Acknowledgments

This book owes its title and chief inspiration to the Soviet Russian writer Vasilii Semenovich Grossman (1905–64). In his pessimistic novella *Forever Flowing* Grossman explains Russia’s uniqueness by its “slave soul.” Russia is a land of endless suffering, according to Grossman, because Russians typically cannot overcome their self-defeating slavishness.

If there was anything to what Grossman was saying, I thought when I first read him, then the psychoanalytic theory of moral masochism ought to apply to the Russians. Nearly one thousand footnotes later, I have become convinced that Grossman was correct, for I have been able to document the widespread occurrence of moral masochism in various spheres of Russian culture.

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All translations into English are mine unless otherwise noted. A Russian translation of this book is in preparation.
THE SLAVE SOUL OF RUSSIA