Joan Kjaer: Hello and welcome to WorldCanvass from International Programs at the University of Iowa. I'm Joan Kjaer and we're coming to you from Merge in Downtown Iowa City.

Our topic tonight is, The Russian Revolution, 100 Years On, and those of you who were with us in the first segment have just heard historian Michael Žmolek describe what led to the revolution and lay out some of what followed in the years since. In this segment we're going to take a look at Russia's cultural elite and see how the revolution and the dramatic changes that followed effected artists, writers and musicians.

I would like to introduce our guests, just next to me is Anna Barker, who's in the University of Iowa Department of Asian & Slavic Languages and Literatures, thank you for being here Anna.

Anna Barker: Thank you.

Joan Kjaer: Next to her is Nathan Platte, from the University of Iowa School of Music, welcome Nathan.

Nathan Platte: Thank you.

Joan Kjaer: So, I'd like to start with you Annie. We're going to talk about literature with you and some of the great writers, and what some of these writers went through, their personal evolution and so on. Can you help us understand what was in the air, the general feeling in the air for the intellectual elite in the early part of the century?

Anna Barker: Yes absolutely, and I would like to go back to something that Michael was talking about which was the terrific wave of terror that swept over Russia for about 50 years, between the 1860s and 1917. It's fascinating to put the Russian Revolution into context of other revolutionary movements. Yesterday was the 500 anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, where we went from Luther to revolutionary Protestant wars and the 30 Years War, which ended up costing one third of the population of German speaking lands. The same with the French Revolution: it begins with the Enlightenment and the call for liberty, equality and fraternity and by about 1815, six million Europeans were dead. Also, Mike talked about the need for perpetual revolution and just sort of igniting the spark everywhere in Europe. He was of course looking at it from the standpoint of the French Revolution, that had to deal with seven coalitions of European powers trying to suppress the revolutionary movement from spreading in Europe.

The writers of that time period knew what was happening in Europe. In 1789 the first French Revolution, but then also the revolutions of the 1830, '31, 1848, '49 and 1860s and 70s Europe was still shaken by revolutions. These revolutionary ideas were very much paramount to the development of Russian

intellectual thought. It's fascinating, I always tell my students, about the '40s liberals and '60s radicals and I always remind them I'm not talking about 20th century U.S.-- I'm talking about 19th century Russia.

The first novel that really deals with it, in a very serious way, is Turgenev's Fathers and Sons, because the Kirsanov brothers, they're sort of the '40s liberals, who are definitely for progressive ideas but then he introduces a character, Bazarov, who was called by critics "the First Bolshevik who wants so much more." Then Dostoyevsky wrote basically all of his mature novels with the knowledge and understanding that revolution is spreading in Russia and it terrified him. The possibilities of what revolutionary violence would do terrified Dostoyevsky, and that is the basis of all of his late novels, Crime and Punishment, The Idiot, Demons, and Brothers Karamazov. Actually one of the characters in The Demons is Pyotr Verkhovensky and he is based on Nechayev, who was the young man who wrote the Catechism of a Revolutionary and he called for all out terror in Russia.

So the 50 years saw the assassination of a Russian Czar, Alexander II, many attempts, including the one by Aleksandr Ulyanov, Lenin's brother, on Alexander III. About 10,000 people were killed in Russian revolutionary terror, so these writers definitely lived in a period of terrorism that was unleashed in Russia on an unprecedented scale. The people who were targeted were, of course, intellectuals, journalists, writers, editors, professors, clergy members, government ministers and all the way to the Czar's. So Alexander II… assassinated, Alexander III… several attempts on his life.

The writers of the period felt that they are living in the times of great doom. These were the writers of the silver age of Russian poetry who were very, very prominent and some of them are less known in the United States or in the West such as Aleksandr Blok, Anna Akhmatova, Marina Tsvetayeva, Gumilyov, Mandelstam, all of these writers were extremely experimental in the early 20th century and Nathan is going to talk about how experimental Russian music was, with the Rite of Spring being sort of the epitome of experimental music in 1913, but that experimentation was happening in literature, too. So someone like Akhmatova wrote very doom and gloom poems about living, basically in the end of times.

