

Introduction

Norman E. Saul

The author of *Russian People* was uniquely qualified to assess the turmoil in the Russian Empire in the early 20th century. She lived there for eighteen years—from 1899 to 1917—and saw the transition of the country from a mainly rustic and traditional society into one undergoing an uneasy process of modernization. She witnessed the upheavals of war and revolution in both city and country and wrote about them in an educated, yet cautious and tempered manner in this and two other books. Unlike a number of other Americans who came to Russia as journalists and curiosity seekers to write about its travails for the popular press or with specific goals in mind in business or diplomacy, her account was based on an intimate family situation and describes her experiences from the perspective of one who is integrally a part of the scene, not a rambling visitor with an agenda, such as John Reed and many other American visitors who welcomed in various ways the tide of events of 1917 and the civil war that followed.

Russian People is a sequel and expansion of Cantacuzene's *Revolutionary Days*, which concentrates on her observations of the court just prior to and during World War I and the Russian revolution of 1917, published the preceding year.¹ *Revolutionary Days* was a view of the revolution from above, largely from the capital, where the Cantacuzenes had an apartment, while *Russian People* is the view from below, the countryside, and from the Cantacuzene estate in Ukraine, and extends the scope of coverage through the Russian Civil War. This book benefitted from more experience in writing, or perhaps superior editing by Scribner's. Overlapping with these two books is a memoir of early life, dedicated to her children, published in 1921.² Parts of

¹ Princess Cantacuzene [Kantakuzen in Russian], Countess Speransky, née Grant, *Revolutionary Days: Recollections of Romanoffs and Bolshewiki, 1914–1917* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Company, 1919). It was reprinted in the Lakeside Classics series (no. 97), edited by Terence Emmons with a number of nice color prints and photographs added: Cantacuzene, *Revolutionary Days: Including Passages from My Life Here and There, 1876–1917* (Chicago: R. R. Donnelly & Sons, 1999). The “Historical Introduction” (xvii–lx) by Emmons is an excellent background of Russian history for the period. Unfortunately, there is no indication of what has been deleted nor from which book the material is being produced.

² Princess Julia Cantacuzene, *My Life Here and There* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921).

all three were published previously in magazines or newspapers, such as the *Saturday Evening Post*. She did not publish another book, such as a more complete memoir that might have set her long life in context.

Julia Dent Grant was born in Washington, D.C., in the White House, on Pennsylvania Avenue, in April 1876, the first grandchild of President Ulysses S. Grant, and was named after her grandmother. Her father, Frederick Dent Grant, was a career army officer who served in the shadow of his famous Civil War general father. Her mother, Ida Honoré Grant, was the daughter of a Chicago merchant and sister of a renowned Chicago socialite and philanthropist, Bertha Honoré Palmer. Bertha and Ida were the daughters of a Louisville merchant who moved north to Chicago in 1855 to found a leading commercial house that would evolve into Marshall Field's. Bertha Honoré (1849–1918) would solidify an aristocratic Chicago connection by marriage in 1870 to Potter Palmer (she was 21, he 44), an entrepreneur best known for establishing the luxury Palmer House as the premier hotel in the city, its first version destroyed in the great fire of 1871.

The pretty young Julia Grant, of modest means, became a protégé of her Aunt Bertha, accompanying her on trips abroad with resulting introductions into European society and into both the Chicago and Florida social scenes, where the Palmers had lavish homes and real estate interests.³ This Palmer connection would continue in Julia's family through three more generations. The Grant daughter's exposure to European society would increase exponentially after her father was appointed American minister to Austria-Hungary by President Benjamin Harrison in 1889. Frederick Dent Grant remained at the post in Vienna into the second Cleveland administration, thus Julia Grant was in residence in Europe between the ages of 13 and 17. What a glorious time to be growing up in Vienna! Julia's "dark good looks, dancing ability, wit and linguistic aptitude helped her to enjoy the waltzes and gay military uniforms of imperial Vienna."⁴

It was not until several years later, however, that her life turned in a Russian direction. While visiting Rome with her Aunt Bertha, Julia met a young Russian cavalry officer, Michael Cantacuzene,⁵ who was attached to the Russian embassy there. They quickly fell in love. Prince Mikhail Mikhailovich Cantacuzene (1875–1955) was a descendant of a Byzantine Greek family (Kantakouzenos), one ancestor being

³ The Palmer Mansion, a Gothic-style castle, was the largest residence in Chicago when completed on Lake Shore Drive in 1885. Later, the Palmers bought considerable property in and around Sarasota, Florida, which would become the base for most of the Cantacuzene family in the 1920s. For more on the Palmer-Grant connections, see Ishbel Ross, *Silhouette in Diamonds: The Life of Mrs. Potter Palmer* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960).

