What has happened to commercial law in Russia since Vladimir Putin took over leadership of the country in 1999? Since that year, there has been substantial progress in many areas of both technical and substantive law reform and a number of other encouraging changes, but also a number of very worrisome developments.

The modernization of the legislative base for a market economy has progressed in a number of areas. President Yeltsin was unable to secure passage of laws providing for private land ownership. Putin pushed through compromise legislation that substantially expands the possibility of such ownership. He also secured passage of a wide variety of legislation to support the real estate market in areas such as title registration, mortgages, and secondary markets in mortgages. An addition to the Civil Code modernizes inheritance rules and implements international standards for dealing with cases with foreign elements. New tax legislation has greatly reduced tax rates and treated income and expenses more in accordance with standard accounting principles. The lower rates and better enforcement have led to an increase in tax collections.

Not all the market-oriented reforms have been popular. A number mark sharp breaks with the Communist past. A new Labor Code gives employers much greater power to set terms of employment and to fire and lay off employees. A new Housing Code will shift the burden of maintaining apartment buildings from the state to apartment owners. Special privileges for the elderly and disabled, such as free use of public transportation, were replaced by small monthly cash payments, leading to public demonstrations by angered senior citizens throughout Russia’s major cities. (The cash payments, however, were a benefit to citizens in rural areas, where there was no public transportation.)

A market economy requires not only substantive rules, but also fair and effective procedures for applying the rules. Recent improvements in the procedural system include modernized codes of civil and arbitrazh procedure, a law on private arbitration, and a law on the bar. The new procedure codes introduce substantially more adversary elements into the process. Another reform is the introduction of the possibility for laypersons to sit alongside judges in the commercial courts, possibly providing a check against judicial corruption. A more effective system of appeals has been introduced for the commercial courts. Many laws, regul-
Director—continued

Astounded by the brilliant virtuosity of some lăutari recordings Rădulescu had brought along, he determined to study personally with these rural instrumentalists and to incorporate their music into his recordings and concertizing, thus drawing attention to their art in a larger public venue. “I found the music of such high value from the standpoint of the violin as an instrument,” said Lupu. “I was impressed by their passion, dedication and respect for the music and the tradition, especially as to be a lăutar today is not a lucrative profession.”

To learn the techniques and repertoires employed by Rădulescu’s lăutari, who represent a cross-section of Romania’s stylistically diverse regions, required rigorous effort on Lupu’s part. Because the lăutari’s music is rooted in oral tradition, his lessons involved intensive listening, observation, and musical exchange rather than a study of music notation. “It took me two months of hard practice to master these traditions,” Lupu recalled. “I would finish the day exhausted, and then learn the next morning that the musicians had stayed up all night, continuing to swap tunes from their home districts after I retired.”

Lupu also had to modify his instrument to accommodate the unique demands of the music. He readjusted the bridge and fingerboard, restrung the bow and learned to hold it differently, and retuned the strings. Much effort was directed at learning a new vocabulary of formulaic melodic and fingering patterns at the vigorous tempos that characterize Romanian dance music. He also learned to play the trumpet- or Stroh violin, an instrument invented by Augustus Stroh in London ca. 1900 that found its way down the Danube and into western Romania sometime around World War I. On this violin the usual guitar-shaped sound box is replaced with an unusual resonator: affixed to its bridge is the horn-like bell of the early telephone or gramophone. The instrument was used to accompany dancing in Transylvania, an outdoor activity for which its louder volume proved beneficial. Romania’s lăutari further adapted the instrument by replacing the metallic horn with a dried, hollowed-out pumpkin shell. Both violins may be heard on the CD; in addition, a four-stringed guitar; the cobză, an instrument related to the Renaissance lute and Arab oud; and the tambal mic, or small tsiymbal (a hammered dulcimer).

“So by taking on this project did you discover anything new about east European art music?” I asked. “Did you gain any new insights into Enescu’s music or that of other east European composers?”

