



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

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

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

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Notes from the Director

This is my last newsletter as Acting Director. I want to thank the ISEEEES staff for making the job so easy, and the ISEEEES community for providing such a stimulating intellectual environment. John Connelly will assume the directorship in the upcoming academic year. I look forward to working with him and seeing you all at future ISEEEES events.

Our faculty/graduate student lunchtime seminar series has been very successful this semester. This year we asked a handful of 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. This spring we were pleased to welcome back Conor O'Dwyer, Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Florida; Melissa Frazier, Professor of Russian Language and Literature at Sarah Lawrence College; Oleg Kharkhordin, Rector of the European University in St. Petersburg, Russia; and Ethan Pollock, Associate Professor of History and Slavic Languages at Brown University.

This spring ISEEEES hosted visiting scholars and visiting student researchers from Belgium, Japan, Poland, the United States, and Uzbekistan. Please see page 2 for a detailed list of our visitors and their research topics.

As always, spring was a very busy time for ISEEEES. On February 27 we hosted Professor Valerie Bunce, Aaron L. Binenkorb Professor of International Studies and Professor of Government at Cornell University, as our Colin Miller Memorial lecturer. Val gave a timely and insightful talk on Russian President Vladimir Putin and resilient authoritarianism. One week later our colleagues at Stanford University's Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies hosted the 38th annual Berkeley-Stanford Conference, the theme of which was "Emancipation." ISEEEES was well represented, with presentations by Berkeley faculty members John Connelly (History), Steven Lee (English), and Harsha Ram (Slavic and Comparative Literature).

This year's annual Peter N. Kujachich Lecture on Serbia and Montenegro was held on April 1, with a presentation by Mr. Saša Srečković, Senior Curator with the Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade, who spoke on intangible cultural property in Serbia and the Balkans. Lastly, the ISEEEES

Outreach Conference took place on April 26. The topic of this year's conference was "Liberalism and Its Discontents," and it proved to be an informative description of contemporary politics in Hungary, Romania, Russia, and Ukraine, with presentations by Steve Fish (Political Science, Berkeley), Gail Lapidus (Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford), Paul Sum (Political Science and Public Administration, University of North Dakota), Andrei Tsygankov (Political Science and International Relations, San Francisco State University), and Jason Wittenberg (Political Science, Berkeley). Recordings of the conference are available on the ISEEEES website at <http://iseeess.berkeley.edu/>.

Summer promises to be a quiet time on campus as we prepare for our fall activities. Please mark your calendar for the ISEEEES Fall Reception, which will take place on Thursday, September 11, at 4:00 p.m. at the Alumni House on the UC Berkeley campus. We look forward to seeing you at the reception and at other events throughout the 2014-15 academic year. Be sure to check our website <http://iseeess.berkeley.edu/> for upcoming events and updates to the calendar.

Sincerely yours,

Jason Wittenberg
ISEEEES Acting Director
Associate Professor of Political Science

Campus Visitors

Tadashi Anno is a Visiting Scholar with ISEEEES during the 2013-2014 academic year. Dr. Anno is a former BPS-affiliated student, who obtained his Ph.D. in Political Science in 1999. He is currently an Associate Professor of Political Science at Sophia University in Tokyo. His main research interest is in nationalism and its role in states' domestic and foreign policies, particularly in the context of Northeast Asia. While at Berkeley, he will be working on a book manuscript on great-power nationalism and foreign policy in Russia and Japan in the late-nineteenth to early-twentieth centuries.

Harry Bastermajian is a Visiting Student Researcher with ISEEEES during the 2013-2014 academic year. Mr. Bastermajian is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Islamic History and Civilization at the University of Chicago. While at UC Berkeley, he will be doing research for his dissertation, Armenian Identity Formation in the late Ottoman Empire: 1908-1909.

Ben Dhooge is a Visiting Scholar with ISEEEES during the 2013-2014 academic year. Dr. Dhooge is a postdoctoral researcher (Research Foundation – Flanders) at Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium. His main research interests are Andrei Platonov, Russian literary Avant-Garde, and Russian émigré culture. While at UC Berkeley, he will be doing research on the reception of linguistic experiments in literature in inter-war Russian émigré literary criticism.

Manuela Gretkowska is a Visiting Scholar with ISEEEES during the 2013-2014 academic year. Ms. Gretkowska is an accomplished writer and public intellectual, holding an M.A. in Anthropology from L'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris, France, and an M.A. in Philosophy from Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland. She is the founder of the Polish Women's Party. She has written numerous books and screenplays. While at UC Berkeley, Ms. Gretkowska will gather research for a book on life in Berkeley during the time of the late Polish Nobel Laureate poet Czesław Miłosz, who was a professor in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at UC Berkeley.

