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“How Well Do You Know Your *Krai*?” The *Kraevedenie* Revival and Patriotic Politics in Late Khrushchev-Era Russia

Victoria Donovan

The Twenty-Second Communist Party Congress, in 1961, marked a turning point in post-Stalin politics. Following the dramatic revelations of the Secret Speech in 1956, the Congress provided a forum in which these events could be worked into a teleological narrative and reinterpreted as grist to the mill in the march toward communism. In place of ideological equivocation and political anxiety, the Congress offered the people of the Soviet Union a concrete set of values and ideals in the form of the “Moral Code of the Builder of Communism” and the new Program of the Communist Party. At the Congress, Nikita Khrushchev employed a characteristic construction metaphor to evoke the changes that were about to take place in the socialist state. Once the foundations of the “glorious house of communism” had been laid, he explained, the “walls” of the building—a surplus of material and cultural goods—could be raised and the redistribution of national wealth could finally take place.¹

The Third Program was ostensibly focused on the future. Famously, communism was supposed to be achieved by 1980. However, in the post-1961 period, the prerevolutionary and Soviet past became one of the most important focuses of Soviet cultural work as political elites attempted to establish new sites of national memory that could bind the country together. The past provided a source of heroes, myths, and icons to mobilize and spur the nation forward along the path to communism. In an attempt to foster national patriotism, certain elements of the past were “objectivized” in institutions of cultural memory, such as museums and monuments, and commemorated in text, in tourist guides and history books. Familiarization with a particular vision of the national and local past, it was hoped, would make Soviet citizens aware of their place in the nation’s history and their role in turning the last page of that volume, the construction of communism.

This article focuses on the local dimension of this process and specifically on the revival of the discipline of *kraevedenie*, a multidisciplinary form of local study repressed at the end of the 1920s for its “bourgeois passéism” and localist inclinations. I argue that the promotion of local historical knowledge at this time constituted part of the effort to strengthen popular support for the Soviet regime during the second phase of de-Stalinization. Local communities were encouraged to turn inward at this time, to contemplate their history and traditions in an effort to stimulate popular allegiance to the ide-

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1. Programma KPSS, section 1, part 1, August 2, 1961.

als and values of the Soviet state. However, the regime's strategic affirmation of regional identity had unintended consequences, giving rise to feelings of regional specificity and manifestations of local patriotism that were at odds with the integrational logic of Soviet historical discourse. By stimulating local historical consciousness, I argue, the state opened the way for individuals to question the integrity of the official script, laying the foundations for a fragmentation of national memory along regional lines.

With its focus on the political restructuring of the post-1961 period, this article contributes to a corpus of scholarly literature dedicated to the excavation of thaw-era politics and culture. This literature has questioned the facile understanding of the post-1956 period as an era of political liberalism and cultural rejuvenation, drawing attention to the reality of continued repression, heightened social control, and cultural re-ideologization under the Khrushchev leadership.² The article understands 1961 as a critical juncture in post-Stalin politics and highlights the official deployment of history as one component in a broader strategy of popular mobilization that emerged in this second phase of de-Stalinization. In this way, my argument intersects with another dynamic field of academic analysis, that of memory politics and nation building.³ The focus on local rather than national memory, however, centers attention not only on the means by which cultural heritage can be manipulated to mold social identity but also on the difficulties that emerge when this process takes place simultaneously on national and local stages. Thus, while contributing to the study of practices of commemoration in the Soviet context, this study also sheds light on center-region relations in the Khrushchev era, scrutinizing institutional tendencies and tensions that help us understand the emergence of more outspoken forms of localism in the late Soviet era.

(Re)Turning to History in the Late Khrushchev Era

The historical turn of the late Khrushchev era was certainly not the first time that the state had strategically deployed history with the intention of bolster-

2. See, for example, Polly Jones, ed., *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era* (London, 2006); Miriam Dobson, *Khrushchev's Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform after Stalin* (Ithaca, 2009); Melanie Ilic and Jeremy Smith, eds., *Soviet State and Society under Nikita Khrushchev* (London, 2009); and Jeremy Smith and Melanie Ilic, eds., *Khrushchev in the Kremlin: Policy and Governance in the Soviet Union, 1953–1964* (London, 2011).

3. The literature on memory politics and nation building in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia is by now vast and various. Some of the most important works in this corpus include Nina Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives! The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983); Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York, 1999); Lisa A. Kirschenbaum, *The Legacy of the Siege of Leningrad, 1941–1995: Myth, Memories, and Monuments* (Cambridge, Eng., 2006); Stephen Bittner, *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw: Experience and Memory in Moscow's Arbat* (Ithaca, 2008); David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931–1956* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002); and Frederick C. Corney, *Telling October: Memory and the Making of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Ithaca, 2004).

ing the legitimacy and popularity of the Soviet regime. As David Brandenberger and Kevin Platt, among others, have effectively demonstrated, Iosif Stalin and his entourage were preoccupied with historical revisionism in the name of Soviet state building as early as the mid-1930s. Brandenberger argues that “the Stalinist party hierarchy’s deployment of Russian national heroes, myths, and iconography was essentially a pragmatic move to augment the more arcane aspects of Marxist Leninism with populist rhetoric designed to bolster Soviet state legitimacy and promote a society-wide sense of allegiance to the USSR.”⁴ Pragmatic populism gradually ceded to patriotic extremism during World War II, when historians began to mine Russian history for inspirational material that would spur the nation forward in its struggle against Nazism. If Russian nationalist rhetoric was curtailed in the wake of the war, the late 1940s were marked by a crackdown on republican historiographies, which were castigated for “nationalist errors” and the endorsement of non-Russian Slavic historical narratives.⁵ By Stalin’s death, the conflation of “Russian” and “Soviet” had become commonplace, as revealed, most famously, by Stalin’s May 1945 toast to the Russian people as the *primus inter pares* of nations forming the Soviet Union.

If the Stalinist party hierarchy made use of prerevolutionary Russian heroes, myths, and iconography in a pragmatic attempt to market Marxist-Leninist rhetoric to a marginally educated citizenry, the focus of Khrushchev-era historicizing was the Soviet, rather than Russian, national past.⁶ The post-Stalin leadership’s main concern was to impress on the population the Communist Party’s continued legitimacy and to find an appropriate way to conceptualize the relationship between the Khrushchev administration and the delegitimized Stalinist regime. Rather than drawing on the symbols of Russian national identity, many of which were compromised through their association with Stalin and his cult of personality, Khrushchev reached back to recent history—the achievements and triumphs of the first half of the socialist twentieth century. The revolution and WWII replaced the Battles of Borodino and Kulikovo as the central sites of Soviet memory, and proletarian heroes were substituted for the nation-building tsars as the idols of national history.

Another way in which the Khrushchev-era historical revival differed from earlier appropriations of the past was through its treatment of local memory. The ideal of Russian history that had been promoted during the 1930s and 1940s had been extremely conservative, comprising a pantheon of Russian national heroes and symbols that were intended to foster a sense of allegiance and identification with the Soviet state.⁷ As Serhy Yekelchuk has demonstrated,

4. Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism*, 4.

