As a result, the Russian imperial microcosm as reconstructed for the exhibition by the “European science” of anthropology did not resemble the normative European model of self-representation of the imperial metropole as a stronghold of civilization.

For Bogdanov and his colleagues, ideological considerations were of secondary importance. Their primary motivation in organizing the exhibition was the scientifically accurate representation of Russian racial types. They displayed skulls and brains in formalin, but these artifacts were obviously not particularly appealing to the general public they wished to attract to anthropology. So they decided that mannequins dressed in authentic ethnographic costumes should reflect the anthropometric specificities of each “tribe.” In accordance with European practice of the day, photography was chosen as a technical tool for objective fixation of facial characteristics that were then to be reproduced in plaster figures commissioned for the exhibition.³⁷ As long as it concerned the representation of non-Russians, everyone was satisfied with the way the exhibition represented the human diversity of the empire. However, the very same approach was a failure from the perspective of all versions of political imagination centered on Russians and their role in the empire and in pan-Slavic protonationalist mobilization. In his case study of the Moscow Ethnographic Exhibition of 1867, Nathaniel Knight quotes disappointed politicians, ethnographers, and intelligentsia ideologists who complained that the Exhibition made Russians aware of the diversity of their empire but failed to establish the objective grounds for the civilizing role (or even supremacy) of the Russians. A prolific publicist, Mikhail Katkov, blamed scientific “realism,” which, in his view, covered for the typical Russian inclination toward self-abasement. “We stop in perplexity before these faces without any expression and meaning. How can it be? There are none, indeed, not a single beautiful female face out of at least thirty female types assembled here, nothing except for some protruding eyes and potato-like noses! There is nothing except for a crude grotesque in some male representatives of this tribe, which had created [our] mighty state!”³⁸

The emperor, Alexander II, who generally liked the display of

his empire, remarked that the faces of the Great Russian women “could have been more beautiful, had a more rigorous selection been implemented.”³⁹

Among the imperial politicians not fully satisfied with the exhibition was Turkestan governor-general Konstantin Kaufman, who would prefer not to see Russians on display in any form. Instead, he was interested in the anthropology and ethnography of the imperial inorodtsy whose representation would show the Russian civilizing influence upon them.⁴⁰ He was impressed by the Turkestan collections at the exhibition and offered his support for colonial anthropology. Kaufman valued modern science for its expected role in overcoming “backwardness” and introducing “constructive cultural, economic, and political ideals and behavior.”⁴¹ In other words, he appreciated anthropological knowledge as instrumental in spreading culture and civilization in Russian Turkestan. Indeed, soon afterward, Kaufman financed the expedition (1868–1871) led by Bogdanov’s student and associate, a twenty-four-year-old secretary of the Anthropological Division of IOLEAE, Aleksei Pavlovich Fedchenko (1844–1873). The setting of this scientific undertaking was explicitly colonial. Fedchenko brought back to Moscow fifty-three Central Asian skulls (thirteen of them with full skeletons) acquired at Muslim cemeteries in Samarkand “in spite of great difficulties.”⁴² Usually, these “difficulties” were overcome either by stealing skeletons or by hiring locals who did this dirty work for the anthropologist. Skeletons were valued as the most convenient objects for anthropometric measurements: to measure live people, a scholar needed their consent; in addition, “cultural” factors, such as subcutaneous fat, impeded the accuracy of measurements.⁴³

Overall, the first IOLEAE exhibition taught Russian anthropologists a few lessons. It fulfilled its role as a popular medium for a new science and substantiated anthropology’s claim for formal academic recognition. It was attended by 83,000 visitors over the fifty-six days it was open, and laid the foundation for the new permanent ethnographic museum.⁴⁴ At the same time, it made apparent that the very format of a mass visual representation of the new knowledge in Russia was a subject of serious debates and that a di-

rect transfer of western colonial models could generate both methodological and practical problems. The buzz around the exhibition of 1867 also revealed the danger of overt politicization of anthropology. To counter the latter threat, the Moscow scholars adopted a more thoughtful attitude to the scientific foundations of anthropology and a more reserved stance vis-à-vis both the “authorities” and the “broader public.” Instead, the Moscow-centered pioneers of Russian anthropology embarked on the intensive building and expansion of an expert network of a narrower but more educated and likeminded public, on the readily available model of self-mobilization of intelligentsia.

The Russian anthropological exhibit at the third Paris World’s Fair (Exposition Universelle) of 1878 was already demonstratively apolitical: it represented neither empire as a microcosm nor Slavic unity or a Russian civilizing role, but a science of anthropology. It featured a number of sections corresponding to the following subfields of anthropology: general anthropology and craniology (featuring busts, masks, skulls, hair samples, etc.); prehistoric archaeology (demonstrating archaeological artifacts); European ethnography (displaying maps, photos, drawings); medical geography (charts of the ethnic distribution of specific diseases, epidemics, etc.); and anthropological education.

A year later, a large Anthropological Exhibition took place in Moscow, accompanying the international anthropological congress. It combined elements of a purely scientific approach with imperial-colonial-civilizational narratives, but overall, as Knight wrote, “compared to the Slavic spectacle of 1867,” the events of 1879 were “strictly apolitical” and designed to attract the leading representatives of European anthropology.⁴⁵ The main organizational principles of the Moscow Anthropological Exhibition of 1879 were evolutionism and universalism. This time, the organizers of the exhibition succeeded in putting on display artifacts from all over the world, arranged so as to demonstrate universal evolutionary progress. Live people representing different groups of the non-Russian population dressed in ethnic costumes demonstrated the human variety of the Russian empire. While the very idea of displaying live “ab-



1. Anthropological exhibition of 1879. Model of a mammoth. From *Antropologicheskaia vystavka 1879 goda* [*Izvestiia OLEAE*, vol. 35, part 2: *Trudy Antropologicheskogo otdela*, vol. 5], 12.



