Chancellor Herman Hosts Conference on Russian Business and Politics in Chicago

By Lynda Park (Associate Director, REEEC)

On October 12-13, the Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center, at the behest of Chancellor Richard Herman, organized a dynamic international conference, “Russia • Business • Politics: Challenges and Opportunities,” at the Palmer House Hilton in Chicago. “The relationship between the U.S. and Russia remains a critical piece of our nation’s global strategy,” stated Herman. His vision for the conference was to bring together “specialists who have helped shape economic and political policies to discuss the current state of affairs and to explore what is possible through creative thinking.” Indeed, a stellar list of leading scholars, business practitioners and policy analysts discussed the Russian economy and politics with a diverse audience of faculty, students, business executives, legal professionals, journalists and the general public.

The conference opened with an address by David Satter, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, who stated that Russia should be judged not by its improved economic climate and living standards but on its moral development, and then painted a rather bleak picture of the Russian state’s moral failings, noting in particular the recent murder of the journalist Anna Politkovskaia and the government’s handling of the Beslan hostage crisis. He emphasized that the West must insist on high standards of morality when dealing with the Russian state.

The opening address was followed by intense, frank, and fruitful discussions about the current state of Russia, with various speakers disagreeing with Satter’s views and others conceding aspects of his arguments. Many speakers from the business sector stressed the primacy of the positive evolution of the Russian economy since 1998. Helen Teplitskaya, president of the American-

Director’s Corner

Projecting the Future: REEEC, 2006–2010

Autumn 2006 marks the beginning of a new, four-year cycle of programming and curricular enhancement at REEEC related to the successful renewal of our status as a comprehensive National Resource Center (NRC) supported by Title VI funding from the US Department of Education. This is cause for celebration: the $444,798 that we were given for 2006–07, roughly split between NRC and Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowship support and broadly representative of annual budgetary projections through 2010, has allowed us to offer eleven FLAS awards to graduate students in the present academic year, to sustain most of the initiatives enacted during the 2003–06 cycle, and to pursue a variety of new endeavors.

Perhaps the most significant of these new efforts is the implementation of thematic programming designed to further cultivate our strengths; fortify areas requiring enrichment; address urgent issues of current interest to our faculty and students; interface with and generate new outreach activities, curricular options, and inter-college collaborations; heighten the Center’s visibility and engagement across campus; and appeal to potential sources of outside funding.

Five topics, selected in consultation with the REEEC Executive Committee and Faculty Assembly, will serve to inspire constellations of related activities within the larger sphere of our usual calendar. These include four annual themes and one comprehensive, four-year integrative initiative, as follows:

2006–07: “Confronting the New Eurasia”

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Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, noted the need to cast off the Cold War mentality of seeing Russia somehow as an adversary or judging it by a different yardstick than, say, China. Business executives, such as Sid Bardwell from John Deere and Kelly Duffin-Maxwell from Kraft, discussed actual success stories of, and challenges faced by, their companies in Russia. The conference keynote speaker, Patricia Cloherty, Chairman and CEO of Delta Private Equity Partners, portrayed the current state of the Russian economy and entrepreneurship in a most optimistic light by discussing the phenomenal investment returns of the funds that she manages.

Arguably the most important sector of the Russian economy is the energy industry. Robert Ebel from CSIS noted that Russia has the potential to be at the top of the world oil market, but will be unable to do so as long as it continues to live on the “inherited infrastructure wealth” of the Soviet system. That the current record revenues are due to inflated global oil prices rather than investment in the development of new fields and improved infrastructure.

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Louis Skyner from Chatham House discussed specific regulatory and political obstacles to investment and development. All three, however, noted the absolute necessity of long-term investment in the Russian energy sector.

The conference also addressed the issues of legal reform, corruption and governance. The legal experts noted that the Russian commercial code has dramatically improved since the early 90s and that businesses can most likely get a fair court judgment even on taxes, as long as they are not dealing with politically sensitive sectors, such as the oil and gas industries. Timothy Frye from Columbia University stated that his extensive survey of Russian business executives indicates that they have respect for the rule of law, but break it—as in many other countries—when the rewards are great and the possibility of punishment miniscule. Frye observed that this is a matter of practical incentives, not of fundamental moral values. This is not to say that corruption is not a major concern. Many acknowledged the reality of close business-government ties and the necessity of dealing with government officials at every level as a fact of life of doing business in Russia. Because the health of the Russian economy is so clearly tied to the Putin administration, the big question on everyone’s mind is whether Putin will run for the presidency again in 2008, and if not, who will be his successor and how this will impact business. In light of these circumstances, one panel asked the thought-provoking question: “Is democracy good for investment?” to which Frank Linden of Merrill Lynch declaratively answered, “It is irrelevant.” He, however, noted that political risk does affect a country’s credit rating.