5. Serhy Yekelchuk, *Stalin’s Empire of Memory: Russian-Ukrainian Relations in the Soviet Historical Imagination* (Toronto, 2004), 20–21.

6. David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism*, 1–10; D. L. Brandenberger and A. M. Dubrovsky, “‘The People Need a Tsar’: The Emergence of National Bolshevism as Stalinist Ideology, 1931–1941,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 50, no. 5 (July 1998): 873–92.

7. Brandenberger and Platt cite Aleksandr Nevskii, Kuz’ma Minin, Dmitrii Pozharskii, Ivan Susanin, Aleksandr Suvorov, Mikhail Kutuzov, Mikhail Lomonosov, and Aleksandr Pushkin as the most important prerevolutionary figures within this pantheon. David Brandenberger and Kevin M. F. Platt, “Introduction: Tsarist-Era Heroes in Stalinist Mass

elites in the Soviet republics were required to bring their national histories into line with the Russian “grand narrative” at this time, replacing recalcitrant elements in the national past with figures and events that demonstrated the tradition of “friendship between the peoples.”⁸ And this was not only the case for the national republics. Many of the Russian regions, whose histories bore testament to their struggle against centralizing pressures exerted by Moscow, were also required to whitewash their pasts. Stalinist “russocentric etatism,” to borrow Brandenberger’s term, must therefore be understood not only as a weapon directed against non-Russian historical traditions but also as one that engaged in self-censorship, substituting a multivoiced national narrative for a hegemonic discourse of unification and national heroism.

Khrushchev’s approach to national mythmaking was, by contrast, remarkably decentered. Rather than limiting history to a centrally determined canon of myths and heroes, local elites were empowered to craft their own narratives of Soviet patriotism. The revival of kraevedenie as a field of study was an important vehicle in this process.⁹ Beginning in 1956 with the rehabilitation of several local *kraevedcheskie* publications, the movement grew throughout the 1960s to form a developed institutional infrastructure for the production and documentation of local knowledge. Within the forums provided by the kraevedenie movement, local populations were encouraged to turn inward to examine the particular role their locality had played in national historical events and to celebrate their local heroes and heroines. This is not to suggest that local history was entirely freed from the shackles of ideology. Indeed, regional elites were still obliged to demonstrate allegiance to the Khrushchev-era ideals of internationalism, collective leadership, and democratism in their narratives of the local past. Nevertheless, this decentralization of initiative to the regions constituted an important turning point in the production of historical knowledge, resulting in a vastly more diverse and complex picture of the past than had ever been possible in the Stalin era.

Kraevedenie as a Vehicle for Participatory Politics

To understand the motivation for Khrushchev’s turn to history, the political exigencies of the post-Stalin moment must be taken into account. Having rejected the idea of an omnipotent leader, whose wisdom could resolve the paradox between the enlightenment agenda of the Soviet regime and the oppressive reality of life under Soviet rule, the Khrushchev government found itself in need of new sources of political legitimation.¹⁰ This need was exacerbated by the emergence of new social tensions after WWII, a consequence of

Culture,” in Kevin M. F. Platt and David Brandenberger, eds., *Epic Revisionism: Russian History and Literature as Stalinist Propaganda* (Madison, 2006), 4–5.

8. Yekelchik, *Stalin’s Empire of Memory*, 20–21.

9. For an informative account of the vexed fate of the kraevedenie movement in the early Soviet period, see Emily D. Johnson, *How St. Petersburg Learned to Study Itself: The Russian Idea of Kraevedenie* (University Park, 2006).

10. Alexei Yurchak draws on Claude Lefort’s reasoning to argue that Stalin constituted an authoritative “master figure, whose presence was able to resolve the paradox between a doctrine of enlightenment and emancipation and its illiberal implementation.”

mass urban migration and social alienation, as well as a growth in consumerist demands, particularly among Soviet youth.¹¹ Of particular concern to the Soviet authorities at this time was the rise in “hooliganism,” a malaise that referred to all manner of uncivilized behavior, from swearing in the street to petty crime.¹² The authorities located the roots of such antisocial behavior in the general absence of a revolutionary fighting spirit and disengagement from politics, particularly among young people. In order to fight such tendencies and reignite the flame of popular enthusiasm for the socialist project, the government endorsed a far-reaching program of re-ideologization that would reach all sectors of Soviet society.¹³ The study of Soviet history would form a core pillar of this program, orientating the nation toward the social and economic successes of the recent past and inspiring their awe anew for the modernizing state of which they were a privileged part.

Why, then, did this turn to history take the specific form of a rehabilitation of *local* historical knowledge? The answer to this question can be found in the policy priorities of the 1961 Third Program, Khrushchev’s manifesto to reunite Soviet society following the dramatic revelations of the Secret Speech. The program’s main argument was that the “dictatorship of the proletariat,” the state of affairs that had been nominally upheld by the Stalinist regime, had run its course and could now be replaced by an “all-people’s state.”¹⁴ In this new people-led government, Khrushchev explained, existing state organs would “wither away,” yielding their responsibilities to mass-populated voluntary organizations that would eventually assume all of the state’s functions. In order to achieve this utopian objective, Khrushchev endorsed the creation of social movements that could embody the goals of mass mobilization and participatory democracy. The result was the post-1961 proliferation of voluntary organizations, from trade unions and workers’ committees, comrades’ courts and street patrols, to housing committees, women’s councils, and vet-

Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, 2006), 10–11.

11. For a discussion of the tensions involved in the growth of materialism in the Khrushchev period, see Christine Varga-Harris, “Homemaking and the Aesthetic and Moral Perimeters of the Soviet Home during the Khrushchev Era,” *Journal of Social History* 41, no. 3 (Spring 2008): 561–89; Susan E. Reid, “Khrushchev Modern: Agency and Modernization in the Soviet Home,” *Cahiers du monde russe* 47, nos. 1/2 (January–June 2006): 227–68; and Susan E. Reid, “Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev,” *Slavic Review* 61, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 211–52.

12. For a discussion of the political discourse around hooliganism in the post-Stalin period, see Brian LaPierre, *Hooligans in Khrushchev’s Russia: Defining, Policing, and Producing Deviance during the Thaw* (Madison, 2012); and Juliane Fürst, *Stalin’s Last Generation: Soviet Post-War Youth and The Emergence of Mature Socialism* (Oxford, 2010), 181–88.

13. The ideological foundation stones for this process were the Moral Code of the Builder of Communism and the new Program of the Communist Party, both launched at the Twenty-Second Party Congress of 1961. See Programma KPSS, section 1, part 1, August 2, 1961. For a discussion of the political thrust of the Third Party Program, see Alexander Titov, “The 1961 Party Programme and the Fate of Khrushchev’s Reforms,” in Ilic and Smith, eds., *Soviet State and Society*, 8–26.

