

Traces of the Life of a Georgian Intellectual: Georg von Charasoff in Heidelberg, Zurich, and Lausanne

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by

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„ ... a gifted scoundrel, mystical anarchist and proven genius, mathematician, poet, anything you like.”

(Boris Pasternak on Georg von Charasoff)

1. Introduction

Since Georg von Charasoff’s previously neglected contributions *Karl Marx über die menschliche und kapitalistische Wirtschaft* (1909) and *Das System des Marxismus. Darstellung und Kritik* (1910) were rediscovered in the early 1980s (Egidi and Gilibert, 1984) several articles and book chapters have been published that provide summary accounts, critical appraisals and comparative assessments of Charasoff’s pioneering work on the classical-Marxian approach to prices and income distribution.¹

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¹ See Egidi and Gilibert (1984, 1989), Duffner and Huth (1988), Kurz (1989), Kurz and Salvadori (1993, 1995, 2000), Egidi (1998), Stamatis (1999), Klyukin (2008), and Mori (2007, 2008, 2011).

Until recently, however, not much was known about Georg von Charasoff's life. Prior to the essay of Peter Klyukin (2008), who discovered some interesting details concerning the later phase of Charasoff's life, almost all the known facts came from a short *curriculum vitae* which Charasoff wrote at the age of 25 on the occasion of the submission of his doctoral dissertation at the University of Heidelberg and from the Prefaces of his two books on economic theory. The printed version of Charasoff's "Lebenslauf", which he submitted to the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at the University of Heidelberg in 1902, reads as follows:²

I was born on 24 June 1877 in Tbilisi. My parents were Russian Armenians. From 1886 to 1890 I attended the first classical gymnasium in Tbilisi; then after the death of my father I was sent to Odessa, where I attended the classical Richelieu gymnasium. In 1893 I returned to Tbilisi and one year later I passed my final exam at the already mentioned gymnasium as an external pupil at the age of 18. Thereafter, I became a student of medicine in Moscow. During the students' protests of 1896 I was relegated and forced to go abroad in order to continue my studies. I came to Heidelberg and here I decided, following an inner impulse which already in Moscow I had difficulty in suppressing, to give up medicine and to turn to mathematics. So I enrolled at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg and after four years of study I submitted my dissertation and passed my doctoral examination on 27 February 1901³, choosing mathematics as the main field and physics and mechanics as supplementary fields.

(Charasoff 1902: 68)

From the Preface of his first book on Marx's economic theory we also know that Charasoff was living in Zurich in October 1908, and that the book had emanated from a series of (public) lectures which he had given in the course of the preceding three years. Moreover, Charasoff dedicated his book to 'My dear children Alex, Arthur, and Helene' and concluded

² Unless otherwise stated, all translations from German sources are mine. The hand-written version of Charasoff's "Lebenslauf", which is preserved in the documents of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the University of Heidelberg (Universitätsarchiv Heidelberg, H-V 3/2), differs slightly from the printed version (cf. Charasoff 1902: 68). In particular, it contains the additional information that Charasoff's parents were members of the Armenian-Gregorian church. When he registered at the University of Heidelberg in 1897, Georg von Charasoff also stated to be of the Armenian-Gregorian faith, but in later documents he declared to be 'without confession' (Meldekarte "Charasoff, Georg"; Stadtarchiv Zürich); his children were not baptized (Vormundschaftsakten "Kinder Charasoff", Stadtarchiv Zürich).

³ This date is wrong: Charasoff's oral examination took place on 27 February 1902 (cf. Promotionsakten der Naturwissenschaftlich-mathematischen Fakultät, H-V-3/2 fol. 73, Universitätsarchiv Heidelberg).

his Preface with a note of thanks to ‘my friend Dr Otto Buek’ (1909: ii and v). The Preface of the second book, *Das System des Marxismus*, is dated ‘Lausanne, on 24 December 1909’ and it is dedicated to ‘My friends Marie Charasoff and Otto Buek’.

The purpose of this essay is to supplement these slender pieces of information with some further biographical details, in an attempt to reconstruct the personal, cultural and intellectual milieu in which Charasoff developed his contributions to economic analysis. The main emphasis will be on the period from 1897 to 1915, which Charasoff spent predominantly in Germany and Switzerland, and on which some new findings can be presented, based on archival research in Heidelberg, Zurich, Lausanne and elsewhere. It needs to be emphasised that the emerging portrait of the man is still based on rather fragmentary pieces of information, and that the available documents on which it draws exhibit a particular bias: As Charasoff lived the life of a private scholar during most of this period, hardly any documents exist about him other than those from administrative bodies.

The essay is organised as follows. Section 2 provides some additional details on Charasoff’s family background and early education. In Section 3, the focus is on Charasoff’s study period at the University of Heidelberg, from 1897 to 1902, and on his friendship with Otto Buek. In Section 4, some traces of Charasoff’s life in Zurich, in the period from 1902 to 1909, are documented. Section 5 turns to Charasoff’s stay in Clarens and Lausanne during the years 1909 and 1910. In Section 6, the contemporary reception of his two books is briefly summarised. Section 7 covers the period from 1910 to 1912, in which Charasoff enrolled as a student of political economy at the University of Zurich. Section 8 discusses Charasoff’s planned contribution to Roberto Michels’ *Handwörterbuch der Soziologie* project. Section 9 documents the circumstances of Charasoff’s return to Tbilisi in February 1915. Section 10 informs about the (unauthorised) re-publication of major parts of his books in two German literary-political journals in 1918, 1920 and 1921. Section 11 provides an account of Charasoff’s life and intellectual preoccupations in the period from 1917 to 1931, which he spent in Tbilisi, Baku, and Moscow.

2. Charasoff’s family background and early education in Tbilisi and Odessa

In the hand-written version of his *curriculum vitae* Charasoff refers to his parents as ‘Russian subjects, Armenians of the Armenian-Gregorian faith’ (H-V 3/2, Universitätsarchiv

Heidelberg), which suggests that he and his family regarded themselves as ‘*Russified* Armenians’ (rather than as Russians). When he first enrolled at the University of Heidelberg in 1897 Charasoff inserted ‘burgrave’ {Burggraf} in the entry “Profession of the father”, while in a later document he wrote ‘government official’ {Staatsrat} – presumably, his father was both. In a document of 1910, which he had to fill in in French, he gave as his own profession: ‘Docteur en sciences’ and ‘rentier’ (Fiches contrôles des habitants 1910, Municipal archive Lausanne). His daughter Lily (b. 1903) stated in a letter of December 1919, which she sent from Tbilisi, that her father ‘has lost all his property {Vermögen}, which is now in the hands of the Russian government’ (Vormundschaftsakten “Kinder Charasoff”, Stadtarchiv Zürich). This implies that the (landed) property of the Charasoff family must have been outside of Georgia, presumably in Armenia or in the Ukraine, since in December 1919 Georgia was still a Democratic Republic which had not yet been occupied by the Red Army. Lily Charasoff also stated, in a letter to her (step-)brother Alexander of December 1919, that ‘we still own a factory, but this is out of use and earns us no money’ (Vormundschaftsakten “Kinder Charasoff”, Stadtarchiv Zürich), which implies that in 1919 Georg von Charasoff must also have owned a factory in independent Georgia, besides his (landed) property which had been seized by the new Russian government. When Charasoff enrolled at the University of Zurich in 1910, he gave as his parents’ address ‘Frauen B. v. Ch, Tbilisi, Gribojedowska N. 3’ (Matrikeledition, Universität Zürich), which suggests not only that his mother was still alive in 1910, but also that she had not re-married after his father’s early death in 1890. In documents of 1919, which are preserved in the municipal archive in Zurich and concern Charasoff’s four children, there is no mention of their paternal grand-parents (but their maternal grand-parents are stated as living in Odessa). There is, however, a reference to an aunt (i.e., to a sister of Georg von Charasoff), who is stated as living in Baku (Vormundschaftsakten “Kinder Charasoff”, Stadtarchiv Zürich).

Tbilisi and Georgia around 1880. Only some rather general information can be provided with regard to Georg Charasoff’s childhood and youth. Georgia and its capital Tbilisi were part of the Russian empire from 1801 to 1917. However, after the formal annexation by Tsar Paul I in January 1801 the Russians succeeded only in controlling the eastern part of Georgia, while the mountainous regions in the West remained independent for another decade. The Georgian kingdom Imretia was only occupied by the Russian troops in 1810, and it took another 54 years before Russia obtained full control over all of the mountainous regions in Western Georgia. Under the Russian reign, Georgia was subjected to an intensive “Russification”, in

order to adapt the cultural, social, and administrative system to that of the Russian empire. At the same time, Georgia was also opened up for Western European ideas and culture: In the mid-nineteenth century, enlightenment ideals, liberalism and modern nationalism blossomed in Georgia. European literature was translated into Georgian, European art and music was imported and amalgamated with local traditions, and there developed an interesting cultural and artistic life in Tbilisi, which was sometimes referred to as the “Paris of the East”.

In order to silence Georgian (and Armenian) calls for independence and to secure the Russian authority, the Tsar installed Count Michail Voroncov as “Viceroy of the Caucasus”. Voroncov, who had been educated in England, modernised trade, industry, infra-structure and town-planning, introduced primary schools and founded two gymnasiums, one in Tbilisi and one in Kutaisi. However, it was only in 1917, after the fall of the Russian Empire, that a Polytechnical University was opened in Tbilisi, followed by a State university in 1918. In 1845, Voroncov also founded the first theatre in Tbilisi, which at first showed plays in Russian only. In 1860, a Russian journalist would still write about the Tbilisi audience: ‘Portions of the Tbilisi public remained in their cultural childhood. Their clapping and shouting at inappropriate moments betrayed their ignorance and their distance from the audiences of Europe’ (Jesild and Mekadze 2002: 35-6). After 1864, there were also performances in Armenian and Georgian, and in 1879 a new Georgian theatre was founded, ‘offering plays and adaptations, in Georgian, from Moliere, Balzac, Shakespeare, Gogol, Pushkin, and Ostrovskii’ (Jesild and Mekadze, 2002: 38). In 1846, the first public library was opened in Tbilisi.

Serfdom was officially abolished in Georgia in 1866, but semi-feudal relations nevertheless remained in place for a considerable time. The gymnasiums in Tbilisi or Kutaisi were run on rigorous disciplinary measures, following the Russian educational system. Because of their traumatic gymnasium experiences, many young Georgian men were open for radical patriotic and revolutionary messages, and many of them were decidedly anti-Tsarist and anti-Russian. In the last quarter of the 19th century there was only a relatively small group of liberals in Georgia, while the social revolutionary or menshevist tendencies were rather strong among young men (Hausmann 1998: 172).

In Georg Charasoff’s youth there was a strong demographic and economic presence of Armenians in Tbilisi. In 1880, Tbilisi had 86.455 inhabitants, of which 38.513 were Armenians, 22.285 Georgians, and 19.804 Russians (Jersild and Mekadze, 2002: 47).

The gymnasium years in Odessa. The Richelieu gymnasium in Odessa, which Georg von Charasoff attended from 1890 to 1893, was one of several institutions which had been founded by the Duke of Richelieu during his reign in Odessa (from 1803 to 1814). It was intended as an educational institution for the sons of Odessa's wealthy merchants, since traditionally only the male offspring of the aristocracy were admitted into higher education. In 1817, he also founded the so-called Richelieu Lyceum, which was later transformed into the New-Russian University after the Crimean war. In 1890, when Georg Charasoff arrived in Odessa, the New-Russian University had three faculties and some 428 students: a historical-philological faculty, a faculty of physics and mathematics, and a law faculty (Hausmann 1998: 105-119).

The classical Richelieu gymnasium was located in the inner city district Chersone, right next to the New-Russian University and the commercial college of Odessa. Close by in the same district was also the German-Lutheran church St. Pauli with the associated junior high school "Zum Heiligen Paulus".⁴ The rich aristocrats and the wealthy merchants mostly lived in the adjacent Boulevard district, where also the banks, the stock exchange, the opera house and the theatre were located.

