

did: just as Lotman had shown in *Pushkin*, so Bezrodnyi joined life and art, and in so doing, made his own life into a text. His way of life consciously reflected literary allusions, the real and fictional blended together. In Bezrodnyi, the values of that generation were thrown into relief and made perceptible.

Ultimately, Bezrodnyi bore the scars of his generation. Although he and that generation had little regard for the powers that be (even if they didn't die on their swords as high-exposure dissidents), their lives were nonetheless shaped by the transformations in Mikhail Gorbachev's Soviet Union. Still a superpower, the Soviet Union's system had trouble filling the shops with consumer goods. The sense of inferiority, embarrassment, humiliation, and blustery bravado made for classic Soviet jokes, but in pensive moments, Bezrodnyi despaired along with his colleagues. When the Soviet Union fell in the early 1990s, he sensed that it was time to leave. He was lucky to have fallen in love with a Slavist from Germany, the inimitable Renata Von Maydell.

Borders were open; why not try one's hand somewhere else? In Germany, however, he broke the rules of academic hierarchy. Instead of praising the powerful, he brought famous professors to their knees with razor-sharp criticism. He fought with everyone. He ultimately found a position teaching Russian language in Heidelberg. Even that job he took too seriously. Were the students learning fast enough? Could a different approach bring greater results? He appeared as a Stakhanovite worker who could not put up with lazy colleagues. Even though he had left the Soviet Union, it had not left him.

In Heidelberg, Bezrodnyi became a paterfamilias, bringing up three boys. To see him in his home was to encounter a workshop where, once again, life and art were combined; this time in the educational project that he imposed on his children. They were instructed not only in Russian language and literature, but also music, art, philosophy, and science—all the dimensions of knowledge that you might read about in Alexander Von Humboldt's enlightenment-period biography.

Although we acknowledge his bodily death, his story does not end here because he was part of something greater and persevering: the Russian intelligentsia. I mean that inclusive, ethnically diverse group which shares values—respect of freedom, individuality, and above all, love for literary expression and creative exploration. That world no longer exists, but it was real and exhilarating for those who experienced the Soviet cultural renaissance of the 1980s, a monument to supra-human achievement in the field of literary scholarship.

Robert O. Crummey

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Robert Owen Crummey (April 12, 1936–November 6, 2023), a ground-breaking scholar of early modern Russia, died on November 6, 2023, in Davis, California. He was 87 years old. His career was wide-ranging, innovative, and enormously influential on his field. He graduated with a Bachelor's degree from the University of Toronto in 1958 and entered the graduate program in History at the University of Chicago. There he initially intended to study French history, but was drawn to Russian history by studying with the Leo Haimson and Michael Cherniavsky (who became his advisor). He completed his PhD in 1964 and began teaching at

Yale University in 1965. In 1974, he moved to the Department of History at the University of California, Davis, where he stayed until his retirement in 1994. At Davis, he served as Dean of the College of Letters and Sciences from 1988 to 1994.

Bob was an original and eclectic thinker, a graceful writer, and a subtle historian. As he pursued two major themes over his career, he constantly deepened and expanded his work with new approaches and new theoretical frameworks. His initial field of study, and the one to which he was perhaps most devoted, focused on the Old Believers—religious dissenters in the Russian Orthodox Church in the seventeenth century who established a sect that endures to this day. In his first monograph, *The Old Believers and the World of Antichrist: The Vyg Community and Russian State, 1694–1855* (1970), Bob tracked the history of one community of Old Believers over several generations, taking primarily an institutional and political approach. Throughout his career, Bob expanded and elaborated upon this study in a number of important articles and book chapters, sometimes applying comparative and theoretical approaches from other disciplines, to explore the community's theology, worship, and beliefs. He explored the spirituality of the Old Belief's founders, experimented with the idea of Old Belief as popular religion, and assiduously tracked how Old Believers created a “textual community” so that its conservative spirituality and beliefs could endure by taking full advantage of the new (for Russia) technology of printing. These and many other seminal essays are gathered in his *Old Believers in a Changing World* (2011), a collection of his most masterful articles and book chapters.