⁴ "Princess Julia Cantacuzene, 99, Grant's Granddaughter, Dead," *New York Times*, October 7, 1975.

⁵ In America, Cantacuzene was pronounced with the accent on the last syllable as "zane." Telephone interview with Julia's grand-nephew, Potter Palmer IV, in Chicago, May 30, 2015.

Byzantine Emperor John VI, who ruled the Roman East with the support of the Ottoman Turks from 1347–54. The princely title derived from the family's political and economic prominence in Romanian Moldavia as "Phanariot Greeks." Mikhail Mikhailovich's great-grandfather, Radu (or Rodion) Cantacuzene joined the Russian service during the Russo-Turkish War of 1768–74, during the reign of Catherine the Great.

Within a generation this branch of the Cantacuzenes had become prosperous merchants in the new port city of Odessa and subsequently acquired a substantial estate of over 80,000 acres in the Poltava province of Ukraine, named Bouromka, described in detail in the first two chapters of this book. Mikhail's mother, Elisabeth Sicard, was from a French Huguenot merchant family in Odessa.⁶ An additional title, "Count Speransky," was acquired through his great-grandfather Mikhail Speransky (1772–1839), a Russian reformer and statesman during the reign of Alexander I. As the eldest son, Mikhail Cantacuzene served in the Page Corps at the Romanov court and graduated from the Imperial Alexandrine Lycée in St. Petersburg. A distant cousin, Grigory Kantakuzen (1843–1902), joined the Russian diplomatic corps and served as Russian minister to the United States in the 1890s.

The "Russian" prince and the American president's granddaughter were married in a lavish wedding on September 25, 1899, at Beaulieu, an Astor home in Newport, Rhode Island, that Bertha Palmer, who arranged the whole affair, had leased for the summer.⁷ A private Russian Orthodox ceremony at the home preceded the Episcopal Church service, officiated by Bishop Henry Potter of New York. Since the bride's father was engaged in the Philippines dealing with the repercussions of the Spanish-American War, his place was taken by the brother of the bride, Ulysses S. Grant III, then a student at West Point. Others attending were the bride's mother, grandmother Ida Grant, grandfather Henry Honoré, and, apparently, the groom's mother.⁸ "The Prince was decked out in a regimental uniform of white with red and silver trimmings, high black boots, and a silver helmet with the Russian imperial crest, while the bride wore a simple gown of white satin."⁹

The reception was notable for the two large second-floor rooms filled with gifts, closely guarded by detectives, and for the spectacular wedding cake prepared by

⁶ *Wikipedia*, s.v. "Prince Mikhail Cantacuzene," last modified May 15, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prince_Mikhail_Cantacuz%C3%A8ne.

⁷ Beaulieu was built by a Peruvian merchant (in the guano trade) in 1859 and was subsequently purchased by John Jacob Astor III. By 1911 it belonged to Cornelius Vanderbilt.

⁸ Cantacuzene, *My Life Here and There*, 199–205. A Chicago newspaper reported that Mrs. Palmer gave a reception in honor of the prince's mother in Paris at the Ritz Hotel on May 4, 1899, to announce the betrothal ("Reception by Mrs. Palmer," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 5, 1899: 8).

⁹ Ross, *Silhouette*, 143–44.

Jerome of Sherry's, one of New York City's most celebrated chefs.¹⁰ After a honeymoon cruise from Newport to New York on a private yacht and a trans-Atlantic journey, the couple retired to Bouromka, the Cantacuzene estate in Ukraine, where the American princess added one more dimension to the multinational family. Charming and poised, she was apparently warmly welcomed into the larger family, which included three of her husband's siblings and their families but was clearly dominated by his French mother and a retinue of long-established servants. We can assume that French, in which the new member was fluent, was the main household language—with smatterings of English, German,¹¹ Ukrainian, and Russian.