Odessa was the economic, administrative and cultural center of the Southern Ukraine. In the 19th century, it was a rapidly growing city, whose wealth was predominantly related to trade. Of major economic importance was Odessa's harbor, through which the export of grain and of other agricultural products from the Southern Ukraine took place. The international grain export business was first controlled by Greek merchants, but from the mid-19th century until 1917 it was dominated mainly by Jewish merchants. Odessa's industrialization started rather late, towards the end of the 1870s, but even then it consisted mainly of sugar and grain mills, packaging factories for coffee, tea and tobacco, and a machine industry which mainly produced agricultural equipment. From 1870 to 1897 the number of Odessa's inhabitants increased rapidly, from 140.000 to over 400.000. In 1892, 57.5% of Odessa's population was orthodox, 33% Jewish, 5.8% catholic and 2.3% protestant. Armenians accounted for a mere 0.3% of the population, but among the students there was a larger number and in the students' protests against the Tsarist regime the Armenians and the Georgians were often involved particularly strongly. Although 95% of the Jews earned their living as craftsmen or small

⁴ From 1888 Leo Trotzki was a pupil of the German-Lutheran junior high school "Zum Heiligen Paulus" in Odessa.

shop-keepers and thus belonged to the lower middle-class, the increasing presence of Jews in the intellectual and economic elite of the city repeatedly led to attacks and even pogroms against the Jews (as in 1881 and in 1905).⁵

3. Charasoff as a student in Heidelberg

It is widely known that after the October revolution of 1917 Berlin became a centre for Russian émigrés in Germany. But before WWI, in the second half of the nineteenth century, one of the most important intellectual centres for Russians in Germany was Heidelberg. The “Russian colony” in Heidelberg consisted not so much of writers and artists, but rather of students and young scientists. A first wave of Russian students came to Heidelberg in the period from 1861 to 1865, after the closure of the University of Saint Petersburg. In those years more than one-hundred Russians studied in Heidelberg. Later, there was a second and a third “wave” in the mid-1890s and around 1905/06, when relocations of students in Moscow and St. Petersburg, in the aftermath of the unsuccessful revolution, again brought large numbers of Russian students to Heidelberg.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Heidelberg was generally considered a centre of excellence in the natural sciences, and the students from the Russian empire typically studied chemistry, physics or physiology with such internationally renowned professors as Bunsen, Kirchhoff, or Helmholtz. The Law faculty of Heidelberg University also attracted talented Russian students; some of them later became prominent academics, constitutional lawyers, or politicians in Tsarist Russia and, then, the Soviet Union. Heidelberg also attracted wealthy young Russians who used it as their temporary home base for travelling Western Europe. Its central location, its mild climate and its low costs of living made it an ideal base for travels to France, Italy or Switzerland: ‘For some Russians Heidelberg was a sort of cure resort with a little scientific program on the side’ (Birkenmaier 1995: 41). Around the turn of the century there was also a significant community of wealthy Russians in the near-by hotels and casinos of Baden-Baden, who sometimes participated in the cultural activities and social gatherings of the Russian student community in Heidelberg.

⁵ Georg von Charasoff’s first wife, Marie Seldovic, came from a Jewish family in Odessa and the Jewish parents of his second wife, Marie Kriegshaber, also lived in Odessa after 1906.

Ever since the 1860s Heidelberg was also one of the centers of Russian revolutionary propaganda in the West. While the leading revolutionaries in exile mostly lived in London, Paris, or Geneva, close collaborators and associates of men like Alexander Herzen or Michail Bakunin lived in Heidelberg, from where they organized the (illegal) printing and dissemination of their writings. The “leftist” group of the Russian students in Heidelberg had its own meeting place, which eventually became a special Russian library. In the beginning, this group met in the back-rooms of a coffee-house and pastry shop, where the Russians had two extra rooms, which were used as a library and a reading room, ‘but which mainly served as a meeting place for those unending Russian discussions, in which the speakers soon tend to forget the topic of the meeting and merely reply agitatedly to the adversary’s response. (...) The library held mainly banned Russian books, but also the newest French, German and British books and magazines with a socialist orientation’ (Birkenmaier 1995: 10). The “Russian reading room” {Russische Lesehalle}, also known as “Pirogov’s reading room” {Pirogov’sche Lesehalle}, became an important institution in the cultural and intellectual life of Heidelberg. Max Weber, who had close contacts with some Russian students after 1903, gave a public lecture there in 1905 and also participated actively in the festivities celebrating the 50th year of the “Russian reading room” in 1912.⁶

Georg von Charasoff lived in Heidelberg from October 1897 to February 1902. He was enrolled in this period as a regular student in the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. The University address book shows that he lived during his entire study period in rented rooms as a tenant: From the winter term 1897/98 to the end of the summer term 1899 he lived in Gaisbergstrasse 27; thereafter in Schiffgasse 2, and in the following semesters until the end of the winter term 1901/02 he lived in Lauerstrasse 5.

In his first year Charasoff enjoyed the company of a fellow student from his home town Tbilisi in Gaisbergstrasse 27: Georg Melik-Karakosoff, the son of a Tbilisian “Hofrat”, a high-ranked public servant, also of the Armenian-Gregorian faith, who studied philosophy in

⁶ The Russian students with whom Max Weber was in close contact, mostly after 1901/02, were Bogdan Kistjakovskij, Sergej Zivago, Fedor Stepun, and Aaron Steinberg. Though possible, it seems rather unlikely that Charasoff had contact with Max Weber, who did not lecture in the period from 1897 to 1901.

Heidelberg. In addition, the two brothers Michail and Vadim Reisner from St. Petersburg also lived in Gaisbergstrasse 27 during Charasoff's first year in Heidelberg.⁷

At the turn of the 20th century, the group of social revolutionaries in Heidelberg included, *inter alia*, Vladimir Zenzinov, Boris Savinkov, Abram Goc, Il'ja Fondaminskij, Amalja Gavronskaja, and Jakov Gavronskij. In a study on the Russian students in Heidelberg it is noted that 'Schiffgasse 2 was for a long time in Russian hands: In the summer term 1901 Jakov Gavronskij lived there; in the summer term 1902 it was Abram Goc; and in the summer term 1903 and in the winter term 1903/04 it was the Fondaminskijs who resided there' (Birkenmaier 1995: 161). Interestingly, in the previous year, that is, in the winter term 1899/1900 and in the summer term 1900, Georg von Charasoff lived in Schiffgasse 2. Whether this is purely accidental or whether he knew some of the social revolutionaries personally could not be ascertained.

According to Fedor Stepun, a liberal who came to Heidelberg in 1903 (and who belonged to the group around Max Weber), the Russian student community in Heidelberg can be divided into three groups: 1) The Jewish-revolutionary elements in the Russian reading room, 2) the academically-minded students who did not belong to any party, and 3) the conservative fraction. On this tripartite division Stepun provided the following information: 'All socialist students regarded the purpose of their stay in Heidelberg not only in studying but also in working actively towards the revolution. ... The members of the second group, mostly natural scientists, and predominantly students of medicine, showed no interest in the coming revolution, but often sympathised with revolutionaries and supported them financially. ... The conservative fraction consisted of young men from the aristocracy or of the descendants of high-ranked public servants, who spent one or two semesters in Heidelberg enjoying themselves, often rather loudly. This group had of course no contact with the Russian reading room' (quoted from Birkenmaier 1995: 142). If this division is also applicable to Georg

⁷ Michael Reisner (or Reissner, Rejsner, von Reussner) was a law student in Heidelberg in 1897-98. After the October revolution of 1917 he became a professor at the law faculty of Petrograd University and was involved in the drafting of the first constitutional law of the Soviet Union. In the 1920s, he worked in the Soviet ministry of Sciences and Education and was responsible for the foundation of the "Communist Academy" in Moscow, which became a centre for Marxist social sciences. He was also a founding member of the Russian Psychoanalytical Society in Moscow. There are some interesting biographical parallels between his daughter, Larissa Reisner (1895-1926), and Charasoff's daughter Lily (1903-1927): Both became writers and both died at a very young age from typhus in Moscow. Michael Reisner's brother Vadim studied chemistry in Heidelberg.

Charasoff's (slightly earlier) study period in Heidelberg, then he can be supposed to have belonged to one of the first two groups.

Mathematics in Heidelberg. Charasoff wrote his doctoral dissertation under the supervision of Leo Königsberger (1837-1921), a distinguished mathematician, who had studied with Karl Weierstrass in Berlin and then held professorships in Greifswald (1864-69), Heidelberg (1869-75), Dresden (1875-77), Vienna (1877-84) and Heidelberg (1884-1914). Königsberger is perhaps best known for his biography of Helmholtz (Königsberger 1902/03, in three volumes), apart from his contributions to the analysis of elliptic and hyper-elliptic functions. In the course of his long academic career Leo Königsberger attracted a number of excellent students, including some future Nobel laureates.⁸ In 1870, Ludwig Boltzmann came to Heidelberg for post-graduate studies with Königsberger, and thirty-two years later Max Born spent the summer term 1902 in Heidelberg in order to attend Königsberger's lectures on differential geometry. Other famous disciples of Leo Königsberger are the mathematician (and pianist) Alfred Pringsheim and the astronomer Max Wolf. The group of Königsberger's doctoral students in the period from 1897 to 1902, when Charasoff was in Heidelberg, included Max Birkenstaedt, Marcus Lewin, Nathan Mannheimer, Friedrich Rösch, and Siegfried Valentiner.

The "Chronik der Stadt Heidelberg" reports a festive academic event on 22 November 1901, in which 'the winners of the prize essay competitions of the juridical, medical, philosophical, and natural sciences faculty' were announced, amongst them 'Georg Charasoff from Tbilisi' (Chronik der Stadt Heidelberg, 1902, pp. 58-9). Charasoff had submitted a hand-written text of 101 pages, entitled "Parallelogrammum mysticum", in October 1901 (Universitätsarchiv Heidelberg, Preisschriften, H-V-3/2, PR 126). Shortly after he had won the prize essay competition, in a letter of 20 January 1902, Charasoff applied to the Dean of the Faculty for admission to the final examination for a doctorate {Antrag auf Zulassung zur Promotionsprüfung}; interestingly, he sent this application from Geneva (rue de Hesse, 4) in Switzerland. As a substitute for a doctoral dissertation he submitted a slightly revised, untitled copy of his prize essay. His oral examination took place on 27 February 1902; shortly afterwards, he published his thesis under the title "Arithmetische Untersuchungen über

⁸ One of Königsberger's best-known students is the Russian mathematician Sof'ja Kovalevskaja (1850-1891), who attended his lectures from 1869 to 1871. She was the first female student at the University of Heidelberg and later was also the first woman ever to be appointed to a professorship in mathematics (in Stockholm).

Irreduktibilität” (1902). The available documents in the University archive show that the thesis was graded “summa cum laude”, but the reports of Königsberger and of the second examiner are not extant.⁹ While Charasoff’s dissertation was listed in several mathematics journals, it was not reviewed, which suggests that it was not considered important.

Charasoff’s friendship with Otto Buek. In the Preface of *Karl Marx über die menschliche und kapitalistische Wirtschaft* Charasoff acknowledged help from ‘my friend Dr Otto Buek’, whom he thanked ‘for encouragement and support during the writing of this book and *for many ideas which I formed from conversations with him*’ (1909: xii; emphasis added).

Who was Otto Buek? Where did they meet and what was Buek’s role in the development of Charasoff’s contributions to economic theory? Can we perhaps gain some insight into the circle of intellectuals with whom Charasoff was in contact in Heidelberg, Zurich and Lausanne via Buek?

Otto Buek was a German-Russian philosopher, editor and translator. He was born on 18 November 1873 in St. Petersburg as the son of Peter Buek, a well-to-do German merchant, and his wife Maria, née Westfalen. He died in 1966, aged 93, lonely and impoverished, in a home for the elderly near Paris. After attending the German gymnasium in his home town, Buek enrolled as a student at the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics of the University of St. Petersburg in 1891, with chemistry as his main field of study. Already in his gymnasium years, and in fact throughout his life, he pursued several intellectual interests simultaneously. He is known to have been remarkably well-read when he was still in his early twenties. He not only had a good knowledge of the contemporary natural sciences literature, but had also studied carefully the works of Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche, the writings of the French socialists, and the first volumes of Marx’s *Kapital*. Moreover, he also had an intimate knowledge of the Russian literature from Tolstoj to Gogol. In his youth, he was a close friend of Lou Salomé (after her marriage: Lou Andreas-Salomé), who later became famous as the “Russian muse” of Friedrich Nietzsche and Rainer Maria Rilke, and as Sigmund Freud’s disciple (and Anna Freud’s confidante). In the winter term 1896/97 Buek moved from Saint-Petersburg to Heidelberg, where he first continued his studies in chemistry and mathematics, but then switched over to philosophy in the following summer term. In the winter term

⁹ Letter to the author from Prof. Werner Moritz (Archivdirektor Universitätsarchiv Heidelberg), 7 Juli 2010.

1899/1900 he left Heidelberg in order to enroll at the Phillips-Universität Marburg, where he wrote his doctoral dissertation under the supervision of the Neo-Kantian philosopher Hermann Cohen, the head of the “Marburg school”. Like Charasoff, Buek won a prize essay competition (in the winter term 1902/03), but because one of the professors in Marburg had raised objections (see Sieg 1994: 207), his dissertation on ‘Die Atomistik und Faradays Begriff der Materie: eine logische Untersuchung’ {Atomism and Faraday’s notion of matter: a logical analysis} (Buek 1905) was only passed in February 1905.¹⁰ Around Cohen and Natorp in Marburg a Kantian-socialist group had formed, which sympathised with syndicalism and anarchism, drawing inspiration in particular from Tolstoj’s works. This group included Robert Michels, Kurt Eisner and Otto Buek (see Hanke, 1993: 130). During his time in Marburg, Buek also contributed to the election campaign of his friend and fellow student Robert Michels, who ran as a candidate for the German Reichstag as a representative of the syndicalist fraction of the Social Democrats.

