



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**

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Notes from the Director

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Sadly, the most significant event of the spring was the passing, at the age of sixty-eight, of our dear colleague, Viktor Zhivov. Viktor was – effortlessly and simultaneously – a linguist, historian, literary scholar, sociologist of religion, and prominent public intellectual. He specialized in ten centuries of Russian culture and taught at multiple universities in Italy, Germany, Russia, and the United States. He was a famously generous mentor and a close friend to many of us. At the time of his death, he had just completed a magisterial two-volume history of the Russian literary language. His manuscript on the history of sin and salvation in Russia remains unfinished. He will be impossible to replace and a tremendous, everlasting joy to remember.

The last public event Viktor attended was the 28th annual Colin and Elsa Miller Memorial Lecture, delivered on March 21, by the rector of the New Economic School in Moscow, Sergei Guriev. In his lecture, “Modernization and Education Reform in Putin’s Russia,” Professor Guriev presented a cautiously optimistic view of the future of Russian higher education. As he spoke (we would later learn), he was under investigation in Russia in connection with a report he had signed about the second Khodarkovsky-Lebedev trial. Within two months of his departure from Berkeley, he had resigned from his position and announced from his home in Paris that he would not return to Russia for as long as he remained in danger of losing his freedom.

This year’s annual Peter N. Kujachich Lecture in Serbian and Montenegrin Studies was held on Tuesday, April 9. Professor Andrei Simić, from the Department of Anthropology at the University of Southern California, spoke on the idealization of the West and cultural dissonance in Serbia. We would like to give our deepest thanks to Peter Kujachich for his continuing support of Serbian and Montenegrin studies at Cal and for making this popular lecture series possible.

It was our honor and pleasure to host this year’s Berkeley–Stanford Conference on Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies. The conference, which we dedicated to the memory of Viktor Zhivov, was devoted to *The Politics of History in the Wake of Socialism*. Speakers included faculty,

advanced graduate students, and invited guests from both universities, including Norman Naimark (History, Stanford), John Connelly (History, Berkeley), Jason Wittenberg (Political Science, Berkeley), Andrew Barshay (History, Berkeley), Robert Crews (History, Stanford), Dylan Riley (Sociology, Berkeley), Amir Weiner (History, Stanford), David Beecher (History, Berkeley), and Alexei Miller (Institute of Scientific Information for the Social Sciences, Russian Academy of Sciences). For those of you who could not attend, or who would like to refresh your memory, we plan to post a podcast of the event on our website later this summer.

I'm pleased to report that our faculty/graduate student lunchtime seminar series continues to be popular and intellectually stimulating. This year we asked several former Institute-affiliated graduate students who are now leading scholars in the field to discuss their intellectual trajectories in the context of trends in their disciplines and in the study of our region. Spring seminars were led by Professor Ted Gerber, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Professor David Engerman, Department of History, Brandeis University; Professor Boris Wolfson, Russian Department, Amherst College; Professor Chad Bryant, Department of History, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and Professor Şener Aktürk, Department of International Relations, Koç University.

In April, our Carnegie-supported Field Development Project brought four young scholars from Armenia, Belarus, and Ukraine to Berkeley for a two-week working visit. These scholars

work with our faculty and graduate students in producing a field reading list, an undergraduate lecture course and/or graduate seminar syllabus, and a field survey. This semester's fellows were Professor Arsen Hakobyan, Yerevan State Linguistic University; Dr. Svitlana Khutka, National University of Kyiv-Mohyla; Professor Liubov Kozik, Belarusian State University; and Professor Natalia Laas, National Aviation University, Kyiv.

Finally, it's time to say goodbye. This summer my term as director is coming to an end. It has been a great privilege to work with all of you. We have learned a lot together and have seen many of our students go on to distinguished careers in many parts of the world. Thank you for your continued interest, curiosity, and support. Next year's interim director will be Professor Jason Wittenberg from the Department of Political Science. In the fall of 2014, the reins will be picked up by ISEEEES's new permanent director, Professor John Connelly, of the History Department.

For information about upcoming events, please continue to visit our website and events calendar at <http://iseees.berkeley.edu/>; and please include Tuesday, September 17, 2013, on your calendar as the date of our annual ISEEEES fall reception.

Sincerely yours,

Yuri Slezkine
ISEEEES Director
Jane K. Sather Professor of History

Save the Date!

ISEEEES Annual Reception

Come celebrate the beginning of the 2013-2014 academic year with ISEEEES!



Tuesday, September 17, 2013
4:00pm
Toll Room - Alumni House
UC Berkeley Campus



Bread and Circus: Putin and the Sochi Olympics

Edward W. Walker

UC Berkeley

For host countries, the political risks in any Olympics are high, but they are higher in some than others. The political stakes in the 2014 Winter Olympic Games are particularly high for host country Russia. Not only will they take place at a moment when President Vladimir Putin and his administration are politically vulnerable, they will be held in the Black Sea resort town of Sochi in the northwestern corner of Russia's volatile North Caucasus region.¹ For the outside world, the news that the perpetrators of the Boston bombings on April 15 were part Chechen and part Avar was a reminder that the North Caucasus is still a violent and troubled region, where a potent Islamist insurgency continues to wage war against federal and local security forces and officials and carries out regular terrorist attacks against civilians. For Russians, and for Putin in particular, no such reminder was necessary.

When Russia submitted its bid to host the Olympics in 2005, Russian authorities had reason to feel confident about the country's future. The hope and expectation was that the 2014 winter Games would mark Russia's return as a "great power" and global player, much as the Summer Olympics in Beijing would showcase the rise of China seven years later. As German Gref, then Minister of Economic Development and Trade, put it after hearing that Russia had won its Olympic bid, "Russia has risen from its knees!"² As it turns out, a successful outcome this coming February will certainly be helpful for the regime. But the downside risks are also higher than expected seven years ago. The Kremlin has invested an enormous amount of political and financial capital in the Games, and while they will likely prove a success, Putin is doubtless aware that disappointment in Sochi, particularly some kind of major terrorist incident, could be a public relations disaster and a major blow to Putin's political prospects.

Putin is one year into his third term as president, his first two terms coming in 2000-2004 and 2004-2008. For whatever

reason, Putin chose to run yet again after four years as prime minister under his political ally, Dmitrii Medvedev, in what came to be known as the "tandemocracy." He thereby rejected two lower-risk alternatives – continue on as prime minister, perhaps only for a few years, and have Medvedev remain president, or step off the political stage entirely, which would have allowed him to leave office a winner, remembered by most Russians, and many foreigners, as the first truly successful Russian leader of the post-Soviet era. The prospect that his third term would prove a success was undermined by the fact that he would serve for six rather than four years thanks to a constitutional amendment adopted in 2008. Moreover, the constitution precludes someone from serving for more than two *consecutive* terms as president, which means that the Russian public is confronted with the possibility that his third term will be followed by a fourth. If so, Putin will have been Russia's formal or informal leader for 24 straight years. That would be no small challenge under the best of circumstances, and these are not the best of circumstances.

Indeed, Putin is already struggling politically. By the time he took office last year, mass demonstrations were bringing tens of thousands onto the streets of Moscow and other cities to protest the so-called "castling" maneuver that returned Putin to the presidency and Medvedev to the prime minister's office. Street protests have since abated, and Putin's approval ratings are holding up (recent surveys put it at around 60 percent). But to put the point in Marxist language, contradictions between Russia's socio-economic base and its ideological-political superstructure are intensifying, and it is difficult to imagine that Putin will overcome those contradictions given his current course. That he will leave office with his popularity and reputation intact seems even less likely.

Writing in 2005, Steve Fish argued in *Democracy Derailed in Russia* that Russia was already an outlier in terms of

¹ Administratively, Sochi is located in Krasnodar Krai in the Southern Federal District of Russia -- it is thus not part of the North Caucasus Federal District. The latter is comprised of seven "subjects of the federation: Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachai-Cherkessia, and Stavropol Krai. Geographically, however, Sochi is situated in the northwest corner of the North Caucasus, on the narrow coastal corridor just to the west of the North Caucasus Mountains, about 35 km by road from Abkhazia to its south. The legal status of Abkhazia was a key issue in the 2008 war between Georgia and Russia. Abkhazia was an autonomous republic within Georgia in the Soviet period, but it fought for independence from Georgia in the late Soviet-early post-Soviet era. The Abkhaz managed to drive Georgian forces out of Abkhazia, but most of the international community still considers Abkhazia to be legally part of Georgia, one notably notable? exception being Russia.

² Quoted in "Russia expects Olympics to Retool its Image," *Washington Post*, February 9, 2013.

the relationship between its level of socioeconomic development and its political institutions. Russia was less liberal and less democratic than average for countries at similar levels of GDP per capita and with similar social profiles.³ In the period since, it has become more of an outlier. It is now considerably richer, has a considerably larger middle class, and is considerably less democratic than was the case a decade ago.

By World Bank standards, Russia is now an upper middle-income country. Its 2011 Gross National Income (GNI) at purchasing power parity (ppp) was \$21,200, a few thousand dollars lower than Greece's and Portugal's and some \$1000 higher than Poland's.⁴ It has a large and growing middle class, and some 50 percent of Russians regularly use the Internet, and Internet use by the urban middle class is even higher.⁵ But Russia is at the same time less liberal and democratic than even a year ago. Since Putin's inauguration, Moscow has used violence to suppress opposition demonstrations and arrested scores of demonstrators as well as leading opposition figures, notably Alexei Navalny. The Russian legislature has adopted new laws that restrict Internet content, broaden the definition of slander, make it easier to prosecute individuals for treason, and, of greatest concern to democracy advocates, require non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that receive any foreign funding and are involved in vaguely-defined "political activities" to register as "foreign agents." State authorities have been enforcing the latter law vigorously in recent months, to the point that the most respected polling service in the country, the Levada Center, may be forced out of business.

Among scholars of democratization, there is a longstanding debate about whether there is a "democratic threshold" – that is, whether there is a threshold level of GDP per capita (often assumed to be somewhere between \$15,000 to \$20,000 at ppp) beyond which authoritarian regimes find it difficult to survive.⁶ The argument, which harkens back to a seminal 1959 article by Seymour Martin Lipset, is that "modernization" entails economic growth, which in turn produces a middle class that demands secure property rights, political and social stability, and accountable government, which are only possible with liberal democratic political institutions. Particularly in the age of the

Internet, one could add an additional factor – educated elites feel humiliated by a governance structure that is viewed as backward and "uncivilized" by their counterparts abroad.