Bouromka, as depicted on the frontispiece of the book, was dominated by a neo-Gothic "castle" that housed the family and a number of servants. The estate and its three villages, where most of the peasant workers lived, lacked a convenient railroad connection, the nearest station being in Lubny (in 1897 a town of just over 10,000), located about one hundred miles southeast of Kiev on the northern edge of the Ukrainian steppe, or about halfway between Kiev and the district capital of Poltava. It was a sizeable trip by horse and carriage or troika from Lubny to Bouromka. Julia's first year at Bouromka was not easy, as she succumbed to pneumonia. This brought her mother from Washington for a visit and to assist in her recovery. Ida Grant returned the following year with her husband, General Fred Grant, for a pleasurable trip from St. Petersburg through Moscow and Kiev to Bouromka.¹²

Still, within a year Julia's first child was born, a boy, Mikhail, named after his father. He would be followed by two girls, Varvara or Barbara (usually known as Bertha, after her great-aunt) in 1904 and Zenaida (Ida—after her Grandmother Grant) in 1908.¹³ There were no doubt strains in the marriage due to Julia's lengthy visits to her family in the United States (1910, 1911) and to Prince Cantacuzene's frequent absences on military and court business, which often necessitated extended periods of residence in St. Petersburg. He served in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05) and as aide de camp to Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich, uncle of the tsar, who was to command the Russian army at the beginning of World War I. As an officer in an elite Guard's Regiment, Mikhail Cantacuzene would be among the first to enter combat in World War I. Severely wounded in the first reckless offensive, he was very

¹⁰ "Jerome of Sherry's Cuts Wedding Cakes For Two Cantacuzene Princesses," *New York Times*, October 18, 1925, E1.

¹¹ There were several "frauleins" on the staff.

¹² "Mrs. F. D. Grant Starts Home," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 5, 1900, 3. A photograph of Julia, her father, and son Mikhail (age one), at Bouromka, is in *Revolutionary Days* (1999), 111, from the collection of Rodion Cantacuzene in Chicago, Julia's grandson.

¹³ The repetition of names can be confusing, especially with three Mikhail Mikhailovich Cantacuzenes in direct line, but also of Idas, Berthas, and Potters in the Palmer family and Ulysses Grants (Julia's brother, uncle, and grandfather).

fortunate to survive a difficult transport back from the front and a long recuperation.¹⁴ Restored to health and promoted to the rank of general, he commanded a cavalry regiment in what has been claimed to be the last major cavalry charge against a fortified position (1915).¹⁵

Despite Bouromka's distance from the railroad and Russia's industrial centers, life on the estate would not remain untouched by the turmoil of the Russo-Japanese War and the 1905 revolution. Sadness and loss brought the war home. Julia's Russian brother-in-law Boris, an officer in the navy, served aboard the Second Russian Pacific squadron (Baltic Fleet) enroute to the catastrophic Battle of Tsushima in May 1905, though he never reached Tsushima, succumbing to "tropical fever" enroute. The 1905 revolution reached Bouromka in the pillaging of shops in town while Julia and the children were away, first in St. Petersburg and then in England and Europe. In 1906, hoping to keep Mikhail and Bertha out of harm's way, Julia sent them to visit family in the United States.

By this time, Julia Grant had settled into the life of a Russian noblewoman, attended by servants and nurses, and would proudly carry her titles of Princess Cantacuzene/Countess Speransky somewhat awkwardly to the end of her life and well after she divorced her husband in 1934. Reading *Russian People*, one feels the aristocratic milieu depicted through an authorial lens tinted with nostalgia for her life of privilege, since by the time of writing the world of Bouromka was no more, except in memory. No doubt nostalgia underlies her sentimental and perhaps overly idyllic picture of the "Russian" countryside on the eve of war and revolution: the growth in peasant ownership of land due to the reforms instituted by Prime Minister Petr Stolypin (assassinated in 1911), new schools, pride in progress and prosperity. But Cantacuzene also notes the inroads made by "travelers" carrying revolutionary ideas, ideas that found fertile soil among villagers increasingly dissatisfied with ineffectual government leadership and the hardships and human losses brought by the seemingly endless and senseless First World War. The princess is perhaps overly optimistic about Russia's divine destiny—if only the Allies will recompense Russia for the sacrifices that allowed them to win the war.

Isolated from Allied support due to the closure of the Baltic and Black Sea ports, by 1917 Russia had run short of the supplies crucial to waging total war. The strains on rail transportation are revealed in the author's descriptions of wartime trips back to Bouromka. The Provisional Government created after the revolution of

¹⁴ This is described in Cantacuzene's first book, *Revolutionary Days: Recollections of Romanoffs and Bolsheviks, 1914–1917* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Company 1919), 38–46.

¹⁵ Noted in several later newspaper articles; it cannot be verified by American experts on Russia in World War I.