“I can now better see the raw stone that was the focus of composers such as Bartók and Janáček,” Lupu replied. “I have also gained more freedom as a musician. By learning this music I have unfettered myself from the paradigms of classical performance. For the lăutari music-making is just a part of everyday life. It is a functional art. They play for local dances where the emphasis is not on accuracy so much as it is on continual improvisation and experience—to provide some sort of emotion and mood for the dancers.” “They have helped me to break these barriers,” he concluded, referring to the Western aesthetic preference for note-perfect, non-improvisational performance in the classical realm, “and have taught me to float along with this river of inspiration that surrounds us everywhere.”

In the future Lupu intends to expand this project by releasing a second CD acknowledging the Romani, Jewish, and Turkish contributions to Romanian violin playing. His next endeavor, however, concerns George Enescu. To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the composer’s death, Lupu has organized a symposium, “The Oedipus Myth and Its Interpretation,” to be held 14-16 October 2005. The event will feature an international coterie of renowned Classics scholars and culminate in the American premiere of Enescu’s 1923 opera, Oedipe, to be performed at KCPA on 15 October.

“We are facing a crisis of spirituality, of expression, right now,” explained Lupu. “I want to use the opera’s performance as an opportunity to talk about what the Oedipus myth means—to reflect on our own existence and to find some answers to contemporary challenges.” Using the opera as a springboard, the conference will consider how the psychological interplay of dislocation, uprootedness, destiny and identity so central to the myth and its operatic portrayal is relevant to the modern condition. Just as Oedipus transcended the challenges he faced, transfiguring his identity in the process, so too, remarked Lupu, must we “continue to fight despite what Destiny throws at us.”

Sherban Lupu is Associate Professor of Violin in the School of Music. A member of the George Enescu Chamber Players and founder of the UI Enescu Ensemble, he has performed widely throughout the US and Europe. Sherban Lupu and the Peasant Virtuosos of Romania was produced with the financial assistance of the UI European Union Center.

Donna A. Buchanan
Director, REEEC

### SUMMER 2005 PROGRAMS

**Summer Research Laboratory** on Russia, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia, June 13–August 5


**Summer Symposium** “Slavery in the Twenty-First Century: Trafficking of Women and Children,” June 25

**Annual Ukrainian Conference:** “Contemporary Ukraine,” June 29–July 2. Organized by the Ukrainian Research Program, UIUC.

**Research Practicum Workshop**, June 16-24

**Noontime Scholars’ Lecture Series**, June 14–July 5

**Film Series**, June 13–July 13


**Curriculum Development Workshop** on Russia, June 25–29

**International Summer Institute** for Pre-collegiate Educators: “The Life of Kids around the World,” June 27–July 1

For information on any of our summer programs, please contact the Center at (217) 333-1244 or reec@uiuc.edu. Information and applications available online: www.reec.uiuc.edu
The effects of the Putin presidency on international economic relations present a mixed picture. The huge oil-based revenue surplus is rapidly reducing Russia’s foreign debt burden and its need for foreign investments. Perhaps for this reason, Putin has indicated that in the future, only companies with majority Russian ownership will be allowed to bid for exploitation of state-owned natural resources. Charges brought recently by the Federal Security Service against a laboratory that conducted cooperative research with foreign organizations may discourage joint research and development projects. Putin has indicated interest in joining the World Trade Organization. In some areas Russia has amended legislation to meet World Trade Organization standards. It has adopted intellectual property legislation that is world-class on paper. However, distribution of pirated recordings, movies, and software still far exceeds that of legal copies. It has made its legislation more transparent by publishing laws, court decisions, and many regulations on the Internet. Contentious issues remain in the World Trade Organization negotiations, particularly those related to sale of oil and gas to domestic users at below-market prices.

Russia faces serious problems before international tribunals. A huge number of complaints brought by Russian business organizations are in the immense backlog of the European Court of Human Rights. Among them is one by Yukos seeking tens of billions of dollars of damages. Moreover, Yukos shareholders have brought international arbitration cases involving tens of billions of dollars. If Russia loses a large number of these cases or is hit with huge damage awards, it may rethink its need for foreign investments. Perhaps for this reason, Putin has indicated that in the future, only companies with majority Russian ownership will be allowed to bid for exploitation of state-owned natural resources. Charges brought recently by the Federal Security Service against a laboratory that conducted cooperative research with foreign organizations may discourage joint research and development projects. Putin has indicated interest in joining the World Trade Organization. In some areas Russia has amended legislation to meet World Trade Organization standards. It has adopted intellectual property legislation that is world-class on paper. However, distribution of pirated recordings, movies, and software still far exceeds that of legal copies. It has made its legislation more transparent by publishing laws, court decisions, and many regulations on the Internet. Contentious issues remain in the World Trade Organization negotiations, particularly those related to sale of oil and gas to domestic users at below-market prices.

