Annual Center Conference Honors the Work of John D. Klier

By Eugene M. Avrutin

On April 19-20, 2009, the Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center hosted its annual conference. Organized by Eugene Avrutin (History) and Harriet Murav (Slavic Languages and Literatures), “Jews in the East European Borderlands: Violence, Daily Life, and Memory” brought together historians and literary critics from Israel, Russia, the United States, and Great Britain. Michael Stanislawski, Professor of Jewish History at Columbia University, gave the keynote lecture titled “May God Bless and Keep the Tsar Far Away from Us: A Reexamination of Russian Jews’ ‘Loyalty’ to Russia.”

The conference honored the work of John D. Klier, the Corob Professor of Modern Jewish History at the University College London until his untimely death in September 2007. A leading authority on Russia’s perception and treatment of the Jews from the late 18th century until the demise of the Tsarist Empire, Klier received his doctorate from the University of Illinois in 1975 under the direction of Ralph Fisher. Klier was a tireless advocate of Jewish scholarship in Russia and Eastern Europe, and advanced the field of Russian and East European Jewish history in the United States, continental

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Letter from the Director

As usual, the semester was packed with events and happenings, so here goes! In February, the entire REECC office, together with staff from the other campus NR Cs and Dean Ann Mester of LAS, went to the U.S. Department of Education workshop in Washington, D.C., as part of preparations for the upcoming Title VI competition. The REECC Faculty Assembly, which once again took place during the course of the semester, was particularly well attended. One of its outcomes was the formation of a temporarily expanded REECC Executive Committee, which, in addition to its regular members, includes former Center Directors Diane Koenker, Mark Steinberg and Donna Buchanan, who will be sharing with REECC the benefits of their Title VI experience. As the semester came to a close we were gearing up for the Summer Research Lab (June 8-July 31) and the Ralph and Ruth Fisher Forum (June 18-20), the theme of which was “Human Mobility in Russia.” I was in Washington, D.C., on June 19 for the announcement of the results of this year’s Title VIII competition, which were determined later than usual because of the change in administrations.

The 2009 Annual Center Conference, held on April 19-21, had as its topic “Jews in the East European Borderlands: Daily Life, Violence, and Memory.” Organized by Harriet Murav (Slavic) and Eugene Avrutin (History), this gathering honored the late John Doyle Klier, one of the world’s leading authorities on Jewish history. The event had an emphatically international character, with presenters from the United States, Britain, Russia and Israel. The keynote address was given by Nathan J. Miller, Professor of Jewish History, Literature, and

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Nadja Berkovich received the John Doyle Klier Scholar award, given to an outstanding graduate student in the Program in Jewish Culture and Society whose work continues the tradition of scholarly excellence and social commitment that characterized the historian’s career. Nadja is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. She specializes in the study of late-19th-century and pre-WWII Yiddish and Russian realist and modernist literatures. Nadja is pictured with Klier’s sister Gene Ann Newcomer and her husband David Newcomer
Europe, and the UK. Generously collaborating with colleagues, Klier made the study of political violence against Jews into a historical field in its own right.

The themes of John Klier’s work provided the point of departure for the conference. The narrative of oppression, which has so long dominated the study of Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe, has undergone a significant shift in the last fifteen years. By incorporating previously untapped archival, visual, and literary sources, scholars have begun to reexamine how Jews began to participate in the administrative, educational, and social structures of the imperial and Soviet system. A new generation of scholarship has also examined how Jews constructed their own identities and cultures by paying close attention to the roles that gender, sexuality, religion, and politics played in the process.

Building on the advances of previous scholarship, “Jews in the East European Borderlands” broadened the field of Russian and East European Jewish Studies. Although scholars have attempted to recast the lachrymose view of East European Jewish history, a re-thinking of the question of violence and interethnic conflict remains a central concern in the borderland regions. Outside of the problem of violence, the papers also analyzed how bodies, places, and objects constituted a site of negotiation between violent ruptures and the continuity of the everyday, between modernization and the force of an intractable, local and specific Jewish inheritance. Professors Avrutin and Murav are planning to publish a volume based on this conference that will honor John Klier.

Eugene M. Avrutin is the Tobor Family Assistant Professor of modern European Jewish history. He has published on documentation practices; the concept of race in imperial Russia; religious toleration and coexistence; and the political tensions and administrative dilemmas of identifying Jews in the Russian empire.
Institutions at Columbia University who discussed the Russian Jews’ historical attitude to the Russian state and nation.