2. Anthropological exhibition of 1879: Lapps. From *Antropologicheskaiia vystavka 1879 goda*, 110.

origines” was manipulative and truly “colonial” in its essence, in the worldwide context of the exhibition they were perceived not so much as subaltern “others” of the Russian empire but rather as representatives of the utterly diversified human species of the world.

This exhibition proved to be a huge success—it was attended by close to 90,000 visitors⁴⁶—and it brought IOLEAE international prestige and financial resources. Russian anthropologists finally formulated their own agenda of anthropological study of the Russian empire as a modernizing undertaking in the country open to the application of new scientific methods and promising many important discoveries. The exhibition promoted the image of Russia as the only country on the European continent that allowed the combining of the anthropology of “national self-cognition”⁴⁷ with the anthropology of population diversity and cross-cultural interaction. This became a very important self-legitimizing thesis for Russian anthropologists of all generations, useful both for internal and external “consumption.” Referring to this thesis and further mythologizing it, the Moscow anthropologist Aleksei Ivanovskii on the pages of *RAJ* quoted the famous German anthropologist Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902) as presumably saying that the progress of anthropology as a science depended on Russia, which held the keys to major questions of European race science.⁴⁸

While constructing a new dynamic and adaptive model of their field as an amalgam of institutionalized science and the informal network of experts, Russian Moscow-oriented anthropologists routinely complained about the conservatism of the Russian university system, which did not want to integrate their discipline, and the lack of support from the Ministry of Education. Despite these complaints regularly voiced in the pages of *RAJ*, the journal received an annual subsidy of 400 rubles from the ministry. The Russian Anthropological Society of St. Petersburg University, demonstratively much more loyal to the state, was denied even this. The society’s members continuously petitioned the ministry for a subvention, but with no success.⁴⁹ On the other hand, in 1904 the minister of education circulated a letter to all overseers of educational districts (the empire was divided into such districts struc-

tured around major universities) in which he recommended that all school libraries subscribe to *RAJ*.⁵⁰ This was the minister's reaction to Anuchin's lobbying for *RAJ*'s financial interests.⁵¹ Thus the state did support, though on a very modest scale, at least the Moscow anthropology, which, curiously, behaved much more independently and was in general much less loyal to the imperial regime than other Russian anthropological "schools." Still, Moscow anthropologists and many readers of and contributors to *RAJ* from outside Moscow remained dissatisfied. They felt that their science was underappreciated, that Russia as a modernizing country was in critical need of anthropological knowledge, and the lack of official support of anthropology signaled the "backwardness" of the imperial regime.

Most of the Russian anthropologists who made careers in official academia received specialized anthropological training in Europe, mostly in France and Germany. They were returning to Russia full of hopes and plans but encountered restrictions that hampered the large-scale normalization of their most modern science. They used this situation in inter-academic politics, claiming their scholarly superiority over their better-integrated colleagues who represented "old" sciences. In their polemical ardor they tended to idealize the degree of European anthropology's institutionalization. In reality, German anthropology of the turn of the century (so idealized by Russian anthropologists) existed mostly as a network of museums and learned societies, among which the Berlin Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie, und Urgeschichte played the leading role.⁵² The structure of German anthropology closely resembled the network of Russian anthropology with the IOLEAE Anthropological Division at its top. As if reproducing the social dynamics of Russian race science, German anthropology functioned as an "autonomous public forum" in which the leading role of university professors was balanced by the active participation of medical doctors, teachers, and different kinds of entrepreneurs. In Germany, as in Russia, anthropology counted more on popular enthusiasm and private capitals than on state support.⁵³

While the network structure of German anthropology reflect-

ed its “beginnings in a self-consciously polycentric nation where municipal and regional support was critical for the success of local universities and the rise of the German sciences,”⁵⁴ a similar structure of Russian anthropology was an alternative form of all-imperial self-mobilization of intellectuals in a country where municipal and regional freedom in the fields of university education was minimal. Thus the real difference between the European and Russian patterns of institutionalization and social settings of anthropology lay not in their hybrid character, more or less universal for all European countries, but in the existence in Russia of a readily available tradition of intelligentsia self-mobilization, with its own public space of communication. This space was by definition oppositional to the Russian state and Russian official politics, and anthropology as a network had absorbed this oppositional ethos. The “lovers” of race science, as a rule, did not share the radical populism characteristic of Russian ethnographers and imperialist enthusiasm that often characterized Russian geographers/explorers.⁵⁵ Rather, they brought into the new science the tropes of the liberal political critique of traditional university education, the dualism of “progressive” vs. “conservative,” modernization philosophy, and the acute perception of Russian backwardness. In this progressivist discourse, anthropology was a litmus test of the country’s structural backwardness. In the words of the anthropologist Dmitrii Nikol’skii, in Russia, “due to special conditions, both in public domain and on the state level, backwardness is apparent everywhere, including the situation in anthropology.”⁵⁶

More anthropology meant less backwardness, and vice versa. Such a perception stimulated the development of anthropology both as a science and as a public network.