



NewsNet

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Soviet-era phenotype chart used by police to identify ethnicity

Revisiting the “Contours of Race, Racialization, and Race-Making” in Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies

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To advance dialogue about the applicability of critical theories of race and racialization to Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (SEES) fields, six scholars (including a scholar journalist), who work and write on race and racialization in Central and Southeast Europe, Eastern Europe, Russia, and Central Asia, came together for the roundtable, “The Contours of Race, Racialization, and Race-Making,” at the 2020 ASEEES Annual Convention. Roundtable participants actively challenged the entrenched silences about race, racialization, and “amnesia of racial capitalism” (Bjelić, 2021) in Central and Southeast Europe, Russia, and Central Asia, and urged others, particularly those engaged in similar scholarly pursuits, to push for the recognition of how racial logics and processes of racialization affect the various members of racialized, and otherwise minoritized, communities throughout geographies associated with SEES fields. For this article, three of the roundtable participants, who work in the Balkans, reflect on their own research, their positionalities, and the significance of the roundtable to their scholarship, the

field, and ASEEES as an organization.

The theme of last year’s ASEEES meeting was “Anxiety and Rebellion,” and one of our conversations was shaped by a type of anxiety that scholars themselves can perpetuate when it comes to the subjects of race and racism. Our roundtable participants called attention to this anxiety, specifically highlighting what it means for us as scholars to conduct research on race in our region. In order to meaningfully address race and racialization, it is imperative that scholars in our field be willing to discuss the tension between being *unable* to engage vs. *unwilling* to examine forms of racism and anti-blackness. Given more recent global conversations and dialogue about race and racialization, this framing could create an opportunity to investigate race and racism in multiple forms, and move beyond racism as unfortunate, unexpected, or not reflective of an entity’s true values, but instead as shaped by global white supremacy and in need of critical engagement.

Several key questions animated our discussion, including those pertaining to how we situate race as a historical category of social organization and not just as a newly emergent one in Eastern, Central and Southeast Europe, Russia, and Central Asia. Though roundtable participants were working in different areas across the Balkans and the former Soviet Union, and though shaped by multiple disciplines including anthropology, cultural studies, journalism, film and media studies, gender studies, and history,

we found numerous intersecting and overlapping threads as they pertain to race and racialization. This enabled us to conduct a rich conversation that addressed the interrelated subjects of marginalization and othering, and how these ideas shaped our engagement with gender, religion, migration, and diaspora within our region.

When and how does the language of whiteness, blackness, and otherness get employed across our region? And how and when does this language get strategically avoided or dismissed? How does this inform us about the globality of racialization? As sociologist Michelle Christian argues, we cannot look at racial dynamics and inequities in any given society as emanating solely from the logics, beliefs, and structures of that society. Although white supremacy is not at all new or “resurgent” (Speed 2020), its latent roots are being explored globally—and finally in SEES fields. And the roots and histories of white supremacy throughout the region have been discussed among local communities of color for decades—if not centuries—but have yet to enter the traditionally white spaces of SEES area studies.

Personal Narratives

Chelsi West Ohueri’s experience with long-term, ethnographic research in the Balkan region has allowed her to consider the complex registers of racialization and belonging that emerge in everyday life, even in spaces that often cling to notions of racelessness. As many of the other roundtable participants also noted,

this type of ethnographic work can yield insight into how particular histories and the contemporary moment shape lived experiences surrounding racialization, marginalization, othering, and dehumanization. Regarding dehumanization, the roundtable also drew attention to silences that often prevent authentic engagement on this subject, whether the conversation is pertaining to Roma persons in the Balkans, to Africans in the former Soviet Union, or to Black folks in the United States.

From a more personal perspective, this roundtable represented an intellectual shift from West Ohueri’s first ASEEES conference in 2014. At that time, she was an advanced graduate student presenting on racial belonging in Albania, but there were no opportunities to collectively discuss race and racialization, nor was she able to connect with other scholars conducting similar research. The roundtable in 2020 gave us a chance to reflect and dialogue about race studies in the field, as well as the opportunity to collectively strategize about addressing race within our association.

In writing about race in SEES fields, Elana Resnick acknowledges how she has been consistently confronted with questions about the fundamental premise of her research: does race (or racial hierarchy) in Bulgaria even exist? Throughout her fieldwork, she was often asked to justify why race is a relevant framework, support it with quantifiable numbers, and account for why race is not just an “Americanization” of a local issue—of what many of her non-Romani

interlocutors (academic and non-academic) categorized as “culture.” When she disagreed with the notion that the terms “ethnicity” or “culture” could adequately account for the power differentials or perspectives of the Romani communities with whom she worked, many non-Romani scholars dismissed her approach as not “emic” enough. They would assert that her reliance on “American notions of race” was out of place in the region. However, this phenomenon is part of what needs to be studied by scholars of the region: denials of race and racialized hierarchies as assertions of white supremacy.

This, however, was only the tip of the iceberg of the expertise regime that has surrounded discussions of power and racialized hierarchies in the region. Even when people use the terms “race” and “racism” to analyze their own conditions, these concepts and framings have been dismissed in widespread scholarship in and on the region. For centuries, white scholars worked to proprietarily document—without collaboration—Romani culture and language (for example). This approach has strategically precluded Roma from the very circles and analytical authority that would transform the study of power, history, and politics in East Europe into one in which critical studies of race and racialization have a place.

Sunnie Rucker-Chang notes that with race critical theories absent in SEEEES fields, consistent inequities and attendant systemic disparities (in education, access to health care, employment, and in other aspects of daily life) persist among members

of some groups without the critical lenses necessary to understand them fully. Perpetuation of the myths of racelessness in Eastern, Central, and Southeast Europe, Russia, and Central Asia does not diminish connections shared among marginalized communities transnationally and the structures that support what is typically their minoritized position. Instead, these relational qualities are dismissed as irrelevant or misplaced and we continue to lack the means to meaningfully include these perspectives into SEEEES scholarship. The fervor to dismiss race, racialization, and its effects actually works against our field, however, as it perpetuates the region as peripheral, disconnecting it from global flows of information and even its own historical, transnational relevance.

While the disciplines of our field include various geographies, histories, cultures, and sociocultural and political realities, those who produce knowledge about our fields have long not been similarly “diverse.” As I recently wrote in the *Slavic and East European Journal* Symposium “Working Towards Equity in Slavic Language and Literature Programs: Experiences from the United States,” SEEEES fields are dominated by scholars whose origins lie in unmarked majorities who identify or code as “white,” and this lack of broad racial diversity facilitates the continued promotion of majoritized positions and facilitates continued silences about race. The discussion that followed the roundtable highlighted that limited “diversity” produces similar experiences and

positions that minimize critical frames of knowledge and understanding.

As an organization, the Association of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies is supporting and incorporating more programs and initiatives that will hopefully result in more inclusive and racially diverse membership. The ASEEEES Initiative for Diversity and Inclusion, ASEEEES support for the US Russia Foundation-sponsored Undergraduate Think Tank and Cybersecurity Simulation hosted by Howard University, and focused articles highlighting the challenges of creating community for students of color in our fields, particularly when traveling abroad, show that ASEEEES administration recognizes a lack of people of color among the organization’s membership as well as in Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies fields, and that they are doing the work to create pathways to have more inclusive and racially diverse membership. Given that these initiatives are specifically targeting students and professionals of color, these new members will likely be from minoritized communities who will, inevitably, be knowledgeable about the dominant cultural idiom, but what language will these students use to express their positionalities, experiences, and potential academic interests in relation to their work in SEEEES fields? That is not to assume that all students of minoritized communities will have an interest in working on issues of race and racialization, but, if they do, how will we provide them the frameworks for analysis when the relevance of racial logics to our fields remains perennially challenged? Moreover,

what language will these students use to express their experiences abroad where their racial positions will inevitably define them much more than at home? How will their faculty leaders or advisors help them work through their experiences? There are both scholarly and practical implications for our fields if addressing race and racialization remains taboo. Without the adoption of updated modalities incorporating race and racialization in our fields, the answers to these questions will remain elusive.

And that is where this roundtable comes in: it creates a new space for thinking about race in Europe and Eurasia that works to unsettle the gatekeeping of SEEEES. The variety of perspectives brought to light issues of how to understand race as a historically present—but often disavowed—category of social organization across Central and Southeast Europe, Russia, and Central Asia that has been changed, exacerbated, and transformed by ongoing conditions of white supremacy, migration, and religion. The power in this approach is not just adding race to a pre-existing conversation but fundamentally shifting the analytical paradigms upon which studies of our regions rely and to which they contribute. This roundtable was inspiring, not only for the collaborations it has cultivated, but also for the possibilities of interdisciplinary and transnational work in East Europe and the post-Soviet space as we reckon with the longstanding structures of white supremacy upon which previous scholarship was built, and

which current scholarship too often continues to ignore or deny.

Sunnie Rucker-Chang is Assistant Professor of Slavic and East European Studies and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Lead for the Institute for Research in Sensing at the U of Cincinnati. She works, writes, and teaches primarily on racial and cultural formations and minority-majority relations in Southeast Europe. She is the co-editor of and contributor to *Cultures of Mobility and Alterity: Crossing the Balkans and Beyond* (forthcoming with Liverpool University Press, 2022), co-author of *Roma Rights and Civil Rights: A Transatlantic Comparison* (Cambridge, 2020), and co-editor of and contributor to *Chinese Migrants in Russia, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe* (Routledge, 2011).

Chelsi West Ohueri is sociocultural and medical anthropologist and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Slavic and Eurasian Studies at the U of Texas, Austin. Her scholarship and teaching are primarily concerned with the study of racialization, marginalization, and structural inequality. She has conducted extensive ethnographic research throughout Albania and is interested in configurations of race and belonging among Albanian, Romani, and Egyptian communities in Southeastern Europe. West Ohueri is currently completing her ethnographic book project about this research.

Elana Resnick is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the U of California, Santa Barbara. She is currently working on a book manuscript about waste and race in Europe. Based on fieldwork in Bulgaria conducted on city streets, in landfills, Romani neighborhoods, executive offices, and at the Ministry of the Environment, the book examines the juncture of material waste management and racialization.

Resnick has a recent (2021) article in *American Anthropologist* stemming from this research entitled “The Limits of Resilience: Managing Waste in the Racialized Anthropocene.”

Citations:

Bjelić, Dušan, “Abolition of a National Paradigm: The Case Against Benedict Anderson and Maria Todorova’s Raceless Imaginaries,” *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* (2021), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2020.1863842>.

Christian, Michelle. “A Global Critical Race and Racism Framework: Racial Entanglements and Deep and Malleable Whiteness.” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 5, no. 2 (2019): 169-185.

Speed, Shannon. “The Persistence of White Supremacy: Indigenous Women Migrants and the Structures of Settler Capitalism.” *American Anthropologist* 122, no. 1 (2020): 76-85.

CALL FOR ARTICLES

Please consider submitting articles to be published in future NewsNets. Articles are typically brief essays on contemporary issues or matters of broad professional interest. They can include discussions of new research, institutions, resources, etc. NewsNet is not a venue for extensive research essays; most cover articles are 2,500 words in length. We encourage members, including graduate students, who are interested in proposing an article to contact the NewsNet Editor, Trevor Erlacher (aseees.grants@pitt.edu).

