

ASEEES NewsNet

Working Between Categories or
How to Get Lost in Order to Be Found

Nuremberg and Russia's
War Against Ukraine

Elements in Soviet and Post-
Soviet History:
A Contribution to Decolonizing Soviet History





Editor's Note: As we continue to face the atrocities of Russia's war in Ukraine and the challenges these horrors present for our colleagues in Slavic, East European, and Eurasian studies, the call for de-colonizing our field is essential. ASEEEES is pleased to kick off a year-long NewsNet series, "De-colonizing Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies." July's issue features Mayhill Fowler and Sofia Dyak's co-authored essay, "Working between Categories or How to Get Lost in Order to Be Found," in which they propose concrete ways to set de-colonizing the field in motion. We look forward to featuring more essays that address this process, especially in terms of undergraduate teaching and graduate training, as well as elevating a variety of perspectives on various questions and topics. If you are interested in contributing to this series, please contact ASEEEES Deputy Director and NewsNet Editor, Kelly McGee: (kmcgee@pitt.edu).

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Association for Slavic, East European,
and Eurasian Studies (ASEEEES)
203C Bellefield Hall,
315 S. Bellefield Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15260-6424
tel.: 412-648-9911 • fax: 412-648-9815
e-mail: aseees@pitt.edu
www.aseees.org

Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies (ASEEEES), established in 1948, is a nonprofit, nonpolitical, scholarly society and is the leading private organization dedicated to the advancement of knowledge about Russia, Central Eurasia, and Eastern & Central Europe.

ASEEEES Staff

- Executive Director: Lynda Park
412-648-9788, lypark@pitt.edu
- Deputy Director, NewsNet Editor, & Director of Membership: Kelly McGee
412- 238-7354, kmcgee@pitt.edu
- Administrative Assistant: Jenn Legler
412-648-9911, aseees@pitt.edu
- Convention Manager: Margaret Manges
412-648-4049, aseeescn@pitt.edu
- Financial Support: Roxana Palomino
412-648-4049, aseeesfn@pitt.edu

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Working Between Categories or How to Get Lost in Order to Be Found

Sofia Dyak, Center for Urban History, Ukraine
Mayhill Fowler, Stetson University

We proposed a roundtable on Ukraine for the 2020 ASEEEES conference called “Connecting Ukraine: New Agendas, Audiences, and Agents in Research on Eastern Europe,” which aimed to present Ukraine as an arena that connects to larger questions, states, and peoples. We included ourselves (scholars of Soviet Ukraine), a scholar of Jewish studies (Ofer Dynes), and a scholar of the Greek Catholic church in the Habsburg Empire (Kate Younger). Yet we stumbled when trying to find ourselves in the ASEEEES proposal categories: neither *History Russian and Eurasian* nor *Central and Southeastern Europe* (nor *Jewish Studies*) fit all our speakers. The stories in our roundtable on Ukraine included the nineteenth-century Tulczyn court and milieus of priests in Vienna, as well as twentieth-century Ukrainian actresses in Kharkiv and architects in postwar Lviv. We wanted to show how Ukraine connected with Jewish history, Habsburg history, Soviet history, urban history, theater history, religious history, and comparative literature. Showing the richness of Ukraine meant we did not fit the field conference.

Nevertheless, we did our roundtable in 2021, engaging with a passionate audience of (largely) scholars of Ukraine. We decided to follow up this year with “Diversifying and Decolonizing: Teaching, Access, and Academic Cooperation with/

in Eastern Europe,” offering concrete ways to bring Ukraine into curricula and research. Note that we, again, identified our region as Eastern Europe. We wanted to place Ukraine in “Eastern Europe” as opposed to Russia to underscore the necessity of rethinking geographies of power. Yet ironically, because of using “Eastern Europe” our roundtable did not show up initially in the list of Ukraine panels that ASEEEES compiled in May. Somehow Ukraine was not found in Eastern Europe. This oversight was easily fixed with a simple email, but it raises a complex problem: by putting Ukraine in Eastern Europe we could not be found. Categories are road-signs, and we got lost.

Cruelly, it seems to take war to be found. If there were no war, there would be no lists of panels on Ukraine, there would not be this *NewsNet* series, and our roundtable audiences would remain largely our friends. In this short piece we propose three ways to find Ukraine, and reasons to do so. Rather than simply reacting to this emergency moment of full-scale war, we want to think about how we can create structural changes to develop a more diversified and sustainable field. Our suggestions may not seem radical, but they aim to have lasting consequences. Bringing Ukraine into focus allows for re-discovering place – not only, in our case, Ukraine, but also more broadly the place



“War has laid bare the inadequacy of our mental maps, and created new ones. We see which places matter in the western corridors of power, and which places do not. We see how space changes, with new notions of ours and theirs, as alliances shift, both in diplomacy, and on the ground...”

we conceptualize as Eastern Europe.

To understand our navigation through categories it helps to reflect on our positionality. We are a tenured professor at a small school with a REES program (Fowler) and a director of a relatively new research center in Lviv (Dyak). Fowler has moved in her career towards Ukraine: from a trained Russianist, who happened to do a dissertation on Ukrainian theater, to a committed Ukrainianist invested not only in researching theater, but also in teaching Ukraine’s students. Dyak has moved in her career beyond Ukraine: from a scholar of comparative postwar rebuilding, to creating international collaborations for research and public history, more a scholar of urban history and heritage than a Ukrainianist. Despite our opposite trajectories, we kept meeting in the middle, and have been talking about how to study, research, write, and teach Ukraine and in Ukraine since 2006. There are many excellent pieces now on decolonizing the field, but here is our contribution of (deceptively) simple themes, and concrete ways to enact them.

Geographies and Language

War has laid bare the inadequacy of our mental maps, and created new ones. We see which places matter in the western corridors of power, and which places do not. We see how space changes, with new notions of ours and theirs, as alliances shift, both in diplomacy, and on the ground, as Poles welcome Ukrainians—when their grandparents might have been enemies at the end of World War II. We see places suddenly emerge in the general public’s imagination and—quite literally—in pronunciation, such as Azovstal or Bucha, Irpin and Okhtryrka, and we see places shift their meaning, as Lviv has become a city of refugees, for example. New places require new languages. And learning new languages requires cooperation.

The most concrete way to address the inadequacy of our field’s spatial imagination (where Russia is always present, but other places are rather a contingency) is to invest in more languages than Russian. It is not enough to know Russian. It hasn’t been for a long time, of course, but now we need to figure out institutional pathways to facilitate the learning of non-Russian languages. At Stetson, like other small schools, the Russian language program attracts students because of job possibilities since Russian (not Ukrainian) is one of fifteen languages deemed “critical” by the US government. While that won’t change, the necessity of “Russian *plus*” will increase; surely no longer will foreign service personnel *not* learn Ukrainian when serving in Ukraine, for example. The shorthand of learning only Russian because “they all speak Russian” needs to end. And it needs to end because as Adeeb Khalid has argued for Central Asian history in *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the USSR*, by reading only the Russian documents you do not have access to the full story.¹

A critical challenge facing all of us is that, until archives in the Russian Federation become accessible again, what are graduate students and scholars to do in order to complete their dissertations and books? True, scholars have explored archives in other countries and cities, like Yerevan and Tallinn, Lviv and Baku, and the resulting work reflects a more nuanced reading of the region. But the bulk of dissertations still rely heavily on archives in Russia, reflecting a decades-long focus on how we see the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. Again, war accelerates and brings change, drastically and at a high price. Of course, because of Russian-language hegemony, Russian-language documents exist in archives from Riga to Bishkek...but one simply

must now learn the “local” language as well. Coming to Kyiv to go to the SBU (*Sluzhba bezpeky Ukrainy*, or security services) archive, as so many scholars have done, but not taking into consideration the local language or local context diminishes so much complexity from the stories locked in those documents.

Of course, small schools cannot offer Ukrainian, or Georgian, or Estonian because courses would never get the necessary enrollment and we could never hire a Kyrgyz language specialist, for example, at Stetson. But through language consortia, including online options now well-honed through our covid years, we could make these languages available to our students. We know the logistical hurdles: accreditation requirements, funding for teaching lines, curriculum demands... but surely we can cooperate on institutional levels to figure out how to make Ukrainian (for example) available at small schools or for graduate students at research universities, through connections with other schools offering Ukrainian or through connections with universities in Ukraine itself. Our conversations could now be with our curriculum committees, deans and provosts, and department chairs to figure out how to enable students to take multiple languages, how to work with other universities, and how to tailor new undergraduate capstone projects to reflect the multi-linguistic space we study. Simply by making Russian one language among many (albeit an important one because it was the primary language in an expansionist empire) shifts the ways we imagine not only the places and societies we study, but also our professional field and practices.²

Stories and Translation

Whether in a seminar room or lecture hall, on the pages of our articles or chapters, or on exhibition walls or blogs or podcasts, we tell stories. We know how powerful and deceptive stories can be, and our task is to untangle them. Stories are built of bricks—sources of different kinds—and it matters what they are and how accessible they can be.