One of the highlights of the conference was the luncheon address by William Browder, Founder and CEO of the Hermitage Capital Management, the largest western investment fund in Russia. To a great extent, his personal...
Keynote Speakers

Patricia Cloherty, Chairman and CEO, Delta Private Equity Partners, LLC
William Browder, Founder and CEO, Hermitage Capital Management, Limited
David Satter, Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute; Former Moscow correspondent for the London Financial Times

Panel Speakers

Natalia Baratiants, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, Moscow; Sidney Bardwell, John Deere Ag Holdings Russia; Bruce W. Bean, Michigan State University, American Bar Association; Edward Chow, Chevon (retired), independent consultant; Philip De Leon, US Department of Commerce BISNIS; Kelly Duffin-Maxwell, Kraft Foods; Robert Ebel, Center for Strategic and International Studies; Timothy Frye, Columbia University; Arthur George, Baker & McKenzie, LLP, Chicago; Masha Gordon, Goldman Sachs London; David Herman, General Motors (retired); Andrey Kortunov, The New Eurasia Foundation, Moscow; Alena Ledeneva, University College London; Frank Linden, Merrill Lynch; Peter Maggs, University of Illinois; James Millar, George Washington University; Burkhard Schrage, Singapore Management University; Louis Skyner, Chatham House, London; John Slocum, MacArthur Foundation; Helen Teplitskaia, American-Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Innex International, Inc.; Paul Vaaler, University of Illinois; Paulius Vilemas, Baltic Coatings, Ltd. & Energenas, Ltd., Vilnius; Vadim Volkov, European University, St. Petersburg

REEEC faculty members Diane Koenker and Harriet Murav are among the five U of I awardees of Guggenheim Fellowships for 2006. According to the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation’s website, Guggenheim Fellows are appointed “on the basis of distinguished achievement in the past and exceptional promise for future accomplishment.” Only 187 artists, scholars, and scientists were selected to receive a total of $7.5 million in fellowships from an applicant pool of 3,000.

Koenker, Professor of History, received a Guggenheim Fellowship for her project on “Proletarian Tourism and Vacation in the USSR.” In exploring the practice of tourism and vacations over time, beginning with the Stalin period and continuing to the eras of Khrushchev and Brezhnev, Koenker’s study will investigate the existence and reinforcement of social distinctions expressed through individuals’ choices of leisure travel. Koenker recently returned from a two-month stay in Russia, where she conducted archival research for this project in Moscow and Sochi with the support of an IREX grant. She also has received a grant from the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research and a Mellon Faculty Fellowship for this project.

Murav, Professor and Head of Slavic Languages and Literatures, was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for a project entitled, “Music from a Speeding Train: Soviet Yiddish and Russian-Jewish Literature of the Twentieth Century.” This study frames Soviet Yiddish and Russian-Jewish literature in the larger twentieth-century landscape of ongoing catastrophe and deferred redemption. Key authors to be discussed include Isaac Babel, David Bergelson, Perets Markish, Leyb Kvitko, Der Nister, Ilya Ehrenburg, Emmanuel Kazakevich, Vasilii Grossman, Fridrikh Goreshtein, Dina Kalinovskaya, Dina Rubina, Alexandr Melikhov, and Asar Eppel’. Murav is also an associate at the U of I Center for Advanced Study this year for the same project.

We extend our congratulations to both Professors Koenker and Murav and look forward to seeing the results of their scholarly endeavors.
Zirins Establish the Fisher Endowment Fund

In August Mary Zirin and her husband Hal established the Ralph and Ruth Fisher Endowment Fund with a major gift to honor the contributions of the Fishers in supporting scholarship in REEE studies. Professor Emeritus Ralph Fisher, as founder and director of the Russian and East European Center (now the Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center) from 1959 to 1987, worked tirelessly to establish a leading program at Illinois, focusing his energy in particular on increasing library materials and personnel. Illinois’ library resources, which had not been ranked among even the top thirty in the mid-1950s, had by 1980 become one of the nation’s leaders. In 1973 the Summer Research Laboratory on Russia and Eastern Europe and, soon thereafter, the Slavic Reference Service were established to give scholars everywhere the opportunity to use the University library’s extensive resources. Since then, the annual Summer Research Lab has been enhanced by specialized workshops, discussion groups, film and lecture series, and symposia, and the Fishers have continued to warmly welcome the scholars to Illinois.

Mary Zirin, an independent scholar and specialist in Russian women writers, has been attending the Summer Research Laboratory regularly since 1978. She is co-editor of and contributor to the Dictionary of Russian Women Writers (with M. Ledkovsky and C. Rosenthal, 1994–comprising biographies and bibliographies of 448 authors from the eighteenth century to the present) and the massive Women and Gender in Central and Eastern Europe, Russia, and Eurasia. A Comprehensive Bibliography (with I. Livezeanu, C. Worobec and J. Farris, 2006). Both works grew out of the conversations and connections made in the Summer Lab discussion group dedicated to research on women of the region, which Zirin and others formed in 1982. In establishing the Fisher Fund, Zirin noted, “The hospitable atmosphere created by the Summer Research Laboratory and the stellar collection held by the University of Illinois Slavic and East European Library made it possible to pursue my research during the years when the Soviets were indifferent or hostile to any revision of the literary canon.”