February–March 1917¹⁶ and the abdication of Nicholas II was powerless to stop the deterioration of conditions within the Russian Empire and the increasingly vociferous opposition to the war. In the spring of 1917, Julia Grant Cantacuzene traveled from Bouromka to Petrograd,¹⁷ where she took up residence in the family apartment at the Evropeiskaya (Hotel Europe). Her chief motivation was to check on family interests, especially son Mikhail who, at sixteen, was a student in the Imperial Alexandrine Lycée. The teenager’s main complaint about the revolution was the disruption of his school classes. Prince Cantacuzene had reached Petrograd earlier, just a week after the tsar’s abdication, on previously scheduled business, and was forced to carry his bags from the station to his club, the Yacht Club, on the Neva, then to suffer the indignity of arrest and abuse before being released and allowed to complete his assignment.

The Cantacuzenes, frustrated by the lack of adequate leadership at the top and blaming the nefarious influences of the empress and a “German clique,” supported this revolution. At first, they welcomed the Provisional Government and hoped that the Constituent Assembly would produce a new leader with vision and experience. Grand Duke Nikolai Mikhailovich (1859–1919), a cousin of the tsar and respected historian and estate manager who promoted education, had support in the Duma, and was favored by the dowager empress.¹⁸ But the economic situation and the war effort continued to deteriorate throughout 1917. The Cantacuzene family escaped most of the rest of the revolutionary year by taking residence in Kiev, where Mikhail’s regiment was stationed to maintain order. Since the city was comparatively calm, Mikhail saw further action on the Southwestern Front, participating at the head of his unit in the “Kerensky Offensive.”

Julia felt that “Kiev seemed enchanting after the capital, with its gay streets and gardens, its charming, luxurious homes, and the great, splendid, picturesque piles of ancient monasteries and churches, crowned by their numerous golden domes.”¹⁹ Their home, conveniently located near the military headquarters, had a balcony that

¹⁶ Russia at this time was officially on the older Julian calendar, while most European countries adhered to the newer Gregorian. In the twentieth century the difference was 13 days, thus February 28 in Petrograd was March 13 in London.

¹⁷ At the beginning of World War I, the unbecomingly “German”-sounding St. Petersburg was renamed Petrograd; after the death of Vladimir Lenin in 1924, the city became Leningrad. Many Russians, however referred to the city as “Piter” throughout. The original name of St. Petersburg was restored in 1990.

¹⁸ Cantacuzene, *Revolutionary Days*, 174–76. The grand duke, after a period of exile in Vologda in 1918 would be executed the following year in Petrograd, along with two of his cousins. For an excellent biography of this lost opportunity for Russia, see Jamie H. Cockfield, *White Crow: The Life and Times of Grand Duke Nicholas Mikhailovich Romanov, 1859–1919* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002).

¹⁹ Cantacuzene, *Revolutionary Days*, 228.

overlooked a small garden for entertaining. “One had the impression of a wild festival in every class.”²⁰ She did comment on some problems: the horde of Polish and Jewish refugees from the Eastern Front and the granting of privileges to Ukrainians in the form of a *rada*, or parliament. “Committees became an epidemic everywhere”²¹—a common complaint of all administrators.

She even managed to spend a couple of weeks at her mother-in-law’s villa on the Crimean coast, awaiting the children’s planned departure for America. Having received word of the arrangements completed through American ambassador David Francis, she succeeded in shepherding the children by train to Petrograd (the Cantacuzenes did a lot of traveling during the war and revolution!), arriving on July 14 in the middle of the “July Crisis,” a rather bloody uprising that began with an armed demonstration by radical forces on Nevsky Prospect. Despite this—and being lodged at the Evropeiskaya nearby—she managed to process visas and passports for the children, then ages 16, 12, and 8, and an accompanying nurse to leave with a party of Americans on the Trans-Siberian.²² Having dispatched the children on their long and hazardous journey, Julia returned to Kiev to wait out more revolutionary turmoil, especially the Kornilov Affair.²³

Long established radical movements in Russia, especially the “Bolsheviks” led by Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky, took advantage of the situation to gain control of central authority in key cities, such as Petrograd and Moscow, through their leadership of workers’ and peasants’ councils (Soviets) and their national union in an All-Russian Congress of Soviets in October–November 1917 (the October Revolution).²⁴ Large portions of rural Russia, especially in Ukraine, remained outside of central control and in opposition to Bolshevik rule. Hence the situation was ripe for civil war. A major factor in the success of the Bolsheviks was the weakness of Alexander Kerensky, now styled “minister-president,” and rapidly diminishing trust in his leadership. For her part, Cantacuzene endorses the German conspiracy theory, that the

²⁰ Ibid., 230.

