Dorothy Atkinson (1929–2016)

Dorothy G. Atkinson, historian of Russia and long-time executive director of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS), as the Association of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) was formerly known, died on January 23, 2016, in Palo Alto, California. Although this tribute to Dorothy's career is late, her many contributions to Russia, East European, and Eurasian studies must be fully acknowledged, however belatedly. I worked closely with Dorothy for 15 years, first as one of her graduate students, then as her research assistant for a brief period, and finally as her lieutenant at the AAASS from 1982 to 1988. For me, Dorothy Atkinson personifies the pioneering women scholars of her generation, who faced so many impediments, yet persevered nonetheless.

Dorothy Grace Gillis was born August 5, 1929 in Malden, Massachusetts, the only daughter of Grace Campagna, a homemaker, and George Gillis, a labor union leader. Learning to coexist with her six brothers was early preparation for dealing with the male-dominated world of higher education. Dorothy early excelled in school, graduating at the top of her high school class. The first member of her family to attend college, she studied history at Barnard College, graduating in 1951 as Dorothy Atkinson, having married Stewart Atkinson the year before. After Dorothy's graduation, she and her husband moved to California, where she earned a master's degree in history at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1953.

After her studies at Berkeley, like so many other smart, ambitious, college-educated women of her era, Dorothy set aside her intellectual aspirations to devote her energies to raising her two children, Paul and Kim. As they grew older, however, Dorothy decided to continue her education at Stanford University, receiving her PhD in 1971. She joined the Stanford faculty as an assistant professor of Russian history in 1973, where she taught for eight years. As a teacher, Dorothy was engaged and engaging, demanding but kind (a rarity at Stanford at that time). Carolyn Pouncy, another of Dorothy's graduate students, also remembers that her erudition and intelligence was combined with a supportive personality, especially important for young women trying to break down barriers in academe in the 1970s. Carolyn recalls Dorothy as a "calm, helpful, and understanding" teacher and a "warm, caring, and supportive advisor."

Despite Dorothy's popularity as a teacher and scholarly recognition as a pioneer in Russian women's history due to the success of *Women in Russia* (Stanford University Press, 1977), which she co-edited with Alexander Dallin and Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, Dorothy was denied tenure in 1981. Her highly regarded book, *The End of the Russian Land Commune, 1905-1930* (Stanford University Press, 1983), was not finished in time to beat the "tenure clock." Tenure denial is devastating under any circumstances, but Dorothy was stunned to learn (unofficially, of course) that with few exceptions, her department not only voted against her, but also argued strenuously against considering an appeal.

Not long after receiving this tremendous blow, Dorothy's husband of thirty-one years told her that he wanted a divorce. I will never forget the sound of her voice when she called me with the news, but help was on the way in the unlikely form of the AAASS, nearly bankrupt from a decade of mismanagement. The board was searching for a new institutional home, which Stanford agreed to provide. Dorothy became the executive director, a post she held from late 1981 to 1995.

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The events of 1981 had a distinct and lasting impact on Dorothy. She became a relentless force, driven to succeed. She devoted everything she had to her new job: her powerful intellect, her business acumen, her newfound affinity for public relations, and her managerial ability. Her waking hours (and she slept little in those years) were obsessively focused on the AAASS, and she expected the same from her staff. Consideration and kindness were in short supply, and ordinary mortals found her almost impossible to please. Despite these cracks behind her polished façade, during Dorothy's tenure as executive director, the association more than doubled its membership, achieved financial stability (even building a reserve), and dramatically raised its national and international profile. It is also important to note that Dorothy encouraged the formation of the Association of Women in Slavic Studies and its affiliation with AAASS and established the AAASS Committee on the Status of Women.

Although Dorothy certainly benefited from the assistance of other leaders in the field in her quest to save the AAASS, in my opinion, the laurels for the association's rebirth really do belong to her. It was quite fitting, therefore, that she received the AAASS Distinguished Contributor Award in 1996 (one of only seven women to be so honored in the history of the prize to date). She should be remembered as a visionary leader, indefatigable fundraiser, dedicated administrator, and serious historian.