Two other events that took place this spring vividly demonstrated the twin poles, as it were, of the Center’s engagement with the region, the humanistic/artistic and the policy/analytical. On February 26, Vera Pavlova, contemporary Russia’s most celebrated woman poet, gave a bilingual reading entitled “Male Female, Mortally Sick — Fervently Alive: Delete Where Necessary” (a line from one of her poems), with the English versions of her texts recited by her husband and translator Steven Seymour. The four- or eight-line verse pieces she declaimed that evening formed a sequence of undated entries from an intimate diary in which she imaginatively dissected her body, turned it inside out, and placed it on poetic display, while presenting lyrical persona that was unabashedly romantic and darkly, arrestingly charismatic. On April 9, REEEC held its annual Current Affairs Forum on a highly topical and highly regional theme: “Reform or Retrenchment: Post-communist Eurasia and the World Economic Crisis.” The keynote speaker was Eugene Lawson, one of the nation’s leading authorities on the international economy and a former U.S. Ambassador to the International Labor Organization, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce, and Chairman of the Export-Import Bank of the United States. In his remarks, Dr. Lawson offered a learned analysis and prognosis of economic developments in Russia and the region spiced with recollections of interactions with principals such as Vladimir Putin; Dr. Lawson was cautiously pessimistic about Russia’s prospects, particularly because of its demographic and infrastructural problems, but stressed that the country’s current administration was committed to a broadly capitalist path of development and had essentially succeeded in embedding the country’s economy in the global system of production, trade, and finance. The other forum presenters were Michael Hemesath of Carleton College, Richard Ericson of East Carolina University, and Zaruhi Sahakyan, a lecturer in our own Economics Department. They examined a spectrum of national economies in the region, reaching the collective conclusion that the world crisis will be traumatic for most, if not all, and will severely test the political elites’ technocratic and managerial abilities.

The two Directions talks that took place this semester were equally reflective of the breadth and variety of our coverage of the region. Martha Merritt of the University of Chicago spoke on “The Triumph of Politics over Economics in Russia,” making the key point that political considerations tend to trump economic ones in that country’s internal and foreign policy; and Kristen Ghodsee of Bowdoin College gave a lecture entitled “Headscarves and Hotpants” on the way newly resurgent Islamist ideologies are shaping cultural, religious and national identity within the Muslim minority in Bulgaria.

REEEC is always happy to feature the research of our graduate students. Kristen Hamm’s talk on media representations of Soviet ballet under Khrushchev and Brezhnev in our Noontime Scholars’ Lecture Series was a case in point, as was Rob Whiting’s talk in the same series on public spaces in the city of Zagreb. Kristen is a trained ballet dancer herself, while Rob has spent a great deal of time in Zagreb, so their respective analyses were informed by direct personal experience, and all the more convincing for it. Other lectures under this rubric included one by Ekaterina Boltunova of Moscow’s Russian State University for the Humanities on the history of the Chamber of Facets in the Moscow Kremlin and a presentation by Jane Bozhinovski, this year’s Junior Faculty Development Program Visiting Fellow from St Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, on English cultural influences in Macedonia.

And on a final musical note for the semester, on April 25, Donna Buchanan and the Balkanalia ensemble she directs presented a program entitled “Bridges: New Horizons in Balkan Music” in a characteristically rousing performance featuring, as a special guest artist and composer, Georgi Andreev of Bulgaria.
Report from the Field: Experiencing St. Petersburg as a ‘Juxtaposition of Extremes’

By Robert Blaney

When I first started studying Russian, my academic advisor told me that, statistically speaking, the only people who ever take their Russian from a basic academic level to a professional one are those who either spent a year abroad, or found a Russian spouse. I ended up doing both.

While on my first trip to Saint Petersburg, I met a girl. The next summer, we fell in love, and by the time I went back the following winter, we were engaged. By going to St. Petersburg, I not only had to start at a new university and a new workplace, but I also had a wedding to plan and organize – in Russian. After attending two universities, teaching in one, and holding jobs as diverse as translator, editor, localization consultant, language instructor, pronunciation coach, musical critic, office secretary, interpreter, marketing manager, and voice-over actor, I can definitely say that my time in Russia has changed my perspective on life and has only shown me that I still have so much more to learn.

My sudden and demanding personal and professional changes quickly forced me to adapt to Russia, both in terms of language and expectations. It is hard to simply state just how much Russia, specifically St. Petersburg, differs from America’s Midwest. St. Petersburg is a constant, often disorienting, juxtaposition of extremes. People scowling at you on the street and berating you in stores and government offices are mixed with the most generous examples of hospitality and kindness from friends and relatives. One is surrounded by both captivating architecture and people, and confronted with crumbling edifices and striking deprivation in the streets. Even time appears to follow this rule: the sun seemingly never sets in the summer and the nights never end in the winter.

Talking to people in Russia is a fascinating experience because many ideas that we have long since taken for granted are still in their infancy. Many people of the Soviet generation still cannot adapt to the modern direction that Russia has taken, and many modern, fast-moving professionals and aspiring urbanites bemoan the cumbersome inheritances of previous generations. An old, lonely grandmother in her family’s sparse, dusty apartment can live next to, literally inches apart from, an investment banker, who resides in a sleek, modern art-deco studio.

I learned several very valuable lessons in Russia, but two stand out above all else. The first is that it is best to enter any situation with no expectations, and the second is that almost everything published and reported about Russia in the United States is a profound and ridiculous exaggeration. The second truth often obscures the first, giving rise to many unrealistic and often disappointing stereotypes. When I would teach any group of students anywhere, I would always include a lesson on stereotypes. It was so interesting to see how the ways that Russians view themselves differs completely from our expectations of them, and how their view of us differs in the same way – often quite flattering. Russian culture needs to be approached on its own terms, yet there are some aspects of my education that came very much in handy.

