

**A Window of Opportunities:
Russian Refugee Scholars in Latin America**

**Marina Yu. Sorokina, PhD
Alexander Soljenitcyn Center for the Study of the Russian Diaspora
Moscow, Russian Federation**

Abstract

In 2018 the first Museum of the Russian Diaspora would be opened in Moscow as a part of the Alexander Soljenitcyn Center in Moscow. This symbolic event reflects both the influence of the Russian diaspora in the life of the modern Russian society and its importance for the current Russian historical memory agenda. What kind of the emigre heritage has to be presented in the Museum is a great challenge and research agenda for the Soljenitcyn Center members. On the base of an experience of the Russian origin scholars in Latin America this paper suggests a concept of refugee academics as an image of life and professional success.

In contrast to many other countries Russian Empire / Soviet Union / Russian Federation survived in XX century three major «waves» of the mass academic migration: after the Bolshevik Revolution and Civil War (1917-1921), the World War II (1945-1952) and after the Gorbachev's perestroika (1985).

Despite its importance, there has been no scholarly treatment of the Russian academic migrations, whether external or internal, on the basis of archival research. For many years refugees and émigrés, like dissidents, were 'hidden groups', ignored by the Soviet authorities, civil society and public memory. With Perestroika and the breakup of the former Soviet Union (1991), however, there has been a revival of research on the relationship between the culture of memory and the trauma of political exile that so marked the country's XXth century. Today a new Russian scholarly literature has begun to trace the displacement and refugee experience of the Russian academic community as a part of the global migration of intellectuals under the impact of the war and social revolutions.

The paper presents an experience of psychologists Konstantin Gavriloff (Argentina) and Helena Antipoff (Brazil) at the time of their search for professional identity and choice of scientific and personal strategies. The Latin America countries opened a window of opportunities for them. Russia – Europe – Latin America – these scholar's locuses marked not only the geographical shift of the émigré scholar positions but reflected the new communications – the ways how the European scholarly approaches and techniques were applied to the new institutions before World War II. The role of the émigré scholars was pioneering in this process.