Much of the challenge for diversifying a standard undergraduate survey course is the lack of primary sources in English.³ We desperately need more primary sources in English from non-Russian sources. And we have already begun this work. The Center for Urban History has started a project to translate and curate selections of primary sources for educators. Oral testimonies of actors/actresses and factory workers from the late Soviet period, for example, could expand students’ vision of the twentieth century beyond Russia; images from Mariupol and Kramatorsk (yes, those very cities) offer ways to enrich our courses and rethink our narratives. Thinking of Zaporizhzhia and not only Magnitogorsk, or Mykola Kulish and not only Mikhail Bulgakov, immediately reflects the complexity of the USSR.

This translation project will be part of the Center’s new educational platform (in development in cooperation with researchers from different institutions internationally and in Ukraine) that aims to diversify materials available for educators teaching a range of subjects, from Eastern Europe and Soviet surveys to more focused seminar topics, such as urban history. This project will operate in multiple directions; translations will be not only from Ukrainian, but also from Polish, Yiddish, and Russian, and those

“Whether in a seminar room or lecture hall, on the pages of our articles or chapters, or at exhibition walls or blogs or podcasts, we tell stories. We know how powerful and deceptive stories can be, and our task is to untangle them. Stories are built of bricks—sources of different kinds—and it matters what they are and how accessible they can be.”

sources would then be translated back into Ukrainian for educators in Ukraine. We also hope to match secondary source material to these primary sources, not only from western scholars publishing in the journals so valued by our field, but also from scholars in Ukraine whose work may not have been translated into English and who may publish in venues less valued by western scholars. Knowledge production does speak different languages, and while we are prone to keep reproducing hierarchies, we urgently need to reflect and amend imbalances.

Building on these goals, in summer 2021 we filmed three full courses not about Ukraine, but based on Ukrainian source material: an introduction to visual culture (with Bohdan Shumylovych), an introduction to sociology (with Natalia Otrishchenko), and Fowler's course on cultural history. All three are free and available on the Center's website and include translated primary sources from the Center's collections, as well as references to secondary sources.⁴

Yes, our goal to diversify sources for teaching by translating in multiple directions is ambitious. But it is hardly a lonely undertaking. For example, the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, together with the Ukrainian Institute, is also creating an online database of translated Ukrainian literature—*Ukrainica: The Primary Database of Ukrainian Studies*—to enable professors to easily add a good translation from Ukrainian into a course.⁵ We are confident that many readers are already doing their own translation projects; can we collaborate and combine our resources? This necessity of translation is urgent because we cannot expect our students to engage with non-Russian stories if they do not have the sources.

More broadly, even Russian-language sources need to be “translated” into place. Think about films, for example: *Little Vera* took place in Mariupol, after all, and *Spring on Zarechnaya Street* was filmed in Zaporizhzhia and Odesa for Odesa Film Studios. These are not only Soviet films, but films about Soviet Ukraine, and where they were made, and where they were set, matters. Such translation into the place and context can offer a richer and denser understanding of what is Soviet.

Networks and People

The acknowledgements sections in our books show how collaborative scholarship is, from accessing archives, to commenting on chapters, to engaging in intellectual exchanges that shape our arguments. But when reading acknowledgements from western scholars, one can be struck by how most of the thanks to Eastern Europeans, in particular Ukrainians, is to those who are less visible in academia: archivists in local archives, people who hosted or assisted in some way, even (often) becoming friends. Those who read chapters or helped develop arguments are often not the “local” scholars. Scholars publishing in Ukraine, on the other hand, simply do not have the tradition of lengthy acknowledgements. This disparity in acknowledgements reflects how weak and disconnected the links actually are between networks of scholars abroad and in Ukraine. Of course, over the past decades, interactions through developing joint conferences and programs have woven webs of communication, but again often privileged “centers” and scholars from those “centers.”

The post-invasion wave of western universities hiring displaced Ukrainian scholars has proven that there are scholars in Ukraine doing important work. We hope that

this wave of scholars from Ukraine shifts the networks that shape the power dynamics in our field, which privileges certain schools, journals, and topics. We hope that comments from new Ukrainian colleagues in seminars shape future books and articles; we hope that collaborative research projects emerge with new Ukrainian colleagues. And just maybe Ukrainian scholars will show up in your acknowledgements—and maybe you will show up in theirs

Yet another aspect to this wave of scholars leaving is that Ukrainian universities must still function and ensure pathways for students to complete degrees. After the war, Ukrainian universities will need to be rebuilt, both physically (many universities have been bombed), but also financially, as the state budget attempts to cope with the extensive loss while paying salaries, giving scholarships, and changing curricula for a postwar reality. We hope that the host institutions for displaced Ukrainian scholars do not see these as temporary positions; like Fulbright scholarships, these emergency positions should offer opportunities for collaboration and further connection. We hope that US institutions create MOUs with Ukrainian institutions, and brainstorm ways to implement student and faculty exchanges after the war. Fulbright does this beautifully – can we find more individual ways of supporting Ukrainian academia, and its scholars and students? Since February 24, the Center for Urban History has entered into more MOUs with western institutions, and the Kyiv School of Economics, with the Ministry of Education-sponsored project called Ukrainian Global University, has worked to partner scholars and students with foreign opportunities. But we must continue to expand our networks,

while reflecting consciously on what they enable as well as what they hinder.

Why, and why now?

War already transformed the field for those of us studying Ukraine in 2014, when Russia occupied Crimea and war started in Donbas. Our roundtables, our syllabi, our efforts have been towards de-imperializing our teaching and research. But now, because of the violence and barbarity of Russia's full-scale invasion, the greater field has taken notice and these conversations have a greater possibility of becoming practices, policies, and programs. The power dynamic in our field, however, has privileged Russia and Russian voices. If our geographies, stories, and networks do not change, we will never come close to explaining this war. After all, it has impacted—and will continue to impact—many societies in our region, not only Ukrainian (and Russian), but also Polish, Moldovan, Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian (for a start). To understand this war, and how it is fundamentally changing the region and how we study it, requires listening to a multiplicity of voices.

Our suggestions require re-thinking power hierarchies in the field, by learning new languages, listening to new stories, and building new networks—all of which requires getting lost. It requires questioning our assumptions of what is central and what is peripheral. It requires appreciating that the language(s) we know are not enough to get where we need to go. It requires humility to appreciate that we do not yet know all the stories. We are not advocating for Ukraine dominating our field, but we do want to introduce more stories of Ukraine...and Lithuania, and Kyrgyzstan, and Azerbaijan, for

example—never mind all the stories of non-Russians within Russia itself. Making this space means accepting that non-Russian places are not secondary, subsidiary, or derivative. We do not want Ukrainian domination, but we do want to end Russian domination; it always comes at someone's expense, and for too long Russia's domination has come at the expense of Ukraine and knowledge about Ukraine. So get lost. Come to our roundtable this fall and find us.

Endnotes

1 Adeeb Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR* (Cornell, 2015), 5.

2 Stetson teaches Russian at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University through an online consortium agreement. Logistical hurdles abound, for sure, but we do teach Russian at two schools through online learning systems.

3 Most readers likely know *Seventeen Moments*: <https://soviethistory.msu.edu> (accessed 28 July 2022); Ronald Grigor Suny's *The Structure of Soviet History: Essays and Documents*, 2nd edition (Oxford, 2013); Katerina Clark and Evgeny Dobrenko, eds., *Soviet Culture and Power: A History in Documents, 1917-1953*, compiled Andrei Artizon and Oleg V. Naumov, trans. Marian Schwartz (Yale, 2007).

4 You can access the courses here: <https://edu.lvivcenter.org/online-courses/> (accessed 28 June 2022); materials from the Center's Urban Media Archive are also useful for undergraduate courses. Visual materials often already have captions in English, see <https://uma.lvivcenter.org/en/photos>; Many materials from the Center's Lviv Interactive project are translated into English and teach very well, for example "Leon Wells' Journey": <https://lia.lvivcenter.org/en/storymaps/wells/>; the goal of the educational platform is to collate and curate all this material into a one-stop portal for teachers. We hope to have an update on this project by our 2022 roundtable.

5 The project is directed by Oleh Kotsyuba, publications manager at HURI, and managed by Sandra Joy Russell, Ph.D. University of Massachusetts. They presented on this project at ASEEES 2020, and Kotsyuba will discuss it at our 2022 roundtable.



Dr. Sofia Dyak is Director of the Center for Urban History (Ukraine), an institution focusing on research, digital and public history, and education. Her research interests include post-war history of border cities, heritage and urban planning in socialist cities, and their legacies. Her most recent publication is, "Impressions of Place: Soviet Travel Writings and the Discovery of Lviv, 1939–40," in: *Lviv – Wrocław: Parallel Cities? Myth, Memory and Migration, c. 1890-present*, ed. by Robert Pyrah and Jan Fellerer (Budapest: CEU Press, 2020). Currently, she is also a senior research fellow for "Legacies of Communism," led by the Center for Contemporary History in Potsdam. Dr. Dyak is a member of the board of directors of Ukrainian-Jewish Encounter (Ottawa) and of the academic board of the Centre for Historical Research in Berlin of the Polish Academy of Science.