Anna Stavrakopoulou (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki)
“Ottoman Karagöz and Greek Shadow Theater: Communicational Shifts and Variants in a Multi-ethnic and Ethnic Context”

Elizabeth Frierson (University of Cincinnati)
“Buy-Local Campaigns in Late Ottoman and Early Republican Newspapers and Magazines”

Participants
Donald Barry (Lehigh University)
Harold Berman (Emory University)
William Burnham (Wayne State University)
William Butler (University of London)
Anatoly Didenko (Kazakh Humanitarian Law University, Almaty)
Anatoly Dowgert (University of Kyiv)
Ferdinand Feldbrugge (University of Leiden)
Kathryn Hendley (University of Wisconsin, Madison)
Eugene Huskey (Stetson University)
Peter Juiver (Barnard College)
Oxana Kozyr (Private Law Research Center, Moscow)
Peter Krug (University of Oklahoma)
Peter Maggs (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign)
Alexander Makovskii (Private Law Research Center, Moscow)
Hiroshi Oda (University of London)
Sarah Reynolds (SREynolds Associates)
Robert Sharlet (Union College)
Louise Shelley (American University)
William Simons (University of Leiden)
Peter Solomon (University of Toronto)
Paul Stephan (University of Virginia)
Alexei Zhiltsov (Private Law Research Center, Moscow)

www.reec.uiuc.edu/events/annual.html
Report from the Field:
Moldovan Poverty and History

By Dmitry Tartakovsky

When I returned to the Moldovan capital of Chisinau in September 2004 to conduct my dissertation research on Jewish communal and national identity in interwar Romanian Bessarabia and Soviet Transdniestria, it seemed to me that I had changed more than Moldova. About two years before, I had left Moldova after serving in the political section of the U.S. Embassy for two years. Now a civilian again, I quickly felt that I could get a closer look at Moldovan society from within, through personal contacts with friends, professors and archival colleagues that were hardly possible before. I discovered that Moldova had changed, but not for the better. The army of Moldovan “gastarbeiters,” or workers abroad—often the most capable and ambitious people from Moldovan society—had become an institution and the most important means through which Moldovan families deal with a collapsed, mismanaged post-socialist economy.

Estimates indicate that every third family has someone working abroad, mostly in Russia, Turkey, Italy, Spain or Portugal, and sending money home. The impact on the economy has been great. While the Communist authorities, expected by all political observers to maintain their Parliamentary majority in the March 2005 elections, tout increased GDP growth and higher wages and pensions, the reality is that most of the growth is driven by consumer spending with money earned abroad. This in turn artificially drives up the value of the Moldovan lei because foreign currency, which in turn makes Moldovan exports expensive and uncompetitive. Rather than implementing policies that would make Moldova attractive to foreign investment, the Communists have pursued policies aimed at satisfying their aging political base by refusing to privatize some national firms and persecuting unpopular, foreign-owned, Western firms (like the Spanish power company Union Fenosa). Foreign investment has fallen in recent years. Mindful of several banking scandals, most recently during the Russian financial crisis of 1998, Moldovans are not saving or investing their money, but rather spending on consumer goods or plowing it into real estate. Apartment and consumer goods prices in Chisinau have risen to near-Western levels while local wages remain miserable, and minimal investment prevents job growth. This fuels the need for families to send their young members abroad in order to survive, feeding a continuing vicious circle.

