



Newsletter of the Institute of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies

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**Newsletter of the Institute of Slavic,
East European, and Eurasian Studies**

University of California, Berkeley
Institute of Slavic, East European, and
Eurasian Studies

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Notes from the Director

Dear friends,

We received spectacular news early last semester, something we sensed but did not know precisely: UC Berkeley is the top institution in the United States in terms of the quality of its overall graduate training in Russia-related studies. This is one of the findings of a study carried out by the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies early last year, and conducted by Professor Ted Gerber of the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He worked carefully and systematically, first surveying 36 US-based universities and then moving to an individual study of 660 researchers who work on Russia. After that he did qualitative interviews with nine current and former US government officials who work in think tanks, foundations, and networks that focus on Russia, and then carried through qualitative case studies of four institutions recognized to be among the top centers for graduate training in Russia-related research.

Beyond finding that Berkeley is the top institution in graduate training in Russia-related studies, Gerber discovered that we rank as one of the top three programs in general, followed by Harvard and Columbia. His analysis shows that Berkeley's programs in Slavic and Russian-language studies and in Russian history are considered the top in the country, and its program in Russia-related social sciences is second, only after Harvard.

"The Institute of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies," Gerber concludes, "funds and administers ... a program supporting graduate student and faculty research on contemporary political and social issues in Russia and the region. Compared to the generously-funded Columbia and Harvard centers, Berkeley has considerably fewer resources for programming. It has a modest endowment and relies largely on state funding, Title VI and FLAS. As a result it has been hurt by state budget crises, University of California budget cuts, and rollbacks in Title VI and FLAS. Nonetheless, its small but effective staff has worked hard to do more with less and to sustain high quality programming."

Examples of this programming include two very successful panel discussions held during the fall semester. In response to the ongoing migrant crisis in Europe and the Middle East, ISEEES co-sponsored with the Center for Middle East Studies and the Institute of European Studies a panel discussion on the migrant crisis in Europe, featuring Keith Watenpugh, Associate Professor and Director of Human Rights Studies, UC Davis; Beverly Crawford, Chair of the Center for German and European Studies, UC Berkeley; and Jason Wittenberg, Associate Professor of Political Science, UC Berkeley. Then in late November we again partnered with the Center for Middle East Studies to present a panel discussion on Russia's military intervention in Syria. Speakers included Mark Galeotti, Clinical Professor of Global Affairs, New York University; Fred H. Lawson, Professor and Department Head of Government, Mills College; and Edward W. Walker, Associate Adjunct Professor of Political Science and Executive Director, Berkeley Program in Eurasian and East European Studies, UC Berkeley.

We also received news that three of our affiliated faculty received prestigious awards for published works. Professor Irina Paperno, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, was honored by the Modern Language Association with its Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Studies in Slavic Languages and Literatures for her book *“Who, What Am I?”: Tolstoy Struggles to Narrate the Self*, published by Cornell University Press. The prize is awarded biennially for an outstanding scholarly work on the linguistics or literatures of the Slavic languages, and is one of fifteen awards that will be presented at the MLA’s annual convention in January 2016.

Professor Alexei Yurchak, Department of Anthropology, received the coveted Russian “Prosvetitel” (Enlightener) Book Prize for the best non-fiction book of 2015, for the Russian version of his book *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More* (Это было навсегда, пока не кончилось), which he himself rewrote and expanded. The award ceremony was held in Moscow’s Academic Theater on November 19, 2015.

Professor Luba Golburt, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, received the third award for her first book, *The First Epoch: The Eighteenth Century and the Russian Cultural Imagination*, for Best Book in Literary and Cultural Studies for 2015 by the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages. *The First Epoch* has already been awarded the Marc Raeff Book Prize from the Eighteenth-Century Russian Studies Association and the Heldt Prize for the Best Book by a Woman in Slavic/East European/Eurasian Studies.

And now’s the time to mark your calendar for some of our upcoming events in 2016. The annual Colin Miller Memorial Lecture is scheduled for Tuesday afternoon, February 2 in the Alumni House. Our guest speaker will be Dr. Fiona Hill, director of the Center on the United States and Europe and a senior fellow in the Foreign Policy program at the Brookings Institution. The 40th annual Berkeley-Stanford Conference on Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies will be held on Friday, March 4, at Stanford University. The theme of this year’s conference is “Dislocation.” The annual Peter N. Kujachich Lecture on Serbian and Montenegrin Studies will be held on Tuesday afternoon, April 5, in the Alumni House. This year’s speaker will be Professor Tomislav Longinović, Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. Lastly, the ISEEEES Outreach Conference is scheduled for Saturday, April 30. The topic of this year’s conference is “Ukraine,” and it promises to be an interesting line-up of speakers for our daylong event.

We look forward to seeing you at these and other occasions throughout 2016. Be sure to check our website <http://iseees.berkeley.edu> for more detailed information on these and other upcoming events and updates to the calendar.

Sincerely yours,

John Connelly
ISEEEES Director
Professor of History



Save the Date



*Upcoming event during the Spring 2016 semester***

40th Annual Berkeley-Stanford Conference

Dislocation

Friday, March 4, 2016

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Stanford University

***Please note that event details may change. Updates will be sent out by email and can be found online at <http://iseees.berkeley.edu/>.*

The Poetry of Time: Andrei Tarkovsky

Matthew Kendall

Graduate Student, Slavic Languages and Literatures

UC Berkeley

Andrei Tarkovsky's film *Mirror* (1974), a unique experience for any first-time viewer, moved Swedish director Ingmar Bergman so deeply that he sought to respond in writing: "When film is not a document, it is dream. That is why Tarkovsky is the greatest of them all." Bergman's words have shrunk into a catch-all phrase that accompanies Tarkovsky's cinema, "film as dream," to capture those abundant moments that are paradoxically ethereal and permanent; scenes that, marked by their insistently sluggish pace, linger hazily in one's memory after viewing.

From June 27th to July 25th, the Pacific Film Archive at UC Berkeley hosted a retrospective that featured all of Tarkovsky's films, including his rarely shown student film, *The Steamroller and the Violin* (1961), and Tonino Guerra's documentary on Tarkovsky, *Voyage in Time* (1983). It was the PFA's first ever complete retrospective of Tarkovsky's work: amongst all of the films, two new 35mm prints of *Nostalghia* (1983) and *The Sacrifice* (1986) were shown in addition to a print from the PFA's collection, *Ivan's Childhood* (1962). In Berkeley, nearly halfway around the world and decades removed from Soviet Moscow, Tarkovsky's films met astounding popularity. Viewers of all ages flocked to the theater to watch these magisterially long works, and the PFA sold out nearly every show (the only screening not overflowing with attendees was *The Steamroller and the Violin*). *Stalker* (1979) was screened to such demand that a second showing was scheduled after several hopeful viewers were not able to secure seats the first time around.

How do we account for Tarkovsky's resilient, nearly a priori popularity amongst cinema goers? And indeed, what makes it a particularly relevant time to revisit Tarkovsky's cinema? In his opening remarks for the series, Stanford professor Nariman Skakov intriguingly posed these questions, and drew attention to our improbable attraction to Tarkovsky's trademark slow-pacing in the YouTube age, where moving images of increasingly shorter length are consumed in seemingly shorter intervals. This is not to say that Tarkovsky is simply old-fashioned — his radical re-purposing of the cinematic medium was much more of a rupture than the advent of quickly digestible streaming video, which is often said to resemble the early cinema's brief trick reels. It is to ask, rather, how his shockingly experimental films, which sometimes feel like earnest explorations of monotony, keep our attention.