Dr. Mayhill C. Fowler is Associate Professor in the Department of History at Stetson University, an Affiliated Researcher with the Center for Urban History in Lviv, and Visiting Professor with the Program in Theater Studies and Acting at Ivan Franko National University of Lviv. Her first book, *Beau Monde on Empire's Edge: State and Stage in Soviet Ukraine* (Toronto, 2017), tells the story of the making of theater, both Soviet and Ukrainian, through a collective biography of young artists and officials in the 1920s and 1930s. Her current book manuscript *Comrade Actress: Soviet Ukrainian Women on the Stage and Behind the Scenes*, re-thinks theater in Ukraine over the long 20th century through a focus on its women. She is also working on a book about the former Soviet Army Theater in Lviv and how societies tell war (*War Stories: Theater on the Frontlines of Socialism*).



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2022 ASEEES Distinguished Contributions Award

Established in 1970, the Distinguished Contributions to Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies Award honors eminent members of the profession who have made major contributions to the field through scholarship of the highest quality, mentoring, leadership, and/or service to the profession. The prize is intended to recognize diverse contributions across Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies.

The 2022 award is presented to **Maria Todorova**, the Edward William and Jane Marr Gutgsell Professor of History at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Maria Todorova is arguably the foremost historian of southeastern Europe in the world today. Her identification and explication of “Balkanism” transformed the field, creating a new paradigm for the study of the region. Her critique, in combination with primary research on a plethora of topics, from nationalism, economic backwardness, and (post)socialism, to memory, nostalgia and affect, repositioned the Balkans from a stepchild of historiography to an important location for understanding European history. Using meticulous historical detail from multilingual primary sources she not only demonstrated the value of viewing global forces from the margins, but revealed how Balkan developments influenced those dynamics. In making these contributions Todorova mastered an astounding range of historical methods, including: quantitative history, historical demography, intellectual history, comparative history, microhistory and digital history. Her writing situates this painstaking research within the broad currents of contemporary theory and philosophy, giving the products both depth and verve, and facilitating interdisciplinary dissemination. That impact has been amplified by the research and careers of over twenty doctoral students that she mentored and influenced, not only in Balkan and Ottoman history, but in East-Central European, and Russian/Soviet history as well. Her reputation as a demanding but generous mentor, along with her contributions to institution building, helped position the University of Illinois as a destination for Southeast European research. She is a tireless fighter for the advancement of our field, always insisting on high standards and extolling principled stances against revisionist accounts of and from the region. She is among the select group of scholars who have transformed and expanded our field—with her scholarship, through the nurturing and training of young talent, by expanding our institutional footprint, and as an ambassador to the broader public. ASEEES is proud to join the long list of institutions recognizing her amazing contributions.



Nuremberg and Russia's War Against Ukraine

Francine Hirsch, University of Wisconsin - Madison

When I wrote *Soviet Judgment at Nuremberg: A New History of the International Military Tribunal after World War II* (Oxford UP, 2020), I never imagined that it would have present-day relevance—or that Nuremberg would be repeatedly invoked during a war between Russia and Ukraine. Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24th took most people by surprise, myself included. Since then, we've been reminded daily just how much history matters—to Ukrainians and to Russians, and to a dictator like Russian President Vladimir Putin who has grossly distorted the past, along with the present, in an effort to justify a predatory war of imperial expansion.

For months now, Ukrainian leaders and their supporters have been looking to the example of Nuremberg to demand a full investigation into Russian war crimes. I wrote this article about the Nuremberg Trials, drawing from my book, at the invitation of *Just Security* in early March, shortly after the invasion. International lawyers and policymakers had begun the important work of drafting proposals for an international tribunal that could hold Russia accountable for launching an illegal war of aggression. The aim of the article was to remind the world that it was a Soviet jurist who had first introduced the concept of "crimes against peace," and that the Soviet Union had played a key role in establishing the Nuremberg model of justice. The article was later cited by international lawyers in a "model criminal indictment" against Putin for the crime of aggression.

Since the original publication of this article in March, the war has grown more brutal, and Ukrainian and Russian leaders have engaged in a struggle to claim Nuremberg and its legacy. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has called for a new Nuremberg to try Russian leaders; international bodies, including the

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, have joined him. At the same time, Russian leaders have been wielding Nuremberg as a weapon. From the start of the war, Putin has falsely smeared Ukraine's leaders as "Nazis" and falsely claimed that Russia's "special military operation" is aimed at the country's "de-Nazification." Russian officials are now calling for a "Nuremberg 2.0" to try Ukrainian prisoners of war, including the Azovstal soldiers.

There is much to be alarmed about—indeed, deeply distressed about—as Russian leaders wage a war of aggression against Ukraine while suppressing dissent and disseminating disinformation at home. It's the victor who typically gets to hold the postwar tribunals, and the outcome of this war is uncertain.

In these dark times, I take some solace in knowing that I am part of a professional organization that has been actively organizing to support Ukraine—and whose members have shown a tremendous commitment to advocating for the truth.

Fran Hirsch, Madison, Wisconsin, July 13, 2022

Editor's note: this article first appeared as a blog on [Just Security](#) dated March 9, 2022.

How the Soviet Union Helped Establish the Crime of Aggressive War

Diplomats and lawyers have been talking in recent days about convening an international tribunal on the Nuremberg model or something akin to it to try Russian President Vladimir Putin and those in his inner circle for waging a war of aggression against Ukraine. And rightly so.

The world has been watching the brute-force invasion in real-time and has been tracking the Russian military's countless violations of

international law, from dropping cluster bombs in densely populated areas to refusing to open a true humanitarian corridor for the evacuation of civilians. It has also heard Putin and his Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov manipulate the language of international law to carry out a propaganda campaign at home.

Putin's cynical use of the language of international law to defend illegal actions while threatening the sovereignty of other states is nothing new. We saw it with the 2014 invasion and annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, which Putin also described as a humanitarian intervention. In the wake of that move, the Russian State Duma passed a law upholding the supremacy of Russian law over the rulings of international courts. Western observers at the time noted that this was "another step for the Kremlin away from the system of international law and rules in place since World War II."

What is not always acknowledged is the vital role that the Soviet Union (present-day Russia's predecessor in the United Nations) played in establishing this postwar system of international law in the first place, including the crime of aggression in particular. When international lawyers and politicians now call for "another Nuremberg" (whether in the form of a UN-based, hybrid, or multinational tribunal), it may be helpful to reflect on the history of the first of the Nuremberg Trials. The International Military Tribunal (IMT) of November 1945-October 1946 is often discussed as a triumph of "Western ideals" or as an "American invention." In fact, Nuremberg would not have happened at all had it not been for the insistence of the Soviet Union.

A call for a special international tribunal

The Soviets took up the question of Nazi criminality early in the war—prompted by the brutality of the Nazi assault and occupation in places such as Kharkiv and Kyiv. In April 1942 Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov published his "Third Note on German Atrocities," citing evidence that the burning of villages and the massacre of civilians were part of a deliberate German plan. Six months later, in October 1942, Molotov publicly called for the convening of a "special international tribunal" and invited all interested governments to cooperate in bringing Adolf Hitler, Hermann Goering, Rudolf Hess, and other Nazi leaders to justice.

The United States and Great Britain were slow to embrace the idea of a special international tribunal. U.S. government officials worried about reprisals against

American prisoners of war. British officials argued that the crimes of the Nazi leaders were far too serious for a trial and pushed instead for punishment by executive decree, without a judicial process.

And so the Soviets went down their own path. They did not join the London-based United Nations War Crimes Commission (UNWCC), which was defining "war crimes" narrowly as criminal actions "violating the laws and customs of war" as set out in the Geneva and Hague Conventions. Instead, the Soviets created their own war crimes commission, the Extraordinary State Commission. They gathered evidence of Nazi atrocities throughout the Soviet Union and began to stage their own war crimes trials, like the Krasnodar Trial of July 1943 and the Kharkiv Trial of December 1943.

Soviet jurists

But this is hardly the whole story. For even as the Soviet Union developed its own approach to wartime justice, a Soviet-Jewish lawyer, Aron Trainin, substantially influenced the international discussion about war crimes through his writings. Most significantly, Trainin argued that a state's leaders could and should bear individual criminal responsibility for planning and waging an unjust war of conquest.

Who was Trainin? How did his ideas about war crimes come to take on significance in the Soviet Union and abroad?