So 1917 was a resolution of many years of the Russians wondering what is happening to their country and how is this going to be resolved. They really didn't see any happy solutions to the conflict that was tearing Russia in the '60s, '70s, '80s and '90s of the 19th century. If I could just skip ahead to go past 1917, some of these writers felt that the revolution resolved that conflict, that something had to happen, that something was the Communist revolution and they were delighted. These would be poets like Sergey Yesenin, Mayakovsky, Isaak Babel, these were all writers who welcomed the revolution. Even someone like Aleksandr Blok, who was talking about the doom that is hanging over Russia in his poems like [Skifi 00:06:19], The Skifs, he wrote a poem welcoming the twelve apostles of the revolution led by Christ himself. So for them the notion of

the apocalypse, some of them had very Christian interpretation of it but some of them just felt that Russia is making a clean cut from the past, it's going to be a Socialist revolutionary country and it requires Socialist revolutionary poetry.

The sort of the tribune of that revolution was Mayakovsky, who wrote an epic poem about Lenin, it was performed, he got a 20 minute ovation. Then the disillusionment starts setting in very, very early on with all of these writers. Even during Lenin's time... one more that I need to mention is Maxim Gorky who was the founder of Socialist Realism and who was very, very close to all of the revolutionaries, he was a people's poet, he came from the people, but the disillusionment starts early on where he's petitioning Lenin to allow someone like Aleksandr Blok, who's very ill in 1920 to leave the country and the release comes too late. He's not allowed to leave the country and by the time Lenin finally allows him to leave, he's dead.

Gumilyov who was Anna Akhmatova, and she's a huge name of course in the 20th century Russian world, Russian literary world, her husband is arrested for anti-Soviet activity, Nikolay Gumilyov, and he's sentenced to death. Of course Gorky is petitioning for his release but it comes too late, Gumilyov is executed and this is during the time of... not yet to the Stalin's purges. So during the time of Lenin being in charge writers are already being rounded up and executed. That makes Gorky so bitter about the revolution, and remember this is the man who is the founder of Socialist Realism, that he leaves Russia, he leaves the Soviet Union and ends up living in Italy for years, and has to leave Italy and come back to the Soviet Union with the rise of fascism.

So the life of a Russian writer in the 1920s and 30s was about as complicated as it gets. Some of them left for good like Bunin, and he ends up living in Paris, he becomes the first Russian Nobel Prize recipient for literature, but he never comes back to Russia, just like ...

Nathan Platte: Rachmaninoff.

Anna Barker: Rachmaninoff. Right. And some of them stay, some of them survive like Pasternak and Akhmatova. Some of them are executed or die on the way to labor camps like Mandelstam and Babel. I'm afraid my tale is a very sad one, they knew that something was broken in Russia. They knew that there is a terrific doom hanging over them, when the revolution happened some of them greeted it very happily and died for it. Some of them started questioning the revolutionary zeal and had a very hard time surviving. Someone like Bulgakov, and someone like Pasternak, actually got personal phone calls from Stalin and they got the idea that Stalin wants to send them out of the country and they both wanted to stay, because they couldn't imagine a life outside of Russia, outside of the Soviet Union because they were so deeply and intimately connected to the Russian language and to the development of Russian culture. So it's complicated.

Joan Kjaer: Yeah.

Well, before we turn to Nathan here I wonder if I could get an explanation of the term you've used, Socialist Realism, tell us what that is.

Anna Barker: Oh my goodness, I'm totally the wrong person to be asked that question. I suppose Socialist Realism was supposed to depict the condition of the working class in a very, very honest and realistic way. And it was a backlash against actually the silver age period, where there was so much experimental poetry and they used fancy words like acmeism, symbolism, imagism. All of these poets wrote poetry sometime because the words sounded beautiful, so it was a very much though an, arts for arts sake, kind of movement. The Socialist Realism movement was designed to discredit that kind of experimentation, with language for the sake of the beauty of language, as completely bourgeois and aesthetically rotten. So depicting the advances of workers and peasants and the happiness that comes from this fulfilling relationship with the world that is making progress towards a better future, became paramount, especially in the late '20s and all through the 1930s.

Some of these writers like Akhmatova who actually survived World War II would write poetry that they would memorize, and just give certain sections to memorize to their closest friends, so that they would not succumb to just this totally dehumanizing culture where Socialist Realist books were the only ones who were being published.

Perhaps later on I can tell a little bit about the writers who did survive the purges of World War II and what happened to them in the '60s, '70s and '80s.

Joan Kjaer: Absolutely, yes we will come back to you for that. And Nathan, a good time to move over into the arena of music and a couple of names have been mentioned so far, but tell us about some of the Russian musicians we may know of, and perhaps some we don't know.

Nathan Platte: Yes, I've been sort of thinking about this particularly in light of Anna's remarks just because some of the musicians I would like to talk a little bit about were not nearly as ideologically savvy or driven, at least when it came it to their work as artists, and yet they had to reckon with this in very sort of serious ways. So the musicians that I wanted talk about, Dimitri Tiomkin, Sergei Prokofiev and Dmitri Shostakovich. I'll give a little bit of a thumbnail sketch of each and their sort of life as effected by the Revolution and then perhaps if there's some time to talk about their music as it connects with these issues, I will.