This is also not a debate centered entirely on Tarkovsky: in a memorable *New Yorker* article from 2012, "Notes on Distraction," Giles Harvey praised the long-form spectacle (in his case, Philip Glass's *Einstein on the Beach*) as an antidote to the never ending rush of modern life. Pushing back against iPhone notifications, the fragmented news flashes of texts, and the interrupting software updates that dictate a wired life is only possible, Harvey writes, by succumbing to the monolithic totality of time that awaits the opera's viewer. But Glass's epic minimalism is a poor comparison

to Tarkovsky's films — his most famous opera overwhelmingly provokes (Alex Ross later wrote that it is filled with "primal pleasures of sight and sound"), whereas Tarkovsky's films rarely dazzle on the surface (with some exceptions). Skakov's comments pointed towards Tarkovsky's attempts to re-invent the medium of film as such: his unorthodox use of voice-over in the film *Mirror*, for example, challenges the assumed notion of film as a visual experience, and shows Tarkovsky at his most inventive in attempts to expand film form.

Of course, it is difficult to mention Tarkovsky without commenting on his most insistent demand on our attention, the long shot. In his book, *Sculpting in Time*, Tarkovsky routinely critiques Eisenstein, who becomes a metonym for montage cinema and of the deferment of cinema's ultimate meaning as a product of process. For Tarkovsky, cinema is never produced on the editing table, and instead fills a Kantian whole: "The cinema image comes into being during shooting, and exists within the frame." This impulse to preserve what is shot on film as a nearly sacred celluloid strip recalls Pasolini's famous equation of the cut with death — to edit is to bring an end to a certain presentation of reality, a life. Long shots had clearly matured by Tarkovsky's final films, and most notoriously so in *The Sacrifice*, which is bookended by two seemingly endless takes of the Swedish wilderness.

There is a thematic link between Tarkovsky's camera and the art that his metaphor of sculpting points to: as Evgeny Dobrenko has pointed out, before cinema usurped it, sculpting was considered the mimetic practice that best captured history. Tarkovsky's films, however, chronicle their own vision of history, not a collective one. Instead of serving as a chronotopic signpost for the Soviet '70s, they are a relic of Tarkovsky's artistic philosophy and his biography. The interpretive union of Tarkovsky's life story and his creative practice has not gone without criticism: many scholars, most notably Robert Bird, have attempted to eschew the intentional fallacy from scholarly approaches to Tarkovsky. Admittedly, it is a difficult habit to resist. Speculations that these films were openly dissident cinema have followed the director since he was active, and there is no reason to believe this isn't true; a kind of personal, artistic sacrifice is crystallized in the story which purports that Tarkovsky, his wife, and actor Anatolii Solonytsin contracted terminal cancer after they were exposed to toxic waste that filled the Estonian filming site for *Stalker*.

Tarkovsky's dissidence is of a subtle nature, made evident in a comparison between his films and those of a longtime rival, Aleksei German. Tarkovsky and German are an intimate pair (the PFA screened all of German's films in 2012), though what German approaches head-on in films like *Khrustalev, My Car!* (1998), a re-staging of the "Doctors' Plot," must be found under the surface of Tarkovsky's films. The bleak realities of Stalinism are most clearly reflected by *Mirror*, Tarkovsky's most difficult

film, when Aleksei's mother fears that she has mistakenly printed something dangerous — a private moment transformed into terror. Tarkovsky was revered abroad with much more passion than he was at home, which reminds us simultaneously of cinema's international appeal, and of the universal, spiritual notions that are much more accessible in the director's work.

Of course, Tarkovsky's fascination with the links between spirituality and the cinema was not a phenomenon that only his films emblemize. One does not need to look far to sense the influence of the long shot and Tarkovsky's ecologically dominated aesthetics in popular Soviet films of his era. The blockbuster *Gypsies are Found Near Heaven* (1976), for example, mixes landscape, color, and sound in ways that are remarkably similar to Tarkovsky's most daring films. It is also easy to forget that Tarkovsky directed his staunchly slow films during the accelerated rollout of the Soviet media empire, which included the arrival of the diverse Soviet TV network, and the clandestine import of foreign voices via radio. Tarkovsky only alludes to this network of mass communications in *The Sacrifice*, his most domestic film in theme, which briefly depicts a television set that sends a transmission to nervous viewers who wait for news about World War III.

Frederic Jameson has accused Tarkovsky of a willful ignorance of the enormous media empire and the apparatus that stands behind it, writing that, "the deepest contradiction in Tarkovsky is...that offered by a valorization of nature without human technology achieved by the highest technology of the photographic apparatus itself." I am not entirely convinced that this is true. A parable recited near the end of *The Sacrifice* tells of a gardener horrified to see his plants arranged in a row, an acknowledgment of Tarkovsky's understanding of the violence that sculpting necessitates. Each film's obsession with artifice, often expressed through a color palette that flickers intermittently to black-and-white, demonstrates an awareness of the camera as a human apparatus, not an ideal extension of nature.

It is true, after all, that totality is destined to fail, and Tarkovsky seems just as aware of this fact as his viewer should be — after emerging from the retrospective, one feels that there are several folds in the fabric of what the word "Tarkovsky" purports to represent. His films trace a gradual movement inwards: the PFA's chronological screening highlights the progressive disappearance of other people from these works. After the massive bell-building scenes from *Andrei Rublev's* finale, rarely do we see more than four people at a time in a Tarkovsky shot; rarely do films feature more than three central characters, and with the exception of images from Tokyo in *Solaris* (1972), rarely do we see urban space as an interconnected and vibrant system. Solitude rules his later films, which atomize and separate the human experience into moments of excruciatingly isolated privacy. Whatever or wherever the cordoned-off "zone" of *Stalker* is, it makes for a useful model of Tarkovsky's treatment of space.

There are also, of course, continuities within Tarkovsky's cinema. Tarkovsky worked closely with a group of actors, many of whom play multiple roles throughout his several films. Anatolii Solonytsin, for example, appears in *Andrei Rublev*, *Mirror*, *Solaris*, and *Stalker*. In his book, Skakov claims that there is such a thing as a characteristically Tarkovskian opening: one that "disorients the viewer from the start." Indeed, these

films revel in transforming the visual into something new. At the beginning of *Solaris*, a skeptical official rejects astronaut Henri Berton's claim that he saw his dead son in Solaris' ocean; "When it's windy out, it's easy to confuse a swaying bush with a living being." This swaying bush is a motif in Tarkovsky's cinema; *Mirror* obsessively returns to an image of fauna that sways in the wind, wild grass that bends to the elements. *Solaris* opens with a similar image, an aquatic plant that slowly conforms to the water surrounding it. *Andrei Rublev* symmetrically begins and ends with trees pelted by rain, and characters in *Ivan's Childhood*, a film mostly bereft of Tarkovsky's typical attachment to vegetation (save for its startlingly bright birch trees), use the cover of a marsh to conceal themselves from the enemy.

In the spirit of Bergman's observations, Skakov notes Tarkovsky's fascination with Pavel Florensky's assertion that "art is materialized dream." Skakov points out, however, that dreams and reality do not form a successful binary, because the two contaminate each other so often in Tarkovsky's films that it is difficult to determine where one begins and the other ends. Otherworldly visitors play a central role in both *Andrei Rublev* and *Solaris*: Theopanes and Hari, respective muses of the lead in each film, haunt the frame and move in what the viewer senses is "lived time" on screen: there is no easy way to discredit the mirage. All of these hallucinatory images, tricks played on us by the wind, point to the possibility of alternate circumstances: costume changes and dreams that share the screen with what constitutes reality.

I was surprised to leave the retrospective and sense Tarkovsky's unexpected penchant for melodrama, and his habit of locating the dramatic crux of each film between only a handful of characters. Several scenes of courting and disappointment take place between two figures on screen; the birch forest scene in *Ivan's Childhood* stands out as the most visually arresting and psychologically probing moment of that film, and perhaps the greatest example throughout all of his works: Kris and Hari's cathartic romance in *Solaris* is a slow meditation on a doomed encounter between two people, if you could call them that. *The Sacrifice* routinely shifts from disaster movie to family drama, and accentuates the tensions between a small group of people as an index for the end of the world.