Lyudmila Pak is a Visiting Scholar with ISEEEES during the Spring 2014 semester. Ms. Pak is currently a junior scholar at the Institute of History at the National Academy of Sciences in Uzbekistan. While at UC Berkeley, she will be researching her current project: "Transformation of Wedding Ceremonialism of Koreans in Uzbekistan."

“The Second Victory”: Imagining Crimea from Moscow

Joy Neumeyer

Ph.D. student, History, UC Berkeley

On March 19, TV journalist Arkady Mamontov hosted a special edition of the news show “Special Correspondent,” which airs on the state-owned channel *Rossiya*, dedicated to Russia’s annexation of Crimea. The program heralded it as “the second victory”—the first victory being Soviet triumph over Nazi Germany in World War II.

The motley panel of pro-Kremlin guests that evening included United Russia lawmaker Yelena Mizulina, who has introduced some of the Duma’s most eyebrow-raising laws, including the “gay propaganda” ban; nationalist ideologue Sergei Kurginyan, whose organization “Essence of Time” seeks to create a new Soviet Union rooted in Russian Orthodoxy; and Alexander Zaldostanov, nicknamed “The Surgeon,” the leader of the Putin-allied motorcycle gang the Night Wolves.

Each speaker stepped forward to offer praise for the new victory, but the night’s best line belonged to the Surgeon. The leather-clad biker declared the Crimean port of Sevastopol “the Stalingrad of the 21st century,” alluding to the 1942-1943 battle that claimed over a million lives.

The studio audience heartily applauded.

This spring, as Ukraine falls deeper into instability, Moscow falls deeper into a surreal patriotism. On March 20, cafés, gyms, and shops around town displayed posters bearing the grimacing countenance of Barack Obama with a red “X.” They turned out to be part of a countrywide flash mob that encouraged Russian businesses to retort to U.S. sanctions against Russian officials with mini-bans of their own. Less playful was a massive banner unfurled over the central Moscow bookstore *Dom Knigi*, which accused several opposition figures of forming a “Fifth Column.”

Foreigners have become conspicuously absent from Moscow’s cultural life, which over the past two decades has grown highly cosmopolitan. The centerpiece of this year’s much-heralded year of cultural exchange between Russia and the U.K. was to be the April opening of “The Golden Age of the Russian Avant-Garde,” a video exhibition by the director Peter Greenaway and his partner Saskia Boddeke, in the *Manezh* gallery by Red Square. But British officials boycotted the event, leaving Muscovites to marvel at the artists’ take on Vladimir Tatlin and Alexander Rodchenko by themselves.

As such self-righteous posturing grows more common, and Moscow responds with snubs of its own, foreigners who study the former Soviet space start to wonder: will we still be granted visas, accreditation, archival access, and simply the pleasure of drinking tea with our Russian friends?

Over the past few months, a series of crackdowns decimated the country’s last independent news outlets, making alternative viewpoints ever harder to find. The head editor of a successful independent news portal, *Lenta.ru*, was fired and replaced with a pro-Kremlin PR man, prompting *Lenta*’s staff to resign. The websites of Alexei Navalny and another Kremlin critic, chess master Gary Kasparov, were blocked. Perhaps the most talked-about move was Putin’s liquidation of the well-regarded news agency *RIA Novosti* and its replacement with *Rossiya Segodnya*, a new conglomerate whose stated mission is to convey the official Russian perspective on current events.

As other news sources were muzzled, state television debuted a bombastic PR campaign informing Russians that Crimea is their ancestral right, for which they have spilled their blood over the centuries with single-minded devotion. The news channels have drawn a direct line between today’s “reunification” with Crimea, to use the state’s favored term, and World War II, when the Red Army liberated the German-occupied region.

Television cameras linger lovingly on the site of pro-Russian activists in Crimea passing out the black and orange Ribbon of St. George, a popular sign of remembrance of the Soviet triumph over German “fascists,” as the Nazis are often referred to in Russian. “Fascists” is also the state media’s term for the protestors and new interim government in Ukraine, who are said to be executing a Nazi-like “genocide.”

Meanwhile, the people whose interests are supposedly being protected in Crimea have become little more than mirrors to reflect the self-image of Russia’s leaders. When the Crimean populace is shown at all on state television, it has generally been to cry “Mother Russia, bring your children home!” or “Thank you, Putin!” to the camera.

