Introduction

Beyond *Revolutionary Dreams*:
Essays in Memory of Richard Stites

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Our late Professor Stites's PhD recipients have honored me beyond my measure with their request that I introduce their three-part memorial fest-schrift for him, which will appear in three *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* volumes, one each in 2012, 2013, and 2014. This also includes a bibliography of his books, articles and essays, plus Tom Barrett’s eulogy at the Georgetown memorial service for Richard and the appended testimonial memories by seven people connected to Georgetown and twelve others, including our publisher, Charles Schlacks, which Paul du Quenoy collected soon after Richard died – all of these at the end of the third part. As I have already discussed his scholarly life in another introduction, so here I concentrate on his career and impact as Georgetown professor, before I survey the authors and their contributions written expressly to honor his memory. In keeping with his spirit and devotion to his students, I spice my account with his humor as best I can, and mention the scholarship his students produced both at Georgetown and afterward. For as I said repeatedly, whenever people mourned him, he would prefer we honor his memory with zesty humor, fine fellowship, and our best work. Where I use quotation marks without an explicit reference, I am repeating words spoken or emailed to me. All of the Georgetown people, whom I mention, are my friends, and I cannot pen what follows without being personal and without taking some credit for what we all did together. I do not believe that I am

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Passion and Perception (See part 3, Bibliography), pp. xii-xxxviii.
saying anything about the living, which I have not checked with them for veracity and propriety. And if in any way I offend anyone due to what I have written, I deeply apologize.

Part I: A Professor for All Seasons

“Let’s stop talking about me. What do you think of my latest book?”
– A favorite Stites one-liner

An Extraordinary “Find”

It’s November 1976, four months since I officially obtained tenure at Georgetown. Our venerable, beloved, Rev. Frank Fadner, SJ, Professor of Russian History, a specialist in Panslavism and a favorite for his colorful survey course, has signaled his upcoming retirement. Joseph Schiebel, our dynamic, charismatic Soviet historian and Director of Russian Area Studies (RASP – now CERES), has recently died of a heart attack. The History Department is mounting a double search for replacements on the assistant level (no “associates” need apply). I receive a telephone call from American University. It’s my professional colleague, Jim Malloy, urging me to come to a talk there by one of our Late Imperial candidates, whom I “really need to see” in action. I appear on time at the assigned classroom and quickly realize that Jim has understated his case.

The speaker, of course, is Richard Stites, else this introduction would start differently. He is addressing a mixed group, mainly students, but also some professors, about Russian and European women’s history. So knowledgeable, engaging, incisive, and clear is he that he immediately becomes my standard for oral communication for the upcoming, preliminary AHA interviews, only a few weeks away. And no one matches him – few of the competition expect to do so. The same holds for the written material, for he has given us his nearly print-ready The Women’s Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism, 1860-1930. He easily makes our short list.

Next come the on-campus interviews, starting with lunch at The Tombs. I am supposed to fetch Stites at D.C. National, but the traffic is horrendous, I am late, and our man is nowhere to be seen. I return to Georgetown and rush to the restaurant. There he is. Not seeing me at the airport, he snagged a taxi, and now is calmly and confidently sitting with four other Georgetown