A Siberian University in Transition: Challenges and Opportunities

by Elizabeth L. Sweet and Yuri P. Dus

Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, education in Russia has been going through a considerable transformation. New departments have been established, reforms connected to the European Commission’s Bologna Process to create uniform educational standards and degrees in European countries have begun, national testing has started, and the Ministry of Science and Education is in the process of downsizing the number of state-funded universities from about 8,000 to 60. Russia’s demographic crisis will also soon be on the universities’ doorsteps. Starting in 2009 public universities’ federal allocations will be based on the number of enrolled students, which is decreasing every year. As the Russian education system conforms to the European system of degrees, the traditional five-year “specialist” degree will be reduced to a four-year Bachelor’s degree. Education will also become more expensive for students as they are forced to pay for an extra year of coursework to get a Master’s degree. We also fear that this process will spur a brain drain to Moscow, Petersburg and abroad as not all universities will have the funding to create and staff Masters-level programs.

Located in western Siberia, Omsk is an industrial city of about 1.4 million people. Omsk State University, with 12,000 students and 1,000 faculty, has faced a transition typical for a regional university in Russia. During the Soviet period, the university offered degrees in eight disciplines—Math, Physics, Chemistry, History, Philology, Economics, Law, and Culture & Arts—and its pedagogy reflected the Soviet position on education and politics, offering for the most part a general classical education and
**Director’s Corner—continued**

[also] be east European and Russian artists in [the revised] *Art since 1940,* more probably than there were before. A major figure in my mind is Ilya Kabakov, and the more time I spend with him and looking at his work, the more major he seems.”

In 2005 Fineberg completed a catalogue about Ilya and Emilia Kabakov and their new installation, *The House of Dreams,* which opened in October in London. “It’s really fabulous,” Fineberg recounted enthusiastically. “He took the whole Serpentine Gallery and built an installation in it that looks like a hospital when you walk in—everything is absolutely white. It’s based on [the Soviet architect Konstantin] Melnikov’s 1929 *Laboratory of Sleep*—one of those crazy utopian projects where the notion was to make Moscow’s workers more efficient by bringing them out to the country for these ‘rest cures,’ so that they would go back to the factory renewed.”

Paradoxically, however, in a burst of collectivist zeal, this utopian retreat called *Dreams* seems. Fineberg put it, features a roster of famous works by Renoir, Cezanne, Bonnard, Braqe, and Klee, among many others. To this, an annex including a roomful of works by the Latvian-born American Abstract Expressionist painter Mark Rothko was added some years ago. In Fineberg’s words, “While everything else is beginning to look like a bank or a bus station, The Phillips has remained a living room in which you can have an intimate encounter with works of the highest possible quality. There is a sense of intimacy about the space that will never and should never change.”

When two townhouses adjoining the mansion came up for sale last year, the museum’s director, Jay Gates, and Trustees decided to expand. Behind the townhouse facades now stands a 27-million-dollar state-of-the-art facility that should be fully operational by June. This includes an art and technology laboratory, sculpture garden, a 180-seat lecture hall, enlarged library and archive, and a renovated carriage house (the new Study Center), comprising a studio, seminar rooms, and Center program offices. A full-time Illinois faculty member will be hired to teach a regular lecture course and graduate seminars there, while Phillips staff will also teach seminars, and two half-time artists will be appointed to teach art classes. Thus, starting as soon as fall 2006 Illinois students may take advantage of a full-time semester- or year-long program at the Center. Student internships will also be made available.

“I also realized that we were asking completely the wrong questions about giftedness,” Fineberg said, “because people misunderstood it to be correlated to whether a child could render well, which is not at all the point. So I started thinking about this and began to study it. I looked at the childhood drawings of famous artists, and at historical children’s art that no one had ever seen before, including some amazing things that date to the sixteenth and seventeenth century, children’s drawings, *When We Were Young* examines early visual gifts in a fresh way.