The views expressed in NewsNet articles are solely the views of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of ASEEEES or its staff.

LETTER FROM ASEES BOARD PRESIDENT SIBELAN FORRESTER

Dear friends and colleagues,

The death of Vartan Gregorian (President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York) in April of this year reminds us that our allies in the wider world are not immortal and that we need to continue advocating for our profession and for the pursuit of knowledge in general. I feel that the scholarly interests ASEES addresses have broadened and grown better roots in the past three decades – the U.S. has seen a growth in serious study of Eastern European and Eurasian as well as Russian and (former) Soviet languages and cultures (serious study that was often already found more widely in Canada). This makes us more responsible scholars, teachers, and thinkers, responsive to the information on the region that we get from colleagues, friends, and the media. The ASEES Board has received an increased number of calls for the association to sign on to letters of protest or to make its own official statement, and the Committee on Academic Freedom and Advocacy has been busy. (I trust our members understand that making a statement requires preliminary consultation, gathering information, and agreeing on our formulation of a decision or a statement.) There is an obvious need to express a reaction in the case of academic issues – especially concerning an ASEES member or a scholar who has attended our conferences abroad – but our own lives and work make clear that oppression, limitations on freedom of discourse, and legal restrictions on social activities impact the societies we study in all kinds of ways. Then there are the political and institutional events in our own biomes,

which leads to my second topic.

There is too much to say about the growing precarity of our professions to cover it here, and those issues are not unique to Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies. They are issues that our association must confront for our own survival as an interrelated set of disciplines that we believe are important as well as interesting. At one end, many of our senior specialists were hired during the Cold War or the exciting years of perestroika, when having a specialist at least in Russia (if not in other parts of the region) was considered vital to a well-stocked department of history or political science. What happens when they retire and are replaced (if they are replaced!) by someone who lacks that expertise? (The idea that “we won” the Cold War and can now prioritize other things seems to have remained active in many circles.) Even more urgently, the long-term shift from stable tenure-track jobs in academia to various kinds of adjunct or temporary positions threatens the careers but also the basic well-being of a huge swath of the younger scholars in our region, who may be forced to leave the profession if the situation does not change. Many graduate programs, as well as ASEES itself, are striving to help students find careers outside the academy, or in the so-called “alt-ac” world – and our members outside the academy are a treasured part of our membership. But without teaching of the languages, literatures, arts, cultures, histories, and politics of the region, what will happen to these bodies of knowledge in future generations?

Let me focus for a moment on higher

education. Unstable enrollments and effects of the pandemic have negatively impacted both public and private institutions of higher education; at many state institutions, funding cuts have been imposed by politicians who seem to desire an undereducated electorate. The rise of business management at the helms of universities is chipping away at faculty governance, where strategies based on manufacturing (is it?) are applied to instructional staff and their “customers.” I see administrations treating graduate students and new PhDs like natural resources, extracting what they need at the moment without concern for even the near future, in order to lower the academic budget and have maximum flexibility to cut staff. The protection of tenure not only allows a scholar to pursue and disseminate research with academic freedom but ensures that scholar has the time to mentor students over the longer arc of their developing careers and to explore intellectual connections and projects outside the narrower range of a set of courses or papers and exams to grade. What will happen when the adjuncts have shrugged and left, when the graduate students look at the job market and decide to take their knowledge, insights, and intelligence elsewhere, when the undergraduates decline to enter the field? How will government agencies or libraries find the specialists they need if the required knowledge is no longer being taught, or is being taught in haste and exhaustion by an adjunct who has to work a second or third job? This issue too is broader than SEES, and we should seek alliances with other learned societies and pursue advocacy that strives to impact

political and funding decisions. Those ASEES members who are caught in the jaws of these changes should keep an eye on the support the association is offering, and should pass thoughts and suggestions along to the Board: we are elected to represent and serve you.

At the end of a crazy academic year set in broader craziness, let us ask: what good has come of the pandemic? It has forced us to use, and become more adept in using, technologies for virtual teaching and communication. This change is good for financial as well as physical accessibility; it helps to address at least some of the issues created by precarity; raising virtual hands to ask questions in order promises more equal access in a discussion; virtual meetings increase possibilities for international collaboration and for the cross-fertilization among disciplines that has always been a strength of our association. In recent decades our fields have become even more internationalized, with students and colleagues who began their educations outside North America and perhaps continue to teach and reside on more than one continent as well as ASEES members from other regions. Many of these members would have trouble affording a trip to the annual conference, and virtual attendance does not require a visa. This is an enriching development that we should strive to nurture and expand through technology as well as through more traditional opportunities. No one can argue against the lower environmental impact when we travel less to do the same work! You can bet that from now on the Executive Committee of ASEES will be holding its meetings

on Zoom rather than flying everyone to Pittsburgh. At the same time, differences in access to the necessary technology remain (my student whose Zoom connection kept freezing or winking out was not getting her money’s worth), and human beings simply have not evolved to handle the physical impact of a lengthy Zoom session. Importantly, a virtual event means a huge loss of serendipity, no chance to chat with the person sitting next to you in a session before or after the papers, no recognizing a scholarly hero’s name on their badge and gathering the nerve to introduce yourself, or the pleasure of treating a former student who has entered the profession to lunch at the conference hotel. Or not at the conference hotel! We must take care going into the future to balance the new possibilities with proven ways of interacting with scholarly pretenses.

So please plan to attend the convention this fall – either in person in New Orleans or in the later virtual segment. Both are packed with rich, thought-provoking, and entertaining panels and other events. Let’s enjoy the contact and learn from one another, while gathering ideas for the future of our field.

Sibelan Forrester is the Susan W. Lippincott Professor of Modern and Classical Languages and Russian at Swarthmore College. She is the 2021 ASEES Board President.



2021 ASEES BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTIONS

We are pleased to announce the candidates for the 2021 election for positions on the ASEES Board of Directors: Vice President/President-Elect, two Members-at-Large, and Grad Student representative. We thank them for their willingness to stand as candidates to serve on the ASEES Board.

Candidates for Vice President / President Elect

- **Juliet Johnson** (Political Science, McGill U, Canada)
- **Doug Rogers** (Anthropology, Yale U)

Candidates for Members-at-Large

- **Andrew Janco** (Digital Scholarship Librarian, Haverford College)
- **Rustis Kamuntavicius** (History, Vytautas Magnus U, Lithuania)
- **David Siroky** (Political Science, Arizona State U)
- **Kimberly Zarecor** (Architecture, Iowa State U)

Candidates for Graduate Student Representative

- **Zachary Hicks** (Slavic, UC Berkeley)
- **Jeffrey Yelverton** (Musicology, U of Minnesota)

For more information on the election including the candidate bios, visit [our website](#). Information on how to vote will be emailed to current ASEES members shortly.



Summing Up Poetry: A Case Against Packaging

AINSLEY MORSE, DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

During the pandemic year I worked on a couple of poetry-translation projects: *F-Letter: New Russian Feminist Poetry*, an anthology of work by twelve contemporary feminist poets/poetesses (isolarii, 2020, co-edited with Galina Rymbu and Eugene Ostashevsky) and a book by one of those poets, Lida Yusupova (*The Scar We Know*, Cicada Press, 2021). Working on these books was extremely illuminating and rewarding, and they have been well received. *F-Letter* may have gotten more attention and press than any other translation project I have worked on. While I'm glad to have helped to bring this poetry to a global audience, I am ceaselessly bemused by a process that often involves marketing and politics as much as literature.

While in grad school a fellow student once chuckled that you could look at the many different poetic groupings of the early twentieth century (Futurism, Cubo-Futurism, Ego-Futurism, Acmeism, Symbolism, etc.) as "brands" competing with one another on the art market—proof, perhaps, that Russia was well on the way to full-blown bourgeois capitalism. Whether or not this model works for the pre-revolutionary era, we certainly have full-blown capitalism in U.S. book markets today. I've become painfully aware of the fact that translation is a hard sell; poetry is even harder (it is no accident that both are often published by small independent presses like isolarii and Cicada). People do not have a lot of time. What sells? Loud voices, clear messages (topical and/or "eternal"), compelling personal stories. To a certain extent, this market logic has influenced what people teach as well.

In literature's inevitable intersections with global politics, writers from distant lands

ruled by bad politicians often find themselves in the role of hero—beacons of freedom, brave Davids against the menacing Goliaths of repressive politics. It is an old story (a Cold story), but it keeps working for the publishers—and other defenders of vaunted Western democracy. This means American readers, who tend to need some hand-holding when it comes to literature in translation, often expect a specific kind of narrative, a certain type of voice, from foreign authors. These expectations, compounded by publishers' calculations, can turn reading into a form of conscientious consumerism, where buying a book written by a certifiably repressed person automatically renders the reader more enlightened.

While there is nothing wrong with effective and legible packaging per se, I usually think of (and try to teach) poetry as something that cannot be summarized or easily defined; a way of thinking with language that produces more questions than answers. Some book covers, meanwhile, give you an answer right away—even if the book is actually full of questions.

F-Letter is a tiny-format book with a shiny, bright red cover. Rymbu's introductory essay explains the recent (re-)emergence of feminist discourse in Russophone writing and argues for its urgency and relevance in contemporary Russian society. Rymbu and Oksana Vasyakina, the best known of the feminist poets in Russia, take up the most space in the volume. One of the two long cycles by Rymbu, "My Vagina," was at the center of an internet scandal in summer 2020

that saw Rymbu both attacked and praised for using explicit anatomical language in poetry. "My Vagina" was an entirely political gesture: Rymbu wrote it in support of Yulia Tsvetkova, an artist and activist who has been subject to arrest and intimidation for her body-positive art and activism. In the introduction, Rymbu points to close engagement with physicality as one of the hallmarks of the new feminist poetry. While this is patently true, women (and queer) poets have been "writing the body" in Russian long before the recent emergence of feminist-identifying poetry.

The other ten poets in the book demonstrate a wide range of poetics, only some of them engaging directly with feminist politics. Alongside brutal evocations of gender-based violence from Egana Dzhabbarova, Elena Kostyleva, Lida Yusupova, and self-deprecating feminist humor from Stanislava Mogileva, there is Vasyakina's sweeping meditation on her father's death from AIDS, writing poetry, and battling the patriarchy. But you will also find the baroque, sexually and philosophically charged hellscape of Lolita Agamalova's "Dilige, et quod vis fac," which in turn contrasts sharply with the intimate, domestic poetics of Ekaterina Simonova and the many things left unsaid by Nastya Denisova (just to give a few examples).

