

## ALFRED P. LEVIN, 1908–1984

Once again Clio weeps for a departed colleague with the recent passing of Alfred P. Levin, professor emeritus of history at Kent State University, on November 28, 1984 at the age of 76. A native of Connecticut, Professor Levin received his undergraduate education at Brown University where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and in 1937 he earned his doctorate at Yale University in Russian history under George Vernadsky.

A consummate scholar, Levin acquired a national reputation very early in his career as an authority on early twentieth-century Russian history, specifically the Russian parliamentary system between 1906 and 1917 and its impact on the Bolshevik Revolution. His two major monographic studies on the subject remain masterpieces of erudition. The first, *The Second Duma: A Study of the Social Democratic Party and the Russian Constitutional Experiment*, appeared in 1940 and represented the first comprehensive examination of the Russian parliamentary system anywhere prior to that date. The second, *The Third Duma: Elections and Profiles*, published in 1973, served as a continuation of his earlier work. This same excellence was also characteristic of Levin's other significant scholarly endeavors, a Festschrift in honor of George Vernadsky (*Essays in European History: A Collection Dedicated to George Vernadsky*, 1964), which he coedited, and *Dynamics of Soviet Society* (1953) of which he was a coauthor.

Levin's accomplishments were not limited to his scholarly activities. He also made significant contributions as an educator. His early career, like that of many early pioneers of Russian studies in this country, was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II. Following military service in the Office of Strategic Services and as research analyst for the Department of State, he accepted an appointment in 1946 at Oklahoma State University. There he developed one of the leading Russian studies programs in the Southwest. In 1968 he joined the faculty of Kent State University as professor of Russian history and coordinator of Russian area studies. He remained there until his retirement in 1979.

Levin also devoted considerable effort to the training of new generations of Russian historians. Always the stern taskmaster, he left his mark on all those who came in contact with him. In the classroom he was a diligent and thorough instructor who brought a wealth of knowledge and understanding to his subject. From his graduate students he demanded the same thoroughness and dedication to scholarly excellence that he accorded to his own work. He encouraged them to develop their own ideas, theories, and interpretations. Often he would act as an interested listener, quietly probing points of presentation, offering incisive commentary and critique, and then wait until his point was understood by the neophyte scholar. As a result he was able to impart to his students the skills and techniques required by the practicing professional.

In addition to his already enumerated accomplishments, Levin contributed significantly to the expansion and development of Russian studies. He was active in numerous professional organizations, especially the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies where for many years he was an influential figure. Moreover, Levin sought to promote increased scholarly cooperation with the Soviet Union. His work with the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX) is well known. He traveled extensively in the Soviet Union as a visiting scholar and in 1971 participated in a major exchange program between the United States and the USSR sponsored by the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Twice he was a recipient of Fulbright grants for study abroad.

Alfred Levin viewed the search for knowledge as his primary purpose in life. He had a unique ability to communicate his knowledge and benefited his many students. There is little doubt that Alfred Levin will be missed by all who knew him.

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