In 1905, Buek moved to Berlin, where he lived a bohemian life as a private scholar and intellectual, earning his living as an editor, translator, and journalist. He edited, co-edited and translated, *inter alia*, a German edition of Gogol’s works (8 vols, 1909-1912) and a German edition of Turgenjew’s collected works (12 vols, 1910-1931; jointly with Kurt Wildhagen); he was also involved in the editorial work for Ernst Cassirer’s monumental edition of Immanuel Kant’s works. Moreover, he also edited and translated several of Tolstoj’s novels and Alexander Herzen’s *Erinnerungen* (from Russian into German) as well as Unamuno’s works (from Spanish into German). In the 1920s, he was the European correspondent of the Argentinian newspaper *La Nacion*.

Presumably, Buek and Charasoff first met during their study period in Heidelberg. From the summer term 1898 until the end of the summer term 1899 Buek took residence in Gaisbergstrasse 27, where Georg von Charasoff had lived already since the winter term 1897/98. Whether Buek’s move to Gaisbergstrasse 27 was motivated by an already existing friendship between the two men, or whether the latter formed only afterwards, could not be ascertained. Buek’s circle of friends and acquaintances from his student days in Heidelberg included Georg Friedrich Nicolai from Saint-Petersburg, then a medical student, whom he

¹⁰ To the *Festschrift* on the occasion of Cohen’s 70th birthday Otto Buek contributed an essay on “Michael Faradays System der Natur und seine begrifflichen Grundlagen” (Buek 1912).

later supported in his peace initiatives, and the bohemian, philosopher and journalist Kurt Wildhagen, with whom he later edited Turgenjew's works in German.

In Berlin, Buek belonged to the circle around Alfred Richard Meyer, who was one of the major figures in the German arts and literature scene at the beginning of the 20th century. Buek had close contacts with a large number of intellectuals, artists and writers, many of whom with radical left-wing or anarchistic leanings. He was a close friend of the anarchist writer Senna Hoy (pseudonym of Johannes Holzmann)¹¹ and of Franz Pfemfert, the editor of the literary-political journal *Die Aktion*. Buek's circle of friends also included the publisher Max Brod,¹² the expressionist poet (and later minister of culture and education in the GDR) Johannes R. Becher,¹³ the philosopher Ernst Cassirer, and the publisher and gallery owner Paul Cassirer.

In the summer of 1905 Buek travelled to Zurich and met with the Swiss anarchists Fritz Brupbacher, Max Tobler and Raphael Friedeberg. In the autumn he briefly returned to Berlin, but then travelled to Zurich again, this time in the company of Senna Hoy (Johannes Holzmann). From Zurich he moved on to Ascona, where he stayed in the *Monte verità* community, the bohemian commune and artists' colony that had been founded by the brothers Karl and Gustav Gräser. Around the turn of the century, the *Monte verità* {mountain of truth} was a well-known meeting place for anarchists and free thinkers, but also for the artistic and intellectual elite (the *Monte verità* was visited, *inter alia*, by men like Hermann Hesse, Ernst Bloch, C. G. Jung, James Joyce, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Paul Klee). Buek returned to the *Monte verità* community again in the spring and summer of 1906, first for a few weeks (in April) and then again for a full month (in May and June). In this period an international meeting of anarchists and free thinkers took place on the *Monte verità*, in which the

¹¹ In 1904/05 Otto Buek, together with the Jewish banker Benedikt Friedländer, financed Senna Hoy's anarchistic journal "Kampf. Zeitschrift für gesunden Menschenverstand".

¹² Leonhard Frank's autobiographical novel *Links wo das Herz ist* (1973) contains the following passage: 'On 4 September 1914 the few existing anti-war activists in Berlin gathered in my apartment, including the poet René Schickele, the philosopher Otto Buek, Max Brod and Alvarez del Vayo, a Spanish journalist' (1973, p. 62). See also Goenner (2005, p. 74).

¹³ Johannes R. Becher devoted his poem "Gebet im Winter 1915/16" to 'Dr Otto Buek in friendship' (Becher 1965, p. 632). In a letter to Katharina Kippenberg, his publisher, of 18 December 1916 he calls Buek 'a truly marvellous friend' and includes him among 'the seven persons whom I love' (1981, pp. 39 and 403).

possibilities for the foundation of “a higher school for the liberation of mankind” were discussed.

In 1913, Buek launched a new journal, together with the historicist Paul Herre, entitled “Die Geisteswissenschaften”.¹⁴ However, this venture was less successful than its twin, the journal “Die Naturwissenschaften” (which still exists today), and had to be terminated because of financial problems in 1914.

From his student days in Heidelberg Buek entertained a lifelong friendship with Georg Friedrich Nicolai, who later taught at the *Charité* in Berlin. In October 1914 Buek signed, together with Albert Einstein and the astronomer Friedrich Wilhelm Förster, Nicolai’s anti-war pamphlet “Aufruf an die Europäer” {Call to the Europeans}, which was an antipode to the pamphlet “An die Kulturwelt!” {To the cultured world!}. The latter pamphlet, which was used by the German government to justify the military invasion of neutral Belgium, was signed by more than two-hundred natural and social scientists from the German Reich. Nicolai’s counter-pamphlet was signed by only four men: Nicolai, Buek, Förster and Einstein. Its publication was prohibited by the authorities in the German Reich. (It was only published in 1917 in Switzerland, as an introduction to Nicolai’s anti-war book *Biologie des Krieges*.)¹⁵

Of particular interest in the present context is Otto Buek’s friendship with Albert Einstein, which is well documented for the period from 1914 to 1931, when both lived in Berlin. The philosopher Don Howard, who has worked extensively on Einstein’s philosophy of science, writes:

Paul Natorp was the first major neo-Kantian to publish his thoughts on relativity, these concerning special relativity, in his influential *Die logischen Grundlagen der exakten Wissenschaften* (1910). (...) We have no direct evidence of Einstein’s having read Natorp, and certainly no record of his reaction to Natorp. He is likely to have been familiar with Natorp’s views on relativity, though, if only through the intermediary of Otto Buek, one of the favorite students of Natorp and Cohen, who struck up something of a friendship with Einstein during the latter’s first couple of years in Berlin, 1914-

¹⁴ The full title of the journal was “Die Geisteswissenschaften. Wochenschrift für das gesamte Gebiet der Philosophie, Psychologie, Mathematik, Religionswissenschaft, Geschichtswissenschaft, Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft, Kunstwissenschaft, Rechts- und Staatswissenschaft, Gesellschaftswissenschaft, Volkswirtschaftslehre und Statistik, Militärwissenschaft, Länder- und Völkerkunde, Pädagogik”.

¹⁵ Because he was forced to resign from his professorship at the *Charité* in Berlin after WWI, Nicolai emigrated to Argentina in 1922.

1915. ... Discussions with Buek may have awakened Einstein's interest in thinking about Kant and relativity. (1994: 50)

According to Howard, Buek and Einstein met regularly in 1914 and 1915, often in Nicolai's house, in order to discuss philosophical issues and to play music together:¹⁶ 'By late 1914 he {Buek} had developed a fairly close and regular relationship with Einstein, who had moved to Berlin ... in April of that year' (Howard 1993: 191).¹⁷

In the early 1920s Buek was involved, together with Georg Friedrich Nicolai and Professor Otto Fanta from Prague, in the making of the first science film, which was shown under the title "Die Grundlagen der Einsteinschen Relativitätstheorie" {The foundations of Einstein's relativity theory}.¹⁸ Although Einstein distanced himself from this film, his friendship with Buek remained intact, and the two men again had regular meetings in the mid-1920s. After his return from a lecture series in Argentina, Einstein discussed his travel impressions with Buek and they also met in various scientific societies as well as privately in order to discuss possible philosophical interpretations of quantum mechanics (Goenner 2005: 161-2).

In a short "Tableau chronologique sur ma vie", which he composed in 1963 at the age of 90, Buek noted: '1931-33: Avènement de Hitler, Einstein et moi passons le même an 1933 à l'étranger, moi – en France, lui en Amérique {1931-33: Rise of Hitler, Einstein and I move abroad in the same year 1933, I – to France, he – to America}' (Nachlass Szittyá, DLA Marbach). But whereas Einstein's fame rose to new heights with his move to Princeton, Buek's move into the French exile led to personal loneliness and material deprivation. In 1953, when Buek was seriously in need of help, his friend Emil Szittyá, a painter and writer,

¹⁶ In an unpublished essay entitled "The Einstein I knew", which is in the Einstein-Archive (EA 59-353), Buek noted 'that he often provided piano accompaniment for Einstein's violin' (Howard 1993: 227).

¹⁷ Further evidence for Buek's friendship with Einstein comes from a letter of Hermann Cohen to Paul Natorp, dated 28 November 1914, which contains the following passage: 'It is very interesting that Buek is attending Einstein's lecture & comes together with him regularly & discusses thoroughly with him. He finds him unclear philosophically, & still has no clear opinion on the whole thing, in which only the difficult mathematics is beyond doubt' (Universitätsbibliothek Marburg, Ms. 831/52; quoted from Holzhey 1986, vol. 2, p. 436).

¹⁸ See Goenner (2005: 160-61). The film was originally shown under the title "EINSTEIN-Film". This title had to be changed, however, because Albert Einstein had publicly distanced himself from the film in a short note in the *Berliner Tageblatt* of 2 June 1922, and had asked the film company to adopt a more appropriate title.

wrote to Einstein for financial support, who was immediately willing to help: ‘I remember Mr Buek very well from the time of the First World War. He is a fine character and a reliable man with a social conscience’ {Ich kenne Herrn Buek sehr gut aus der Zeit des ersten Weltkriegs. Er ist ein vortrefflicher Charakter und zuverlässiger Mensch mit einem sozialen Gewissen}.¹⁹

4. Charasoff in Zurich, 1902-1909

After he had obtained his doctorate in Heidelberg in February 1902, Charasoff seems to have returned to Tbilisi or to have travelled in Europe before moving to Zurich, where he was registered from 24 October 1903 onwards (Meldekarte “Charasoff”, Stadtarchiv Zürich). In the interim period he must have married his first wife, Marie Seldovic, who came from a Jewish family in Odessa. The date and place of their marriage could not be ascertained, but their first son Andreas Arthenius (“Arthur”) was born in Zurich on 5 November 1902. In the following year, the daughter Barbara Lydia Helene (“Lily”) was also born in Zurich, on 11 December 1903. A further member of the Charasoff family was Alexander (“Alex”) von Charasoff, who was born on 17 March 1900 in Strasbourg. According to the birth entry in the municipal archive in Strasbourg, Alexander was the illegitimate child of Anna Magdalena Seldovic (in some documents: Anna Hanela Seldowitsch or Zeltowitsch) from Odessa, who was born on 31 July 1878 in Beresino, Russia. The child was subsequently “legitimised” by Anna Seldovic’s marriage with Ladislaus von Studnicki-Gisbert on 22 September 1900 in Zurich. It is unclear how Alexander came into Charasoff’s family: One possibility is that he was adopted by Anna Seldovic’s sister Marie and her husband, Georg von Charasoff. Another possibility that cannot be excluded is that Alexander’s mother, “Anna”, and Charasoff’s wife “Marie” Seldovic are one and the same person (and that Alexander’s biological father was not Ladislaus Studnicki-Gisbert but Georg von Charasoff).

At the time of the marriage, in September 1900, Ladislaus von Studnicki-Gisbert was a law student of Polish descent at the University of Zurich. Ten years before, as a student in Warsaw, he had been ostracised to Siberia for socialist propaganda from 1890 to 1896. In the summer term 1899 and in the winter term 1899-1900 he was enrolled at the Law Faculty of the University of Heidelberg (Matrikeleintrag, Universitätsarchiv Heidelberg); thereafter he

¹⁹ Albert Einstein to Emil Szitty, 18 July 1953 (Nachlass Szitty, DLA Marbach). In the 1950s, Buek obtained regular financial support from the “Einstein fund” for several years.

continued his studies at the University of Zurich, where he was officially enrolled from the summer term 1900 to the end of the summer term 1901 (Matrikeedition der Universität Zürich). However, in spring 1901 he appears to have returned to Warsaw without de-registering at the University of Zurich.²⁰ Anna Magdalena Studnicki-Gisbert, neé Seldovic, was enrolled as a student of mathematics at the University of Zurich in the winter term 1900/1901 (Matrikeedition der Universität Zürich). Apparently, she had previously studied mathematics at the Universities of Bonn and Heidelberg as a so-called “Hospitantin”, which means that she was allowed to attend lectures but could not take any exams (women were only accepted as regular students at the University of Heidelberg from 1900 onwards). It seems very likely, of course, that Charasoff knew both Anna Seldovic and Ladislaus von Studnicki-Gisbert from his student days in Heidelberg.