²¹ Ibid., 234.

²² Ibid., 213–19.

²³ The Kornilov Affair in August–September 1917 is symptomatic of the confusion of the time. It resulted from a policy conflict between the head of the Provisional Government and the commander in chief of the Russian army over the measures necessary to curb the rising Bolshevik menace. Kornilov believed that re-establishing discipline and martial law in cities in turmoil, such as Petrograd, was essential. Kerensky saw this as a usurpation of power and attempt to establish a military dictatorship. The confusion was augmented by British involvement, with the Foreign Office supporting Kerensky, while the War Office urged on Kornilov. See my “British Involvement in the Kornilov Affair,” *Rocky Mountain Social Science Journal* 10, 1 (January 1973): 43–51.

²⁴ The literature on the Russian Revolution is enormous. A good brief summary is that by Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

revolution in Russia was plotted and funded by agents in Germany, even down to the level of villages in Ukraine.

After the Bolshevik Revolution, the Cantacuzenes proceeded with plans to leave Russia and rejoin their children in America. It would take some time. In October, on the eve of the Bolshevik seizure of power, Julia, accompanied by her faithful maid, Elena, had undertaken another trip to Petrograd to make preliminary arrangements, including settling some banking affairs, selling and storing furniture, and establishing useful contacts. Returning to Kiev, Julia encountered additional complications: Mikhail had difficulty obtaining the dismissal papers he should have been issued after being wounded in 1914; the couple undertook a harrowing journey back to the villa in Crimea to bid farewell to their family; luggage had to be sorted and jewels sewn into clothing, etc. Finally, in December, they set out for the last time for Petrograd, now under Soviet authority.

Throughout these journeys the Cantacuzenes were fortunate to have faithful servants, sympathetic fellow travelers, and, as Julia claimed, a good luck charm, a small owl carved from Siberian stone in the Faberge workshop in St. Petersburg. Probably more important was that the name Cantacuzene denoted to Russian officials the sacrifice of a “wounded warrior,” a liberal and tolerant stance, and a family in need. The final hurdle was passing through passport control at Torneo on the Swedish border in January 1918.²⁵ There Julia looked back to bid farewell to her second homeland: “Mysterious as always, Russia stretched out her great plains towards the light, and that was all we could see of her.”²⁶

Julia Cantacuzene tells her family’s story of survival and escape from Russia through her and her husband’s February 1918 arrival in the United States. Mikhail Cantacuzene, however, would return to Russia as a volunteer in the White (anti-Bolshevik) army of Admiral Alexander Kolchak during the Civil War.²⁷ For Cantacuzene this involved an arduous (and expensive) trip via the Pacific Ocean through Tokyo to Siberia, where he spent six futile, exhausting months with the Kolchak army. In the meantime, back in the United States, Julia, as organizer and chairwoman of the American Central Committee for Russian Relief, devoted herself to Russian efforts to assist those fleeing Bolshevik rule, and campaigned for American support for Kolchak. These activities shaped the strong anti-Bolshevik and anti-German tone of *Russian People*, which she was writing at this time.

Julia Grant Cantacuzene used her name in the United States and experience in Russia to solicit donations to the American Central Committee for Russian Relief, gaining endorsements from a number of prominent Americans, including John R. Mott, executive secretary of the YMCA; Cyrus McCormick, a Chicago industri-

²⁵ The story is told in *Revolutionary Days*, 291 and passim.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 367.

²⁷ “Cantacuzene Urges Help for Kolchak,” *New York Times*, December 24, 1919, 6.

alist with interests in Russia; and Charles Eliot, president of Harvard, who was the committee's honorary president. By highlighting the need to support Russians with American connections, she succeeded in collecting over one million dollars, including a \$50,000 donation from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.²⁸ The American Central Committee for Russian Relief experienced difficulties in coordinating with similar European relief efforts, other American relief organizations such as those focusing on Near Eastern and Armenian assistance, and especially the American Relief Administration (ARA), directed by Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover. In 1921, Julia's committee provided nearly \$200,000 in relief to Russian refugees, many of them the remnants of White armies, with a quarter of that sum going to Constantinople, and nearly as much to Poland. By that time Congress had committed \$20,000,000 to the ARA; the following year it would distribute over \$60,000,000 in aid donated by a variety of organizations, including the Red Cross, ultimately saving over 10,000,000 lives. The Cantacuzenes strongly opposed the ARA, believing that its work was strengthening the Bolshevik regime at the expense of the anti-Bolshevik refugees who represented the true Russia. In July 1922, Julia called an end to the American Central Committee for Russian Relief "on the grounds that Americans are no longer interested in contributions toward the relief of Russia."²⁹