Of course, countervailing factors can sustain authoritarian regimes despite a "modern" socioeconomic profile, including international threats, irredentism, virulent ethno-nationalism, the resource curse, and extreme income inequality – GDP per capita of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are tens of thousands of dollars above \$15,000, but neither is a democracy, liberal or otherwise. At least in the short term, however, nothing is more important for authoritarian stability than a healthy and growing economy – property owners and workers alike fear a regime change that might kill the goose laying the golden eggs. Certainly Putin's most worrisome problem is the slowing Russian economy and the possibility that it will continue to underperform for the duration of his current term.

From 2000 to 2008, Russia's economy grew at an average rate of some seven percent per annum (I suspect that 2008, the year of Russia's brief and victorious war with Georgia, will be remembered as the political high-water mark of the Putin era). The global economic crisis that struck late that year hit the Russian economy particularly hard, with GDP falling by 7.9 percent in 2009. The economy started growing again later that year, but, in the period since, growth rates have been disappointing for a middle-income country with Russia's resource endowments. In 2010, 2011, and 2012, respectively, GDP growth was 4.5 percent, 4.3 percent, and 3.4 percent.⁷ By the end of 2012, it was slowing further, and it then deteriorated sharply early this year, growing only 1.1 percent year-on-year in the first quarter of 2013. Russia has now recorded five straight quarters of slowing growth. For 2013 as a whole, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has cut its growth forecast to only 1.8 percent, while the Russian government forecast has been lowered to 2.4 percent and the OECD's to 2.3 percent.⁸

More alarmingly for the administration, many economists are predicting that growth will average only two to three percent per year for the coming decade.⁹ Many factors are contributing to this gloomy assessment, but perhaps most important is the fact

³ M. Steven Fish, *Democracy Derailed in Russia: The Failure of Open Politics*, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

⁴ See the World Bank's country data at <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/country-profiles>.

⁵ "Russia's Internet Use is Exploding," *Forbes*, May 18, 2013.

⁶ Seymour Martin Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *Political Science Review* 53 (March): 69-105. For the debate over the existence of a "democratic threshold," see Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, "Modernization: Theories and Facts," *World Politics*, 1997, no. 49, pp. 155-183; Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Cambridge University Press, 2005; and Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

⁷ For GDP growth rates, see *CIA World Factbook* at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2003.html>.

⁸ "Russia GDP Growth at 1.6% as Economy Weakest Since 2009," *Bloomberg*, May 17, 2013.

⁹ "Russia's Economy Could be Next Big Underperformer," *CNBC.com*, <http://www.cnbc.com/id/100739313>.

that Russia is already a relatively rich country. Just as there is evidence that authoritarian regimes run into trouble at around \$15,000 - \$20,000 per capita GDP (ppp), there is evidence of a so-called “middle-income trap” at about the same threshold (for Eichengreen, et.al, that threshold is \$15,000-\$17,000 in ppp adjusted constant 2005 international dollars), at which point extensive growth and the economic advantages of backwardness are exhausted and most economies experience a slowdown.¹⁰ Better economic performance is increasingly a function of more intensive exploitation of factors of production (i.e. improved labor productivity and the efficient use of capital), which itself is a function, *inter alia*, of improved governance.

There are many signs that Russia’s economy is facing serious economic headwinds. In the first two months of 2013, capital flight was some \$14-\$16 billion, more than the government expected for all of 2013.¹¹ New tax policies have forced thousands of small businesses to close, and many Russian entrepreneurs are reportedly relocating to more business-friendly Kazakhstan.¹² Pessimism about the economy’s immediate prospects in the Russian media compelled Medvedev to reassure consumers that “there is no need to stockpile canned meat, soap, matches and salt!”¹³ Oil and gas production still accounts for up to 20 percent of GDP, two-thirds of export earnings, and 50 percent of government revenue. The government now estimates that a balanced budget in 2013 requires an average price for Brent crude of \$118 per barrel, over five times the price required to balance the budget in 2006. A decline of \$10 per barrel reduces federal revenues by approximately 1.1 percent of GDP.¹⁴ And oil prices are down considerably from their 2013 peak. More broadly, the Russian economy suffers from “Dutch disease,” in which export earnings drive up the price of its currency, making imports cheaper and undermining domestic production in general and small business and entrepreneurship in particular.

To be sure, there is even more uncertainty than usual about where the Russian economy is headed, and the pessimism in Moscow may prove excessive. Much depends on the strength

of the global economic recovery, economic stabilization in the Euro zone, and oil and gas prices on international markets. Russia’s economy also has some underlying strengths. Factories are operating at close to full capacity and consumer spending has held up despite the slowdown in growth. Sovereign debt is only some ten percent of GDP, and the government has again been augmenting, rather than drawing down on, the country’s sovereign wealth fund.¹⁵ The federal budget was in balance last year, and government forecasters anticipate a deficit of less than one percent of GDP for 2013. Foreign direct investment (FDI) increased by over 60 percent in the first quarter compared to the first quarter of 2012, and a majority of foreign investors believe that the investment climate is improving.¹⁶

Nevertheless, the consensus among economists is that the target set by Putin for GDP growth of five percent per year is unlikely to be met. Even less likely is a return to the robust rates of 2000-2008. If so, the political risks for Putin are obvious. His 2012 campaign promises on pensions, education, housing, and health care will not be realized, and eventually his implicit social contract with the Russian people – a strengthening of the “power vertical” and constraints on individual liberties in exchange for political/social stability and improving material conditions – will be at risk. He has reacted by attempting to blame the government for the weak economy, and at some point he may well fire Medvedev. But blaming the government and firing Medvedev will not relieve the pressure for long if the economy continues to underperform.

For all these reasons, the Sochi Olympics are scheduled to take place at a particularly vulnerable time for Putin. His personal commitment to the success of the Games is longstanding and unequivocal. Having learned from Tony Blair’s successful personal appearance before the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to lobby for the 2012 Summer London Games, Putin flew to Guatemala to attend the July 4, 2007, IOC meeting to decide on the 2014 host country, to argue Russia’s case. In his speech to the IOC, he took the unusual step of speaking mostly in English

¹⁰ See Barry Eichengreen, Barry, Donghyun Park, and Kwanho Shin, “When Fast Growing Economies Slow Down: International Evidence and Implications for China”, 2011; NBER working paper no.16919, 2011; Antonio Fatás and Ilian Mihov, “The 4 I’s of Economic Growth,” INSEAD Working Paper, Freedom House, Freedom in the World, 2011; and the discussion in “Russia May Experience Minimal Growth in the Next 10 Years,” by Olga Kuvshinova, *Vedomosti*, May 22, 2013 [Translated at <http://russianspectrum.com>].

¹¹ Will Pomeranz, “Putin’s Unsteady Year,” *The National Interest*, May 7, 2013.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Quoted in “No Need to Hoard Canned Meat, Matches – Medvedev,” *The Moscow Times*, May 20, 2013.

¹⁴ “Russia’s Economy Could be Next Big Underperformer,” CNBC.com, <http://www.cnbc.com/id/100739313>.

¹⁵ Russia’s has two sovereign wealth funds: a so-called “Reserve Fund” and a “National Wealth Fund.” The former is invested in low risk securities and is to be used to cover budget shortfalls (notably from lower prices from oil and gas exports), while the latter is invested in riskier assets. For the changing value of the funds, see the official website of the Russian Ministry of Finance at <http://www1.minfin.ru/en/reservefund/> and <http://www1.minfin.ru/en/nationalwealthfund/>.

¹⁶ Interfax, May 24, 2013.

and then concluded with a few sentences in French.¹⁷ He also promised \$12 billion in funding. By all accounts, his speech was decisive in Russia's narrow and unexpected victory.¹⁸ He has continued to talk up the Games in the period since, emphasizing that he hopes that they will help turn Sochi into a major winter resort, inspire Russian youth to become active sportsmen, and set the stage for the 2018 soccer World Cup, which will also be held in Russia. He is also increasingly associated personally with the city of Sochi, where his vacation residence is located and where he has been spending more of his time as of late. He now regularly hosts foreign dignitaries in Sochi, escorting them around construction sites where the enormous Olympic development work is underway. He recently announced that Sochi will be the site of the G-8 presidential summit next year.¹⁹ He skis regularly at Krasnaya Polyana, occasionally inviting Medvedev to join him. And he claimed during his annual televised Q&A marathon that "the [Olympics] work is on schedule and that overall, all of the sites will be completed on time and will go through all of the planned trial competitions. I am absolutely certain that all of the Olympic preparations will be completed on time and will be of the proper quality."²⁰

What Putin did not, and could not, claim is that the Games will come in on budget. The costs of the Games are enormous and growing, much greater than originally projected. In February, a Russian official stated that they will likely cost at least \$51 billion, almost \$40 billion more than originally forecast.²¹ They will also be the most costly Games in history, even more expensive than the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, which cost an estimated \$40 billion, and the 2012 London Games, which cost a mere \$14.3 billion, despite the fact that the Summer Olympics involve more athletes and attract more spectators. Some hundreds of high-rises are being built in anticipation of the Games in and around Sochi, including luxury hotels and new housing blocks, as well as three Olympic villages, ultra-modern sporting stadiums, and high-tech transportation and telecommunications facilities. The events themselves will take place at two locations, a "coastal cluster" along the Black Sea and a "mountain cluster" at Krasnaya

Polyana, some 50 kilometers into the Caucasus Mountains to the east. Opening and closing ceremonies will take place in Fisht Stadium, a 40,000-seat facility that will be an architectural highlight of the Games.

