

4 EAST MEETS WEST IN ARCTIC/NORTHERN SOCIAL SCIENCES: THE STORY OF THE 1991 JOINT US/USSR ACADEMIES WORKSHOP IN MOSCOW

Oran R. Young

Introduction

In April 1991, I led a delegation of American social scientists to a week-long "Workshop on US/USSR Cooperation in Arctic/Northern Social Science" sponsored jointly by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and the (then) Soviet Academy of Sciences. Held in Moscow, the workshop was designed to explore opportunities for enhancing collaboration between American and Russian social scientists regarding a wide range of topics dealing with the human dimensions of life in the Far North. During the workshop, thirteen American scientists and twenty Russian scientists engaged in a week of discussions dealing with topics of mutual interest. The workshop not only produced agreement on a set of themes offering opportunities for cooperative research; it also initiated several partnerships that led to collaborative research projects between or among individuals participating in the discussions that took place in Moscow.¹

The workshop built on a growing recognition on both sides of the importance of the social sciences among those engaged in Arctic/northern studies along with a rise in interactions between individual scientists in both countries interested in Arctic/northern issues.² This effort reflected the relative openness in relations between Russia and the West that we associate with the period shaped by ideas of *glasnost* and *perestroika* that Mikhail Gorbachev introduced in the mid-1980s; it also grew out of a desire to capitalize on new opportunities arising in this period in the realm of scientific collaboration. Some relationships forged during the workshop produced substantive collaborations during the following years; others contributed to collaborative work arising in later years. In one case, a research partnership arising from the workshop ended in tragedy: one of the Russians and two American participants died while conducting field research along the coast of Chukotka in 1995. This essay tells

- 1 In preparing this essay, I have relied on the record provided in the final report of the workshop submitted to the U.S. National Research Council for factual information. See National Research Council, *Final Report of the Workshop on US/USSR Cooperation in Arctic/Northern Social Science*, Washington, DC, July 1992.
- 2 Throughout this effort, we used the phrase "Arctic/northern social science" to reflect the fact that Russian scientists often draw a distinction between the Arctic and the North in a way that roughly parallels the distinction between the Arctic and the sub-Arctic. Our objective was to be inclusive.

the story of this workshop, including the course of events resulting in our gathering in Moscow, the conduct of the workshop itself, and some ensuing developments. The essay asks whether there are any lessons regarding the conduct and consequences of scientific collaboration arising from this experience that remain relevant despite the chilling effects of growing tensions in relations between the two countries in recent years.

The rise of Arctic/Northern social science

In 1987, the Polar Research Board, a standing advisory body of the National Research Council in the United States, established a Committee on Arctic Social Sciences and charged it with "... reviewing existing research, identifying research needs, and recommending future directions for the social sciences in the Arctic."³ Mim Dixon from the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center in Fairbanks, Alaska and I (then a member of the faculty of Dartmouth College) co-chaired the committee. We recruited a diverse group of social scientists (including two Canadians) to work with us on this initiative and organized several meetings of the group. In 1989, the committee produced a report entitled *Arctic Social Science: An Agenda for Action*, including a set of recommendations calling for multidisciplinary Arctic social science emphasizing issues relating to human/environment relationships, community viability, and rapid social change.⁴ In addition, the committee made the case for the establishment of an Arctic Social Science Program at the national level. A specific recommendation in this connection emphasized the value of advancing "cooperation in circumpolar social science by providing travel funds, arranging for translations, fostering cooperative agreements, organizing international conferences, and other steps."⁵ A direct result of this effort was the creation shortly thereafter of the Arctic Social Science Program within the Division of Polar Programs at the National Science Foundation. Noel Broadbent became the first director of this program. In this capacity, he became a supporter of collaborative projects; he participated in the 1991 workshop as an observer.

On the Russian (then Soviet) side, a major event was the December 1988 Lenin-grad Conference of Arctic and Nordic Countries on Coordination of Research in the Arctic.⁶ A section of this conference was concerned with the socioeconomic problems of the North, and the social sciences "figured prominently in efforts to follow up the conference."⁷ By 1989, the Commission on Arctic Research of the Soviet Academy of

3 National Research Council, "Arctic Contributions to Social Science and Public Policy," Washington, DC, 1993: vii.

4 National Research Council, "Arctic Social Science: An Agenda for Action," Washington, DC, 1989.

5 National Research Council, 1993: 76.

6 At that time, St. Petersburg was known as Leningrad. For the proceedings of the conference, see V.M. Kotliakov and V.E. Sokolov (eds.) 1990.