In the 1980s Bob turned in a very different direction, applying quantitative methods to a prosopographical study of the members of the tsar's informal council, the “Boyar Duma.” His *Aristocrats and Servitors: The Boyar Elite in Russia 1613–89* (1983) is a collective biography of the elite based on a gargantuan collection of biographical data in archival and printed sources. Analyzing how this group of rough-hewn, illiterate military servitors gradually transformed themselves into the competent officials required for the state's growing central bureaucracy and expanding imperial administration, *Aristocrats and Servitors* constitutes a history of the seventeenth-century state itself. He published numerous complementary articles around the issue of boyars and court politics, one of the most impressive being the detailed quantitative analysis in his seminal 1980 book chapter “The Origins of the Noble Official: The Boyar Elite, 1613–1689” (in Pintner and Rowney's, *Russian Officialdom*, 46–75). He rounded out his interest in boyars in further essays: his study of court rituals (1985) was one of the first in the field of Muscovite history to take seriously the place of rituals in politics. His analysis of the system of precedence (*mestnichestvo*) (1980) was perhaps the first to question the received interpretations and offer new ways of thinking about honor, service, and the formation of power in the Muscovite monarchy. These three articles continue to be cited today by anyone interested in the political culture of early modern Russia.

Bob's fair-mindedness as a scholar and a person made him particularly good at historiography, to which he devoted several important articles. His survey of work on Ivan IV “the Terrible” (1976) deftly navigates the turbulent waters of that field, and his last historiographical survey, “The Latest from Muscovy” (2001), offered a frank but still optimistic overview of where the field of early Slavic studies was at that moment—and where it might venture to in the next decades. His judiciousness and breadth of knowledge were on full display in his general survey *The Formation of Muscovy 1304–1613* (1987), still the best single-volume study of the centuries of Muscovy's state building. Generations of students have used his and Lloyd E. Berry's edition of sixteenth-century English travel accounts to Russia, *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom: Russia in the Accounts of Sixteenth-Century English Voyagers* (1968), benefitting far more than they probably realized by his learned annotations, which helpfully put into context some of the English travelers' misapprehensions about Russia.

Bob was an exceptionally generous and kind person. In a field that was experiencing radical revisions of the received wisdom in many areas, Bob not only led the way by suggesting novel approaches and new conclusions but, both in print and in person, maintained a tone of judicious good will towards all sides of these debates. He was particularly fond of referring

to our small band of colleagues as a family, and he always treated us as such. As a mentor, his comments were both meticulous and fair, and his emotional and academic support was simply unfailing.

The title of his first book (with Lloyd E. Berry) was recycled for a collection of essays in his honor, *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom Revisited* (2008), where the reader can find a full bibliography of his work. The Festschrift is evidence of his colleagues' great esteem and respect for him as a scholar, as well as their fondness for him as a friend. Robert Crummey was a kind person, intensely supportive of his own students, and welcoming and helpful to all who knew him. We will miss his wry and erudite wit and his big-hearted winning smile.

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On December 2, 2023, one of the rooms at ASEES was filled for a panel commemorating the life and work of our friend and colleague, Ben Eklof (1946–2023). The panel was not originally intended as a memorial, but as a celebration of Ben's achievements as a scholar, mentor, and friend. Even though the planned event went against the grain of his strong sense of humility, Ben was looking forward to being there, but he did not make it; Ben had sadly passed on October 24 after a long struggle with cancer. He was notorious for not showing up for panels, and all assembled could not help but chuckle at the fact that he'd managed to do it again. Only this time, there would be no apologetic emails or phone calls from Ben. He had gone, to quote one of his favorite Van Morrison tunes, “into the mystic.” Yet, the consensus of the room—the consensus of all who experienced his graceful, innate sense of politeness, the warmth of his charm, and the sharpness of his intellect—was that Ben had always showed up where it mattered most in our academic lives: in his scholarship, in the classroom, and in his role as a mentor.

Ben's life and scholarship reflected his passionate love of Russia's past and present, its culture and daily life. Like many of us, his path to history began with an early fascination with nineteenth-century literature that led to studying the language. Over time, he developed a special affection for the short story genre, not only the obligatory Aleksandr Pushkin stories, but also (and especially) Anton Chekhov's pointed depictions of peasants and the many other character types that populated the post-emancipation Russian empire. He pursued his curiosity about Russia amidst the Cold War and its heated proxy, the war raging in Vietnam. Ben became convinced that understanding all of this required an understanding of history. He completed a BA in history at Middlebury College in 1968, and then a PhD at Princeton in 1977.

Ben arrived in Moscow on a Fulbright to conduct his dissertation research in the early 1970s and immersed himself in the Brezhnevian world, not only as a researcher, but also as a translator for Progress Publishers and as a friend and colleague. For Ben (and most others), observing day-to-day life debunked the paradigm of the totalitarian model that had governed conceptions of the Soviet Union since the mid-1950s and reduced attempts to understand the place to Kremlinology. The USSR was not just a row of gray old men on top of the Lenin Mausoleum on Soviet holidays, but a vibrant society that hummed its own tune both because of (and despite) the Party and the Plan. Understanding the Soviet Union and