To some degree, the Putin administration has reduced its political exposure to the Games through what might be called strong-armed cost sharing. State-controlled companies and private investors will pick up around half of the \$51 billion in development expenses, with the state on the hook for the rest.²² Gazprom is building a gas pipeline, a power station, one of the Olympic villages, a cross-country skiing and biathlon center, and a ski lift, with total investment of around \$3 billion. The billionaire Mikhail Potanin has committed an estimated \$2.5 billion, mostly on the ski resort, while a company controlled by Oleg Deripaska is investing in Sochi's port facilities. Some private investors are reportedly unhappy about prospects for making a profit from their Sochi commitments, claiming in particular that Olympstroy, the state agency overseeing the Sochi work, is proving to be a difficult client.²³ But there is no sign that private investors are pulling out, perhaps because they are confident that they will make a reasonable profit in the end, or because they believe the Kremlin expects them to pony up for a national project of this importance. The Russian media is full of reports that Russia's oligarchs have been told that it would be a mistake not to contribute to the success at Sochi. As Mikhail Kasyanov, a former prime minister under Putin and now a member of the opposition, explained, the presumably implicit message is, "If you want to carry on doing business in Russia, here's the tax you need to pay."²⁴

Not surprisingly, there have also been frequent media reports of corruption, fraud, and embezzlement in Sochi. The government's Audit Chamber has asserted that more than \$500 million of government money earmarked for the Olympics work has gone missing.²⁵ In February, the deputy head of Russia's Olympic Committee was fired after Putin publicly criticized him for cost overruns and a two-year delay in the construction of the Olympic ski jump. Prosecutors filed criminal charges against him in April for embezzling \$2.6 million, at which point he fled Russia

¹⁷ For the full speech, see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_aNo3DxWaW4.

¹⁸ "Russian City to Stage 2014 Winter Olympics," *Los Angeles Times*, July 5, 2007.

¹⁹ "2014 G8 Summit to Be Held in Sochi – Putin," RIA Novosti, February 4, 2013.

²⁰ The full transcript of the April 25, 2013 televised question and answer marathon can be found on the Kremlin website, [Kremlin.ru](http://kremlin.ru).

²¹ "Russia's \$50 Billion Olympics," *Bloomberg*, February 12, 2013.

²² "Russian Oligarchs Foot Most of 2014 Sochi Olympics," Associated Press, May 20, 2013.

²³ "Russian Tycoons Help Fund 2014 Set to Cost \$52 Billion," news.com.au, May 21, 2013. See also "Putin Buddy Gets \$7 Billion of Deals for Sochi Olympics," *Bloomberg*, March 19, 2013.

²⁴ Quoted in "Russian Oligarchs Foot Most of 2014 Sochi Olympics," Associated Press, May 20, 2013.

²⁵ "Olympic Overstate: Sochi Embezzlement Reaches \$506mn," *RT: Russian Times*, March 6, 2013.

and announced that he had been poisoned with mercury before he left Moscow.²⁶

Preparatory work for the Winter Games has experienced other public relations problems as well. Police officials in Sochi assert that the vast sums being spent on the Olympics has led to a significant increase in organized criminal activity. Concerns peaked this past January after one of Russia's best known mobsters, Aslan Usoyan (a.k.a Dedy Khassan), boss of one of Russia's largest criminal networks, was shot dead on a Moscow street. Usoyan's organization reportedly dominated the Sochi criminal scene. The hit was followed by other high profile assassinations, which suggested that the country was on the verge of another mob war.²⁷ To date, those fears have proven unfounded, but the Kremlin has every incentive to ensure that those planning to attend the Games are confident that Sochi's streets are safe. The Games' organizers have also been criticized by human rights groups for allowing many of the tens of thousands of construction workers engaged in the massive construction work to be exploited by their employers, particularly the 16,000 or so foreign migrant workers.²⁸ Environmental groups have claimed that the construction work is causing unnecessary damage to the ecosystem. Regular protests by residents of a small town near Sochi in opposition to the construction of what is reported to be largest natural gas-powered station in the world have received considerable press coverage.

Cost overruns, corruption, organized crime, and labor and environmental problems would be unsurprising in any country for a project of this scale, and it is even less surprising in a country that ranks among the world's most corrupt by any cross-national measure. Politically, however, these problems are not likely to prove very costly for that very reason – they are considered par for the course and the inevitable cost of mega projects and rapid development. It is also true that media coverage in the lead up to any Olympic Games stresses problems rather than successes – the British press, for example, was full of criticism of the construction work and security measures leading up to the London Summer Games. All will likely be forgiven if the Games themselves go

well. But if they do not, cost overruns and other problems in preparing for the Games may add to Putin's political vulnerability.

The odds are that the Sochi Games will go well. While perhaps not as effective at mobilizing social resources for priority projects as the Soviet state before it, the Russian state is good at mobilizing for major projects of this nature, in no small part because of Putin's success at reestablishing the "power vertical." If the Kremlin makes a major political commitment to a particular project, all those involved, whether in the public or private sector, are on notice that they will be held accountable for shortcomings. They also know that the center will commit the resources needed to accomplish the mission. Moreover, numerous test events in Sochi, including the recent finals of the International Ice Hockey World Championship, have generally gone well. According to the head of the Sochi Organizing Committee, over 70 national and international competitions have been held in Sochi over the course of 2012 and 2013 at Olympic venues.²⁹

Nevertheless, the Games may turn into a political problem, or worse, for the Kremlin. Perhaps the most likely factor that could undermine their success, and a major worry for the organizers, is the weather. The 2010 Winter Games in Vancouver were plagued by warm weather, fog, and a dearth of snow that led to repeated delays and major problems for television programming. It is very possible that the same will happen in Sochi. The average temperature in February is around 50 degrees Fahrenheit. It also appears that organizers overestimated the probability of snow in the mountains when they made their bid to the IOC. Data from weather stations installed for the Games suggest that snowfall is considerably more variable than anticipated.³⁰ Already weather has been a problem at a number of the preparatory events – this past February, for example, a lack of snow forced the cancellation of some World Cup cross-country and snowboarding events. But Olympic events cannot be canceled, and as a result, organizing authorities may face huge challenges in ensuring that all events take place as planned. Extensive and costly snowmaking facilities are being installed on the ski slopes, and hundreds of thousands of cubic meters of snow are being stockpiled in shaded areas of the

²⁶ "Russian President Fires Olympic Official Over Delays, Cost Overruns, RFE/RL, February 7, 2013; "Disgraced Russian Official Says He Was Poisoned," RFE/RL, April 29, 2013.

²⁷ "Mob Wars: A Vor for a Vor," RFE/RL, January 21, 2013; and "Death of Russian Mobster Sparks Fear of Turf War in Sochi," *The Guardian*, February 4, 2013.

²⁸ "Laboring in Sochi No Slice of Heaven," *Moscow Times*, April 30, 2013. Earlier this year, Human Rights Watch released an extensive report claiming that employers "cheated workers out of their salaries, required 12-hour work shifts with few days off, and confiscated passports, apparently to force workers to remain in exploitative jobs." ("Migrant Olympic Workers Cheated, Exploited," Human Rights Watch, February 6, 2013).

²⁹ "After Dress Rehearsal, Sochi Declared Ready for Olympics," *Moscow Times*, April 29, 2013.

³⁰ "Sochi Organizers are Stockpiling Snow, Just in Case," *New York Times*, May 25, 2013.

mountains above the ski slopes. A warm summer, lack of snow, or major storms could make for major problems.

Politically, a bigger risk than weather is the possibility that Russian athletes disappoint. Invariably the publics of host countries have high hopes that their athletes will do better, or at least as well, as they have done in the past. The problem for Russia is that this is a very high bar. In the first Winter Games at which a Russian national competed, the 1994 Games in Norway (Russian athletes participated in the 1992 Winter Games as part of a “Unified Team” that included athletes from most former Soviet republics), Russia won 23 medals, more than any other country. In the four Winter Olympics since, Russia has come in third, fifth, fourth, and a disappointing eleventh in Vancouver. At the very least, Russian officials have to hope that the Russian medal count will be higher in Sochi than it was in Vancouver. And for Russian sports fans the most important winter event is ice hockey. Currently, Russia has the top ranked team in the International Ice Hockey Federation standings, having won gold medals in the 2008, 2009, and 2012 world championships. Russian hockey teams have nevertheless failed to win a single Olympic gold in ice hockey, managing only a silver medal in 1998 and a bronze in 2002. Russia also finished a disappointing sixth at the recent world championship, behind rivals the United States (3rd) and Canada (5th), as well as first place Sweden and second place Switzerland. Particularly humiliating was an 8-3 defeat at the hands of the Americans in the quarterfinals. A strong overall medal performance, and especially a gold – or at least a silver or bronze – medal in ice hockey, would be enormously helpful in making Russians forget about cost overruns, corruption, or organizational failures. But the opposite is also true, as Putin and his advisers are doubtless well aware.

Finally, there is of course a risk that terrorism will turn the 2014 Winter Games into a disaster. As the Boston Marathon bombings made clear, major sporting events are inviting targets for terrorists – the media is present in large numbers, and large and often raucous crowds can make security measures fiendishly difficult. Sporting events are particularly soft targets, particularly when they are spread out and when spectators are not required to pass through a limited number of points of egress where dogs, scanners, video cameras, inspections, and profilers can seek to identify odd behavior and search for firearms, explosives, or chemical and biological weapons.

Nevertheless, the organizers of the Sochi Olympics must strike a difficult balance in planning for the security at the Games. They cannot be so heavy-handed that they interfere with the smooth operation of the sporting events or with the enjoyment of athletes and spectators.³¹ But they also have to take all reasonable measures to prevent a spectacular incident like the murder of the Israeli athletes at the 1972 Summer Games in Munich, one of the most successful terrorist attacks in history, because it is still remembered by so many. And they also have to prevent smaller, less-elaborate attacks, whether by so-called “lone wolves,” insurgents from the North Caucasus, international *jihadis*, or indeed anyone, including Russian nationalists from the extreme right. Arguably the lowest cost and most effective way to disrupt the Games would be a terrorist attack in Sochi well before the Games get underway, when security measures are presumably less elaborate and terrorists can gain access to the city as one of the tens of thousands of non-resident construction workers. A Boston marathon type attack using low-tech explosives that targeted a foreign hotel or delegation, or worse an attack by terrorists armed with automatic weapons such as the one in Mumbai in 2011, would be a public relations disaster. Media coverage would be enormous, and a great many spectators would be deterred from attending, particularly those from the U.S. and Western Europe. A spectacular attack might even lead national governments to keep their athletes at home.