7 National Research Council, 1992: 4.

Sciences included several people with interests in the social sciences, and a number of the Academy's Institutes had begun to take an interest in Arctic/northern social science. I participated in the Leningrad Conference as a member of the U.S. delegation, visiting Moscow prior to the conference itself and making contact with researchers at the Soviet Academy of Sciences who subsequently became collaborators in research projects I coordinated as director of the Institute of Arctic Studies at Dartmouth College. One result of the Leningrad Conference was a recognition of Arctic/northern research as an area of special interest for cooperation between the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

Several formal agreements provided a point of departure for those of us eager to seize the opportunity to promote cooperation between American and Russian social scientists interested in Arctic/northern issues. The December 1988 "Protocol to the Agreement on Scientific Cooperation Between the National Academy of Sciences of the United States and the Academy of Sciences of the USSR" identified Arctic research as an area of special interest and encouraged collaboration on efforts to pursue themes identified in the outcome statement from the 1988 Leningrad Conference. The May 1989 "Memorandum of Understanding between the National Science Foundation and the Academy of Sciences of the USSR on Cooperation in the field of Basic Scientific Research" included "Scientific Problems of the Arctic and the North" as one of its approved areas. More broadly, the 1972 US/USSR Agreement on Cooperation in Environmental Protection provided an umbrella for promoting research initiatives by directing attention to legal and administrative issues arising in efforts to protect Arctic and sub-Arctic ecosystems.

Working through the Polar Research Board, several of us took the lead in proposing the organization of a joint workshop as a means of taking the next steps in moving from declarations regarding the desirability of cooperation in Arctic social science to the development of coordinated and fully collaborative research projects. For financial and logistical reasons, we proposed holding the workshop in Moscow, and the US National Science Foundation agreed to cover the costs for members of the US delegation to travel to Moscow. The suitability of this activity as an initiative within the terms of the agreements referred to in the preceding paragraph was confirmed in an exchange of letters between Erich Bloch, the director of the National Science Foundation and Gury Marchuk, the president of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in 1990. The stage was set for the workshop that took place in April of the following year.

It is worth emphasizing that the objectives of the 1991 workshop were to compare and contrast the experiences of American and Russian social scientists working on Arctic/northern issues, to identify research themes identified as important topics by both sides, and to prepare the ground for launching concrete projects involving participants from both communities. Of course, many of us on the American side were interested in gaining access to field sites and research resources in the Russian Arctic/north. Still, the primary motivation for this initiative was an interest in com-

paring and contrasting the approaches of American and Russian social scientists interested in Arctic issues and exploring opportunities for joining forces not only to produce new knowledge regarding Arctic issues but also to provide insights relevant to broader developments relating to international cooperation pertaining to Arctic issues. In this connection, it is notable that the workshop took place during a period marked by the development of what has become known as the “Arctic zone of peace” narrative, the establishment during 1990 of both the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) and the International Arctic Social Sciences Association (IASSA), the negotiation of the June 1991 Rovaniemi Declaration that launched the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, and, in due course, the adoption of the 1996 Ottawa Declaration that created the Arctic Council as a high level intergovernmental forum for the consideration of issues relating to environmental protection and sustainable development.

At the 1988 Leningrad Conference, it became clear that there was a sizable group of Russian researchers interested in Arctic/northern social issues scattered across a variety of institutes of the Soviet Academy of Sciences including the Institute of Geography, the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, the Institute of Systems Studies,⁸ the Institute of the United States and Canada, the Institute of Employment Problems, and the Institute of World Economy and International Relations among others. For many of these researchers, the 1988 conference provided the first opportunity for them to meet one another in person and to explore opportunities for collaboration.