Together with the accompanying book and catalogue (University of California Press), this exhibit (opening at The Phillips June 17 and coming to the Krannert Art Museum in October) will also serve as the opening project of a new Center for the Study of Modern Art at The Phillips Collection. These developments herald a significant new partnership between the University and The Phillips Collection that has resulted directly from Fineberg’s role on the museum’s Board of Trustees, and with the assistance and vision of Chancellor Richard Herman. Founded by Duncan Phillips in the early 1920s, The Phillips Collection is the oldest museum of modern art in the country. Housed in the Phillips mansion on Dupont Circle, the museum’s “warren of small rooms,” as Fineberg put it, features a roster of famous works by Renoir, Cezanne, Bonnard, Braqe, and Klee, among many others. To this, an annex including a roomful of works by the Latvian-born American Abstract Expressionist painter Mark Rothko was added some years ago. In Fineberg’s words, “While everything else is beginning to look like a bank or a bus station, The Phillips has remained a living room in which you can have an intimate encounter with works of the highest possible quality. There is a sense of intimacy about the space that will never and should never change.”

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Anonyme: Modernism for America

2006 will witness two pertinent, temporary exhibitions. For those interested, don’t really allow ourselves to look at the place in a new way. At the moment collecting first-rate public art and mark the presence of this university. For him, the presence art and architecture of Ilya Kabakov’s calibre. He would love to come and build the utopian city here. Instead of getting an architect like everyone else has, we would have something really unique."

commentary, so too do Fineberg’s teaching and research bridge disparate disciplines and look beyond the conventional scholarly wisdom to attain novel perspectives—on history, the creative process, and the world around us. For him, the presence of art can powerfully alter the presence and significance of place, including that of our own campus. “We need something on this campus to symbolize how we’re different,” Fineberg explained. “I just met with Harris Lewin, head of the Institute for Genomic Biology, who understands that there should be a sculpture in front of his building which is just as stimulating and interesting as the science inside—that this will inspire the campus to begin collecting first-rate public art and mark the place in a new way. At the moment we have... no real respect for what distinguishes the appearance of this university. We have a beautiful place, but don’t really allow ourselves to look at it.” Changing this might begin, Fineberg suggested, with enhancing the visibility of the historic farms and prairie lands surrounding the University, strategically placing high-quality commissioned sculpture around campus, and removing the mediocre works with which it has been littered from the past. One noteworthy aspect of the Illinois–Phillips partnership is that the Krannert Art Museum will be able to borrow from The Phillips Collection, giving the campus access to artworks that the University could never otherwise display. In 2007 this may include twelve panels from the Migration Series of the African-American artist Jacob Lawrence, whom Fineberg described as “one of the twentieth century’s greatest history painters.” Or perhaps it might begin with the architecture for the Kabakovs, devoting to the encouragement of creativity—“it’s all about inspiring people to creativity and cosmic thoughts. This proposal would be perfect for Krannert North—for this notion of building a center which is at the interface of the arts and technical science disciplines on campus.”

Noting that other universities such as North Carolina and Wisconsin are currently establishing major art centers, and that this is something that Illinois, too, needs to consider, he added, “I’d love for the University to start acquiring public art and architecture of Ilya Kabakov’s calibre. He would love to come and build the utopian city here. Instead of getting an architect like everyone else has, we would have something really unique.”

Twenty-first century ideas for a twenty-first century university: this is one utopia that we should all hope becomes reality.

Donna A. Buchanan
Director, REEEC

Readers interested in Christo should see the expanded version of this article published at the REEEC website: www.reec.uiuc.edu/publications/papers.html. For further information about study or internships at The Phillips Collection, Center for the Study of Modern Art, see www.art.uiuc.edu/projects/philpps/

Annual Center International Conference

“Post-Communist Nostalgia”
April 7-8, 2006

Opening Address
“From Utopia to Propaganda and Back” Maria Todorova (History, University of Illinois)

Documentary Film Screening
"Bastards of Utopia" (2006 — rough cut)
Directors: Pacho Velez and Maple Razsa

Conference Participants
Laura Adams (Princeton University)
Daphne Berdahl (University of Minnesota)
Dominic Boyer (Cornell University)
Donna Buchanan (University of Illinois)
Matti Bunzl (University of Illinois)
Fedja Buric (University of Illinois)
Victoria Clement (University of Illinois)
Gerald Creed (CUNY)
Diana Georgescu (University of Illinois)
Zsuzsa Gille (University of Illinois)
Bruce Grant (New York University)
Ted Hopf (Ohio State University)
Lilya Kaganovsky (University of Illinois)
Diane Koenker (University of Illinois)
Carol Leff (University of Illinois)
Harriet Murav (University of Illinois)
Tanja Petrovic (Slovenian Academy of Sciences)
Tim Pilbrow (University of Illinois)
Anke Pinkert (University of Illinois)
Maple Razsa (Harvard University)
Cristofer Scarboro (University of Illinois)
Anna Szemere (Washington State University, Vancouver)
Maria Todorova (University of Illinois)
Alexei Yurchak (University of California, Berkeley)