14. Titov, “The 1961 Party Programme.”

erans' associations.¹⁵ In this context, the revival of the kraevedenie movement, a quintessential "mass" organization, was a logical step. Like other voluntary organizations of its kind, the movement was intended to devolve authority—in this case, over the production of historical and cultural knowledge of the regions—from the state to the masses. History would no longer be the preserve of an unrepresentative and removed intellectual elite but rather part of a democratic process, the ultimate expression of Khrushchev-era participatory politics.

Kraevedenie as a Vehicle for Patriotic Politics

It would be a mistake, however, to say that the "turn to history" in post-Stalin society was driven exclusively by the political administration. Patriotic elements within the Soviet cultural elite were also instrumental in generating interest in the national past. Reacting to the dramatic social changes of the two postwar decades, many conservative writers, journalists, and cultural commentators spoke out in the 1960s about the need for the Russian nation to preserve its cultural identity by raising awareness of its past and traditions.¹⁶ Russian patriots, like their Soviet counterparts, located the roots of social discontent in the Russian people's sense of disconnectedness, albeit from the Russian rather than the Soviet past. This argument's structural parallelism with the government's promotion of Soviet patriotism meant that its proponents could nuance their criticisms and link them to official reasoning, a stance that allowed them to defend themselves against accusations of anti-modernist or, worse, anti-Soviet sentiment.

Perhaps the most agile cultural commentator to walk this line was the medievalist and public intellectual Dmitrii Likhachev. A former political prisoner, who had been rehabilitated in 1936 and established himself as a leading light among intellectual talents in the 1940s and 1950s, Likhachev was in a position of some authority to comment on developments in Soviet culture in the post-Stalin period. The scholar was nevertheless careful to couch his arguments in terms that would not cause consternation among Soviet officials. Writing in 1961 about the need to establish an official movement for the conservation of cultural and architectural monuments, Likhachev thus emphasized, in line with the political climate of the time, the Leninist derivation of this argument.¹⁷ The conflation of Russian and Soviet patriotic arguments was made explicit in the closing remarks to Likhachev's article: "The preservation

15. For a discussion of the rise of social control in Khrushchev-era Soviet society, see Melanie Ilic, introduction to Ilic and Smith, eds., *Soviet State and Society*, 3.

16. See, for example, Dmitrii Likhachev's strictures on the shortcomings in national heritage preservation in *Literaturnaia gazeta* in 1965: D. S. Likhachev, "Chetvertoe izmerenie," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, June 10, 1965, 2; D. S. Likhachev, "Iz letnikh putishestvii," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, September 14, 1965, 2; and Vladimir Soloukhin's patriotically inspired defense of Russian cultural authenticity, "Pis'ma iz Russkogo muzeia," first published in *Molodaia gvardiia* in 1966 and republished in various later editions, for example, in V. A. Soloukhin, *Slavianskaia etrad'* (Moscow, 1972).

17. Picking up on the official emphasis on democratism in the post-Stalin era, the scholar stressed the democratic potential of heritage preservation: "The principle of democratism in everything that concerns the preservation and propagandizing of cultural

and study of monuments to the great history of the Russian people must be given greater attention than it is at present. It is impossible to nourish Soviet patriotism without nourishing pride in the great past of our people [*narod*].”¹⁸ While the privileged status attributed to Russian cultural heritage in this statement might have made Likhachev vulnerable to accusations of national chauvinism, the link with the official goal of promoting Soviet patriotism and the ultimate dissolution of the distinction between “Russian” and “Soviet” in the national imaginary of the *narod* lent the argument official credibility.

Another group of influential cultural figures concerned with the preservation of Russian heritage and traditions was the so-called village prose writers.¹⁹ At their most prolific between 1953 and 1980, this group of conservative cultural commentators wrote, sometimes in a strikingly unguarded fashion, about the threat posed by Soviet modernization to traditional ways of life, norms, and practices in Russian villages. Among the most evocative literary products of this movement were Vasilii Belov’s lyrical *Privichnoe delo* (1966), which detailed the breakdown of one peasant family as a consequence of the destructive imposition of collectivization on a Russian farming community, and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s *Matrenin dvor* (1963), which narrated the symbolic death of a simple Russian *baba* under the wheels of an industrial freight train. Far from being mere nostalgic accounts of a disappearing way of life, however, these texts were acts of preservation in themselves, documenting in near-ethnographic detail, in some cases, the dialectical specificities, norms of behavior, and everyday practices of the communities they described. These vivid depictions of life in the Russian villages, filled with drunken swash-buckling and grandmotherly superstition, so distant from the dry, ideologically inspired *kolkhoz* literature that had come before, were undoubtedly one of the reasons for the genre’s immense popularity among Soviet readers in the 1960s and 1970s.

What, then, was the nature of the relationship between the Russian nationalist intelligentsia and the Communist Party leadership? While this question has generated considerable interest among scholars of Russian nationalism, analysis has generally focused on the post-1965 period rather than the late Khrushchev era. Indeed, the year 1965 has tended to be seen as a turning point in the history of Russian nationalism, as the moment when the arguments of Russian patriots received official endorsement from the regime, not least through the creation of the All-Russian Society for the Preservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments (VOOPIK).²⁰ But if we can talk of a growth

monuments is of the utmost importance.” Dmitrii Likhachev, “Pamiatniki kul’tury—vsenarodnoe dostoianie,” *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 3 (1961): 9.

18. *Ibid.*, 11.

19. Kathleen Parthé has argued in her seminal study of the genre that village prose was “the most aesthetically coherent and ideologically important body of literature that was published in the Soviet Union between the death of Stalin and the ascendancy of Gorbachev.” Kathleen Parthé, *Russian Village Prose: The Radiant Past* (Princeton, 1992).

20. For a discussion of VOOPIK’s role in fostering Soviet patriotism in the Brezhnev era, see Nikolai Mitrokhin, *Russkaia partiia: Dvizhenie russkikh natsionalistov v SSSR 1953–1985 gody* (Moscow, 2003), 300–37; and Yitzhak M. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953–1991* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998). Catriona Kelly has explored the organization’s activities in Leningrad/St. Petersburg in “A Dis-

in officially endorsed national patriotism in the late 1960s, what of official attitudes to the past in the first half of the 1960s? Nikolai Mitrokhin has argued that the Russian Communist Party was, in effect, an ethnonationalist party characterized by a xenophobic outlook and chauvinistic tendencies as early as 1953.²¹ Yet there would appear to be a perceptible difference between the regime's flirtation with national patriotism in the late Khrushchev era and the so-called inclusionary politics of the Brezhnev administration. Rather than an outright appropriation of nationalist arguments in an attempt to defuse their inflammatory potential, as Yitzhak Brudny has argued occurred under Brezhnev, the Khrushchev regime was involved in a more complex relationship of collaboration with patriotic elements in Soviet society.²² This relationship resembled more the "intricate feedback loop" that Francine Hirsch has described in connection with the processes of exchange between the Bolsheviks and local administrators and ethnographers in her study of nation-making in the early Soviet period.²³ Russian patriotism undoubtedly shaped Khrushchev-era politics, but this took place at the same time as the authorities strengthened their control over cultural institutions in an effort to advance their program of re-ideologization. Nowhere was this clearer than on the local stage, where the intellectual elite was involved in the delicate task of promoting local culture while at the same time demonstrating that their patriotism was the correct "Soviet" kind. In the remainder of this article, I focus on the negotiation of these agendas through the lens of the kraevedenie revival to shed further light on the nature of patriotic politics in late Khrushchev-era Russia.