We soon learned that many of these people were excellent analysts. But working within the cultural and institutional setting of the Soviet system, their experiences differed in important ways from the experiences of their American counterparts (see Kasten, *this volume*, p. 310 – E.K.). Despite the onset of *perestroika*, the Soviet approach to research still prevailed in 1991. The various institutes located within the Soviet Academy of Sciences controlled most research in a top-down manner. Researchers generally worked on topics identified as priority themes by the leaders of the institutes who, in turn, were influenced by priorities set by state agencies. Those of us who participated in the 1988 Leningrad Conference witnessed this system in operation when we sought with limited success to provide input for the statement regarding the results of the conference to be issued at the close of the event.⁹

As individuals, the Russian scientists were less concerned with theoretical issues in the social sciences than their American colleagues and more concerned with applied research on topics of interest to the leadership of their institutes as informed by prior-

8 This institute was established in 1972 as a collaboration with the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis located in Austria and dedicated to improving East-West communication through scientific initiatives.

9 Following Soviet practice, the organizers of the conference had prepared the text of the outcome statement in advance of the event. They were resistant to the efforts of some of us to amend the text to reflect ideas that surfaced during the course of the conference.

ities of the state. Most of the Americans were associated with discipline-based departments within colleges and universities; they were motivated to conduct research that would address current research priorities in their own disciplines. For the most part, the Russians were more concerned with the challenges of addressing matters of priority identified by the leadership of the institutes. Many were comfortable engaging in studies reflecting the methodology often described as historical sociology among western researchers. The Americans, by contrast, tended to focus on analytic issues and to experiment with new approaches to data collection and analysis. More generally, it seems fair to say that the thinking of both Russian and American social scientists at the time was influenced by fundamental differences between the two societies in economic and political terms, including the role of the state in economic and social matters, that influenced both their training and the conditions under which they worked on a day-to-day basis. This is not to say that their work was driven by ideology. But there is no denying the influence of the social environments in which they were working on the perspectives of the two groups of researchers.

Of course, we knew about these differences in general terms as we prepared to participate in the workshop. But we did not see them as a source of insurmountable difficulties in the effort to find common ground. And given the spirit of cooperation that developed among many members of the two groups on a personal basis, these differences turned out to provide a point of departure for lively and productive conversations during the course of the workshop rather than to constitute a deterrent to stimulating interactions.

A week in Moscow

We gathered in Moscow during the week of 8 April 1991, and both delegations took up residence in the *Gostinitsa* (Hotel) Uzkoe, a facility on the outskirts of the city that the Soviet Academy of Sciences often used for scientific meetings. A virtue of this arrangement was that it allowed members of the two groups to interact with each other not only during the formal sessions of the workshop but also over meals and in informal conversations. Vladimir Kotliakov, the director of the Institute of Geography, was the leader of the Soviet delegation. Kotliakov is a physical geographer who studied the behavior of glaciers. But as director of the Institute of Geography, he understood the concerns of human geographers as well as physical geographers and took a broad perspective on the scope of Arctic/northern social science. I had met Kotliakov previously and regarded him as a serious and committed scientist. We had no difficulty in organizing the activities of the workshop on a day-to-day basis.

The first day of the workshop “provided an opportunity for Russian officials to make introductory statements and for several senior Russian participants to present papers.”¹⁰ This gave us an opportunity to experience the Soviet approach to scientific

¹⁰ National Research Council, 1992: 6.

research in operation. Thereafter, we decided to divide the participants in the workshop into three subgroups focused on thematic areas of mutual interest including community studies, regional studies, and international studies. The subgroups provided an opportunity to exchange views on a personal level; they became the vehicles for identifying opportunities for productive collaboration going forward. At the same time, the entire group wrestled with common concerns relating to differences in the organization, administration, and funding of research in the two systems and matters of epistemology and methodology. Given the timing of the workshop, we were very much aware of uncertainties arising from the fundamental changes starting to surface during what turned out to be the final year of the Soviet Union.