In Zurich, Charasoff appears to have led the life of an independent private scholar. Although his varying addresses are close to the University and the central library, he did not enrol as a regular student before 1910. In his first years in Zurich, his main intellectual preoccupation still seems to have been mathematics. This can be inferred from a letter he sent to the mathematician David Hilbert of the University of Göttingen on 10 May 1904, which has been preserved in the Hilbert Papers. In this letter, Charasoff responded to Hilbert’s commentary on a set of papers which he had sent him earlier, and which Hilbert had apparently returned with the remark that Charasoff’s main results had already been proved by Hermann Minkowski. Charasoff fully accepted Hilbert’s judgement, noting that ‘from your assessment I now realise that I was apparently not sufficiently familiar with all the contributions of Minkowski’ (Nachlass David Hilbert, Code MS Hilbert 59, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen). In spite of this set-back, Charasoff seems to have continued his mathematical studies; in the summer term 1905 he enrolled as an “Auditor” at the University of Zurich for the lecture on “Elliptische Funktionen” {Elliptical functions} by Professor Heinrich Burkhardt.²¹ Interestingly, at this very time Professor Burkhardt was one of the two examiners of Albert Einstein’s inaugural dissertation *Eine neue Bestimmung der Moleküldimensionen*,

²⁰ He later became a publicist and pro-German politician in Warsaw, and was a member of the Temporary Council of State, a German-sponsored government, which existed in Warsaw in the years 1916–1918. In the 1930s, he collaborated with the Nazis, but then was imprisoned by them in early 1940. After WWII, he left Poland and moved to London, where he died in 1953.

²¹ As an “Auditor” he was allowed to attend lectures but could not take exams.

which Einstein had submitted on 30 April 1905. It is possible, therefore, that Einstein's seminal contribution may have caught Charasoff's attention very early on – through conversations on mathematics and physics which he surely would have had with Professor Burkhardt.

There are only few further traces of Charasoff's personal life and intellectual preoccupations in this period. In 1904, he apparently made a comment during a lecture on 'Scientific socialism and religion' that Georgij Plekhanov had delivered in Zurich. This is documented in Plekhanov's "Notes during the discussion of the report", among which there is *inter alia* the following remark of Plekhanov on 'G. Kharazov's bewilderment': 'If we are to agree with him, we must admit that the question of religion is finished. The existence of God cannot be proved. He considers my ideas common to all people. Very glad!' (Plekhanov 1976: 61). In addition, Plekhanov also noted, under the heading '*KHARAZOV*':

Kant. He is surprised at comparing Kant and Berdayev. Not Berdayev, but Bulgakov. Kant: the idea of religion is a regulatory idea. With Kant, God is not a personality but an idea. I am supposed to have distorted Kant's argument. No, I indicated his two *Critiques*, quoting almost his own words. I am supposed to have said the Westphalian miners are Kantians. Never said anything of the kind. How does that follow? (Plekhanov 1976: 61)

An important event in Georg von Charasoff's personal life must also have occurred in this period: His first wife, Marie von Charasoff, née Seldovic, must have died sometime between 1904 and 1906. Her death is registered in official documents of 1919, which concern the Charasoff children and which have been preserved in the municipal archive in Zurich (Vormundschaftsakten "Kinder Charasoff", Stadtarchiv Zürich). In these documents neither the exact date nor the circumstances of her death are given, but since Lily was born in December 1903 and Charasoff publicly showed up with a girl-friend in spring 1907 (see below), it must have occurred in the interim period from 1904 to 1906.

Around 1904/05, and in parallel to his mathematical studies, Charasoff must also have begun to study the works of Menger, Böhm-Bawerk, and Walras, since he notes in the Preface of *Das System des Marxismus*, dated December 1909, that he had only become familiar with those works 'in the course of the last four years'). The works of the classical political economists and Marx he must have studied already much earlier, because he also states in his Preface that he had developed the main ideas of his treatise, including the notion of a "production series", long before he had read the works of Menger and Böhm-Bawerk. It is

also clear, from references in his books, that he had carefully studied the contemporary literature on Marx's economic theory, including Tugan-Baranowski (1905) and Bortkiewicz (1906/07). (There is no reference to Dmitriev's contributions.)

In January 1907 he submitted a manuscript on Marx's theory of value and distribution, via Otto Buek, to Karl Kautsky, the editor of the journal *Die Neue Zeit*. Kautsky returned the manuscript, together with a rejection letter, to Otto Buek, who forwarded both to Charasoff. Buek's involvement seems to have resulted from the fact that he had been responsible for producing a German translation of Charasoff's manuscript, which must originally have been in Russian. Neither the manuscript and submission letter nor Kautsky's rejection letter is extant, but a letter of Georg von Charasoff to Karl Kautsky of 7 February 1907 has been preserved in the Kautsky Papers (Correspondence D VII 66, Internationales Institut für Sozialgeschichte, Amsterdam). In this letter Charasoff informed Kautsky that he did not consider the reasons which the latter had given for his rejection convincing and that he was keen to read a more detailed criticism of his views. (For a more detailed discussion of the Charasoff-Kautsky correspondence, see Mori 2007).²²

In the spring term 1907 Charasoff again enrolled as an "Auditor" at the University of Zurich, this time in order to attend a four-hour lecture on "Psychiatrische Klinik" {Clinical psychiatry} by Professor Eugen Bleuler.²³ As we shall see below (section 11), Charasoff in fact took a keen interest in psychoanalysis and seems to have studied Freud's (and Jung's) writings very carefully. In June and July 1907 he stayed for a cure treatment in the "Kur- und Heilanstalt Schloss Marbach am Untersee (Bodensee)", partly in the company of his friend Otto Buek. This can be inferred from the correspondence of Lidija Petrowna Kotschetkova,

²² In this letter Charasoff also noted that his manuscript had been translated from Russian into German by 'my friend', i.e. by Otto Buek. Moreover, in the already mentioned "Tableau chronologique sur ma vie" Buek stated that in the period 1908-1912 he began to earn his living by doing translations, and that he had translated 'Tolstoi, Gogol, Alexandre Herzen, Tschekow, un economiste russe etc' (Nachlass Szittyta, DLA Marbach).

²³ Eugen Bleuler (1857-1939) was professor of psychiatry at the University of Zurich and the successor of Auguste Forel as director of the Psychiatric University clinic "Burghölzli" from 1898 to 1927. Bleuler was the first director of a psychiatric clinic in Europe to adopt the psychoanalytical methods of Sigmund Freud. C. G. Jung, the founder of analytical psychology, first was an assistant and then a collaborator of Bleuler at the clinic "Burghölzli" from 1900 to 1909. Bleuler is known in particular for his analysis of schizophrenia (sometimes also designated as "morbus Bleuler"). He also coined the terms "schizophrenia" and "autism".

who refers to Charasoff repeatedly in some of her letters to her husband, the anarchist, publicist and medical practitioner for the poor Fritz Brupbacher in Zurich. In Kotschetkova's account, the group of cure guests at "Schloss Marbach" consisted partly of medium-ranked and high-ranked nobility from Russia and Western Europe ('The Duke of Parma with his entourage, etc. etc. '), but also of social revolutionaries from Russia, like Leonid Schisko and Vera Figner.²⁴ Kotschetkova commented on Charasoff's personality in several letters. She was highly critical of him, and strongly disapproved of his manners and conversation:

A conceitedness, self-satisfaction and smugness which I have elsewhere encountered only in Bulgarians. All the time at the dinner table he talks about great things – the making of bombs, killings of anarchists, maltreatments in the German army, catholic religion, etc. etc. – and all this in a rather loud voice, and of course in German, among Germans and Catholics. (...) He fails to notice that nobody is interested in his conversation and that his style of arguing is simply unpleasant. He is not a wise man and I really regret that he does not get his nerves cured by Veraguth.²⁵ (Kotschetkova to Brupbacher, 16 July 1907, Brupbacher Papers MFC 37, Schweizerisches Sozialarchiv)

In one of her earlier letters she observed:

Today Charasoff let his girl-friend (a young female student – Jewish) come here from Zurich. She dined with us at the dinner-table and sat between Charasoff and Buek. The former I cannot stand at all. He really gets on my nerves. This brutal, worn face, this self-contentedness and megalomania are just disgusting. He eats, speaks, tells stupid jokes and talks nonsense – just horrible. An animal – or a rather vulgar person! (Kotschetkova to Brupbacher, 17 June 1907, Brupbacher Papers MFC 37, Schweizerisches Sozialarchiv)

Kotschetkova's description of Charasoff's girl-friend matches with the known facts about his later second wife, Marie Kriegshaber, so that we may assume that it is the same person. In the following fifteen months, Charasoff worked further on his manuscripts on Marx's theory of value and distribution and eventually must have decided to publish his ideas in the form of

²⁴ Vera Figner (1852-1942) studied medicine in Zurich and Berne and then directed a country clinic in Russia. She was a leading member of the militant revolutionary group "Narodnaya Volya" {Will of the People}, who was responsible for the assassination of Tsar Alexander in 1881. In 1894, Figner was sentenced to death, but the death sentence was not executed and after her trial she was imprisoned for twenty years at Schlüsselburg. In late 1906, she was set free and with the help of friends brought to Switzerland for cure treatment in spring 1907, via Finland and Sweden. After several years in exile, spent mostly in Switzerland (during this period she also lived temporarily in Baugy-sur-Clarens in the house of her friend Nicolai Rubakin), she returned to Russia before the revolution.

²⁵ Professor Otto Veraguth was a well-known psycho-therapist in Zurich.

books rather than articles. He wrote the finishing sentences of the first book, *Karl Marx über die menschliche und kapitalistische Wirtschaft*, on ‘12 October 1908’ (Charasoff 1909: v).

5. Charasoff’s stay in Clarens and Lausanne

Immediately after its publication, in spring 1909, Charasoff moved to Clarens, which was then a small village near Montreux (of which it now is a suburb) at Lake Geneva. He obtained a “permis de séjour” {residence permission} that was valid from 2 February 1909 to 13 February 1912, but he left Clarens already on 26 August 1909 in order to take up residence in Lausanne (Municipal Archive, Montreux). Throughout his stay he was accompanied by his three children and by Marie Kriegshaber.

Clarens has a long tradition as a vacation and cure resort, with luxurious hotels, numerous guest-houses, and excellent restaurants. The little village on the “Swiss Riviera” was particularly popular among Russian guests and was visited by artists and intellectuals like Leo Tolstoj, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Igor Stravinski, Maurice Ravel, Arthur Rubinstein, and Vladimir Nabokov.²⁶ Igor Stravinski first came to Clarens, like Charasoff, in the spring of 1909, and he returned there in 1910 in order to settle down for an extended period of time (in Clarens he composed, among other things, the ballets “Le sacre du printemps” and “Pulcinella”).

This part of Lake Geneva was also a popular retreat for exiled revolutionaries from Tsarist Russia, and was visited by Pjotr Kropotkin, Michail Bakunin, Wladimir Illjitsch Lenin, Inessa Armand, Vera Figner and several others. In the previous year, in spring 1908, it appears to have been overcrowded with Russians. Rosa Luxemburg, who regularly spent her spring vacation in the guest-house “La Colline” in Baugy-sur-Clarens, wrote to Karl and Luise Kautsky in April 1908: ‘The entire guest-house, and all of Baugy, Vevey, Clarens, and Lausanne is full of Russians. We are the only ones here to speak some German’ {Die ganze Pension, ganz Baugy, ganz Vevey, ganz Clarens, ganz Lausanne voller Russen. Wir sind die

²⁶ In a letter of 1857, Tolstoj raved about the awesome beauty of the unique landscape around Clarens, which had ‘blinded’ him and had ‘moved [him] with unexpected force’ (quoted from Huser 2003: 82). Twenty-one years later, Tchaikovsky wrote that he could not imagine any landscape outside of Russia ‘which more than this one exerts a comforting influence on the soul’ (ibid., pp. 82-3).

einzigem, die da reden dajtsch} (Kautsky Papers, Internationales Institut für Socialgeschichte, Amsterdam; quoted from Huser 2003: 83).

From Clarens, Charasoff sent two letters to Karl Kautsky, which have been preserved in the Kautsky archive. The first one, dated 18 February 1909, was an accompanying letter to a complimentary copy of his 1909 book, which he sent Kautsky together with ‘a short article in which I have developed the same ideas in a different and, as it seems to me, less popular, but for the adept of Marx’s theory clearer form’. He added: ‘I would of course be delighted, if you were to publish this article in your journal, but this must of course depend on your judgement’. Just one week later, on 25 February 1909, Charasoff responded to Kautsky’s rejection letter and return of the manuscript, which he had received the day before, in the following terms: ‘I readily admit that my assessment of Marxism may contain some imprecisions. Because I am not a Marxist in the conventional sense of the term, it is impossible for me to think myself into this doctrine, which is really alien to my way of thinking, however much I esteem Marx as a political economist and as a theoretician of the labour movement. (...) But that my construction should be basically wrong I am not ready to concede so easily, and I therefore look forward to your promised statement of grounds, by letter or in print, with great interest’ (Charasoff to Kautsky, 18 February and 25 February 1909, Kautsky Papers, D VII 67-8, Internationales Institut für Sozialgeschichte, Amsterdam).