Aron Moishe Trainin was born into a Jewish merchant



Photo: Iona Nikitchenko and Aron Trainin (center, center left) during deliberations at the London Conference, 1945 (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Harry S. Truman Library. Photographer: Charles Alexander)

“What state actions during wartime could be considered punishable offenses under international law? What did international law have to say about atrocities committed during a war of aggression? What kinds of sanctions could be taken against the leaders of a “bandit” state that invaded other countries and made “a mockery of the principles and the norms recognized by civilized humanity” in pursuit of “predatory goals”?

family in 1883 in the town of Vitebsk in the Pale of Settlement (in present-day Belarus). He graduated from Moscow University in February 1909 and remained attached to its Criminal Law Department. Trainin did not join the Communist Party. But after 1917 he ably and eagerly served the new government.

Trainin’s ideas gained traction in the Soviet Union partly because of his ties to Andrei Vyshinsky, whom he met at Moscow University. Vyshinsky, who was born to a Polish Catholic family in Odesa and received a law degree at Kyiv University, joined the Bolsheviks in 1920. He rose through the Party ranks, occupying various positions and distinguishing himself as a state prosecutor. He is best known for his role as the chief prosecutor in the Moscow Trials of 1936-1938—major show trials which Stalin used to take down his political enemies.

In the early 1930s, both Trainin and Vyshinsky held posts at Moscow’s Institute of Law. When the Soviet Union joined the League of Nations in 1934, Trainin worked with Vyshinsky to define a Soviet approach to international law.

Trainin wrote two books in the mid-1930s—*Criminal Intervention* (1935) and *The Defense of Peace and Criminal Law* (1937)—that criticized the League of Nations for failing to take on the problem of preventing “aggressive war.” Trainin conceded that the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 had been an important step forward, but argued that it had not gone far enough. The signatories had renounced war “as an instrument of national policy,” but had not made the waging of war a punishable offense. Trainin ended his 1937 book with a call for the creation of an international criminal court to try “persons violating peace.” Vyshinsky attached his name to this work as its editor and wrote an introduction proposing that all acts “infringing on peace” be the subject of a new international criminal law convention.

Trainin’s appeal and Vyshinsky’s proposal, issued as Hitler was preparing to march on Europe and as Stalin was launching his Great Terror, initially fell on deaf ears.

A response to German invasion

In 1940, Vyshinsky became Deputy Foreign

Minister. Two years later, when faced with the urgent matter of dealing with Nazi war crimes, Vyshinsky looked to Trainin.

For Trainin, the ruthlessness of the Nazis toward civilians and the unprovoked invasion of sovereign nations seemed to require a reimagining of the law. He took up the question of criminal responsibility by asking several critical questions: What state actions during wartime could be considered punishable offenses under international law? What did international law have to say about atrocities committed during a war of aggression? What kinds of sanctions could be taken against the leaders of a “bandit” state that invaded other countries and made “a mockery of the principles and the norms recognized by civilized humanity” in pursuit of “predatory goals”?

Trainin’s answers, elaborated in a report for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in July 1943 and then publicized abroad, would fundamentally shape the Allied approach to war crimes.

Trainin argued that the scope of the war was so overwhelming, and Nazi crimes against civilians so shocking, that it would be “unthinkable not to hold the perpetrators to account.” While the German state should face political reprisals and economic sanctions for these crimes, criminal responsibility, he argued, must be borne by individual perpetrators at all levels.

Rejecting the plea of “superior orders,” which was still a standard defense in international law, Trainin argued that rank-and-file soldiers who murder civilians “on the orders of their superiors” were just as guilty as those who do so “of their own accord.” But Trainin insisted that the greatest degree of criminal responsibility belonged to Germany’s leaders. Here he called particular attention to Hitler and his ministers, the leadership of the Nazi Party, Nazi authorities in the occupied territories, the Wehrmacht’s High Command, and German financial and industrial magnates, noting their “grievous violations of the principles of international intercourse and human ethics.”

Most significantly, Trainin argued that Nazi leaders should be tried not only for crimes

committed in the course of the war but also for launching a war of aggression in the first place. Here Trainin coined the term “crimes against peace” and defined it as: acts of aggression; propaganda of aggression; the conclusion of international agreements with aggressive aims; the violation of peace treaties; provocations designed to stir up trouble between countries; terrorism; and the support of fifth columns. He echoed Molotov’s call for the creation of a special international tribunal. And he proposed that “crimes against peace” be included in a new international-law convention.

Spread of Soviet ideas on crime of aggression

Soviet leaders publicized Trainin’s key ideas in radio broadcasts and news bulletins. Then in July 1944, they released Trainin’s report as a book, *The Criminal Responsibility of the Hitlerites*. Vyshinsky’s name again appeared as the editor. The timing here was everything. By late spring 1944, the Soviet Union had recaptured much of southern Russia and Ukraine, and German forces were

in full retreat. That summer, the Red Army launched its most ambitious offensive of the war, retaking Belorussia and marching into Poland. The Soviets pressed the case for convening a special international tribunal.

Trainin’s book soon made its way across Europe to London, where it was translated into English and discussed by the members of the UNWCC. It was embraced by some UNWCC members like the Czechoslovak jurist Bohuslav Ečer, who also believed that aggressive war was the primary crime and who had become increasingly frustrated by the UNWCC’s more conservative approach. Using Trainin’s terminology, Ečer insisted that the “preparation and launching of the present war must be punished as a crime against peace.”

The term “crimes against peace,” which would have a profound effect on postwar justice, thus entered the international legal lexicon. In late October, Ečer presented the UNWCC with a detailed report on Trainin’s book. This report was circulated to the delegates, many of whom brought it back to their governments. A couple of weeks later, Ečer’s analysis was forwarded to the U.S. State Department. Soon thereafter, the State Department assessed Trainin’s book and sent it, along with Ečer’s analysis, on to the White House.

In early January 1945, two lawyers from the War Department’s Special Projects Branch, Lieutenant Colonel Murray Bernays and his colleague D. W. Brown, wrote a secret report for U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, addressing the question of whether starting World War II was a crime for which the Axis leaders could be tried and punished. They concluded that it was. This opinion completely broke from existing U.S. policy, they acknowledged, but the events in Europe demanded that international law evolve “with the growth and development of the public conscience.”

According to Bernays and Brown, regardless of earlier views on the subject, it could “not be disputed that the launching of a war of aggression today is condemned by the vast majority of mankind as a crime.” To support their position they referred to the “Soviet view” and discussed Trainin’s concept of “crimes against peace.” A formal declaration by the Allied governments calling out the criminality of aggressive war would “rest on solid grounds,” they concluded, and would itself take on the power of “valid international law.”

Trainin’s ideas had taken hold and would play an instrumental role in the development of a new body of international law.



Photo: Aron Trainin (second from the front on the left, with a mustache) sits with Roman Rudenko and other members of the Soviet prosecution during the organizations case, August 1946. Credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, College Park.

Postwar justice

After the Allied victory in May 1945, when American and British leaders came around to the idea of a special international tribunal, Trainin was one of the two representatives that the Soviets sent to London to draw up the London Agreement and the Nuremberg Charter. He and Iona Nikitchenko (who would later serve as the Soviet judge on the IMT) negotiated with representatives from the United States, Britain, and France over the course of the summer. “Crimes against peace” was one of the three categories of crimes ultimately set out in the Charter’s Article 6, along with war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The representatives from the four major Allied powers came from different political systems with different legal traditions. But in formulating the London Agreement and the Nuremberg Charter they found common ground. The charge of “crimes against peace” became the linchpin of the entire trial and significantly shaped the Nuremberg model of justice.

Russia today

What does any of this have to do with the call for a new Nuremberg Tribunal to hold Russia’s leaders responsible for the invasion of Ukraine? Does it matter that the Soviet Union helped create the Nuremberg model of justice? Do we really need to know that it was a Soviet lawyer who introduced the concept of “crimes against peace”? Absolutely.

Putin has launched an aggressive war on Ukraine. The Russian military is bombing schools, hospitals, and cultural monuments in Kherson, Kyiv, Chernihiv, Kharkiv, and other Ukrainian cities—some of the same regions that the Wehrmacht targeted during World War II. There are numerous reports that Russian forces are intentionally shelling peaceful civilians trying to escape. In short, Russia’s leaders and generals are committing crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

Putin and those in his inner circle have breached an international legal system that Moscow-based leaders and lawyers helped create after World War II. They have even cynically used the language of Nuremberg to try to justify unjustifiable actions, falsely accusing the Ukrainian government of carrying out a “genocide” of Russians.

While the International Criminal Court has the power to investigate war crimes and crimes against humanity committed on the territory of Ukraine, it is foreclosed from investigating the crime of aggression because neither Russia

nor Ukraine have ratified the Rome Statute. This is where a new Nuremberg-like special tribunal would come in—either forged through an agreement at the UN or created independently by several states.