The Zirins have been generous supporters of the Summer Lab as well as the Slavic Library for many years. She initiated the summer Fisher Forum with an annual contribution, which now be funded by the income from the endowment. She has also contributed funds to the Slavic Reference Service in the Library and has established the Mary and Harold Zirin Fund for the Slavic Reference Service.

If interested in contributing to the Fisher Endowment Fund, please contact REEEC.

Thank you!

REEEC would like to thank the donors who contributed to REEEC, the Summer Research Lab, and the Ukrainian Research Program in 2005-06:

Don Chenoweth
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Merrily Shaw
Mr. & Mrs. Frederick Thayer
Gary Thurston
Mary and Harold Zirin
2008–09: “Individuals and Identities in Transit”
2009–10: “Resurgent Religions and Emergent Ecumenes: Spirituality and Change”
2006–10: “Festive States: The Art(s) of Celebration in Russia, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia”

While certainly not intended to dominate all Center pursuits, these emphases are already yielding fruit. In conjunction with this year’s focus on Eurasia, REEEC hosted a high powered, cutting-edge conference on Russian business and politics in Chicago during early October on behalf of University of Illinois Chancellor Richard Herman, and two of our distinguished colloquium speakers, Mary Ann Lila (Professor of Natural Resources and Plant Physiology and Interim Associate Dean for Research in ACES) and sociologist Cynthia Buckley (University of Texas), addressed Central Asian topics. Spring 2007 will witness an extended visit by anthropologist Katherine Verdery (CUNY), whose problematization of “Eurasia” while president of the AASS inspired much debate; an advanced new REEES course offering on Central Asian studies; an exhibit of Russian and Eurasian folklife that will draw upon the expertise of four REEES-affiliated PhD students and our Library’s holdings; and in lieu of our annual conference, a symposium targeting Eurasia as a geo-political concept and analytical construct from multiple disciplinary perspectives and angles. Thanks to the successful renewal of our Title VIII funding from the US Department of State, for the 2007 Summer Research Laboratory we have also organized an innovative training workshop for junior scholars, “From Chechnya to Kabul: New Directions in Central Asian and Caucasus Studies,” scheduled to be moderated by Douglas Northrop (Michigan). The Slavic and East European Library is targeting Eurasia as a priority for new acquisitions, and one component of the junior scholars workshop will acquaint participants with these and other scholarly resources on this important region. Although not specifically a REEES activity, it is worth noting that Professor Lila will host several colleagues from Uzbek and Kyrgyz scientific institutions at the annual International Cooperative Biodiversity Groups conference, to be held in Chicago during July 2007, demonstrating a further link between Illinois and Central Asia.

In tandem with the “Festive States” initiative, intended to highlight expressive culture of all kinds, from cuisine to fashion and drama to dance, we recently launched a new presentational series, “Artists and Authors,” dedicated to bringing a variety of artistic practitioners, such as the 2006 visits of novelists Elizabeth Kostova and Irene Zabytko, to the Illinois campus and surrounding community. October saw an extraordinary evening of Romanian dance music organized and performed by Sherban Lupu (School of Music) together with three virtuoso instrumentalists from Wallachia and Transylvania, while a generous grant from the Open World Leadership Program will result in the March visit of four Russian performer-teachers of traditional instrumental and vocal music for a two-week extravaganza of public concerts and educational engagements. With the kind assistance of the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, School of Music, and College of Fine and Applied Arts we have coordinated outreach events with the Czech violinist, vocalist, and theatrical artist Iva Bittova (January) and the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble (February), and will continue to organize other such activities throughout the years to come (watch the new “Festive States” corner of the REEES website for details).

Beyond these thematic activities, REEES is assisting David Cooper (Slavic) in organizing the Czech Studies workshop in March and Richard Tempest (Slavic) in organizing an unprecedented international conference on the Russian author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, which will take place under the auspices of our annual Fisher Forum during June. We will also host the first meeting of the national committee responsible for establishing a new American Research Center in Sofia (ARCS) during February. This institution, which is intended to facilitate the work of American scholars in several Balkan countries, is one of two American Overseas Research Centers created during 2006. The second, the American Research Institute in the South Caucasus (ARISC), will eventually have offices in Tbilisi, Yerevan, and Baku. The University of Illinois, through REEES, is a charter member of each. Forging such new international linkages for faculty/student research abroad is a central concern for REEES at present; in June we signed agreements with National University of Chernivtsi and Ostroh Academy National University in Ukraine, and in anticipation of next year’s focus on the Balkans in the New Europe, we will establish a new institutional agreement with the University of Sofia, spearheaded by Richard Tempest, in November.

