

John N. Hazard: 1909–1995

Readers of *Slavic Review* have cause to recall John Newbold Hazard, II, who died of cancer on 7 April 1995, at the age of 86. In addition to his distinction as a pioneer in the Soviet field, he edited this journal and was a founder of its sponsoring corporation.

Hazard was born in Syracuse, New York, on 5 January 1909. He was named after his father's father, a mill owner from Newport, Rhode Island. Hazard's father, after training as a chemical engineer, joined a great-uncle's soda-ash business in Syracuse. There he married Ada DeKalb, the daughter of a classics teacher who had fled the poverty of the post Civil War South.

Hazard gave his mother much of the credit for starting him out well. Remembering her parents' hardships, she insisted that young John master the violin as a skill to fall back on. It was she who, after John's father died suddenly of pneumonia in 1918, managed her late husband's estate so prudently that she not only paid off all debts but built up her assets enough to permit John to follow his father's path to The Hill School and to Yale. She enabled him, in 1924, to accompany a group of Hill boys on a study tour of Europe, and in 1926 to spend a summer in Paris studying both French and the violin. When she died unexpectedly in 1930, just after he had graduated from Yale, he seemed to be heading toward law school and a typical legal practice in Syracuse.

Before entering law school, he carried out a plan he and three Yale classmates had made for a nine-month no-frills trip around the world. En route, they visited several cities in the USSR. Hazard found Russia so depressing that he wrote to his sister that he never wanted to see it again.

But in a twist of fate, as he was about to finish Harvard Law School, one of his professors offered to nominate him for a new, unique three-year fellowship to study Soviet law. He would be at the Moscow Juridical Institute as a fellow of the Chicago-based Institute of Current World Affairs. After some hesitation Hazard set aside his unpleasant memories of the country and took the leap.

Hazard arrived in the USSR in August of 1934 and plunged into language study. He entered the Juridical Institute in February of 1935. His lecturers included many respected names in Soviet law, some of whom vanished in the Purge while he was there. In his unusual position as a non-government American who had ready access to the Embassy on social occasions, he met not only ambassadors Bullitt and Davies but also such future victims of Stalin as Radek, Bukharin, and Tukhachevskii.

After he completed his Moscow certificate in December of 1937, the ICWA supported him through a JSD from the University of Chicago in 1939. He then had two years of law practice on Wall Street and wartime service with the Lend-Lease Administration (including a special mission to the USSR and China with vice-president Henry Wallace in 1944) before his appointment in 1946, at the age of 37, as full professor of public law at Columbia. It was in that capacity that he became one of the original five-man team, under the leadership of Geroid T. Robinson, that launched the Russian Institute. Meanwhile, in 1941 he married Susan Lawrence, a daughter and granddaughter of Episcopalian bishops. They had four children—John, William, Nancy (Greenfield), and Barbara—all of whom, as well as Susan, are still living.

Columbia was Hazard's academic home for the rest of his life. His courses on Soviet law and the Soviet political system were path-breaking. He made an extreme effort to teach dispassionately, bringing out the shortcomings of the Soviet system yet, with the help of his personal experiences there, explaining the views of Soviet believers. He was a mentor to students not just in his own specialties but also in other *Slavic Review* 54, no. 4 (Winter 1995)

disciplines of the Russian (later Harriman) Institute. John and Sue were especially hospitable to students, and maintained contact with many after they left Columbia. After his nominal retirement in 1977 he remained active as Nash Professor of Law, Emeritus. He taught in several around-the-world "Semesters at Sea," during which Sue served as librarian. He joined Sue in service to the local Episcopal community. With her help, he was still reading manuscripts and carrying on correspondence up to within a few weeks of his death.

Hazard seemed to treasure every minute. He said that his work in a Wall Street firm had taught him to count each quarter-hour for billing purposes. Indeed, he always seemed to be unusually focused on not wasting time, even when he and his family were at their summer home on Skaneateles Lake. He published widely, including five editions of a popular text, *The Soviet System of Government*, as well as such volumes as *Soviet Housing Law*, *Law and Social Change in the USSR*, *Settling Disputes in Soviet Society*, *The Soviet Legal System*, *Managing Change in the USSR* and *Recollections of a Pioneering Sovietologist*. He had held visiting appointments or lectureships at over two dozen universities, and received honorary degrees from seven of them. His achievements were recognized in many other ways, including election as president of the International Academy of Comparative Law and president of the International Association of Legal Sciences.

His vital service to our journal began in the 1940s. The *American Slavic and East European Review* had started in 1941 in order to carry on the war-interrupted work of London's *Slavonic and East European Review*. As of 1948 the *ASEER* was being edited by Ernest J. Simmons and subsidized by Columbia, with help from the Rockefeller Foundation and the ACLS-SSRC Joint Committee on Slavic Studies. It was Hazard who, in that year, on behalf of the sponsoring group, arranged to incorporate in the State of New York an organization to be called the "American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies." In 1951 Hazard took over the managing editorship and remained in that post through 1960. The journal evidently reached 600 or 700 individual subscribers, which was notable considering that Hazard had both to manage and to edit it with only one assistant and little or no released time.

When, in 1959–60, the JCSS decided that our field needed a national membership organization to broaden support for the *Review* and to develop the field generally, the already-chartered AAASS stood ready to serve those expanded purposes. Hazard turned over the editorship to the late Donald W. Treadgold for the first issue of 1961, but continued to serve the AAASS as treasurer until 1965. From then on into the 1990s, he was one of the most faithful participants at AAASS conventions. In many sessions some of us Medicare types would sit toward the back, afraid that we might not be able to keep from nodding. But if John were present he would surely be in the front row, looking as alert as the freshest neophyte—if not quite as hirsute—and noting ideas for the question period.

As a person who had achieved worldwide renown, John Hazard was remarkably unassuming, considerate, and open to the views of others. As a person who took his educational mission most seriously, he was strikingly non-hortatory. He seemed always cheerful, even-tempered, cautiously optimistic, and restrainedly enthusiastic. His professional activities were in large part his recreation, too, and—except when forced to grade papers—he tackled them with zest. Life dealt him a good hand, and he worked hard to make every card count.

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