www.reec.uiuc.edu/events/annual.html
preparing the students for the centralized, collectivist Soviet economy and society, with its ideological hostility toward markets, religion, or psychological aspects of the individual. Since 1991, five new departments—Psychology, Theology, Foreign Languages, Computer Science, and the School of International Business—have been established to meet the needs of a radically changed society.

The departments at Omsk State are essentially divided into three groups with varying organizational strategies. One might think that the division would fall along the lines of pre- and post-Soviet departments, but that is not the case. First is the group of the old science departments with many famous scientists. They generally have no tuition-paying students or income-generating activities. They are waiting, in the Soviet tradition, for the government to provide funding or the opportunity to emigrate. Currently, government grants for science-related projects are limited, and in the context of the recent spy scandal implicating a British diplomat who was also involved with NGO funding, international grant-making is difficult and unsustainable. This group of departments, it appears, is dying a slow death, which will have serious consequences for Russia. While current scientific research at Omsk State University may not be cutting-edge, the loss of these departments will certainly erase any hopes of increased scientific innovation, which many argue is the engine of economic development.

The second group of departments—Theology, Foreign Languages, and Computer Science—is new and offers degrees that are popular among students. They, however, do not have experienced or highly educated faculty (most with only the first doctorate, not the second), or funding for research to improve the academic standing of these departments. They are living “paycheck to paycheck,” constantly fundraising for and marketing their programs. These are nonetheless promising departments. If the Russian economy picks up, they should be able to become more self-sustaining.

The third group is a mixture of new and old, including Economics, Law, International Business, and Psychology.

During its short history, the School of International Business has positioned itself as a leading provider of high-quality business education in western Siberia and has also successfully established international educational programs with American and Australian partners.

These departments do not have a great academic legacy, except perhaps Economics and Law, but are considered important disciplines for understanding and dealing with the challenges of contemporary domestic conditions. The administration as well as the students in these departments demand and expect high-quality teaching; thus the professors are paid relatively high salaries. The departments also have, by Russian standards, good budgets and income, with 50% of student tuitions allocated directly to the departments. (By comparison Tyumen State University’s departments get only 1% of the tuition, with the rest going to the administration.)

The School of International Business was founded in 1993 initially as a department within the School of Economics. In 1998 its status was raised to School of International Business. The School offers degree programs in International Economic Relations, Marketing and Advertising. Currently, approximately 500 students (approximately 30% male, 70% female) are enrolled in the School, most of whom are interested in developing their international credentials and English-language skills toward careers with international companies either in Russia or abroad. During its short history, the School of International Business has positioned itself as a leading provider of high-quality business education in western Siberia and has also successfully established international educational programs with American and Australian partners.
strengthen our connection to the business sector.

One of the major obstacles that the School faces is in the area of faculty research. Good professors can make more money by teaching at many universities or consulting for businesses. Academic research is not profitable under these conditions, but necessary for the advancement and legitimacy of the School. As government funding is not forthcoming, we are trying to develop relationships with socially responsible businesses to fund academic research projects. Another hindrance is the oppressive and costly university bureaucracy. To avoid this, the School is assessing the possibility of establishing a private research institute or think tank outside of the university system. But breaking away from the state system signifies a loss of status as private institutions in Russia lack prestige and high standards. Some faculty might also see this as a process of commodification and dehumanization of the Academy as education and research become a business you buy and sell. Additionally, there may yet be considerable obstacles from the Ministry of Science and Education in establishing such a private research institute for many complex reasons.

All departments at Omsk State University have faced major challenges in the last 15 years. The School of International Business, with the help of its international partners, arguably has fared better than others and has developed a sound strategy for survival in the new education marketplace in Russia.