Of course security has been a huge concern for all Olympic Games, at least since the Munich Games of 1972, and Russian security officials have to anticipate threats from all the usual directions, including international *jihadis* and other religious or nationalist extremists who might, for example, want to target Western or Israeli athletes. But security is particularly an issue for the Sochi Games because of the bloody insurgency underway to the city’s east. Islamist militants carry out almost daily attacks in the North Caucasus, and they have also periodically mounted spectacular terrorist operations elsewhere in Russia. The International Crisis Group (ICG) reports that some 750 people were killed in 2011 as a result of insurgent attacks and counter-insurgency operations by the state, while 574 were killed in the first nine months of 2012.³²

What began in the early 1990s as an ethno-nationalist separatist movement in pursuit of independence for Chechnya

³¹ For example, human rights groups have been complaining about street patrols in Sochi by self-styled Cossack in traditional garb, the fear being that rather than enhancing security the groups are intimidating minorities, notably Muslims, Jews, and foreign construction workers. See “In Boston’s wake, Sochi Eyes Olympics, Chechens,” Reuters, April 24, 2013.

³² “The North Caucasus: The Challenges of Integration (I), Ethnicity and Conflict,” International Crisis Group: Europe Report No. 220, October 19, 2013; and “The North Caucasus: The Challenges of Integration (II), The Insurgency and Counter-insurgency,” International Crisis Group: Europe Report No. 221, October 19, 2013

that included a small minority of Islamists had, by the end of the 1990s, morphed into an insurgency that unequivocally embraced Islamist discourse and considered itself part of the international *jihadi* movement.³³ From its inception, elements of the resistance embraced terrorism as a mode of combat, but until the mid-2000s most of the violence from the conflict was concentrated in Chechnya and its immediate neighborhood. A turning point came in 2002-2004, during the second half of Putin's first term, thanks to a series of particularly spectacular terrorist incidents, most notably a hostage-taking at the Dubrovka Theater in Moscow in October 2002, in which some 130 theater-goers were killed, and an attack in September 2004 on a school filled with children in Beslan, a town in the North Caucasus republic of North Ossetia, in which some 334 were killed, including 156 children. The Kremlin responded by increasing the intensity of its campaign against the insurgency, but this time it also managed to find, and unleash, a Chechen ally and strongman, Ramzan Kadyrov, to help suppress the insurgency. Thanks in part to Kadyrov's brutally effective measures, organized resistance in Chechnya has declined dramatically since the mid-2000s, to the point where Kadyrov recently claimed that virtually all "terrorists" had been eliminated from the republic. While Kadyrov was being hyperbolic, it is decidedly the case that most of the violence in the region now takes place to Chechnya's east, in the larger and ethnically diverse republic of Dagestan, and to a lesser extent to Chechnya's west in Kabardino-Balkaria.

In 2007, the insurgents established a new entity, the Caucasus Emirates, the central purpose of which was to shed the vestiges of Chechen ethno-nationalism in the resistance movement and signal that, like any proper *jihadi* organization, it transcended ethnic and national loyalties and was instead an instrument of Islam pure and simple and served the global Muslim community, the *umma*.³⁴ In practical terms, the move signaled that the leadership of the insurgency recognized that, given Kadyrov's success in suppressing the resistance in Chechnya, they would need to maximize their ability to recruit non-Chechens, as well as Chechens, to the cause. Today, while much of the leadership of the resistance movement is still Chechen, it appears that most of those who "go to the forest" to sign up to fight are coming from the diverse nationalities of Dagestan. Most combat operations carried out by agents of the Caucasus Emirates use improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and small arms to target federal

forces, local police, government officials, and members of the traditional clergy. But terrorist attacks on civilians still take place regularly, including suicide operations and strikes outside the North Caucasus—the Caucasus Emirates claimed credit for an attack that derailed the Moscow-St. Petersburg express train in 2009 and killed 27 passengers, suicide bombings on the Moscow Metro in March 2010 that killed at least 40, and a suicide attack at Moscow's Domodedovo Airport in January 2011 that killed 37.

Last year, Doku Umarov, Emir of the Caucasus Emirates, announced that the Sochi Games would be a legitimate target for his operatives, and there are unconfirmed reports in the Russian media that he has been deploying fighters into Krasnodar krai. However, it is important to appreciate that Sochi is considerably less accessible to insurgents from the North Caucasus than a cursory look at a map would suggest. The mountains running along the coast to its west are enormous, and there are no roads that pass through them from the central North Caucasus to the Black Sea coast. As in much of the Caucasus range, there are dirt paths through the mountains for hikers or donkeys in the summer months, but those routes are inaccessible during the winter, and anyone who attempted to brave the mountain passes during the winter would risk being spotted by surveillance aircraft. The only practical way to reach Sochi by land during the winter is therefore by the coastal road along the Black Sea. From Nalchik, in the central North Caucasus, the most direct road to Sochi takes some ten hours and passes through Maikop and Tuapse before turning south along the coast to Sochi. Driving from Grozny would take around twelve hours, while from Makhachkala it is an additional two hours. The central and eastern regions of the North Caucasus are also highly militarized, and insurgents trying to reach Sochi by road would be subject to frequent security inspections. And security will get even tighter as the Games approach. Were it not for political obstacles resulting from Georgia's unresolved conflicts with the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the southern route from Vladikavkaz to Sochi through Georgia and Abkhazia could take as little as 8.5 hours. However, while the Georgian-Russian border is now open to traffic, any terrorist group would have to cross that tense international border, and even more difficult would be crossing the highly controlled border from Georgia into Abkhazia, which is not open to casual traffic. Finally, terrorists would have to account for the fact that most of the 410,000 residents of the city are Russian, as are the great

³³ I describe, and try to explain, this transformation in Edward W. Walker, "Islam in Chechnya," *Contemporary Caucasus Newsletter*, UC Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies, Issue 6, Fall 1998.

³⁴ For background on the Caucasus Emirates, see Gordon M. Hahn, "From the Caucasus to Boston and Beyond," National Consortium on Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, University of Maryland, distributed on Johnson's Russia List, May 1, 2013.

majority of citizens of Krasnodar krai. Moreover, while Abkhazia to the south is relatively lawless and also lightly populated, the Abkhaz are in effect at war with Georgia and depend on Russia for support, which would make it additionally difficult for fighters from the North Caucasus to use the region as a base of operations.

There is yet another security threat peculiar to Sochi as an Olympic host city. The western North Caucasus is the traditional homeland of the Circassian people, while Sochi was their traditional capital.³⁵ The Circassians participated in the fifty-year “Murid Wars” against Russian imperial penetration of the North Caucasus in the nineteenth century, but they were relatively late in doing so, and they were rather less of a problem for imperial authorities than the Chechens, Avars, Ingush, and other highlanders in the central and eastern zones. Nevertheless, the Circassians were the last of the highlanders to give up the fight, and Krasnaya Polyana was the site of the final surrender to Russian imperial power in 1864. In the wake of the surrender, Russian imperial authorities decided that the Circassians were a particular strategic threat because their homeland was close to Ottoman power and the Circassians had received occasional support from Istanbul and indeed from Western powers as well. As a result, St. Petersburg engaged in an act of large-scale ethnic cleansing, driving most Circassians from their homes into exile. Today, remnant populations in the North Caucasus – notably the Adyghe, Cherkess, and Kabardinians, as well as the small community of Shapsugs, the west Circassian tribe whose traditional home was in the vicinity of Sochi – are few in number, and as many as five million self-identifying Circassians, some 90 percent of the total, live abroad, mostly in the Middle East. Many of these Diaspora Circassians retain a strong sense of national identity and attachment to their traditional homeland. Circassian nationalist organizations were, not surprisingly, outraged by the selection of Sochi as an Olympic site, particularly because the Games will take place on the 150th anniversary of the surrender at Krasnaya Polyana and the expulsions that followed.³⁶ As Iyad Youghar, head of the International Circassian Council, told *The Economist*: “We want the athletes to know that if they compete

here they will be skiing on the bones of our relatives.”³⁷ Russian authorities have, however, ignored demands from Circassian organizations that they at least acknowledge the historical presence of the Circassians in the region, if not their sufferings from the ethnic cleansing in the nineteenth century—Putin, for example, failed to mention the Circassians in his 2007 speech to the IOC despite observing that Sochi was built by Greeks in antiquity. That Circassian nationalists might try to disrupt the Games through some kind of violent “propaganda of the deed” is not lost on Russian security officials.

The Sochi Games entail downside risk and potential upside reward for Russian foreign policy as well. In the wake of the Boston bombings, Western governments are hoping for Russian assistance in assessing and monitoring the possibility of terrorist operations organized out of the North Caucasus that target Western countries. And of course Washington would also like assistance with its investigation into the Boston attacks. However, American officials have told reporters that Moscow has been guarded in its support of the Boston bombings investigation, and they are concerned that there will likewise be little cooperation with foreign intelligence services in preparation for the Sochi Games.³⁸ Cooperation between national intelligence agencies was reportedly extensive in the lead up to the London Olympics, but to date, Russian security officials have reportedly been less willing to share intelligence. With less burden sharing, there will also be less blame sharing if something goes wrong, and thus greater likelihood that a terrorist incident will negatively impact Russia’s relations with foreign governments and publics.

There is an additional foreign policy risk that warrants mention. The last Olympic Games held on Russian soil took place in Moscow in the summer of 1980. Coming some six months after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Games were a huge political setback for the Kremlin because some 60 countries, including the United States, refused to send teams in protest. Rather than the propaganda coup that the Kremlin had hoped for, the 1980 Games were a public relations disaster for the Kremlin, as was its decision to retaliate four years later by refusing to

³⁵ The term “Circassian” is a widely-used exonym dating to medieval times for a cluster of highland tribes that spoke a series of related paleo-caucasian languages – in the Soviet nationality classification system, these tribes were classified separately as Adyghe, Cherkess, Ubykhs, etc., but Circassian is the ethnonym with the most historical resonance and is preferred by most Circassian nationalist groups today.

³⁶ An American research institute, The Jamestown Foundation, has been particularly active in publicizing the demands for recognition and restitution by Circassian nationalist organizations, in particular their assertion that they were the victims of the first act genocide in the modern era (*pace* the Armenians) and their objections to the selection of Sochi as an Olympic site. See, for example, “Krasnaya Polyana: Breaking the 150 Years of Silence (Part One),” *Jamestown Monitor*, vol. 10, Issue 103, May 31, 2013. The Jamestown Foundation also organized two major international conferences on the Circassians, one in Tbilisi in March 2010 (“Hidden Nations, Enduring Crimes”) and a second in June 2010 Washington, D.C. (“Sochi in 2014: Can an Olympics Take Place at the Site of the Expulsion the Circassians 150 Years Earlier?”).