Putin is likely to denounce any such a tribunal as a Western invention. It is anything but that. The Soviet Union cooperated closely with the United States, Britain, and France to bring the European Axis powers to justice after World War II. In fact, it led the way. It pushed to convene a special international tribunal, introduced the concept of “crimes against peace,” and insisted on trying Nazi leaders for some of the very same crimes that Russia’s leaders are committing today. A full history of the IMT shows that the Soviet Union helped create international legal norms and the Nuremberg model of justice. If Putin is indicted and tried for launching a war of aggression against Ukraine, the world will have Aron Trainin partly to thank.

Francine Hirsch (@FranHirsch) is Vilas Distinguished Achievement Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is the author of *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Cornell UP, 2005) and *Soviet Judgment at Nuremberg: A New History of the International Military Tribunal after World War II* (Oxford UP, 2020).



NEW FROM SLAVICA PUBLISHERS

David R. Stone et al., eds. *Military Affairs in Russia's Great War and Revolution, 1914–22, 2: The Russian Civil War: Campaigns and Operations*, xviii + 302 p. (ISBN 978-089357-439-0), \$44.95.

This book explores the military history of the Russian Civil War. Drawing heavily on research from Russian historians but including an international slate of authors, it traces the fighting on the Civil War's eastern, southern, northern, and northwestern fronts, examining both the Bolshevik Reds and their White opponents. In addition, thematic chapters explore the role of aviation and naval forces in the Russian Civil War. Employing a wide range of new Russian archival sources, the authors bring fresh insights on the war's campaigns and operations to an English-speaking audience.

David R. Stone et al., eds. *Military Affairs in Russia's Great War and Revolution, 1914–22, 3: The Russian Civil War: Military and Society*, xviii + 320 p., 2021 (978-089357-440-6), \$44.95.

Here an international cohort of authors utilizes a host of newly available sources to investigate institutions, social groups, and social conflict amid the chaos of the Russian Civil War. In addition to studies of intelligence and the Red and White officer corps, the book traces the history of Russia's Cossacks through the war. Explorations of the role of ideology and propaganda along with the problem of desertion from the fighting armies give insight into the motivations of the war's soldiers. Chapters on peasant insurgency and the anarchic conflicts in Ukraine offer a clearer understanding of often-neglected aspects of the Civil War.



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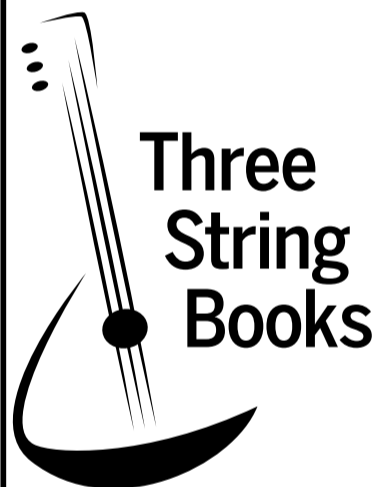
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Three String Books is an imprint of Slavica Publishers devoted to translations of literary works and belles-lettres from Central and Eastern Europe, including Russia and the other successor states of the former Soviet Union.

Anna Starobinets. *Look at Him*, trans. Katherine E. Young, xii + 151 p., 2020 (ISBN 978-089357-503-8), \$19.95.

In this groundbreaking memoir, Anna Starobinets chronicles the devastating loss of her unborn son to a fatal birth defect. A finalist for the 2018 National Bestseller Prize, *Look at Him* ignited a firestorm in Russia, prompting both high praise and severe condemnation for the author's willingness to discuss long-taboo issues of women's agency over their own bodies, the aftereffects of abortion and miscarriage on marriage and family life, and the callousness and ignorance displayed by many in Russia in situations like hers.



Miroslav Maksimović, *Pain*, trans. John Jeffries and Bogdan Rakić, viii + 104 p., 2021 (ISBN 978-089357-508-3), \$19.95.

The fourteen sonnets of *Pain* deal with a historical event from August 1941, when the entire Serbian population of the village of Miostrah were massacred by their Muslim neighbors. Among the more than 180 slaughtered women and children were all the members of Maksimović's mother's immediate family. Thirteen years of age, Maksimović's mother miraculously survived and joined the anti-fascist partisan forces.

Using her tragedy as a paradigm for a national trauma, Maksimović created a work that both contributes to the Serbian culture of remembrance and oversteps the boundaries of memorial literature as it celebrates the triumph of poetry over historical evil.



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Kritika is dedicated to critical inquiry into the history of Russia and Eurasia. The quarterly journal features research articles as well as analytical review essays and extensive book reviews, especially of works in languages other than English. Subscriptions and previously published volumes available from Slavica—including, as of 16, no. 1, e-book editions (ePub, MOBI, PDF). Contact our business manager at slavica@indiana.com for all questions regarding subscriptions and eligibility for discounts.

Elements in Soviet and Post-Soviet History: A Contribution to Decolonizing Soviet History

Mark Edele, University of Melbourne

Rebecca Friedman, Florida International University

Our new series with Cambridge University Press is titled, *Elements in Soviet and Post-Soviet History*. Initially running for five years beginning in 2023, it will provide timely, authoritative, and distinctive overviews targeted at wide public audiences as well as students and scholars. Regularly updated and conceived from the start for a digital environment, the series will provide a dynamic reference resource for advanced undergraduate and graduate students in history, art history, cultural studies, political science, and Eurasian studies. The volumes will also be valuable for wider general audiences, including international relations practitioners, culture influencers, business people engaged in the region, journalists, politicians, and anyone interested in the post-Soviet space.

The series is designed to support an intellectually sophisticated reinvigoration of historically informed post-Soviet area studies. It will provide an up-to-date history of the present of the region formerly known as the Soviet Union. Contributions will combine a sense of the complexity of Soviet history with a focus on commonalities and entanglements between and among the many societies of the empire.

The series aims to pluralize this history in order to free up our imagination about the present and the future. By decentralizing it away from Moscow, contributions will both decolonize Soviet history and provincialize the former metropole: Russia. The short volumes will be scholarly and peer-reviewed, but accessible to a broad readership. Written in crisp and jargon-free English, they will put the latest historical research into dialogue with contemporary issues.

Why is this worth doing? Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has further amplified voices in our field who have called for a "decolonization" of our thinking, writing, and teaching about the

former Soviet space.¹ This is an urgent matter. Notwithstanding pioneering works on the multi-national character of this country,² the history of the Soviet Union has long been told as a branch of Russian history. This tendency to 'Russianize' Soviet history made some sense while the Soviet Union was in existence: the country was geographically largely continuous with the old Romanov empire, the Russians were the largest and most influential ethnic group, Moscow was its capital, and, ever since the 1930s, Russian history had become part of the legitimizing narratives stabilizing the regime.³

To 'Russianize' Soviet history, however, flattens out its multi-national character and tends to neglect the other fourteen successor states of the Soviet Union, often collectively referred to as 'Eurasia': Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia; Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan in the Transcaucasus; Estonia,



Photo Credit: Photo by [L B](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova in Europe. These countries are inhabited by a large variety of ethnic groups and religious faiths. Their relationships to the former metropole vary as much as their political systems, which range from dictatorships to democracy. Some have ethnic trajectories going back centuries even as their borders, identities, and sovereignty shifted. Others emerged only during Soviet times; some have histories of statehood going back to the decolonizing moment of World War I (the Baltic States, Ukraine, and the Transcaucasian republics), others were results of Soviet nation making (the Central Asian republics). Some are fully integrated into the EU and NATO, others hostile to both. Their economies recovered at different paces from the shocks of the post-Soviet economic transitions.⁴

While there has been a flurry of excellent histories of individual countries since 1991, often to tell the “backstory” to the present moment, their collective tendency is to pull apart what is a common historical heritage: Soviet history.⁵ Yet, the shadow of the Soviet experience has not entirely receded. The post-Soviet states are entangled in a variety of degrees, rooted in Soviet times: the reason why Russian troops needed to paint the ubiquitous “Z” on their vehicles, for example, was that their opponents on the battlefield were identically equipped with Soviet era material. That is why scholars have developed the umbrella term, “Eurasia” to engage with this political, economic, and social space.

With lengths of approximately 20,000–30,000 words (40 to 75 pages), *Elements in Soviet and Post-Soviet History* offers an opportunity to develop a theme in greater detail than is possible in a traditional journal article, yet presented more concisely, lively, and public-facing than would be expected in a full-length scholarly monograph. The volumes will be published within 12 weeks of final acceptance of the manuscript, following scrutiny by the series editors and external peer reviewers. They will be available as e-books, as print-on-demand paperbacks, and as digital collections to institutional libraries. Contributions may be updated annually, which lends itself particularly well to a history of the present, which,

by its very nature, is dynamic and evolving.

The war against Ukraine has increased the number of colleagues who question if writing for specialist audiences in monographs or scholarly journals is the best way to communicate our knowledge of Eurasia to a wider public. There is now strong demand for specialist knowledge about the region in the broader public sphere all over the world. And there is an increasing recognition by academic historians that they must engage wider audiences or else let amateurs fill the public sphere with historical clichés. The *Elements* series is one vehicle to facilitate this communication.

Editor’s note: Endnotes can be found on page 18.



