

Arthur P. Mendel, 1927–1988

Arthur P. Mendel, professor of history at the University of Michigan, died on 28 February 1988 after a courageous bout with cancer. Born on 17 July 1927 in Chicago, Arthur was a graduate of Roosevelt College in Chicago and did his graduate work at Harvard, where he received his doctorate in Russian history in 1955. He taught at Roosevelt College and New York University before coming to Michigan in 1962.

Arthur's major work was in Russian intellectual history, a subject he studied and taught with great passion. Generations of Michigan students heard him discuss in his lectures and seminars the celebrated questions of the Russian intelligentsia: "What is Justice?" "Who is to Blame?" "What is to be Done?" Arthur shared with the figures he studied the belief that these questions must concern all responsible thinking men and women, that the task of the scholar and teacher is to draw lessons from the past and present that can define and shape one's life, politics, and social environment. His choice of Russian intellectual history as a field of specialization reflected his sense of what it meant to lead a meaningful and morally responsible life. He believed passionately in freedom and equally strongly opposed those philosophies and historical interpretations that suggest the power of vast impersonal forces over the fates of men and peoples. The history of nineteenth and twentieth century Russia provided him with abundant material to examine and discuss these issues and to explore their reflection in concrete historical situations. Similarly, the world and campus he lived in provided frequent opportunities to present and contest his views and to elaborate his ethical ideals. This he did in earnest good humor, even in the throes of his illness. Few of his colleagues and students avoided these engagements during his twenty-five years at Michigan. All will remember them, and him, with appreciation and respect.

Arthur's major scholarly contributions reflected his deep convictions. *Dilemmas of Progress in Tsarist Russia* focused on the debate between legal Marxists and legal populists but elaborated at the same time a theory of peaceful social development that its author deemed applicable to India and other developing social orders. *Michael Bakunin: Roots of Apocalypse* attempted to situate radical political strivings in psychological conditions and to identify the destructive qualities of revolutionary movements and radical change in the personalities and characters of their practitioners. Both books thus reflected Arthur's deep conviction in the power of men and women to shape their destinies, and his equally strong sense of an individual's moral responsibility for social and political actions. More recently, his work turned to the history of utopian and millennialist thought in western civilization. He worked on that project until his final days and left a completed manuscript of the first volume.

Arthur Mendel leaves a rich and valued legacy in his writings, teaching, and personal relationships. His friends and colleagues greatly admired his courage of conviction and will remember his intelligence, warmth and spirit.

ROMAN SZPORLUK AND WILLIAM G. ROSENBERG
University of Michigan