Thematic priorities

The thematic areas we chose to focus on correspond roughly to the micro, meso, and macro levels of social organization. Participants in the workshop self-selected into these subgroups with little difficulty. Those with backgrounds in anthropology, archeology, and ethnography were drawn to discussions focused on community studies. Those interested in international relations gravitated to the subgroup on international studies. Those concerned with issues like the relations between northern states, provinces, oblasts, and so forth and the national governments of Arctic states addressed priorities in the area of regional studies. We made no claim to covering the contributions of the social sciences comprehensively. For example, there was a shortage of expertise in the area of economics in the two delegations. Still, we were able to discuss a wide range of topics that would benefit from collaboration between American and Russian social scientists. All the participants were inspired by the observation that similarities in biophysical systems coupled with striking differences in the socioeconomic experiences of the two societies regarding Arctic/northern matters provided opportunities to pursue natural experiments.

The community studies subgroup naturally drew attention to issues pertaining to the maintenance of cultural integrity at the local level, taking into account the impacts of rapid social change in the Arctic. Cross-national comparisons offered interesting opportunities in these terms. Communities in both the American Arctic and the Russian Arctic/north were experiencing the impacts of oil and gas developments. But there was no analogue in the Russian Arctic/north to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971. Conversely, communities in the American Arctic had no experience with institutional arrangements like the collective/state farms that had played a prominent role in the Russian Arctic/north. An issue of particular interest emphasized by the American participants but somewhat unfamiliar to the Russian participants was the importance of developing and implementing a code of research ethics applicable especially to interactions between researchers coming into communities as outsiders and the Indigenous residents of these communities.

The regional studies subgroup took up issues involving relations between national governments and the political arrangements operative in Arctic/northern regions. Alaska had become a state in 1959, but the federal government still owned more than half of the state's land and held jurisdiction over most of the waters of the adjacent portions of the Bering, Chukchi, and Beaufort Seas. On the Russian side, Gorbachev had supported limited decentralization as an element of *perestroika*, and relations between Moscow and regional governments were already showing signs of the turmoil that became more pronounced following the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991. A topic of considerable interest was the shifting balance of power/influence between national governments and regional governments in settings featuring similar biophysical conditions but striking differences in the political and social experiences of those located in the United States and those located in the Soviet Union. This suggested the possibility of making use of comparative studies to explore issues pertaining to environmental protection and sustainable development and to the role of the state more generally.

The international studies subgroup was energized by the turn toward international cooperation in the Arctic following Gorbachev's 1987 "Arctic zone of peace" speech together with the interest of the American participants in the developing body of research dealing with the formation, implementation and effectiveness of international regimes. One theme in this regard was the potential of relatively informal mechanisms to foster cooperation. Traditionally, research in this field focused on the development of legally binding treaties or conventions. But more informal arrangements were emerging in the Arctic. The International Arctic Science Committee was a non-governmental body. The Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, emerging as the workshop took place, was launched under the terms of a Ministerial Declaration. This produced an interest in conducting research on the relative merits of different types of arrangements for promoting international cooperation.

Moving forward

It is generally understood that actual collaboration depends on the willingness of individual scientists to take the initiative, joining forces to develop and carry out specific projects focusing on topics of common interest. In this regard, the workshop proved productive, despite impediments arising from the top-down Soviet approach to the organization of research. Several of the Russian participants in the workshop became active members of the research team for a project on international environmental regimes funded by the Ford Foundation in the United States that I directed and that produced a book published by Cornell University Press using Arctic cases to test various hypotheses about the creation of international environmental regimes (Young and Osherenko 1993). Steve McNabb and Sasha Pika became principal investigators on an NSF-funded project dealing with a "Comparative Study of Social Tran-

sition in the North: Alaska and Russian Far East.” The objective of this project was to assess the impacts of epidemiological, demographic, and domestic changes on northern (largely Indigenous) communities (Mason 2004). An unusual collaboration illustrating the benefits of bringing different disciplinary perspectives to bear on a common theme arose between Andrei Golovnev, a Russian ethnographer, and Gail Osherenko, an American environmental lawyer. They joined forces to produce an important book exploring the factors that had allowed the Nenets living on the Yamal Peninsula to maintain their traditional culture despite the impact of external forces including hydrocarbon development and the establishment of state farms (Golovnev and Osherenko 1999).