The two most defining characteristics of Russian culture, from my point of view, are: uncertainty and the collective. One must not expect anything to be clear in Russia – the laws, the expectations of others, even the limits of one’s own behavior. Most people are very used to a high level of uncertainty – coming to work late, receiving incomprehensible requests from their managers, being stuck in traffic for six hours one day, but flying down the street the next, and having professors simply not show up to class. In fact, there seem to be no clear rules or expectations for anything, except in interpersonal relationships. The collective is the only source of true definition that I found in Russian society, with the boundaries of one’s circle separated sharply and strongly from all others. People expect many things of those that they are associated with, and can often rely on this interpersonal connection to accomplish many things that other societies do via impersonal institutions and services. In Russia, there is an old saying that is still true today – it is better to have 100 friends than 100 rubles.

I found my time in my university to be a very illuminating experience. At first, the university system itself was a lesson, navigating the seemingly endless, frivolous, and frustrating bureaucratic demands imposed on all students. My early language instruction was very, very helpful, but as my needs eventually were all met in terms of academics, the people that I met also became very important to me. Students from all over the world study at St. Petersburg State University, and the opportunity to meet them taught me much about the world that I had never thought about.

My two years in St. Petersburg changed my life completely, and I don’t think I’ll ever feel the same way that I did before I left the United States. As with many professionals, in order to truly change for the better, one must be willing to lose part of one’s own identity; as the Chinese saying goes – in order to harvest, one must plant – you cannot gain something without first losing something else. When I came back to the United States, I had learned to leave behind all of my old misconceptions, my bad habits and my beliefs about my own limitations, and I let my experiences in Saint Petersburg add a valuable new chapter to my life that I will cherish forever.

Robert Blaney is a second-year graduate student in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies. He is currently writing a thesis on corruption in Russian Higher Education. He has been in St. Petersburg for two years and is married to Olena, who is Ukrainian.
Mr. Eugene Lawson, first president of the U.S.-Russian Business Council and former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for East-West Trade, addressed the topic, "Russia, Friend or Foe?" at the REEEC Current Affairs Forum held on April 9. In his keynote address, Mr. Lawson combined quantitative analysis with qualitative commentary to effectively situate recent developments in the current state of U.S. – Russia relations. He analyzed and clarified the relationship’s complexity from a multi-angled perspective, specifically in ways which economic, political, and demographic elements are forging new impacts in this relationship.

According to Lawson the “ties that truly bind” the two nations are primarily economic, not political, and that recent talk of a new Cold War is premature and unrealistic. His description of Russia’s unstable economic growth resulting from energy price fluctuations revealed the extent to which the country’s geopolitical and economic clout is pegged to its natural resource endowment. At the time of its economic collapse in 1998, the size of Russia’s economy was equivalent to that of Los Angeles County, and trade with the U.S. was less than 10 billion. By way of comparison, in 2008 the economy had emerged as the seventh-largest worldwide and annual trade with the U.S. had risen substantially, to over 36 billion. Interestingly, American companies such as Coke, Caterpillar, Ford, Microsoft, GM and others have all benefited from Russia’s robust growth, even amid shrinking profit margins for these companies’ domestic operations during this same period. Moreover, Wal-Mart will soon open operations in Russia in an attempt to capitalize upon this growth potential; time will tell to what degree Russians are receptive of this ultra-efficient and highly controversial commercial entity, especially if it marginalizes local Russian mercantile enterprises.

In elucidating the state of Russia’s energy infrastructure and production, Lawson highlighted the fact that although the country ranks eighth in terms of oil reserves (and proven reserves continue to increase), second in the production of crude, and first overall in natural gas production, Russia’s domestic energy infrastructure is largely a massive rust belt with outdated technology. As a result of the exorbitant costs associated with the infrastructure’s modernization, Russia must rely on foreign direct investment and the associated technological expertise which Western entities can provide. The recent drop off in oil prices and subsequent sharp decline in revenues exacerbates the problem, and the fact that Gazprom has been attempting to acquire controlling stakes in the national energy companies of regional states (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Serbia, etc.) is perhaps evidence that Russia would prefer to delay the desperately needed, extensive domestic updates. According to Lawson, “Russia is intent on taking the low-hanging fruit.”

From a political perspective, Lawson expressed his hope that recent dialogue between U.S. President Barack Obama and Russian president Dmitry Medvedev will revitalize the relationship, promoting closer political alignment and economic cooperation. However, pertaining strictly to Russia, Lawson noted that the U.S. has not had a clearly defined strategic policy, something which he argues must be hammered out under the auspices of the Obama administration. Moreover, the political elite and a burgeoning number of Russian bureaucrats, while seeking an elevated level of respect from the international community, are still corrupt to the core and stifle the country’s ability to address a slew of challenges spawned in large part by the global economic recession.