“The Great Patriotic War” has long been the ideological centerpiece of the Putin regime, celebrated every year in enormous Victory Day parades on May 9. Bringing the “second victory” analogy full circle, reports emerged that Putin and Prime Minister

Medvedev would mark this year's Victory Day in Crimea. Kiev, meanwhile, canceled its parade.

In practice, those who questioned the triumphalist vision of a war that cost an estimated 27 million Soviet lives were already ostracized. In a broadcast that marked the 70th anniversary of the lifting of the Leningrad blockade this spring, *Dozhd*, the country's only independent news channel, polled viewers about whether they thought the blockade could have been averted in order to spare the 700,000 people who perished in it. As a result, Russia's major television stations dropped the channel, at lawmakers' behest.

In April, however, the Duma passed a new law that solidifies the consequences for injecting uncertainty into World War II's official version. Nominally intended to fight the "rehabilitation of Nazism," the law institutes prison terms of up to 5 years and fines of up to 500,000 rubles for spreading "knowingly false" information about the Allied forces. If Putin signs the law, discussing aspects of the war left out of the official narrative—the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact between the Soviet Union and the Third Reich, mass rapes committed by the Red Army, Stalin's deportations of entire ethnic groups—can now merit jail time. The law's passage received little media attention, but scholars took notice. On her Facebook page, the cultural historian Monika Spivak called the law "the end of history"—"or at a minimum, the end of history as a science."

As in past eras, a certain comic relief comes from sardonic "anekdoty." One of the latest jokes circulating on the Internet features a man who catches a rabbit in Crimea and tells his wife to boil it. "I can't, the Ukrainians have cut off the water," she replies. He tells her to throw it on the grill. "The Ukrainians have turned off the gas," she says. After being told that the Ukrainians

have also cut off the electricity, he gives up and tosses the rabbit outside to freedom. "Glory to Ukraine!" it cries.

Other times, the boundary between irony and reality is less clear. On April Fool's Day, *Colta*, a culture website favored by the intelligentsia, posted on Facebook about a new poster campaign promoting Russian tourism in Crimea, with the tagline "We don't need your Turkish coast!" Clicking on the link revealed it to be a joke. On the same day, the photojournalist Ilya Varlamov wrote on his blog about a new mural campaign around Moscow that has brought slogans such as "Russia and Crimea: Together Forever" to the sides of buildings. One such slogan—"Don't stay home with the wash/Vacation in Crimea!"—was painted on the highrise where opposition leader Alexei Navalny has been held under house arrest. The freshly dried paint was all too real.

For those who look at the country's current state with alarm, the greatest relief has happened in the street. On March 15, Moscow saw a March for Peace, in which tens of thousands of Muscovites, across ages and classes, converged on Prospekt Sakharova. Many were stunned to see masses of people who, like them, felt solidarity with Ukraine. For several hours, away from the glare of the television, society felt much less atomized.

It is hard to say what Russia will truly gain from "the second victory." A strategic port, yes. A cheaper trip to Crimea's beaches, surely—though most Russians now prefer Egypt or Turkey. But for now, millions of Muscovites are simply retreating farther back into their kitchens, where they can talk about war and rabbits without fear of retribution.

Joy Neumeyer worked at RIA Novosti from fall 2011 to spring 2014 as a reporter for The Moscow News. She joins the UC Berkeley History Department as a PhD candidate in fall 2014.



Faculty and Student News

Victoria Bonnell (Professor, Sociology) had an article translated for the academic website www.historians.in.ua titled "Більшовицька демонологія в радянських політичних плакатах 1930-1945 років [Bilshovytska demonolohiia v radianskih politychnyh plakatah 1930-1945 rokiv; Bolshevik Demonology in Soviet Political Posters, 1930-1945]," published in April 2014. The translator of the article was Yulia Kuzmenko and the editor of the translation was Natalia Laas, a past Carnegie Fellow at ISEES.

Greg Castillo (Associate Professor, Architecture) presented a paper on East Berlin city planning titled "Asceticism as Postwar Progress: Hans Scharoun's Kollektivplan Housing, 1946-9," which was part of the session "Beyond Slab and Subdivision: Housing Alternatives After 1945" at the 67th Society of Architectural Historians Annual Conference in Austin, Texas, in April 2014.