Although there is no question that Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies at Illinois is flourishing, I must conclude this article on a note of caution. Like many of our sister centers across the US, our Title VI grant, while substantial, suffered a cut that has put our funding at a level below that of the 2003–06 budget cycle. This troubling development will cause us to scale down some of our customary programs. It also points to an issue that must be addressed in the very near future if we are to cultivate a national profile of the highest caliber—an objective whose achievement is both within our reach and aligned with the Campus Strategic Plan. We are far too dependent on federal monies but lack the workforce to seek out alternative income streams. We need staff who can focus on grant-writing and fund-raising, as well as the appointment of additional academic professionals or partial faculty lines to assist with the teaching and advising of our core curricula. We must sustain and enhance our instruction of regional languages, strengthen our presence in the social sciences, and greatly expand our coverage of Eurasia—an area of escalating import but that essentially represents a gaping black hole in our curriculum (hence our 2006–07 theme). To develop a truly competitive edge, we must engage in these efforts while simultaneously cultivating and capitalizing upon that which makes us unique: Russian studies, Balkan studies, the comparative study of socialism and postsocialism, our Summer Research Laboratory and Jr. Scholars Training Workshops, our vibrant and comprehensive outreach program, and the unparalleled resources of our Slavic and East European Library and Slavic Reference Service, to highlight just a few. While difficult, these challenges also pose opportunities to rethink REEES’s future path. I welcome your counsel.

Donna A. Buchanan
Director, REEEC
Report from the Field:
Kazakhstan-Russia-Mongolia-China

Margarethe Adams (Ethnomusicology)

From Kazakhstan to Russia, Mongolia and Northwest China, my fieldwork has required nearly two years of travel and residence abroad, an extra funding source, and lots and lots of visas. My original plan was to spend one year in Kazakhstan, taking part in and observing holidays and seasonal events, with an eye to understanding ethnic relations, minority-majority issues, nation building, and dynamics between the home state and the Kazak diaspora. When the opportunity arose to extend my project beyond the one year in Kazakhstan, I decided to cross the border and spend six months studying the Kazak population (ca. one million) in Xinjiang, China. I also took a short trip to Russia and traveled to a remote western region of Mongolia, whose population is over 90% Kazak. Though my project has become vastly more complicated by this multi-sited approach, it has given me a clearer picture of several key issues: diaspora relations, minority-majority concerns, and the role of media and advertising in nation building.

A greater attention to the media became perhaps the most important change to my original proposal. In Kazakhstan I attended many live, public events, as anticipated, but also became increasingly interested in how these events are portrayed and in some cases shaped by media coverage and advertisements. I came to think of the media as an advertising tool of the state, an important channel through which nation-building ideas are communicated to the mainstream. Every few months another nation-building “theme” seemed to seep through Almaty and other cities, appearing on national television, on colorful, freshly printed banners lining the streets, and on billboards at major intersections. For example, last July was “Green Nation” month, accompanying an extremely limited and mostly ineffectual recycling campaign, a “voluntary” clean-up of major cities reminiscent of Soviet-era “subbotniki” (working Saturdays), and a much publicized conservation effort to save Almaty’s famous apples from extinction.

Holidays in Almaty, the largest city in Kazakhstan, almost always feature a live public performance (also broadcast on television), and I spent many, many hours on the main square in all kinds of weather, filming concerts and dances and conducting interviews. After a while, at least a segment of the performances fell into a rather predictable pattern: a long string of song and dance routines featuring various minority ethnic groups (Tatars, Uyghurs, Poles, Ukrainians, Koreans, Cossacks, etc.). When I first began inter-

Nauryz celebration on the main square in Almaty, Kazakhstan

viewing at these public celebrations, I asked lots of questions that had to do with nationalism and got a lot of answers that seemed to be about style. Why don’t people like certain state-sponsored celebrations on the main square in Almaty? Not because they are too nationalist, not because they are too Russian or too Kazak, not because they do not accept the message being transmitted, but rather because the old-fashioned Soviet-style performances clash with their more cosmopolitan tastes and esthetics.

Russian television channels like Rossia, Evrazia and NTV are widely available and popular in Kazakstan, and as I watched Moscow’s celebration of the 60th anniversary of Victory Day from my Almaty apartment, I was awed by the world-class production of the festivities. If this was advertising for the state, it was at a much more sophisticated level than what was happening in Kazakhstan. Like the smoothest vodka, the message went down with barely noticeable taste, but maximum effect. I witnessed this again at a celebration I saw in St. Petersburg last June, a city-wide graduation party called “Red Sails (Alye Parusa).” The imagery was simple and engaging, but the message conveyed was multi-layered and complex, simultaneously indexing the Russian nation, St. Petersburg’s nautical traditions, romantic anticipation, and forward-looking youthful aspirations. The celebrations consisted of two very well-advertised simultaneous rock concerts. There were no dancers in national costume, no Russian folk music ensembles, but all the same, the nationalist message of the event was very clear, targeted, and well received.