Crafting Soviet Localism

Khrushchev's decision to use the kraevedenie movement as a means of fostering Soviet patriotism was the latest chapter in a turbulent history for the field of local study. The early Soviet incarnation of the movement had cohered around the Central Bureau of Kraevedenie (TsBK), a body under the Commissariat of Enlightenment which was initially intended to coordinate the efforts of local volunteers in their struggle to protect valuable documents and artifacts during the ruinous years of civil war (1917–22).²⁴ Kraevedenie had acquired strong institutional foundations and a certain social status by the end of the 1920s, yet the years of centralization and hegemony of Moscow that followed resulted in it being viewed with increased suspicion by the state as a breeding

sonant Note on the Neva': Historical Memory and City Identity in Russia's Second Capital during the Post-Stalin Era," *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 1, no. 1 (2010): 72–83. See also Steven Maddox, *Saving Stalin's Imperial City: Historic Preservation in Leningrad, 1930–1950* (Bloomington, 2015).

21. Mitrokhin, *Russkaia partiia*, 300–37.

22. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia*.

23. Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, 2005), 12.

24. Johnson, *How St. Petersburg Learned to Study Itself*, 157. See also Ekaterina Mel'nikova, "'Sblizhalis' narody kraia, predstavitelem kotorogo iavliaiush'ia': Kraevedcheskoe dvizhenie 1920–1930-kh godov i sovetskaia natsional'naia politika," *Ab Imperio*, no. 1 (2012): 209–40.

ground for regional separatism. As a consequence, the field was targeted in the academic purge of 1929–31 and its activities were brought under the control of the central government. Following the repression of its leading figures, the movement transformed into an extension of the state apparatus geared toward the fulfillment of plans and the promotion of state propaganda.²⁵

The first major change in attitudes to kraevedenie work came with the Twentieth Party Congress, in 1956, following which the preservation of local historical knowledge began to be explicitly linked with the general improvement of cultural and academic life in the country. One of the most important institutional changes that followed this event was the transfer of responsibility for the work of museums and the preservation of monuments to the Ministry of Culture. This de facto upgrading of the status of museum work had dramatic implications for the kraevedenie movement, the institutional infrastructure of which began to expand rapidly across the Russian regions. Kraevedenie museums opened in new oblast centers such as Kaliningrad and Iuzhno-Sakhalinsk, and many new museums were established in industrial towns such as Berezniki and Puchezh.²⁶ It was only following the Twenty-Second Party Congress of 1961, however, that the role of kraevedenie work in the moral education of the nation became a central preoccupation of cultural politics. As the government focused on the need to reengage the Soviet public in the task of building communism, so the importance of a movement that directly engaged the community in the study of their own Soviet traditions and culture became more obvious.

The top-down regeneration of local studies directly impacted the work of regional cultural institutions. For local museums, the revival reversed a process of institutional deterioration that had been underway since the end of WWII. In the first postwar decade, many regional museums had found themselves in exceptionally difficult circumstances, with little or no funds for the purchase of exhibits, serious staffing problems, and lamentable material conditions for the preservation of the objects in their stores.²⁷ A survey carried out by the Ministry of State Control between 1952 and 1954, for example, revealed that the majority of the sixty-seven kraevedenie and memorial museums visited in eleven regions of the country were unfit for their purpose. In her article on museum activity in the postwar period, V. I. Zlatoustova cites the case of the Nikol'skii museum in Vologda, whose stocks were found to contain just 742 objects, 500 of which were coins, as indicative of the perceived faults in museum work at this time.²⁸ The lamentable picture of museum activity that emerged from the ministry's report prompted a Declaration of the Council of

25. As much is revealed by the entry for "kraevedenie" in the 1937 edition of the *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia*, which states, rather dryly, that "K. is characterized by a class-conscious dedication to the interest of socialist construction, its mass nature, its topical relevance, and its specific, scientific and planned character." O. Shmidt et al., "Kraevedenie," *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia* (Moscow, 1937), 34:522.

26. D. A. Ravikovich, *Formirovanie gosudarstvennoi muzeinoi seti (1917–pervaia polovina 60-kh gg.): Nauchno-metodicheskie rekomendatsii* (Moscow, 1988), 143.

27. V. I. Zlatoustova, "Gosudarstvennaia politika v oblasti muzeinogo dela (1945–1985 gg.)," in S. A. Kasparinekaia, ed., *Muzei i vlast': Sbornik nauchnykh trudov* (Moscow, 1991), 232–37.

28. *Ibid.*, 240.

Ministers of RSFSR on January 11, 1954, "On the Serious Shortcomings in the Work of Kraevedenie and Memorial Museums of the Ministry of Culture of the RSFSR and Means for the Improvement of Their Activities." In the aftermath of the Declaration, thirty-three regional kraevedenie museums were closed and another seven were turned into libraries.²⁹ The fate of the remaining kraevedenie institutions depended on their capacity to transform themselves into effective institutions of cultural and enlightenment work that could contribute to the project of building a communist society.

With the rehabilitation of kraevedenie as a means to "cultivate in workers a feeling of Soviet patriotism, love for their region and for their socialist Motherland," the fate of such museums began to change.³⁰ Following the institutional cull of the mid-1950s, the early 1960s saw a drive to expand and "improve" the work of regional kraevedcheskie institutions. The most significant legislative act in this regard was the 1964 declaration "On the Improvement of the Role of Museums in the Communist Education of the Workers," which singled out kraevedenie work as a means "to familiarize workers with the historical relics of our people, materials about the history of factories, kolkhozes, and sovkhozes."³¹ The declaration gave rise to another flurry of openings, as kraevedenie museums and kraevedcheskie sections of museums mushroomed across the country.³² Rather than stockpiling coins or religious paraphernalia, however, these institutions were tasked with a clear political objective: to present a picture of local history and culture that reflected the main tenets of the teleological narrative of socialist construction. Vague timelines of local history were thus reshaped to correspond to the established milestones of Soviet history—the revolution, WWII, and postwar reconstruction, for example—and local heroes emerged from among the ranks of the local worker and peasant populations.

The central authorities were not always convinced of the local government's capacity to implement these reforms independently and, accordingly, sent groups of experts from Leningrad and Moscow to observe and advise on the work of regional cultural institutions. One such group sent to Novgorod in the early 1960s criticized the local kraevedcheskii museum for the weakness of the Soviet section of its display.³³ Similar groups of experts deemed

29. Ibid.

30. This quotation is taken from a letter to the head of the Regional Department for Culture and director of the Novgorod Museum from the head of the Regional Cultural Authorities in Novgorod, K. Daineko, in response to the recommendations of the Main Authorities for Cultural and Enlightening Institutions under the Ministry of Culture. Novgorodskii gosudarstvennyi ob'edinennyi muzei (NGOM), op. 1, d. 410, l. 24.