Dimitri Tiomkin if he's known at all in this room, is as a Hollywood film composer who wrote film scores from the '30s through '60s, but in 1917 he was a student at the Petrograd Conservatory studying to become a concert pianist. So he was in early 20s and he was not yet recognized as anyone particularly special. In fact, there's some question as to whether or not he was even officially enrolled at the Conservatory or whether he was just auditing classes and sort of getting lessons from the distinguished faculty when he could.

So that meant that his experience amidst the events that Michael was describing, were both astonishing and perhaps not terribly exceptional, among sort of rank and file citizens of the city. He had trouble finding food, he had trouble finding clothes that he could wear in public. When there was a cholera epidemic, in early 1918, he was enlisted to go to the apartments of people who had died and clean them. When he went to visit someone who had been in prison, shortly after Lenin had been shot, they didn't allow him to leave. They said "We're sorry we don't have the right paperwork here that shows that you are a visitor, so we're not going to let you go". He actually had to sneak out a letter to Alexander Glazunov, who's a great Russian composer, who was at that time the Director of the Conservatory, saying "Please help me, I'm stuck here", and he was able to pull some strings and allow that to happen.

So Tiomkin essentially said "Enough is enough, and if I can get out I'm going to", and his father was at that time working in medicine in Germany and so he used that as means to get out of the country. He worked as a concert pianist in Western Europe for a few years and made his way to America and ended up in Hollywood in the late '20s, where this new career in film compositions sort of gradually opened up and he worked in Hollywood for decades. What's interesting is the last project he did was actually a film about the life of Tchaikovsky. He produced the film and it is a Soviet film, he went back to the Soviet Union to make it, and arranged the music of Tchaikovsky for it. He's best known for writing music for Westerns like High Noon, Red River, Gunfight at the O.K Corral, and I suppose in a very strange way we might say we would not have that, if it weren't for the Russian revolution, and the impact that had on his life.

The other individual I wanted to talk about, Sergei Prokofiev, was also a student at the Petrograd Conservatory at this time. He was a few years older than Tiomkin, and he was much more ... he was already recognized as a composer of some distinction and just a phenomenal concert pianist. He had all sorts of special treatment and connections because of his potential and already sort of burgeoning international fame.

He was in Petrograd for the February revolutions, which he writes about in his diaries in a way that is, with the benefit of hindsight, conspicuously disinterested and almost flippant, it's very striking to read those. He was out of town for the October revolution and when he realized how badly things were going he decided he would not return. So he went to another part of Russia, to continue working on his compositions and wrote some sort of, again somewhat flippant letters, to colleagues about how he's glad he doesn't have to deal with this, he can just focus on his music. And when it seemed like this was not something that was going to blow over quickly, he leaned on several individuals in high places, including Gorky, but also again Alexander Glazunov, the director of the Petrograd Conservatory, to arrange for his leaving the country. So he went to the United States via Japan and spent much of the '20s going back and forth between the United States and Western Europe.

What's particularly interesting about Prokofiev's story is that in the late '20s he starts making return visits to the Soviet Union, and is aggressively courted by the Government to come back and make the Soviet Union his home. Prokofiev again was not somebody who was very politically clairvoyant, and saw this as a great opportunity that if a State was going to make sure all his needs were met, so that he could only write music and occasionally perform it, that sounded good to him. So in 1936, which is an astonishing year given what was happening in the Soviet Union in 1936, he bought his family back to the Soviet Union and shortly after that they took his passport away and he was a permanent resident, until his death, which is the same day as Stalin's.

His career, if we're just looking at his recognition of his compositions, it was very bumpy in the Soviet Union. Some of his works received the highest awards that the regime could give him. He was also publicly denounced among other high distinguished composers in a decree that was given in 1948. In terms of the quality of life, it was pretty terrible. His wife, who was foreign born, was arrested as a suspected spy after the Second World War, and sent away to Gulag. Again I mentioned because he died the same day as Stalin, he did not have the pleasure or privilege of really saying what he thought about any of it in a post-Stalin world, and there were no flowers, as they said, for his casket, because they had been bought and purchased for Stalin.

So those are two very different stories, do I have a moment for Shostakovich's as well?

Joan Kjaer: Yes, yes.