Chinese televised holiday events are mixed, with a marked difference between the performances broadcast on the national and regional channels. On the one hand, there are splashy gala events like the Chinese New Year festival broadcast from Beijing, and on the other, low-budget programs featuring local folk ensembles performing in minority languages. The Beijing shows have some minority song and dance numbers, but these are flashier and appeal to a more youthful audience, with minority rock and hip hop groups taking the stage rather than folk ensembles. In Xinjiang, a border province with large numbers of Turkic, Muslim minorities including Kazaks, the regional television stations broadcast separate programs for each ethnic group. As Kazaks mostly watch the Kazak channel, and Uyghurs the Uygar channel, the holiday programs (even shared Muslim holidays like Qurban Ayt) are similarly divided. Since there are virtually no live public celebrations of minority holidays in Xinjiang, the divided television programming effectively limits the scope of minority holidays, cordonning them off from the mainstream—a diverse and multilingual population in Xinjiang—thus minimizing their visibility and importance.

It will be interesting to see how long it takes for the Kazakstani media to catch up to the polished, cosmopolitan segment of its population—the city dwellers who follow all the latest fashion trends—but I imagine it will have to wait for a regime change. For now, while Chinese and Russian nation-builders have caught on to clever and colorful advertising techniques, Kazakstan still lingers in shades of Soviet gray, at least stylistically.

Adams is a PhD candidate in ethnomusicology. She conducted her dissertation research from 2004-06 with support from the Fulbright-Hays and the SSRC.
Garmajobat! For those of you whose Georgian language skills have diminished, the aforementioned word means “hello.” It has been nearly 18 months since I completed my Peace Corps service in the 2,000-year-old nation known as the Republic of Georgia (hereafter “Georgia”). For two years this country, nestled neatly in the natural wonders of the south Caucasus, was my home away from home.

From April 2003 to January 2005 I lived in Vale, a small village of one thousand people located in the southwest corner of Georgia and just an hour’s drive from the Turkish border. During the Soviet era, Vale was a closed town. Georgians who wanted to visit friends or family needed special permission and were registered with the local KGB because of the tiny village’s close proximity to the “free world” of Turkey.

I taught English at School #1, which housed Grades 1 to 11 in one building, which is typical in Georgia. The school building was an old, dilapidated throwback to socialist architecture: a gray, block building with a fading iconic image of Stalin positioned conspicuously atop the school’s entrance. My counterpart, Marina, and I taught all grades. I mostly worked with students on their oral exercises, which included playing a lot of games, especially—to my great annoyance—“Simon Says.” The students were most curious about my life in the US, especially as a college student. They were amazed that American students would travel thousands of miles from their homes to attend college. “How did you take care of yourself?” my students would ask. I, on the other hand, was amazed at the level of respect that Georgian children extended to their teachers, which would be the envy of many American teachers. When Marina and I would enter the classroom, the students would stand as a sign of respect and wait for our signal to permit them to sit. Whenever I dropped a piece of chalk on the floor, students would race to the board, competing with one another to pick it up for me.

When I wasn’t in the classroom, I spent much of my free time wrestling with the Georgian language. My newly made Georgian friends would laugh at my attempts to pronounce a word with three or four consecutive consonants. Try saying my host brother’s last name three times fast—Kakachishvili. I bet they’d laugh at you, too!

From my village high in the mountains of southeast Georgia to the flower-adorned capital of Tbilisi, Georgian people were most hospitable towards me. People in my village were quite friendly and shared with me whatever luxuries they had. This was usually an evening dinner that consisted of traditional Georgian cuisine and great Georgian wine. Wine is a major staple at any Georgian table, and no man can leave the country without participating in the ancient and male-dominated experience of the Georgian toast. Whether a tribute to family and friends, good health, the legendary Queen Tamar (who ruled the Kingdom of Georgia from 1184-1213), or, if a table of men, the beauty of Russian women, every facet of life had to be acknowledged and appreciated with an endless toast followed by a large gulp of Georgian wine.

My experiences as a black man in Georgia frequently led to humorous incidents. There were almost no cases in which I felt threatened because of my race, nor did I feel that people used my race against me. I was actually treated as a celebrity, posing for well over 300 pictures with Georgians who stopped me on the streets and once, more than thirty in a single day. People even offered to pay per pose, and sometimes I signed autographs. However, no one could ever get my citizenship straight. While many Georgians asked where I was from, many more made assumptions. On Monday, I was African; on Tuesday, Indian; on Wednesday, Brazilian; on Thursday, Arab; and on other days, I was assumed to be anything else but American. This nationality was attributed more easily to my American friends of the fairer persuasion.