With this environment in the background, I began sifting through old Jewish and non-Jewish newspapers, Romanian security police reports, Soviet party conferences and citizens’ complaints files from several levels of administration to understand how Jews defined themselves in two new, modern and radically different political systems in the years between the First and Second World Wars. In such desperate economic circumstances, personal contacts with archivists on whom I depended for the documents became imperative. Gifts and bribes became a common part of research. Conditions in both the National and the Former Communist archives were always a problem; in the former my progress was slowed by microfilm readers that never worked (although they were constantly being fixed), while in the latter running my computer in the reading hall became an unaffordable expense in the view of the director. Both problems took time (and money) to overcome.

When I imagined my project prior to arrival, I never intended it to become political. I quickly learned, however, that attempting to write a professional history of the Jews in interwar Moldova is politically charged because it rubs against both nationally prominent historiographies of the Holocaust. Unlike many post-socialist countries such as Poland, Hungary, or even Romania, in which national academics have begun to deal with the painful reality of the Holocaust, senior Moldovan historians are still largely plagued by denial. The Soviet school, which dominates the Russian-speaking, anti-Russian perspective, continues to argue that giving special attention to the Jews takes it away from the suffering of other brave peoples who sacrificed their lives in the fight against Fascism. The Moldovan nationalist school on the other hand, which came to dominate intellectual life during the late 1980s as part of the anti-Soviet, pro-Russian campaign of the Popular Front, maintains that as Soviet sympathizers who worked against the interests of ethnic Moldovans as they are now defined, Jews brought their fate down upon themselves. In the fight to establish the purity of their national cause, this view naturally recoils from the truth of the Holocaust. I had several painful reminders of this. Having shown some of my documents from the political rallies of the right-wing, virulently anti-Semitic National Christian Party from 1936 to a local Moldovan friend, she reacted with shock and disbelief: “How can this be explained? The Jews must have done something,” she said. A senior researcher at the Former Communist Archive (now called the Archive of Social-Political Organizations), having learned about my topic, commented: “The Jews suffered genocide, this cannot be denied. But Jews also held all the top positions in the Communist bureaucracy of the Autonomous Republic (interwar Transdniestria), and they sent Moldovans to Siberia.” While there is a growing group of young historians, many of them with some Western training, that seeks to integrate into their work international debates about the past, they continue for the moment to be a fringe group. The past is very much the present in the Republic of Moldova, as intellectuals struggle to reclaim their national past and understand their identity between the polar opposites of Romanian nationalism on the one hand and Russian imperialism and Soviet Communism on the other. For better or worse, this struggle for broader Moldovan national identity cannot be ignored in understanding interwar Jewish identity.

Dmitry Tartakovsky is a PhD candidate in History.
Report from the Field:
St. Petersburg—Sapporo—Iuzhno-Sakhalinsk

By Sharyl Corrado

Halfway though my year of dissertation research, I have found my time to be both exciting and tedious, frustrating, yet rewarding. With a topic involving research in multiple locations (“The Image of Sakhalin Island in the Imperial Russian Imagination”), I have spent the past six months in St. Petersburg, Iuzhno-Sakhalinsk (Sakhalin), and Sapporo, Japan, each of which has provided unique experiences. St. Petersburg, of course, is a scholar’s dream-come-true. Easily accessible archives, a national repository library, and knowledgeable librarians and archivists (although I still wrote to the Slavic Reference Service at Illinois with the hard questions!)—not to mention the long summer days and wonderful cultural life of the city—made it hard to leave for my next destination: Japan.

Not knowing the Japanese language, I was nervous about spending the next month in Sapporo, but the helpful staff of the Slavic Research Center at Hokkaido University soon calmed my fears. Conditions for research were truly ideal: I was given my own desk, DSL connection, and access to probably the best Slavic library in Asia. The community of international scholars made me feel at home, and while certain things remained a challenge—such as finding books when library shelves are labeled in Japanese—staff helped with every little question. The library is especially rich in primary sources on the Russian Far East, but also contains most recent literature in western languages. I made use of both, and left Japan with a deep desire to return at a future point in my career.

From Sapporo, I took a 1½ hour flight to Iuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Russia, the main site of my research. Not much larger than Urbana-Champaign, without a major university or archive, Iuzhno-Sakhalinsk is nonetheless the perfect place to research Sakhalin history. Scholars on Sakhalin have been photocopying and microfilming materials from archives all over Russia since the 1950s, and most relevant books and articles have made their way to the Sakhalin Regional Library in some form or another. While at a national library, searching the catalog can take hours and the book may be across town, the librarian here will bring the book immediately—even if you don’t remember the title or author’s name! (“Could I please see that little book published in the 70’s about Chekhov’s correspondence?” “No problem….”)