A particularly poignant aspect of Lawson’s political description of Russia was Prime Minister Putin’s offer of condolences to President Bush in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington, where he conveyed his willingness to remove all obstacles potentially hindering the United States’ ability to conduct the so-called War on Terror in Central Asia. Later, he stated that he did not feel that he received any recognition or benefit in return. Adding insult to
Today thirteen officers and staff of the U.S. Consulate went on a little ‘diplomatic excursion’ to the museum of the Road of Life, a road of ice forged across Lake Lagoda (LAH-gi-da) that was the only way in and out of the city for the four years of the Siege of Leningrad. During World War II, St. Petersburg (then known as Leningrad) became a small island of free Russians when a mix of German and Finnish forces came to occupy the surrounding land, coast to coast. The siege lasted for 872 days, from September of 1941 to January of 1944.

We began the trip at a roadside monument dedicated to the children of the siege. There is a gigantic concrete flower erupting out of the ground like a mushroom cloud, with the Russian childrens’ song lyrics “Always, it will be sunny” on the petals. Following the snowy path, there are a series of imposing monuments praising the child guerrillas and factory workers. At the very end, up on a dais overlooking the winter-bound birch forest, there is a small group of shorter marble slabs with childish writing carved into the stone. “Uncle Vanya, March 2nd at 3pm, 1941.” “Mama, May 1st at 11am, 1942.” There are six or seven of these. They are pages from a diary. The last block is signed, “Standing alone, Tanya.” All of little Tanya’s family, and eventually the evacuated Tanya herself, died from starvation or complications thereof. People of course attempted to ration their food, but those rations were pitifully small—something like a 5 gram allowance of sugar and butter a day, and 250 grams of bread for workers. Nonworkers and children received only 125 grams. To give you some idea, 250 grams of bread is about half of a pencil box. An anecdote given by the deputy RSO on the car trip back was of how parents would slowly starve themselves to feed their children, die, and the children and grandparents would so utterly exhaust themselves pulling the bodies to the cemetery that they would die as well.

Next was the outdoor monument to the Road of Life, a broken half-circle that rises over the place where trucks would depart solid ground for the frozen lake. The broken circle symbolizes the break in the siege wall that Lake Ladoga represented. Under the snow, tire tracks are cast in bronze at the foot of the monument.

During the first winter of the siege, ’41-’42, the temperature reached its lowest point in decades. Germans had cut off electricity and gas supplies, and the cold killed many, but the cold also ended up saving much of the city. The only route out of the city not occupied by the Germans was east across Lagoda, a stormy and choppy sea that in most winters never froze. In 1941 it froze so solid that the people discovered they could drive vehicles over even the very middle of it. This was how the city lasted through that winter: drivers, hundreds of them, with no heaters and their doors removed so they could escape if the ice broke, creeping along at fifteen to twenty miles an hour across the desolate plain of ice. They brought food into the city and brought people out of the city, from Kobona on the eastern shore, across Shlissel’burg Bay to Vaganova. Medical and gas stations were set up on the ice. As the ice grew denser and the drivers more skilled, trips across were increased from one to as many as four times a day. That winter, the Road of Life was used until April 24 and had reached 1,106 miles in length. Also on
Injury, the United States’ equivocal signals regarding NATO expansion, recognition of Kosovo’s independence, and the potential placement of weapon defense sites in Poland and the Czech Republic further strained the relationship. Russia’s enviable resource endowment and resultant rise in oil prices has provided the needed leverage to Russian economic and geopolitical interests, at last compelling the United States and the global community at large to acknowledge Russia’s increasingly crucial presence in world affairs.

As Lawson stated, both countries need the other, and the relationship will only improve if based first and foremost upon economic cooperation and bilateral trade. Perhaps the most sobering words of Lawson’s discussion were in his description of the more daunting tasks Russia now faces, after completing the first phase of modernization. Specifically, Russia needs to begin investing in its human infrastructure, the most quintessential component of state security and stability yet the one most frequently overlooked. Airports, roads, and other components are crumbling in disrepair and skyrocketing unemployment; rampant disease (especially among the teenage demographic), and the horrendous state of the healthcare system threaten Russia’s demographic stability. According to Lawson, this domestic concern, one that has attained crisis proportions, is Russia’s most pressing demand in the 21st century. For even partial rectification, it will require a massive redirection and reallocation of revenue from the aforementioned resource endowment and will require a completely altered domestic mentality.

James Keller is a second-year graduate student in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies, and is also earning a graduate certificate in Global Business Culture. His research interests include Lukashenka’s Belarus and the geopolitics of climate change and energy in Russia and Eastern Europe.

**Some numbers**

- At the beginning of the siege, 3 1/2 million people lived in Leningrad.
- At the end of the siege, less than a million people were left alive in the city.
- A 1/2 million were evacuated, before or during the siege.
- 1 million soldiers died fighting the siege. This is in Leningrad alone.
- 18,000 civilians were killed by German bombs.
- The remainder died from hunger and the cold.
Russian Music Scene in Review

By Richard Tempest

A look at the current popular music scene in Russia can shed light on the tensions, fissures and discontinuities that have typified that country’s path from communism, through the economic and political upheavals of the Yeltsin years, to what Putin’s advisors now call sovereign democracy. So here is a very brief survey of the good, the bad and the cacophonous that makes no claim to being particularly academic or even particularly objective.