It is surprising that *Solaris*, one of Tarkovsky's most popular films and one that he later disowned, remains quite emblematic of his work as a whole. *Solaris'* teacup that overflows with rainwater is one of his most remarkable metaphors of time, and the impossible, Escher-like spaces that his camera creates on board the spaceship routinely disrupt this seeming stability of space-time. Tarkovsky's sensitivity to sound is best realized in this film: Eduard Artyemyev, a longtime collaborator, composed the soundtrack entirely on an experimental Soviet synthesizer (with the exception of the theme by Bach, performed on pipe organ and vibraphone). One could also look to the image of Tokyo in *Solaris*, a bustling metropolis of the future, which signifies the city of the future simply through use of sound effects and a brief double exposure. What this shot visually represents is not at all futuristic, but like Tarkovsky's color filters, the aleatoric soundtrack transforms the image and carries the scene's semantic weight.

Are Tarkovsky's films perhaps even more relevant to us now? His daring experimentation is inspiring, and has earned him the

reputation of a giant that must be reckoned with. These films' forced distinction from spectacular, popular entertainment is also worthy of recognition. Yet if Pasolini's famous equation of the long shot with death serves as any indication, Tarkovsky's march for survival sometimes baffles in its own seemingly möbius path — to be immortal is, at times, a trying fate. Any repeat audience member from the series should notice that Tarkovsky most often fills his meditative scenes with the sound of dripping water, a constant reminder of the passage of time, or the illusion of eternity gained. These are films equally impressive as they are demanding, which attempt to efface their own necessity to end. When the cinema first transitioned to sound, many bemoaned that the soothing relaxation chamber of the silent cinema had been lost forever, in that it now resembled the cacophonous rush of the streets just beyond its doors. That sound of dripping water to subtly exploits its associations with both tranquility and torture: I will admit that I have never found Tarkovsky's long shots particularly soothing.

Yet I am still most deeply affected by *Andrei Rublev* (which screened as an alternative to Fourth of July festivities), a film that stands out amongst Tarkovsky's works. I see in this film nearly everything that makes Tarkovsky an undeniable legend, and nearly everything he struggles with as a director: *Andrei*

Rublev pits itself against Eisenstein's medieval epics (*Aleksandr Nevsky* [1938] and *Ivan the Terrible Pts I & II* [1944, 1946]) by eschewing their gaudiness and whimsy. The film abrasively reminds the viewer of its length and pace through repeated long takes, and Tarkovsky immolates myth, filling the world of the icon painter with punishment, violence, and chaos. It is, by a wide margin, his most violent film. *Andrei Rublev* has little to do with the time that it purports to take place in, and as the viewer watches rape, kidnapping, blinding, torture, and murder, the connotation of Andrei as Christ, an obvious allegory, loses its relevance. He, too, partakes in the carnage, and the image of him wielding an ax as he slowly ascends a flight of stairs haunts the viewer long after watching the film. It is a film ravaged by contradictions, which begs to be watched both as a totality and a stray collection of fragments — an impossible unity of iconoclasm between past and present. It is, paradoxically, Tarkovsky.

The Tarkovsky film retrospective "The Poetry of Time: Andrei Tarkovsky" took place at the Pacific Film Archive at UC Berkeley from June 27 to July 25, 2015. The series was curated by Senior Film Curator Susan Oxtoby.

Campus Visitors

Jeong Hwan Kim is a Visiting Scholar with ISEEEES during the 2015-2016 academic year. Dr. Kim is currently an associate professor in the Department of Romanian Studies at Hankyong University of Foreign Studies in South Korea. His current research interests are Romanian diaspora literature and Romanian folklore. While at Berkeley, he will pursue research on these topics.

Ilya Matveev is a Visiting Student Researcher with ISEEEES during the Fall 2015 semester. Mr. Matveev is a PhD student at the European University in St. Petersburg, Russia. His research focuses on neoliberalism, neopatrimonialism, and the nature of the political regime in Russia.

Petra Mayrhofer is a Visiting Student Researcher with ISEEEES during the Fall 2015 semester. Ms. Mayrhofer is a PhD student at the Institut für Zeitgeschichte der Universität Wien. Her research is on remembrance of 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe.

Jakub Niedźwiedz is a Visiting Scholar with ISEEEES during the Fall 2015 semester. Dr. Niedźwiedz is a lecturer and Faculty Erasmus Programme Coordinator in the Department of Polish Studies at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. His research is about the relationship between literature and cartography in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 16th-17th century.

Nathalia Saliba Dias is a Visiting Student Researcher with ISEEEES during the 2015-2016 academic year. Ms. Dias is currently a PhD student at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Her current research interests are the works of Vladimir Nabokov. While at Berkeley, she will pursue research on 'literary incest' or the meaning of 'incest' in Nabokov's works.

Ruprecht von Waldenfels is a Visiting Scholar with ISEEEES during the 2015-2016 academic year. Dr. von Waldenfels is hosted by Professor Johanna Nichols in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. He is working on the project *Convergence and divergence of Slavic from a usage based, parallel corpus driven perspectives*, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. His research interests include linguistic variation, corpus linguistics, and digital humanities.

UC Berkeley Participants at the ASEES Convention

The 47th Annual Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEES) was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on November 19-22, 2015. ASEES held a joint Alumni Reception with Stanford's CREES on Friday, November 20, 2015, at Time Restaurant.

Faculty/Staff Papers

John Connelly (History): "The Czech Origins of Wilsonian Ideas of Nationhood"

David Frick (Slavic): "Early Modern Jewish Residence Patterns Revisited"

Luba Golburt (Slavic): "The Schellingian Form of *Dr. Zhivago*"

Eric Naiman (Slavic): "The Spirit of Deceit: *Anna Karenina* as Metafictional Gothic"

Student Papers

Megan Barickman (Slavic): "'When all the veils were removed': The Sacred Domestic in *Anna Karenina*"

Bathsheba Demuth (History): "Transnational Animals and Local Empires: Russian Sealing in the North Pacific"

Rhiannon Dowling (History): "'He Was a Man, but the Factory Ruined Him!': The Law, Science, and the Embezzlement of Milk Products in the Early Brezhnev Era"

Jennifer Flaherty (Slavic): "'Life is prison, prison, prison': Dostoevsky (re)Writes the Saeculum"

Cammeron Girvin (Slavic): "Dialect and 'Dialect' in Bulgarian Folk Song Texts"

Eric Johnson (History): "The Pigeon through the Bars: The Everyday Life of Russian Revolutionaries of the 1870s in Tsarist Prisons"

Zachary Johnson (Slavic): "Hegelian Recognition and Desire in Tugenev's *Rudin*"

Chloë Kitlinger (Slavic): "'Ves' vash Karamazovskii vopros': Naming in *The Brothers Karamazov*"

Jason Morton (History): "'The Absence of Anna': 'Real Life', Art, and the Creation of a Socialist Realist Prototype"

Joy Neumeyer (History): "'The Final Struggle': The Art of the Soviet Death Mask"

Lily Scott (Slavic): "The Volga's Labor Pains: Visions of Nature in Panferov's *Bruski*"

Olesya Shayduk-Immerman (Anthropology): "Learning to be a Social Movement: Conceptualizations of Jewish Practices in the Late Soviet Period"

Yana Skorobogatov (History): "*Istoricheskii akt*: The Abolition of Capital Punishment in the Soviet Union in 1947"

Mirjam Voerkelius (History): "Facing the Past: Sculptural Anthropology on Display in the Soviet Union"

Katherine Zubovich (History): "Unsettling the Plan: Urban Monumentalism and Displacement in Postwar Moscow"

Panel Discussants

David Beecher (History/IAS): *Internet, Museum, Family: Contesting Historical Facts in Ukraine and the Baltic States*

John Connelly (History): *Between Epistemology and Rationalization: Racial Approaches to Society in Central Europe 1916-1945*

Victoria Frede (History): *Imperial Subjects. Autobiographical Practices in Late Tsarist Russia*

Cammeron Girvin (Slavic): *Dialects and Minority Languages of Eastern Europe: At Home and Abroad*