Yet research in the provinces has its challenges as well. For example, the bulb burned out on the microfilm reader recently—the only microfilm reader in the city that works! Since bulbs for the Soviet-era machine no longer seem to be available (I’ve spent three days visiting every store in town that sells light bulbs), a lot of valuable material has suddenly become inaccessible. And the curator at the museum took a month-long vacation in the middle of my research, which meant materials from the museum archives were temporarily unavailable. And then there was the conference paper…. I was asked to give a paper at a local conference on Chekhov’s 1890 visit to Sakhalin. My paper was well-received, even if only indirectly related to the conference theme. Imagine my consternation, however, when the television news that evening described me as a visiting Chekhov specialist, which has led to a number of uncomfortable situations. Why exactly my supposed knowledge of Chekhov qualifies me to speak to local university students on Russo-Japanese relations leaves me baffled, for example—but a local professor insisted that I speak to her students on that topic.

My time here is coming to a close as I make plans to work in Vladivostok, Moscow, and again in St. Petersburg. Sad to say goodbye to my new friends and colleagues, I appreciate all the more the opportunities to continue my research in places most of them seldom visit. I am grateful to my host institution, the Sakhalin Regional Studies Museum, and the many local scholars who have advised me and provided access to materials, and hope that cooperation will continue in the future.

Sharyl Corrado is a PhD candidate in History. She is conducting her research on a Fulbright-Hays Research Fellowship.

Sorbian Survival: A Look at the Sorbian Community in Germany

By Elizabeth Spreng (Doctoral student, Anthropology)

The continued survival of ethnolinguistic minorities illustrates the dynamics of cultural and linguistic interactions, and the Sorbs, an indigenous minority in eastern Germany, can serve as a lens through which to view this struggle. The Sorbs define their difference through language and believe that the continued use of their language is crucial to their survival. My research focuses on linguistic questions that explore the complex interplay of linguistic vitality and language loss. During my preliminary fieldwork in the summer of 2004 on a FLAS fellowship from REEEC, I studied the Upper Sorbian dialect and conducted fieldwork in Bautzen, the urban center for the Sorbian community. In this article, I briefly outline the particularities of the Sorbian community that also illuminate broader discourses addressing the tension between the national/global and the local.

Describing the Sorbian community involves several interrelated facets including geography, language, and history. With a population of approximately 60,000, the bilingual Sorbian community demonstrates diachronic and synchronic flexibility in adapting to changing historical circumstances and everyday pressures. In the early 4th century, the Sorbs settled in Lusatia, the Sorbian homeland and a geographical area that comprises the political areas of Saxony and Brandenburg; however, Lusatia represents a vaguely defined region. The original Slavic tribes known as the Milčeni and Lužići occupied Upper and Lower Lusatia, respectively, a varied geographical area bordered by Poland to the east and the Czech Republic to the south. Paralleling the settlement of the two Slavic tribes, the Sorbian community developed a patois that eventually led to the development of two dialects. In northern Lusatia, the lower Sorbian (Niedersorbisch) dialect community of 20,000 Sorbs experienced greater linguistic oppression in Brandenburg than the Upper Sorbian (Obersorbisch) dialect community of 40,000 Sorbs in Saxony. Early debates about the dialectal differences focused on the significant differences between the dialects that almost—continued on page 7
Dmitry Bobyshev published “Laboratoriia svobody (Laboratory of Freedom)” in Voprosy Literatury (vol. 5, 2004) and participated in a poetry reading at the AATSEEL convention in Philadelphia in December 2004.


Francis Butler presented “Jur’ev Den’ and Românii, will appear in late summer.

Dmitry Bobyshev

Lynda Park presented “Russians in Siberia in the Nineteenth Century: Sibiriai as a New Ethnographic Type” at the AAASS convention in December.