³⁷ Quoted in “Circassians: Home Thoughts from Abroad,” *The Economist*, May 26, 2012. Circassian nationalists have launched a campaign to protest the Sochi Games called “No Sochi” – see nosochi2014.com.

³⁸ Mark Galeotti, “Will Spy Scandal Hamper U.S.-Russia Collaboration on Sochi Olympics Security,” *Russia Beyond the Headlines*, May 27, 2013.

attend the Summer Games in Atlanta. While a similar outcome in Sochi seems very unlikely, one could imagine a crisis of some sort that could lead to another boycott – for example, another war with Georgia or the use of a S-300 surface-to-air missiles by Syrian forces to shoot down, whether by mistake or otherwise, a commercial airliner. Were some kind of boycott to take place, there might well be a brief rally-around-the-flag effect for Putin in Russia, but the longer term impact on regime legitimacy would likely be very negative.

Even if the Sochi Games unfold the way the Putin administration hopes they will, the Kremlin will immediately face another major challenge – preparations for the 2018 World Cup. The competition will take place in eleven cities, one of which is Sochi. Federal authorities have estimated that the preparations will cost over \$20 billion, but this time federal money is to be used for sports-related facilities only – city and regional governments will cover housing and utilities and transportation infrastructure.³⁹ Local governments have claimed, however, that the actual cost of the competition may be as high as \$43 billion, more than three times the \$13.6 billion that Brazil expects to spend on the 2014 World Cup.⁴⁰ Standard & Poor has warned that “slowing economic growth, material spending pressure triggered by a presidential call for public salary increases and very modest fiscal

flexibility” will make it difficult for some local governments to meet their financial commitments to the event – of the eleven host cities, only Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, and Sochi are likely to cover costs without excessive debt or support from the federal government.⁴¹

As with the 2014 Winter Olympics, the 2018 World Cup may pay off politically for Putin, but it also entails a great deal of political risk, particularly if the Winter Games go badly. One could even imagine the competition being moved to another venue if there is a major terrorist incident in Sochi. At the very least, the decision to spend many billions of dollars on high-profile sporting events will prove increasingly costly politically if the economy continues to struggle, especially given that the Winter Games and World Cup will cost much more than similar events elsewhere. Putin, it seems, is committed to a renewed program of strengthening the “power vertical,” suppressing political opposition and securing public support by appealing to Russian state patriotism, anti-Americanism, and measured ethno-nationalism. Central to this project is the claim that he has restored Russia to its rightful place as a Great Power, predominant in former Soviet space and an equal among the world’s other Great Powers. A prolonged period of poor economic performance would make this project much more difficult. And a stalled economy combined with disappointment in Sochi would mean neither bread nor circus for the Russian people.

³⁹ “2018 World Cup to Cost Russia More than \$20 Billion,” Sportbusiness, June 14, 2013.

⁴⁰ “S&P Warns Russia on High Costs For 2018 World Cup,” Associated Press, April 17, 2013.

⁴¹ “2018 Soccer World Cup Could Undermine The Credit Quality Of Russian Host Regions,” Standard & Poor, April 16, 2013.

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Spring 2013 Courses

Selected course offerings and selected area-related courses

Film and Media 160	National Cinema: Soviet Film Style, from Silence to Sound	Nesbet, A.
History 100	Early Modern Russia	Zhivov, V. / Frede, V.
History 103B	The Caucasus in the Modern Era	Astourian, S.
History 171C	The Soviet Union, 1917 to the Present	Slezkine, Y.
History 280B	Introduction to Soviet Historiography	Slezkine, Y.
History 280B	Nations and Nationalism in Modern East Central Europe	Connelly, J.
Music 220P	Beethoven and Shostakovich String Quartets	Taruskin, R.
Near Eastern Studies 126	Silk Road Art and Archaeology	Mehendale, S.
Political Science 2	Introduction to Comparative Politics	Fish, S.
Slavic R5A	Reading Composition Topic: <i>Music and Literature: Transpositions</i>	Lin, T.
Slavic R5A	Reading Composition Topic: <i>Elements of Character</i>	Kitzinger, C.
Slavic R5B	Reading Composition Topic: <i>Tricksters, Rogues, and Other Outsiders</i>	Girvin, C.
Slavic R5B	Reading Composition Topic: <i>Narrative and Desire</i>	Johnson, Z.
Slavic R5B	Reading Composition Topic: <i>The Logic of Empire: Violence and Seduction in Fictions of England and Russia</i>	Papava, S.
Slavic 24	The Mystery and Fascination of the Balkans	Alexander, R.
Slavic 46	20th-Century Russian Literature	Ram, H.
Slavic 50	Intro to Russian/ East European/ Eurasian Cultures	Kavitskaya, D.
Slavic 105A	Advanced Russian/English/Russian Translation	Muza, A.
Slavic 134C	Dostoevsky	Matich, O.
Slavic 134E	Chekhov	Muza, A.
Slavic 148	Early Modern Russian Culture	Zhivov, V. / Frede, V.
Slavic 158	Galicia in History and Imagination	Frick, D.
Slavic 172	Topics in BCS	Alexander, R.
Slavic 190	Russian Culture Taught in Russian <i>Russian Identity: Language and Culture</i>	Muza, A.
Slavic 200	Graduate Colloquium	Naiman, E.
Slavic 204	Russian Composition and Style: Discourse Analysis	Golburt, L.
Slavic 222	Descriptive Grammar of Slavic Languages	Kavitskaya, D.
Slavic 242	18th Century Russian Literature	Zhivov, V. / Frede, V.
Slavic 256	Slavic Folklore Theory	Alexander, R.
Slavic 280 001	Early Modern Eastern and East Central Europe	Frick, D.
Slavic 280 002	Graduate Seminar: Andrei Platonov	Naiman, E.
TDPS 125	Performance and History: Stanislavsky in Hollywood	Gordon, M.

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

Campus Visitors

Asel Murzakulova is an Associate Professor at Bishkek Humanities University and a consultant at Analytical Center “Polis Asia”. Her current research interests focus on the discourse of the Kyrgyz national image and identity, its reflection in Kyrgyz media, and CIS and Russian policy in Central Asia, and interethnic relations after the Osh events 2010. She is the author of two books: *CIS Inter-Parliamentary Institutions in the Context of Post-Soviet Transformation* (Kyrgyz-Russian Slavonic University, Bishkek, 2011), *Interparliamentary Institutions of the CIS: Sustainability and Integration Issues in the Post-Soviet Area* (Bishkek Humanities University, Bishkek, 2012).; and *The citizen and the State in Modern Kyrgyzstan* (KRSU Center “Polis Asia” - Bishkek, Maxprint, 2012), a tutorial for universities.

Emily Finer is a Visiting Scholar with ISEEEES for the Spring 2013 semester. Dr. Finer holds a PhD in Slavonic Studies from the University of Cambridge and holds the position of Lecturer in Russian and Comparative Literature in the School of Modern Languages at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. During her stay at UC Berkeley, Dr. Finer intends to conduct research for her second monograph, *The Best of Times, the Worst of Times: Reading Charles Dickens in the Soviet Union*.

Irina Demetradze is a visiting scholar with ISEEEES during the Spring 2013 semester. She is an assistant professor in the College of Engineering at Ilia State University in Tbilisi, Georgia. She is working on settlement patterns in the South Caucasus with Professor Patrick V. Kirch in the Department of Anthropology, UC Berkeley.

Natasa Besirevic is a Visiting Scholar with ISEEEES for the Spring 2013 semester. Dr. Besirevic holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Zagreb in Croatia. She is hosted at UC Berkeley by the Junior Faculty Development Program (JFDP) Fellowship. During her stay, Dr. Besirevic intends to collect materials in order to compose handbooks on the political system of the European Union and public diplomacy for undergraduate and graduate students studying political science and journalism.

Nazym Shedenova is a visiting scholar at ISEEEES during the Spring 2013 semester. She is a professor in the Faculty of Philosophy and Political Sciences at al-Farabi Kazakh National University in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Her visit is sponsored by the Open Society Institute. Her research deals with economic sociology, sociology of labor, sociology of gender, and public policy. Her current studies are devoted to issues of working women and the work-family balance, and economic strategies of survival in Kazakh households. During her time at ISEEEES, she is working with Dr. Mary E. Kelsey in the Department of Sociology.

Tamir Chultemsuren is a visiting student researcher with ISEEEES during the Spring 2013 semester. He is a lecturer in the Department of Sociology at the National University of Mongolia in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. He studies social movements and protest in post-communist countries (comparative research of Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia). His visit is sponsored by the Open Society Institute. During his time in Berkeley, he will work with Professor Victoria Bonnell.

Undrakh Davaadorj is a visiting student researcher with ISEEEES during the Spring 2013 semester. She is a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science at the National University of Mongolia. Her visit to Berkeley is sponsored by the Open Society Institute’s Faculty Development Fellowship Program. Her research interests include international relations, comparative politics, and political philosophy. During her time in Berkeley, she hopes to develop a syllabus for a course in Mongolia on American Politics.

Yongwaha Kim is a Visiting Scholar with ISEEEES for the year of 2013. She holds a PhD in Russian historical linguistics from Moscow State University. Dr. Kim is a Professor in the Department of Russian Language and Literature at Chungbuk National University in Cheongju, South Korea. Her research at UC Berkeley will focus on the diachronic aspect of the variability of genitive plural noun forms in the Russian language.

A True Polish Jew?

Jewish-Gentile Coexistence in Ber of Bolechów's *Memoirs*

Sarah A. Cramsey

Ph.D. Candidate, History, UC Berkeley

In the last decade of the eighteenth century, Ber of Bolechów inked his memories on precious parchment.¹ This octogenarian from the southern reaches of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had a story to tell. Over dozens of pages, Ber described his father, his business, his home, and the major social events of his life. His various stories include the mundane travails of the traveling salesman as well as gripping descriptions of a town fire, waves of bandits, and political disputes. Like autobiographical works penned by Jews throughout Europe in the early modern period, Ber's writings offer intimate contact with a semi-literate and overwhelmingly silent Jewish society.² Ber's decision to tell his tale does not make him unique. The geographical accident of his eastern birth, however, separates this chronicler from Glückl, from Solomon Maimon, and from Jacob Emden. For Ber of Bolechów was not only Jewish, he was, arguably, Polish.