**REEEC Artists & Authors Series**

Inaugurating REEEC’s new Artists and Authors Series, Elizabeth Kostova, author of the NY Times best selling novel The Historian, gave a public lecture, “Journeying East: Literary Travelers in Eastern Europe,” on March 10. Specialist in Slavic folk music and longtime colleague of REEEC director Donna Buchanan, Kostova discussed various interwar travelogues of Eastern Europe and her own travels and study in the Balkans that influenced the writing of her novel, which probes the legends of Vlad the Impaler, or Dracula. Five singers from Balkanalia, the UI Balkan ensemble, also performed a Bulgarian song to bring to life many Balkan folk music references in the book.

**Second Turkish Studies Symposium**

March 8, 2006

**Turkey and Europe**

“The Myths of Turkish Influence in the European Union”
Robert Pahre and Burcu Uçaray (Political Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)

“Political Islam in Turkey: Changing Attitudes towards Democracy and the EU”
Binnaz Toprak (Political Science and International Relations, Bogazici University)

“West by Way of East: Strange History of Turkey’s Relationship with Europe”
Reşat Kasaba (Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington)

“Reluctant Revolutionaries? The JDP and Turkey’s response to the EU’s Copenhagen Criteria” Sultan Tepe (Political Science, University of Illinois, Chicago)
In February 2005, as I shivered through dissertation research in the small reading room at the Centre for Tourism Documentation and Information (CTDI) in Dubrovnik, Croatia, I discovered a brochure for Priština in a box marked “Macedonia.” This possibly accidental misfile struck me powerfully on that day, perhaps because a few minutes later, in the same box, I came across a brochure advertising a bus trip through Montenegro, Kosovo, and Macedonia—the same item that I had encountered in nearly every box I had opened so far. In a hastily scribbled research note I remarked that the boxes were, in a crude way, like the former Yugoslavia itself—all mixed up.

When I arrived in Dubrovnik in September 2004 to research my dissertation on tourism and national identity in the former Yugoslavia, CTDI’s voluminous collection of post-1945 Yugoslav travel brochures, guides, booklets, posters, price lists, menus, and programs was housed in a set of battered shirt boxes recycled from a Zagreb department store, all bearing yellowed typed labels that quickly proved themselves the falsest of friends. The layers of dust on the boxes indicated that they hadn’t been touched in years, and as the Centre’s chief archivist was relatively new to her position, she admitted to having little real knowledge of what was contained within them. Chaos broke loose—in a good way—when I opened the first box marked “Croatia” and found multiple copies of brochures promoting the beaches at Budva on the Montenegrin coast, and when I discovered glossy booklets about the 1984 Sarajevo Winter Olympic Games in a box marked “Serbia–General Propaganda.” Thus began a collaborative re-organization and documentation project that was still ongoing when I left Croatia this past June. I opened all the boxes, sorted the materials, made digital photographs of them, and provided the head archivist and her staff with the information necessary to construct a database that organizes the images by subject, date, and type.

In the meantime, we all settled into a routine of sharing morning coffee, complaining about the Centre’s bureaucracy, and indulging in occasional nostalgia for mechanisms that the staff insisted actually functioned better under socialism. The archivist, Sofija Bogoje, proved to be an invaluable friend who checked on me when I was sick, called the surly local post office to inquire about my lost Christmas packages, and patiently listened to my slow and painful Croatian with gentle patience.

After spending almost eight months in Dubrovnik at CTDI, I switched gears and headed to the Archive of Serbia and Montenegro in Belgrade, formerly the Archive of Yugoslavia. My experience at the Archive in Belgrade was completely opposite from that in Dubrovnik—more “official,” less exploratory (they had an actual catalogue with finding aids!), but ultimately equally rewarding. I found a wealth of material related to the position of tourism in the Yugoslav economic and political structure, and felt a bit giddy the first time I brushed my fingers lightly over the actual signatures of political figures like Tito and Edvard Kardelj.

I soon mastered the system of accurately submitting my daily requests and writing my name in legible Cyrillic, and began to join other researchers in the Archive’s cafeteria for a hot lunch. I made friends with the head of the cafeteria (who presented me with a scholarly journal as a gift when I left!), with a professor of history at Belgrade University who helped me get a research card at the National Library one rainy day, and with the security guards at the Archive gate, who didn’t understand why I needed to go and poke around in those dusty papers when I could sit around talking to them all afternoon. The warmth, generosity, and acceptance of the people I met all over Belgrade struck me powerfully every day on my walk home from the Archive, a route that took me directly past the wrecked shells of many buildings damaged in the 1999 NATO bombing of the city.