All anthologies suffer from issues of selection and space, and this one is especially tiny: it only has room for one or two poems per poet. I am thrilled that Yusupova's *The Scar We Know* came out virtually simultaneously with the anthology, because it offers

a much fuller spectrum of her work. Yusupova—who has not lived in Russia since 1994—is a complex and idiosyncratic personality with a trajectory that has lately run parallel to feminist concerns. At 54, she is the oldest poet in the anthology; some of the younger poets have engaged her as a forerunner of the movement, although she only started writing poems with an identifiably feminist agenda within the last five or so years (basically on the same timeline as the movement itself). In one of the poems in *The Scar*, "The Center for Gender Problems," the speaker confesses her real motivation for seeking out Petersburg's so-called Center for Gender Problems in the late 1990s:

I'm not that interested in writing for their feminist newsletter though maybe I am but not that much not that much and it's so important so important to me to meet lesbians I want to meet feminists too but lesbians are more important to me because maybe maybe after I meet them a new life will begin for me I came to the center for gender problems but not to write for feminism I came only for myself yes I came here because I want love and sex with a lesbian yes I came here for love that's my problem I came here for love

Even though these lines come in a breathless rush of unpunctuated prose, they can be read from different angles. Yusupova's poem covers the feminine lyric subject, physical threats against women, and lesbian sex (as well as the difficulty of finding



the language, especially poetic Russian language, to express such an experience). But there's also plenty to say here about the cultural shifts of the 1990s, and stereotypes and hedonism and irony.

The Scar We Know is hardly an exhaustive selection of Yusupova's work—it barely scratches the surface of her enormous, ongoing cycle of "Verdicts" (poems built from the grisly material of Russian court documentation), and does not include any of her early work from the 1990s or prose experiments. Still, the book does justice to a poet and her complex trajectory, one that cannot be distilled into a keyword. I wish each of the anthology poets could be similarly well represented—but who is going to publish ten more books of contemporary poetry in translation? And what about all the fascinating poets who are not in anthologies, some of whom actively resist labels and affiliations?

I found out about Yusupova from the poet, visual artist, and set designer Dina Gatina, who gave me Yusupova's book *Ritual C-4* in 2013. Gatina, who grew up in the small city of Engels on the Volga river, writes despairing, obscene, and hilarious poems and songs, tightly constructed, bursting with subtle and incisive wordplay, and often apologetically elliptical. She has also been writing (and illustrating) female bodily experience and, by all means, raging against the patriarchy, for years:

писька, такая мохнатая
coochie, so furry, so fuzzy
писька, невиноватая
coochie, you're not to blame
писька
coochie
что мир так устроен вокруг
that this world is built like it is

Still, it is hard to imagine her work in a feminist anthology. The F-pismo brand of feminism is theoretically inflected. Leading figures like Rymbu and Vasyakina, as well as other writers affiliated with the collective, have variously engaged with feminist and queer theorists like Hélène Cixous, Monique Wittig, and Judith Butler. Gatina's years of association with the theory-mad (and male-dominated) scene around the Petersburg literary journal *Translit* left her permanently exasperated with attempts to apply theory to daily life (otherwise understood as the stuff of poetry).

There's a Russian expression: *что ето такое i s chem ego ediat*—literally, what on earth is that and what do you eat it with. *F-Letter* offers a beautiful range of poetic diversity, served under the familiar sauce of political repression and (feminist)

activism. But how do you "serve" a poet like Gatina—or Anna Glazova, or Polina Andrukovich, or Elena Guro (or Fet, for that matter)? With my colleague Rebekah Smith from NYU/Ugly Duckling Presse, we decided to host a series of Zoom readings and conversations by Russophone women poets (some featured in the anthology, some not) that would highlight just poets—acknowledging them as women and inviting them to speak to this status, but without any idea what they might say or choose to read. What resulted was riveting, controversial, articulate, evasive, breathtaking, brief, capacious—and impossible to summarize. (But available to watch on the [Jordan Center YouTube channel](#).)

Ainsley Morse teaches in the Russian department at Dartmouth College and is a translator of Russian and former Yugoslav literatures. Her research focuses on the literature and culture of the post-war Soviet period, particularly unofficial or "underground" poetry, as well as the *avant-garde* and children's literature.

NEW FROM SLAVICA PUBLISHERS

David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye et al., eds. *Russian International Relations in War and Revolution, 1914–22, 1: Origins and War, 1914–16*, xxii + 446 p.; 2: *Revolution and Civil War*, xviii + 416 p., 2021 (ISBN 978-089357-436-9; 978-089357-437-6), \$44.95.

Written by scholars from North America, Europe, Russia, and Japan and making abundant use of Russian archives, these essays are diverse in approach: some focus on traditional "diplomatic history," while others adopt new "international history" by placing Russia's relations with the world in their social, intellectual, economic, and cultural contexts. Arranged in roughly chronological order, book 1 covers the late imperial period (1914–mid-1916), while book 2 examines the 1917 revolutions and the Civil War (1918–22).

David M. Griffiths, *No Collusion! Catherine the Great and American Independence*, ed. George E. Munro, xvi + 717 p., 2020 (ISBN 978-0-89357-499-4), \$44.95.

The fledgling United States desperately needed more than its single ally, France, to pursue its war for independence. Unwilling to engage in traditional European diplomatic behavior, the Americans developed a concept of "militia diplomacy," under which merchants would be sent to foreign ports to initiate friendly trading relations. Not fully realizing Empress Catherine II's intention to maintain absolute neutrality in order to mediate peace between Great Britain and its breakaway colonies, the Americans sent to St. Petersburg, uninvited and unannounced, a would-be ambassador. The empress refused to collude in any way.



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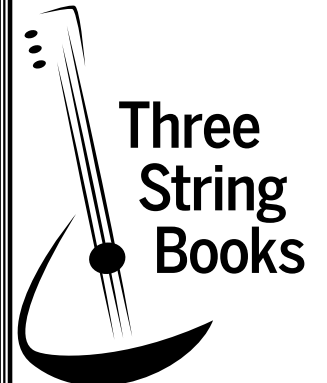
ALEXANDER FILYUSHKIN

In Search of a New Face for Muscovy

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.



"Intellectual Monopoly Capitalism and the University" by Françoise Foliot

Supporting Precarious Scholars in Eastern Europe: Addressing Barriers to Publishing in US and UK Journals

JANINE HOLC, LOYOLA UNIVERSITY MARYLAND

The news from Poland on academic freedom is not good. Litigation against scholars Jan Grabowski and Barbara Engelking, ongoing attacks on Jan Gross, and renewed commitments to nationalized historiography at state institutions have been circulating through our social media and mainstream news outlets. Those of us specializing in Poland and in contact with colleagues there also know that these news stories are just the tip of the iceberg. Academics—who had always been in an economically precarious position—feel even more vulnerable as the government creates new policies that assess their publication and teaching by its own politicized standards. Compounding this shift is the overall climate encouraging excessive scrutiny directed at the work of anyone challenging the official stance on Polish history. Scholars are vulnerable elsewhere as well, especially in Hungary, Belarus, and Russia.

I know about these policies and the structural vulnerability they create from my acquaintances in Poland who are also scholars. The pandemic prevented travel, so I have been communicating more and more through new technologies and rediscovering old ones (or ones I had been unaware of, like free Facebook calling). Our conversations have become unhurried, and more personal. Through one of these conversations, my academic friend—whom I will call A. (they/them/their) to preserve their anonymity—and I began to discuss the importance of publishing in U.S. journals and the difficulties of decoding exactly what these journals require. I started to give A. some tips, which then blossomed into a full-on partnership in which I mentored them through the publication process for a single manuscript. This process was so transformative, so enriching for both of us, that I wondered

if it could not be replicated on a larger scale. After a few e-mails and a meeting with ASEEES, the idea for this short essay was born: a description of my experience mentoring one academic with an eye toward creating a formal mentoring program supporting vulnerable scholars in Slavic Studies.

When we began our conversations, A. had already completed quite a bit of excellent research, produced multiple publications in Polish, and had a fluent command of English. I was familiar with their research area, although it was not identical to mine. I was also familiar with the conventions for publishing in Polish journals, so I understood the patterns and structure of their drafts and writing style. We decided that it would not be a co-authored piece and that I would not contribute anything to the content. A's ultimate goal was to understand U.S. publication conventions so that they could continue without guidance in the future. The main purpose of our experiment was to decode the often-hidden conventions of U.S. journal publishing, a process I myself had to learn earlier in my career. These preconditions helped make the partnership work.

Why was a publication in the U.S. so crucial? The answer lies in the government's academic scoring system, informally called "*punktoza*" by academics, a recently created assessment regime that assigns value to specific journals, book presses and conferences. *Punktoza* is embedded in "*parametryzacja*," the Polish version of accreditation for universities. In this system—designed by the Ministry of Education—each department or

institute, rather than the university as a whole, is assessed, which in turn determines state funding.¹ *Parametryzacja* forces both individuals and departments (or institutes) to prioritize an accumulation of points. So-called "*punktoza* scores" are issued through a massive document, altered periodically, and are available on Poland's Ministry of Education and Science website. Its current iteration reserves the highest number of points for U.S. journals. In other words, it differentially values both Polish and U.S. journals according to the governing regime's priorities regarding nationalized historiography and related disciplines. The government has, for example, assigned a low number of points to *Zagłada Żydów*, an excellent journal on the Holocaust (20), and a high number to various U.S. journals (for example, *Slavic Review* has 140). Combined with the ever-present possibility of one's contract not being renewed for low productivity, publishing in a U.S. (or U.K.) journal is almost required for professional survival—for individuals and for entire departments. The high status of U.S. and U.K. journals in academic publishing also reminds us of the equity implications of demanding fluent English, a theme developed in the "native speakerism" scholarship in critical linguistics. In fact, not only fluent English but a specialized academic English is another barrier that journal editors are familiar with but that does not actually reflect the quality of the research itself.

¹ An excellent description is available at <https://oko.press/lista-czasopism-wedlug-czarn-ka/>.

Thus, our first task was to identify some target journals from the *punktoza* list with high points and decode their "scope and mission" statements, as well as go through recent issues. We then spent time figuring out the structure of recently published articles in the journal on which they decided, such as how much space was generally used for literature review, how empirical, if a methodological discussion was required, and so on. Some of this was "mentoring" on my part but a lot of it was processed together in conversation. We then went through successive drafts, meeting once a week for one or two hours. Near the end of the process there was the infamous "Scholar One Manuscript" interface with which we had to grapple. Four months from our first *punktoza* discussion, the manuscript was submitted, and the reviews have since arrived. A. is confident they can move on to their next piece. And I learned in a very precise way exactly how unequal our academic systems are and what it means to work in a setting in which academic freedom does not function.

So how did our experience work in terms of the nuts and bolts?

- Because A. was unsure of how any overheard conversations would be received at their university department, we spoke while they were at home. This meant they did not have access to Zoom, recent versions of Adobe, or recent versions of Word.

- We decided to use Skype and set a regular time to meet. For us it was Saturday morning (U.S. time) before

my family was up and about.

- We used Google Docs, which worked perfectly. We could look at the document simultaneously while on Skype and keep track of changes. A. could easily work on it wherever they were. It did not require any updated software and I could type in idiomatic expressions or Americanized versions of terms while we were speaking in real time. That said, I did not translate their writing, as they wrote well in English.

- We were not working on a deadline. This allowed us to cancel when needed (which happened a few times) and also to talk about my own research, learn new Polish expressions, share teaching experiences, and the like. Looking back, this was important to creating a relational dynamic with some mutuality and reciprocity.

- The heavy lifting for A. included changing the narrative's structure, organization, shifting from passive constructions to active voice, assuming a non-Polish audience, and becoming more aware of citational practices—whom to include, whom to leave out. Most important was the need to emphasize the unique contribution of the work rather than how well it fit with what we already know.