The first thing to recognize about Russian popular music is that its formats and genres were largely imported from the West. Rock — heavy, metal and MOR — rap, reggae, country (yes, there are Russian country music singers!), bubble gum bands, boy bands, girl bands, gay bands and every other type of band were originally inspired by Western, mostly British and American, models. But almost immediately, the musical productions in question were infused with Russian content.

The last years of Gorbachev’s perestroika saw the emergence into the open of an extensive underground rock culture that in comparison with its Anglo-American models was more socially engaged though less polished musically. In Russia, the lyrics to rock songs have traditionally been just as important — often more so — as the actual music. Among formerly unofficial rock groups that continued into the 1990s and beyond were Akvarium, with its glamorous singer/composer Aleksandr Grebenshchikov, who fused Russian folk motifs with rock, reggae, classical music and high-brow poetry. Mashina Vremeni (Time Machine) were Russia’s answer to the Beatles, covering many of the same musical bases and expressing an inchoate but powerful longing for freedom and a very Beatlesque joie de vivre. At the other end of the emotional spectrum, Krematorii, as their name suggests, were dark, pessimistic, and acutely (I use the term advisedly) contemptuous of authority. Kino, with its charismatic Russian-Korean front man Viktor Tsoi, commemorated the bleakness of late-Soviet urban existence, their music’s acoustic sound and low production values a statement in themselves. DDT is a heavy rock combo whose leader, Yuri Shevchuk, is an outspoken opponent of the Putin government and a scathing critic of the popsa phenomenon (more about that later). Nautilus Pompilius’s commercial mainstream rock was popular in the 1990s (the group disbanded in 1996) and provided the sound track for the film Brat (Brother; 1997), the archetypal Russian gangster movie that launched the revival of the nation’s film industry. Some members of this founding generation of Russian rockers have left the scene, violently or otherwise. Tsoi was killed in a car accident in 1990, and Akeksandr Makarevich, Mashina’s leader, now does cooking shows on TV, while Grebenshchikov basks in his status as Russian rock’s elder statesman. Nautilus Pompilius disbanded in 1996, though Krematorii is still going strong — or going wrong, since the band’s preoccupation with death, drugs and other dark themes continues to scandalize the more traditionally minded.

Liubé is perhaps the most interesting Russian rock group in the cultural sense. They sing of World War II heroism and the exploits of the spetsnaz (Russian special forces) in the Northern Caucasus. Their music contains elements of Soviet-era patriotic songs, hard rock and, once again, folklore. Thanks to their lyrical and musical quotations from the Soviet past, Liubé resonates with Soviet nostalgists who long for a time when Stalin was great, vodka was cheap, and the red flag flew from Kamchatka to Cuba. But it is also possible to enjoy Liubé’s driving beats and patriotic exaggerations (“America, Give Us Back Alaska”) as tongue-in-cheek performances, postmodern exercises in total quotation and total irony.

Unapologetically commercial, popsa saturates the country’s airwaves as well as Russian MTV. Its songs are not so much musical productions as products. The reigning matriarch of the scene is Alla Pugacheva, Russia’s Barbra Streisand, whose career started in the 1970s. Girl groups such as Via-Gra (technically Ukrainian, though they sing entirely in Russian) and Blestiashchie (The Sparkling Ones) take the Girls Aloud formula and add a big dollop of in-your-crotch eroticism: pole-dancing with singing, as it were. Alsou, a stunningly beautiful ethnic Tartar, is a bit more demure and appeals to marginally less testosterone-addled adolescents. Male popsa stars like Dmitrii Malikov are Russian versions of Enrique Iglesias; boy toys who can croon a tune in the studio, and sometimes live.

Russian rap, which tends to be performed by scrawny, pimply gangsta wannabes, is uniformly bad because it remains uniformly unauthentic. The exception here is Dolfin, a high-brow outfit that combines classical-sounding poetry with chill and electronica.

Finally, there is reggae, which can be surprisingly good. S’nizza (Friday), a now disbanded duo, were famous for their performance of the old Soviet national anthem (restored by Putin early in his presidency). This could be taken either as a postmodern inversion of a signature piece of totalitarian music or an avant-garde affirmation thereof, depending on one’s politics and level of cultural sophistication.

Richard Tempest is the director of REECC.
Academic year 2008-2009 was a good one for John Randolph. His 2007 book, The House in the Garden: the Bakunin Family and the Romance of Russian Idealism won the 2008 W. Bruce Lincoln Book Prize of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS), as well as Best Book in Literary or Cultural Studies from the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL), also receiving an honorable mention for the Wayne S. Vucinich Book Prize.

Professor Randolph also worked on the 2009 Ralph and Ruth Fisher Forum, “Russia’s Role in Human Mobility: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives,” which he co-organized with Professor Eugene Avrutin. This conference took place June 18-20th on the Urbana-Champaign campus. Attendees included seven guests from the former Soviet Union as well as participants from Canada, Germany, Australia, and our own U.S. scholars.