As you can imagine, living in Georgia was a great experience for me, and I strongly encourage others to travel there. Everyone who goes is bound to fall in love with the country’s Eden of botanical exquisiteness. They will also be overwhelmed by the hospitality of Georgians eager to reveal that their Georgia has great peaches, too!
REEEC is pleased to welcome Eugene Avrutin as a new tenure-track Assistant Professor of Modern European Jewish History. Avrutin received his PhD in Russian and Jewish History from the University of Michigan in 2004. Before coming to Illinois this fall, he served as visiting Assistant Professor of History and Jewish Studies at Colby College. His work has appeared in *Slavic Review*, *Jewish Social Studies*, and *Kritika*.

Avrutin’s teaching and research interests include Russian-Jewish relations, governance, race, autobiography, mobility, and everyday life. He is now completing his first monograph, *A Legible People: Identification Politics and Jewish Accommodation in Imperial Russia*, based primarily on newly declassified archival documents. *A Legible People* is a cultural history that examines the ways in which ordinary Jews dealt with imperial management policies and redefined themselves against the backdrop of profound economic and social change. It is also a political history that focuses on Russian empire-building and statecraft, that is, the political practices by which the state attempted to document, verify, and control the movement and place of Jewish (and other imperial) identities. The study takes as its point of departure a shift in the way states governed their populations. If in the early modern period dress and badges represented social and religious identities, then in the modern period states made their populations “legible” by universal means of registration, through censuses, passports, and parish registers.

With Robert H. Greene, Avrutin also is preparing an edited translation of Anna Pavlovna Vygodskaya’s memoirs, entitled *The Story of a Life: The Memoirs of an Ordinary Jewish Woman in the Russian Empire*. Vygodskaya’s memoirs tell the story of a young girl growing up in an Orthodox Jewish community in a small provincial town in the Pale of Settlement and offer a unique insight into the everyday experiences of a Jewish woman in Tsarist Russia in the 1870s and 1880s. Avrutin’s next project will turn to Siberia to analyze the interplay of gold, Jewish labor migration, and empire.

This academic year, Avrutin is teaching the undergraduate surveys of Jewish history—“Jewish History to 1700” and “Jewish History since 1700”—as well as two courses tailored to his own interests. This fall, he is teaching a research and writing seminar on “Jewish Autobiography” for senior history majors. Next spring, he will offer an advanced undergraduate course entitled, “From Shtetl to Revolution: Jewish History and Culture in Eastern Europe.” In the coming years, Avrutin will teach newly designed courses on “Secular Jewish Life in Eastern Europe” and “Invention of Mobility in Modern Europe.”

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On September 14 the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures held a service of remembrance for Professor Evelyn Bristol, who passed away on July 28 after a brief period of failing health. Statements by her colleagues, friends, and former students were heard, as well as readings of Russian and Croatian poetry in her translations.

Born in San Francisco in 1925, Professor Bristol—"Eve" to her friends—earned her PhD at the University of California, Berkeley, studying under Gleb Struve. She taught briefly at the University of Washington and for several years at the University of Texas before coming to the University of Illinois as Associate Professor in 1965. She taught a wide range of courses in Russian and other Slavic literatures and directed a dozen PhD dissertations.

She was deeply devoted to her students and concerned with their success. Professor Bristol was the author of *A History of Russian Poetry* (Oxford U Press, 1991) and over sixty articles, encyclopedia entries, and reviews. She was promoted to Professor in 1989 and retired in 2003. She was widely respected in the Slavic field for her depth of erudition and soundness of critical judgment. Aside from her professional activities, she was a great friend of animals and a strong supporter of many animal welfare and environmental causes. As an expression of solidarity with her former students in Korea, her estate, administered by her cousin Christopher Hooper of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, is shipping her extensive professional library to Kyungpook National University in Taegu. Her papers, which include a sizable body of unpublished lyric poetry, are being acquired by the U of I archives.
Donna Buchanan presented “Postsocialist Mythological Tales: Music, Memory, Mafia, and Marketing in Turn-of-the-Millennium Bulgaria,” at the annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology in November. Her edited volume with accompanying CD-ROM, Balkan Popular Culture and the Ottoman Ecumene: Music, Image, and Regional Political Discourse (Scarecrow Press), is in production and should appear within the next few months.

David Cooper co-edited (with M. Richter) Milan Rúfus, And That’s the Truth: Poems in English and Slovak (Bolchazy-Carducci Pub, 2006). Rúfus is the poet laureate of Slovakia, and this is the first book-length English translation of his work.


Diane Koener gave a presentation at Perm State University on “Current Trends in the History of the USSR in the USA” in September.