Luba Golburt (Slavic): *Irrational, Ineffectual, Counterfactual: The Problem of Action in Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature*

Irina Paperno (Slavic): *Paradoxes of Russian Realism*

Olesya Shayduk-Immerman (Anthropology): *Identities, Practices and Places – Part 1*

Panel/Roundtable Chairs

Bathsheba Demuth (History): *Protecting Domestic Politics in the Wake of the Economic Crisis and Ukraine War*

David Frick (Slavic): *Verbal and Visual Representation in East Slavic Orthodoxy, 17th Century*

Cammeron Girvin (Slavic): *Dialects and Minority Languages of Eastern Europe: At Home and Abroad*

Eric Johnson (History): *The Fact of Violence II: Conscious Violence (soznatel'noe nasilie) 1941-1953*

Zachary Kelly (ISEES): *Alumni Relations: The Enterprise of Staying in Touch*

Olga Matich (Slavic): *Minor Characters in Russian Literature (Dostoevsky to Nabokov)*

Jason Morton (History): *The Fact of Violence I: Elemental Violence (stikhiinoe nasilie) 1900-1945*

Eric Naiman (Slavic): *In Search of Personality: Bakhtin, Dostoevsky, and the Ethics of Characterization*

Irina Paperno (Slavic): *Religion and the Realist Novel*

Katherine Zubovich (History): *Soviet Culture and the Intelligentsia of World War II*

Roundtable Participants

David Beecher (History/IAS): *Teaching the Multiethnic Soviet Union*

Caroline Brickman (Slavic): *Poetry as Fact/Poezīia kak fakt*

Rhiannon Dowling (History): *Crime and Punishment in Russia since the Nineteenth Century*

Victoria Frede (History): *Getting published in Slavic and Eurasian Studies 2: From Conference Paper to Published Article*

Chloë Kitlinger (Slavic): *Minor Characters in Russian Literature (Dostoevsky to Nabokov)*

Andrej Milivojevic (History): *Yugoslavia in the 1970s: A Step Before Withering Away?*

Liladhar Pendse (Library): *Unique Collections in the Academic Libraries of the PACSLAV Consortium*

Liladhar Pendse (Library): *Abundance and Variation: Digital Resources on Central Asia and the Caucasus*

Liladhar Pendse (Library): *Library Cooperation: Initiatives in the U.S. and Europe*

Eric Prendergast (Linguistics): *Presenting 'Facts' and 'non-Facts' in Macedonian Language and Languages in Contact*

Leslie Root (Berkeley): *Health and Demography in the Former Soviet Space*

Elizabeth Wenger (History): *Communist Comparisons: New Approaches to Comparative History in the Soviet Bloc*

Meeting Moderators

Cammeron Girvin (Slavic): *Bulgarian Studies Association*

ISEEES Community News

Faculty

David Beecher (IAS) won the annual “Friends of Cal History” UC Berkeley History Department Prize at Commencement in May 2015 for “best written” PhD dissertation – “Ivory Tower of Babel: Tartu University and the Languages of Two Empires, a Nation State, and the Soviet Union.” At the end of July, he was one of 20 international instructors participating in a two-week workshop “Late Socialism (1956-85): The Forgotten Years between Stalinism and Perestroika” at the Tallinn Summer School at Tallinn University in Estonia. The workshop hosted 60 doctoral students from doctoral programs around the world. He has been busy on campus teaching various courses in history and political economy with a Russian and East European bent as a lecturer in Berkeley’s International and Area Studies since the Fall 2014. During Fall 2015, he taught the lecture course: “Russia & Europe Since 1848: From the Making of the Soviet Union to the Crisis of the European Union.”

George Breslauer (Political Science) conducted a seminar at the European University of St. Petersburg on faculty shared governance at UC Berkeley. That led him to write a monograph, commissioned by the European University, called “Shared Governance and Quality Evaluation at the University of California, Berkeley: Implications for Russian Universities” (September 2015). In Spring/Summer 2015, he also wrote a revised and updated version of a paper he had published two years ago, “UC Berkeley’s Adaptations to the Crisis of Public Higher Education in the US: Privatization? Commercialization? Or Hybridization?” The new version will appear in an edited volume, *Research in the Sociology of Organizations: The University Under Pressure*, Elizabeth Popp Berman and Catherine Paradeise, eds. (Emerald Group Publishing Ltd., 2016).

David Frick (Slavic) was chosen by the National Fryderyk Chopin Institute to translate the composer’s complete Polish letters to appear with the 17th International Chopin Competition (Warsaw, October 2015).

Luba Golburt (Slavic) received the third award for her first book, *The First Epoch: The Eighteenth Century and the Russian Cultural Imagination*, for Best Book in Literary and Cultural Studies for 2015 by the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages. *The First Epoch* has already been awarded the Marc Raeff Book Prize from the Eighteenth-Century Russian Studies Association and the Heldt Prize for the Best Book by a Woman in Slavic/East European/Eurasian Studies.

Ellen Langer (Slavic) presented a paper in Prague at the *Pátý kongres světové literárněvědné bohemistický (Fifth Congress of World Literary-Critical Bohemistics)*, sponsored by the Institute for Czech Literature of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, entitled “Neruda za okupace” (“Neruda during the Occupation”). She received travel support for this presentation from a UC Professional Development Grant.

Steven Lee’s (English) book *The Ethnic Avant-Garde: Minority Cultures and World* was published by Columbia University Press in October 2015. He will be giving a lecture on his research at ISEES on Thursday, February 18, 2016.

Andrej Milivojevic (History) is teaching a 2-unit seminar, “How does History Count? Reading and Writing History in the Age of Big Data,” that is part of the Data Science Initiative (<http://databears.berkeley.edu/>).

Johanna Nichols (Slavic) co-authored an article, “Co-evolution of genes and languages and high levels of population structure among the highland populations of Daghestan,” with Tatiana Karafet, Kazima Bulayeva, Oleg Bulaev, Farida Gurganova, Jamilia Omarova, Levon Yepiskoposyan, Barry Rodrigue, Olga Savina, and Michael Hammer, in the *Journal of Human Genetics*. She also contributed an essay “How America was colonized: Linguistic evidence,” to *Mobility and Ancient Society in Asia and the Americas*, Michael David Frachetti and Robert N. III Spengler, eds., by Springer (New York). She has also been busy giving lectures and presentations both near and far: in July she presented “Canonical head marking and the evolution of polysynthesis” as the Collitz Lecture for the Linguistic Society of American Linguistics Institute in Chicago; “Complexity as non-canonicity: An affordable, reliable metric for morphology” at the Societas Linguistica Europaea annual meeting

in Leiden in September; “Slavic in the Balkans and vice versa” at The Ohio State University in October. Prof. Nichols was particularly busy in November, giving four presentations in Europe: “Canonical head marking: Complexity in the relational parts of grammar” for the Surrey Morphology Group at the University of Surrey; “Measuring and comparing complexity in gender systems” at the Workshop on Gender and Linguistic Complexity at the University of Stockholm; “State-based vs. transition-based lexical event structure” at the Workshop on Resultative Constructions at the University of Stockholm; and “Proto-Nakh-Daghestanian and first farming in the Caucasus: A case study in method” at the Words, Bones, Genes, Tools Inaugural Symposium at the University of Tübingen.

Irina Paperno (Slavic) was honored by the Modern Language Association with its Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Studies in Slavic Languages and Literatures for her book “*Who, What Am I?*”: *Tolstoy Struggles to Narrate the Self*, published by Cornell University Press.

Barbara Voytek (ISEEES) spent two study seasons in Italy this year. She completed the analysis of chipped stone tools from the sites of Lugo di Romagna near Bologna and San Nicolao near Sestri Levante. These analyses will be part of the respective publications of each site in 2016.

Alexei Yurchak (Anthropology) received the coveted Russian “Prosvetitel” (Enlightener) Book Prize for the best non-fiction book of 2015, for the Russian version of his book *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More* (*Это было навсегда, пока не кончилось*), which he himself rewrote and expanded. The award ceremony was held in Moscow’s Academic Theater on November 19, 2015.