Professor Randolph will be on sabbatical this year, during which he intends to conduct research in Moscow for his new book, a study of the post-horse relay system in Imperial Russia.

Visiting Scholars, Spring 2009

Oleg Iuriev, poet, playwright, literary critic, and prose author, was a Visiting Assistant Professor at the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures in the spring of 2009. His course, “A Leningrad Anthology: From One Renaming to Another (1924-1991),” introduced graduate and undergraduate students to modern Russian poetry of the twentieth century by juxtaposing the official, mainstream pieces to little known and recently rediscovered unofficial works. Iuriev was born in Leningrad, but has lived in Germany since 1991. His most recent novel, The Russian Cargo, was published by Suhrkamp Verlag in German as Die russische Fracht in 2009. Iuriev also runs a fascinating website for poetry and literary criticism, found at http://www.newkamera.de/lenchr.html.

Faculty Publications

Donna A. Buchanan
Balkan Popular Culture and the Ottoman Ecumene: Music, Image, and Regional Political Discourse (Scarecrow Press), is forthcoming later this year [second, edited volume].

David Cooper


Peter Fritzsche

Mohammad Hassan Khalil
Islam and the Fate of Others: Rethinking Salvation in Islam (monograph, in progress)


Maria Todorova
Bones of Contention: the Living Archive of Vasil Levski and the Making of Bulgaria’s National Hero (Central European U Press, 2008)

Richard Tempest
“Svetliiat biaisimvol: belezhkii vůrhu poetikata na politicheska harizma”, Novo Vreme, No 12, 2008


“Obama’s One Hundred Days,” Bulgarian Socialist Party, March 22, 2009
STAFF NEWS

Richard Tempest (Director, REEEC) wrote the article: “Svetliliat bial sivmolv: belezhiki vůrhu poetikata na politicheskata harizma,” for the November 12, 2008, Vovo Vreme. On March 22, 2009, he presented the paper “Solzhenitsyn, the Cartesian,” at the International Solzhenitsyn Conference in Paris. Also on March 22, he was invited to speak for the Bulgarian Socialist Party on Obama’s first hundred days in office.

Tracie Wilson (Associate Director, REEEC) was invited to present “Lessons on EU Accession and the Environment: The Case of Poland” at the Woodrow Wilson Center’s Title VIII Symposium “Evaluating the Effects of EU Accession: Lessons for Southeast Europe,” June 9, 2009. She was also awarded a Study Abroad Development Grant for travel to support developing a service-learning course on sustainability and rural development in Poland.

FACULTY/ASSOCIATES NEWS

Eugene Avrutin (History) presented “Documents of Belonging: Identification Papers and Jewish Experience” at a colloquium sponsored by the Simon Dubnow Institute, Leipzig, Germany. His new book, Jews and the Imperial State: Identification Politics in Tsarist Russia, is scheduled for publication with Cornell University Press.


George Gasyna (Slavic) is completing his book, Spaces of Language/Spaces of Exile in Joseph Conrad and Witold Gombrowicz, which treats the poetics of exile in the writings of those two authors. He presented the paper “Narrative as Transgression in Witold Gombrowicz’s Kosmos and Michel Houellebecq’s Les particules élémentaires” in January, at “The Effect of Palimpsest,” an International Slavic Conference at the University of Chicago, and in March at the American Comparative Literature Association’s Annual Meeting at Harvard (where he also organized a two-day panel on extraterritorial literature). Last but certainly not least, in November 2008 he and his wife Sarah celebrated the arrival of their daughter, Sophie Charlotte.

Peter Fritzsche (History) was shortlisted as a finalist in the inaugural Cundill International Prize in History, the world’s largest non-fiction historical literature award, his Life and Death in the Third Reich one of three books selected. The first prize is $75,000 USD, and the runners-up are to receive “Recognition of Excellence” awards of $10,000 USD.

Lyla Kaganovsky (Slavic) has been happily on sabbatical in Paris doing research for a book project on Soviet cinema’s transition from silence to sound (1928-1932). In the fall, she gave talks at Columbia, University of Chicago, and Cornell University, as well as at AAASS and the MLA. Recent publications have included a film review of Karen Shakhnaazarov’s The Vanished Empire in KinoKultura, and an article on the Cold War subtext and gender insubordination in “Nu, pogođi!” in a volume on Soviet cartoons (NILO, 2008). In January, she joined the editorial board of Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema.


Sherban Lupu (Music) was awarded a Fulbright Grant for the academic year 2009-10. He has recently released a new CD for Albany Records with music for violin by George Enescu, Romania’s greatest composer.