Unlike most refugees from the Russian Revolution, the Cantacuzenes were well-off, enjoying the support of the Palmer family and the comforts of their summer estate near Sarasota, Florida, where Julia wrote about her experiences for this book. Though they lost all their property in Ukraine—it was pillaged and burned during the Russian Civil War—they managed to smuggle out jewels and art work that they preserved for many years in the United States. Julia displayed these frequently at social occasions. Unlike many emigre nobles, the Cantacuzenes would not need to resort to the proverbial driving of taxis in Paris.

Russian People was preceded by *Revolutionary Days*, which tells Julia's story more from "the top," from Petrograd and the center of Russian politics. *Russian People* is a sequel of sorts, but focuses on the countryside rather than the city. The follow-up chapters on the Civil War are impressions of the Denikin and Kolchak campaigns as recounted by others, especially her husband's experiences with Kolchak. The book went to press early in 1920, certainly before the middle of February, when Kolchak was executed by the Bolsheviks, since this is not mentioned in the book.

In regard to Julia's political views, she was a supporter of the moderate progressive faction led by representatives of the old nobility and a believer in strong central government, while quite critical of the nefarious elements at work in St. Petersburg,

²⁸ "Carnegie Fund Aids Russia," *New York Times*, June 28, 1920, 32.

²⁹ "Would End Russian Relief," *New York Times*, July 20, 1922, 31. For the full story of the ARA and its complications, see Bertrand M. Patenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand: The American Relief Expedition to Soviet Russia in the Famine of 1921* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).

especially the notoriously corrupt Rasputin clique around the empress.³⁰ She admired Sergei Witte (1849–1915), minister of finance (1892–1905), and his modernization policies but found him socially backward. Surprisingly, she had a personal fondness for Minister of Interior (1902–04) Viacheslav Plehve, despite his reputation as a ruthless ultraconservative.³¹

Princess Cantacuzene supported the February Revolution that brought an end to the reign of Nicholas II but hoped for the return of a more moderate and capable leadership, possibly under the Romanov dynasty. She had little use for Alexander Kerensky, “that demagogue,” but almost uncontrolled praise for Alexander Kolchak, who led the last valiant attempt to overthrow the Bolsheviks but received much criticism from other sources. For what went wrong in Russia, she blames first the “German gold” flowing to the Bolsheviks and then the Allies for not aiding Kolchak’s and other anti-Bolshevik efforts.

In America, the Cantacuzene family largely melded into the Palmer family, especially the children of Bertha Palmer, Julia’s cousins, who had been central to Julia’s life before her marriage. Life centered around the early Palmer investments in Florida, with occasional sojourns in Chicago. Prince Cantacuzene became manager of the 1,500-acre “Hyde Park” citrus grove and an officer in the Palmer Bank in Sarasota, which was active in real estate development in the region. In a 1920 article in the *Washington Post*, he voiced at length his opposition to the Bolshevik Revolution and predicted a new world war involving an alliance of Germany and Japan against Russia and the West, an accurate prognosis.³²

Ironically, Julia was much more active in support of the Russian relief effort and more strongly anti-Bolshevik than her husband. She had some independent financial support, having shared with her brother a \$375,000 inheritance from their mother.³³ While Mikhail’s business activities were centered in Florida, Julia’s interests drew her more to Washington and New York, where there were still Grant relatives and memorialists (mainly Civil War veterans). This divergence of interests may have contributed to their divorce in 1934 on grounds of desertion and “failure to show interest in matrimonial duties.” The divorce was processed quickly in Sarasota, and a month later Mikhail married Jeannette Draper, a clerk in the Sarasota bank. He became known for his leadership in local civic organizations such as the American Legion, Kiwanis,

³⁰ Grigory Rasputin (1872–1916) was a Siberian peasant and “holy man” who gained influence over Empress Alexandra in 1905 with his apparent ability to stop her hemophiliac son’s bleeding through hypnosis. His opposition to the war and generally nefarious character led to his assassination in late 1916.

³¹ Cantacuzene, *My Life Here and There*, 266–74.

³² “Prince Cantacuzene Prophesies a New World War,” *Washington Post*, February 22, 1920, 49.