Several more indirect results are worth noting as well. Liudmila Bogoslovskaja went on to become a driving force in environmental cooperation in the Bering Strait Region, reflected in collaborative activities with researchers based at the Arctic Studies Center of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. Gail Fondahl benefitted from interacting with Galina Gracheva as she prepared to launch her fieldwork in Zabaikalia. The collaboration between Andrei Golovnev and Gail Osherenko helped to pave the way for a lengthy series of studies by Bruce Forbes and his colleagues on the socioecological systems of the Yamal Peninsula starting in the mid-1990s. Rick Condon, who was then editor of *Arctic Anthropology*, launched an initiative upon his return from the workshop that led to the publication in the journal of translations of significant Russian works in the field.¹¹

A more somber note arises from the untimely deaths of two American and two Russian participants in the 1991 workshop in the course of fieldwork in the Russian Arctic/north. Galina Gracheva died in a helicopter crash in Chukotka in 1993 while conducting field research as a member of a collaborative French-Russian project. Sasha Pika, Steve McNabb, and Rick Condon died tragically in a boating incident in coastal waters while conducting fieldwork in Chukotka for the Social Transition in the North project in 1995. The loss of these prominent and productive scholars was a severe blow to Arctic/northern social science.

General observations

At the same time, it is worth commenting on several issues of a more general nature that came to our attention during the workshop. As the workshop report notes, “[w]hereas the American delegates were interested in the contributions that comparative work on Russian-American cases might make to their efforts at theory building, the Russian delegates were often preoccupied with the search for solutions to current cri-

11 Igor Krupnik, a Russian anthropologist-archeologist who had emigrated from Russia and joined the staff of the Arctic Studies Center at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, played a central role in this initiative.

ses.”¹² In addition, the American and Russian systems for funding research are fundamentally different, posing problems for mobilizing support for truly collaborative projects. The workshop concluded that those who controlled funding sources on both sides might have to demonstrate unaccustomed flexibility in order to prevent these differences from blocking efforts to launch specific projects. One thing that could help in overcoming these practical problems was the development of regular opportunities for American and Russian social scientists interested in Arctic/northern studies to meet in informal settings and engage in dialogue designed to overcoming obstacles to collaboration.

As others have noted, the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991 shifted the ground regarding collaboration in Arctic/northern social science at least for a time. It became considerably easier for western scientists desiring to conduct fieldwork in Russia to gain access to their areas of interest. The economic conditions of the 1990s sharply reduced research funding available to the institutes of the newly-formed Russian Academy of Sciences. But at the same time, these conditions had the effect of freeing individual scientists from decisions handed down by the leadership of the Academy's research institutes. Participation in meetings of groups like IASSA allowed some individual Russian social scientists to interact relatively freely with their western counterparts. It is important to observe, under the circumstances, that the 1991 workshop took place on the cusp of a period of rapid change in Russian science.

Scientific collaboration in changing times

More generally, the workshop occurred during a time of profound change in the realm of Arctic affairs. At one and the same time, these developments generated a sense of opportunity regarding the prospects for scientific collaboration and an awareness of uncertainties making it hard to engage in the practical planning required to initiate concrete projects. The winding down of the Cold War produced a desire to place East-West relations on a new footing and a sense that the Arctic offered attractive opportunities to make progress in these terms. This was the origin of the idea of the Arctic as a zone of peace, to use the phrase that Gorbachev introduced in 1987 and that was soon picked up by others. On the other hand, it was becoming apparent by the spring of 1991 that the Soviet Union was on its last legs. Though the timing of the final collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991 took all of us by surprise, participants in the workshop were aware of instabilities that might well have major consequences for our efforts to promote scientific collaboration between American and Russian social scientists interested in the Arctic.

12 National Research Council, 1992:12. With some exceptions (e.g. Arkadii Cherkasov whose research focused on Canada), the Russians were less interested in developing projects that would bring them to North America.