Nathan Platte: Okay. Shostakovich is younger, he is only about 11 when the 1917 revolutions are happening, but he is a resident of Petrograd and he is also very precocious. So he enters the Conservatory, this same Conservatory, at the age of 13, to study piano and composition. So just a couple of years after the Revolution, and his story is simpler in the fact that he never leaves the Soviet Union, but what happens with him that is so fascinating, for both biographical and musical reasons, is he becomes the poster child of the Soviet Union in terms of art composition because he is their sort of first ... a musician who has been sort of trained under the aegis of the Soviet Union.

His first symphony is premiered in the mid 1920s, he's 19 years old and becomes an international sensation. His second symphony is actually an ode to the 10th anniversary of the 1917 revolution and so he is tied very, very directly to the fate and the future of this new social order and it is not a privilege that he wanted.

He, like Prokofiev, is also at times publicly denounced for his work, the most famous example of this happens in the mid '30s. He writes an opera called Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District, which is an operatic adaptation of a Nikolai Leskov novella from the 19th century. It is phenomenally popular, both in the Soviet Union and in Western Europe, for two years and then Stalin decides that

he would like to see what this opera looks like, given Shostakovich's pre-eminence as a Soviet composer and the international interest in this work. And he is appalled by what he hears and he sees, and I could talk about some of why that is, but needless to say a very, very famous article is published in Pravda days later called Muddle Instead of Music, and it is an outright denunciation of the opera and of Shostakovich himself. And essentially says if he does not start writing music that more appropriately adheres to the ideals of Socialist Realism, who knows what might happen.

This is a composer who is at the top of his game, and is sort of recognized around the world for his achievements as an artist, being told to essential stand down by the government. A similar incident happened in 1948 as well.

So like Prokofiev he is both trumpeted, and applauded by the Soviet Government, he is also sort of brought low at strategic times to show that even our greatest artists are not ... need to sort of kowtow to the powers that be. In contrast to Prokofiev, he does outlive Stalin by a couple of decades, he dies in the mid-70s, and that gives him some time to write other pieces, that perhaps explore emotional and sonic states that he might not of been able to do under the regime. Also, to talk a little bit about what he was thinking and feeling during that time and of course, you know, the effects of memory, the effects of somebody being cognizant of their legacy and perhaps having to in some ways redeem it, plays into that.

But I think one of the things that makes Shostakovich so astonishing, really by any standard, is that he reckoned ... he did not leave the Soviet Union, he reckoned with it, he did not have to sell out his artistic or individual ideals in order to make that happen, and he walked a very fine line for decades in order to make that happen, and I think that's part of the reason why his life is really, really fascinating, and then knowing that and then hearing his music, pieces that had to be written to connect with groups of opposing ideological viewpoints, that's not easy to do. I suppose it's maybe easier to do in music than in say something like literature but it's still very, very difficult and he managed that for a long time.

Joan Kjaer: Yes, well thank you.

I want to come back to Annie, and ask you to speak just a little bit about Solzhenitsyn.

Anna Barker: Right, so I talked about some of the writers who either died of starvation, were executed or committed suicide under very suspicious circumstances, and these would be Babel, Mandelstam, Blok, Tsvetaeva, Mayakovsky, Yesenin, these are the glory of Russian literature of that time period. Anna Akhmatova survived and she had husbands who were executed, husbands who were sent to the gulag, her son was sent to the gulag so that she would write nice poetry about Stalin, while she is writing in her Memory Requiem, which is her poem about

the horrors of 20th century Russia. Stalin called her half harlot, half nun, and he kind of kept her alive, it was his perverse pleasure to keep her alive.

The same was Pasternak, they considered him to be a holy fool and they kept him alive. Of course, Pasternak gets the Nobel Prize in Literature for Doctor Zhivago, which was an event in Western literary life. Then after that, so this is the '50s, '60s, Sholokhov gets the Nobel Prize in literature, and he is a very establishment writer, and this was during the Khrushchev period, where the United States wanted to have a better relationship with the Soviet Union. And then of course the next Nobel is a shocker, it's Solzhenitsyn.

It is such a shock to the Soviet system that he is kicked out of the Soviet Union. He goes to the West and the West has a hard time dealing with him because he is not willing to be used as a propaganda piece against the Soviet Union. He comes to live here in the United States, he lives in total self-isolation in Vermont for 17 years. When the Soviet Union collapses he goes back to Russia in the '90s. Very critical of what is happening in Russia in the 1990s, which was truly a catastrophic period in Russian history, from about 1991 to 2000. And then he comes to terms with the sum total of the Russian century. This is a man who fought in World War II, was arrested at the end of World War II for questioning Soviet authorities, goes to the gulag for eight years, writes about it, Khrushchev allows the publication of One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich, which is astonishing. When the Khrushchev thaw is over he cannot publish in the Soviet Union anymore so his Gulag Archipelago is published much later. His works are not going to be known to Russian readers until the late 1980s and then he dies in 2008. His funeral, he is given the full Russian Orthodox funeral and is buried in a Russian monastery.