- There were also small technical details that mattered. For example, the choice of keywords shifted to match a more global audience. (For a journal in Poland you do not need the keyword, "Poland.") As noted above, the interface for submission is difficult to decode for any of us. The rules at play here are which boxes are best to fill in and which can be ignored. One box asked for a "cc e-mail," a term not

used in Poland.

- There were also painful moments when A. told me they could not use particular terms and had to avoid referring to specific past events for fear of being targeted by the government, conservative colleagues, or challenged by others at their university. I could see firsthand the psychological and intellectual labor required to dance around the academic regime in place.

The reviewers' comments were another issue. Their informalities, colloquialisms, confusing sentence structures and mix of description, positive remarks and requests for revision meant yet another type of translation was again required from me for A. Example: "The author notes in passing..." was understandable to A. in a literal sense but not in the context of a review. In addition, I shared with A. my approach to documenting revisions: that formal academic language is not required and often simply a phrase such as, "agreed, correct date inserted" was sufficient.

In the end, we each had a deepened understanding of how academia functions in our respective home countries. I also felt that more scholars could benefit from a similar process. Journal editors, ASEES, and people like Andrzej Tymowski have been working with academics in other countries on these very processes. But some editors have also told me that they continue to receive manuscripts based on excellent research but are in no shape for publication. Some of what we struggled with could be easily fixed, such as making a video

available for guidance through the Scholar One submission form. Most steps, however, require an ongoing human interaction.

Not everyone wants to give up an hour a week for more academic labor, especially after this extraordinarily difficult year and a half. There is also the sensitive issue of the possible exploitation of these scholars' work, and so some oversight might be necessary. But my hope is that there are others in the field who have already published and are in stable positions, and who might wish to contribute to designing a mentoring system to support our colleagues struggling in settings of nationalized precarity. Many of us are searching for ways to address the oppressive systems in the very settings from which we have built our CVs and publications, and I thank ASEES for opening up this possibility.

Janine Holc is Professor of Political Science at Loyola University Maryland. She has published research on Poland on topics including democratization, gender politics, and Holocaust memory. Her current project is on Polish Jewish girls and women in slave labor during World War II.

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Alexander Bogdanov, left, play chess with Lenin with Gorky watching on.

New Lease on Life for Physiological Collectivism? Reading Bogdanov in the Time of COVID

FELIX HELBING, UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

Consider the following a thought experiment in the spirit of McKenzie Wark's challenge to theory for the Anthropocene: "What if we treated it not as *high theory*, with pretensions to legislate or interpret other genres, but as *low theory*, as something vulgar, common, even a bit rude—having no greater or lesser claim to speak of the world than any other?" (Wark 2019, 52). My entry into low theory juxtaposes convalescent plasma as a prophylaxis against COVID-19 with Aleksandr Bogdanov's 1920s blood transfusion experiments. Bogdanov sought to overcome the "limitations of individuality" (Bogdanov 2018, 211) in the most literal sense of transcending the borders imposed upon consciousness by individual material embodiment. He envisioned a unity that extended into the body itself, joining people in a comradesly collective that functioned for the freedom and benefit of all its denizens. Calls for the investigation of convalescent plasma as a treatment of and prophylaxis against COVID-19 echo this early twentieth-century desire for a community that works for the common good. What surprising connections might there be between these phenomena?

The use of convalescent plasma as treatment against infection can be traced back to 1890, when von Behring and Shibasaburo used it as a treatment for diphtheria (Marano 2015, 153). Since then, it has been employed as a treatment and prophylaxis for various viral and bacterial illnesses, from the 1918 influenza pandemic to MERS as recently as 2012 (Bloch 4). There is over a century of evidence testifying to the effectiveness of convalescent plasma as a protective tool. After the proliferation of

antibiotics, however, this method fell out of favor (WHO 2017, 2). Today's preferred approach is to use "genetically engineered antibodies," as this is more readily scalable (Healy 2020). At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and in other times of acute crisis, when development of a vaccine is a long way off, convalescent plasma therapy has been able to provide a viable stopgap measure to save the lives of those most at risk.

Convalescent plasma is, simply put, "plasma collected from individuals, following resolution of infection and development of antibodies" (Bloch 2020, 3). Its use as treatment is referred to as passive antibody therapy, wherein the immune plasma is administered to someone recently exposed to a pathogen in order to prevent infection or to treat oncoming symptoms. The consensus seems to be that the earlier a patient is treated with convalescent plasma, the better the outcomes will be. Therapy administered before day 14 yields the best results (Cunningham 2020). Given this knowledge, what exactly is plasma doing once inside the patient?

It is useful against bacterial and viral infection because of its antibodies. There are, however, different types of antibodies, not all of which are equally useful in treating or immunizing others. A 2017 report by the WHO Blood Regulators Network stated that "the potential efficacy of convalescent plasma or serum will depend on the extent to which antibodies generated during the recovery of the donor would directly neutralize a virus or otherwise mediate an effective immune response" (WHO 2017, 3). Antibodies can also bind to a

pathogen without preventing it from replicating, and this can also assist in the prophylactic and treatment effect of passive antibody therapy (Bloch 2020, 4). The degree of immunity will depend on the composition and number of antibodies contained within the plasma, with larger amounts of neutralizing antibodies presumably leading to a longer-lasting immunity (Casadevall 2020, 1545).

In crises such as the current one, the use of convalescent plasma in passive antibody therapy would be immediately accessible and available for implementation while a vaccine remained some distance in the future. The employment of this prophylactic measure could mitigate mortality rates and provide protection to the most at-risk populations. On April 13, 2020, the FDA issued a guidance authorizing the use of convalescent plasma in treating COVID-19 patients in the form of clinical trials using IND (Investigation New Drug Application) protocols to determine the safety and efficacy of the approach against COVID-19. To date, there are few clinical studies on the efficacy of convalescent plasma as prophylaxis and treatment because it is so often employed only as an emergency measure during pandemics (Bloch 2020, 10). Roback and Guarner, in an article recently published in *JAMA Network*, point to the establishment of a "stockpile of frozen, pathogen-reduced plasma" collected from convalescent Ebola patients after a recent outbreak as a potential model for responding to COVID-19.

Naturally, as a Slavist with an interest in Aleksandr Bogdanov, I could not help but think of how something like

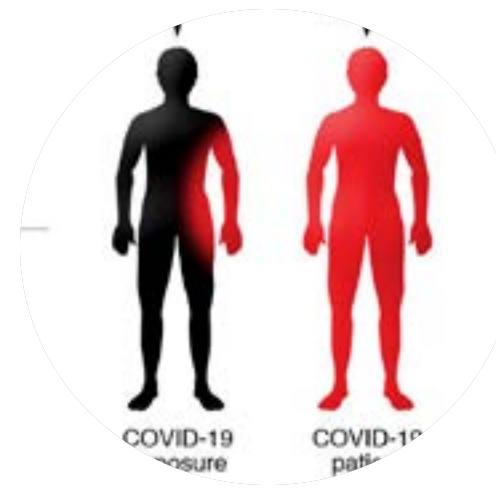
this could intersect with his concept of physiological collectivism, which brings me to the second part of this discussion. Bogdanov is typically known as Lenin's early rival for control of the Bolshevik faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, the forerunner of systems theory for his concept of Tektology, or, with Gorky and Lunacharsky, a prominent originating figure of Proletkul't. For the moment, I will focus on Bogdanov the philosopher and Bogdanov the science fiction writer, as it is these roles that are most relevant.

Bogdanov published three major philosophical works: *Empiriomonism*, *The Philosophy of Living Experience*, and *Tektology*. Nikolai Kremmentsov describes Bogdanov's approach to knowledge: "In Russian, the word for 'science' is *nauka*, and, like its German counterpart *Wissenschaft*, *nauka* means a systematic pursuit of knowledge in any and every possible area. So Bogdanov's notion of science included—and was based upon—not just natural sciences but also philosophy, social sciences, and the humanities" (Kremmentsov 2011, 117). For Bogdanov, scientific inquiry could not be divided into a series of separate disciplines. Philosophy and empirical science formed part of the same knowledge practice in pursuit of the same goal—understanding the natural world to improve the human position within it. Bogdanov envisioned a society organized according to the "labor point of view" (Wark 2015, 23), wherein competition for survival was not an intraspecies fight amongst ourselves, but rather humanity's collaborative project against a hostile natural world. The construction of such

an organized society required that the current dominant world attitude of bourgeois individualism be overcome and buried in the past.

In Bogdanov's view, the best opportunity for overcoming this petty individualism lay within the working class. Like many other theorists of his time, Bogdanov observed that the seeds of collectivism were already contained within the proletarian worldview. He argued it was necessary to foster this collectivist tendency in all aspects of proletarian life with the aim of establishing a new culture and everything that entails—proletarian arts, proletarian science, a society organized in service to cooperation and collective wellbeing. Bogdanov assigns huge importance to the collective—it is not simply a political concept but extends into the workers. As he wrote in 1897, in the new society "each worker will be actually on an equality with the rest as conscious elements of one sensible whole" (Bogdanov 2013, 13). The worker's relation to society will not be like that of a bird to the flock but like that of a cell to the body. The socially organized society, to borrow his term, would function like a body whose many organs worked together.

But how does blood exchange figure into Bogdanov's notion of the collective? In 1908, Bogdanov published his first science fiction novel, *Red Star*. The story is a classic utopian tale, in that an outsider visits an ideal society and observes its inhabitants. Here, earthling Leonid tours Mars with Netti, a doctor for whom he develops confusing romantic feelings. In *Red Star* Bogdanov introduces readers to the Martian practice of "comradely exchanges of life," or mutual blood



Schematic of the use of convalescent sera for COVID-19

transfusions (Bogdanov 1984, 86). Leonid notices the Martians live an extraordinarily long time, without the horrible burden of senescence. When he asks Netti why, she informs him it is not a characteristic of the species, nor entirely a function of improved living conditions, but an effect of mutual blood exchange "whereby each individual receives from the other a number of elements which can raise his life expectancy. Such an exchange involves merely pumping the blood of one person into another and back again by means of devices which connect their respective circulatory systems... The blood of one person continues to live in the organism of the other, where it mixes with his own blood and thoroughly regenerates all his tissues" (Bogdanov 1984, 85). Leonid wonders why this sort of procedure is not performed on Earth, as blood transfusion is a known concept frequently used to treat sickness and injury. Netti says the ideology of individualism still reigns on Earth, whereas on Mars "in keeping with the nature of our entire system, our regular comradely exchanges of life extend beyond the ideological dimension into the physiological

one" (Bogdanov 1984, 86). Martian collectivism is not just metaphorical—mental or political—but literally extends into the Martian body.

When, almost two decades later, Bogdanov employed the term "physiological collectivism" in relation to his experiments in mutual blood exchange he harkened back to this moment in *Red Star*. After his departure from Proletkul't in 1921, he devoted himself to elaborating his theory of physiological collectivism on the basis of mutual blood exchange, performing informal experiments on himself and a close circle of associates. Even by the standards of his time, these experiments were considered unscientific and of dubious value due to their small sample sizes, lack of control groups, and so on. In 1926, however, Bogdanov was appointed director of the Soviet Union's first Institute of Blood Transfusion, where he remained until his death due to complications from a transfusion procedure in 1928.