I feel very privileged to have been able to conduct my dissertation research in two beautiful and fascinating cities and to have had the chance to experience “the archive” in manifestations of both infancy and maturity. Memories of morning coffee in Dubrovnik and hot lunch in Belgrade are my motivators as I struggle through the long process of corralling this material into a dissertation.

Pedrotty conducted her research in 2004-05 on a Dissertation Fellowship from the Department of History and a Dissertation Travel Grant from the Graduate College.
of esthetic taste as the publishing world underwent a process of redefinition. The collection is strong in poetry, including many small press items. A good number contain dedications and additional notes and letters from various Romanian authors, and nearly half are unlisted in the national databases. Thus they complement existing library holdings which tend to focus on mainstream authors and presses. Besides contemporary poets the collection includes volumes by canonical Romanian writers who published before and after 1989. The post-1989 imprints include works by writers like Mircea Eliade, Emil Cioran and Ioan Petru Culianu that were previously censored and unpublished.

Another significant part of the collection involves journals and magazines. Titles like Agora, Contrapunct, Dilema, Euresis, Orizont, Plural and Vatra offer a view into the Romanian cultural press, its practices and concerns. Cultural journals have had a difficult time in the post-communist market, because of lack of funds due to lower circulation and a more specialized audience. Often, such magazines do not survive their first year.

The literary critic and editor Ioan Bogdan Lefer writes that there are four main categories of publications in post-communist Romania: (1) non-fiction: diaries, memoirs, autobiographies; (2) books in the social sciences and humanities (history, sociology, political science); (3) previously banned authors; (4) works of exiled authors. The Codrescu collection contains a number of works from the last three categories. Moreover, these books are published not only in Romanian but also in English, by foreign scholars or by Romanian scholars in the US or Europe (see Vladimir Tismaneanu, Matei Calinescu). The books on Romania in English augment the translations of contemporary Romanian poetry present in the collection (by George Bacovia, George Bajenaru, Lucian Blaga, Ana Blandiana, Ion Caraion, Ruxandra Cesereanu, Magda Carneci and Codrescu himself). As noted by Codrescu during his visit, translations of Romanian literature are sparse and not well circulated, and the collection highlights the materials available.

Finally, the collection contains media items. Of special interest are documentaries by film maker Alexandru Solomon like Sweet Bread of Exile and Petronome (an essay on Paul Celan’s youth in Romania), and the documentary on the Romanian prison system by U.S.-based scholar Diana Nicolae, Red Darkness Before Dawn. These items are unavailable for sale or little circulated, and therefore increase the value of the collection.

On March 2, Codrescu returned to Illinois to celebrate his gift, housed in the Library’s Rare Book and Manuscript Library. He has added materials since his original donation last year and has indicated that he wants to continue adding to the collection in the future. For more information about the Codrescu Collection, visit www.library.uiuc.edu/spx/codrescu/.

Miranda Remnek (Head, Slavic and East European Library) and Oana Popescu-Sandu (Collection Assistant)
Summer 2006 Programs

Summer Research Laboratory on Russia, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia, June 12–August 4

Russian-Jewish Studies Training Workshops for Junior Scholars: "From the Pale to Moscow: Russian-Jewish and Soviet-Yiddish Studies," June 12–16. Moderators: Gennady Estraikh (NYU); Harriet Murav (University of Illinois); David Shneer (University of Denver)


Slavic Digital Text Workshop, June 15

Slavic Librarians’ Workshop, June 15

Ralph and Ruth Fisher Forum: International Conference on “Book Arts, Culture and Media in Eastern Europe and Eurasia: From Print to Digital,” June 16–18. Invited speakers: Mikhail Afanas’ev (Historical Library, Moscow), David Birnbaum (University of Pittsburgh), Leonid Borodkin (Moscow State University), Jeffrey Brooks (Johns Hopkins University), Marianna Tax Choldin (University of Illinois), Ralph Cleminson (University of Portsmouth, UK), Stephen Lovell (King’s College, London); Igor Pil’shchikov (Moscow State University), Kiril Ribarov (Charles University, Prague), Juergen Warmbrunn (Herder Institute, Marburg). Faculty organizer: Miranda Remnek (University of Illinois)

Pre-conference Seminar: “‘Prostranstvo knigi’: the Space of the Book in the Imperial Russian Social Imagination,” June 16