Mark Steinberg (History) co-edited a recently published interdisciplinary collection on religion after communism, Religion, Morality, and Community in Post-Soviet Societies (Woodrow Wilson Center and Indiana University Press, 2008). He spoke at the sixthtieth anniversary symposium of the Davis Center at Harvard University about the present and future of the study of Russian and Eurasian history. He also presented a talk entitled “The Futurist Book as Uneasy Flâneur: Walking, Seeing, and Feeling the Modern City” at the Getty Research Institute’s Symposium ‘The Book as Such in the Russian Avant-Garde, 1910-1917’ He is currently completing work on the eighth edition of A History of Russia, with Nicholas Riasanovsky. He continues to edit the journal Slavic Review.

VISITING SCHOLARS

Eda Derhemi (Ph.D.) is teaching Special Topics in Propaganda (Communication 391/Journalism 391). It is being taught again this fall, and will also be offered spring 2010.

STUDENT NEWS

Anna Bateman (Ph.D., History) won an International Dissertation Research Fellowship for 2009-2010 from the Social Science Research Council for research in Great Britain on imperial rivalries between Britain and Russia in the polar region in the 19th century.

Andy Bruno (Ph.D., History) presented a paper at the Midwest Russian History Workshop in East Lansing in April 2009.

Sharyl Corrado (Ph.D., History) has a tenure-track job at Pepperdine University, beginning in fall 2009.

Erica Fraser (Ph.D., History) has a tenure-track job at Goucher College, Baltimore, beginning in fall 2009.

Maria Galmarini (Ph.D., History) won an International Dissertation Research Fellowship for 2009-2010 from the Social Science Research Council, for research in Russia. She also received a Graduate College Dissertation travel grant.

Angela Glaros (Ph.D., Anthropology) presented a paper entitled “Carnival Has No Color: Gender, Song, and Memory in Skryos, Greece” at the annual meeting of the Midwest Chapter of the American Anthropological Association in Minneapolis, MN on May 15, 2009.

Kristen Hamm (M.A., REEEC) has been selected from over 700 applicants to participate in the National Security Summer Analysis and Intelligence Seminar this July, in Washington, D.C. This seminar, the first of its kind, is sponsored by the Director of National Intelligence and will focus on the theme, “Political Instability—International Systems in Transition.”

Ryan Haynes (Ph.D., Musicology) is currently teaching elementary music at a bilingual school in Marshalltown, Iowa. He passed doctoral exams in October and is applying for grants for dissertation research on the Bosnian refugee community in Waterloo, Iowa.

Katherine Sredl (Ph.D., Communications) will defend her dissertation, “Consumer Pride and Consumption-Based Family Rituals: A Field Study in Zagreb, Croatia,” for the PhD in Communications with a minor in Balkan Studies (the first to earn the minor) in May 2009, graduating in October 2009. Sredl has accepted a post as Assistant Professor, Department of Marketing, Mendoza College of Business at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, IN, starting June 2009. Sredl will teach International Marketing and Promotions.

Terrell Starr (M.A., REEEC & Journalism) received a Fulbright for study in Ukraine.

Matthew Sutton (Ph.D., Slavic) received FLAS fellowships for both summer and academic year 2009-10 to study Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian.
Miha Wood (Ph.D., History) presented “Socialism vs. Capitalism in Romanian Sport Culture during the Early Cold War” at the Southern Conference on Slavic Studies in Charlottesville, Virginia in March 2009.

ALUMNI NEWS

Florin Fesnic (Ph.D., Political Science, 2008) hopes to find a position in his hometown of Cluj, Romania, at the University of Babes-Bolyai.

Soobum Kim (MLS, 2001) is a foreign language librarian at Stanford University.

REGIONAL FACULTY ASSOCIATES

Rosina Neginsky’s (UI-Springfield) bilingual (Russian/English) book of poetry, juggler, was recently published by the University Press of the South. She was invited by the State Library in Springfield to read poetry from the book to celebrate poetry month. Neginsky organized the international conference, “Symbolism, Its Origins and Its Consequences,” which took place in April. The keynote speaker was Madame Genevieve Lacambre, the honorary curator of Musee d’Orsay and the former director of Musee Gustave Moreau in Paris. Neginsky presented the paper “Maillarme and the Self-Portrait in Disguise” and moderated one session of the conference.

Nancy Scannell (UI-Springfield) published with Estonian colleagues Dr. Tiitu Pass and Egle Tafner an article entitled “Gravity Equation Analysis in the Context of International Trade:


Ronald Spahr (University of Memphis) served as a visiting scholar at the University of Vitera in Albania, lecturing on management of financial institutions and commercial banking.

William Benton Whisenhunt (College of DuPage) recently co-edited Russian and Soviet History: From the Time of Troubles to the Collapse of the Soviet Union (Rowman and Littlefield) and co-authored A Russian Paints America: The Travels of Pavel P. Svinin, 1811-1813 (McGill-Queen’s University Press). He also led fifteen students on a ten-day study trip to Russia in summer 2008, and is planning another such trip for May 2010.

Russell Zanca (Northeastern Illinois University) has been elected to the Board of the Central Eurasian Studies Society.