The emergence of the Arctic zone of peace narrative had a significant impact on the 1991 workshop. Beginning in 1987, for example, I organized and co-chaired an exercise in Track 2 diplomacy known as the Working Group on Arctic International Relations (Young 1996: 1–19).¹³ In a series of meetings held in Arctic locations including one in Russia, the Working Group brought together small groups of scientists and policymakers from the eight Arctic states to discuss common approaches to issues of mutual interest such as environmental protection and sustainable development. Four participants in the 1991 workshop (two Americans and two Russians) had participated in meetings of the Working Group and already knew each other on a personal level before meeting in Moscow in April 1991. Several of us also had interacted at the 1988 Leningrad Conference, which had played a role in promoting the establishment of IASC. Although IASC leaned heavily toward the natural sciences, especially during its early years, it also served to promote the general idea of the value of scientific collaboration and to provide a forum for dealing with practical matters pertinent to this agenda.

The unfolding crisis in the Soviet Union, on the other hand, was a source of growing uncertainty manifest both at the individual level for Russian scientists and at the societal level. Although the final collapse of the Soviet Union did not occur until the end of 1991, the country's GDP fell by 15–20% during that year. At the time of the workshop in April, the exchange rate between the ruble and the dollar had just been revised from 6/1 to 27/1, making Americans rich visitors to the Soviet Union but leaving ordinary Russians with a struggle to make ends meet.¹⁴ In the following years, Institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences faced severe reductions in their budgets, forcing them to cut salaries and, in some cases, to lease out space in their buildings as a means of mobilizing revenue to keep operating on a reduced basis. To the best of my knowledge, at least two of the Russian participants in the 1991 workshop chose to leave the research community as a result of these difficulties. Another participant chose to emigrate from Russia for other reasons, settled in the United States, and became a faculty member at Duke University.

More generally, however, the transition from the Soviet Union to the Russian Federation ushered in a new era in relations between the central government in Moscow and regional governments in the Russian Arctic/north. Broadly speaking, regional governments were able to assert more control over their own affairs as a result of the declining capacity of the central government to exercise control in far-flung regions.

13 The MacArthur Foundation in the United States awarded a grant to Dartmouth College in the fall of 1987 to support this initiative.

14 With some embarrassment, the leader of the Soviet delegation came to me and asked whether it would be possible for the Americans to pay for the banquet planned for the end of the workshop. We agreed to cover the cost of this event. We then enjoyed a sumptuous banquet with excellent food and drink. At the new exchange rate, the total cost of this event was about \$25 USD!

Although it is hard to generalize from one region to another, this eased restrictions affecting the conduct of research in the Russian Arctic/north in most cases. Of course, this trend toward political decentralization came to an end with the consolidation of power in Moscow in the 2000s. Yet this shifting pattern of central/regional relations in the Russian Federation was a key feature of the environment in which American and Russian social scientists sought to follow up on opportunities to launch collaborative projects identified during the course of the April 1991 workshop.

The legacy of the 1991 workshop

The contrast between the difficult state of East-West relations today and the environment in which the 1991 workshop took place is dramatic. In 1991, we were pursuing the vision embedded in the idea of the Arctic as a zone of peace. Most of those interested in this process took the view that scientific cooperation could play a constructive role in advancing the general interest in putting East-West relations on a new footing. Our experiences during the 1990s seemed to validate this premise. By contrast, we are now in a period of deep conflict between Russia and the western states. Though many attribute this situation to the revisionist policies of Vladimir Putin, it is worth noting that there is considerable sympathy among members of the Russian intelligentsia for the perspective on relations between Russia and Ukraine articulated by Putin. As a result, Piers Vitebsky concludes that “we have slid down an icy slope to somewhere far before 1986” with regard to opportunities to conduct research in and on the Russian Arctic/north (Vitebsky 2025: 251). Whether or not this assessment is correct, there is no denying that we have entered a period in which the barriers to cooperation between American and Russian social scientists interested in the Arctic/north are severe.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to say that we are now facing an impermeable iron curtain regarding scientific cooperation. I know of one case in which a senior American linguist continues to engage in cooperative work with colleagues in the Sakha Republic. In my own case, I maintain collaborative relations with Russian colleagues, though I am no longer able to travel to Russia, and I am aware of the need to proceed with care in pursuing our common interests. At a recent meeting in Geneva, I was struck by the intensity of the desire to main cooperative relations expressed by the director of the Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute in Saint Petersburg. Though he himself is a natural scientist, he has been a vigorous advocate of the importance of continued participation in policy-relevant efforts such as the contributions of the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme to understanding the dynamics of climate change in the Arctic. Without doubt, the cause of scientific cooperation has fallen on hard times as a result of deepening tensions between Russia and the West. But the willingness of individual scientists to make the effort required to continue to collaborate has not disappeared.