Sherban Lupu played concerts and recitals in Vienna, Budapest and Romania this summer. He gave master classes in London at the Guildhall School of Music and recently went on a tour in Taiwan that included recitals, lectures and master classes. His October concerts with peasant virtuosos of Romania took place in New York, Washington, Chicago, and here at the University of Illinois.


Robert Ousterhout is a 2006-07 associate at the Center for Advanced Study for his project, “From Center to Border: Repositioning Architectural History in the Evros/Meric Valley.”

Lynda Park was promoted to Associate Director of REEEC.

Janice Pilch was recently promoted to tenured faculty. She published “U.S. Copyright Relations with Central, East European, and Eurasian Nations in Historical Perspective,” Slavic Review (65: 2, 2006) and presented “International Copyright: How Does It Work?” at the American Library Association conference in New Orleans this June.


In August 2006, Mark Steinberg became editor of Slavic Review, the interdisciplinary journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies. A few new publications will also appear this fall: Sacred Stories: Religion and Spirituality in Modern Russia from Indiana University Press (co-edited with Heather Coleman), a chapter in this volume called “Path of Thorns: The Spiritual Wounds and Wandering of Worker-Poets,” an extended essay in the new Cambridge History of Russia on “Russia’s Fin de Siècle, 1900-1914,” and essays on Maxim Gorky, Nicholas II, and Rasputin in the Scribner’s Encyclopedia of Modern Europe.

Richard Tempest presented “The Political Science of Putin’s Body,” at the Third International Political Marketing conference in Nicosia, Cyprus in April 2006. He was inter-viewed by Bulgarian TV channel 7 dni in June and gave two newspaper interviews to: Duma - “Putin napomnja na Petur I i Aleksandru III” (14 July 2006), and Trud - “V politikata tialoto e dovod” (20 August 2006).

Robert L. Thompson served for the past year as co-chair of the Task Force on U.S. Agriculture Policy. This independent task force was convened in September 2005 and comprised of thirty prominent leaders and policy specialists from Chicago, the Midwest and the nation. The Chicago Council on Global Affairs released the findings of the Task Force on U.S. Agriculture Policy in September 2006. The Task Force report, “Modernizing America’s Farm and Food Policy: Vision for a New Direction,” is available at thechicagocouncil.org.

Maria Todorova was awarded a Doctor Honoris Causa from the European University Institute in Florence, Italy. She received a Volkswagen-Stiftung grant for an international collaborative 3-year project on “Remembering Communism: Methodological and Practical Issues of Approaching the Recent Past in Eastern Europe,” directed by herself and S. Troebst. She published an updated, revised edition of Balkan Family Structure and the European Pattern: Demographic Developments in Ottoman Bulgaria (CEU Press, 2006); “The Mausoleum of George Dimitrov as Lieu de Mémoire,” The Journal of Modern History (78: 2, 2006); and several articles in the Scribner’s Encyclopedia of Modern Europe.

New REEEC Faculty
Eugene Avrutin, History
(see new faculty profile)
Michael Finke, Slavic
George Gasyna, Slavic/Comp Lit
Elizabeth Sweet, Urban & Regional Planning (on Fulbright in 05-06)
Robert Thompson, ACE
Paul Vaaler, International Business

Retirements
Dmitry Bobychev, Slavic
Bob Burger, Library
Frank Gladney, Slavic

Faculty/Associates/Staff News
Contribute to the REEEC Graduate Student Research Fund

As you will note from this and other issues of the Center News, REEEC is able to sponsor a wide range of programs designed to enhance the study of Russia, Eurasia, and Eastern Europe. Much of this is funded by the US Department of Education and the Department of State along with the University. However, none of those funds can be used for REEEC-affiliated graduate students to find support for thesis research abroad. To address these needs, we are seeking to establish a REEEC Graduate Student Research Grant. The grant would be open to graduate students in all disciplines at UIUC.

Please send your contribution to: REEEC, University of Illinois, 104 ISR, 910 S. 5th St., Champaign, IL 61820.

Your gifts are tax-deductible. Thank you very much for your support.

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Student News

Pompilia Burcica (history) presented “Romanian Theater on Tour: Entertainment and Nationalism 1918-1930” at the annual AAASS convention in Washington, DC, in November.

Diana M. Cheng (natural resources and environmental sciences) received the AYRE Fellowship Grant through the College of ACES Global Connect program to facilitate her travel to Bishkek and Issyk Kul, Kyrgyzstan, in July, where she attended an International Cooperative Biodiversity Groups conference and conducted interviews related to her ethnobotanical research.

Michael Findley (political science) published (with Tze Kwang Teo) “Rethinking Third Party Interventions into Civil Wars: An Actor-centric Approach,” Journal of Politics (Nov. 06).

Erica Fraser (history) presented “The Next Generation: Gender, Collectivism, and Training the New Soviet Man in Post-war Military Academies” at the AAASS in November.