REEEC faculty named to the Daily Illini Excellent Teachers List:

ANTHROPOLOGY
Matt Bunzl, Associate Professor, Cultural Anthropology; Director, Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities
Mahir Saul, Associate Professor, Cultural Anthropology
Olga Soffer, Professor, Archaeology

ART HISTORY
Jonathan D. Fineberg, Professor, Art History

GEOGRAPHY
Jerome Fellmann, Geography (retired)

GEOLOGY
Bruce Fouke, Associate Professor, Geology
Andrey Kalinichev, Research Associate Professor, Geology

HISTORY
Eugene Aurutin, Assistant Professor, History
Paul Bernard, History (retired)
Richard Esbenshade, Visiting Assistant Professor, History
Ralph Fisher, Jr., REECC; History (retired)
Peter Fritzschke, Professor, History
Keith Hitchins, Professor, History
Diane P. Koenker, Professor, History
Joseph Love, History (retired)
John McKay, History (retired)
David Prochaska, Professor, History
John Randolph, Assistant Professor, History
Paul Schroeder, History (retired)
Mark D. Steinberg, Professor, History and Editor, Slavic Review
Maria Todorova, Professor, History

JOURNALISM/COMMUNICATION
Nancy Benson, Associate Professor, Journalism
Ronald Yates, Dean, College of Communications; Professor, Journalism

MUSIC AND MUSICOLOGY
Donna A. Buchanan, Associate Professor, Musicology
Adriana Helbig, Visiting Assistant Professor, Musicology
Sherban Lupu, Associate Professor, Violin
Bruno Netti, Musicology (retired)
Sever Tipel, Professor, Composition-Theory

POLITICAL SCIENCE
Carol Sklkinik Leff, Associate Professor, Political Science
Robert Pahre, Professor, Political Science
Mark Schrad, Visiting Assistant Professor, Political Science
Milan Svolkien, Assistant Professor, Political Science

SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES/ COMPARATIVE LITERATURE
Dmitry V. Bobyshov, Slavic Languages and Literatures (retired)
Francis Butler, Visiting Lecturer, Slavic Languages and Literatures
David Cooper, Assistant Professor, Slavic Languages and Literatures
Radio Dunatov, Slavic Languages and Literatures (retired)
Michael Finke, Professor, Slavic Languages and Literatures
Maurice Friedberg, Slavic Languages and Literatures (retired)
George Gasyna, Assistant Professor, Slavic Languages and Literatures, and Comparative and World Literature
Frank Y. Gladney, Slavic Languages and Literatures, and Comparative and World Literature
Karl-Heinz Schoeps, Germanic Languages and Literatures (retired)
Steven P. Hill, Associate Professor, Slavic Languages and Literatures and Cinema Studies
Hans H. Hock, Professor, Sanskrit and Linguistics (retired)
Lilya Kaganovsky, Assistant Professor, Slavic Languages and Literatures, Comparative and World Literature, and Cinema Studies
Harriet Murav, Professor and Head, Slavic Languages and Literatures; and Professor, Comparative and World Literature
Anke Pinkert, Professor, German
Catherine Prendergast, Professor, English
Dmytro Shatrov, Slavic Languages and Literatures, Comparative and World Literature, and Cinema Studies
Valeria Sobol, Associate Professor and Language Coordinator, Slavic Languages and Literatures (retired)
Richard Tempest, Associate Professor, Slavic Languages and Literatures, and Director, Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center

SOCIIOLOGY
William Brustein, Associate Provost for International Affairs; Director, International Programs and Studies; Professor, Sociology, Political Science, and History; Alumni Professor, International Studies
Zsuzsa Gill, Associate Professor, Sociology
James R. Kluegel, Professor, Sociology (retired)
Judith Pinter, Lecturer, Sociology

Send Us Your News!

We would love to hear from REEEC-related alumni. Please send us your news along with the degree(s) earned and year and your current affiliation to the email or street address below.

Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center News

Editor: Katrina Chester
Assistant Editor: Kristina Satern
Editorial Assistants: Courtney Gaul, James Keller

No. 113 Spring 2009

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Noontime Scholars Lecture Series

February 24
“Maintaining the Center by Transforming Space: Keeping the Nation at the Center of Daily Life in Zagreb, Croatia”
Robert Whiting, Ph.D. Candidate in Geography, Illinois

March 17
“Cultures in Contact: Using Corpus-Based Techniques to Discover the Influences of the English Culture on the Macedonian Culture”
Jane Bozhinovski, Junior Faculty Development Program Visiting Fellow, St Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje, Macedonia

April 14
“Tsar/Emperor Discourse in the Topography of Moscow: Faceted Chamber (Granovitaya Palata) in the 17th-18th Centuries”
Ekaterina Boltounova, Assistant Professor, Russian State University for the Humanities

April 28
Kristen Hamm, MA Candidate in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies, Illinois

“Directions in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies” Colloquium Series

February 12
“The Triumph of Politics over Economics in Russia”
Martha Merritt, Associate Dean for International Education at the University of Chicago and adjunct senior fellow at The Chicago Council on Global Affairs

March 11
“Headscarves and Hotpants: Debating Gender Equality, Secularism and Religious Freedoms in the “New Europe””
Kristen Ghodsee, Associate Professor of Gender and Women’s Studies, Bowdoin College