After her retirement, Dorothy remained active in various institutional leadership roles in Slavic studies for a few years. Away from the AAASS helm, Dorothy's softer side slowly reemerged. In her remaining years, she devoted herself to her beloved children and grandchildren, who survive her, and began gardening again, a favorite pastime, at which (of course) she excelled. I hope that in her later years, she found the happiness and contentment that she richly deserved.

Dorothy Atkinson was a remarkable woman from whom I learned much. I have touched on her setbacks in this remembrance not to diminish her, but to valorize her. Her struggles and her courage in facing them are a sobering reminder that although women in academe have achieved much, thanks to the paths blazed by Dorothy and her generational cohort, the past is still not past.

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James P. Scanlan, 1927–2016

James P. Scanlan, longtime Professor of Philosophy and former Director of the Slavic and East European Center at Ohio State University, died on October 28, 2016. He is well-known for his historical and critical work on and translations of Russian philosophy, in particular his groundbreaking work on the philosophical views of Dostoevskii and Tolstoi. Scanlan is author of more than 170 publications in English and Russian, including two monographs, five edited or co-edited anthologies, two book-length translations with substantial intellectual biographies, over eighty scholarly articles and book chapters, forty-two encyclopedia entries, and a number of editor's introductions and other works. Between 1956 and 2012, he gave over 175 scholarly and public presentations in eleven countries. He mentored several generations of specialists in Russian philosophy and his work serves as the backbone for a field that he—together with his colleague and mentor George L. Kline (1921–2014)—were instrumental in developing.

Scanlan did not start out his career, however, in Russian philosophy. He received his PhD from the University of Chicago in 1956, where he studied under Rudolph

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Carnap and Alan Gewirth. For two years before receiving his degree, he worked as a fellow of the Institute of Philosophical Research under the direction of Mortimer Adler on the first of two volumes of *The Idea of Freedom*, a monumental work. The theme of freedom is an enduring one in Scanlan's writings. Once he had his degree, he accepted a position at Goucher College and his early publications were in political philosophy. It was at Goucher that his interest in Russian philosophy began. He studied Russian at Georgetown University, spent a year in Russian Studies at Berkley on a postdoctoral fellowship from the Ford Foundation, and then spent the 1964–65 academic year as Visiting Professor in the Philosophy Department at Moscow State University. He would return to Russia many times over his career, including the spring 1969 semester to Moscow State University and for the spring 1978 semester to the Institute of Philosophy at the Russian Academy of Sciences (Moscow).

One of his earliest contributions to the field was his collaboration with James Edie, Mary-Barbara Zeldin, and George Kline in the three-volume anthology *Russian Philosophy* (1965). For the book, Scanlan translated works by Vissarion Belinskii, Dmitrii Pisarev, Petr Lavrov, Nikolai Mikhailovskii, and Lev Tolstoi, as well as writing introductions to a number of the twenty-seven authors represented in the volumes. The three volumes went through multiple editions and became a standard textbook for undergraduate and graduate courses in Russian philosophy, making available many texts that had previously been unavailable in English translation.

For the next few years, Scanlan was involved primarily in translation and editorial projects. In 1967, he published a translation of Lavrov's *Historical Letters*, preceded by a 60-page introduction. He completed the archival work for an English translation of Mikhail Gershenzon's *History of Young Russia*, first published in its entirety in 1986, for which he received an award from the National Translation Center. Like *Russian Philosophy*, each is an ambitious combination of carefully annotated translation with erudite intellectual biographies of relevant thinkers. In 1974, he co-edited (with Richard De George) a volume of papers on *Marxism and Religion in Eastern Europe*. Between 1970 and 1972, he compiled the American Bibliography of Slavic and East European Studies on a yearlong grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Scanlan left Goucher in 1968 to become a professor of Philosophy and Director of the Center for Soviet and East European Studies at the University of Kansas, a position that he left in 1971 for Ohio State.