Graduate Students

Bathsheba Demuth (History) recently returned from a Mellon-ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship-funded research trip to the arctic. She also gave a paper titled “The Energy of Borders: Ecology, Walrus Hunting, and Sovereignty at the Bering Straits” at the Harvard Energy History Conference in October.

Cammeron Girvin (Slavic) won the ISEEES Graduate Student Essay Competition for my paper “The Subversive Folklore of Bai Ganio.” He also received a fellowship from the Peter N. Kujachich Endowment to conduct dissertation research this summer in the Balkans. He has presented three papers: “Archaisms, Dialectisms, and the Bulgarian National Folk Song Register” at the Western States Folklore Society conference in Los Angeles in April; “Eastern-Bloc Propaganda Signs and the Problem of ‘Authenticity’” at the Linguistic Landscape conference in Berkeley in May; and “Authenticity and the Canonization of Bulgarian Socialist ‘Folk’ Songs” at the meeting of the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore in Zagreb in June.

Laura Jakli (Political Science) and Professor **Jason Wittenberg** (Political Science) published a review of *Háló 2. “Dokumentumok és tanulmányok a Magyarországi Evangélikus Egyház és az állambiztonság kapcsolatáról, 1945–1990 – Egyházvezetők I. Káldy Zoltán, Ottlyk Ernő”* entitled “Are Hungary’s Churches Confronting their Communist Past?” (“Szembeneznek-e a kommunista múltjukkal a magyar egyházak?”) in *Principium: A Christian Journal of Public Life*.

Yana Skorobogatov (History) received the University of California at Berkeley John L. Simpson Memorial Research Fellowship (2015-2016) and the University of California at Berkeley Institute for International Studies Pre-Dissertation Research Grant (2015). She published two Soviet-history related articles on TIME.com: “See the Vintage Soviet Movie Posters That Were Also Political Tools” (Oct. 19, 2015) and “How a Photographer Captured the USSR’s Dramatic Rise as the U.S. Economy Tanked” (Aug. 28, 2015).

Mirjam Voerkelius (History) received a German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Stipend (Jahresstipendium fuer Doktoranden) for January–December 2016 to conduct archival research in Russia. The archives she will be working at include the Darwin Museum and those of other natural history museums, such as the Timiriazev State Biology Museum and the Zoological Museum of Moscow State University.

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The ISEEEES Graduate Student Support Fund is a new UCB Foundation endowment that was established by a generous gift from an anonymous donor. When fully funded, the ISEEEES Graduate Student Support Fund will be used to support graduate students in the field of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies. The endowment was launched by the initial gift and matching funds from the Graduate Division. Additional gifts to the Fund are encouraged and gratefully accepted.

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The Annual Colin Miller Memorial Lecture honors the memory of a journalist and radio and TV producer who was devoted to the Center for Slavic and East European Studies (as ISEEEES was called before the year 2000). The endowment funds an annual lecture given by a respected scholar in the field of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies.

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Awards for Summer 2015

Keru Cai, Department of Comparative Literature, received funding to study Russian at Middlebury College.

Kathryn DeWaele, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, received funding to study Russian at Middlebury College.

Brian Egdorf, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, received funding to study Russian at Middlebury College.

Irina Kogel, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, received funding to study Russian in St. Petersburg.

Claire Leon, Department of History, received funding to study Hungarian in Debrecen.

Griffin Madden, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, received funding to study Russian at Middlebury College.

Christina Schwartz, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, received funding to study Russian in Moscow.

Awards for Academic Year 2015-2016

Levi Bridges, School of Journalism, received a fellowship to study Russian at UC Berkeley.

Lana Cosic, Department of Psychology, received a fellowship to study Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian at UC Berkeley.

Kathryn DeWaele, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, received a fellowship to study Russian at UC Berkeley.

Devon Harris, Mathematics and Russian Language and Literature double major and Global Poverty and Practice minor, received a fellowship to study Russian at UC Berkeley.

Jerry Lin, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, received a fellowship to study Russian at UC Berkeley.

Urszula Madej-Krupitski, Department of History, received a fellowship to study Yiddish at UC Berkeley.

Maria Martirosyan, Political Science and Slavic Studies double major, received a fellowship to study Russian at UC Berkeley.

Karina McCorkle, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, received a fellowship to study Russian at UC Berkeley.

David Parker, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, received a fellowship to study Russian at UC Berkeley.

Kristina Slezacek, Chemical Engineering major, received a fellowship to study Czech at UC Berkeley.

Agnieszka Smelkowska, Department of History, received a fellowship to study Russian at UC Berkeley.

Marissa Urias, Media Studies major and Czech minor, received a fellowship to study Czech at UC Berkeley.

Maria Whittle, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, received a fellowship to study Czech at UC Berkeley.

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Tuesday, April 5, 2016, 5:00 p.m.

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The Secret Funerals in Pskov: Spectacles of War and Spectres from the Past

Emil Persson

Doctoral Student, Political Science
Lund University, Sweden

Emil Persson was a Visiting Student Researcher with ISEES during the Spring 2015 semester.

Introduction

On August 22, 2014, a status update was posted on the personal VKontakte¹ page of a female resident in the small Russian town of Pskov near the Estonian border, the wife of paratrooper Leonid Kichatkin. The message came to ignite a news story that spread around Russia and the world. As later accounted by Aleksey Sem'онов, the journalist at the local newspaper *Pskovskaya Guberniya* who revealed the story, the message was: "Life ended!!!!!!!!!!!!!! L'onya has died, the funeral is on Monday at 10 AM service in Vybutakh (sic). Who wishes to say farewell, come we will be happy to see everyone." Two days later the message was removed and replaced with a short text stating that "My husband is alive and well and we are celebrating the christening of our daughter." Nonetheless, Sem'онов and his colleague Lev Shlosberg went to the Vybutakh cemetery on the mentioned date, August 25. The reason was that Kichatkin's name recently had appeared on a list circulated in Ukrainian media with names of Russian soldiers who, Ukrainian authorities claimed to have evidence for, had taken part in battles outside Luhansk earlier the same month. At the same time, the Russian government continued to claim that there were no Russian forces in Ukraine, and the commander of the brigade in which Kichatkin served had stated, on August 22, that everyone in his brigade were "alive and well." When Sem'онов and Shlosberg arrived at the cemetery chapel, a funeral service was going on. Later the same day, the journalists returned to the cemetery and found two fresh graves with wooden crosses and name plates with the texts "Kichatkin Leonid Yur'evich, 30.09. 1984 – 19.08. 2014" and "Osipov Aleksandr Sergeyeovich, 15.12.1993 – 20.08.2014." The first grave had a photograph of Kichatkin, the second had no photograph (see images 1 and 2).



Image 1.



Image 2.

(Sem'онов 2014a)

Pskovskaya Guberniya published the account of the journalists illustrated with photographs of the graves (Sem'онов 2014a), and other, nation-wide independent media such as *Novaya Gazeta* (2014a) and the TV station *Dozhd* (2014a) reported extensively on the secret funerals in Pskov, publishing the same or similar photographs. Russian and foreign journalists came to see the graves for themselves but were, on several occasions, attacked and chased away by unknown men at the cemetery, and Shlosberg himself was beaten up and hospitalized with a concussion (Prokop'eva 2014a). During the same period, various independent media reported about other secret funerals taking place in various regions of Russia (*Dozhd* 2014b; *Novaya Gazeta* 2014b). Interviews were published with wives and mothers of soldiers who could not get hold of their husbands and sons, fearing that they had been sent to Ukraine, and worrying about what had happened to them there (Racheva 2014). Different regional Soldier Mothers organizations publically demanded information from the army about the whereabouts of the missing soldiers. State-controlled media eventually confirmed the deaths of Russian soldiers in Ukraine; we will return to these official reactions.