During his stay in Clarens, Charasoff took residence in rue de la Gare 11 (now: rue Gambetta), which is located right next to the train station, with direct connections to Montreux and Lausanne. Within walking distance is the small village of Baugy-sur-Clarens, where several Russian exiles lived and where Nicolai Rubakin’s famous library was at his disposal.²⁷ Another possible reason for Charasoff’s choice of Clarens, apart from its natural beauty and its closeness to the Russian community in Baugy, may have been the fact that Léon Walras was living there (until his death in January 1910). Moreover, Lausanne was near-by, where in 1909 Vilfredo Pareto was still teaching. In view of Charasoff’s statement (in the Preface of his book of 1910) that he planned to write a third book on the critique of the

²⁷ The private library of Nicolai Aleksandrovich Rubakin comprised one of the largest collections of Russian books in Western Europe. At the time of Rubakin’s death in 1946 it comprised approx. 100.000 volumes. Rubakin freely offered his books to anybody who was interested. Before the Russian revolution of 1917, his library was used inter alia by the bolsheviks and mensheviks who lived in Baugy, and by guests like Bukharin, Plekhanov, Lenin, and Stravinski (cf. Senn 1973).

marginalist approach to economic theory, the idea is close at hand that he may have tried to get in touch with Walras and Pareto – but so far no evidence has been found in support of this hypothesis. (It should also be noted that in spring 1909 Léon Walras was presumably already too weak for a serious scientific discussion.)

In August 1909, Charasoff moved with his family from Clarens to Lausanne, and took residence in Avenue de la Harpe 3, until the end of March 1910. There is no evidence for any connection with the University of Lausanne: Charasoff was neither enrolled as a regular student nor as an auditor at the University of Lausanne (accordingly, he also passed no exams there). He also seems not to have used the University library, although this cannot be ascertained definitively, because the library loan documents are incomplete.²⁸ It seems most likely, therefore, that Charasoff used his “sabbatical term” in Clarens and Lausanne mainly for composing the manuscript of his second book, *Das System des Marxismus*, the preface of which is dated ‘Lausanne, 24 December 1909’.

Marriage with Marie Kriegshaber. Some two months earlier, on 28 October 1909, Georg von Charasoff married Marie Kriegshaber (in some documents: Krigsgaber), who gave birth to a son, Sergius, on 11 March 1910 in Lausanne.

Marie Kriegshaber was born on 1 August 1882 in Kamenetz-Podolski/Proskurow (then Russia, now Ukraine). After receiving a high-school education at the “Schitomir” gymnasium for girls in her home town, Marie Kriegshaber studied medicine at the University of Berne from the winter term 1902/03 until the end of the winter term 1903/04.²⁹ In the summer term 1904 she moved from Berne to Zurich, where she finished her studies in 1908 with a doctoral dissertation on the topic *Über die Verdoppelung des weiblichen Genitalapparates und die damit zusammenhängenden Folgen* {On the doubling of the female genital apparatus and its implications} (cf. Kriegshaber 1908).³⁰ The list of courses she attended and the topic of her dissertation suggest that she specialised in gynaecology. Interestingly, the account books for lecture fees {Kollegiengeldabrechnungen} show that she also attended the course

²⁸ Letter to the author from François Allisson, Researcher at the *Centre Walras-Pareto* at the University of Lausanne, 5 July 2010.

²⁹ Her younger sister Sophie (born 15 February 1886) also came to Berne in the winter term 1903/04 and enrolled as a student of philosophy.

³⁰ The supervisor of her doctoral dissertation was Professor Wyder, the director of the “Universitätsfrauenklinik“ at the University of Zurich.

“Psychiatrische Klinik” by Professor Bleuler in the summer term 1907 (Kollegiengeldabrechnungen der Universität Zürich für das Jahr 1907, Staatsarchiv Zürich).

6. On the reception of Charasoff's contributions by his contemporaries

It has been rightly suggested that Charasoff's pioneering contributions were not appreciated at the time because most contemporary economists lacked the necessary mathematical training for a proper understanding of his work (cf. Mori, 2007). In addition, two further reasons can be given for the almost complete neglect of Charasoff's books. First, Charasoff's choice of the publisher was rather unfortunate: The Hans Bondy Verlagsbuchhandlung in Berlin only existed from 1908 to 1913,³¹ with its programme consisting predominantly of literary titles; among the few academic titles Charasoff's two books were the only ones on economic theory. Moreover, the print-run of the books was low, so that they soon became difficult to get hold of. Secondly, Charasoff's rather polemical style may not only have offended some readers, but also turned their attention away from his novel ideas and analytical concepts. This can be exemplified with regard to two contemporary book reviews.

Charasoff's first book was reviewed by Otto Bauer in the May issue 1909 of the journal *Der Kampf*, jointly with the German edition of Louis B. Boudin's *Das theoretische System von Karl Marx* and Werner Sombart's *Das Lebenswerk von Karl Marx*. According to Bauer, Charasoff rightly pointed out that a central element of Marx's theoretical system is the idea that capitalism fails to develop the productivity of labour to the highest possible degree, ‘because the introduction of labour-saving methods of production is hindered by the fact that the capitalist only pays for necessary labour, but not for surplus labour’ (1908/09: 380). However, ‘this correct idea is presented by Charasoff in the clumsiest possible way’, so that Marx's important idea ‘is distorted by his unfortunate style of presentation to the point of making it appear ridiculous’ (1908/09: 381 and 380). Bauer's rather superficial review makes no mention of Charasoff's analysis of prices and distribution at all. This prompted Charasoff to send a reply to Bauer, which the latter refused to publish. Instead, he provided a summary

³¹ Hans Bondy (1881-1917) was the son of the Viennese industrialist Otto Bondy and his wife Julie, née Cassirer. His sister Tony was married to Ernst Cassirer (her cousin) and his brother Walter was a well-known painter, art exhibitor and art critic. Hans Bondy lived a bohemian life in Paris and Berlin and in 1917 committed suicide. It can safely be assumed that Otto Buek was involved in Charasoff's choice of publisher.

account of Charasoff's reply in a single paragraph of the July issue of *Der Kampf*. In this short paragraph, Bauer reported *inter alia* that 'Charasoff complains about the fact that my review did not discuss his solution of the contradiction between the first and the third volume of *Capital* and his analysis of the relationship between the law of the falling rate of profit and the crisis theory' (1908/09: 480).

Charasoff's second book, *Das System des Marxismus*, was reviewed somewhat more extensively by Bauer in the March issue 1910 of *Der Kampf*. Bauer conceded that Marx's transformation algorithm was 'incomplete', because Marx had 'refrained from showing how the formation of the prices of production must then modify in turn the rate of profit'. But this 'gap' cannot be filled 'by simply setting the prices of the basic products {Grundprodukte} equal to their values, and thus to fall back into the errors of the physiocrats. The value of the commodity exceeds the value of labour power also in the surplus production {"Mehrproduktion", which is the term used by Bauer for Charasoff's term "Nebenproduktion"}', and this surplus value is also distributed among all capitals according to their size' (1910/11: 237). Bauer's objection clearly missed the point of Charasoff's procedure, which was to prove the incompatibility of Marx's two invariance postulates ("sum of values = sum of prices" and "total surplus value = total profits"). Bauer also failed to understand Charasoff's proof that the general rate of profits is determined in the basic industries alone. (For a more detailed discussion of Bauer's review, see Mori 2007).

Charasoff's *Das System des Marxismus* (1910) was also reviewed by Conrad Schmidt in *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, which was the revisionist counterpart of Kautsky's *Die neue Zeit*, the theoretical journal of the German Social Democrats. Schmidt's review opened with a complaint about Charasoff's 'tricky sophistry' {verzwickte Rabulistik}, which 'demands very hard work from the serious reader' (1910: 850). Schmidt then contended that Charasoff's book 'contains a critical tribunal on my article "Grundriß zu einem System der theoretischen Nationalökonomie" (published in the *Sozialistische Monatshefte*) which Charasoff had indeed briefly criticised in his Preface. The remainder of Schmidt's book review is devoted to a defence of his own position on Marx's theory of value. In the mentioned article, Schmidt had argued that the labour theory of value should be abandoned altogether, and he had also contended – without showing it – that an analysis in terms of production prices suffices for a derivation of all the important Marxian ideas, while at the same time avoiding the errors and contradictions, into which one is inevitably led by the further adherence to the labour theory of value.

7. Charasoff as a student of “Oeconomia publica” at the University of Zurich

In September 1910, Charasoff returned to Zurich with his new wife and extended family and took residence in Plattenstrasse 28; in the following year the family then moved to larger premises in Ottikerstrasse 14 in Zurich-Oberstrass.³² In October 1910 Charasoff, then thirty-three years old, enrolled as a student at the Law Faculty of the University of Zurich, with “Oeconomia publica” as his main field of study. The account books for lecture fees show that from the winter term 1910/11 until the end of the winter term 1911/12 he attended all the lectures and seminars that are required for a degree in economics.³³ In the summer term 1912 the account books show no entries for lecture fees any more, although Charasoff was still enrolled as a regular student: He apparently terminated his studies at the end of the winter term 1911/12, without taking a final examination and without de-registering. The available documents suggest that Charasoff embarked on this study with the intention of obtaining a degree in economics, and that for three semesters he worked seriously towards achieving this goal.

Political economy in Zurich. Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century political economy was taught at the University of Zurich by professors in the law faculty as a minor subject. It was only with Julius Wolf, who taught in Zurich from 1888 to 1897, that political economy became a separate field of study.³⁴ Wolf’s successor in Zurich was Heinrich

³² Charasoff’s apartment in Plattenstrasse 28 was within walking distance (in fact just across the street) from the Institute of Economics in Zürichbergstrasse 14.

³³ In the winter term 1910/11 he enrolled for the following classes: „Praktische Sozialökonomie“ (Prof. Sieveking), „Sozialökonomisches Seminar“ (Prof. Sieveking), „Sozialökonomisches Konservatorium“ (Prof. Sieveking), „Volkswirtschaftliche Übungen“ (Prof. Eßlen), „Geschichte der nationalökonomischen und sozialistischen Theorien“ (Prof. Eßlen), „Allgemeine Rechtslehre und Einführung in die Rechtswissenschaft“ (Prof. Hafter), „Wechsel- und Scheckrecht“ (Prof. Cohn), „Allgemeine Handelsbetriebslehre“ (Prof. Bachmann), and „Fabrikbetriebslehre“ (Prof. Bachmann). In the summer term 1911 Charasoff again attended all classes taught by Prof. Sieveking, that is, „Theoretische (allgemeine) Sozialökonomie“, „Geschichte des Sozialismus und der sozialen Bewegung“, and „Sozialökonomisches Seminar“; in addition, he also enrolled for „Allgemeines Staatsrecht“ (Prof. Huber). In the winter term 1911/12 Charasoff enrolled for „Praktische Sozialökonomie“ (Prof. Sieveking), „Sozialökonomisches Seminar“ (Prof. Sieveking), and „Statistik“ (Prof. Eßlen).

³⁴ Although Julius Wolf was strongly opposed to Marxism (see his book *Sozialismus und kapitalistische Gesellschaftsordnung* (1892)), he attracted a number of revolutionary

Herkner, who taught theoretical and applied economics as well as public economics and statistics from 1898 to 1906. Herkner was in turn succeeded in 1907 by the economic historian Heinrich Sieveking, who taught in Zurich until his return to his home-town Hamburg in 1922.³⁵ The second professor was Joseph Eßlen, a pupil of Lujo Brentano, who taught in Zurich as an extra-ordinary professor from 1906-1912 and as a full professor from 1913/14, when he left for Berlin. From 1913 onwards, Sieveking's co-worker was the private docent Manuel Saitzew, an economic historian and historian of economic thought, who succeeded him as a full professor in 1922 (see Nabholz et al., 1938: 831-6).

If Charasoff had embarked on the study of "Oeconomia publica" in order to find economic theorists with whom he could discuss his ideas on Marx's economic theory, then his hopes were probably disappointed: Sieveking and Eßlen, from their training and their research interests, were probably not able to understand Charasoff's work. It is very likely, however, that Charasoff got in touch with fellow students in Sieveking's seminar who had a deep interest in the discussion of Marx's economic theories. In his autobiographical reminiscences Sieveking noted about his teaching in Zurich (without giving a precise date): 'Apart from the lecture course I also held a regular seminar, which turned out to be rather lively, because it was not only attended by the calm and quiet Swiss-men but also by many Russians, who were still agitated by the revolution of 1905' (1977: 96-7). In all likelihood, Charasoff also came in contact with Natalie Moszkowska, who wrote her doctoral dissertation under Sieveking's supervision during this period.³⁶ In her later book *Das Marxsche System. Ein Beitrag zu dessen Ausbau* (1929), Moszkowska provided not only a critical discussion of Tugan-Baranowsky's and Bortkiewicz's contributions to the transformation problem, but also

Marxists as students: 'The most talented among them was in his view Rosa Luxemburg' (Nabholz et al., 1938: 831). Rosa Luxemburg left Zurich already in 1897.