In the late 1960s, Scanlan turned his focus to scholarly criticism on the history of Russian philosophy. The subject matter of his articles between 1967 and the early 1980s includes Nikolai Chernyshevskii, Soviet and Marxist aesthetics, and Soviet political thought (especially dialectical materialism and Marxist ideology). In 1985, he published his first monograph, *Marxism in the USSR: A Critical Survey of Current Soviet Thought*, a groundbreaking and comprehensive scholarly survey of the realities of Marxism in the USSR in the decades following Stalin's death. The book was not just another western criticism of Marxism-Leninism. Rather, he argued that despite the grave weaknesses of Soviet Marxism as a philosophical system, the realities of the Soviet system permitted many Soviet philosophers to undertake serious and interesting philosophical work. This thesis flew in the face of received wisdom abroad, which assumed that Marxism functioned only as a dogmatic restriction to philosophical development.

Scanlan would again take on unquestioned assumptions about Russian philosophy in 1993, during a presentation at the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of Philosophy entitled "Does Russia Need Russian Philosophy?" Here he controversially called for Russian philosophers to abandon claims to "national uniqueness" and join in dialogue with philosophers abroad. He went on to suggest that more attention be paid to insightful Russian thinkers (especially neo-Leibnizians and liberal legal

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philosophers of the fin de siècle), whose ideas had been suppressed or distorted during the Soviet era. Scanlan's 1993 presentation was published in the leading Russian philosophical journal, *Problems of Philosophy* (No. 1, 1994) and discussion of it continued for some time in both the Russian and American academic press. Another major work in this period was the edited volume *Russian Thought after Communism: The Recovery of a Philosophical Heritage*, a *festschrift* in honor of George Kline. Scanlan continued his focus on salient contemporary issues in his chapter on "Interpretations and Uses of Slavophilism in Recent Russian Thought." Scanlan's work on post-Soviet Russian philosophy, and especially his memorable presentation in Moscow in 1993, is still regularly cited by scholars today.

As discussion on the collapse of the Soviet Union subsided, Scanlan turned his attention to Russian thinkers of the pre-Soviet period, especially Tolstoi and Dostoevskii. In 2002 he published *Dostoevsky the Thinker*, the first comprehensive account of Dostoevskii's philosophical outlook, bringing together the writer's fiction, essays, and personal papers. He demonstrated that Dostoevskii's philosophical views were more solidly grounded and systematic than generally assumed, while also taking care to challenge weaknesses in Dostoevskii's philosophical approach. The monograph was translated into Russian in 2006.

From the mid–2000s until his death, Scanlan was preparing a monograph on Tolstoi as philosopher. He had already published substantial work on Tolstoy's philosophical views, including "Tolstoy as Analytic Thinker: His Philosophical Defense of Nonviolence," in which he concluded that Tolstoy's later writings "show that he was perfectly capable of making appropriate conceptual distinctions, recognizing legitimate objections to his position, and responding rationally to them," even if "his missionary zeal led him to exaggerate the absoluteness of his moral message."[1]

It is impossible to eulogize in such a short space—or in any space—the life and work of a scholar who has shaped a discipline in the way that Jim Scanlan shaped the study of Russian philosophy in the United States. Amongst the plethora of scholarly writing on Tolstoi, for instance, he stands out as one of a select few who engage the writer's moral philosophy with the broader ethical tradition. His treatment of the ideas of Dostoevskii and Tolstoi not just in a literary context, but in rigorous philosophical context, serves as a model for scholars investigating Russia's philosophical thinkers.

The discipline of Russian philosophy in the United States is very different now than it was in the 1960s, when Scanlan was preparing translations for the three volumes of *Russian Philosophy*. It is a discipline no longer populated by philosophers who found their way to Russian Studies, but by Russianists who found their way to philosophy. It is a discipline that does not enjoy nearly as much attention as during its Cold War heyday. But the field of Russian philosophy today is perhaps more vibrant than ever, in very strong part due to the foundational work that Jim Scanlan's scholarship and translations did to pave the way for generations of scholars of Russian philosophy after him.

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1. Scanlan, James P., "Tolstoy as Analytic Thinker: His Philosophical Defense of Nonviolence," *Studies in East European Thought* 63 (2011): 7.

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