31. Postanovlenie TsK KPSS "O povyshenii roli muzeev v kommunisticheskom vospitanii trudiachshikh," printed in the newspaper *Politicheskoe somoobrazovanie*, №6, 1964, quoted in Zlatoustova, "Gosudarstvennaia politika," 262.

32. These institutions were founded not only in regional capitals but also in smaller settlements, such as Valdai, Staraiia Russa, and Borovich, in the Novgorod region, and Velikie Luki, Sebezh, Porkhov, and Pechory, in the Pskov region. NGOM, istoricheskaia spravka, op. 1; annual report of the Pskov Cultural Authorities for 1965, Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Pskovskoi oblasti (GAPO), f. R-1855, op. 1, d. 247, l. 143.

33. These criticisms were voiced at a meeting of researchers from historical-architectural museums of the RSFSR, held in Novgorod in November 1960. Among those participating at the meeting were representatives of the Ministry of Culture and directors and vice-directors of national museums. See NGOM, op. 1, d. 380 (Materials on the

the exhibition of socialist history in Vologda's kraevedcheskii museum to be too generic and to require enhancement through the inclusion of locally derived exhibits that illustrated the developments that had taken place in the region since the establishment of Soviet power.³⁴ Local museum collectives dutifully responded to such criticisms by undertaking expeditions to the surrounding regions in search of ideologically resonant local artifacts. One such expedition to the Okulovskii and Krestetskii regions in Novgorod in 1962 thus produced a haul that included materials about the technical reconstruction of the Okulovskii weaving factory and the activities of its workers.³⁵ A similar expedition to the Vytegorsk region of the Vologda oblast in 1961 resulted in the acquisition of a severed ribbon and scissors from the opening of the Vytegorsk hydro-electric complex, a fitter's uniform from the workshop floor, and a list of socialist pledges from the Vologda linen factory.³⁶ Such materials were integrated into exhibitions such as "The Region in the Postwar Period, 1920–1940" and "The Region in the Period of Reconstruction and Rapid Economic Growth in the Postwar Period, 1945–1958" that celebrated developments in local culture as a microcosm of the societal changes taking place in the nation as a whole.³⁷

Local memory remained narrowly defined in the 1960s, focusing on episodes and events from the local past that corresponded with the ideological preoccupations of the post-Stalin regime. This much is clear from a 1963 plan to reorganize the materials from the prerevolutionary section of the Vologda kraevedenie museum, "The Vologda Region from the Twelfth to the Beginning of the Twentieth Century." This plan revealed the museum's attempts to strengthen the *local* character of the historical narrative while at the same time making efforts to align the local experience with the political reality of the time. For example, while emphasizing Vologda's role as a "second capital" during the rule of Ivan the Terrible, the section was purged of materials related to the historical figure of the tsar himself, presumably in line with the drive against cults of personality after 1956. Likewise, the replacement of materials about Peter the Great with information about the class character of Petrine politics reflected the official emphasis on the Leninist principle of "collective leadership" at this time. If the development of Vologda's milk production and timber industries was given pride of place in the display, the museum collective nevertheless thought it politic to include a quotation from Vladimir Lenin to underline the ideological integrity of the message.³⁸ The final result was a presentation of regional history that expertly negotiated the parameters of

proceedings of meetings and seminars of workers of architectural museum-zapovedniki of the RSFSR in Novgorod [plans, protocols]), ll. 13–49.

34. Vologodskii oblastnoi kraevedcheskii muzei (VOKM), op. 1, d. 403 (Reports on museum activity in 1961), ll. 1–4.

35. NGOM, op. 1, d. 429, l. 17.

36. VOKM, op. 1, d. 403, l. 2.

37. *Ibid.*, l. 8.

38. The Lenin citation included in the display was the following: "Capital has all the newest developments and means not only to separate cream from milk but also to separate milk from the children of the rural poor." Ministerstvo kul'tury RSFSR, VOKM, op. 1, d. 491, ll. 2–17 (1963).

state-sanctioned local patriotism, highlighting pertinent episodes from the local past and linking these with the achievements of the socialist present.

Museum workers were not the only group whose work was affected by the official endorsement of local history. Schools and schoolchildren were also directly targeted by the state in the effort to forge local patriotism and, concomitantly, foster support among the population for socialist construction. The most important legislative act in this regard was the Order of the Ministry of Enlightenment of the RSFSR of May 1961, "On the Strengthening of Kraevedenie Work in Schools and the Publication of Kraevedenie Materials for Schoolchildren." This document underlined the role of kraevedenie work in transforming Soviet schoolchildren into politically conscious and engaged citizens, able to locate the abstract social and cultural transformations written about in school textbooks in their local contexts:

The existing links between study and life need to be significantly strengthened through kraevedenie work in schools. The use of kraevedenie materials in geography, biology, history, literature, and other lessons will allow pupils to acquire knowledge more consciously and to see evidence of the patterns they are studying in the world around them. The engagement of pupils in extra-curricular kraevedenie work will create more opportunities for them to apply the knowledge they have acquired to real life.³⁹

In addition to the abstract logic behind the promotion of kraevedenie work in the classroom, the order also provided a number of practical instructions to school directors and teachers about how to strengthen local study in their institutions. These included the construction of kraevedenie rooms or corners in every school, the involvement of school pupils in the creation of local "chronicles" detailing the history of their village or town, and the promotion of architectural preservation among school-age children through their active involvement in the upkeep of local monuments.⁴⁰ Schools were encouraged to work actively with museums to improve pupils' knowledge of their regions' history and culture. A report on the work of the Vologda kraevedenie museum in 1961 demonstrates the ways in which this requirement for inter-institutional collaboration was implemented at a local level. In a section on "work with schoolchildren," the report recorded plans to create kraevedenie-themed study aids for pupils in the fourth and eighth grades to be used during school trips. Pupils would be able to choose from sets of materials on themes such as "your region in the distant past," "the struggle of workers in the local area under capitalism," "World War II and the Soviet people against the fascist invaders," and "the present and past in the local area." In a similar way to museum exhibitions, which presented the viewer with a specifically socialist understanding of the local past, these exercises were designed to inculcate in schoolchildren an appreciation of local history and culture that corresponded to the political agenda of the time.