So if we talk about Solzhenitsyn we talk about the sum total of 20th century Russian experience. From the revolutionary zeal to the horrors of World War II, to Stalinist repressions, to the period in the gulag, Nobel Prize in Literature for being a dissident, exile in the West, unwillingness to co-operate with the West against what he feels is his homeland, the Russia that he loves so much and the Russian language. And then coming back was the collapse of the Soviet Union and just sort of folding into the life of new Russia, and being buried as an Orthodox Christian in a Russian monastery in 2008. I just feel that Solzhenitsyn's life just incorporates every aspect of what it meant to be Russian in the 20th century.

Joan Kjaer: Wow. So, thank you so much. I wish we had more time to talk about these things. Really, so interesting. Nathan Platte and Anna Barker, thank you.

Yes.

And in just a moment we're going to start the third and final portion of the program where we're going to look at Russia today. Russia as an actor on the world stage since about World War II.

WorldCanvass programming is available on iTunes, the Public Radio Exchange, and the International Programs website, which is international.uiowa.edu.

I'm Joan Kjaer and thank you very much for being here tonight.

Joan Kjaer: Hello. I'm Joan Kjaer and welcome to WorldCanvass from International Programs at the University of Iowa. This is part three of our program on the Russian Revolution 100 years On. Our guests in this segment will bring us up to the present as we examine Russia on the world stage. Next to me is Bill Reisinger, from the University of Iowa Department of Political Science. Thank you for being here, Bill.

Bill Reisinger: Very happy to.

Joan Kjaer: Next to him is Michaela Hoenicke Moore, from the University of Iowa Department of History. Thank you for joining us, Michaela.

Michaela H.M.: Gladly.

Joan Kjaer: Bill, I want to start with you. You're a political scientist, deep knowledge of Russia and the former Soviet Union. How do you assess the impact of the Russian Revolution, a century ago, on where we are today?

Bill Reisinger: Yeah. You know, there's sort of an irony, it seems to me, in that there are tremendous impacts on the history of the 20th century and into the 21st, that started in October of 1917. And, of course, as we heard in the first portion of the show, that began even much earlier than that. But 1917's impact ... One of the things I would mention would be the fact that party authoritarian regimes became a phenomenon in world affairs and a way for power to be managed in many countries around the world. You think about the communist regimes that came to power, modeled in many ways on the Soviet communist party and the way that they ran the Soviet Union. So, Cuba, China, North Korea, et cetera, et cetera. But not just communist ones. This kind of party-based form of authoritarianism is something that's available to be used by regimes that don't have communist goals. So it really did expand, I guess, the pallets of authoritarianism in our time. And that's something that I do think comes from the Soviet period.

There's also the impact that the living under communist rule had for the people in the societies where that happened for many decades. And we are seeing now that there's still carryover. There's still legacy from life under communism in these societies, that are even now post-communist, that still can be tracked and traced. Peoples' attitudes, the way that the societies function, the weak institutions, a greater prevalence for corruption, for example, and just a much weaker attachment to market-based capitalism and to democracy and the symbols of democracy and things like that. So you see these kind of carryovers even 100 years on.

Joan Kjaer: Why is it that so many of these communist societies, that you mentioned earlier, why is it that a controlled economy, as they were trying to do it, really didn't produce the results they would have hoped for?

Bill Reisinger: Isn't it sort of ironic? 100 years on, a whole bunch of the goals that the people making the revolution in 1917 had have been discredited or proven to be unworkable. And so, central planning as a way of running a national economy really doesn't have any proponents left, except, possibly North Korea and a few others, but in that particular form. The idea that there will be a move into communism at some point in the future ... communism being a utopian future where from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs. Right? This idea that you won't have to have power and politics and repression and other things. You can have a nice, orderly human society, but yet one in which there's abundance and all. Right? So, that image, has more or less been discredited. It's not a moving force in the world in the way it was 100 years ago.

In terms of why that is, I think a lot of it is the fact that the ideals of most of the people who made the revolution were betrayed by the way that power played out in the Soviet Union, certainly under Stalin. I think, in the first segment, we heard Michael talk about the ways in which it became a dictatorship of the party, rather than really being the kind of government that was hoped for. The local, more decentralized form of rule. And so, a lot of worse catastrophes of the 20th century ... The state-organized mass murders, on the scale of millions and millions and millions ... It wasn't communist regimes that began those in the century and they weren't the only ones who did it. But, on the kind of leaderboard of places where you had these terrible, terrible situations, the communist countries are right up at the top.