³³ “Mrs. Grant Left \$375,000,” *Washington Post*, October 16, 1930, 20.

Elks, and Chamber of Commerce. The children would continue their father's orientation to the Palmer connections in Florida and Chicago—with mixed results.³⁴

Julia, now restyled as Princess Julia Cantacuzene Grant, resided mainly in Washington, with occasional visits to Chicago and Bar Harbor, and she became a leading Republican Party activist in the Women's National Republican Club. She campaigned for the election of Alf Landon in 1936—in strong opposition to President Franklin Roosevelt's support for diplomatic recognition of the USSR. In an effort to win the French Canadian vote in Maine, she addressed a large crowd in Lewiston—in French!³⁵ She continued to spend winters in Florida, where she impressed younger members of the Palmer family with her elegant teas, served in English and/or Russian styles.³⁶

In 1937 she joined President Roosevelt in a special tribute at the Lincoln Memorial on the occasion of Abraham Lincoln's 128th birthday, reading excerpts from the Grant-Lincoln correspondence. She was also a special guest at Roosevelt's 1937 reception for King George VI and Queen Elizabeth of England. As the granddaughter of President Ulysses S. Grant, she was naturally supportive of his legacy; she attended the rededication of Grant's Tomb in New York on his 117th birthday in 1939.³⁷

In her later years Julia was a leading member of the Sulgrave Club in Washington, a generous hostess for visiting Russian émigrés, and an active lecturer in support of old Russian and new Republican causes. Afflicted with blindness in her 80s, her movements in society were more limited, though she did recover some vision during her last years: "My sight is better than it was five years ago, but not as good as it was six months ago, it comes and goes," she reflected on her birthday in 1970.³⁸ In 1975 she died at age 99 in her apartment on Connecticut Avenue only a few blocks from the White House.

³⁴ Daughter Bertha (1904–91) married Donald Macintosh, a cashier at the Palmer Bank in Sarasota, a few months later, after divorcing her first husband, Bruce Smith ("Bertha Cantacuzene to be wed March 27," *New York Times*, October 19, 1934, 28). Son Mikhail (1900–72) followed Potter Palmer in establishing a real estate business and residence in Chicago with his wife, the former Clarissa Curtis of Boston, with whom he had two children. After their divorce in 1935, he had two more marriages. Daughter Ida (1908–84) more successfully married the son of Sir John Hanbury-Williams, British military attaché in Russia during the war and revolution; the ceremony in Washington was attended by President Calvin Coolidge ("President Sees Princess Married," *New York Times*, November 2, 1928).

³⁵ Dudley Harmon, "Mme. Cantacuzene-Grant Off to Speak for Landon," *Washington Post*, September 28, 1936, X10

³⁶ Telephone interview with Potter Palmer IV, a grand-nephew, May 30, 2015, who had fond memories of his "Aunt Julia."

³⁷ "New Grant's Tomb Opens on Birthday," *New York Times*, April 28, 1939, 27.

³⁸ Marie Smith, "Princess at 94," *Washington Post*, June 8, 1970, 32.

The title *Russian People* may seem to be a misnomer, since the book concerns the experiences of a multinational family in Ukraine, but Cantacuzene is using “Russian” not in the sense of *ruskii* (a person of Russian ethnicity) but rather in the sense of *rossiiskii* (subject of the Russian Empire), denoting loyalty to the tsar and including a wide variety of non-Russian nationalities. In fact, only about half of the population of the Russian Empire was ethnically Russian; the remainder included a variety of Turkic and Caucasian peoples, as well as non-Russian Slavs (Ukrainians, Poles, Belorussians), native Baltic Germans, and a number of immigrant settlers of German, Dutch, and Greek background. The Cantacuzene family itself was non-Russian, and the family language at home was French, owing both to the prevalence of that language in aristocratic circles and the French ethnicity of the prince’s mother. Though the author does not discuss the rise of national movements in detail, it was an important factor shaping events, especially in Ukraine. The destruction of the Cantacuzene estate, described in chapter 2, may have been motivated as much by national (Ukrainian vs. non-Slav) as by class (have-nots vs. haves) animosities. Princess Cantacuzene did not witness the end of Bouromka firsthand but learned about it from other sources; she sees its destruction, and unrest in the countryside in general, as the work of outsiders, specifically a “German conspiracy” to exploit Russia’s rich agricultural and human resources by bankrolling the Bolshevik Revolution.³⁹

Cantacuzene has interesting observations about the Ukrainian independence movement, which she and the family observed (chapter 5), and skillfully conveys her husband’s experience of the complicated situation in Siberia during the Russian Civil War (chapter 7). Especially informative is her description of the changing role of Russian women in the course of war and revolution, in particular their role in combat (chapter 9). Despite her revulsion at the destruction of old Russia’s upper classes, and some obvious elements of exaggeration and hyperbole, her account of the Russian people in war and revolution rings true in all its tragic complexity.