Janice Pilch presented “New Dimensions in Intellectual Property: Copyright Dilemmas and How to Solve Them” as chair of Bibliography and Documentation Committee Copyright Working Group at the AAASS convention.

Anke Pinkert presented “Specters of Utopia: Postcommunist Travel to America in German Literature of the 1990s” at the Annual Conference of the American Comparative Literatures Association in March.

Judith Pintar presented “Gender, Ethnicity, and Atrocity: The Case of the Drina Martyrs in Croatia” at the Social Science History Association meeting in Chicago in November 2004.

John Randolph presented “Traveling Royalty: Road Building and Royal Visits in Russia, 1750-1800” at the AAASS Convention.

Mahir Saul received a research fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Valeria Sobol presented “Nerves, Brain or Heart? The Anatomy of Feeling in Russian Sentimentalism” at the AAASS convention in December and will publish “‘Yes, We Are Scythians’: The Image of Russia in Josef Škvorecký’s The Cowsards,” Slavic and East European Journal 29:1 (2005). She also received a fellowship from the Center for Advanced Study for 2005-06 and the Humanities Release Time award from the Campus Research Board for fall 2006.


Mark Steinberg gave a number of lectures in Russia, Germany, and England while on sabbatical in St. Petersburg and Berlin. He published the revised 7th edition of A History of Russia, with Nicholas Riasanovsky (Oxford University Press, 2004). Two edited collections—one on the Russian city and one on religion—will appear later this year.


Maria Todorova was recently awarded the Doctor Honoris Causa from her alma mater, the University of Sofia in Bulgaria. Currently a Fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin, she has given lectures at the New Europe College in Bucharest, the University of Constanta in Romania, University of Sofia, the Center for Advanced Study in Sofia, the Einstein Forum in Berlin, the Wissenschaftskolleg, and the Free University Berlin, Bochum and Munich. She was the editor and co-author of Balkan Identities: Nation and Memory (NYU Press, 2004). She also published “The Trap of Backwardness: Modernity, Temporality and the study of Eastern European Nationalism,” Slavic Review (2005) and “The Category Time in the Study of Balkan Nationalism,” Revue des études sud-est européennes (2004).

Robert Bayer (JD ’75) became the Country Director for Russia for the American Bar Association Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative in August 2004 after serving as a rule of law advisor for USAID in Tbilisi, Georgia, and working for five years as Chief of Party for a rule of law contractor in Ukraine. He received his LLM from Columbia University in 1985, where he was a Jersey Fellow in Soviet Law.

Rosina Neginsky (PhD ’91, Slavic) published Zinaida Vengerova in Search of Beauty: A Literary Ambassador between East and West (Peter Lang Verlag 2004). She is Associate Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Illinois, Springfield.

Keith Rosten (JD ’81) has been working as the manager of Europe and Eurasia Programs for Checchi and Company Consulting, Inc., in St. Petersburg, Russia, for the last 3 years. He has been working on projects funded by the US government to develop the legal infrastructure in the countries of the former Soviet Union. He also published Once in Kazakhstan: The Snow Leopard Emerges in January 2005. More information can be obtained at www.okazakhstan.com

Veronica Shenshin (PhD ’94, Slavic) published The Poetic Weltanschauung of A. A. Fet (Moscow 2003). She was also chosen as a member of the Academy of Sciences in Pedagogical Studies in Russia. She teaches in Finland.
led to virtually distinct languages with Lower Sorbian being similar to Polish, on the one hand, and Upper Sorbian to Czech, on the other.

Although Sorbs and Germans share many common historical moments, Sorbian history differs significantly from German nation-state history. For example, Sorbian history stresses the rise of Sorbian national consciousness in the 1850s aided by the growth of an intelligentsia and a literary movement; however, German unification occurred later in 1871. Another significant difference lies in the understanding of and attitudes toward socialism. During the socialist period, Sorbs received significant state support for schools and other cultural institutions. Yet, since the collapse of socialism, critiques of the Sorbian cooperation with the socialist government illustrate a significant rethinking of socialism. In the post-socialist era, Sorbs still receive political and linguistic protection in the Saxon and Brandenburg constitutions and enjoy an active print literature in newspapers, magazines and literary publications. Education in Sorb is available for many Sorbian children.