Cammeron Girvin (Ph.D. candidate, Slavic) gave a talk for the Berkeley Language Center - "Uniting the BCS Classroom with Folkloric Language"; the accompanying paper has been published on the BLC's website. He also gave two conference papers: "What Makes a 'Folk' Song? Folkloric Markers in Socialist Bulgarian Song Texts" at the Biennial Conference on Balkan and South Slavic Linguistics, Literature, and Folklore in Chicago, and "Socialist Propaganda Songs as South Slavic Folklore" at the 2014 Meeting of the Western States Folklore Society.

Joseph Kellner (Ph.D. candidate, History) received the IREX-IARO (Individual Advanced Research Opportunities) to conduct research in Moscow for the academic year 2014-15.

Ellen Langer's (Lecturer, Czech Language) students from first- and second-year Czech and an independent study student participated in presenting a Czech Medley at *Words in Action* on campus on April 23, 2014. The program consisted of four songs, two short pieces of poetry, and an excerpt from Karel Čapek's play *R.U.R.* The students who participated were **Brian Egdorf, Isobel Palmer, Johanna Rothe** (UCSC), **Christina Slezacek, Stephanie Walter,** and **Ruoying Zhao.**

Emily Laskin (Ph.D. candidate, Comparative Literature) presented a paper titled "The Idea of Petersburg: Fragment, Remnant, and the City in Bely's *Petersburg*" at the American Comparative Literature Association's 2014 Conference at NYU in March 2014.

Johanna Nichols (Professor Emerita, Slavic) was an invited speaker at the International Symposium on Polysynthesis in Tokyo in February 2014. She gave a talk titled "Explaining the Linguistic Geography of Polysynthesis." A week earlier, Professor Nichols was at Harvard University giving the plenary talk at the Slavic Cognitive Linguistics Society conference titled "Three Morphological About-Faces in the History of Slavic: Implications for Cognitive Linguistics."

Malgorzata Szajbel-Keck (Ph.D. candidate, Slavic) presented a paper titled "Small Clause Analysis of Secondary Predication in Polish" at the Formal Description of Slavic Languages 10 conference organized by the Institut für Slavistik at the Universität Leipzig in December 2013. She is also a recipient of the DAAD Research Grant for Germany during the academic year 2013-14.



Save the Date

*Upcoming event during the Fall 2014 semester***

ISEEES Annual Fall Reception

Thursday, September 11, 2014

4:00 p.m.

Toll Room, Alumni House

UC Berkeley Campus

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



Make a Gift to ISEEEES!

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Our Federal and state funding have faced continued reductions, compelling us to draw more and more on our modest endowments to maintain the superior programming and research and academic support our student, faculty, and public constituents have come to expect. As a result, we have expanded opportunities for more targeted giving in order to encompass a variety of ISEEEES programs. Contributions of any size are appreciated and contribute directly to ISEEEES's continued accomplishments. We would be very happy to discuss details of these funds or other giving opportunities. Jeff Pennington, executive director of ISEEEES, can be reached at jpennington@berkeley.edu or (510) 643-6736.

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

ISEEEES General Support Fund

The ISEEEES General Support Fund is an unrestricted fund that is used to: provide travel grants to affiliated graduate and undergraduate students for the purpose of presenting papers at academic conferences; provide research assistance to affiliated faculty members; convene conferences, open to the public, that examine current topics in Slavic, East European, and Eurasian studies; host an annual reception to foster community building among faculty, students, and the public; and augment the state and grant funds that provide minimal support for ISEEEES operations.

ISEEEES Graduate Student Support Fund

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

Colin and Elsa Miller Endowment Fund

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

Hungarian Studies Fund

This fund promotes the teaching of the Hungarian language at UC Berkeley, provides research assistance to faculty and students studying Hungarian topics, and supports lectures, workshops, and conferences devoted to Hungarian studies.

Fund for Romanian Studies

This fund promotes the teaching of the Romanian language at UC Berkeley; supports lectures, workshops, and conferences devoted to Romanian topics; and provides research assistance to faculty and students pursuing Romanian studies.

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ISEEES acknowledges with sincere appreciation the following individuals who made their annual contribution to ISEEES between December 2013 and May 2014.

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Members (Gifts under \$100). Members are notified in writing about major upcoming ISEEES events.

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Center Circle (Gifts of \$1,000 and above). Members of the Center Circle will qualify for the Charter Hill Society at UC Berkeley. The Charter Hill Society is Berkeley's new program designed to recognize donors' annual giving to the campus. Benefits of this program include a subscription to *Berkeley Promise Magazine* and an invitation to *Discover Cal* lecture.