Joan Kjaer: Yeah. What is the sentiment now, in Russia, about their pathway out of the central control period and into, sort of, more capitalist market system within Russia? How do citizens feel about this now?

Bill Reisinger: I think they have ... There are many ways in which Russians, and this is similar to people in other post-communist countries, in which they have attitudes that are carryovers from the Soviet time. It's a co-mingling of, that carryover with the process of transition, as you suggested. As we heard in the second segment, the first decade, roughly, of that transition was brutally hard on the people in Russia. Massive hyperinflation, unemployment, disintegration of many kinds of social norms and institutions. Just a very difficult time, so they carry that with them.

On the other hand, what has sort of brought them today as the economy rebounded, was a sense of their country as being a continuation of the long-term Russian state project and a great deal of patriotism and pride. Of course, we see, that in the reaction that people have had to the annexation of Crimea and other actions by the Russian government in foreign policy, that support for the leadership goes up. There's a rally-around-the-flag effect that has made President Putin very popular. And that provides for the Russians a kind of cohesion on the whole. There's some 80% support for Putin's leadership. Even though the Russian population does not agree on everything, they are not happy with their system and their leaders, and they are happy to go out on the street and protest when things go bad. But the support for the very top

leadership has maintained itself despite that. And I think part of that is wanting to see themselves as part of the great Russian tradition that, in some ways, had to make it through the Soviet period.

Joan Kjaer: Yeah. Yeah, well, Michaela, let's go to you next and talk a little bit about U.S.-Soviet relations and the perceptions in the United States of Russia or the Soviet Union.

Michaela H.M.: Yes. That story also begins, of course, in 1917. Several months before the Bolshevist Revolution. The United States joins the Great War, joins the war in Europe. Thus, in some ways, I was just thinking about that. We have that scenario that the French aristocrat Alexis de Tocqueville had predicted in the 1830s, that in the future, there'll be two great powers. Russia from now on, in the form of the Soviet Union, and the United States. I think that the U.S. intervention in the Great War really does position it after the Spanish-American War, after the high point of imperialism to emerge as one of the great powers, and later, the super power in the 20th century. As Mike mentioned, also towards the end of the war the U.S. joins with other western powers in the military intervention in the civil war in Russia.

At the very end of the war, something else happens in the U.S. which foreshadows, I think, the then more important story of the U.S. and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Which is, we have our first Red Scare in this country. And just to clarify that and to remind everyone, there are connections between the Red Scare of the World War I and World War II, but there are also important distinctions. I would say the most important difference or distinction at the end of World War I, is that political leaders in this country, in the U.S. So, I'll just name the President, Woodrow Wilson, but also our famous Iowan, Herbert Hoover, who is very important throughout the 1920s as secretary of commerce, almost throughout the 1920s. And then, of course, eventually president. They are both radically and principled anti-communist and anti-Bolshevist. Neither one of them, nor anyone else, detects any national security threat, any danger that emanates from Russia/Soviet Union at that point.

So the response in 1917, '19, and thereafter, is not one of fear as we associate with the second Red Scare and with the Cold War, but is one of contempt. And, I think one should add, of hope. Hoover, for example, takes a very principled anti-interventionist stand. Both in that context, and later again in the late 1940s. He's really in favor of clearly not recognizing the Bolshevist regime, but pulling the U.S. troops out. And instead, sort of ignoring the Bolshevik regime, and sending aide and food. Which, of course, he does, after World War I, to other parts of Europe in order to win them over. Sort of, winning the hearts and minds. And let the Bolshevist regime, which cannot survive he thinks because that economy is not ... those economic ideas are not functionable. The regime is too repressive, let it just collapse under its own weight.

One parallel that I would point to between the two Red Scares is ... And I only saw that actually and sort of freshening up my memory a little bit in preparation

for this evening, I found this amazing quote form 1919 from President Wilson. I think Americans in general, were in the context of that anti-communist fear, completely focused. As they would be decades later again on internal subversive enemies. And the problem with the first Red Scare, the same as later, is that people were unjustly targeted as communist subversives. People who were not Bolshevist. Although, those people were also there, but it was really against unions, it was against recent immigrants, it was against German Americans. You know, anyone else was associated, this linkage was made.