³⁹ This belief, common at the time, has been largely discredited by modern scholarship. Evidence from both Russian and German archives supports assertions that in 1917 some monetary assistance was provided not only to the Bolsheviks but to other radical revolutionary parties as well. This suggests a much more extensive conspiracy, for which there is much less proof.

Suggested Additional Reading

- Bisher, Jamie. *White Terror: Cossack Warlords of the Trans-Siberian*. London: Routledge, 2005.
- Cantacuzene, Countess Speransky, Julia Grant. *Revolutionary Days: Recollections of Romanoffs and Bolsheviks, 1914–1917*. Boston: Small, Maynard & Company, 1919.
- . *Revolutionary Days: My Life Here and There, 1876–1917*. Edited by Terence Emmons. Chicago: R. R. Donnelly & Sons, 1999.
- Cockfield, Jamie. *White Crow: The Life and Times of the Grand Duke Nicholas Mikhailovich Romanov. 1859–1919*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002.
- Figes, Orlando. *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution, 1891–1924*. London: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *The Russian Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- Francis, David R. *Russia from the American Embassy, April, 1916–November, 1918*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921.
- Hoyt, Edwin P. *The Army Without a Country*. New York: Macmillan, 1967.
- Ignatieff, Michael. *The Russian Album*. New York: Viking, 1987.
- Jackson, George, ed. *Dictionary of the Russian Revolution*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1989.
- Katkov, George. *Russia 1917, the Kornilov Affair: Kerensky and the Break-up of the Russian Army*. London: Longman, 1980.
- Lieven, Dominic. *The End of Tsarist Russia: The March to World War I and Revolution*. New York: Viking, 2015.
- . *Russia's Rulers Under the Old Regime*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.
- Lincoln, W. Bruce. *Passage Through Armageddon: The Russians in War and Revolution, 1914–1918*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Luckett, Richard. *The White Generals: An Account of the White Movement and the Russian Civil War*. New York: Viking Press, 1971.
- McMeekin, Sean. *History's Greatest Heist: The Looting of Russia by the Bolsheviks*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.
- Palij, Michael. *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance, 1919–1921: An Aspect of the Ukrainian Revolution*. Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1995.
- Pipes, Richard, ed. *Revolutionary Russia*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968.

- Plokhyy, Serhii. *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine*. New York: Basic Books, 2015.
- Poole, Ernest. *The Village: Russian Impressions*. New York: Macmillan, 1919.
- Rabinowitch, Alexander. *The Bolsheviks Come to Power: The Revolution of 1917 in Petrograd*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1976.
- Ross, Ishbel. *Silhouette in Diamonds: The Life of Mrs. Potter Palmer*. New York: Harper, 1960.
- Sanborn, Joshua A. *Imperial Apocalypse: The Great War and the Destruction of the Russian Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Saul, Norman E. *War and Revolution: The United States and Russia, 1914–1921*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001.
- Smele, Jonathan D. *Civil War in Siberia: The Anti-Bolshevik Government of Admiral Kolchak, 1918–1920*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Smith, Douglas. *Former People: The Final Days of the Russian Aristocracy*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2012.
- Thompson, John M. *Russia, Bolshevism, and the Versailles Peace*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967.
- Unterberger, Betty Miller. *America's Siberian Expedition, 1918–1920: A Study of National Policy*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1956.
- . *The United States, Revolutionary Russia, and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989.
- Wade, Rex. *The Russian Revolution, 1917*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Ward, Colonel John. *With the "Die-Hards" in Siberia*. New York: George H. Doran, 1920.
- Weeks, Charles J., Jr. *An American Naval Diplomat in Revolutionary Russia: The Life and Times of Vice Admiral Newton A. McCully*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1993.
- White, Dmitri. Fedotoff. *Survival Through War and Revolution in Russia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1939.
- Wildman, Allan K. *The End of the Russian Imperial Army*. 2 vols. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980–87.
- Zeman, Z. A. B. *Germany and the Revolution in Russia, 1915–1918: Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Minister*. London: Oxford University Press, 1958.