It is a policy of the University of California and the Berkeley Foundation that a portion of the gifts and/or income therefrom is used to defray the costs of raising and administering the funds. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

You can contribute online by visiting the ISEEES website -

<http://iseees.berkeley.edu/give>

- and selecting the fund to which you would like to make a gift.

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The World of Yesterday, Today

Mark Keck-Szajbel

Ph.D., History, UC Berkeley

Academic Research Fellow at the Center for Interdisciplinary Polish Studies

Europa-Universität Viadrina

I have witnessed Ukraine's political turmoil from many vantage points. Living in Frankfurt Oder on the German-Polish border, my radio is set to Poland (better music) while the newspaper comes in German (better opinion pages). I also read the headlines of major English-language news sources online and have in my classes several students from Ukraine and Eastern Europe. I have family in Poland and close friends from the former Soviet Union. Hence, while my impressions are neither systematic nor broad, they are nevertheless representative of a cross-section of the 1989 generation in Central Europe.

The striking difference between Polish and German discussions about the conflict is that—while it is consistently page-one news in both countries—Polish newspapers focus on military preparations and strategic future development, and German newspapers focus on diplomatic (im)possibilities with Russia and economic consequences of increased conflict. German politicians and the population more generally were genuinely surprised by events in February. As an instructor of seminars on the region, I found myself being asked to explain how such an event could even happen given the strong economic ties Russia has with the European Union (and in particular Germany). To them, it was inconceivable that blatant aggression would be used to occupy an area many Germans know from summer vacation. Angela Merkel's statement that Putin was "off his rocker" had a ripple effect on German society. People on both sides of the political spectrum came to understand that Putin's tactics were not limited to his own personal fiefdom: methods of intimidation, coercion, and newspeak were exports and were being effectively used on a peninsula which, only a few months ago, Germans thought might be joining the European Union in the foreseeable future.

In contrast to German politicians and society, current events have vindicated Poland's approach to its eastern neighbors. Its approach with Ukraine was to promote close cooperation and encourage EU membership. All the while, other international observers saw in Ukraine the potential success story that was Poland in the last twenty years. Poland increasingly acted as

mediator between the West and Ukraine and has grown to be one of the most vocal supporters of cultural openness with its Eastern neighbor (as best revealed in the last FIFA European Cup). Polish diplomats of all stripes are candid in their goals: at a fundamental level, they want to promote economic growth, establish a strong buffer between Poland and Russia, and have greater voice in NATO. There have been two major setbacks to these economic and strategic goals in recent memory: first, Germany and Russia agreed to build a new Baltic pipeline which completely cut out Poland in the early 2000s; secondly, the Obama administration declined to station NATO missiles in Central Europe. Hence, when the media and politicians in Poland discuss the "tentacles of Gazprom" in Europe, they are doing so in continuation of decades-long policies, which have had only conditional success. Russia's aggressive tactics in Ukraine has strengthened Poland's voice in NATO and has made EU energy independence more important. But while one might have expected Polish politicians to be more boastfulness vis-à-vis the West, the Polish reaction is, on the one hand, sober and, on the other, more-determined to be heard. Donald Tusk's administration—like the population in general—is directly threatened by Russia's use of force in eastern Ukraine.

In reading American blogs and newspapers, one is struck by the near nostalgic references to the Cold War. In that conflict, according to popular accounts, the US was clearly the victor over an "evil empire." When congressmen boast that they were put on a travel-ban to Russia, their sense of pride reveals a deeper satisfaction that, in the Crimean conflict, there are clear enemies and allies. In contrast to the events in Syria or Libya (not to mention Afghanistan and Iraq), US media has a clear set of historical events and actors with which to compare Russia and Vladimir Putin. In this regard, one must sadly recognize that American news whitewashes a complex conflict in ways similar to Pravda.

Polish media is not nostalgic for the Cold War—after all, Poland was on the opposing side of the Iron Curtain—but Poles do have numerous symbols with which to identify during

the current crisis. While people in the US and in western Europe had a hard time distinguishing between peaceful demonstrators and violent rebels last year in Ukraine, Poland's history is full of examples of such violent (but patriotic) uprisings. In contrast to German and English, Polish has a word to describe the people who marched on the Maidan: *powstańcy*. *Powstańcy* can carry banners or bayonets. *Powstańcy* fought against Nazis and Soviets during World War II. They rose against the imperial monarchs in the nineteenth century. Hence, despite a historical animosity with Ukrainian nationalists, conjuring up the image of *powstańcy* in Kiev has certainly helped ordinary individuals identify with the conflict, and Polish diplomacy of the past generation has also ensured that Warsaw would support Ukraine's attempt to become less dependent on Moscow.