The value of Bogdanov's blood transfusion work lies on the theoretical level. What does it mean for a collective to manifest "physiologically?" In a serialized piece originally published between 1921-23, Bogdanov wrote that advances in medical science and technology had made it possible for the human organism to fight against its own decline "through the joint efforts" of multiple organisms (Bogdanov 2018, 207). He referred to this later as "*direct physiological conjugation*" by which he meant organ and tissue transplants, like skin grafts to treat burn victims, blood transfusions to prevent death from blood loss or provide immunity to disease. For him,

blood exchange and other medical interventions that borrowed from donor organisms represented a form of collaboration and cooperation among living members of a collective. In his time, these moments of physiological conjugation were one-sided and therefore not living up to the potential contained within the process. His work in mutual blood exchange between the young and old at the Institute of Blood Transfusion was, in his own words, an effort to “transgress the limitations of individuality by establishing a living accord between two previously separate individualities” (Bogdanov 2018, 211).

Could passive antibody therapy employing convalescent plasma be a new lease on life for physiological collectivism? The process does, after all, entail the literal absorption of another person’s organic material. The

donor contributes to strengthen and improve the wellbeing of the recipient organism, creating a new potential donor in a chain linking everyone undergoing this process. Is this not a version of the “comradely cooperation” Bogdanov hoped would one day form the basis of society? Calls by members of the scientific and medical community for the mobilization of existing blood bank infrastructure and establishment of protocols on the use of convalescent plasma to respond to future pandemics illustrate both the need and potential for comradely cooperation in the twenty-first century. The construction of a network to connect people physically, in a manner of speaking, in a system of mutual support could be a positive development. The isolated individualism that has calcified in American society over the last several decades is showing its limitations more clearly than ever. It would be a

lie to say I am optimistic this crisis will lead to change, but I find it helps, at least, to look at the past and imagine what alternative configurations might now be possible with the benefit of some hindsight.

Felix Helbing is a PhD student in Slavic Literature at the University of Pittsburgh with a background in digital advertising and video game localization. His research focuses on the interaction of technology and the working body in the writings of Aleksandr Bogdanov and Aleksei Gastev, with an eye to its contemporary relevance as the human relationship to technology again becomes a pressing concern. His additional interests include videogaming in the post-Soviet space, biohacking, and early Soviet gender politics.

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ASEEES PROGRAM UPDATE

ASEEES launched two pilot programs this spring, the [Initiative for Diversity and Inclusion \(IDI\)](#) and the [Exploring Career Diversity Conversation Series](#). The IDI provides structural support for our community of BIPOC students, scholars, and professionals to network, share their experiences, and participate in an exclusive, forthcoming mentor program. Over 50 undergraduate and graduate students, professors, and working professionals have received complimentary two-year ASEEES membership and access to the BIPOC Scholars in SEEEES ASEEES Commons discussion group. Eligible participants include BIPOC students, scholars, and professionals in the US who are working on topics in Eastern Europe, Russia, and Eurasia in or outside the academy or those who have an MA or PhD in the field but are working in unrelated areas or disciplines.

Supported by the Committee for Careers beyond Academia, the Exploring Career Diversity Conversation Series consisted of five informal sessions, conducted via Zoom breakout rooms, during which participants spoke to professionals in secondary education, higher education outside the tenure track, government and government-affiliated organizations, non-profits and program management, and business and consulting. Many of the 25 featured speakers were long-time ASEEES members who earned MAs and PhDs within disciplines in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies and who are currently working outside the professoriate. Approximately 50 graduate student or recent graduate members registered for the Conversation Series. ASEEES hopes to host this series again in spring 2022.

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- Felix Cowan, U of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, History, "On the Path of Truth and Progress: The Imperial Russian Penny Press, 1908-18"
- Alexander McConnell, U of Michigan, History, "Soviet Humanism after Stalin, 1953-1991"
- Sandra Russell, U of Massachusetts Amherst, Comparative Literature, "Embodiment and Gendered Subjectivity in Ukrainian Women's Film, Poetry, and Prose during Perestroika (1985-1991)"
- Brendan McElmeel, U of Washington, History, "Comrades in Love: Intimacy and Communist Morality in Soviet Institutions and Everyday Life, 1945-1975"
- Daria Semenova, U of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Slavic Languages and Literatures, "At Home and Away: Community Belonging in Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian Adventure Fiction, 1918-1960"
- Anastasiia Strakhova, Emory U, History, "Selective Emigration: Border Control and the Jewish Escape in Late Imperial Russia, 1881-1914"

DISSERTATION RESEARCH GRANT

- Gehad Abaza, UC Santa Barbara, Anthropology, "Syrian War-Time Migration, Citizenship,

and State-building in Abkhazia"

- Tuna Basibek, U of Washington, Near and Middle Eastern Studies, "Empires in War and Peace: The Caucasian Communities in the Russian-Ottoman Borderland, 1825-1875"
- Alison Curry, U of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, History, "Tradition or Necessity? Sanctuary or Sorrow? The Role of the Jewish Cemetery in Poland, 1919-1945"
- Joanna Dobrowolska, U of Illinois at Chicago, History, "From Neighbors to Rivals: The Shifting Attitudes in Rural Communities of Volhynia and Eastern Galicia, 1930-1943"
- Zukhra Kasimova, U of Illinois at Chicago, History, "Uzbek, Karakalpak, and Soviet: Multinational in Form, Hybrid in Content, 1941-1981"
- Zachary King, U of Chicago, Slavic Languages and Literatures, "Gained in Translation: Modernism and Translation in Soviet Russia, 1927-1937"
- Vladislav Lilic, Vanderbilt U, History, "The Laboratory of Statehood: Imperial Law, Quasi-Sovereignty, and International Order in the Balkans, 1856-1912"
- Kate Mower, UC Riverside, History, "'In These Veins Roman Blood Still Flows': Transnationalism and the Black Sea World"
- Jonathan Parker, U of Texas at Austin, History, "Policing the Nation: State-Building

and the Police in Interwar Czechoslovakia"

- Lidia Tripiccione, Princeton U, Slavic Languages and Literatures, "Dis-locating Russian Formalism: Beyond Literary Theory"
- Angela Wheeler, Harvard U, Graduate School of Design, "Trial and Era: Socialist and National Narratives in Soviet Urban Heritage Planning, 1953-1990"

DISSERTATION RESEARCH GRANT IN WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES

- Giulia Giamboni, UC Santa Barbara, History, "The Politics of Charity. Political, Gendered, and Material Uses of Charity in Fourteenth-Century Eastern Mediterranean"

DISSERTATION RESEARCH GRANT IN LGBTQ STUDIES

- Anton Svyarenko, U of Illinois at Chicago, Polish, Russian, and Lithuanian Studies, "Queer Childhood in Russian Modernism"

JOSEPH BRADLEY AND CHRISTINE RUANE DISSERTATION RESEARCH GRANT IN RUSSIAN STUDIES

- Nurlan Kabdykhak, UNC at Chapel Hill, History, "Islamic Revival of the Kazakh steppe under the Tsars"

UNDERSTANDING MODERN RUSSIA GRANT

- Alex Craver, Northern Illinois U, History, "The Roots of Empire and Industry"

- Konstantin Georgiev, Rice U, Anthropology, "Environmental Science after Socialism: Sociopolitical Change and Environmental Science in Post-Soviet Siberia"
- Taylor Zajicek, Princeton U, History, "The Black Sea's Cold War: Geopolitics, Science, and Environment, 1925-1995"

INTERNSHIP GRANT

- Spencer Abbe, U of Oregon, Department of History
- Rusana Cieply, UC Berkeley, Anthropology
- Shawn Conroy, OSU, History
- Caroline Elkin, Johns Hopkins U, School of Advanced International Studies
- Jeffrey Fredrich, U of Wisconsin-Madison, Russian, East European, & Central Asian Studies
- Felix Helbing, U of Pittsburgh, Slavic Languages & Literatures
- Emily Kanner, Harvard U, Slavic Languages and Literatures
- Aristide LaVey, U of Rhode Island, Library and Information Studies
- Dante Matero, Columbia U, Harriman Institute
- Rachel Mohr, Georgia Tech, International Affairs
- Amelia Parlier, U of Pittsburgh, Katz School of Business
- Cordelia Ponczek, U of Oxford, Russian and East European Studies
- Alexandra Steiner, Stanford U, Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies

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PUBLICATIONS

The Akunin Project: The Mysteries and Histories of Russia's Bestselling Author, edited by Elena V. Baraban and Stephen M. Norris, was published by University of Toronto Press in February 2021. This is the first book to study the fiction and popular history of Grigorii Chkhardtshvili, one of the most successful writers in post-Soviet Russia. Bringing together scholars of literature, history, and culture, *The Akunin Project* explores the author's bestselling adventure novels and recent histories of the Russian state. The book includes translations of five short works previously unavailable in English as well as an interview with the author.

Faster, Higher, Stronger, Comrades! Sports, Art, and Ideology in Late Russian and Early Soviet Culture, by Tim Harte, was published by University of Wisconsin Press in July 2020. This book traces how physical fitness had an even broader impact on culture and ideology in the Soviet Union than previously realized. From prerevolutionary writers and painters glorifying popular circus wrestlers to Soviet photographers capturing athleticism as a means of satisfying their aesthetic ideals, the nation's artists embraced sports in inventive ways. Though athletics were used for doctrinaire purposes, Harte demonstrates that at their core, they remained joyous physical activities capable of transforming everyday realities.

The Ghost of Shakespeare: Collected Essay, by Anna Frajlich and edited by Ronald Meyer, was published by Academic Studies Press in November 2020. This volume takes its name from Frajlich's essay on Nobel Prize laureate Wisława Szymborska, but informs Frajlich's approach as she considers the work of major

Polish writers of the twentieth century, including Zbigniew Herbert, Czesław Miłosz, and Bruno Schulz. The book concludes with autobiographical essays that describe her parents' dramatic flight from Poland at the outbreak of the war, her own exile from Poland in 1969, settling in New York City, and building her career as a scholar and leading poet of her generation.

God Save the USSR: Soviet Muslims and the Second World War, by Jeff Eden, was published by Oxford University Press in April 2021. During World War II, Stalin ended the state's persecution of religion. Religious leaders were tasked with rallying Soviet citizens to a "Holy War" against Hitler. A revolution in Soviet religious life ensued: villages celebrated once-banned holidays and state-backed religious leaders used their new positions to consolidate power over their communities and to petition for further religious freedoms. This book argues that the religious revolution was fomented by the state and by religious Soviet citizens.

The Habsburg Empire under Siege: Ottoman Expansion and Hungarian Revolt in the Age of Grand Vizier Ahmed Köprülü (1661–76), by Georg B. Michels, was published by McGill-Queen's University Press in March 2021. During the seventeenth century Hungary rose up against the Counter-Reformation, the Habsburg military occupation, and war taxes. Michels explores these grassroots revolts that threatened the Habsburgs' hold over the Hungarian borderlands. Offering a trans-imperial perspective that reassesses the complex relationship between Hungarians, Habsburgs, and Ottomans, this book portrays the resistance of ordinary

people and their hopes for liberation from Habsburg oppression.