Rebecca Friedman is Founding Director of the Wolfsonian Public Humanities Lab and Professor of History at Florida International University in Miami. She is author of the first English-language monograph on Russian masculinity, *Masculinity, Autocracy and the Russian University, 1804-1863* (Palgrave, 2006) as well as the first English-language co-edited volume on the subject (with Barbara Clements and Dan Healy) *Russian Masculinities in History and Culture*. Her recent book, *Modernity, Domesticity and Temporality: Time at Home* explores modern time and home in twentieth-century Russia (Bloomsbury 2020). Much of her work at present involves public humanities and community-engaged scholarship, including multi-million-dollar Mellon Foundation-funded projects.



Mark Edle is the inaugural Hansen Chair in History at the University of Melbourne. He also serves as Deputy Dean in the Faculty of Arts. He is author of *Soviet Veterans of the Second World War* (2008), *Stalinist Society* (2011), *Stalin’s Defectors* (2017), *The Soviet Union. A Short History* (2019), *Debates on Stalinism* (2020), *The Politics of Veteran Benefits in the Twentieth Century* (with Martin Crotty and Neil Diamant, 2020), and *Stalinism at War. The Soviet Union in World War II* (2021). He has written for *The Age*, *The Conversation*, *The Australian Book Review*, *The Saturday Paper*, and is a frequent guest on both radio and television programs of Australia’s public broadcaster, the ABC.

“There is now strong demand for specialist knowledge about the region in the broader public sphere all over the world. And there is an increasing recognition by academic historians that they must engage wider audiences or else let amateurs fill the public sphere with historical clichés.”

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ENDNOTES

1 The discussion itself of course preceded the current crisis. Any bibliographical footnote on this field is by necessity incomplete but historians of World War I, revolutions, and civil wars have been particularly active. See, for example, Joshua A. Sanborn, *Imperial Apocalypse: The Great War and the Destruction of the Russian Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Jon Smele, *The "Russian" Civil Wars, 1916-1926: Ten Years that shook the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); or Laura Engelstein, *Russia in Flames: War, Revolution, Civil War, 1914-1921* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018). Examples grappling with the issue for the later years include Paula A. Michaels, *Curative Powers: Medicine and Empire in Stalin's Central Asia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003); Valerie A. Kivelson and Ronald G. Suny, *Russia's Empires* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Serhii Plokhy, *Lost Kingdom. The Quest for Empire and the Making of the Russian Nation. From 1470 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 2017); or Epp Annus, *Soviet Postcolonial Studies: A View from the Western Borderlands* (London: Routledge, 2018). Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper embed the Soviet experience into a comparative context: *Empires in World History. Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

2 For example: Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917-1923* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954; 2nd rev. ed: 1997); Ronald Suny, *The Revenge of the Past. Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993); Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire. Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations. Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Jeremy Smith, *Red Nations. The Nationalities Experience in and after the USSR* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2013).

3 Geoffrey Hosking, *Rulers and Victims. The Russians in the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006).

4 Kathleen Hancock and Alexander Libman, "Eurasia," *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2016).

5 For Russia, in addition to those already cited: Timothy Colton, *Russia. What Everyone Needs to Know.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); or Sean Walker, *The Long Hangover. Putin's New Russia and the Ghosts of the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). For Ukraine: Serhy Yekelchuk, *Ukraine: Birth of a Modern Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Serhii Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe. A History of Ukraine* (London: Penguin, 2016); Serhy Yekelchuk, *Ukraine. What Everyone Needs to Know.* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020). For the Baltics: Romuald Misiunas and Rein Taagepera, *The Baltic States. Years of Dependence, 1940-1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Thomas Lane, Artis Pabriks, David Smith, and Aldis Purs, *The Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania* (London: Routledge, 2017). For Central Asia: Adeeb Khalid, *Central Asia: A New History from the Imperial Conquests to the Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021). These new studies could build on monographs published from the late 1970s in the Hoover Institution's Studies of Nationalities in the USSR series. For bookends see Alan Fisher, *The Crimean Tatars* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1978) and Charles King, *The Moldovans: Romania, Russia, and the Politics of Culture* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 2000).

Spotlight: Russia.Post

[Russia.Post](#) is a new analytical and data analysis platform on Russia launched by [the Institute for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies \(IERES\)](#) from the George Washington University in May 2022, about two months after Russia invaded Ukraine. The Kremlin's "special military operation" sowing death and devastation in Ukraine has also dealt a major blow on Russia itself. Criminal prosecutions of disloyalty have forced many Russian academics, experts, journalists, and others either to fall silent or leave Russia altogether.

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2022 Cohen Tucker Dissertation Fellows

Allison Brooks-Conrad

U of Pennsylvania, Music, "Zhenskaya Muzika: Gender, Labor, and Music in the Underground and the Apartment during Late Soviet Socialism"

Recipient of the Women's and Gender Studies Fellowship

This dissertation investigates how women living in Soviet Russia used music in their attempts to conform to and diverge from Soviet state policy, social expectations, and gender roles during the late socialist era in the Soviet Union. Brooks-Conrad contends that women used music and sound to create deterritorialized spaces out of sight (or earshot) of state authorities. Their labor was invaluable in the maintenance and longevity of different unofficial Soviet music scenes. She interrogates how women used music to articulate a public-facing femininity in line with Soviet expectations. She argues that one way that this self-presentation took place was through the music women actively sought out and listened to, as well as through their performance of gendered musical genres. In comparing these scenes and how women figured in both, she uses a gendered analytic to dismantle the official/unofficial culture binary while showing the points of convergence and overlap in scenes of Soviet cultural production.

Albert Cavallaro

U of Michigan, Ann Arbor, History, "From Tver to Tashkent: Exploring Citizenship and Nation in 19th Century Russian Museums"

Cavallaro's dissertation examines the intertwined trajectories of two 19th century Russian imperial museums: the Tver Historical Museum, which opened in provincial Tver in 1866, and the National Museum of Turkestan, which opened in colonial, Central Asian Tashkent in 1876. Following these museums from their founding to 1917, his study puts the empire's colonies and provinces into direct conversation to show how geographically dispersed but intellectually connected communities engaged in related meaning-making projects. At the local scale, he examines resources to reconstruct the daily life of museums' employees and visitors. At the imperial scale, Cavallaro argues that intellectuals in Moscow and St. Petersburg apprehended provincial and colonial sites as places of exploitation, where raw materials could be collected and sent to the center. At the global scale, he considers how museums, a new European technology, were involved in networks of knowledge production beyond the empire. His dissertation shows these museums engaged in a single project to historicize and create proper models of Russian citizenship and nation. Imperial officials claimed affinity with Europe and sought to "Europeanize" museum visitors and, by extension, the empire itself.

Ethell Gershengorin

U of Wisconsin, Madison, History, "Healing After Violence: Jewish Pogrom Aid and Its Role in Bolshevik State Building, 1917-1924"

The Russian Civil War and its pogroms constituted a transformative moment for Jews living in the western borderlands of Russia. Despite the Red Army's participation in these pogroms, the Bolsheviks were alone in condemning antisemitism, and many Jews turned to the Bolsheviks for protection. The Jewish nationalist Society for the Preservation of the Health of the Jewish Population (OZE) worked with the Bolshevik-run Jewish Social Committee for Relief Among the Victims of Pogroms and Counterrevolution (Evobkom), which was funded by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (The Joint) worked to provide relief to pogrom survivors. This project will explore the OZE and Evobkom's medical aid programs and will examine how the OZE and Bolsheviks' concerns about health and desires to maintain traditional gender norms unified these organizations and served as crucial continuities of the revolution. This project will explore how funding from the Joint brought with it the American perspective to questions about medicine and healing. This study will offer new insights into how the relationship between Jews and Bolsheviks evolved within the context of international aid.

Kim Lacey

Washington U, St. Louis, History, "Border Crossers and the Making of the Russian Far East, 1860-1938"

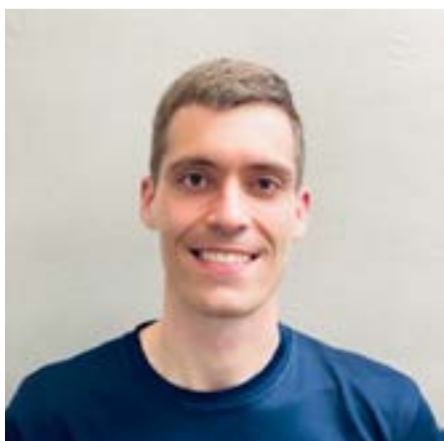
Lacey traces the movement of people from Japan and Korea to the Russian Far East between 1860 and 1938 and examines their roles and place in the community. Vladivostok is a crucial site for the study of migration during imperial expansion since it is home to a major port and the terminus of the Trans-Siberian Railway. Lacey's analysis covers events including the Russo-Japanese War, the Japanese intervention in the Russian Civil War, and Stalin's Great Terror. "Border Crossers" foregrounds the experiences of transnational migrants and studies the role of gender, ethnicity, and class. The work is based on primary sources, interviews with individuals in Kazakhstan whose ancestors had migrated to the RFE, personal collections, and memorabilia. Triangulating analyses of state records, interviews, and other sources offers a new perspective on how migrants negotiated their place in Vladivostok. Simultaneously, it reveals how the RFE was transformed by various migrant communities.