By giving a deeper analysis of media representations from Russian independent media as well as state-aligned television about the secret funerals in Pskov, I will address the issue of the "spectacle of war" – how warfare is displayed in the media – and how it relates to national imaginaries. Post-structuralist theorists of international relations have examined how media representations of war are central in imagining and renegotiating communities and their boundaries for inclusion and exclusion (Campbell 1998). Michael J. Shapiro writes that representations of war on television and other media are a form of modern rituals providing people with a certain form of pleasure or "ontological enjoyment," the satisfaction of collective identification with a supposedly coherent and strong national body (1997:63). In studying representations of war, I am especially interested in the question of the regulation of visibility: what determines which subjects, images, and narratives become visible in the public sphere and through which interpretative frameworks are they seen, and which subjects are rendered invisible? The exposure of the secret funerals in Pskov (and other places) meant that subjects rendered invisible in the public sphere suddenly were made visible. Why did the narratives of the funerals in Pskov and other places achieve such attention, even crossing the boundaries to state-controlled media? What mythologies, imaginaries, and memories were invoked by the stories, and how did these relate to the official narratives? What does this event tell us about the politics of visibility and about the boundary-work of war?

¹ VKontakte is the largest social media community on the Russian-language Internet, very similar to Facebook in form and function.

Homecoming, military masculinity, and national mythologies

An important part of the spectacle of war is the celebration of soldiers who return home from war, alive or dead. Whereas representations of war tend to obscure some subjects such as those who lose their lives as “collateral damage” or on refuge, what Judith Butler (2010) calls “ungrievable lives,” certain subjects are rendered highly visible, even hypervisible (Casper & Moore 2009:134). The figure of the fallen soldier traditionally belongs to the latter category: he (for it tends to be a *he*) has historically been put on display and celebrated as an example of national sacrifice, one who deserves to be mourned and revered. The grievability and symbolic status of the soldier is demonstrated and constructed by spectacular rituals and symbols, including ceremonial funerals, military parades, monuments, and days of national mourning (Edkins 2003). Such spectacles convey, in sublime and mythologizing forms, certain values, norms and truths as natural, common, and outside the realm of politics; e.g., the goodness and necessity of state violence as well as its dependence on male strength. The figure of the soldier-hero who sacrifices his life for the safety and survival of the collective is intimately bound up with norms of masculinity, narratives of nationhood, and the legitimacy of the state (Mosse 1990). Gendered narratives of male warriors defending the national body (often narrated as female), as well as the bodies of “our” women, are a key element of national imaginaries (Yuval-Davis 1997). As the body of the heroic male soldier is represented as an incarnation of state power, variations in the symbolic status of military masculinity are connected to changes in the national imaginary (Shapiro 1997:48, 160).

In Russia, military masculinity and sacrificial death have a prominent place in public narratives of belonging. There is a strong mythology surrounding the Great Patriotic War (as the Second World War is usually referred to), expressed in gendered narratives about soldiers and wives, patriotic sacrifice, and mourning. The unpopular wars in Afghanistan 1979-89 and Chechnya 1994-96, resulting in thousands of casualties that were difficult to represent as sacrifices for the nation but were rather understood as a cruel waste of lives in meaningless wars, contributed to what some have argued as a perceived “crisis of masculinity.” These wars, along with political and economic turmoil, the breakdown of the Soviet empire, and the loss of international superpower status, were tied to an imagined emasculation of the Russian man (Zdravomyslova & Temkina 2001; Eichler 2006), sometimes seen as embodied by the alcoholic and comic figure of Yeltsin (at the end of his presidency). In contrast, the Putin period has been associated with a perceived remasculination, connected to the popular and officially successful second war in Chechnya, economic growth, and military build-up, and incarnated by the spectacularly masculine figure of Putin (Rutten 2012; Foxall 2013). This has been accompanied by a reinforced celebration and visibility of patriotic military masculinity, in public narratives as well as everyday popular culture, although this symbolic status seems quite detached from the lived realities of Russian soldiers, as demonstrated by numerous reports of abuse and bullying in the army. Additionally, the increased public visibility of military ‘masculinity’ does not suggest that these men, as individuals, find this ideal necessarily appealing, especially in a country where military conscription has become a strong class marker, denoting one’s place in a lower social strata (Eichler 2006).

For a regime that derives legitimacy from the symbolic resurrection of masculinity and the myth of male soldiers defending the homeland, the war in Ukraine poses a challenge regarding how the spectacle of war is to be orchestrated. On the one hand, popular support for the separatists and the Russian government’s position vis-à-vis the Ukrainian government was, at least throughout the first year of the conflict, very strong, and both state-controlled media and social media were dominated by jingoist and aggressive rhetoric. On the other hand, as Russia according to the official narrative is not part of the war, when Russian soldiers nonetheless die in Ukraine, the state cannot easily appropriate their deaths in national mythology and deliver on its implicit promises that heroic sacrifices should be honoured. National mythology has constructed soldiers as grievable, yet they cannot be grieved. This tension helps us understand how the exposures of the secret funerals in Pskov turned the dead body of the soldier into a site of symbolic struggle.

By drawing on the myth of the soldier-hero, the independent media that revealed the secret funerals actively exploited the gap between the symbolic visibility of military masculinity and the erasure of the dead soldiers from public discourse. *Dozhd* presented its coverage on the dead paratroopers from Pskov under the headline “Our soldiers,” thus emphasizing the symbolic link between the soldier and the national body. Oppositional journalist Oleg Kashin wrote in *Pskovskaya Guberniya* about the 14,000 roubles paid out monthly to the families of deceased soldiers:

These 14 thousand are the payment for the fact that they died “just because.” For the fact that nobody will ever tell us openly by whom and for what purpose they were sent to Donbass. For the fact that there will never be any medals “For Donetsk” or “For Lugansk,” there will never be any memorials, but only “reliable partners” and new gas contracts. (Kashin 2014)

In several of the reports, the state’s silence around the dead soldiers was described as “treason” against the army and the families of the soldiers, such as when *Dozhd*, referring to the forces behind the cover-up, said that “they have betrayed the army” (2014c).

In another article, *Pskovskaya Guberniya* wrote that while it was possible to understand the reluctance of some family members of the soldiers to let journalists come and photograph the graves

...what cannot be understood is nameless graves of soldiers contracted in the army, buried without honour, without memory, without worthy headstones in an atmosphere of death-like silence... (Prokop’eva 2014a)

I argue that, by deploying the hegemonic idiom of male military honour, normally a symbolic pillar on which the Putinist state rests, but in this case in order to criticize that state, these narratives attempted to expose a breach in the symbolic alliance between the state and patriotic military masculinity. Mythologies that are usually complicit with and conveyed by the regime were suddenly wielded against it. The disclosure of the secret funerals were therefore, I argue, a blow directed straight at the narrative fundamentals of the Putinist state.

Good wives and mothers

To tell a story about someone who is missing under unknown circumstances is difficult: how does one speak about absence and uncertainty? When there seemed to be no credible sources about Russia's military participation in Ukraine – it is hard to trust any side in an information war – the narratives came to centre around the very concrete act of missing itself, and the persons who were missing or mourning the soldiers. Here, wives and mothers played a prominent role. Not only did the exposure of the Pskov funerals begin with a social media post by a soldier's wife, in many of the reports, interviews with female family members who could not get hold of their husbands or sons, fearing that they had been sent to Ukraine, were the most important substantial content of the stories.

On August 28, 2014, *Novaya Gazeta* published the account of Olga, the wife of Ruslan, a soldier serving in the same Pskov division as the soldiers buried at Vybutakh. She says that Ruslan, on August 16, had come home from military exercises for a few hours, only to depart again.