Twenty-fifth Annual Ukrainian Conference on “Contemporary Ukraine,” June 19–24


Curriculum Development Workshop on Russia and Ukraine, June 24–28

Noontime Scholars’ Lecture Series, June 13 - July 5

Film Series, June 12 - July 12

International Summer Institute for Pre-collegiate Educators: "People, Places, and Patterns: Teaching World Geographies & Cultures," June 18–23

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

Annual Concert

Balkanalia, the UI Balkan ensemble directed by Donna Buchanan, held its 9th annual spring concert, "At the Horo: An Evening of Balkan Dance Music," at Smith Recital Hall on April 8. With performance of a Romanian folk song by a guest violinist Sherban Lupu (School of Music) along with dancers from the Hellenic Student Association, Balkanalia performed toe-tapping Balkan dance songs to an appreciative audience of well over 350.
Faculty/Associates News


In addition to directing REECC, writing her regular “The Director’s Corner” column for the Center News, and directing and performing regularly with “Balkanalia,” Donna Buchanan published “TrIBUTE to Stoyan Velchikov” and an English-language “Summary” in Zlatoprůstřiště a Siranždža: Kavaldžhiya Stoyan Velchikov, by M. Bukureshtliev (Sofia: Pony Publishers, 2005). In June she will give a presentation about Hungarian composer Béla Bartók’s correspondence with Bulgarian ethnomusicologist Raina Kataranova at an international symposium, “From the Wellspring to the Ocean: Bartók’s Ethnomusical Legacy in Today’s World,” at Bard College in commemoration of the composer’s 125th birthday.

Victoria Clement gave an invited paper on Turkmen civil society at Columbia University’s Harriman Institute in March.

David Cooper received a REECC course development grant for summer 2006.

Barbara J. Ford was an invited speaker during National Library Week in Kosovo in early April. Her visit was sponsored by the US Department of State as part of a strategy to help update the national and university libraries of Kosovo, support Kosovo’s intellectual and academic life, establish the library’s role as a community service, and support the inclusion of ethnic-minority based and regional libraries in the activities and programs of the National Library.


Harriet Murav received a UI CAS fellowship and the prestigious Guggenheim fellowship for her project "Music from a Speeding Train: Soviet Yiddish and Russian Jewish Literature of the 20th Century."

Diane Koenker received two prestigious fellowships—the Mellon and the Guggenheim—for her new project “Proletarian Tourism and Vacations in the USSR.” She also received an IREX (IARO) grant for the same project in fall 2006.


In Memoriam: A Personal Note on Benjamin Uroff

Benjamin Uroff died unexpectedly at home, evidently during the night of October 17-18, 2005. He was seventy-two. (For his obituary, see the News-Gazette of October 21, 2005). To his many students since the 1960s, he was an inspiring teacher with unsurpassed mastery of Russian history and a delicate sense of humor. These same qualities were appreciated by his professional colleagues, especially those who had managed to get past the shyness and self-doubts that plagued Ben increasingly during his last years. Many of those colleagues, including visitors from elsewhere, must remember Ben's part in launching our Summer Research Lab in the 1970s. To them and to later researchers he was almost magical in his ability to guide them to historical sources best suited to their needs and to discuss with them disputed points of interpretation. These visitors sometimes wondered aloud how it was that they had never heard of "this fellow Uroff" who seemed to be already thoroughly familiar with most of their publications.

Ben's low profile in the academic world was of his own design. His main contribution to scholarship was his encyclopedic two-volume study of Kotoshikhin's description of pre-Petrine Russia. Although several prominent specialists on early Russian history praised it as eminently ready to publish, Ben repeatedly insisted that he needed to "make a few improvements." Who knows how his life might have changed if he had allowed his friends to sneak the work off to a press! As it was, the work remained in typescript, accessible primarily to the erudite customers of University Microfilms.

Ben's death hit me hard, for I had known him since 1952, when he was an undergraduate at Yale. Linguistically and in his knowledge of Russian historiography, he was as solidly grounded for our profession as anyone else I can think of. As a friend he had my admiration and affection. Happily for our field (and for Ben's daughters!), it appears that a fellow-specialist, Marshall Poe, may update Ben's study, and that the Indiana University Press may publish it.