So that's the similarity, but what I found striking in this one quote that I saw by President Wilson, is that he publicly predicted that the agents of Bolshevism in this country would be the returning Negroes coming home from the war. And that, of course, is one of these scandalous features that we are all aware of, and the second Red Scare, in the 1940s. But many groups get targeted among others. People of different sexual orientation in the State Department, which leads to a terrible brain drain there. A kind of, almost, internal purge in the State Department. But also, the association of communism and Bolshevism after World War II with civil rights activism. When I saw that quote, I actually thought, one has to maybe interpret this on a deeper level that, Wilson, the Southern racist that he was. As well as later in the second Red Scare, people understood that this was a vulnerable point in the American democracy. You know, the lack of civil rights. And that they thought this vulnerable point, we're going to call them Bolshevist or communist first. Yeah.

Joan Kjaer: Yeah, well you know, people of my age and younger are aware of this ... certainly, we think of Vietnam and the notion that communism in China would be spread all throughout Asia and elsewhere. This was a palpable reality for many of us who lived through the 60s, 70s, and thereafter. And, I mean, now nobody says the word communism. It's, kind of, not in anybody's current vocabulary. Other than, you know, you talk about North Korea, but that sort of seems to stand altogether on its own. It's a very interesting shift to me, to live through a period where that is really the main ... It seemed to me anyway, one of the very most prominent national security fears or, you know, our values and the form of our society being threatened by this thing out there that was going to overtake us if we weren't careful. And we don't speak in those terms anymore. Tell us how we moved through that.

Bill Reisinger: Well, the Soviet Union and its allied countries stopped being able to produce new economic growth, new kinds of economic innovation. They had a period in the 50s…they were the first country to put a satellite in orbit, and then a human being in Earth's orbit, and there was a lot of reason to fear that in a competition, they were going to be very stiff opponents by the 1970s and 80s. It was clear that economically, they didn't have the wherewithal to keep up with the West, and it turns out that the system didn't have the wherewithal to deal with conflicts among ethnic groups and other kinds of cultural pluralism. That proved to be one of the most important factors in the end of the Soviet Union. And then, the fact is, that when you educate a population and provide upward mobility and things, people want to have a greater political voice. And that also

creates pressure from below, that the communist system in the Soviet Union was very poor at managing.

And so I think, you look at history now ... in many ways, what had been a feared Soviet model is no longer talked about, no longer treated seriously, et cetera. But there is a sense in which many in the West went too far and declared the end of history and that all Western ideas had won the ideological battle and there was going to be no more contending in these things. And that doesn't look so good 25 years on as it did in the late 80s and early 90s. So, you don't want to go too far and say, "The West totally won," or something. But, it was clear that the bulk of the problem was coming from the systems themselves not working very well.

Michaela H.M.: I think I would, maybe, add to that, that even though we may not be using that term quite so much, and it's no longer that recognizable enemy. The consequences of the Cold War, I think, shaped this country deeply in different ways. Both, in terms of its geopolitical position. It's really during the Cold War that our foreign policy becomes a kind of militarized globalism and we are undoubtedly an empire, in that regard and in that context.

I would also say that the Cold War is obviously a global phenomenon, and in addition to who wins the Cold War in the end, I think there are people who benefit from that global Cold War, and there are people who suffer proportionately much more. And I would say that Europe, for example, especially Western Europe, including my home country where I was born, West Germany, should be counted among the beneficiaries. Also, of American Cold War foreign policy. It sort of builds up an umbrella under which the Europeans, the Western Europeans in general, can move forward with their project of European unification and so on. Whereas, the Cold War turns hot in other places around the world and on other continents. In Asia, in particular, but also in Africa, with wars of proxy in these other places. And it's those societies, I think, that are carrying the burden.

I would add on the part of the United States, that the U.S. also pays in this war as the Soviet Union does in terms of blood and treasure. But also, I think both sides actually, different as they are, democracy and dictatorship, pay in terms of their domestic culture. Political culture. So, if I just could briefly come back to that, to the beginning, the origins of the Cold War. Which, I think, are more properly located in that period and that transformative, and anxious, and insecure period between the end of World War II and maybe 1950, when the Cold War turns hot with Korea.

I think if we look at the discourse of this country, but also at the political elites, at foreign policy makers, there are very different kinds of anti-communisms in this country that you can differentiate. There is Hoover, I already mentioned him. A kind of very principled anti-Bolshevist, anti-communist, but non-interventionist that survives in the Republican Party into the post Word World II period, with the sort of Robert Taft wing. We are confronting them, but not

militarily. What really comes to the foreign to power with Truman, and then is carried on with Eisenhower, is a more militant and interventionist anti-communism. And then, a third category I think that is important, is people who were interested in anti-communism almost as solely a domestic ideology, with which to push back against certain groups within this country.