They flew in on Thursday night, he had time to put a few things in his backpack and said: "We are flying away." He came at 4 in the morning, and already at 6 they were supposed to meet. Then he called me around 16 o'clock and said: "We have arrived, it is very hot here." That is all. Where was "here," he didn't say. (Pet'anova 2014)

Since that phone call, Olga says, she had not been able to make contact with her husband. She says that her sister-in-law managed to talk to an officer who certified that Ruslan is "alive and well." However, she mistrusts those declarations, especially since a soldier-colleague of Ruslan, hospitalized with a broken leg, had told her that Ruslan's division was fighting outside Luhansk. Her account contains no open criticism of the military or government but focuses on her worries, for her husband, herself, and her children: "I don't even know... If anything has happened – I do not even have my own place to live. And two children" (Ibid). The article is illustrated with a photo of Ruslan, according to the caption taken from their private photo album.

There were many similar stories: *Dozhd* reported about the wife of another of the soldiers in the Pskov division, having posted the following text on *VKontakte* on August 24:

On Friday morning I was happy – I was bringing some things home to Pskov to OUR house, but at noon everything fell apart. I am at the brink of an abyss, on one side is our happy life, on the other, emptiness. Please pray for my only and beloved Anton, how can such things happen, he is no more. (*Dozhd* 2014d)

I argue that in the absence of any affirmative information about the whereabouts of the soldiers, narratives such as the one above, focusing on the private grief and worries of their wives, establish a concreteness with potentially powerful consequences. While endless "lists of dead Russian soldiers" and "leaked documents" circling on the Internet claiming to prove Russia's involvement can be dismissed as fabrications, the particular story of a wife missing her husband gives a form of materiality to the disappearance that the lists and documents do not have: an embodied manifestation of the missing. Also, by such

accounts, in describing how the family at home in Russia is in emotional and material need of the missing man, a symbolic link is established between the soldier and the home, his place in the community of belonging is naturalized. The trope of heterosexual love thus binds the soldier to the homeland, embodied by his wife (and children).

In the reports about the missing or dead paratroopers in independent media, a prominent role was played by the Committees of Soldiers' Mothers, a coalition of regional organizations that since *Perestroika* have worked for the rights of soldiers enlisted in the Russian army, whose activism during the first war in Chechnya gained them national and international fame, but since then have been ostracized and excluded from state-aligned media. In the interviews in independent media, representatives of the organization speak about how worried families contact them to find out what has happened to their soldier sons and express concerns for how the soldiers are treated and what will happen to soldiers who return home from an undeclared war, e.g., whether they will have the right to a pension. When asked about reports on how family members are being threatened into silence, Valentina Melnikova, head of the union of Committees of Soldiers' Mothers, insisted that family members have an unconditional right to know, an answer perhaps more resembling an incantation than factual description:

If they are being threatened, the relatives should turn to the nearest military investigative unit and tell them about these idiots. Because nobody dares to threaten the relatives of the dead, captured or wounded. Nobody dares to call this a secret. If they are enlisted in the army, there can be no secrets. (*Dozhd* 2014e)

Often the Soldiers' Mothers have talked about the soldiers as children in need of rescue. This infantilization was also strong in an interview with some mothers not affiliated with the organization, whose sons were reported to have been captured by the Ukrainian army. In the words of one of the mothers: "Our only wish is that our children (*deti*) are returned (...). If they offer us to come and pick up our children, we will go there. We will not abandon our children" (*Dozhd* 2014f). This particular form of emasculation, the construction of the soldiers as children in need, not only reverses the myth of the strong and heroic warriors, but could possibly be read as an implicit criticism of how the Russian military system has already emasculated the soldiers by denying them all possibilities to act and speak for themselves as active subjects.

Without a doubt many of the stories about wives and mothers drew on essentialist ideas of femininity, motherhood, and heterosexuality. Embodying notions normally associated with the private sphere, such as home and family, and ascribed emotions such as love, grief, and caring, the women appeared less as political activists than as loving relatives. They were positioned outside the realm of politics, interested "only" in knowing where their husbands and sons were. The wives claimed to be uninterested in politics, some even explicitly expressed support for the president (Racheva 2014). However, the very act of making public the disappearance of the soldiers and the silence surrounding it, was in its very essence political, precisely because the disappearance itself was politically organized. And once again, dominant

mythologies of gender, on which the regime normally relies, were mobilized against it. By subscribing to the figure of caring wives and mothers, a norm actively celebrated by the pro-natalist and neotraditional policies of the Putin government, the women could claim a position which would have been unavailable had they appeared as oppositional politicians or anti-war activists (cf. Eichler 2006). Parallels can be drawn to how organizations of mothers in other contexts, notably Argentina, have deployed traditional notions of motherhood to criticize authoritarian and patriarchal regimes (Taylor 2001). Precisely because caring and love has been constructed as belonging to the private sphere, when the women spoke as wives or mothers, they could present their claims as non-aligned and non-ideological, which perhaps made the claims more difficult to dismiss. Thus a very political critique could be delivered without appearing to be political in the first place.

Official responses

The photographs of the graves in Pskov, as well as similar images from other graveyards in Russia, were spread on the Internet and in various independent media sources, and also picked up in the foreign media, with a speed and reach which would have been unthinkable before the Internet. Although the images of the graves in Pskov were not displayed by Russian state TV channels or Kremlin-loyal newspapers, the story soon became well-known in Russia. A poll published by Levada Center on September 29, according to which 46% of the respondents said that they had heard about the deaths of paratroopers from Pskov on Ukrainian territory (Levada Center 2014), is indicative of the wide dissemination of the story.

What was the response to this exposure on the level of official narratives? The initial strategy of full denial and insistence that the Pskov soldiers were “alive and well” (Sem’onov 2014a) was eventually abandoned. A letter sent by Shlosberg, one of the journalists who uncovered the story, to the Central Army Prosecutor’s Office, in which he demanded information about the fate of Kichatkin, Osipov, and other paratroopers from Pskov, received an official reply in November 2014, in which the army confirmed the death of these soldiers “outside of their regular location” but would not reveal the circumstances around their deaths due to laws of state secrecy (Sem’onov 2014b).

The reports that Russian soldiers had died in Ukraine finally appeared in the state-controlled public sphere. On September 4, 2014, the news program *Vremya* on the Channel One told the story about a funeral, not those in Pskov, but in Kostroma, where a Russian soldier who had recently died in Ukraine was put to rest. This was, according to *Pskovskaya Guberniya* (Prokop’eva 2014b), the first time state-controlled media confirmed the presence and death of Russian soldiers on Ukrainian territory. A closer look at this news report gives us one insight into how the deaths of Russian soldiers in Ukraine were reported in official narratives (Channel One 2014). Footage of a flag-draped coffin surrounded by weeping women, an orthodox priest with a smoking censer, a military gun-salute, and a band playing the Russian national anthem accompanied the following account:

Today paratrooper Anatolii Travkin was buried in Kostroma. About a month ago he set off to Donbass and died in battle. He did not say anything about his decision neither to his

wife, whom he had married shortly before going, nor to the military unit in which he served. Officially he went on vacation. A military honorary funeral was organized next to the grave of his mother. Among those who came to depart with Anatolii on his last journey were his family, among them the grandmother who raised him, his friend and colleagues. Anatolii Travkin was 28 years old.

“It is sad that we lose young people. But I am proud that in our Russian provincial towns, there are boys who are not indifferent to what is happening today in our world. And who, by the calling of their souls and hearts, do what they have to do,” says VDV veteran Mikhail Kozlov.

The same news item also told the story of Sergey Zhdanovich, who had died in May in Donetsk after going there as volunteer. His widow is interviewed:

“He went to war knowing what he was doing. There was no way to hold him back, because the man took the decision immediately. He did what a real man must do. We miss him very much. But we will be proud of him for the rest of our lives.”

As we see, the official narrative about the soldier funerals was also highly gendered, deploying similar notions of heroic men and loyal grieving wives like we saw in the independent media. However, whereas the independent media suggested that the state had betrayed its men and women, *Vremya* presents quite unsurprisingly the sacrifices made by soldiers and wives as completely harmonious with official policies. The explanation that the Russian soldiers who had died in Ukraine were volunteers going to war on their own accord was of course a way to reconcile these events with the official narrative that Russian forces were not involved in the war, a story which did not change during the entire period of research.