Diana Georgescu (history) presented “A Jewish Diary Fifty Years Later: The Fate of Autobiographical Testimony in Post-Communist Romanian Historiography” at the AAASS.

Angela Glaros (anthropology) presented “The Domestication of Passion: Transforming ‘Dangerous’ Women’s Voices in the Smyrneiko Song” at the annual AAA meeting in San Jose in November.

Oana Popescu-Sandu (comp lit) presented “…Where do you live, comrade, not on the moon for sure”: Narrative Hybridity in Bulgarian Communist Prison Memoirs” at the AAASS meeting in November.


2005-2006 GRADUATES

PhDs:
James Bang (economics)
Diana Mincyte (sociology)
Cristofer Scarboro (history)
Greg Stroud (history)

MAS:
Emily Goodhue (LIS)
Maria Radeva (REES)
Karin Steinbrueck (REES)
James Walker (REES)

BAs & Minors:
William L. Hasty (REES major)
Areta Kovalsky (REES minor)
Scott Schulfer (REES minor)
Anastasia Tolstikhin (Russian)

Incoming REEES MA Students

Robert Blaney
Hilary Negele
Terrell Starr
Kevin Turley

2006-07 FLAS Fellowship Recipients

Summer 2006
Katya Balter (comp lit—Russian)
Sara Brinegar (REEES—Russian)
Emily Evans (art history—Russian)
Paul Hartley (music—Turkish)
Tatiana Kuzmic (comp lit—Russian)
David May (REEES—Russian)
Faith Stein (comp lit—Russian)
James Walker (REEES—Turkish)

AY 2006-2007
Katya Balter (comp lit—Russian)
Annaliee Bateman (history—Russian)
Robert Blaney (REEES—Russian)
Sara Brinegar (REEES—Russian)
Tony Demchak (REEES—Ukrainian)
Emily Evans (art history—Russian)
Nelly Matova (musicology—Czech)
David May (REEES—Russian)
Andrea Michaelis (REEES—Russian)
Hilary Negele (REEES—Russian)
Loren Puette (REEES—Polish, EUC)
Faith Stein (comp lit—Russian)

Slavic Review Editorial Assistants
Randall S. Dills
Tatiana Kuzmic
Zsuzsánna Magdó

Slavic Library Assistants
Katya Dunatov
Mary Aguila
Marina Sergeyeva

On Oct. 22, Sherban Lupu (School of Music) performed with peasant virtuosos from Romania to an audience of over 300 in Smith Music Hall.

Send Us Your News!

We would love to hear from REEES-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: Lynda Park
Editorial Assistants: Elana Jakel and Colleen Galvin
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The Center News is published bi-annually. We welcome your comments and suggestions. To be added to our mailing list, contact the center at the address below or e-mail: reec@uiuc.edu.

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www.reec.uiuc.edu
Noontime Scholars Lecture Series

September 5 (with PSAMES)  
“Governance Reform in Tajikistan: A Report from the Field”  
**Thomas Ginsburg** (Law, UIUC)

September 19  
“‘We Have Never Been German,’ or What Kaliningrad Can Teach Us about Historical Memory and Identity”  
**Olga Sezneva** (Society of Fellows in the Liberal Arts, University of Chicago)

October 3  
“Drafting the New Soviet Man: Masculinity, Empire, and Resistance in Postwar Conscription Efforts”  
**Erica Fraser** (History, UIUC)

October 18 (with History)  
“Living the Soviet Dream: Encounters with Leonid Potemkin”  
**Jochen Hellbeck** (History, Rutgers University)

October 24 (with Art History)  
“Modern Soviet Art Meets America, 1935”  
**Christina Kiaer** (Art History, Northwestern University)

November 9  
“Ideology, Identity and the Reconstruction of Medieval Monuments in Ukraine”  
**Olenka Pevny** (Art History, University of Richmond)

December 5  
“How to Make a ‘Nation’? Reflections on the Moldovan Nation-Building Policies during the Soviet Period and After”  
**Octavian Ticu** (International Relations and Political Science, International Free University of Moldova, Chișinău)

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

September 7  
“Bioexploration in Central Asia and Beyond”  
**Mary Ann Lila** (Professor of Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences; Interim Associate Dean for Research, College of ACES, University of Illinois)

November 2  
“Hinterlands and Borderlands: Nationalism and Ideology on the Greco-Turkish Frontier”  
**Robert Ousterhout** (Professor of History and Preservation, School of Architecture, University of Illinois)

November 30  
“Workers on the Move: Out-Migration and Family Stability in the Southern Caucasus”  
**Cynthia Buckley** (Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Texas at Austin)

CAS Initiative on Globalization Lecture (with ACDIS)

October 19  
“The Globalization of Energy Resources: Tapping the Caspian Oil and Gas”  
**Jonathan Elkind** (Independent energy consultant; former Director for Russian, Ukrainian, and Eurasian Affairs, National Security Council, 1998-2001)