In Germany, I think most people understand the hypocritical stance their leaders have taken with Eastern neighbors. On the one hand, politicians have called for transparent multi-party democracies, but, on the other, see the necessity to strengthen economic relations with the East. Russia, in particular, is such an important economic partner that German politicians are reluctant to propose more stringent sanctions. At the same time, they want to promote greater European integration. Ordinary Germans also realize their follies. Retirees worry that heating costs will rise if Germany is more forceful against Russia. In a

conversation with a sixty-year-old apothecary from Hamburg, the woman had to admit that giving up Ukrainian territory was more important than risking war with Russia. Like during the Cold War, (West) Germans are willing to maintain the status quo, even if that means overlooking some troubling developments in the neighboring countries. Hence, the current mood in this region reminds me of Stefan Zweig's writing in *The World of Yesterday*.

There, Zweig reflected on the golden age of pre-World War I Europe, when Vienna, Paris, and Berlin were lighthouses of culture, and when "nations still struggled to obtain human sympathy instead of employing inhuman terror." There is an uncertain malaise in the air today, and never before have I heard so many young Germans reflect on the fact that theirs is the first generation in centuries which never witnessed a global conflagration. It is not that anyone actually thinks there will be a global conflict. Instead, there is a reserved realization that German (and hence, EU) economic and political will might not be enough to prevent Russia's leadership from intervening in Ukraine.

Stefan Zweig's is a depressing memoir—he committed suicide during the Second World War, having lost faith in the world in which he was born. The situation in Ukraine has not brought people to suicide, but the failure of international diplomacy has made Germany's and Poland's economic prowess less lustrous.



Save the Date

*Upcoming event at the annual ASEEES Conference
in San Antonio, TX*



Berkeley-Stanford Alumni Reception

Friday, November 21, 2014

7:00 p.m.

Guadalajara Grill
301 S. Alamo Street

A formal invitation will be sent out in early September, at which point you will be able to RSVP.

The Past in Present Ukraine

Bathsheba Demuth

Ph.D. Candidate, History, UC Berkeley

Shortly after Crimea declared itself part of Russia, I flew from Moscow back to the U.S. At the historical conference I was attending, I was confronted with a barrage of well-meaning but confounding questions: could I use the internet in Russia? Were my phones tapped? Did my plumbing work? Was Putin really insane? Was the U.S. policy too strident? Wasn't this Munich all over again? The colleagues enquiring were not Russian specialists, but were consumers of reputable media: The New York Times, the New York Review of Books, the New Republic. They were dedicated to staying well-informed about global events. And it was this admirable impulse, apparently, that led to questions which made me wonder if I had gotten off the airplane fifty years in the past.

In my experience of this winter's events in Ukraine, the past has often been more present than the present itself. In Moscow, February and March went on, in most ways, as always for the expat – filled with rocking metro commutes and expensive coffees and the camaraderie of freezing archival reading rooms. Ukraine was present not in any changed texture of daily life, but through the media, snatched from errant Wi-Fi and Russia's ubiquitous T.V. screens. I followed the bullets and fires at Maidan, Yukanovich absconding, and the beginnings of Crimean's uncoupling from Ukraine through the Twitter accounts of friends and reporters on the ground, where what was happening – or not happening – emerged in jerky photo bursts of fiery barricades, unlicensed army trucks and newly-hoisted Russian flags. The information was slow to coalesce into a comprehensible whole. How many protesters were from the far right? What did the protesters want? Who were the men in balaclavas? Was there going to be war? Real time, even in our moment of digital immediacy, was far too slow to answer most of these questions. Into that breach both the American and Russian press poured a great deal of history.

The impulse to turn to the past to understand present conflict, in Eastern Europe or anywhere, is a good one, and necessary given the vast swath of Americans for whom Crimea conjured vague associations with Florence Nightingale and not much else. Understanding why the protests in Kiev emerged in the first place logically required a gesture at the collapse of the Soviet Union and the politics of the subsequent decades. The linguistic distribution and politics of Ukraine's borderlands and heartlands goes back even further, to Kievan Rus' if we are being

thorough, but at least to Stalin-era famines, nationality policies, the scorched earth of the Second World War, and the deportations that followed. Russia's attachments to Crimea are more explicable with knowledge of its history as a choice vacation spot and short tenure as part of Ukraine.