³⁵ Heinrich Sieveking (1871-1945) was born into a well-known family of Hanseatic merchants and public servants in Hamburg. After his habilitation in Freiburg he became a professor (Extraordinarius) in Marburg in 1903, before he became a professor for social economics (Ordinarius für Sozialökonomie) at the University of Zurich, from where he moved on to the newly-founded University of Hamburg in 1922. He is known for his work on Italian Renaissance merchant practices and the economic history of Hamburg, as well as for his biographies of Karl Sieveking and Georg Heinrich Sieveking. In Marburg, Sieveking had close contacts with Cohen and Natorp, and he kept up the relationship with the two neo-Kantian philosophers during his time in Zurich (see Sieveking 1977: 85).

³⁶ See Moszkowska (1917).

discussed Tugan-Baranowsky's, Luxemburg's and Charasoff's contributions to the critique of Marx's crisis theory.

The reason for Charasoff's abrupt termination of his studies in spring 1912 presumably lies in a tragic personal event. His second wife, Marie von Charasoff, née Kriegshaber, 'poisoned herself with cyanide' (Vormundschaftakten "Kinder Charasoff", Stadtarchiv Zürich). From the available documents it is not possible to ascertain whether she poisoned herself accidentally (as a doctor of medicine, she might well have experimented with poisonous substances for professional reasons) or rather committed suicide (which seems more likely). In any case, Georg von Charasoff was left behind with four children, with the youngest one, Sergius, barely two years old. He appears to have coped with this difficult situation by giving up his economic studies. He stayed on in Zurich-Oberstrass in Ottikerstrasse 14 with his four children until February 1915.

8. Charasoff's entry for Robert Michels' *Handwörterbuch* project

In late 1913 Charasoff was invited by Robert Michels, who had in the meantime become a professor of sociology at the University of Torino, to make a contribution to a projected encyclopedia of sociology, to be entitled *Handwörterbuch der Soziologie*. In a letter to Michels of 15 January 1914, which is preserved in the Roberto Michels Papers at the Fondazione Einaudi in Torino, Charasoff explained his ideas for an article on "Tolstoj" he intended to contribute. He pointed out that he would challenge the prevailing view of Tolstoj as a thinker who stands in the tradition of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He assured Michels that he was perfectly aware of the novelty and heretical nature of his views, which ran counter to dominant readings of Tolstoj's philosophical position, but that he felt capable of arguing out his case ('if sufficient space were available to me'), because he had 'thoroughly studied this thinker for many years'. Interestingly, Charasoff ended his letter with the remark:

I would also have liked to contribute something on Marxism, but in this field I am a heretic as well and I do not want to impose my ideas on others. If you should be familiar with my book *Das System des Marxismus*, you would perhaps let me know which entries in this boundary field in between sociology and economics you consider to be worthy of my labour. (Roberto Michels Papers, Fondazione Einaudi, Torino)

This remark shows that Charasoff still entertained some hopes in 1914 that he could bring his ideas on the Marxian theory of value and distribution to the attention of a larger academic audience. With the collapse of Robert Michels' *Handwörterbuch* project (for which, besides

the outbreak of WWI, also Max Weber's and Ferdinand Tönnies' refusals of contributing major entries was responsible), a further attempt of Charasoff to gain some recognition for his work in economic theory collapsed as well.

9. Charasoff's return to Tbilisi

In February 1915 Georg von Charasoff travelled to Tbilisi 'in order to take care of some financial/legal transactions related to his property' {in Vermögensangelegenheiten}, leaving his four children behind in Zurich under the auspices of Dr Max Husmann, the owner of a private school and a friend of the Charasoff family.³⁷ On 1 May 1915 Husmann disbanded the apartment in Ottikerstrasse 14, after he had been informed by Charasoff (by telegram) that for the time being he could not possibly return to Zurich. The four children were lodged separately in different families in Zurich, mostly of Russian-Jewish origin, with Dr Husmann remaining in guardianship of all four children. In the following three years no further letters or telegrams from Georg Charasoff arrived, and it was not even clear whether he was still alive. In the revolutionary and post-revolutionary turmoil of 1917 it was rather difficult to obtain any information at all on the current situation in Georgia.

Some information about an event that may or may not be related to Charasoff's departure from Zurich emerges from a document in the Staatsarchiv Zurich, which concerns a court decision from the district court Zurich of 24 March 1915 (Urteil des Bezirksgerichts Zürich vom 24. März 1915, "Charasoff", Staatsarchiv Zürich). Apparently, Charasoff had sacked a house-maid in December 1914 without giving any grounds. She applied to the local judge

³⁷ Max (Meer) Husmann (1888-1965) came to Zurich around 1900, together with his mother and two brothers and sisters, from Proskurow, Poldonia. In 1906 the medical student Marie Kriegshaber lived with the Husmann family as a tenant in Ilgenstrasse 4. In 1912, Max Husmann founded a private school in Sonnegstrasse 80, the "Institut Dr Max Husmann" (Husmann obtained a doctorate in mathematics at the University of Zurich in 1915), for which Georg von Charasoff made a loan. In 1918, Husmann merged his school with the "Institut Minerva" in Scheuchzerstrasse 2 (which still exists today), and in 1926 he founded another private school, the "Institut Montana" in Zugerberg (which also still exists). In 1945, Husmann was an important mediator in secret meetings between representatives of the German SS and the American secret service about the surrender of the German troops in Northern Italy: Due to Husmann's initiative these meetings were successful in ending the war, thus saving human lives and important cultural heritage. When Husmann died in Rome in 1965, his considerable funds went into the "Dr Max Husmann Stiftung (Zurich)", which gives grants 'to talented young people in order to finance an academic or artistic education'.

{Friedensrichter}, who decided that she must obtain the outstanding wage payment. Charasoff did not accept this decision and applied to the next higher court, the “Bezirksgericht”. In the court hearing on 24 March (which Charasoff did not attend) it transpired that he had approached the house-maid sexually, and had apparently sacked her for refusing him. Moreover, the house-maid’s description of him as an extremely arrogant and self-assured but also uncontrolled and ill-tempered person was confirmed by several witnesses. The court sentenced Charasoff (in absentia) to pay the outstanding wage and the law costs.

For a full four years, Husmann took care of the Charasoff children, being helped in this by his friends and his extended family. In spring 1919, however, Husmann applied to the court in Zurich for resolution of his guardianship, because he had run into serious financial problems with his private school. Moreover, he also had disciplinary problems with the three elder children. According to Husmann, Charasoff had left him some 6.000 Swiss Francs in February 1915, and approx. the same amount of money he had obtained from the disbanding of the Charasoff apartment (that is, from the sale of furniture, carpets, books, silverware etc.), from the liquidation of Charasoff’s share in his private school, and from the repayment of a loan that Charasoff had previously given to a widow by the name of “Frau Brunner”. But over and above this sum, Dr Husmann declared to have spent from his own pocket, from 1915 to 1919, ‘some 12.000 to 15.000 Swiss Francs’ on the Charasoff children, ‘apart from much time and distress. My benevolence has been shamelessly exploited.’ (Vormundschaftsakten “Kinder Charasoff”, Stadtarchiv Zurich).

In early 1919, the municipality of Zurich assumed the guardianship of the four Charasoff children, in the form of its representative Dr Häberli {Amtsvormund}. From spring 1919 to spring 1920, there exists an extensive documentation on Dr Häberli’s activities concerning the Charasoff children (see Vormundschaftsakten “Kinder Charasoff” and Fremdenpolizeidossier “Kinder Charasoff”, Stadtarchiv Zurich), which can be briefly summed up as follows.

By spring 1919, Charasoff’s son Andreas Arthenius, then 17 years old, regularly bunked school in order to hang out with his (mostly) Russian friends in Zurich; he stayed up late and strolled through Zurich’s nightlife, incurred debts, and was arrested by the police more than once. There were plans of confining him to a work-house for boys in the Swiss countryside, but he left Zurich in May 1919 without giving notice to anybody with one of the “Russian trains” {Russenzüge}, which regularly departed from Zurich in those years. After a ten weeks

journey he arrived in Tbilisi, briefly stayed with his father, and then moved on to Batum, where he worked for the British army.

Lily von Charasoff, then 15 years old, also did not regularly attend classes in the private school for girls, in which she had been placed by Dr Husmann. She was apparently fascinated by the theatre, the ballet and the opera, moved in artistic and literary circles, and also had first love affairs. She informed Dr Häberli that she intended to break off high-school attendance in order to become an actress, and she actually took acting lessons with the actor Luis Rainer (who was then little known, but later worked with Max Reinhardt and Gustav Gründgens). During spring and summer 1919, Lily obtained regular financial support from Edith Rockefeller-McCormick, the mother of her schoolmate and close girlfriend Muriel McCormick.³⁸ Dr Häberli noted in a memo note that Ms Rockefeller-McCormick was even prepared to employ her as a lady's companion and secretary, but Lily refused this offer and declared that she was determined to travel to Tbilisi in order to search for her father.

Alexander von Charasoff had successfully finished high-school in 1918 and was now a student of chemistry at the Polytechnical University of Zurich. However, after a few months he had largely given up studying and spent his time by enjoying the Zurich nightlife, incurring debts etc. The youngest child, Sergius, then 8 years old, caused no disciplinary problems. He lived in the family of Husmann's sister, who was married to a Jewish mathematics teacher.

Since the municipality of Zurich was keen to get rid of the financial obligations related to the remaining three Charasoff children, Dr Häberli tried to raise money for their "home transport". From various sources, including donations from Ms McCormick and from a further school-friend of Lily's, Maria Wyss, a sufficient amount was finally available for covering Lily's travel costs. She was able to leave Zurich on 21 October 1919 and travelled

³⁸ Edith Rockefeller-McCormick (1872-1932) was a daughter of the American oil tycoon John D. Rockefeller (Standard Oil); she was married to Harold Fowler McCormick, a son of the inventor and entrepreneur Cyrus McCormick (International Harvester). At the time, she was one of the richest women in the world. She first came to Zurich in 1913 in order to obtain treatment from C.G. Jung, and then stayed on until 1921. During those eight years she lived in a luxurious suite in the Hotel Baur au Lac, where for several months in 1919 Lily Charasoff visited her on a weekly basis in order to spend an afternoon with her. Her daughter, Muriel McCormick (1903-1959), after having finished private schools in Zurich and Lausanne, was trained as an actor and opera-singer, but she never performed professionally. After the early death of her husband she devoted her time and energy to the management of her funds and to sponsoring the performing and visual arts.

by train and ship via Naples and Constantinople to Tbilisi, where she arrived some six weeks later. Immediately upon her arrival she wrote a letter to Dr Häberli, and another one to her (step-)brother Alexander, in which she asked him forcefully *not* to embark on the journey to Tbilisi, and rather to make every possible effort to be allowed to stay on in Zurich. She informed Alexander about the difficult living conditions in Tbilisi, where their father now earned his living as a professor at the Polytechnical University: ‘We don’t have any money, although we still own a factory, but this is out of use and earns us no money. And to sell it now is not the right time’. To Dr Häberli, Lily wrote that her father ‘has lost all his funds and property, which is now in the hands of the Russian government’ and that she had found him in very bad health and was now living together with him in a single, unheated room. Since life was so difficult in Tbilisi, her plan was to return to Zurich as soon as possible, together with her father: ‘We plan to come to Switzerland in spring, and if Alexander could stay on until then, this would be a great relief. Here it would be very difficult for him, and his future would be rather bleak, the more so, because he cannot speak the language and the higher faculties {at the newly founded Tbilisi University} are not yet well established’ (Lily Charasoff to Dr Häberli, 8 December 1919; Vormundschaftsakten “Kinder Charasoff”, Stadtarchiv Zürich). However, when Lily’s two letters arrived in Zurich on 27 December 1919, Alexander von Charasoff was already on the way to Tbilisi, together with his younger (step-)brother Sergius. They had left Zurich on 9 December 1919.

Lily sent a further letter to Dr Häberli in June 1920, in which she informed him about her firm intention to return to Zurich, together with her father, as soon as possible. She had meanwhile opened a sewing room, with two apprentice girls working for her, and she hoped to earn enough money within the next fifteen months to make a return trip possible: ‘Life is very difficult here. There is an enormous inflation and much suffering. My father is very weak. My brother Arthur has got an excellent job in Baku. Bubi {i.e., Sergius} lives with Papa and is doing well on the whole’ (Vormundschaftsakten “Kinder Charasoff”, Stadtarchiv Zürich).

Neither Georg von Charasoff nor his children ever returned to Zurich.