In Valeria Sobol's new book, *Haunted Empire: Gothic and the Russian Imperial Uncanny* (NIU Press/Cornell, September 2020), she brings together theories of empire and colonialism with close readings of canonical and less-studied literary texts as she explores how Gothic horror arises from the threatening ambiguity of Russia's own past and present, producing the effect Sobol terms "the imperial uncanny." The book reconstructs a powerful discursive tradition that reveals the mechanisms of the Russian imperial imagination that are still at work today.

Focusing on international law and amendments to the 1993 Russian Constitution in July 2020, William Butler's *International Law in the Russian Legal System* (Oxford University Press, 2020) considers what role treaties and the generally-recognized principles and norms of international law play under Russian law. Special attention is devoted to investment protection treaties and the relationship between the Russian Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights.

Made in Yugoslavia: Studies in Popular Music, edited by Danijela Š. Beard and Ljerka V. Rasmussen, was published by Routledge in June 2020. The book includes an overview and background on popular music in Yugoslavia, followed by chapters covering the Zabavna-Pop; Rock, Punk, and New Wave; Narodna (Folk) and Neofolk Music; and the Politics of Popular Music Under Socialism. Exploring the role played by music in Yugoslav art, culture, social movements, and

discourses of statehood, this book offers a gateway into scholarly explanation of a key region in Eastern Europe.

Mixed Messages: Mediating Native Belonging in Asian Russia, by Kathryn E. Graber, was published by Cornell University Press in August 2020. Focusing on language and media in Asian Russia, particularly in Buryat territories, *Mixed Messages* engages in debates about the role of minority media in society, alternative visions of modernity, and the impact of media on everyday language use. Graber demonstrates that language and the production, circulation, and consumption of media are practices by which residents of the region perform and negotiate competing possible identities.

No Collusion! Catherine The Great And American Independence, by David M. Griffiths and edited by George E. Munro, was published by Slavica Publishers in October 2020. Empress Catherine II brought Russia to the forefront among European powers. Her creation of a League of Armed Neutrality was intended to guarantee the security of maritime shipping. Not realizing Catherine's intention to maintain absolute neutrality in order to mediate peace between Great Britain and its breakaway colonies, the Americans sent to St. Petersburg, uninvited and unannounced, a would-be ambassador.

Nonconformity, Dissent, Opposition, and Resistance in Germany, 1933-1990: The Freedom to Conform, by Sabrina Ramet, was published by Palgrave in October 2020. This book contrasts three very different incarnations of Germany – the totalitarian Third Reich, the communist German

Democratic Republic, and the democratic Federal Republic of Germany up to 1990 – in terms of their experiences with and responses to nonconformity, dissent, opposition, and resistance and the role played by those factors in each case.

On Civilization's Edge: A Polish Borderland in the Interwar World, by Kathryn Ciancia, was published by Oxford University Press in December 2020. This work offers a story of nation-building from the ground up. Readers can eavesdrop on peasant rumors at the Polish-Soviet border, read ethnographic descriptions of isolated marshlands, and scrutinize staged photographs of everyday life. The book invites readers to consider how fears of national weakness and competitions for local power affect the treatment of national minorities, how more inclusive definitions of the nation are themselves based on exclusions, and how the very distinction between empires and nation-states is not always clear-cut.

The Parallel Universes of David Shroyer-Petrov: A Collection Published on the Occasion of the Writer's 85th Birthday, edited by Roman Katsman, Maxim D. Shroyer, and Klavdia Smola, was published in January 2021 by Academic Studies Press. This book brings together scholars of Jewish poetics, exilic literature, and Russian and Soviet culture and history. In addition to essays and an interview with Shroyer-Petrov, the volume features a detailed bibliography and a pictorial biography.

Place and Nature: Essays in Russian Environmental History, edited by David Moon, Nicholas B. Breyfogle and Alexandra

Bekasova (White Horse Press, February 2021,) offers new perspectives on the environmental history of lands that have come under Russian and Soviet rule. Through case studies of northwestern Russia, the book highlights the importance of local environments and the specificities of individual places in understanding the human-nature nexus. The authors' first-hand experience complements and supplements their research in textual sources.

Tatar Empire: Kazan's Muslims and the Making of Imperial Russia, by Danielle Ross, was published by Indiana University Press in 2020. Ross bridges the history of Russia's imperial project with the history of Russia's Muslims. Ross reconstructs the interaction among Russian imperial policy, nonstate actors, and intellectual developments within Kazan's Muslim community and also considers the evolving relationship with Central Asia, the Kazakh steppe, and western China. *Tatar Empire* offers a Muslim-centered narrative of Russian empire building, making clear the links between cultural reformism and Kazan Tatar participation in the Russian eastward expansion.

Cathy McAteer authored *Translating Great Russian Literature: The Penguin Russian Classics* (Routledge BASEES Series, 2021), which focuses on the cohort of translators who worked with Penguin in the 1950s to bring out the first batch of Penguin Russian Classics. She she continues her survey through the following decades, examining such hot spots as the race to publish Solzhenitsyn in English or the fates of women translators like Babette Deutsch.

2021 STEPHEN F. COHEN ROBERT C. TUCKER DISSERTATION FELLOWS

The CTFD Program for Russian Historical Studies supports the next generation of US scholars to conduct their doctoral dissertation research in Russia. This program is sponsored by the KAT Charitable Foundation, which we thank for its generous support.

DISSERTATION RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

Samuel Fajerstein, Indiana U - Bloomington, History, "Between Cooperation and Contestation: Agricultural Interactions in the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R., 1917-1991"

Fajerstein's project contends that agricultural relations between the Soviet Union and the US constitute one of the most significant pieces of the global developmental puzzle. Utilizing materials from archives in the US and Russia, the dissertation will examine these agricultural interactions from 1917-1991, identifying periods of heightened agricultural transfer and assessing each period for its domestic, international, and global significance. As each state examined and reacted to the other's agricultural systems, transfers of policies and technologies forged paths across the globe that are perceivable today. From food storage technologies, to global grain prices, to fertilizer production, the current global food system was formed along the fine line between agricultural contestation and collaboration in the US and USSR.

Jennifer Goetz, Columbia U, History, "Developing Soviet Photography, 1937-1963"

Goetz's dissertation examines photography as hobby and art in the Soviet Union. Despite prominence in the 1920s, by the late 1930s art photography existed on the margins of Soviet culture. Still, from 1945 until 1963 the Soviet state increasingly supported an amateur camera industry. Why did the post-war Stalinist state economically encourage private photography while discouraging state-regulated professional photography? Goetz's hypothesis is that the Soviet state invested in the camera industry in response to a perceived growth in popular demand for amateur photography, as well as to competition with camera producers abroad. As photography became more accessible, it became, in the eyes of Soviet artists and critics, a less viable artistic medium. The state economic support for private photography supplied and trained the photographers who participated in the resurgence of public photography during the Thaw from 1953 to 1963, showing an important continuity between two periods.

Luke Jeske, U of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, History, "Orthodox Pilgrimage and the Forging of Russian Identity, 1774-1914"

Jeske's project examines the evolution

of Russian Orthodox Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Lands, from the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774 in which Ottomans granted Russians access to the Holy Lands, to the dissolution of pilgrimage networks ushered in by war in 1914. His analysis links pilgrimage to the constructions and rearrangements of imagined communities bound by religion, ethnicity, and empire. As pilgrimage evolved over the century, it brought together peasants and princes, monks and muzhiks animated by the same yearning for the Holy Lands and united by their experiences. He suggests they articulated a "Russianness" rooted in ethnicity and a cultural heritage particular to their empire but connected to the Orthodox peoples and places dispersed from the Balkans to the Red Sea. Jeske recovers notions of belonging fostered among Russians and foreign coreligionists, readers and writers, travelers and the home-bound. In showing how pilgrimage enabled ethnic Russian Orthodox Christians to articulate their own visions of modernity, he contributes to ongoing revisions of the history of Russian Empire.

Patrick Monson, Princeton U, History, "The Multiple Meanings of Legal Pluralism in Imperial Russia's Baltic Provinces, 1860-1917"

This project analyzes the interplay of

law and empire, metropole and periphery, through a study of legal reform in the Baltic provinces. Russia's progressive judicial reform, announced in 1864, incited tensions over the issue of legal homogenization in the Baltics, where German elites controlled the legal system. In the 1860s and 1870s, some central officials, including Baltic Germans, enabled litigants and defendants to participate in court procedures in their native languages. In seeking to designate central judicial institutions as appellate instances, they perceived the supra-ethnic central government as a more impartial arbiter. Monson's project examines why, in 1889, officials decided to assume responsibility for the interpretation and application of Baltic civil law. The project will explore how this arrangement resulted in Russian inflected interpretations of local law, or non-native pluralism. Since many of these jurists were highly educated and often proponents of individual rights, as well as belonging to various non-Russian ethnic groups, Monson's research may contradict previous claims that they arbitrarily and incompetently interpreted Baltic civil law.

James Nadel, Columbia U, History, "Jewish Speculation: Russian Jews and Financial Investment in Late Imperial Russia, 1870-1917"

At the end of the nineteenth century, Jews made inroads into the Russian Empire's financial sector, becoming a significant presence on the novel commodity and stock exchanges made necessary by industrial

development. Also, urban migration spread Russian Jews across the wide expanse of the imperial domains, allowing their business relationships to form a crucial ligature in the long-distance circulation of capital throughout the Empire. Such economic networks of coreligionists served as both a solid foundation and a limiting constraint for Russian Jewish speculators living under the Tsarist regime, in which ascribed corporate identities determined social orders and where anti-Jewish legal restriction had intensified in the 1880s. Nadel's dissertation follows these Russian Jews, who, while negotiating the power dynamics of minority life, adapted their commercial activities to the demands of financial capitalism and proved integral to the financial infrastructure of the largest land empire in the world.

DISSERTATION COMPLETION FELLOWSHIPS

Dominick Lawton, UC Berkeley, Slavic Languages and Literatures, "Revolts of Things: The Poetics of Materialism in Russian Revolutionary Literature, 1909-1939"

Lawton's dissertation provides a critical history of how industrial development and economic construction, as refracted through Bolshevik materialist ideology, shaped the aesthetics of early Soviet literature. Lawton's project investigates how writers gave shape to new "Soviet objects," industrial products which would resist commodification. Amid the violent ruptures that the early twentieth century brought to Russia, even simple things were artistically

represented as containing the basis for a revolutionary transformation of modernity. Through interpretations of four major writers of various styles and backgrounds, Lawton traces how early Soviet literary aesthetics arose from, and intervened in, the attempt to construct a new, anti-capitalist industrial modernity. The authors' work anticipates many of the concerns of the current "new materialist" turn in the humanities and social sciences. Lawton's project offers a revitalized history of early Soviet literature from the standpoint of its materialist poetics.