A third area of local cultural activity that was directly affected by the state-sponsored regeneration of kraevedenie work was architectural preservation

39. NGOM, op. 1, d. 410, l. 24.

40. Ibid.

and heritage tourism. While the rise of heritage preservation has tended to be associated with the establishment of VOPIK, in 1965, there is evidence that architectural conservation was already a priority in the late Khrushchev era and that cultural monuments were explicitly linked with the re-ideologizing agenda of the period. This process was particularly notable in the historic center of Russia, where local architectural heritage was marketed to a domestic audience in the form of *muzei-zapovedniki*, or open-air architectural museums, that comprised the most prominent historical and cultural monuments in the region, preserved in their traditional surrounds. Between August 1958 and February 1959, a number of these zapovedniki were established in the medieval towns of Novgorod (August 1958), Kostroma (August 1958), Vladimir (September 1958), Gor'kii (December 1958), and Yaroslavl' (February 1959).⁴¹ Their function was to engage the population in "rituals of public self-admiration," to borrow Anne Gorsuch's expression, directing citizens' attention to the majestic relics of medieval Rus' that formed the historical foundation of the great Soviet state.⁴²

Like the politically resonant exhibitions of local history, the preservation of architectural heritage and its exhibition to Soviet citizens was intended to generate a sense of pride in the material culture of the socialist state and, concomitantly, engagement with its values and ideals. Rather than consuming architectural beauty passively, spectators were expected to draw ideological lessons from the onion domes and fortress walls that they were confronted with in the zapovedniki. To this end, visitors to Russia's medieval towns were offered guidance in the form of kraevedcheskii literature and the expertise of local kraevedy, both of which they were encouraged to exploit prior to and during their trips to the regions.⁴³ These mediating texts were intended to frame the tourist's gaze, ensuring that the most politically salient features of the local architectural landscape were taken into account, while any qualities that undermined the authoritative exegesis of local cultural heritage were elided from public view.

Changing patterns in publication figures for kraevedcheskii literature at this time reveal more general shifts in the balance of control over the production of local historical knowledge.⁴⁴ The production of kraevedcheskie materials increased exponentially in the 1960s. In Novgorod, for example, seven books on local history, architecture, and culture were published between 1960 and

41. Order of the Council of Ministers RSFSR of August 28, 1958, № 5639, in E. A. Shulepova, ed., *Muzevedcheskaia mysl' v Rossii XXVIII–XX vekov. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Moscow, 2010), 885. See also Susan Nicole Smith, "The Creation of the Vladimir-Suzdal Museum-Reserve: Preservation for a National Audience" (paper, American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Los Angeles, November 2010).

42. Anne E. Gorsuch, "'There's No Place Like Home': Soviet Tourism in Late Stalinism," *Slavic Review* 62, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 771.

43. A pamphlet on tourism and kraevedenie published slightly later, in 1974, pointed out that conscientious tourists should make use of kraevedcheskie materials and report as soon as possible to local kraevedy in order to get the most out their touristic experience. See I. S. Iun'ev, *Kraevedenie i turizm* (Moscow, 1974), 11–12.

44. The following statistics are drawn from work carried out with the card catalogue and in collaboration with local librarians at the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg in 2010.

1969 with high print runs (25,000 copies or more), including one guide to the town's historical monuments, Mikhail Karger's *Novgorod Velikii*, published by Iskusstvo in 1961, with a print run of over 50,000 copies. This was a marked increase from the 1950–59 period, when just one historical guide with a print run of over 25,000 had been published. Likewise, in Pskov, four books of this genre with high print runs were published between 1960 and 1969, including one publication, Iurii Spegal'skii's *Pskov: Khudozhesvennie pamiatniki*, again by Iskusstvo, in 1963, which had a *tirazh* of over 100,000 copies, compared to just one book with a high print run in the 1950–59 period. Perhaps even more significant was the shift in the ratio of guides written and produced locally to those published in Leningrad and Moscow. In Novgorod, for example, this ratio shifted from nineteen locally produced guides to three published in the capital in the 1950s to seven locally produced versus eleven Leningrad- and Moscow-published guides in the 1960s. The simultaneous promotion of local narratives of history and culture and the tightening of central control over the production of these narratives is indicative of the tensions inherent to the kraevedenie revival. While a localization of historical memory can be argued to have occurred at this time, it was nevertheless closely supervised and vigorously censored in an effort to ensure local alignment with national cultural priorities.

How, then, was regional architectural heritage presented in such materials? And how were cultural monuments made to communicate the political message of the late Khrushchev regime? Local guidebooks directed the tourist's attention toward objects and sites that embodied certain ideals and values endorsed by the Soviet state. In particular, visitors to the zapovedniki of the northwest were encouraged to admire the centerpieces of medieval Russian architecture, buildings that were presented as objects of sublime and transcendental beauty. However, Soviet tourists were not supposed to passively consume this beauty. On the contrary, they were encouraged to find parallels between the genius craftsmen of the medieval age and the builders of socialism in the Khrushchev era. This was achieved through the guides' insistence on the "laconicism" (*lakonizm*) and "democratism" (*demokratizm*) of the Old Russian architecture, which, it was implied, resembled the functionalist aesthetic of the Khrushchev era. It is instructive to recall here that an aesthetic de-Stalinization was under way in the wake of the 1956 attack on the cult of personality which involved a thorough purge of the old regime's visual culture. With regard to architecture, this equaled a rejection of the Empire style of the high Stalinist period, with its decorative extravagances and hints of Russian chauvinism, in favor of more populist, utilitarian form of architecture.⁴⁵ When framing the Soviet tourist's gaze on the architectural landscape in the medieval museum reserves, emphasis was thus placed on the "austere" (*strogii*) and "laconic" (*lakonichnyi*) forms that were "democratic" (*demokraticeskii*) and "authentic" (*istinnyi*), free from any lofty pretensions

45. See the "Decree of the Central Committee of the KPSS and the Council of Ministers of the USSR of 4 November 1955 № 1871 'On the Elimination of Decorative Extravagances in Design and Construction Work,'" Sovarkh: Proekt Sovetskaia arkhitektura, at www.sovarkh.ru/postanovlenie55/ (last accessed March 2, 2015).

or obscurantist “mysticism” (*mistitsizm*).⁴⁶ This insistence on the “democratism” of the medieval architecture echoed the period’s political rhetoric, which emphasized the principle of “party democracy” as a corrective to the years of political perversion under Stalin.⁴⁷

From the evidence presented above, it would appear justified to view the kraevedenie revival as a top-down process of cultural regeneration in the Russian regions, in which local elites played a passive role as the implementers of policy decisions determined exclusively by the center. In reality, however, relations between central and regional cultural authorities were often more dynamic than this. As I remarked in the introduction to this discussion, relations between the center and the regions resembled more an intricate feedback loop, similar to that described by Hirsch in her study of Bolshevik cultural practices, than a case of top-down subordination. The kraevedenie revival may have been a state-sponsored phenomenon that was driven by actors and organs at the political center, but it also resulted in the endorsement of local initiative and, in connection with this, a growing sense of entitlement among regional elites to shape their own cultural policy. By endorsing a patriotic politics that privileged the role of local historical knowledge in communist socialization, the central authorities empowered local elites to make demands of the center. In the next section, I consider two cases of conflict between central and regional cultural authorities, which reveal the nuanced nature of their relationship at this time.

Local Heritage or National Treasures?