Such history, the history of Ukraine, Russia, and Crimea as specific places with intricate recent and distant pasts was not, however, the history I generally observed from the radio and internet streaming into my Moscow apartment. Instead of using the past to explicate the particular, the American op-ed pages and Russian newspapers were rife with history as analogy. This became especially apparent once masked men showed up in Crimea, transforming Russia's role from exerting financial pressure at a distance to potentially altering the map of Eastern Europe. In the United States, the coverage grappled for narrative cohesion in a situation that, based on what was actually known, hour by hour, was frustratingly partial. The presence of soldier-esque men in standoffs with the Ukrainian military lacked predictive potential, or any semblance of a plot, and so previous European conflicts were drafted to give some semblance of an arc.

But the choice of conflict, of plot, in both the U.S. and Russia, came freighted with moral import and political baggage. Hillary Clinton, among many others, invoked the Sudetenland to make Putin into Hitler, Obama into Chamberlin, and implied a stark moral choice in America's actions toward Russia (not to mention her own possible role as Churchill in 2016). Vladimir Putin turned everyone on Independence Square into a neo-Nazi with a lust for Russian-speaking blood. These analogies, which had just enough truth about them to stick, turned the present into a past that could now be done right. By casting back to a war that is remembered as heroic and righteous in both the United States and the former Soviet Union became a way of ignoring, for example, Ukraine's sovereignty and Russia's strategic interests, and cloaked the fragmented present and unknown future with moral certainty.

These stories were, and are, powerful. My English-language reading father is now muttering about appeasement and Munich. My Russian-language reading father-in-law fills his Facebook feed with news stories about Nazi coups and freedom from Maidan's tyranny. What made the analogies still more tenacious, at least for my colleagues in history, is the degree to

which their polarizing logic was firmly supported from within our own profession. Timothy Snyder, in a series of elegant but slippery essays in the *New York Review of Books*, made Ukraine's protests into a 21st century Berlin Wall, with a bullish Putin waiting to shore up the cement. Stephen Cohen responded in the *Nation*, reasonably asking us to consider Russia's national interests before tripping into outright Putin-philia. Both historians threw a great deal of the past at their arguments, some of it quite enlightening, but mostly done to draw a line in the sand. Either you are for Russia, because the U.S. is a country beset by moral and political failures, foreign wars, bigotry, and sinister government programs, or you are against Russia, because Russia is authoritarian, run by a maniac, homophobic and xenophobic, with delusions of nationalist grandeur. Ukraine, with all its messy possible futures – as one country or many, as leaning toward Europe or away, or perhaps doing something different altogether – became a proxy for looking at ourselves in the mirror of Russia's actions.

As a result, when I speak with both Russian and American colleagues, whatever events are coming fresh out of Crimea and Ukraine cannot just be about that place and those people, but becomes a matter of taking sides in some world-historical civilizational standoff. Now, in April, the analogy of choice, with armed NATO intervention in Ukraine seeming a dim possibility, has moved from Munich to Berlin: we are in a second Cold War. Two important things have been lost in the winter's process of historical grafting. One is the capacity to fully critique the actions of the U.S. and Russia simultaneously. To say that I understand the military and cultural interests, not to mention the domestic politics, behind Russia's absorption of Crimea is not to say I endorse it or the deplorable state of Putin's policies at home. But the same goes for the U.S., where our highest court has green-lighted oligarchy and where I can be sure the government is tapping my phone. And while we are debating who is better and who is worse, we lose something else: the actual texture and stakes of the unsure present in Ukraine.

As I am writing, Ukrainians in the east are storming their own government buildings and singing Soviet anthems and demanding – well, demanding something. Demanding, perhaps, another chance at a society over a quarter-century gone, or what memory makes of that past. The threat of violence and the weight of the unknown makes this news, like the news before it, discomfiting, and the impulse to take sides is an understandable exit from a situation that is unresolved and changing rapidly. It is easier to take up the Cold War analogy and go willfully blind to the complicated and morally fraught actions of all parties. I have met Russians who prefer to see the United States as a degenerate, unintelligible bully – and not a few Americans

who would rather write Russia off as irreparably authoritarian. Certainly the recent exile of American Councils and other NGOs by the Russian government, not to mention the increasing number of innocuous websites I find blocked by the Russian high court, lend credence to this analogy. But the Cold War rhetoric feels over-determined, like a lazy pattern of thought into which we slipped again without noticing that doing so will foreclose not just on options in Ukraine, but in Iran and Syria, in the global response to climate change, in relationships with China and India, and the list goes on. Moreover, the invocation of a new Cold War does not match the actual documents of the 1950s and 1960s, which I have spent innumerable hours crouching over in the past two years, documents filled with connections between the United States and the Soviet Union bubbling along beneath an edifice, both contemporary and upheld by many historians, of complete separation and civilizational divide. That I can read these documents at all, and that I have done so while depending mightily on the kindness of Russian strangers, is a testament to how at least on the local and personal level things are not freezing yet.