This statement begs a variety of provocative questions: could Ber or any Jew integrate into Polish society? Did Jews and Gentiles in early modern Poland have a shared cultural vocabulary or societal framework? And finally, where does Jewishness end and Polishness begin? I contend that a closer reading of Ber's memoirs offers novel answers to these inquiries, which have infused the recent telling of medieval and early modern Jewish history in the Polish lands and beyond. The experiences of Ber reveal how some Jews in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth acted just as, if not more (!), Polish than many of their Gentile neighbors. For this investigation to succeed, it is necessary to clarify the collective and often-essentialist terms that saturate this historiography. To understand Ber, his Jewishness and his

Polishness, the exceptional, multicultural circumstances of this eastern European federation must remain at the forefront of our minds.

Studies like those offered by Gershon Hundert and Magda Teter tease apart generalized nouns such as "Poles," "Jews," and "Polish society" to reveal both cleavages and connections throughout the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Across a handful of publications, Hundert painstakingly reconstructs the intricacies of Polish society and its political realities. Hundert's handiwork reveals a complex configuration of royal towns, private towns (owned by wealthy magnates), and a vast countryside dominated by small villages. Limited in numbers, members of the eighteenth century Polish bourgeoisie lived exclusively in Warsaw. Elsewhere, diversity was the rule rather than the exception. Hundert explains that

identity in pre-modern European society was characterized by a multiplicity of loyalties and memberships. Indeed there was no majority as we now understand the term...Jews cannot be seen as a minority group when less than 20% of the population of the country was urban and only 40 to 60 % was ethnically Polish.³

In Hundert's assessment, a concept such as "Polish society" proves too tidy. It does not encapsulate the world of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, where differentiations of wealth, noble heritage, and residence permeated the citizenry. The Jews of eighteenth century Poland and Lithuania were not necessarily

¹ Ber of Bolechów, also known as Ber of Birkenthal, lived between 1723 and 1805. He most likely wrote his memoirs between 1790 and 1800. According to Nancy Sinkoff, Ber's memoirs prove "the existence of a class of men within the eighteenth-century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth whose worldviews encompassed deep traditional Jewish learning and broad secular knowledge even before the formal Jewish Enlightenment movement began in Eastern Europe." See her entry on Ber of Bolechów in the online *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe* (http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Ber_of_Bolechów, accessed on June 2, 2013). The author would like to thank Professor Deena Aranoff of the Graduate Theological Union and Professor John Efron of the University of California, Berkeley for their comments on this paper.

² See Glückl, *The Memoirs of Glückl of Hameln*, Marvin Lowenthal, trans. (New York: Schocken Books, 1977); Solomon Maimon, *An Autobiography*, J. Clark Murray, trans. (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2006); and Jacob Emden, *Megilat sefer* (Jerusalem: Moreshet Jerusalem, 1979). On Jewish autobiography in general see: Marcus Moseley, *Being for Myself Alone: Origins of Jewish Autobiography* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006); Michael Stanislawski, *Autobiographical Jews: Essays in Jewish Self-Fashioning* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004).

³ Gershon David Hundert, *Jews in Poland-Lithuania in the 18th century: a genealogy of modernity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 21. Also helpful is Hundert's *The Jews in a Polish private town: the case of Opatów in the eighteenth century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

a minority. Therefore, Ber and his coreligionists should not be contrasted against an imagined majority, “Polish” culture.

Just as Hundert complicates the notion of “Polish society,” so does Magda Teter challenge the direct connection between Catholicism and Polishness. In her recent book interrogating the success of the counter-Reformation in Poland, Teter questions the theological unity of the “Polish nation” in the pre-modern period. Teter observes that only at “the end of the 18th century [did] aristocratic lineage and Catholicism define the Polish nation.”⁴ Conversely, the “Polish nation” as defined by the nobles in pre-modern Poland, excluded nearly 90% of the population in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and among that 90%, Catholics were not a majority.⁵ The population surrounding the Jews in the eighteenth century Polish lands was not necessarily “Polish” or Roman Catholic. Ber of Bolechów did not inhabit a bi-polar world populated by one majority and one minority culture. The analyses offered by Teter and Hundert confront the straightforward model of “Polish society” submitted by other observers with a more nuanced and refined appreciation. Thanks to their careful work, Ber’s universe and the questions driving this exploration stand in sharper relief.

The Jewish world of Bolechów was linked to the region surrounding it, to the trade routes passing over the Carpathian Mountains to the Council of the Four Lands, and to the Polish Crown and *Sejm* (legislature). Jews were not necessarily a minority in the town, nor were they a minority in the overall non-Jewish population. When Ber of Bolechów speaks of non-Jews he does not once call them Poles. Rather he speaks more specifically of the Gentiles who live on his street, the steward who listens to the grievances of the townspeople, the Rabbis in faraway regions discussing *halakha*, and the nobles who carouse during the legislative season. Ber’s world was multi-polar. Instead of envisioning the Jews in Bolechów as interacting or integrating with the Gentiles surrounding them, perhaps we should see all of the population groups within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as interlocking and indeed inseparable from each other. Yes, laws and cultural norms separated Jews from non-Jews, preventing complete absorption of Bolechów’s Jews and, most commonly, precluding intermarriage across religious lines. These divisions, however, were not exceptional. Porous divides

cut across the entirety of the Polish-Lithuanian citizenry, keeping men and women within the localized, ethnic worlds which they inherited by birth. In general, nobles married nobles, Orthodox – their brethren, and Catholic peasants were betrothed to other Catholics. This caste system cannot be envisioned, however, as static. In towns dominated by a heterogeneous population, points of intimacy were inevitable. Moreover, all groups fell under the umbrella of a complex legal system ensuring that everyone on Polish soil functioned within Commonwealth law. To further explore the linguistic, spatial and legal linkages that crossed the pre-modern membrane of the Bolechów Jewish community, we turn to its bard, Ber.

Ber insists in his *Memoirs* that he speaks and writes Polish correctly and beautifully. This wine merchant turned document translator had an exceptional talent. According to R. Jacob, whom Ber quotes in his tale, our chronicler “writes Polish as nobody else can. All the nobles are astonished that he writes so well and praise him for his fluency in the Polish language.”⁶ Ber acquired this valuable linguistic fluency early in his life, thanks to the influence and support of his father, Judah. Judah of Bolechów was a “wine merchant and innkeeper of considerable business capacity.”⁷ According to his youngest son Ber, Judah “was welcomed everywhere; people were glad to see him again, Jews and Gentiles alike. Above all they were pleased with his charming manner of speech to everybody, Jews and Gentiles, both in Poland and in Hungary. They liked to listen to his tales and proverbs in Yiddish, Polish and Hungarian, for he had perfectly mastered these languages.”⁸ Judah was a frequent traveler throughout the Carpathian region, but the foundation of his business was his ample household in Bolechów.

Here, under the roof of his father, Ber intensely studied and eventually mastered the Polish language. Early on in his *Memoirs*, Ber describes this process. He writes that he “learned also the Polish language to please [(his)] father, who wanted [(him)] to know it. He kept a tutor in his house, an educated Polish gentleman, who made [(him)] conversant with Polish speech and writing. [(Ber)] learned it perfectly in a very short time.”⁹ Not only did Ber study Polish as a child, he learned the language from a native speaker who lived in the family house. We do not know why Judah wanted his son Ber to gain fluency in Polish.

⁴ Magda Teter, *Jews and Heretics in Catholic Poland: a beleaguered church in the post-Reformation era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 142.

⁵ Teter, 142.

⁶ Ber, *The Memoirs of Ber of Bolechów*, M. Vishnitzer, trans. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1922), 65.

⁷ “Introduction” by M. Vishnitzer, in Ber, 4.

⁸ Ber, 90.

⁹ Ber, 79.

No doubt, as a savvy businessman, Judah knew that Ber's wine trade would increase with the more languages he knew. Ber could, however, write Polish fluently as well. Thanks to this skill, Ber found himself privy to important legal documents and an arbiter of sorts in disputes between those who knew Polish and those who did not.

In Ber's assessment, he was the only Jew qualified to translate complex legal documents from Hebrew into Polish and vice versa.¹⁰ He relates one such instance when his exceptional translation skills were sought out. A familial dispute over an inheritance led to the involvement of the Gentile authorities in decidedly Jewish affairs. Gentile leaders fell under the impression that one particular Jewish court had handed down conflicting decisions. In rabbinical eyes, the offered decisions were not in conflict: the second verdict simply overruled the first. A Jewish party who was unhappy with the second verdict, however, complained to the Gentile authorities, asking them to intervene and correct the injustice of the Jewish court. This case serves as a fascinating introduction to the multilayered legal world of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Our focus at present, however, is the language barrier standing between the rabbinical leaders and the Gentile authorities. In order to clarify the Jewish verdict and demonstrate the integrity of the rabbinical legal apparatus, the famous Gaon of Lemberg intervened, deciding to write a letter explicating the situation. To explain the conflict, however, Gaon Hayyim Rapaport needed to utilize Polish.

Ber explains what happened next and how he became involved in this dispute. After these events, Ber writes,

Hayyim Rapaport, Rabbi at Lemberg, since 1741, the Gaon said 'I myself know the Polish language a little, but not perfectly; and when a Gentile writes for me he never expresses my meaning properly. The only thing for me to do is write what I want to say myself in Polish on a clean sheet of paper; then if you will kindly go to R. Ber and ask him to put the substance of it in other words, I will look at both copies and send to the steward the one which pleases me better.'¹¹

After this, the *shtadlan* of the Council of Four Lands (a prominent office in the commonwealth-wide Jewish communal hierarchy) met with Ber and gave him the Rabbi's draft. Ber proceeded to read the letter and write it "afresh," correcting the mistakes and rewriting the letter in his own handwriting.¹²

Two conclusions stem from this interesting tale. First, Ber enjoyed a modicum of fame throughout the Polish lands. In this case, the Gaon of Lemberg, one of the most elevated offices in the region, approached Ber of Bolechów for his translation needs. Ber accepted his work gladly and was happy to report his skill and renown. The second conclusion proves more interesting and warrants pause. Before approaching Ber of Bolechów, the Gaon of Lemberg wrote a draft of his explanation in Polish. And so, one of the foremost rabbinical authorities in the Commonwealth knew enough Polish to write a rudimentary sketch of a detailed legal argument. Yes, Ber of Bolechów corrected the Gaon's mistakes and rewrote the letter, but the Gaon could express himself in literary Polish. Moreover, this religious figure could discern whether or not a Gentile could correctly translate his meaning into words on the page. Ber's translation skills may be exceptional, but the Gaon's intimacy with Polish is staggering. What conclusions can we draw from Ber's account regarding the linguistic space in the eighteenth century Polish lands?