Yacov Zohn

U of Wisconsin, Madison, History, "Homo Sovieticus Goes to Extra Time: Constructing the Soviet Image in Soccer (1946-1992)"

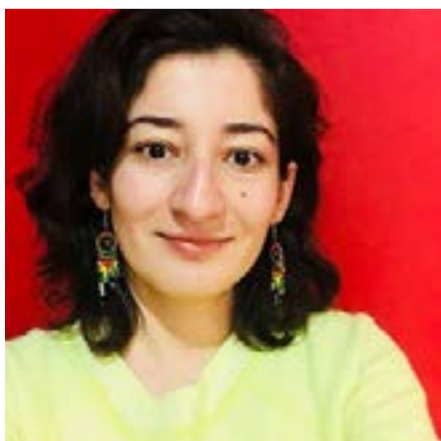
Zohn's project examines the interplay of local, national, and supranational forces in the politics of representation in the Soviet Union through the lens of the Soviet national soccer team. In tracing the history of the team from the Post-War era to its final collapse in 1992, he aims to understand and illuminate how the Soviet political system sought to form the "ideal" image of the USSR abroad and at home. He will structure my argument by means of selected matches/tournaments of the USSR team that serve as case studies, which thread wider trends. His questions will probe the internal and external dynamics of the team. For example, how did performance on the field reflect/deflect and affect the political landscape? Was the multi-ethnic character of the team an advantage on the field of play, or not? A federation with one of the most heterogeneous populations in the globe was often represented by the narrowest regional choices, with local clubs (especially from Moscow and Kyiv) often doubling as the USSR national team. He will scrutinize this paradox within this context through a combination of archival research and interviews primarily in Russia as well as in Ukraine.



Zukhra Kasimova

U of Illinois, Chicago, History, "Hybridizing Sovietness, Modernity, Nationality and Provinciality in the Post-World War II Uzbek SSR (1941-1981)"

Kasimova argues that Soviet modernity was essentially a hybrid concept. Within this framework, Central Asia as a region ceases being a periphery of the Soviet world and becomes central for understanding processes of hybridization of Soviet modernity. Her project is aimed at decentering Eurocentric narratives of modernity. The Soviet modernity she suggests is multi-lingual; it allows a place for the persistence of Islam in the region (as both religion and cultural text), and it implies the active role of local elites in [re]shaping messages and policies of the center and directly influencing them. The project also explores the heterogeneous nature of the Central Asian region itself, highlighting its internal social, gender, and national stratifications and conflicts that defy any binary explanations and oppositions. Ultimately, Kasimova argues that the hybrid Uzbek modernity decisively influenced the normative Soviet project – by carving in it a place for "Muslim" cultural identification, a concept of national science, and toleration of "national" traditionalism.



Alexander McConnell

U of Michigan, History, "Soviet Humanism after Stalin, 1953-1991"

McConnell's dissertation traces the conceptual evolution of humanism (gumanizm) in Soviet ideological, philosophical, and cultural discourse during the post-Stalin period. By demonstrating the centrality of this concept to both the Communist Party's attempted revitalization of socialism after 1953 and dissident challenges to official ideology, it charts the emergence of a new ethical imperative that outlasted other elements of post-Stalin cultural "thaw." His project also reveals how efforts to draw a moral line under Stalin's "cult of personality" were complicated by continued reliance on a conceptual vocabulary adopted during the 1930s. Maxim Gorky's Stalin-era conception of humanism as hatred for enemies persisted alongside the term's historical associations with Renaissance thought and abstract love for humankind. By examining how contests over the scope and meaning of humanism helped to reshape ideals of socialist personhood after Stalin, McConnell's dissertation offers a new intellectual genealogy of Gorbachev's reform campaigns of the 1980s. His project likewise represents a timely intervention into the nascent scholarship on humanism's global manifestations during the twentieth century, linking Soviet debates to Cold War ideological contestation with both Maoist China and the West.



SPOTLIGHT: UKRAINE UNLOCKED

Ukraine Unlocked is a weekly newsletter providing a roundup of the cultural, political, and economic developments in the country. In light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we are providing succinct updates about what is happening on the ground in Ukraine. The newsletter was created by two Fulbright Ukraine alumni (Philip Kopatz and Gabriel Pimsler) who hope to provide students, professionals, and the casual reader with greater insight into Ukraine as its role on the global stage evolves throughout the 21st century.



ASEEES Grant Recipients

Dissertation Research Grant

- Jeffrey Bilik, U of Michigan, Sociology, "Stewarding Citizenship: Soviet and Post-Soviet Housing Intermediaries as Civic Wards and Migration Brokers"
- Michael Corsi, The Ohio State U, History, "A Metropolis of Metal: Urbanization and the Rise of Russia's Industrial Heartland, 1887-1945"
- Aram Ghoogasian, Princeton University, Near Eastern Studies, "The Second Printing Revolution: Industrialized Printing and the Transformation of Armenian Culture"
- David Kaminsky, SUNY Binghamton, History, "Mobile Legacies: Russian Refugees in Interwar Yugoslavia"
- Weronika Malek-Lubawski, U of Southern California, Art History, "Between Moscow and Paris: Katarzyna Kobro, Władysław Strzemiński, and Modern Art in Łódź"
- Yan Matusevich, City U of New York, Anthropology, "From Moscow to Tashkent: The New Exiles of a Failed Empire"
- Slaveya Minkova, U of California Los Angeles, Theater Film and Television, "South-East European Mediascapes: Film Studio Histories and Contemporary Co-Production Dynamics"
- Ksenia Pavlenko, Cornell U, Art History and Visual Studies, "Seeing Expansion: Representation and Appropriation in the Late Russian Empire"
- Milan Skobic, Northeastern U, Sociology and Anthropology, "Industrial labor in Serbia between Neo-Patrimonial State and Transnational Capital: A Comparative Ethnographic Analysis"

Dissertation Research Grant in Women and Gender Studies

- Morgan Morales, U of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, History, "A Matter of Life and Death: Jewish Women Who Chose Abortion during the Holocaust"

Maya K. Peterson Research Grant in Environmental Studies

- see sidebar

Joseph Bradley and Christing Ruane Research Grant in Russian Studies

- Sophia Horowitz, Harvard U, History, "Popular Participation in Soviet Secret Policing, 1927-1953: The Secret Lives of Stalinist Informers,"

Summer Dissertation Writing Grant

- Nikita Allgire, U of Southern California, Slavic Languages and Literatures, "The Anatomy of the Drives: Psychoanalysis in Russia 1910-1930"
- Nicolette van den Bogerd, Indiana U - Bloomington, Musicology, "Sonic Testimonies: Polish-Jewish Survivors' Musical Responses to the Holocaust in Postwar Political Memoryscapes"
- Tyler Dolan, U of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Slavic Languages and Literatures, "On the Threshold: Literary Responses to Pogrom Violence in the East European Borderlands"
- Nataliia Laas, Brandeis U, History, "Market Research Without a Market: Consumers, the State, and the Economy of Waste in the Soviet Union, 1947-1991"
- Daria Smirnova, U of South Carolina, Comparative Literature, "'What Memory Wants from Me': Contemporary Female Authors on the Calling to Remember"
- John Vsetecka, Michigan State U, History, "In the Aftermath of Hunger: Rupture, Response, and Retribution in Soviet Ukraine, 1933-1947"

Understanding Modern Russia and Ukraine Grant

- Elena Sirotkina, U of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Political Science, "The Moral Foundations of Approving Political Coercion in Autocracy"

Internship Grant

- Fiona Bell, Yale U, Slavic Languages and Literatures
- Brandon Harvey, The Ohio State U, CSEES

- Lucy Minicozzi-Wheeland, Harvard U, REECA
- Cyrus Newlin, Columbia U, School of International and Public Affairs
- Cordelia Ponczek, U of Oxford, Global Area Studies
- Anya Shatilova, Wesleyan U, Music
- Mariia Shynkarenko, The New School, Politics

- Maria Telegina, Georgetown U, History
- Natalia Vygovskaia, Brown U, Slavic Studies
- Kathryn Yegorov-Crate, The U of Texas-Austin, Slavic & Eurasian Studies
- Mechella Yezernitskaya, Bryn Mawr College, History of Art

Maya K. Peterson Dissertation Research Grant in Environmental Studies

Congratulations to the inaugural recipients of the Maya K. Peterson Dissertation Research Grant in Environmental Studies. We thank the Peterson family, friends and colleagues for establishing the Maya K. Peterson Endowed Fund so that the annual research grant can be awarded in perpetuity.