The Sorbs often shift between German and Sorbian narratives, considering themselves German citizens but members of the Sorbian nation. Although defined as bilingual, Sorbs hold German and Sorb identities as distinct. Yet these identities interanimate one another. During my fieldwork, Sorbs repeatedly told me about the importance of their language as the marker of difference and that Sorbian identity depended on linguistic competence. A protest that I observed illustrates the importance of language and identity in the Sorbian community. One Saturday afternoon approximately 25 Sorbs gathered to organize a protest. A German employee at the Saint Marienstern Convent lodged a complaint against a Sorbian-speaking woman insisting that she must speak German. A female employee had been reprimanded for speaking Sorb in the workplace. Holding the Sorbian flag and a banner that read, “Sersbska reč je žiwa (The Sorbian language is alive),” the protesters marched around the convent courtyard with tape over their mouths. Then they circled the courtyard again, took the tape off their mouths, and sang Sorbian folk songs while the convent employees cheered from the window. The taped mouths of the protesters signified their feelings of being silenced, which suggests that in many situations Sorbs choose or feel forced to speak German, potentially facilitating a shift toward language loss. The complaint by the German speaking employee shows that some Germans feel threatened by Sorbian language use. This small protest illustrates the importance of language in identity, the dynamics of linguistic survival, and the tensions between the national and the local. With the growth of the European Union, the ambiguous border between eastern and western Europe, and the collapse of socialism, a reevaluation of the space that minority language communities create for themselves is an important site for understanding these broader topics.
**Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center**  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
104 International Studies Building  
910 South Fifth Street  
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USA  

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**Noontime Scholars**

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<td>January 25</td>
<td>“The Social Logic of Iconicity: Re/Presenting ‘Gypsies’ in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey”</td>
<td>Sonia Seeman (Ethnomusicology, University of California, Santa Barbara)</td>
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<td>February 1</td>
<td>“European or Bulgarian? Irony and the Definition of a National Identity”</td>
<td>Tim Pilbrow (Anthropology, UIUC)</td>
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<td>February 8</td>
<td>“Plotting the Self in Bulgarian Socialist Realist Painting”</td>
<td>Cristofer Scarboro (History, UIUC)</td>
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<td>February 22</td>
<td>“State and Religious Extremism in Uzbekistan: Problems toward Crafting a Secular Republic”</td>
<td>Elyor Karimov (Institute of History, Uzbek Academy of Sciences)</td>
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<td>March 1</td>
<td>“Images of Kerensky in 1917”</td>
<td>Boris Kolontskii (Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences; European University, St. Petersburg, Russia)</td>
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<td>March 15</td>
<td>“Defining Human Rights in a Post-Communist Framework”</td>
<td>Katlijn Malflie (Political Science, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium)</td>
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<td>March 29</td>
<td>“Sex in Russian Modernist Theology: Father Sergei Bulgakov and Others”</td>
<td>Evgenii Bershtein (Russian, Reed College)</td>
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<td>April 15</td>
<td>“A ‘Hebrew Drama’: The Individual, the Collective, and the Problem of Crisis in Russian-Jewish History”</td>
<td>Benjamin Nathans (History, University of Pennsylvania)</td>
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<td>Tuesday, April 26</td>
<td>“Merchant Readers under Nicholas I: Research in Progress”</td>
<td>Miranda Remnek (Slavic and East European Library, UIUC)</td>
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**Directions in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies Colloquium Series**

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<td>March 10</td>
<td>“Ancient Ethnic Fondness: A Linguist’s History of the Balkans and the Caucasus”</td>
<td>Victor Friedman (Mellon Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures and Linguistics, University of Chicago)</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 31</td>
<td>(rescheduled event) “Language and the Future of Europe: Some Current Issues”</td>
<td>Susan Gal (Professor of Anthropology and Linguistics, University of Chicago)</td>
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<td>April 21</td>
<td>“The Poverty of Ideology in Postcommunism—or Why Putin is Clueless, but Russia Still Loves Him”</td>
<td>Karen Dawisha (Director, Havighurst Center; Professor of Political Science, Miami University, Ohio)</td>
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