Ralph T. Fisher, Jr.
M. Mobin Shirish presented “Madrasah as Dystopia” at the Comparative and International Education Society meeting in Honolulu in March.


Elizabeth Sweet received a REEEC course development grant for summer 2006. She is currently teaching at Buriat State University in Ulan Ude, Russia, as a Fulbright Teaching Fellow.

Maria Todorova, with her colleague Stefan Troebst from the University of Leipzig, was awarded a major grant from Germany’s Volkswagen-Stiftung for a 3-year study on “Remembering Communism: Methodological and Practical Issues of Approaching the Recent Past in Eastern Europe.” She also received a REEEC course development grant for summer 2006.

Regional Faculty Associates


Christine D. Worobec (NIU) was awarded a 2006 NEH Fellowship for her new project “Moving Faith: Pilgrimages in Modern Russia.”

Visiting Faculty Spring 2006

Victoria Clement is a REEEC Post-doctoral Fellow in Central Asia-Caucasus Studies this semester, teaching a course on “Stability, Security and Popular Opinion in Central Asia.” She received her PhD in History from Ohio State University in fall 2005. Her work focuses on literacy and modernity in Turkmenistan. She has served as a consultant on Central Asia for the International Crisis Group, Oxford Analytica, and the CBS 60 Minutes. Starting in fall 2006, she will be Assistant Professor of Islamic History at Western Carolina University.

Svanibor Pettan is Associate Professor of Cultural Anthropology and Musicology at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. The main themes of his studies include music in the context of politics and war, multiculturalism and music of minorities, and theory and practice of applied ethnomusicology. His publications are based on fieldwork in various parts of former Yugoslavia, Australia, Egypt, Norway, Tanzania, and the US. Among his recent projects is Rom Musicians in Kosovo: Interaction and Creativity (2002), including a book, picture exhibition, film, and CD-ROM. He holds a PhD in Ethnomusicology from the University of Maryland. He is Visiting Associate Professor of Musicology in the School of Music, with support from REEEC, this semester and is currently teaching “Issues in Romani Music.”

Eugenia Amditis (BA’93, French, Russian, political science) is Lecturer in Russian language and Slavic folklore at the University of Kansas.

Christina Bethin (PhD’78, Slavic) is Professor of Linguistics at SUNY-Stony Brook.

Daniel Burghart (BA’73, political science) is Department Head and Professor of National Security and Eurasian Studies at the Joint Military Intelligence College in Washington, DC, and an adjunct faculty at Georgetown University. A specialist in Russian, CIS and Central European Affairs, he has also has served as Senior National Security Policy Advisor at the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, U S. Defense and Army Attaché to Kazakhstan, and a Mission Commander at the On Site Inspection Agency, where he led arms control inspections to the republics of the Former Soviet Union. He recently published with co-editor T. Sabonis-Helf, In the Tracks of Tamerlane: Central Asia’s Path to the 21st Century (2005).

J. Douglas Clayton (PhD’71, Slavic) is Professor of Slavic Studies at the University of Ottawa, specializing in Russian Romanticism, Pushkin, Chekhov and 20 c. Russian theatre.

Lance Erickson (BA’93, REES, political science) is Academic Advisor and Assistant Director for Student Services at the Russian and East European Institute at Indiana University.

Rachel Facey (MA’04, REES) is Student Services Associate for CREEES/CEUS/EUC at the University of Michigan.

Svitlana Kobets (PhD’01, Slavic) is Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies and Research Fellow at CREEES, University of Toronto. She was Visiting Professor at the Department of German and Russian, University of Notre Dame, 2003-2005.

Aida Orgocka (PhD’03, human development and family studies) is Program Manager of the Christian Children’s Fund Albania. She also contributed to a recent publication, Reforming the World Bank: Will the Gender Strategy Make a Difference? (2005).

Andrew Scoulas (BA’95, REES) is a Policy Consultant at the National Association of Realtors® in Chicago, where he has been working for the past 10 years.

Veronica Shenshin (PhD’94, Slavic) was appointed the Chairman of the Assembly of Russian Nobility in Finland.

Yevgenyi Slivkin (PhD’00, Slavic) is Assistant Professor of Russian at the Presidio of Monterey’s Defense Language Institute.