In 1965, a revealing exchange took place between the secretary of the Novgorod obkom, A. Prokof’ev, and the deputy head of Cultural Authorities at the Ministry of Culture, V. Goncharov. In July, Prokof’ev wrote to the ministry to query the proprietorship of the Vasil’evskii Gates, which were located at that time in Aleksandrov in the Vladimir oblast. Prokof’ev argued that the gates were the lawful property of the Novgorod Sophia Cathedral, having been relocated to the Trinity Cathedral in Aleksandrov by Ivan IV following the unification of Novgorod with Muscovy in 1478. Drawing on the argument that regional museums should exhibit locally specific objects that exemplified the particular experience of that krai, Prokof’ev pointed out that the gates were currently languishing in the stairwell of the Aleksandrov museum since they “don’t match its profile.” Prokof’ev justified the gates’ relocation using the language and logic of the kraevedenie revival, which associated the promotion of local culture with the stimulation of national patriotism: “The Vasil’evskii doors will help create a more complete impres-

46. These descriptions of the northern Russian architectural style are taken from the guidebooks M. V. Fekhnner, *Arkhitektura gorodov SSSR: Vologda* (Moscow, 1958), 42; and G. Bocharov and V. Vygodov, *Vologda, Kirillov, Ferapontovo, Belozersk* (Moscow, 1969), 6.

47. For a discussion of the role of “party democracy” in Khrushchev’s campaign for power and legitimacy after Stalin, see Stephen Lovell, *The Shadow of War: Russia and the USSR, 1941 to the Present* (Malden, 2010), 44–47.

sion of the ancient decoration of the cathedral and will make the Novgorod Sophia a real *national* treasure.”⁴⁸

Despite Prokof'ev's adept handling of the ideological discourse, the Ministry of Culture rejected the request for the gates to be returned to the Novgorod cathedral. The reasons given for the refusal of the regional secretary's request reveal an interesting hierarchy of priorities related to patriotic politics at this time. Goncharov explained that the gates were not only part of the local narrative of the Democratic Republic of Novgorod but also part of a more culturally significant *national* narrative of the unification of the Russian lands under Ivan IV: “As such, the gates have been located in Aleksandrov for 300 years, not by accident, but in connection with a distinct historical event, the creation of the Russian national state, and their location in the Trinity Cathedral of Aleksandrov is therefore *historically justified*.”⁴⁹ The implication here was that local memory, while nominally endorsed by the regime, could not challenge or detract from the foundation myths and narratives of the nation. Goncharov underlined this point by alluding to hypothetical analogies to Novgorod's claim that were intended to exemplify its absurdity: “In much the same way the town of Vladimir could lay claim to the icons of the Rublev iconostasis from the Vladimir Assumption Cathedral, which are now in the Tret'iakov Gallery and the Russian Museum, as well as to a number of other major works of art, which have ended up as a consequence in the State Historical Museum, the Armory Museum, and so on.”⁵⁰ Interestingly, these hypothetical absurdities, whereby regions would claim ownership of objects of national significance, were closer to reality than Goncharov made out. Indeed, in his letter to the ministry, Prokof'ev had not limited his demands to the Vasil'evskii Gates but had gone further, laying claim to “Novgorodian” objects that were at that time being held at the Russian Museum in Leningrad, including the Liudogoshchenskii cross (1359), a carved image of Varlaam Khutynskii (1560), a polyptych with engravings of Nikolai Mozhaiskii (c. 15th–16th century), engraved plaques from the funeral of Savva Visherskii, and a carved wooden sculpture of the Paraskeva Piatnitsa Church.⁵¹ While these claims were ultimately unsuccessful, their very articulation reveals an antagonism between cultural authorities at the center and in the regions over what constituted local versus national cultural heritage. The endorsement of local patriotic consciousness, it would seem, had exacerbated such antagonisms, encouraging their manifestation in open conflicts of this sort.

Indeed, the Novgorod secretary was not the only one engaged in disputes over the ownership of objects of Russian cultural heritage. Another revealing clash had occurred between the Russian Museum and the Pskov Regional Cultural Authorities three years earlier, in 1962, with regard to a number of objects of early Russian art excavated from Pskovian churches. The conflict began with a letter sent in July 1962 from the director of the Russian Museum,

48. NGOM, op. 1, d. 480 (Correspondence with the Ministry of Culture and museum authorities concerning matters connected with the work of the museum), l. 35. Emphasis added.

49. *Ibid.*, l. 43.

50. *Ibid.*, l. 44.

51. *Ibid.*, l. 36.

I. P. Pushkarev, to the Pskov Cultural Authorities, explaining that, in line with official orders, the Russian Museum would be sending a group of specialists in Old Russian art to Pskov in order to investigate the regional churches' contents, the most valuable of which would be sent to the Pskov Museum and to a specialist foundation in Leningrad for further study and restoration work.⁵² This proposal met with a cold reception from the director of the Pskov Museum, I. N. Larionov, who claimed that rather than philanthropic patronage on the part of the Russian Museum, this was one more in a series of cynical maneuvers intended to procure the region's most important works of art for the Leningrad institution.

Before 1960, Larionov explained in a letter to the deputy head of the Main Authorities for Artistic Affairs, the Russian Museum had transported eight early examples of Pskov artwork to Leningrad without the local cultural authorities' knowledge. Following research in the region carried out in the summer of 1961—again without the local authorities' knowledge—another icon had been transported to Leningrad from the town of Ostrov. Following objections about this clandestine work in the region, Larionov continued, Pushkarev had informed the local authorities that “henceforward such questions will not be decided in consultation with [the local authorities].” To add insult to injury, when the Pskov Museum had requested that one of their icons be cleaned in preparation for a local exhibition, they were told that this could only be done by the Russian Museum at a cost of 500 rubles.⁵³ The last straw had come when the Russian Museum pulled out of an expedition to unstudied areas of the Pskov region following the local authorities' insistence that a specialist from the Pskov Museum be included in the ranks of the expedition team. Larionov drew the inevitable conclusion from this action: “The important thing for them was obviously not the discovery and preservation of monuments (as it was stated in the order from the Ministry of Culture), since the Pskov Museum has excellent means to preserve old paintings and can at any time call on the assistance of restorers at the [restoration workshop] but rather the question of where these 13th-, 14th-, and 15th-century objects would be kept.”⁵⁴

Such clashes between regional and national cultural authorities allow us to nuance our understanding of the priorities behind the *kraevedenie* revival and its cultural consequences. First, it would appear that while ostensibly supporting the localization of cultural knowledge, on the grounds that pride in one's locality would engender pride in one's nation, thereby strengthening social solidarity in the state, central authorities nevertheless continued to privilege the interests of national culture over those of local culture and to assign responsibility for cultural heritage accordingly. While this fact is unsurprising in a multinational state whose territorial integrity depended on myths of national solidarity and brotherhood between peoples, the consequences of this contradictory policy, which encouraged expressions of local patriotism,

52. GAPO, f R-1855, op. 1, d. 157 (Plans for the restoration of cultural monuments and correspondence with the ministry about their preservation), l. 23.

53. *Ibid.*, l. 50.