This last point was the rather pat answer I gave my historian colleagues at the conference back in March, when they wondered if the United States was not appeasing Putin. And it was true, since my experience of this conflict has, blessedly, been really no experience at all. But part of what I should have said is that the crude grafting of the past onto the present is something that, as historians, we should have been primed to treat with skepticism and intellectual rigor. The history, which has dogged every move from Kiev to Sebastopol to Donetsk, has mostly been methodologically bankrupt, the equivalent of going to a source with the argument already formed, merely to find a few choice quotes to animate it. In part this is because much of the history was not employed by politicians and the makers of sound bites. But those in the historical profession participated too, in ways I, at least, thought we were taught to avoid. Resisting a narrative arc until we have read enough to take a stand backed by more than our own prejudices and hopes lies at the center of our craft. When mucking about in the faded telegrams and incomplete reports found in archives, resisting the easy narrative and sitting, instead, with chaos is hideously frustrating and epistemologically fraught. It is no less so when faced with contemporary events, where we have less time to mull and, often, the pressing needs of human lives are at stake. But immediacy should not be an excuse for sloppy thinking, lest we determine the present by grafting it onto an easy vision of the past that, to paraphrase William Faulkner, is more than simply not past, but never was at all.

Spring 2014 Courses

Selected course offerings and selected area-related courses

Comparative Literature 266	Nationalism, Colonialism, and Culture	Ram, H.
History 101	Seminar in Historical Research and Writing for History Majors: <i>Little Histories of Greater Europe</i>	Shaw, C. D.
History 103B	Foodways in Europe, 1500-1950	Frede, V.
History 103B	From War to Peace: Europe in the 1940s	Hoffmann, S.
History 160	The International Economy of the Twentieth Century	Milivojevic, A.
History 171B	Imperial Russia: <i>From Peter the Great to the Russian Revolution</i>	Frede, V.
History 174A	A History of Poland-Lithuania	Frick, D. A.
History 177	Armenia from Ethnogenesis to the Dark Ages	Astourian, S. H.
Near Eastern Studies 126	Silk Road Art and Archaeology	Mehendale, S.
Political Science 2	Introduction to Comparative Politics	Fish, S.
Political Science 149W	Dictatorship and its Discontents	Wittenberg, J.
Political Science 210	Historical Approaches to Politics	Wittenberg, J.
Public Policy 285	Nuclear Security	Nacht, M.
Slavic R5A	Utopia, Dystopia, and Everyday Life in Twentieth-Century Russian Literature	Brooks, D. A.
Slavic R5A	Sleeping with the Enemy	Scott, L.
Slavic R5B	Dialogue and Dostoevsky's <i>Crime and Punishment</i>	Johnson, Z. S.
Slavic R5B	"Perfect nonsense goes on in the world": <i>The Boundaries of Realism & the Fantastic</i>	Dyne, T. H.
Slavic R5B	The Logic of Empire: <i>Violence and Seduction in Fictions of England and Russia</i>	Papava, S.
Slavic 24	The Mystery and Fascination of the Balkans	Alexander, R.
Slavic 36	Great Writers of Russian Literature	Kitzinger, C.
Slavic 46	Twentieth-Century Russian Literature	Lorenz, S. R.
Slavic 50	Introduction to Russian/East European/Eurasian Cultures	Kavitskaya, D. A.
Slavic 134E	Chekhov	Muza, A.
Slavic 134G	Tolstoy & Dostoevsky	Paperno, I.
Slavic 147B	Balkan Folklore	Alexander, R.
Slavic 200	Graduate Colloquium	Paperno, I.
Slavic 214	Medieval Russian Orthodox Texts	Frick, D. A.
Slavic 239	Twentieth-Century Slavic Literary Theory: <i>Russian Literary Theory</i>	Ram, H.
Slavic 256	Slavic Folklore Theory	Alexander, R.
Slavic 287	The Russian Poetic Tradition, 1780-1870	Golburt, L.
Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies 125	Performance and History: <i>Modern Theater</i>	Gordon, M.

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