Beyond this, it is helpful to bear in mind Peter Schweitzer's analysis of the pattern of openings and closures in Russian policies affecting access on the part of researchers to the Russian Arctic/north and receptivity to scientific collaboration more generally. As he puts it, the positive message arising from his analysis is that "every closure is eventually followed by an opening" (Schweitzer 2024: 277). While it is difficult to say anything concrete about the future, his analysis suggests that "closures typically last at least a decade and rarely more than three decades." (ibid.) If, as seems likely, this analysis is relevant to the current case, we can expect a renewed turn toward openness in the 2030s or 2040s. This is a long time to wait, especially for those now at critical stages in their research careers. But it does suggest that we should not lose track of the experience of the 1991 workshop and subsequent collaborations among those interested in Arctic/northern studies, especially when it comes to finding ways to bridge gaps regarding matters of epistemology and methodology and to overcome problems arising from differences in the organizational and funding practices prevailing in the two systems.

At the end of the day, human relations lie at the core of any effective effort to promote scientific cooperation. The growth of an informal transnational community of individuals interested in the Arctic is one of the most significant outcomes of our efforts to address Arctic issues of common concern over the last forty years. In this regard, policies and practices that block Russian participation in nongovernmental events like the 2025 International Conference on Arctic Research Planning or the annual gatherings at Arctic Frontiers and the Arctic Circle Assembly need to be revisited. This is not a matter of passing judgment on the policies of the Russian government. Rather, it is a matter of recognizing the value of unofficial channels of communication open to scientists and others in their personal capacities, especially during periods of heightened tension at the intergovernmental level.

Appendix: List of participants in the Moscow workshop

NAS Delegation

Oran R. Young (Head of Delegation), Dartmouth College
 Douglas D. Anderson, Brown University
 Elizabeth C. Anderson
 Richard A. Caulfield, University of Alaska Fairbanks
 Norman A. Chance, University of Connecticut
 Richard G. Condon, University of Arkansas
 Victor Fisher, University of Alaska Anchorage
 Gail A. Fondahl, Middlebury College
 Susan A. Kaplan, Bowdoin College
 Steven L. McNabb, Social Research Institutes

Gail Osherenko, Dartmouth College

Mary C. Pete, Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Noel D. Broadbent (Observer), National Science Foundation

ASUSSR Delegation

Vladimir M. Kotliakov (Head of Delegation), Institute of Geography (Moscow)

Grigorii A. Agranat, Institute of Geography (Moscow)

Asylbek A. Aidarliev, Institute of the Biological Problems of the Northern (Magadan)

Elena N. Andreeva, Institute for Systems Studies (Moscow)

Aleksander I. Arikainen, Institute for Systems Studies (Moscow)

Liudmila S. Bogoslovskaja, Institute of Evolutional Morphology and Animal Ecology (Moscow)

Arkadii I. Cherkasov, Institute of the United States and Canada (Moscow)

Andrei V. Golovnev, Institute of History and Archeology (Ekaterinburg)

Galina N. Gracheva, Institute of Ethnography (Leningrad)

Tat'iana D. Ivanova, Institute of Employment Problems (Moscow)

Oleg S. Kolbasov, Institute of the State and Law (Moscow)

Boris Kh. Krasnopol'skii, The North-East Interdisciplinary Scientific Research Institute of Northern Development (Magadan)

Natal'ia S. Mirovitskaia, Institute of World Economy and International Relations (Moscow)

B. P. Oleinikov, Institute of Evolutionary Morphology and Animal Ecology (Moscow)

Vladimir I. Pavlenko, Center on Arctic Research and Coordination (Moscow)

Aleksandr I. Pika, Institute of Employment Problems (Moscow)

Aleksei Yu. Roginko, Institute of World Economy and International Relations (Moscow)

B. F. Shapalin, Central Economic Institute of the State Economic Committee RSFSR (Moscow)

Aleksandr A. Tranin, Institute of the State and Law (Moscow)

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