Ber's description of this event and the Gaon's linguistic skills hint at the existence of a common language that falls between grammatically correct written varieties. Perhaps the Gaon could not write in perfect Polish. Perhaps Ber was the only Jew qualified to render these ideas into a grammatically correct language. This does not mean that an oral language did not exist between Jews and non-Jews in the Commonwealth. Perhaps the Gaon drew on this very storehouse of oral communication when he penned the letter that later arrived on Ber's desk.¹³ The picture painted by Ber in this segment of his memoirs challenges an argument posited by Moshe Rosman regarding language in the Polish lands. Rosman writes, "with no real common language it would seem that Jews and Christians were operating in separate cultural universes. Full literacy in Polish was rare amongst Jews. No Judeo-Polish language developed (though Yiddish in Poland did come to incorporate many Polish and other Slavic terms)."¹⁴ Full literacy in Polish was rare amongst non-Jews as well in eighteenth century

¹⁰ Ber, 83.

¹¹ Ber, 65.

¹² Ber, 66.

¹³ Helpful when considering the differences between oral and literate worlds is Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London, New York: Methuen, 1982).

¹⁴ Moshe Rosman, "Innovative Tradition: Jewish Culture in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth," in *Cultures of the Jews: A New History*, ed. David Biale (New York: Schocken, 2006), 524.

Bolechów and thus, not the most useful bar by which to measure shared cultural space. More helpful is to envision how Jews and non-Jews, who matured with diverse mother tongues, developed a common language that enabled coexistence and interaction in everyday life.¹⁵ The Gaon may have required Ber and his detailed understanding of Polish to craft a complex legal explanation, but he had enough Polish stored in his memory to commit some thoughts to paper.

Just as Jews and Gentiles inhabited a virtual space of letters and translation in Ber's *Memoirs*, so do they coexist in physical spaces such as their homes, their marketplaces, and their towns. As indicated above, having a Polish boarder, specifically one to tutor your child, was not out of the ordinary in Bolechów. Ber notes at another juncture that for a time, he "lived with [his] wife in [his] father's house, in the special rooms which were reserved for guests-Jews and Gentiles alike."¹⁶ We learn that Gentiles had slept (even lived!) in Ber's family home. Beyond Ber's home life, as a merchant he often interacted with Gentiles professionally. Moreover, he had established business partnerships with non-Jews. Ber notes in his memoirs, which often serve as a record of business failures and accomplishments, how his wine-vaults lay in a "house built of bricks, which belonged to the Carmelite Monastery."¹⁷ In both his home and business life, Ber had opportunities for contact with non-Jews. As noted by Hundert, continued prohibitions regarding Jewish and Gentile interaction by some Catholic bishops throughout the Commonwealth in the eighteenth century can be read as evidence of regular and continuing contact between the various religious groups.¹⁸ Ber's chronicle records such interactions and hints at more.

As a successful traveling businessman and lover of Polish history and prose, Ber was indeed exceptional. We cannot conclude, however, that the space he carved out for himself was unique. No Jewish ghetto was established in Bolechów, and Jewish and Gentile houses dotted the town's main street. Yet the question remains, how interconnected was Ber's Jewish world with the universe of the nobility, the cosmos of the Orthodox peasantry, or the churchyard of the Catholic cathedral? At this juncture, the work of historian David Frick, who studies early

modern Vilnius, an equally multi-cultural city at the northern end of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, may prove useful. Frick concludes that "given the number of Uniate and Orthodox inhabitants, the number of Uniate churches and the importance of the one Orthodox complex as well as the public nature of preparations for holidays, it would seem likely that Catholics and Protestants (as well as Jews and Tatars) in Vilnius lived with a certain everyday awareness of the Greek Calendar."¹⁹ Thus, while different religious groups harbored alternative notions of religious time, the close proximity of cohabitation mandated an awareness of the other group's rituals and practices. It follows that even if the majority of Jews in Bolechów could not speak Polish fluently, some other communicative structure must have emerged enabling cohabitants to function at a rudimentary level. A common language and a common calendar served as overarching frameworks even in the most heterogeneous towns; Bolechów was no exception.

In addition to language, space, and an awareness of time, the residents of Bolechów shared a common circumstance and a political hierarchy regardless of creed. A tragic example from Ber's memoirs can elucidate both. In 1759, a posse of bandits from the east entered Bolechów, ravaged Jewish houses, and set the structures on fire. Traveling for business at the time of the pillage, Ber heard of the tragedy soon after the event and hurried home to assess the damage to his family, his house, and his community. His account of the crime and the aftermath reveal how complex and interlocking relations were between Jews and Gentiles in Ber's hometown. The bandits received intelligence from "other" townspeople indicating that Ber's house contained many valuable items. Some valuables were taken from his residence; other items, including upwards of 100 books, were saved by Ber's "Muscovite" maid, whose valorous feat is commended by Ber in his reflections. In the midst of this mayhem, which included some killings and many axe-inflicted injuries, "some members of our [or the Jewish] community had run to the church and tolled the bell, to call the people to help."²⁰ It would seem that members of the Jewish community of Bolechów not only knew how to access the church but also initiated and responded to calls from the church bells. Ber does not specify which "people" answered the pleas inherent in the nocturnal ringing descending from the town's steeple. Such a

¹⁵ See David Frick, "The Bells of Vilnius: Keeping time in a city of many calendars" in *Making Contact: Maps, Identity and Travel*, Glenn Burger, Lesley B. Cormack, Jonathan Hart and Natalia Pylypiuk, eds. (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2003) and his forthcoming book *Kith, Kin and Neighbors: Communities and Confessions in Seventeenth-Century Wilno* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, forthcoming). The author read an early draft of a chapter from this manuscript during a meeting of the *Krouzek* Working Group at the University of California, Berkeley in 2008.

¹⁶ Ber, 87.

¹⁷ Ber, 54.

¹⁸ Hundert, 64.

¹⁹ Frick, 36.

²⁰ Ber, 101.

gesture, however, could very well indicate that Jews and Gentiles alike would respond to this universal symbol of alarm. Even if the bandits' violence was directed against the Jews, the entire town was summoned to action. Violence against one group threatened the livelihood of all others. A fire in a Jewish home could easily spread to the house of a Gentile.²¹

After the fire subsided and sunlight revealed the damage, Ber returned home from his trip, and the blame game began. According to Ber, "the gentiles would have felt obliged to put out the fire and to save some of the buildings had the steward commanded them to do so."²² And so to explore his allegation and decide how rebuilding would commence, Ber, Bolechów's steward, and a number of noblemen of "intelligence and judgment" convened a conference to reach an "agreement as to the best way of helping the ruined town."²³ The response to the tragedy of the robbery and the fire is quite telling. The Jewish community was not solely responsible for rebuilding after the event. The entire town, including the steward (a post usually appointed by the noble of the region in which the town lies), other noblemen, and Jewish communal representatives bore the burden of the fire. This moment in Ber's memoirs brings this paper to its final and most notable point of Jewish-Gentile contact in Bolechów and throughout the Polish and Lithuanian lands. Legally, it was impossible to separate Jews and the Jewish community from the multivalent world ensconcing them. The Jews were connected to each other, to their neighbors, to the nobility, to the king, and to communal leaders of the Va'ad by means of a complex legal framework that criss-crossed linguistic and ethnic boundaries, interlocking all groups irrespective of religion or birth into one overarching societal unit.

Multiple legal structures existed in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The institutions of the Jews, Gentiles, nobles, and royals consistently overlapped. If a Jew wanted to file a charge against another Jew, anywhere in the state, he simply had to access his local steward who could speak on his behalf in the royal courts.²⁴ Ber relates a story centered upon the friendship of a proverbial odd couple: a steward and renowned chief Rabbi Hayyim Rappaport. Ber quotes the steward as declaring, "up to this day I have been [Rappaport's] friend and trusted all his

words and deeds since the time he was made a Rabbi. I presented him to the Prince, the Voyevoda and I succeeded in obtaining the letter of appointment."²⁵ In this instance, the steward helped Rappaport secure an important position in the Jewish community and the Polish governmental apparatus. The world of the prince, noble, and steward seemed inextricably linked to rabbinical structures. Additionally, Ber describes one situation that could indicate a customary legal procedure between Jews and the noble authorities. Ber explains how a Jew from Skole, R. Jacob, son of R. Loeb Klimtser, asked the steward "for his seal to confirm a verdict passed by the President of the Bet Din of Lemberg against a Jew, an inhabitant of Skole."²⁶ Here, a seal from a gentile authority lends credence to an exclusively Jewish verdict. Clearly, the Jewish legal sphere interlocked with the world of the nobility and their stewards on many levels.

Alongside discussions of stewards and seals, a close examination of the legal aftermath of the 1759 fire in Bolechów reveals how Jewish communal autonomy operated within the Commonwealth's legal system. Indeed, Jews enjoyed some semblance of self-government. The influence and sovereignty of the Council of the Four Lands (or the Va'ad) and individual *kehilla*, however, must be understood as part of an interlocking hierarchical framework with the Sejm at its apex. Ber's memoirs treat the famed Va'ad with a balance often lacking in the historiography. Ber's description of the Va'ad mixes overwhelming pride with harsh realism. Yes, the Va'ad, as the only trans-regional Jewish structure on the European continent in the early modern period, was unique. Its alleged power, however, was always tempered by the complex legal structure within which it was situated.