James Nealy, Duke U, History, "The Shchekino Method: Socialist Modernity and Labor, 1960s-1980s"

As the Cold War transformed into a struggle centering on socioeconomic factors, the Soviet Union sought to improve economic efficiency. One manifestation of this change was the "Shchekino Method," a constellation of factory-level managerial and organizational strategies that resembled tactics typically associated with capitalist systems. Tracing the Shchekino Method from its origins through its dispersal across the Soviet Union, the dissertation challenges the "stagnation" trope in contemporary historiography of the Soviet Union and instead examines the Soviet system's capacity to change. In doing so, it seeks to place the history of Soviet labor into conversation with that of Europe, the United States, and Japan.



AATSEEL

AATSEEL CONFERENCE AND AWARDS
 The AATSEEL national meeting is a forum for scholarly exchange of ideas in all areas of Slavic and East/Central European languages, literatures, linguistics, cultures, and pedagogy. 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 2022 conference. The next annual AATSEEL conference will be held at the Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, February 17-20, 2022..

To submit a proposal: [click here](#). When submitting abstracts, members are encouraged to renew their membership. For questions about conference proposals, contact Program Committee Chair, [Ainsley Morse](#).

AATSEEL awards prizes to outstanding publications in: Literary and/or Cultural Scholarship, Best First Book, Edited Multi-Author Scholarly Volume, Translations into English, and Language Pedagogy and Linguistics. For more on the specific eligibility requirements of the individual prizes, and for recent recipients of the prizes, [click here](#). Nominations should be forwarded to [Yuri Leving](#), Chair of the Publications Committee.

Nominated works must have been published between 2019-2020. For the prize in language pedagogy, works nominated must have been published within the three preceding calendar years. Nominated authors must be AATSEEL members.

SOCIETY FOR ROMANIAN STUDIES

THE SOCIETY FOR ROMANIAN STUDIES GRADUATE STUDENT ESSAY PRIZE

The single-author work must be written in English by a graduate student in any social science or humanities discipline on a Romanian or Moldovan subject, broadly and inclusively understood.

The competition is open to current MA and doctoral students or to those who

defended dissertations in the academic year 2020–2021. The submitted work should have been completed within the last two academic years and should not have been published yet. If the essay is a dissertation chapter, it should be accompanied by the dissertation abstract and table of contents. Expanded versions of conference papers are also acceptable if accompanied by a description of the panel and the candidate’s conference paper proposal. Candidates should clearly indicate the format of the essay submitted. Essays/chapters should be up to 10,000 words double-spaced, including citations. Candidates should clearly indicate their institutional affiliation, current email and postal addresses. Questions can be directed to the Committee Chair, [Narcis Tulbure](#). Please send a copy of the essay, any accompanying documentation (as both Word and PDF), and CV to [Narcis Tulbure](#). Applicants are not required to be members of SRS in order to apply. Deadline for submissions is 15 July 2021.

SLOVAK STUDIES SOCIETY

Cfs: SLOVAK STUDIES ASSOCIATION ARTICLE PRIZE

At its annual meeting during the ASEES conference, the Slovak Studies Association will award a prize for the best article or book chapter about Slovakia in the humanities and social sciences published in 2018 or later. All submissions must be in English, but they can be published anywhere in the world. The publication’s author or authors are to be members in good standing of the SSA (to join, contact [Carol Skalnik Leff](#). First year membership is free.)

The submission deadline is July 1st 2021. Send entries and any questions to [Edward Snajdr](#), Prize Committee Chair. The SSA Awards Committee consists of Susan Mikula (Benedictine University), M. Mark Stolarik (University of Ottawa), and Edward Snajdr (City University of New York).

THE KENNAN INSTITUTE AT THE WILSON CENTER

George F. Kennan Fellows
 Kennan Fellows will be based in DC for three-month residencies and will have access to the Library of Congress, National Archives, and policy research centers in DC, as well as the opportunity to meet with key experts and officials. Kennan Fellows are expected to participate in discussions with the policy and academic communities, including speaking engagements, conferences, and other activities. Upon completion of the fellowships, the grantees become alumni, for whom Kennan will continue to offer opportunities for collaboration and engagement. There are no citizenship requirements for this grant.

Applicants can apply for the fellowship as individuals or as part of a team. If applying as a team, applicants must be citizens of at least two different countries. The goal of such joint fellowships is to promote collaborative research projects among US, Russian, and Ukrainian experts. Kennan Fellowship Teams will: Produce joint paper(s) for policy-relevant publications; present work at DC, Russia, and/or Ukraine events; and conduct meetings and engage with policymakers in DC. The next deadlines is September 30. Please see the [website for the application](#).

Title VIII Short-Term Scholarships
 Title VIII-Supported Short-Term Grants, which allow U.S. citizens whose policy-relevant research in the social sciences or humanities focused on the countries of Eurasia, to spend up to one month using the library, archival, and other specialized resources of the DC area, while in residence at the Kennan Institute. The application deadline is September 30, 2021. Please see [the website](#) for more details.

The Kennan Institute welcomes:
Title VIII Research Scholars

- Lee Singh, PhD Candidate, Dept. of History, UC Riverside. “Ballet for Socialism’s Sake (and Beyond)”
- Anna Whittington, Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, Washington U in St. Louis. “Repertoires of Citizenship: Inclusion, Inequality, and the Making of the Soviet People”

Title VIII Summer Research Scholars

- Thomas Rotnem, Associate Director and Professor, School of Government and International Affairs, Kennesaw State U. “The Impact of the Northern Sea Route Project upon Human and Environmental Security in Russia’s Arctic Regions”
- Paul Werth, Professor, Dept. of History, UNLV. “Russia’s Enclosure: A History of the World’s Longest Border”

MIDDLEBURY INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AT MONTEREY

On the eve of the 2021 Russia-United States Summit in Geneva, MIIS is pleased to share [The Ambassadorial Series](#). It is a compilation of conversations with eight outstanding American diplomats who served at various points of time as U.S. ambassadors to the Soviet Union and, after its dissolution, to the Russian Federation.

The Series provides nuanced analyses of crucial aspects of the U.S.-Russia relationship, through the personal reflections of the ambassadors. This project is conceived as a service to scholars and students of American diplomacy vis-à-vis Russia. The interviews, released as videos, podcasts, and a transcript, form a unique resource for those who want to better understand the evolving relationship between the two countries. In eight, hour-long videos, the ambassadors recall their experiences in strikingly personal terms. They share private photos, insights from high-stakes negotiations, and reflections on the challenges and dangers they sometimes faced. The ambassadors discuss a range of geopolitical issues including the Soviet Union’s breakup and the tense months that preceded it, the 1991 attempted coup, President Yeltsin’s 1993 standoff, the early years of President Vladimir Putin, Russia’s response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and the 2008 Russo-Georgian war. The ambassadors also discuss nuclear, cyber, and economic cooperation, the impact of sanctions, and how social media and other technology changed their ability to communicate with the Russian people, among much else.

The videos are hosted by Jill Dougherty, former CNN Moscow bureau chief, and include:

- Amb. Jack F. Matlock (1987-1991)
- Amb. Thomas R. Pickering (1993-1996)
- Amb. James F. Collins (1997-2001)

- Amb. Alexander Vershbow (2001-2005)
- Amb. John Beyrle (2008-2012)
- Amb. Michael McFaul (2012-2014)
- Amb. John F. Tefft (2014-2017)
- Amb. Jon Huntsman Jr. (2017-2019)

Please visit the Monterey Initiative in Russian Studies webpage for [videos and transcripts](#). Listen to the podcast version of the interviews [here](#)

PUSHKIN HOUSE

Pushkin House announces the appointment of Elena Sudakova as its new Executive Director. Sudakova brings a wealth of

experience in the leadership of cultural institutions, including her previous roles as founder and director of Grad. She takes on executive leadership at a pivotal moment in Pushkin House’s 67-year history, as it prepares to resume live-audience events at its Bloomsbury Square residence and expand digital access to events for a growing global, online audience.

Sudakova succeeds Clem Cecil, who served as Executive Director from 2016 until June 2020. Since last June, Rebecca Ostrovsky and Rafy Hay provided interim leadership of cultural programming and content, while Alina Gainard oversaw operations. Preslava Fentham-Fletcher transformed the development effort, while Alexander Karpeyev curated the music program.

Forthcoming in Summer 2021 *Slavic Review*

CRITICAL DISCUSSION FORUM ON RACE AND BIAS

- Introduction by Joy Carew & Christina Kiaer
- “When Race Is a Language and Empire Is a Context,” by Marina Mogilner
- “A Moment of Reckoning: Transcending Bias, Engaging Race and Racial Formations in Slavic and East European Studies,” by Sunnie Rucker-Chang & Chelsi West Ohueri
- “The Invisibility of Race in Sociological Research on Contemporary Russia: A Decolonial Intervention,” by Marina Yusupova
- “Reading Race in Slavic Studies Scholarship through a Digital Lens,” by Katherine M. H. Reischl, Susan Grunewald, Andrew Janco, Hilah Kohen, and Antonina Puchkovskaia
- “When Pushkin’s Blackness Was in Vogue: Rediscovering the Racialization of Russia’s Preeminent Poet and His Descendants,” by Corey Garibaldi and Emily Wang
- “Race-ing the Russian Nineteenth Century,” by Edyta M. Bojanowska
- “Exotic Aesthetics: Representations of Blackness in Nineteenth-Century Russian Painting,” by Maria Taroutina
- “Sphinx upon the Dnieper: Black Modernism and the Yiddish Translation of Race,” by Eli Rosenblatt
- “Racism, the Highest Stage of Anti-Communism,” by Rossen Djagalov
- “A Cold War Cold Case: What Huldah Clark Can Teach Us about Teaching Soviet History,” by Brigid O’Keeffe
- “Rereading Russia through the Contact Zone of HBCUs,” by Kelly Knickmeier Cummings and B. Amarelis Lugo de Fabritz
- “The Afterlife of Soviet Russia’s “Refusal to be White”: A Du Boisian Lens on Post-Soviet Russian-US Relations,” by Christy Monet
- “Subjects, Subjectivities, and Slavic Studies: A Design for Anti-Racist Pedagogy,” by Erin Katherine Krafft
- “The Contingent Problem: A Counter-Narrative on Race and Class in the Field of Slavic Studies,” by Louis Howard Porter

ARTICLES

- “Kalmyk DPs and the Narration of Displacement in Post-World War II Europe,” by Elvira Churyumova & Edward C. Holland
- “The Man Who Struck the Judge with a Fly Swatter: Justice and Performance in Contemporary Kazakhstan,” by Nari Shelekpaev



PERSONAGES

Michael David-Fox will become Director of Georgetown’s Center for Eurasian, Russian, and East European Studies (CERES) on July 1, 2021.

Emily Greble and **Tara Zahra** were named Guggenheim Fellows. Greble’s research explores how the Balkans challenge presumptions about European history while Zahra’s current projects include a co-authored history of World War I in the Habsburg Empire (with Pieter Judson), and a history of deglobalization in interwar Europe. **Geneviève Zubrzycki** was also named a 2021 Guggenheim Fellow. Zubrzycki plans to use the award to complete a book on nationalism and the Jewish revival in Poland. <https://www.gf.org/fellows/all-fellows>.