In Memoriam, Boris Bilokur passed away at age 73 on November 19, 2005 in New England, after a 30-year career in Slavic at the University of Connecticut. Born in Ukraine, he was one of the first recipients of a new PhD degree in Slavic at the University of Illinois in the early 60s. (Steven P. Hill)

Jinjie Chen (anthropology) presented “Graduated Citizenship in Postsocialist States: Regulating Population in China, Poland, and East Germany” at the American Anthropological Association (AAA) annual meeting in Washington, DC, in December.

Angela Glaros (anthropology) presented “Performing Patriarchy: Gender Antiphonies in Greek Orthodox Liturgical Music” at the AAA meeting in December.

Tatiana Kuzmic (comparative literature) presented “The Slavonic Question and the Dismembered Adulteress” at the AATSEEL conference in December.

Maria Radeva (REES) presented “Form, Perform, Reform, Transform—the politics and erotics of anti-trafficking in post-postsocialist Bulgaria” at the Ohio State University’s Midwest Slavic Conference and the UI Annual Graduate Student Symposium on Women’s and Gender History in March.


Dmitry Tartakovsky (history) presented in October “Communism, Judaism, and Anti-Romanianism in Romanian Bessarabia: Holocaust Memory in Moldovan National Identity Construction” at University of Pittsburgh’s “Beyond Bessarabia” conference and “Jewish Communism and Romanian Victimization Myth in Moldovan Holocaust Historiography” at the UI Jewish Studies Graduate Student Organization workshop. He also presented “The Jewish Cultural League in Interwar Bessarabia: A Point of Irreconcilable Difference” at the Association for the Study of Nationalities annual conference at Columbia University in March.

2005 Yaro Skalnik Prize for Best Essay in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies

Undergraduate winner: Kathleen Kelly (Russian), “**Attributes of Good Art in War and Peace**

Graduate winner: Diana Mincey (sociology), “Pasterization of Lithuania: Of Raw Milk and Globalization”
Contribute to the REECC Graduate Student Research Fund

As you will note from this and other issues of the Center News, REECC 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 REECC-affiliated graduate students to conduct research in the field, and university funds for research travel are very limited. In particular, the ability of doctoral students to obtain major grants for dissertation research is much enhanced by preliminary field research, and MA students normally cannot find support for thesis research abroad. To address these needs, we have established a REECC Graduate Student Research Fund. The grant would be open to graduate students in all disciplines at UIUC.

Please send your contribution to: REECC, University of Illinois, 104 ISB, 910 S. 5th St., Champaign, IL 61820. Your gifts are tax-deductible. Thank you very much for your support.

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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.

CAS/MillerComm lecture


Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center News

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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.

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Noontime Scholars Lecture Series

January 24
"Ivan Mestrovic: Sculpting a Yugoslav Heimat"
**Fedja Buric** (History, UIUC)

February 7
"The Political Science of Putin’s Body"
**Richard Tempest** (Slavic Languages and Literatures, UIUC)

February 21
"The ABCs of Literacy in Turkmenistan, 1904-2004"
**Victoria Clement** (REEEC Post-doctoral Fellow in Central Asia-Caucasus Studies, UIUC)

February 28
"What Do We Know about Siberian Shamanism?"
**Minjong Yang** (Russian Literature, Busan National University, South Korea)

March 14
"Reflecting on the Health of Political Color: 2006 Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections"

Olena Betlii (REEEC Fulbright Visiting Scholar, UIUC)

March 28
"Rom Musicians—Endangered Mediators in Kosovo?"
**Svanibor Pettan** (Cultural Anthropology & Musicology, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia)

April 6 (with ACDIS)
"Confessions of an Arms Control Junkie"
**Daniel Burghart** (National Security and Eurasian Studies, Joint Military Intelligence College)

April 18
"Baron Ungern’s Mongolian Pogrom: The Genealogy of an Imperial Massacre"
**Willard Sunderland** (History, University of Cincinnati)

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

January 26
"The Melancholy of the Metropolis: Toward a History of the 'Modern Social Mood' in Russia, 1905-1917"
**Mark Steinberg** (Professor of History, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign)

February 16
"Gypsies or Roma?: The Dual Identity of a Transnational People"
**Ian Hancock** (Nowlin Regents Professor of Liberal Arts, University of Texas, Austin)

March 16
"Gideon Klein’s Terezin Trio, or Shooting the Wild Goose"
**Michael Beckerman** (Professor and Head of Music, New York University)