After meeting with the town steward and an assortment of noblemen, Ber of Bolechów followed the recommendation of the "fire committee" and sent off three letters. The first letter went to state administrators at Lemberg asking for a communal reprieve from the annual alcohol tax. He addressed the second letter to the Elders of the Va'ad in nearby Brody. The third letter implored Princess Johanna Lubormirska of Rzeszów, the ruler of Bolechów, to intervene with the State Treasury on the Jew's behalf.²⁷ Each letter requested relief from taxation, which was too onerous to bear in the aftermath of the fire. In due time, the Jewish

²¹ Into the modern period, fireman's associations throughout the Polish lands offered Jews and Gentiles a shared space and opportunity to officially associate with each other. Fires, of course, were a point of common concern.

²² Ber, 102.

²³ Ber, 102.

²⁴ Ber, 63.

²⁵ Ber, 63. The Voyevoda must refer to Bolechow's voivodeship, (Polish: województwo) or the administrative unit to which the town belonged.

²⁶ Ber, 64.

²⁷ Ber, 104.

community of Bolechów was relieved of their wine tax. The other two letters fell on semi-deaf ears. According to the reply by an otherwise sympathetic Princess Johanna, taxes could not be evaded. Other Jewish communities would have to account for the gap in Bolechów's payment. But with the council meeting of the Va'ad only a few months away, this possibility seemed untenable.

This tax situation, seemingly relegated to an internal issue of the Jewish Va'ad, remained a Gentile matter as well. As Ber of Bolechów negotiated with nobles to stave off tax collection at the hand of the Polish army, another noble met him in the midst of his business travels with good news. A letter from the noble Rzewuski contained an order, which asked that the community of Bolechów not be pressed for payment until the next assembling of the Council of Four Lands.²⁸ Moreover, the noble promised that if Ber's statements of destruction were correct, he would do everything in his power to "advocate [Ber's] cause and save [him] from this payment."²⁹ In the end, the Va'ad paid Bolechów's taxes for the year of 1759.

Ber's description of the tax situation in the fire's aftermath reveals the complexity of the institutional architecture within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Within the Va'ad, Jews enjoyed some trans-regional autonomy and unity, but the nobility and the Sejm could more often than not exercise an upper hand. Ber's description of the Va'ad's restrained authority tempers the analysis of Shmuel Ettinger, who tends to romanticize the power and reach of the Va'ad. Ettinger writes "the Council of the Lands was regarded as the greatest expression of Jewish aspirations towards self-rule since the institution of the Gaonate came to an end."³⁰ Certainly the Va'ad harbored some power and autonomy. It served as a high court for *halahkic* disputes, a social networking event that mirrored the noble's Sejm, and the prime taxation organ for all Jews within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (nearly five percent of the overall population of the state by the eighteenth century). Did it represent the pinnacle of Jewish self-rule? Historian Israel Bartal is skeptical at best. He explains that

... most Jewish historians view the Council of Four Lands anachronistically, from the point of view of those processes which led to the development of a feeling of modern national awareness, something which grew during

the 19th century and in the first decades of the 20th. For them the Va'ad was a 'model' institution, providing the most suitable pattern for the autonomous administration of the Jewish community through institutions set up in a changing social and political situation. Thus both Shimon Dubnow and Majer Balaban clearly overestimated the significance of the Sejm of the Four Lands...³¹

Bartal would not disagree that in comparison to Jewish life elsewhere in Europe, the Va'ad can be seen as an exceptional trans-regional organization that consolidated power. This opinion cannot be overstated. However, in the context of the Commonwealth, Jewish electors rarely had the final word. After all, the real power within the Commonwealth was divided among the landed nobility, who constituted the Sejm, and determined royal succession.

In fact, future inquiries into Jewish life in the eighteenth century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth should downplay the workings of the Va'ad and instead focus on the liminal figures, who moved between Jewish, Gentile, and noble circles. Documentation on the Va'ad is sparse. A better scholarly path forward could focus on the *shtadlan* or even the translator. Hundert defines the *shtadlan* as an "official lobbyist," whose duties included "interceding with government officials or the town owner on behalf of the Jewish community and accompanying and assisting the [Jewish] individuals who appeared in Christian courts."³² The *shtadlan* occupied a crucial juncture between the interlocking parts of the Commonwealth's legal system and populace. So, too, did translators such as Ber. Studying these liminal figures and how they negotiated Gentile courts, the Va'ad, and town magnates will help complicate our understanding of this fascinating, decentralized Commonwealth. A direct reward will be a deeper awareness of how the highest concentration of Jews in the early modern period lived.

In conclusion, I would like to return to the questions posed at the onset of this study and my tentative thesis. Is it fair to say that our chronicler, Ber of Bolechów, is a true Polish Jew? Yes, but only if we understand Polishness and Jewishness in the context of the eighteenth century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

²⁸ Ber, 110.

²⁹ Ber, 110

³⁰ Shmul Ettinger, "The Council of Four Lands" in *The Jews in Old Poland 1000-1795*, Antony Polonsky, Jakub Basista and Andrzej Link-Lenczowski eds. (I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, London 1993), 94.

³¹ Israel Bartal, "Dov of Bolechów: A Diarist of the Council of Four Lands in the 18th century" in *Polin Volume 9* (1996), 188.

³² Hundert, 84.

Did Ber feel at home in Bolechów? Yes. Did he mourn the fire that damaged his town? Yes. Did he feel connected to the Va'ad, his neighbors, the Polish language, and the established political system? Yes. These connections with Jews and Gentiles alike and his location within a complex social and legal system of the

Commonwealth bequeath Ber a Polish identity of sorts. Religious tradition may have prevented him from marrying a Catholic and rabbinical rulings might have dictated his dietary habits, but Ber and his co-religionists still coexisted together with Gentiles in Bolechów and beyond.

Faculty and Student News

Anne Nesbet published her second children's book, *A Box of Gargoyles*, with HarperCollins.

Darya Kavitskaya received a Hellman Family Faculty Award and will be a Hellman Fellow for the 2013-2014 academic year.

Eric Naiman published an article, "When Dickens met Dostoevsky," in the Times Literary Supplement. The article is available online: <http://www.the-tls.co.uk/tls/public/article1243205.ece>

Gérard Roland gave the keynote lecture, "The Costs and Risks of Incomplete Transition. What Makes a Successful Economy!" at a conference organized by the International Monetary Fund, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs of Switzerland (SECO), and the National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, May 19-21, 2013.

Joseph Kellner was awarded the Heller Seminar Paper Prize this year and presented this paper titled "Potpourri Russe: Santeri Nuorteva and the Embassy of the International Revolution" at a history conference at CSU Fresno and at the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study's annual conference in San Francisco.

Malgorzata Szajbel-Keck, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, received the Dean's Normative Time Fellowship for the 2012-2013 academic year and the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) Fellowship for study in Germany. She also presented a poster at the conference *Formal Approaches to Slavic Linguistics 22*, which took place in Hamilton, Ontario, May 3-5, 2013. Her poster is titled: "Can we eat our soup cold in Poland? A fresh look at secondary predication in Polish." More information about her poster and the conference can be found online at the following link: <http://fasl22.mcmaster.ca/fasl22/>

Mark Keck-Szajbel received a position as Academic Fellow at the Center for Interdisciplinary Polish Studies at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt Oder.

Michael Dean was awarded an ACLS East European Fellowship for the 2013-2014 academic year. He also presented a paper titled, "'For Our Slavonic Future': How the Czechs Did Not Colonize Asia" at the 14th annual Czech Studies Conference at Columbia University (April 26-27, 2013).

Olesya Shayduk-Immerman received the Wenner Gren Foundation Dissertation Fieldwork Grant for the 2013-2014 academic year.

Richard Buxbaum published an article, "Back to the Past: Old German Bonds and New U.S. Litigation," in *Zeitschrift für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht (ZaöRV)*. His paper discusses the fate of bonds issued by or owned by what after World War II became GDR entities or subjects.

Tony H. Lin's article "Beyond Science Fiction: Vladimir Odoevskij's *The Year of 4338* as a Hybrid Text" will be published in *Russian Literature* (<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/russian-literature/>) in 2014.

Yana Skorobogatov received the Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship and the Graduate Division Summer Grant for Summer 2013. She also presented a paper titled "Kurt Vonnegut's Dystopia: Science Fiction and the Use of Science in Soviet Society" at the History of Science Society Annual Meeting in November 2012.

Yuriy Gorodnichenko was named a 2013 Sloan Research Fellow.

IN MEMORIAM

Viktor Markovich Zhivov

(February 5, 1945 - April 17, 2013)



Our colleague, mentor and friend, Viktor Markovich Zhivov passed away Wednesday, April 17, 2013 at Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley.

Viktor was a remarkable man, warm, caring, learned, highly distinguished within the academy in Russia, Europe and the US, deeply knowledgeable about his area of specialization and profoundly curious about all that was outside of it. We loved him for his intelligence, humor and empathy. He will be missed terribly, both at Berkeley and in the larger intellectual community of Slavic Studies.

Carnegie Scholars Program: Spring 2013

The Institute of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, in collaboration with the Centre for Advanced Studies and Education (CASE) at the European Humanities University and the Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC), organizes a bi-annual two-week-long workshop for promising scholars from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. The workshop is funded by a generous grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Each semester, a total of four scholars (“Carnegie Fellows”) are brought to UC Berkeley for an intensive review of key literature, theoretical approaches, and methods employed in a particular field of scholarship. During the Spring 2013 semester, ISEES hosted the following scholars:

Arsen Hakobyan is a Senior Lecturer and the UNESCO Chair on Human Rights, Democracy and European Studies at Yerevan State Linguistic University, a Research Fellow at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography at the National Academy of Sciences in Yerevan, and an Assistant Professor and the Chair of History at Gavar State University. He holds a Ph.D. in Ethnology (*kandidat nauk*) from the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography at the National Academy of Sciences. During the Carnegie Scholars Program, he developed a syllabus on ethnic and cultural history of the Caucasus under the guidance of Professor Stephan Astourian.

Svitlana Khutka is an Associate Professor of Sociology in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Social Technologies at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and an associated researcher at the Laboratory for Comparative Social Studies. She holds a Ph.D. in Sociology (*kandidat nauk*) from the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. During the Carnegie Scholars Program, she developed a syllabus on subjective well-being in transition societies under the guidance of Professor Victoria Bonnell.

Liubov Kozik is an Assistant Professor of History at the Belarusian State University. She holds a Ph.D. in History (*kandydat gistorychnykh navuk*) from the Belarusian State University. During the Carnegie Scholars Program, she developed a syllabus on Polish history under the guidance of Professor John Connelly.

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