The American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) announces the 2021 Fellows of the **Luce/ACLS Program in Religion, Journalism & International Affairs**. The fellowships support exceptional scholars in the humanities and social sciences who are pursuing research on the roles religion plays in public life around the world and who are poised to enrich public understanding of religion through media engagement. Among this year’s fellows is **Sean Griffin**, Lecturer of Russian and Religion, Dartmouth College, for his project “The Unpredictable Past: Orthodoxy and Memory in Post-Soviet Russia.”

Francine Hirsch received a 2021 Certificate of Merit for a Preeminent Contribution to Creative Scholarship from the American Society of International Law. Hirsch received the Certificate of Merit for her recently published book, *Soviet Judgement at Nuremberg: A New History of the International Military Tribunal after World War II* (Oxford University Press, 2020).

Alana Holland was awarded a Postdoctoral Fellowship in Advanced Holocaust Studies at American University in conjunction with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, **The Andrew Carnegie Fellows Program** provides philanthropic support for scholarship in the humanities and social sciences that addresses important and enduring issues confronting our society. This year’s fellows include **Jeanne-Marie Jackson**. Her project, “J. E. Casely Hayford and the Legacy of Gold Coast Sovereignty,” looks toward two closely linked projects on the nineteenth-century Gold Coast Fante writer and statesman J. E. Casely Hayford. The first is an intellectual biography that weaves together the eclectic political, theological, and literary influences on and of his written work, and the second is a new annotated edition of the first African novel written in English, Hayford’s 1911 opus, *Ethiopia Unbound*.

Alexis Lerner accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Political Science (Russian and East European Politics) at the United States Naval Academy.

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) announced \$24 million in grants for 225 humanities projects across the country. These grants support a diverse range of exemplary humanities projects, the following by ASEEES members:

- **Jonathan Brunstedt**, for “The Soviet-Afghan War and the Shadow of Vietnam,” which supports research and writing toward a monograph examining the cultural legacies of the Vietnam (1961–75) and Soviet-Afghan (1979–89) wars.
- **Marko Dumancic**, for “From Ordinary Men to War Criminals,” which supports research and writing towards an article analyzing the function of gender in defense strategies during war crimes tribunals following the Yugoslav Civil Wars in the 1990s.
- **Tatyana Gershkovich**, for “The Legacy of Leo Tolstoy Inside and Outside Russia, 1920–1928,” which supports archival research in Moscow and writing of two chapters of a book on the reconstruction and the reinterpretation of Tolstoy’s works by Communists in the Soviet Union and by Russian émigrés who fled Russia after 1917.

- **Lilya Kaganovsky**, for “Fifty Years of Soviet Women’s Cinema, 1929–1979,” which supports the research and writing one chapter of a book examining the role of women and attitudes regarding gender in the development of the Soviet film industry.

The American Council of Learned Societies 2021 Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellows include **Mariia Koskina**, PhD Candidate in History (SUNY Binghamton), for her research, “Giving a Green Light to Development: State and Personal Encounters with Nature in Cold War Siberia.”

Małgorzata Mazurek received tenure at Columbia University where she heads the Polish Studies program.

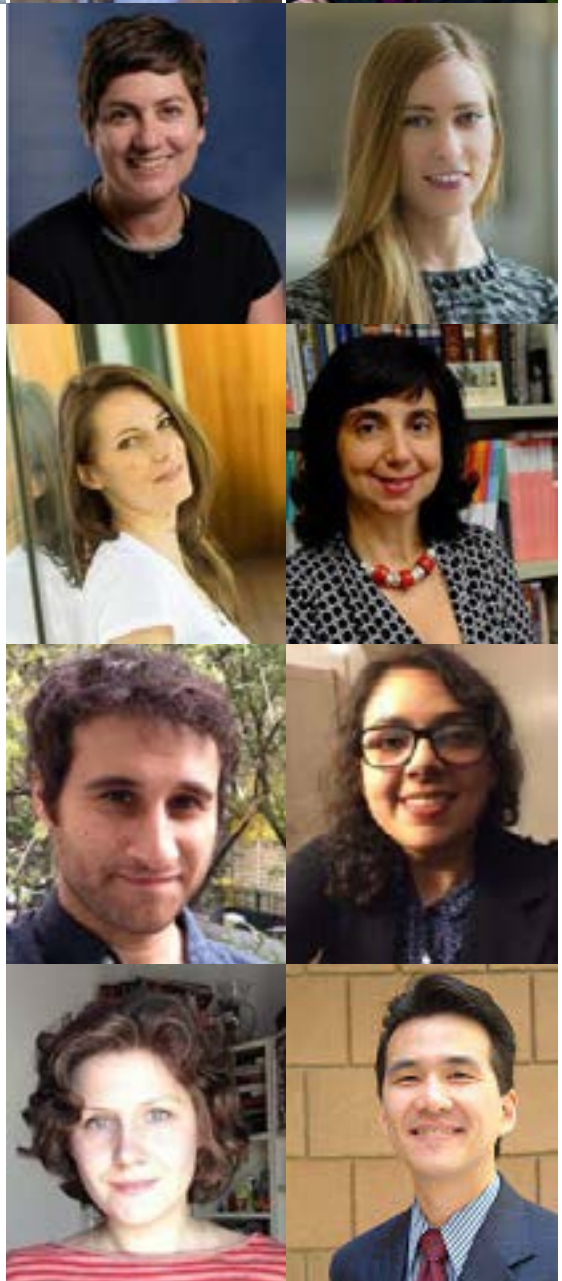
Valeria Sobol (U of Illinois) was promoted to full professor and also appointed as the LAS Dean’s Distinguished Professorial Scholar for 2021–2022.

Joshua Tapper, a doctoral candidate at Stanford University, is the recipient of the **Ruth and David Musher / JDC Archives Fellowship**. Tapper will trace the revival of Jewish institutional and political life, cultural organization, and a multi-denominational religious sphere in the final years of the Soviet Union (1985–1991).

The Institute for Citizens & Scholars announced the selection of eight **WW Dissertation Fellows in Women’s Studies** for 2021. Among them is **Svetlana Ter-Grigoryan**. She is a doctoral candidate in history at the Ohio State University whose dissertation explores how debates on sexuality reflected and propelled social, cultural, and political reform and revolution in the last years of the Soviet Union.

The American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) announces the winners of the 2021 ACLS Fellowships, including **Maria Vinogradova**, for “On the Public Rails,” which offers the first scholarly study of organized Soviet amateur cinema.

ACLS named 28 new Mellon/ACLS Community College Faculty Fellows for 2021. Among them is ASEEES member **Kenneth J. Yin**, for “Making Literary History: The Emergence and Development of Soviet Dungan Literature.”





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IN MEMORIUM

Rachel Feldhay Brenner (1946-2021), Harvey L. Temkin and Barbara Myers Temkin Professor in Hebrew Language and Literature and Elaine Marks Professor of Jewish Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, passed away in February 2021.

Brenner published widely in Israeli, Polish, Holocaust, and Canadian Jewish literature, including *A.M. Klein, The Father of Canadian Jewish Literature: Essays in the Poetics of Humanistic Passion* (1990) which was awarded The Jewish Federation of Greater Toronto Literary Scholarship Award. Her Holocaust literature book-length study, *The Ethics of Witnessing: The Holocaust in Polish Writers' Diaries from Warsaw, 1939-1945* (2014), was awarded ASEEE's USC Book Prize in Literary and Cultural Studies. She had just completed the monograph *Polish Literature and the Holocaust: Eyewitness Testimonies, 1942-1947* (2019).

Brenner's work was recognized by the US Memorial Holocaust Museum where she was a Fellow on three separate occasions. Brenner held fellowships in Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies (2001), and was a Visiting Professor at Hebrew University for the Mosse Faculty Exchange Program (2004). She was Senior Fellow at the Institute for Research in the Humanities (2028-2013). Her awards include a Canadian Studies Research Grant awarded by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and US National Endowment Fellowship (1990). The University of Wisconsin-Madison awarded her the Kellet mid-career award (2011), the Hilldale award (2015), and the WARF Elaine Marks named professorship (2019).

[Excerpted from text provided by H-net.](#)

Robert William Davies, British historian, writer, and professor of Soviet Economic Studies at the University of Birmingham, died in April 2021 at the age of 95.

A collaborator and co-author with historian E. H. Carr on two volumes of his 14-volume *History of Soviet Russia*, Davies is best known for having carried Carr's

work forward into the 1930s with seven additional volumes of economic history under the general title, *The Industrialisation of Soviet Russia*. Davies' papers are housed in the Special Collections department of the University of Birmingham.

Davies obtained his BA from the University of London and a PhD in Commerce and Social Science from the University of Birmingham. His first post was at the University of Glasgow, where he would remain until his return to the University of Birmingham in 1956. Davies was appointed a professor of Soviet Economic Studies in 1965.

In 1963, Davies was named the first director of the Centre for Russian and East European Studies (CREES), a post which he would retain until 1978. Davies retired in 1989 and was named Senior Fellow and Emeritus Professor by the university upon his departure from active teaching.

For more information, see his [obituary](#).

Vartan Gregorian, an educator, historian, humanities scholar, and recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, died on April 15, 2021, in New York City at age 87.

Gregorian served as the twelfth president of Carnegie Corporation of New York at the time of his death. During his tenure, beginning in 1997, he championed the causes of education, immigration, and international peace and security. Gregorian was a naturalized United States citizen whose experiences in a new country helped shape him, including his belief in the great importance of immigrant civic integration to the health of American democracy.

Gregorian was devoted to higher education and was president emeritus of Brown University and the former provost of the University of Pennsylvania. In addition, Gregorian is renowned for revitalizing The New York Public Library during his presidency in the 1980s. The recipient of more than 70 honorary degrees and dozens of significant awards, he was decorated by the governments of the United States, France, Italy, Austria,

Armenia, and Portugal. His story is told in his autobiography, *The Road to Home: My Life and Times*, published in 2003.

At the Corporation, Gregorian focused the foundation's grantmaking on aiding the development of innovative ideas and transformative scholarship. During his presidency, CCNY awarded more than 10,000 grants totaling some \$2.8 billion. *Excerpted from text provided by Thomas H. Kean, Chair, Board of Trustees, Carnegie Corporation of New York*

William Riegel Schmalstieg (1929-2021) was Sparks Professor Emeritus of Slavic and Baltic Linguistics and head of the Department of Slavic Languages at Penn State University.

Born in Sayre, Pennsylvania, he followed his father's dictum to study Russian due to that nation's expanding world role after WWII, Schmalstieg received his BA from the University of Minnesota and his MA at University of Pennsylvania, where he became interested in Lithuanian. With the Korean Conflict looming, Schmalstieg's range of language skills, from Arabic to Sanskrit, helped land him a job at the National Security Agency's language school. While at NSA, Schmalstieg served as a 2nd lieutenant in the Army, teaching languages to counter intelligence officers. He headed back to Penn where he finished his PhD in linguistics.

Schmalstieg settled at Penn State University in 1964 until his retirement in 2001. His teaching concentrated on Slavic linguistics, Russian, Old Church Slavic as well as courses in Baltic languages and linguistics, primarily Lithuanian. When Lithuania regained its independence in 1991, the Lithuanian government officially honored Professor Schmalstieg for his accomplishments in the study of the Lithuanian language.

[Excerpted from his obituary.](#)



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