The Pskov story and its circulation meant that the things the state had rendered invisible suddenly became visible and widely known. When full denial was no longer an option, the state sought to establish certain frameworks for interpretation, aimed to orchestrate how that which had appeared was seen and heard. Smear-campaigns were directed against those who had uncovered and spread the stories about the secret funerals, aiming to compromise them by suggesting that they had suspicious links to foreign powers. On August 29, 2014, the Ministry of Justice included the Committee of Soldiers’ Mothers in St. Petersburg on its list of “foreign agents” (Dozhd 2014g). A few days later, in a response to a letter sent by the Soldiers’ Mothers demanding information about whether Russian soldiers were fighting in Ukraine, the Ministry of Defense wrote that:

The information you refer to does not correspond to reality. Your speculations are based on information propagated by media channels who are pro-Western and hostile towards the Russian Federation. Keep your calm and respect the defenders of our homeland. (Dozhd 2014h)

On September 17, 2014, the news program *Vesti* on Rossiya-1 ran a story on Lev Shlosberg, the journalist who, after uncovering

the story of the Pskov funerals, was beaten up. *Vesti* presented documents allegedly proving that Shlosberg, who is also a local Duma representative for the liberal party *Yabloko*, had regularly received grants from the U.S. organization, the National Endowment for Democracy. In addition, a video shown was said to document a meeting at a restaurant between Shlosberg and the U.S. General Consul in St. Petersburg. The clip was removed from the *Vesti* website but is still available on YouTube (2014). Such reports can be seen as a way to restore control of visibility. The people who reveal these stories were associated with foreign powers, notably the U.S. government. Although it was not said outright, the implicit suggestion was that stories such as the one about the dead soldiers from Pskov had been fabricated by enemy powers to damage the morality of the Russian people.

Echoes of the past

In her book *Zinky Boys*, Svetlana Aleksiyevich writes about how young Soviet soldiers in the 1980s were sent to the war in Afghanistan under celebratory slogans of building socialism, and returned home in zinc coffins for secret burials at night and were kept from official discourse. The exposure in August 2014 of how the Russian state secretly buried those it had sent to their death, and the images of their graves and photographs, could function

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as an echo from such violent traumas in the past. If soldiers returning from war have traditionally been celebrated and turned into spectacles, the homecoming of the soldiers from Pskov may be better captured by the metaphor of specter. Avery F. Gordon (1997) argues that sometimes violent historical events, which are supposedly over with, return to the public imagination as haunting specters, as eerie reminders of an unresolved violent past, but not by the logic of narrative linearity and causality, but rather through the uneasiness, implicit associations, and emotional connotations that certain things evoke. The exposure of the Pskov funerals exposed a gap between the loud and macho patriotism of official narratives and the dense silence surrounding those men who had died "for the nation." Their erasure from the dominant spectacle of war made these dead soldiers into threatening specters: the silence about their death indicated that there was something the state did not want to be visible. The reports about secret funerals were an unsettling indication that things were not in their place, working not only on the level of rational argument but also of emotion and collective memory. Thus the exposure was a real challenge to the narratives that legitimize the regime. It is, I believe, against this background we must understand the reverberation and dissemination of the story, but we must also keep in mind the official response.

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Fall 2015 Courses

Selected course offerings and selected area-related courses

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Anthropology 150 | Utopia: Art and Power in Modern Times | Yurchak, A. |
| Anthropology 196 | Undergraduate Seminar: "Post-communism: Histories and Transformations" | Yurchak, A. |
| Architecture 270 | History of Modern Architecture | Castillo, G. |
| Architecture 279 | Special Topics in the History of Architecture | Castillo, G. |
| Buddhist Studies 120 | Buddhism on the Silk Road | Mehendale, S. |
| Comparative Literature 240 | Urban Space and Literary Form: World Literature and the Modern and Contemporary City | Ram, H. |
| Economics 172 | Case Studies in Economic Development | Roland, G. |
| Economics 215A | Political Economics | Roland, G. |
| Economics 216 | Seminar in Political Economy | Roland, G. |
| Economics 237 | Seminar in Advanced Macroeconomics and Money | Gorodnichenko, Yu. |
| Economics 260A | Comparative Economics | Roland, G. |
| Economics 291 | Departmental Seminar | Gorodnichenko, Yu. |
| English 45C | Literature in English: The Mid-19 th through the 20 th Century | Lee, S. |
| Geography 55 | Introduction to Central Asia | Mehendale, S. |
| Geography 170 | Post-Socialist Spaces | Feakins, M. |
| Film and Media 25A | The History of Film (Silent Era) | Nesbet, A. |
| History R1B | The Socialist City: Urban Life in the 20th Century from Havana to Pyongyang | Zubovich, K. |
| History 100B | Yugoslavia (co-taught with Ronelle Alexander, Slavic 158) | Connelly, J. |
| History 103B | The Frontier in Global History | Dean, M. |
| History 159B | European Economic History | Milivojevic, A. |
| History 167C | Germany 1914 to the Present | Dean, M. |
| History 172 | Russian Intellectual History | Frede-Montemayor, V. |
| History 177A | Armenia from Ethnogenesis to the Dark Ages | Astourian, S. |
| History 280B | Introduction to Soviet Historiography | Slezkine, Yu. |
| History 375 | Teaching History at the University | Frede-Montemayor, V. |
| History of Art 192C | Undergraduate Seminar: Problems in Research and Interpretation: Medieval | Angelova, D. |
| IAS 45 | Survey of World History | Beecher, D. |
| Political Economy 160 | Russia and Europe Since 1848 | Beecher, D. |
| Political Science 3 | Introduction to Empirical Analysis and Quantitative Methods | Wittenberg, J. |
| Political Science 200A | Major Themes in Comparative Analysis | Wittenberg, J./M. Fish |
| Public Policy 286 | US National Security Policy | Nacht, M. |
| Slavic R5A | Misfits in Literature | Egdorf, B. |
| Slavic R5A | Encounters with Utopia | Barickman, M. |
| Slavic R5B | Representing Russian Peasants | Flaherty, J. |
| Slavic R5B | Man and Nature | Scott, L. |
| Slavic 24 | Freshman Seminar: The Mystery and Fascination of the Balkans | Alexander, R. |
| Slavic 39C | Images of Eastern Europe: "Cold War: Fear, Conspiracies, Spies and Noir" | Frick, D. |
| Slavic 45 | Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature | Golburt, L. |
| Slavic 100 | Seminar: Russian, East European, and Eurasian Cultures | Kavitskaya, D. |
| Slavic 132 | Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and the English Novel (Crosslisted with English 125C) | Paperno, I. |
| Slavic 134E | Chekhov's Theater: A Cross-Cultural Inquiry (Crosslisted with Theater 126) | Muza, A. |
| Slavic C137 | Introduction to Slavic Linguistics (Crosslisted with Linguistics C137) | Kavitskaya, D. |
| Slavic 158 | The Rise and Fall of Yugoslavia (co-taught with John Connelly, History 100B) | Alexander, R. |
| Slavic 171 | Readings in Yugoslav Literature | Alexander, R. |
| Slavic 182 | Readings in Russian Literature: Pushkin and Others (in Russian) | Golburt, L. |
| Slavic 200 | Graduate Colloquium | Paperno, I. |
| Slavic 210 | Old Church Slavic | Frick, D. |
| Slavic 245A | Russian Romanticism | Ram, H. |
| Slavic 281 | Proseminar: Aims and Methods of Literary Scholarship | Naiman, E. |
| Slavic 375A | Teachings Methods for Slavic Languages: Russian 1-4, 6A-B | Little, L. |
| Slavic 375A | Teaching Methods for Slavic Languages: BCS 27A | Alexander, R. |
| Slavic 375B | Teaching Methods for Reading and Composition: R5A, R5B | Nesbet, A. |

The Slavic Department offers courses in Armenian, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Czech, Hungarian, Polish, and Russian. The German Department offers Yiddish.