10. Charasoff’s articles in *Die Aktion* and *Der Gegner*

In 1918, five essays of Georg Charasoff appeared in the literary-political journal *Die Aktion*. Scrutiny shows that these articles are slightly revised versions of five chapters from

Charasoff's second book, *Das System des Marxismus*, of 1910. The first article was published under the title "Die Ideologie des Marxismus" {The ideology of Marxism} in a special issue devoted to Karl Marx on the occasion of his 100th birthday, together with a reprint of the full text of Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*. Vol. 10 of *Die Aktion*, published in 1920, contained another long article (in three parts) by Georg Charasoff, entitled "Eine Darstellung der Lehre von Karl Marx". This article is based on selected excerpts from different chapters of Charasoff's first book, *Karl Marx über die menschliche und kapitalistische Wirtschaft* of 1909. All the texts were probably reprinted without the author's (and the publisher's) consent: Charasoff lived in Tbilisi since 1915 and the *Hans Bondy Verlag* had been liquidated in 1912.

Die Aktion was a literary-political journal, edited by Franz Pfemfert, which appeared from 1911 to 1932. It is generally regarded as having been instrumental for the break-through of expressionism in Germany (see Raabe 1961, 1964). In the early phase of the expressionist movement, that is, from roughly 1911 to 1914, *Die Aktion* was the main outlet, together with Herwarth Walden's *Der Sturm*, for the new literary and artistic movement. Very early on, Pfemfert published the works of young writers and poets that later became famous, including Gottfried Benn, Max Brod, André Gide, Georg Heym, Else Lasker-Schüler, Heinrich Mann, Frank Wedekind, Franz Werfel and Carl Zuckmayer. *Die Aktion* also published illustrations of artists like Lyonel Feininger, George Grosz, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Alfred Kubin, Franz Marc, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Egon Schiele, and Heinrich Vogeler. In addition to illustrations, literary texts and expressionist poetry, the journal also published political-economic essays with a socialist/Marxist/anarchist orientation. During WWI, several issues of the journal were confiscated by the police because of anti-nationalistic and anti-war propaganda. In 1918, Pfemfert briefly supported the "Räte-Kommunismus" and after the foundation of the German Communist Party (KPD) his journal temporarily became the official party journal.

It seems very likely that the Charasoff texts had been recommended to Pfemfert by Otto Buek. If this is true, Buek's initiative was responsible for making Charasoff's name, and thus perhaps also his books, known in literary circles. Evidence for this can be found, for instance, in a letter of Raoul Hausmann, a major contributor to the Dada-movement, to his former wife, the artist Hannah Höch, of 1931, in which he refers to Charasoff's books (see *Künstlerarchiv der Berlinischen Galerie*, 1995: 67). It is interesting to note that the first volume of *Die Aktion*, published in 1911, carries a short article by Otto Buek, entitled "Zur Kritik des Marxismus" {On the critique of Marxism}, in which the 'bourgeois critique of Marx' is

rejected with arguments that are very similar to those advanced by Charasoff in his book of 1909. Buek's article can indeed be considered as a synopsis of parts of Charasoff's first book. Since this article is likely to have come to Charasoff's attention, and no complaints from him about plagiarism are on record, there is probably some truth in Charasoff's statement (in his acknowledgement to Buek in his Preface) that in the writing of his 1909 book he 'drew inspiration for my ideas from conversations with him {Buek}' (1909: v).

In 1921, the literary-political journal *Der Gegner*, which was edited by Julian Gumperz and Wieland Herzfelde, published the article "Karl Marx an seine bürgerlichen Gegner" {Karl Marx to his bourgeois adversaries} by Georg Charasoff. This was a slightly revised version of the final chapter of Charasoff's book of 1909. In the same issue there is also a graphical illustration by John Heartfield (Wieland Herzfelde's brother) on the title page and several illustrations by George Grosz, as well as contributions by Fritjof Nansen, Leo Trotzky, Alexander Preobrashensky, and Georg Heym. The editors of *Der Gegner* supported the Bolshevik revolution in Russia and published a number of articles which glorified the "new life" in the Soviet Union.

11. Charasoff in Tbilisi, Baku and Moscow, 1915-1931

Political turmoil and artistic-literary life in Tbilisi, 1917-1921. After the collapse of the Russian empire in the aftermath of the February revolution Georgia for a few months became part of the Transcaucasian Federation. Upon its break-up, the *Democratic Republic of Georgia* was founded in May 1918 under the leadership of the Socialdemocratic Menshevik party. In order to prevent Georgia from being occupied by the Ottoman empire, the National Assembly signed a treaty with Germany, which recognized the newly founded Republic and stationed troops there in compensation for the establishment of an anti-Bolshevik region between the Ukraine and the Caspian Sea. After Germany's defeat, the German troops were removed from the Caucasus and replaced by British ones.

The Menshevik government introduced a radical land reform, in which the feudal landlords were expropriated (without a compensation) and the land was divided up among the peasant farmers as private property. Forests, mineral deposits, the post and railway system, and the harbor installations were seized by the government as state property. The Mensheviks also

introduced a comprehensive educational system, with Georgian as the main language in primary schools and gymnasiums and in the newly-founded national university in Tbilisi.

After the occupation of Georgia by the Red Army in March 1921 the leading Social Democrats left the country and established a government in exile in Paris, under the leadership of Noe Zhordania. Georgia saw violent riots in August and September 1924, followed by executions of some 4000 people and a similar number of imprisonments. In Abkhazia, the Islamic region around Batum, there was an uprising in spring 1929, primarily because of religious oppression and a high tax burden; in spring 1930 there were violent uprisings by farmers in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, in which several thousand people were killed.³⁹

Futurism, transrational poetry, and psychoanalytical interpretations of literature. After Georgia's declaration of independence in spring 1918 a highly interesting cultural and intellectual life developed in Tbilisi:

In 1917-1921 Tbilisi actually played the same role in Caucasus as Paris in Europe in the beginning of the century; in other words, it became the cultural centre of Russia and Caucasus, where the elite artistic society gathered and its accumulated artistic energy was being creatively expressed at full strength. (Chikhradze 2009)

In 1917 and 1918 some young poets, painters, actors, dancers and intellectuals from Russia moved to Tbilisi, where they organized, together with Georgian and Armenian artists, readings and discussions of modern poetry, and cabaret and dancing performances in coffee-houses and taverns. A popular place was the "Fantastic Little Inn" {*Fantasticheskii kabachok*}, first named the "Poet's Studio", which opened on 12 November 1917 on the main street of the Georgian capital and soon became a major center of attraction for young poets and artists. The Georgian poet G. Robakidse described it thus:

Tbilisi had become a fantastic city. This fantastic city needed a fantastic corner and one fine day at Rustaveli Prospect No. 12, in the courtyard, poets and artists opened The Fantastic Little Inn, which consisted of a small room designed for 12-15 people in which by some miracle as many as 50 people managed to fit. The walls of the room were

³⁹ Karl Kautsky, who had rejected Charasoff's submissions to "Die neue Zeit" in 1907 and 1909, visited Georgia from September 1920 to January 1921. He was favorably impressed by the reform policies that had been introduced in the "Social Democratic Peasants Republic", and wrote a small booklet on his travel impressions (Kautsky 1921). However, when it was published in May 1921 after his return to Germany, Georgia had been occupied already by the Red Army (Stenson 1991: 227).

decorated with phantasmagoria. The Inn was open almost every evening and poets and artists read their poems and lectures. (Quoted from Nikolskaia 1998: 167).

Georg von Charasoff seems to have participated very actively in these artistic-literary activities right from the start. Marzio Marzaduri, an Italian expert on Russian avant-garde literature of the early 20th century, refers to him in the following terms:

Charazov is indeed an intellectual of great versatility: he works on mathematics, economics, psychology and literature, also writes poetry. He has returned to his mother country from Zurich, where he had lived for many years, and is regarded by everyone as a sort of master {maestro}. In April 1918 he held a conference in the “Fantastic Little Inn” on *The theory of Freud and transrational language*, then published in “Ars” a psychoanalytical interpretation of the dream of Tatiana, the heroine of *Onegin*; the first work with a Freudian reading of a poetic text in Russia. The article is also interesting for the statement of the militant poetics which it contains. Charazov invites the poets to break the “fetters of Laertes” which strangle the art, and to aim at comprehending the truly inside, to find “in the capriciousness of dreams” new and universal imagination. (Marzaduri 1982: 117)

Gerald Janecek, who wrote a book entitled *Zaum: The Transrational Poetry of Russian Futurism* (1996) refers to Charasoff in the following terms:

The Tiflis mathematician and poet G. A. Kharazov was an active proponent of Freudian psychology. Although Kharazov was apparently able to read Freud in the original German judging by one such reference by him (1919: 12), the main Freud texts were already available in Russian translation: *The Interpretation of Dreams* [1900] in 1904, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* [1901, 1904, 1907] in 1910 and a second edition in 1916. Among the recorded contributions of Dr Kharazov to the discussion of Freud and *zaum* were a lecture, “Freud’s Theories and Zaum poetry”, at the Fantastic Little Inn, April 5, 1918, and his participation in a debate “On Theatre and Zaum poetry” at the Conservatory, May 27, 1918, in which Kruchenykh also took part. (Janecek, 1996: 242)

In his article on Pushkin’s poetry Charasoff in fact made use of two further writings of Freud which had not then been translated into Russian: *Totem und Tabu* (1913; Russian transl. 1923) and *Vorlesungen über die Einführung in die Psychoanalyse* (1916/17; Russian transl. 1922).

The best-known Russian avant-garde and Zaum poets in Tbilisi were Aleksei Kruchenykh, Juri Degen, David Burluk, Sergei Goredetskii, and Velimir Khlebnikov. Among the Georgian poets, Igor Terentyev and Ilya Zdanevich are famously remembered. In Tbilisi, there were several literary groups, amongst them “Alpha-Lira”, “The Blue Horns”, “41⁰”, “The Guild of Poets”, “The Academy of Verse”, and the “Syndicate of the Futurists”.

In her contribution to *Dada global*, a book that traces the dissemination of the *Dada*-movement in Eastern Europe, the Swiss literary critic Ludmila Vachtova contends that Charasoff was instrumental in transferring Dadaism from Zurich to Tbilisi:

The francophone Zdanewitsch corresponded with Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, and from Zurich Georgij Charasow returned to Tbilisi with experiences from the “Cabaret Voltaire”. Oddly enough, the sapient mathematician, psychologist and economist gave a presentation in the “Fantastic Little Inn” on psychoanalytical features of Pushkin’s Tatyana and anal erotism. (Vachtova 1994: 110)

Vachtova’s statement regarding Charasoff’s role as a transmitter of Dadaistic ideas seems to lack plausibility: Charasoff had left Zurich already in February 1915, while Dada performances in the “Cabaret Voltaire” were held only from March 1916 onwards (and there is also no evidence for earlier contacts of Charasoff with Hugo Ball, Hans Arp or other members of the artistic community that was later associated with the “Cabaret Voltaire”). As already mentioned, Charasoff’s presentation in the Fantastic Little Inn led to the publication of the article “Son Tat’iany (Opyt tolkovaniia po Freidu) {Tatiana’s dream (A Freudian interpretation)} (1919) in the newly-founded literary journal *ARS*. It concerns the interpretation of a dream sequence of the main female character, Tatiana, in Alexander Pushkin’s poetic epos *Evgenij Onegin*. Charasoff’s interpretation, according to which Tatiana’s dream is a nightmarish mirror-like doubling of Onegin’s obsessions, is frequently mentioned with approval in contributions on Russian avant-garde literature.⁴⁰ Olga Peters Hasty, for instance, notes in her treatise on Pushkin’s poetry:

Most commentators acknowledge the erotic nature of Tatiana’s dream. The most extensive treatment of its erotic imagery can be found in Richard Gregg’s “Ta’yana’s Two dreams”, Georgii Gachev’s “Russkii eros” in *Natsional’nye obrazy mira: Kosmo/Psikho/Logos* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1995), 242-50; G.A. Kharazov, “Son Tat’iany. Opyt tolkovaniia po Freidu” in *ARS*, (Tiflis), no. 1 (1919): 9-20; and J. Douglas Clayton, “Towards a Feminist Reading of Evgenii Onegin”, *Canadian Slavic Papers* 29, nos. 2 & 3 (June-September 1987): esp. 262-64. (Hasty 1999: 258)

According to Harsha Ram, Charasoff’s presentation in the Fantastic Little Inn was instrumental in turning Alexei Kruchenykh’s attention to psychoanalysis and to introduce Freudian ideas into his *Zaum* poetry:⁴¹

⁴⁰ See, for instance, Matlaw (1959: 490-91), Rancour Laferriere (1989: 229-31), Clayton (2000: 104), and Gillespie (2009: 463).

⁴¹ Janecek (1996: 212) notes that Kruchenykh’s correspondence contains references to Freud already in 1915.