Karolina Partyga, Columbia University, History, "Waste Recovery as a Measure of Progress: Economic Planning for a Wasteless Modernity in socialist East Central Europe, 1953-1983."



Tyson Luneau, SUNY Albany, History, "Reimagined Peripheries: Environment and the Construction of the Russian and French Colonial Empires."

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Deadline: September 1

<http://aseees.org/programs/firstbook-subvention>

Affiliate Group News

AATSEEL News

The AATSEEL Call for Proposals is now [available](#). The 2023 AATSEEL Conference will be fully virtual and will be held on February 16-19, 2023. The Program Committee invites scholars in these and related areas to form panels around specific topics, organize roundtable discussions, propose forums on instructional materials, and/or submit proposals for individual presentations for the 2023 Conference. The conference regularly includes panels in linguistics, pedagogy and second language acquisition, in addition to literature, cinema, and culture. Submit your proposals by August 15, 2022. For more information, visit the AATSEEL [website](#).

Midwest Slavic Association

The winners for the 2022 Midwest Slavic Association Student Essay Competition have been selected by Dr. James McGavran and Dr. Timothy Pogačar who reviewed the undergraduate and graduate papers respectively. The 2022 winners are:

- Undergraduate: Katie Frevert, Oberlin College, "Kill the State in Yourself: Totalitarianism and the Illiberal Dissidence of Egor Letov," which is a thesis chapter on Egor Letov of the punk band Grazhdanskaya oborona and his treatment of totalitarianism in songs of the late 1980s. Frevert shows connections between Letov's punk songs and political theories with which he could not have been explicitly familiar (e.g. Arendt).
- Graduate: Tamara Polyakova, University of Wisconsin-Madison, "Past Enemy, Future Ally: Nature as Actor in the Russian Civil War" Polyakova's submission explores environmental factors in Karelia during the Russian civil war and their effects on servicemen. It also attends to the importance of Karelian natural resources as a factor in the conflict. The strengths of the article are its original topic, extensive use of sources, and interdisciplinary approach. It is very clearly organized and written.

Personages



Eugene M. Avrutin and **Elissa Bemporad** (were awarded the Association of Jewish Libraries Reference Award for their co-edited book, *Pogroms: A Documentary History*.

Sarah Cameron is a 2022 Andrew Carnegie Fellowship recipient. Her project, "The Aral Sea: Environment, Society, and State Power in Central Asia," offers the first complete account of one of the 20th century's worst environmental catastrophes, the disappearance of the Aral Sea. Interweaving an examination of high politics with voices of the people who lived by the sea, the book underscores the urgency of finding more sustainable methods to produce cotton.

Olga Chernysheva won the prestigious 2022 Daniel and Florence Guerlain Foundation's Contemporary Drawing Prize. She was one of the three nominated artists who presented their works to the jury in Paris on 19 May.

Carol Leff has been named to the Executive Committee of the University of Illinois European Union Center.

The American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) has proudly named 40 new Emerging Voices Fellows for 2022. Among them are ASEEES members:

- **K. Maya Larson**, who is

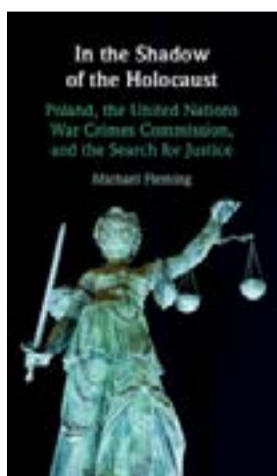
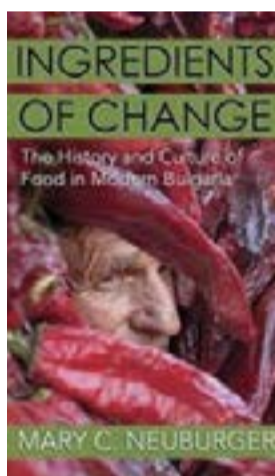
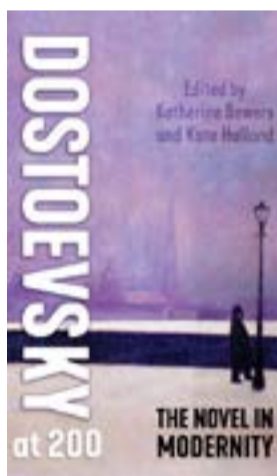
now a Postdoctoral Fellow in Translation Studies for her dissertation, "Truth Disguised as Lies: How Aesop's Life Shaped Russia's Aesopian Literature (1884-1984)." Larson's dissertation examines the origins of so-called "Aesopian," or covertly subversive, narratives. Through an analysis of literary works spanning three censorship regimes in Russia, Larson investigates how these narratives shaped the truth-telling strategies of suppressed writers.

- **Anya Yermakova** received the Transdisciplinary Futures in Humanities PhD Training Postdoctoral Fellowship for her research, "An Embodied History of Math and Logic in Russian-speaking Eurasia." This research is grounded in thought experiments in logic by logicians, scientists, artists, and other logically curious intellectuals in Russian-speaking Eurasia at the turn of the twentieth century, which have seldom been jointly investigated.

José Vergara was selected to hold the Myra T. Cooley Lectureship in Russian Studies.

Kenneth J. Yin was awarded a 2022-2023 Engaging Eurasia Teacher Fellowship at Harvard University's Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies.

Publications



All Future Plunges to the Past: James Joyce in Russian Literature, by José Vergara, (Northern Illinois University Press, October 2021) demonstrates how Russian authors have drawn from Joyce's texts to address questions of lineages in their respective Soviet, émigré, and post-Soviet contexts. Interviews with contemporary authors, critics, and scholars extend the conversation to the present day.

Amanat: Women's Writings from Kazakhstan (July 2022, Gaudy Boy Translates), is an anthology of women's voices from a post-soviet Kazakhstan. Edited by Zaire Batayeva and Shelley Fairweather-Vega, the anthology pays homage to the rich but largely unrecorded oral storytelling tradition of the region.

Ivan N. Petrov's *The Development of the Bulgarian Literary Language: From Incunabula to First Grammars, Late Fifteenth–Early Seventeenth Century* (Rowman & Littlefield, March 2021) examines the history of the first printed Cyrillic books and their role in the development of the Bulgarian literary language.

Katherine Bowers and Kate Holland co-edited *Dostoevsky at 200: The Novel in Modernity* (University of Toronto Press, Summer 2021), which marks Dostoevsky's bicentenary and features new research on Dostoevsky. It is available open access as a [pdf download](#) through the University of Toronto Library's support and the Open Monographs program.

In *Film Genres in Hungarian and Romanian Cinema: History, Theory, and Reception*, (Rowman & Littlefield, April 2021) Andrea Virginás employs a film historical overview to merge the study of small national cinemas with film genre theory and cultural theory and posits that Hollywood-originated classical film genres have been important fields of reference for the development of these Eastern European cinemas.

Ingredients of Change, by Mary C. Neuberger (Cornell University Press, April 2022) explores modern Bulgaria's foodways from the Ottoman era to the present, outlining how the nation's culinary topography has been reshaped by the imperial legacies of the Ottomans, Habsburgs, Russians, and Soviets, as well as by its own people.

In the Shadow of the Holocaust: Poland, the United Nations War Crimes Commission, and the Search for Justice, by Michael Fleming, (Cambridge University Press, January 2022) analyzes the ways that the Polish Government in Exile agitated for an Allied response to German atrocities.

Darra Goldstein's new book, *The Kingdom of Rye: A Brief History of Russian Food*, (University of California Press, May 2022) demonstrates how national identity is revealed through food. It also examines the Russians' ingenuity in overcoming hunger, a difficult climate, and a history of political hardship while deciphering Russia's social structures from within.

Proletarian Imagination: Self, Modernity, and the Sacred in Russia, 1910-1925, by Mark D. Steinberg, was released in Russian. This is a study of working-class people who wrote poetry and fiction during a tumultuous time in Russian history. The record of their efforts is key to understanding cultural and social issues of their day, especially the self, modernity, and the sacred.

The Quill and the Scalpel: Nabokov's Art and the Worlds of Science, by Stephen H. Blackwell, is now available in Russian. Most famous as a literary artist, Vladimir Nabokov was also a professional biologist. This book demonstrates how aesthetic sensibilities contributed to Nabokov's scientific work, and how his scientific passions informed his fictions.

The Rhetorical Rise and Demise of "Democracy" in Russian Political Discourse, Volume 2: The Promise of "Democracy" during the Yeltsin Years by David Cratis Williams, Marilyn J. Young, and Michael K. Launer (Academic Studies Press, May 2022) examines the arc of government rhetoric during the height of media freedom, the quest for a new national identity, and the struggle for self-government in the Post-Soviet era.

Choi Chatterjee published *Russia in World History: A Transnational Approach* (Bloomsbury, January 2022). The book challenges the idea of Russia as an outlier of European civilization by examining select themes in modern Russian history alongside cases drawn from the British Empire.