Bill Reisinger: Yeah, I guess I would say that I really think that's right. And I guess, as I look forward in time a hundred years from now, if the United States has any chance to manage the power transition from China, India, maybe other countries over the next century, it seems to me it's going to be because there is an international order that's based on legal principles and international organization and clear rules of the road. And every time the United States backs a dictator against its democratic principles, every time the United States militarizes conflicts, it's undercutting the principles that could be helpful in that process. So there are real costs to be paid, and that have been paid prior to this, for sure.

Joan Kjaer: So, here we are, at a time I remember a few years ago when Mitt Romney was in one of the debates, and he remarked that perhaps our greatest concern on the international stage was Russia, and he was kind of laughed out of the room. I remember the commentary after that remark. And then, of course, in this most recent election, we have a candidate who seems to have all kinds of interest in befriending Russia or whatever. We can all take that sentence wherever we want to take it. But, what does Russia want now? You have better insight into these things than most of us do. What do you think ... What is this game?

Bill Reisinger: Well, Russia wants to be a great power. So, it believes it is and must be seen as, and must be treated as a great power just on the face of things. Russia believes that its size, and its population, and its traditions, and other things make it one of the world's great powers. Which means, that they believe they ought to have a particular power, and particular influence in their neighborhood. In the area, particularly the former Soviet Union and the former Soviet bloc. They want to have enough power to be able to project selectively into other regions of the world, as they're doing now with Syria. Primarily, because that is a way to be taken seriously, a somebody who needs to be consulted with on the world's stage. And they would like to ... Part of that image of themselves, they would like to reduce the coherence and effectiveness of democratic ideals and the language that is used by the western powers in the world order.

So I think, they're not the only leadership at present of major countries that are trying to, I think, create an impression that so called democracy, and other things, is not what it's cracked up to be. But that it is part of the project, I think.

Joan Kjaer: And what do you think?

Michaela H.M.: So, I have two thoughts about this. One is that, I think the story of Putin and Putin's Russia begins in 1989, 1990. Which was such a particularly happy moment, because it marks the end of the Cold War, but also for my home

country, it's German unification. And I was very interested in reading recently about scholars pouring over the, until recently, secret documents of those highest ranking negotiations between Bush 41 cabinet. Especially, the president himself as well as Secretary of State Baker, and Gorbachev and Shevardnadze, and of course Helmut Kohl, the German chancellor then. And also, these same scholars talking to the participants who would still be around.

And Bill can help me out with this, but the story that emerges is, these were maybe among the most important diplomatic international relations, negotiations in the 20th century. And the Americans had, I mean, all sides had ... But the Americans had a list of maximum, best possible outcome for us. And the result of the negotiations is, a promise that Gorbachev will allow Germany to re-unify. Which was huge. And also, be a member, remain a member or become unified. Germany, would become a member of NATO. And he would do that, the Soviet Union, would do that in exchange for financial aid from the West German government. Which, was a small ... those millions were a small price to pay for this. And this outcome of the negotiations, pretty much is the very top of what the Americans were expecting.

Later in his memoirs, Secretary of State Baker, reflects on this. I think in the typical manner of a seasoned diplomat and says, "The only thing we have to worry about, is that sometimes in these extravagant cases of diplomatic success, you really have the seeds of future problems." And another commentator on that same scene would be Putin, who was present in '89, in East Germany as a young KGB officer and who about 10 years later in the late 1990s comments on that and talks about how devastated and demoralized he was. Let us say, as a Russian patriot. And so the revisionist urge, I think, starts at that very moment, because it's not clear where NATO expansion would stop. So, if a united Germany can be part of NATO, there is no promise that the Western powers give where this is going to stop. Putin says, at that moment, "It's clear that Russia has been pushed out of Europe and has been pushed back [inaudible 00:25:00]. And it will not be there silently."

Joan Kjaer: Wow. Well, thank you so much, Michaela Hoenicke Moore. Really, really so interesting. And Bill Reisinger, very grateful you would be here and share your insights. And to everybody listening, all of you here in the room with us, thank you for coming. I hope you've enjoyed the evening as much as I have. If you'd like to hear this program or any other WorldCanvass programs, they're all available on iTunes, the Public Radio Exchange, and the International Programs website, which is international.uiowa.edu.

And our next program is coming up soon. It's on December 7th, here in this room at 5:30. Our guests are part of the Art & the Afterlife project at the University of Iowa Museum of Art. And we'll have faculty from the School of Art and Art History as well on that program. For all of us, and for International Programs, thank you very much and good night.