It was in Tbilisi that Kruchenykh was to assimilate the lessons of Freud, specifically *The Interpretation of Dreams* and *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*; it was also in Tbilisi that the first attempt was made to apply Freudian theory to the interpretation of Russian literature. (...) Kruchenykh found in Freud a new means of interpreting the randomness of phonetic play. If the mystical and the infantile had long been claimed as analogues to avant-garde linguistic practice, they were now joined by the erotic and the obscene. (2004: 374)

Many poets left Tbilisi in 1919 because of the deteriorating economic conditions in Georgia. The Menshevik government had difficulties with raising taxes and controlling corruption, and even the Head of State, Noe Zhordania, admitted that the economic and social conditions were unbearable. Many of the Russian poets moved from Tbilisi to Baku (Azerbaijan) where the University had just opened. Charasoff stayed on until 1921 and continued to participate actively in the literary activities in Tbilisi. The poetess Melitta Rafalovich, the wife of the leader of the “Guild of Poets”, recalled the meetings in the winter 1920/1921:

We met once a week, read and discussed sixty poems an evening ... about fifty men and women ... half sang half read their verse ... Life was getting very difficult. Rooms were requisitioned. It was unprecedentedly cold in Tiflis, but the Guild still went on meeting. Wrapped up in their coats, people huddled around the miserable stoves, reading poetry. The electricity went out every minute, but even if it was on, you could not read by it. Paraffin lamps, which smoked, appeared. Cold and hunger stopped this activity. (Nikol'skaia 1980: 320)

According to Tatiana Nikol'skaia, Charasoff participated in some of those meetings, but more importantly he also led another group of writers, the so-called “Academy of Verse”:

Apart from the sessions of the Guild of Poets, in 1920 in Tiflis a literary circle called the Academy of Verse, headed by Kharazov, was also functioning. Apart from readings of poetry at its meetings there were lectures devoted to analysing literary works from a psychoanalytic point of view. (...) Not only Kharazov, but also Terentiev, the poetess K. Arsenieva, Tatishvili and the author of prose miniatures, Shepelenko, were active visitors to the Academy of Verse. (Nikol'skaia 1980: 320)

According to Marzaduri, ‘Kharazov left Tbilisi in 1921 and also moved to Baku, in order to teach economics at the newly-founded Polytechnical University. But he continued to work on literature and psychoanalysis, to write poetry and to study Pushkin's works. Towards the end of the decade he died in an accident’ (Marzaduri 1982: 127).

Charasoff's contributions to debates on physics and on psychoanalysis. In 1925, Charasoff made various presentations as well as contributions to scientific discussions in Moscow. He certainly stayed in Moscow for several weeks and perhaps even moved there permanently

from Baku.⁴² He published a short article which aimed at a mathematical refutation of Einstein's relativity theory (Kharazov 1925). Because of this article, Charasoff has been associated with the so-called "mechanist group", whose objections to relativity theory triggered heated debates in Russia during the 1920s. The Finnish curator Pia Tikka observed that

... many researchers describe the cross-disciplinary atmosphere that synthesized foreign scientific and socio-economic tendencies with the principles of the new socialist order (...). Debates concerning the modern ideas of non-Euclidian spaces, Albert Einstein's relativity theory, and Werner Heisenberg and Niels Bohr's 'Copenhagen interpretation' of quantum mechanics were also seemingly reflected in Soviet 'live building'. However, the new ideas were not always accepted: for example, the Mach-inspired Bogdanov, whose main interest was to adapt Marxism to the latest discoveries in the natural sciences, took the stand of defending Einstein's relativity theory against accusations of 'mathematical refutation' by G. A. Kharasov and of 'ideological refutation' by A. K. Timiryazev. (Tikka 2008: 187)⁴³

The debates among Russian physicists on relativity theory in the 1920s were burdened with political and ideological considerations, and articulating a particular view which did not become the official Party line could have far-reaching practical consequences for those involved:

The engineers with a bias to mechanistic thinking (N P Kastarin, Ya I Grdina, G A Kharazov, later V F Mitkevich and others) went much further in their criticism of relativity than the Deborin group did. Timiryazev alone published at least ten articles condemning relativity in 1925-1926. (...) Bringing academic discussions on the relation of philosophy to physics down to the level of admonitions on the adherence of science Communist Party principles, the class struggle in science, sabotage of scientists, etc. was fraught with a ban on teaching the physical theories to students and with the persecution of theoretical physicists. (Vizgin, 1999: 1261)⁴⁴

⁴² Klyukin (2008: 335) has suggested that Charasoff moved to Moscow in 1925, but so far no documents have been provided to confirm this conjecture. It seems not unlikely, though, also because his daughter, Lily Charasoff, appears to have lived in Moscow by 1925/1926 as well (see below).

⁴³ See also the following remark in a study on Bogdanov: 'Together with the future academician I.E. Tamm, he {Bogdanov} defended the theory of relativity in the Communist Academy against G.A. Kharazov's 'mathematical' refutation, A. K. Timiryazev's 'ideological' refutation and so on' (Plyutto 1998: 78).

⁴⁴ In *The Lysenko Affair*, published in 1970, the American historian David Joravsky surmised that Charasoff might have been one of the victims of repressive measures against non-conformist scientists: 'I consider it very likely that some obscurantists did suffer repression. For example, G. A. Kharazov vanished with disturbing suddenness following his 'rebuttals' of relativity' (1970: 385). However, there is no evidence to support this hypothesis.

The physicist Timiryazev, who was the main proponent of the group of mechanistic thinkers, refers to Charasoff in his *Introduction to Theoretical Physics* (1933, in Russian) in the following terms: ‘An ingenious and simple derivation of the Einstein-Lorentz transformation, to which we now turn, goes back to the gifted theoretician Professor G A Kharazov’ (quoted from Klyukin, 2008: 335).

Parallel to his work in physics, Charasoff also pursued further his work on the psychoanalytical interpretation of Russian literature. In March 1925, he delivered a lecture at the Russian Psychoanalytic Institute in Moscow,⁴⁵ on the psychoanalytical interpretation of Pushkin’s writings:

The members of the institute also heard addresses by guest speakers, including one of the rising stars in Soviet psychology, Lev Vygotsky, on December 14, 1924, and by G.A. Charasov, a literary scholar who spoke on “Pushkin’s Work in the Light of Psychoanalysis” on March 21, 1925. (Miller 1998: 67)

In the reports of the meetings of the Russian Psychoanalytic Association Charasoff’s lecture is summarized in the following terms:

25th meeting. — 21 March 1925.

Prof. G. A. C h a r a s o w (as guest): **Pushkin’s work in the light of psychoanalysis.** The speaker analyses several works of Pushkin and notes some parallels between the social motives in Pushkin’s writings and his psychic attitude. (*Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, Band XII, 1926, p. 125)

In the following week, Charasoff presented a further paper:

27th meeting. — 28 March 1925.

Prof. G. **Charasow** (as guest): **Methodological considerations on the psychoanalysis of art.** The speaker wants every work of art to be considered as a dream of the artist. Every

⁴⁵ On the history of psychoanalysis in Russia, see Miller (1998). Although a psychoanalytic institute was established rather early in Soviet Russia, Freudian ideas were nevertheless vigorously debated in the 1920s: ‘Freud’s works, beginning with his *Interpretation of Dreams* (published in 1899) were translated from German into Russian before they appeared in any other foreign language. Psychiatrists who had travelled to study with Freud, Carl Jung and Karl Abraham in Western Europe organized a training institute in Moscow years before any existed in London, Paris, New York, or Buenos Aires – all cities that later became flourishing centers of psychoanalysis. (...) During the first half of the 1920s the Freudian community in Soviet Russia managed to establish the first (and to date the only) state-supported psychoanalytic institute in the world. In addition, a therapeutic children’s school run on psychoanalytic principles was established with government funding. Moreover, a vigorous debate about psychoanalysis took place throughout the 1920s in the major Bolshevik party journals. This situation changed decisively at the end of that decade as all matters relating to Freud and psychoanalysis were banished to the exclusionary zone reserved for enemies of the state.’ (Miller 1998: xi-xii)

creative act has infantile motives, which are socially transformed in the further development. (*Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, Band XII, 1926, p. 126)

In the same year Charasoff also attended a symposium on “Psychoanalysis and the Arts” in Moscow, which was organized by the Russian Academy of Sciences. In a comment on a contribution by V. M. Friche, Charasoff rejected the latter’s objections to psychoanalysis. His comment on Friche was summarized in the following terms:

What is so scary about someone telling you that a man is a machine, running on some ionic-chemical energy which is also called sexual when directed to securing progeny? This energy creates all social values because society is also a kind of progeny. Creation of social values is called sublimation, or distillation. But all processes are based on the same old rough sexual energy. This energy is the matter from which everything elevated, social, is made. There is nothing scary and awful in this, for as everyone knows from long ago, everything emerges from matter and returns into matter. (Kharazov 1925: 256-7; quoted from Kurbanovsky 2008: 895)

The art theorist and art critic Voronskij summarized Charasoff’s contribution to the debate in an article of 1926 in the following terms: ‘According to Charasow, Freud is an excellent psychiatrist, who can contribute greatly to the art sciences; correct is for example his idea that everything originates in sexuality: “There is nothing bad or frightening about this”’ (Voronskij 2003: 224).

On the fate of Lily von Charasoff. Dmitrii Bykov’s recent biography of Boris Pasternak (Bykov 2005; in Russian) contains an interesting reference to Charasoff’s daughter Lily, in connection with a description of the New Year’s eve at the turn of the year 1926/27:

Pasternak welcomed the new year 1927 at home, almost in the same way as described in Nabokov’s “Dar”: There, Godunov-Čerdyncev is to meet Zina for the New Year’s Eve ball, but sits down with his manuscript “The Life of Černyševskij” shortly before leaving the house, begins to revise it, allows himself to be carried away, and then writes all night long – Zina returns home aggrieved, but the thing is finished. Pasternak, as we know, loved to be alone in the house. In the darkness and privacy of a feast day it was good to sit down on the writing table rather than on the festive dinner table. Just as you receive it, so you will also live it: the year 1927 became for Pasternak a year of intensive work and increasing loneliness. In the first night of the new year he sketched the outlines of the second part of “Šmidt”, bringing together finished sections and turning them into a unified style. He also was not disturbed in his working mood by the visit of Lily Charazova shortly after midnight. Charazova came in order to congratulate him and then disappeared, and in the year 1927 she also disappeared from his life and from life in general: she contracted typhus and died on 13 September.

Charazova meant a lot to Pasternak – it was a remarkable women’s fate even in those days. She was born in 1903. Her father, Georgij Charazov, lived in Switzerland then, as a political emigré (,a gifted scoundrel, mystical anarchist and proven genius, mathematician,

poet, anything you like,” – is Pasternak’s characterization of him in a letter to Cvetaeva). In 1914 he left his children in Zurich and returned to Georgia, and Lily, when she had just reached her 15th year, began to search for him in Russia. About her Russian exertions very little is known – in the Preface to the failed anthology of her poems (Charazova wrote in German, under the pen name “Maria Wyss”) Pasternak wrote:

“There she got into an environment that never gave anything else to anyone but disarray and suffering; where she, after having become a mother at the age of seventeen and having been exposed to immorality and suffered endless insults and torments, formed such ideas about life, which guaranteed that any future elation would invariably turn into balefulness for her.”

This environment was, according to Pasternak, inspired by Nietzsche and anarchy: “The Tbilisi children of the coffee-house period”. Charazova never recollected herself – she forgot Zurich forever, and to Zurich, wrote Pasternak, she must immediately be brought back, and it was not yet too late, - but it did not happen. Pasternak called her a beauty, „Mediumička“, and he loved her countenance, but her poems he did not really appreciate – sometimes reprimanding himself for, perhaps, „not noticing a great talent, numbed by the soberness and pedantry of his standards“: he did not like in those poems the arbitrariness, the dreamful graphic quality and the surrealism of Lautréamont-like shadows, but the roots of all this lay – not in the attempt to follow the literary fashion, but in the drowsy, half-sleeping, half-insane state, in which Charazova, forever doped by Russia, lived through the revolution, the female tragedy and her entire life. (...)

Charazova first met Pasternak on some evening in spring 1926, perceiving a kindred soul in him, and reaching out for this kinship. He tried to rescue her – but without success: It was the environment that fuelled the madness. (Bykov 2005: 94)

A further reference to Lily Charasoff can be found in an unpublished essay of the Russian poet Andrei Voznesenskii.⁴⁶

On Georg von Charasoff’s death. Georg von Charasoff died in an accident in the night of 4 to 5 March 1931 in the Kizhase colony near Zaporizhia, a major city in the Southeast of the Ukraine at the banks of the Dnieper. At the time he was visiting the energy institute *Dnjepostro*, which since 1927 was overseeing the construction of a dam and a hydro-electric power station in the Dnieper river (Notice in *Istvestya* of 6 March 1931; quoted from Klyukin 2008, pp. 334-5).

Charasoff’s eldest son, Alexander, seems to have been killed in 1937 during Stalin’s great purge. About the fate of Arthur and Sergius nothing is known.

⁴⁶ See Andrei Voznesenskii Papers at Stanford University, Box 14, Folder 19. Andrei Voznesenskii (b. 1933), a pupil of Boris Pasternak, is one of the most important poets in post-Stalinist Russia. He has published more than forty anthologies of poetry, as well as several novels, three plays, and two operas.

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