54. *Ibid.*

on the one hand, while denying requests for material affirmation of this status, on the other, are perhaps more interesting. As Prokof'ev's and Larionov's commentaries demonstrate, local cultural elites were far from passive actors in this process of cultural regeneration in the regions. Exploiting the authoritative discourse of cultural patriotism with skill and expertise, they were able to advance far-reaching demands that would have been impossible in the years of Stalinist centralization. While these claims were not always successful, they nevertheless reveal an attitude of entitlement that itself indicates a fundamental shift in center-region relations at the level of cultural policy.

Patriots of Their Towns

To what extent, then, was the late Khrushchev-era kraevedenie revival successful in achieving the goals it set out for itself? And how did this (albeit moderated) awakening of local cultural consciousness affect center-region relations in the late Soviet period? As I have argued in this article, the regeneration of local studies in the Russian regions can be understood within the context of the Khrushchev regime's campaign for mass re-ideologization after 1961. This second, reconstitutive phase of de-Stalinization was marked by a rise in controlled Soviet patriotism, within which officially sanctioned visions of local history and culture were marketed to local populations in an effort to galvanize popular support for the project of building communism.

Judging by public commentaries preserved in local archives, it would appear that the regime was partly successful in realizing this objective, at least at a discursive level. By the mid-1960s, citizens had experienced sufficient exposure to the patriotic discourse to be able to reproduce its rhetorical tone and tropes with relative ease. Throughout the decade that followed the Twenty-Second Party Congress, schoolchildren, workers, and pensioners regularly penned letters to local cultural institutions, left commentaries in museum response books, and wrote texts to accompany their own displays of local history and culture that demonstrated a developed awareness of institutional expectations of how local patriotism ought to be performed. In their correspondence with local cultural institutions, local "patriots" in the northwest thus focused on areas of sanctioned historical interest, such as the architectural history of local monuments, local war heroes, the liberation of the region from wartime occupation, medieval burial mounds, and other heroic local topoi. Entries in regional museum response books also demonstrated a high level of ideological awareness, as commentators expertly traced the contours of the official patriotic discourse, shifting from praise for the preservation of local culture to acknowledgement of the main goals of socialist construction.

Yet it would appear that the popular affirmation of local patriotism was more than a matter of public posturing and social conformism. The entries left by groups of tourists who attended patriotic excursions around the sights of Novgorod in the 1960s provide some illustration of the positive manner in which such events were received. A group of visitors from Moscow, for example, complimented their guide on the "profound love and patriotism" with which he presented his lectures on local history. Visitors from Leningrad echoed

these words, congratulating another member of the museum staff on the patriotic tone of her presentation: "It is clear from the way she speaks that she's a patriot of her town." In a particularly laudatory entry, a group of tourists from Moscow demanded institutional recognition of their guide's "knowledge and sincere Novgorodian patriotism."⁵⁵ From these entries it would appear clear that local patriotism was not merely a nominal requirement of local tourist guides but rather one that was enthusiastically implemented in practice and positively received by consumers of local culture.

The institutionalization of interest in the local past resulted in a discernable growth in local historical consciousness. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, many of the factories, collective farms, and institutes providing work for local populations established their own historical museums.⁵⁶ Local communities were encouraged to engage in microhistorical analysis, to ponder the evolution of the individual institutions that formed their social and cultural lives. Moreover, members of local communities were directly implicated in the history-making process, contributing objects from their personal and family archives—samples of weaving, embroidery, and lacemaking, decorated spinning wheels, looms, mortars, and salt cellars—to museum exhibitions.⁵⁷ The "museumization" of everyday life in the Russian regions impressed on people the relevance of their own contribution to the goals of socialist construction, but it also stimulated curiosity about the collective past and raised questions about the role of the locality in the events that formed the national historical narrative.

With the curtains drawn back to reveal the historiographical mechanism, people were empowered to reflect on the constructedness of institutional memory and to begin to question the selection of episodes, objects, and events from the past for historical preservation. While it would be an exaggeration to speak of sites of "contested memory" existing at this time, the growth in public demand for information about the past can be seen to have created the potential for exposure of historical blurring or, indeed, the falsification of history on the part of the state. Communities became increasingly aware of their collective pasts as a consequence of lectures, films, exhibitions, and publications and were alerted to the need to maintain an architectural record of local history on the landscape. At the same time, they became conscious of the gap between the theoretical endorsement of cultural conservation and the reality of selective preservation, censorship, and neglect.⁵⁸ This was particularly true

55. See the response and suggestion book of the Novgorod Council for Tourism and Excursions for 1968–72. Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Novgorodskoi oblasti (GANO), f. R-4063, op. 2–10, d. 140a, ll. 2, 3, and 9.

56. A list of museums in the Vologda region compiled in 1974 included the museums at the "Glory of Work" sewing factory, the Vologda car equipment plant, and the Vologda sheepskin and fur factory. See the 1974 report on the conditions of folk and industrial museums in the Vologda region. VOKM, op. 1, d. 784, ll. 59–60.

57. See the report on the Novgorod museum collective's expeditions to villages in the Novgorod region for the collection of museum exhibit materials. NGOM, op. 1, d. 429, l. 17.

58. The disconnect between public discourse and local reality with regard to the preservation of architectural heritage was the focus of a number of letters sent to local authorities and newspapers in the 1960s. See, for example, the opinions expressed by a local

of the conservation of cultural heritage. Rather than strengthening identification with the ideals and values of the socialist state, the preservationist drive provided a center around which controversy could cohere and a vocabulary with which to articulate frustrations with the political authorities.

This was perhaps the central paradox of the official drive to stimulate local patriotism in the late Khrushchev period. Through its affirmation of local identity and the provision of a state-endorsed patriotic discourse, the regime stimulated a sense of entitlement among local actors as stakeholders in the construction of local memory. From local officials such as Prokof'ev and Lari-onov to the authors of letters about the preservation of architectural heritage, local actors were able to exploit the vocabulary of state patriotism in order to further local interests. Local officials and inhabitants' readiness to challenge the relevant authorities on matters of historical memory demonstrates the radically changed political environment of the late Khrushchev-era turn to history, distinguishing it from earlier, Stalinist cases of historical revisionism. These altered political conditions ultimately meant that the state was less effective in realizing its political objectives. If the regeneration of interest in local history and traditions had been intended to foster support for the construction of communism, in reality it succeeded in drawing attention to the subjective and arbitrary nature of historical memory, undermining the state's authority to control the interpretation of the most fundamental component of national and local identity—the past.

electrician in Novgorod concerning the decision to exclude many “old buildings” (*stariie doma*), which the author considered to be “monuments” (*pamiatniki*), if not “architectural masterpieces” (*shedevry zodchestva*), from local heritage lists. G. Melomedov, “O gorode moem rodnom,” *Novgorodskaiia pravda*, January 6, 1967, 4. See also the commentary of a local resident published in a letter to the editor in *Novgorodskaiia pravda* in 1968 concerning the state's selective preservation of churches in the local region. I. Mikhailov, “Pis'ma v redaktsiiu,” *Novgorodskaiia pravda*, March 10, 1968, 4.