



# 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

*Reginald E. Zelnik (May 8, 1936–May 17, 2004)*

### *In Memoriam*

Over the past decade, this Newsletter has given me an opportunity to comment on many subjects, and I have tried to keep you—our readers—informed about developments that have an impact on the Institute’s mission. This is my final “Notes.” It is also the most difficult to write.

As many of you know, a tragic accident occurred on Monday afternoon, May 17. A delivery truck struck Professor Reginald Zelnik as he passed in front of Moses Hall on his way to an Institute reception at the Faculty Club. He died at the scene.

The last time I saw Reggie was on May 8, the day of his 68<sup>th</sup> birthday. I had anticipated seeing him at the May 17<sup>th</sup> reception, and his presence meant a great deal to me. As the chair of the ISEEEES Executive Committee, Reggie had helped to plan the event, which celebrated the end of a decade and the passing of the Institute’s leadership to Yuri Slezkine. More than anyone else on the faculty, Reggie enlivened the Institute with his unique combination of deep intelligence and conviviality. Less well known, but equally important, was his contribution to the Institute’s steady course over the years.

Reggie’s career at Berkeley spanned forty years and touched the lives of many people. He was only 28 when he joined the Berkeley history department. A magna cum laude graduate from Princeton University (1956), Reggie spent a year at the University of Vienna as a Fulbright Fellow and then served for two years on active duty in the United States Navy. He entered the graduate program in history at Stanford University in 1959, had an IUCTG grant at Leningrad University in 1961–1962, and taught for a year at Indiana University, before coming to Berkeley in 1964.

Soon after Reggie arrived in Berkeley with his wife Elaine and his two children, Pam and Michael, the campus was thrown into turmoil by student protests. Although he was still an Acting Assistant Professor, Reggie became involved in the Free Speech Movement and took a leading part in the mobilization of the faculty (his account can be found in *The Free Speech Movement: Reflections on Berkeley in the 1960s*, which he co-edited with Robert Cohen, University of California Press, 2002). Reggie’s participation in the events of 1964—courageous and constructive at the same time—marked his future career at Berkeley, even as he moved into the ranks of tenured faculty, eventually chairing the Department of History (1994–1997). A man of strong convictions, Reggie had a profound sense of justice, a sense that affected everything he did.

In historical scholarship, Reggie stood at the forefront of the study of Russian labor. His first book, *Labor and Society in Tsarist Russia: The Factory Workers of St. Petersburg, 1855–1870* (Stanford University Press, 1971), set a standard for the history of pre-revolutionary Russian workers. Beginning with the publication of a two-part article in *Russian Review* (July and October 1976), “Russian Bebel: An Introduction to the Memoirs of Semen Kanatchikov and Matvei Fisher,” Reggie focused attention on workers’ autobiographies—a neglected source that made it possible to gain a fresh insight into the workers’ milieu and their view of the world. His approach to micro-history was further elaborated in two books, *A Radical Worker in Tsarist Russia: The Autobiography of Semen Ivanovich Kanatchikov* (Stanford University Press, 1986) and *Law and Disorder on the Narova River: The Kreenholm Strike of 1872* (University of California Press, 1995). Reggie also edited several volumes and published articles on a wide range of historical and contemporary topics. At the time of his death, he was working on several projects: a biography of the Soviet labor historian Anna Mikhailovna Pankratova, the meaning of strikes from 1789 to 1917, and a chapter on the history of Russian workers and the pre-revolutionary labor movement for the second volume of the new *Cambridge History of Russia*.

Reggie had prodigious gifts as a teacher and a mentor. Generations of graduate students matured intellectually under his tutelage and benefited from his copious and penetrating comments on their work (always handwritten, usually in the margins). His interactions with them were not limited to the classroom or his office in Dwinelle Hall but often continued over a glass of red wine or a meal, where scholarly brilliance was combined with banter, wit, and good humor. Reggie’s special contributions to teaching and mentoring were recognized when he received the American Historical Association’s Nancy Lyman Roelker Mentorship Award (1996), a Special Recognition Award for graduate teaching from the History Department (1996), and the Distinguished Teaching Award in the UCB Social Science Division (1998). In 1996, a Festschrift was organized at Berkeley in honor of Reggie’s 60th birthday.

He wore his honors and awards as casually as he wore the plaid shirts and corduroy pants that were his uniform. Early in his career he received a Guggenheim Fellowship (1970–1971), and he was later awarded fellowships and grants from the ACLS, IREX, NEH, and the Ford Foundation, among others. Recognition also came in the form of appointments to the editorial boards of journals (*American Historical Review*, *Journal of Modern History*, *Slavic Review*, *Journal of Social History*, and *Kritika*) and boards of scholarly associations (SSRC/ACLS Joint Committee on Soviet Studies, AAASS, and the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research).

Reggie took part in various campus and off-campus organizations and communities. Apart from the Institute, he was active on behalf of the FSM (Board of Directors, FSM *ISEEES Newsletter Summer 2004 / 2*

Archive) and in mental health (Board of Directors of the Mental Health Association of Alameda County). Whatever the undertaking, Reggie was a pillar of strength and wisdom, selfless and devoted, always ready to help, and widely respected and admired.

I first met Reggie in the early 1970s when I was working on my dissertation. Before and after I came to UCB, he was generous with his support and advice, and over the years we collaborated on various projects, often advising the same students and serving on the same qualifying exams and dissertation committees. But Reggie has been much more than a mentor and colleague. He has also been my close friend. I cannot imagine Berkeley without Reggie.

To the Zelnik family—Elaine, Pam, Michael, Martin, Mark, and Jaxon—our deepest and most heartfelt sympathies. To the ISEEES community—please join us in memorializing Reggie at Berkeley on Sunday afternoon, August 29 at 11 a.m. The Reginald Zelnik Memorial Fund has been established in Reggie’s honor to support graduate training in Russian history and to carry on his legacy. Contributions should be sent to the Reginald Zelnik Memorial Fund, Department of History, UC Berkeley, 3229 Dwinelle Hall #2550, Berkeley CA 94720-2550, attention Chris Egan.

Victoria E. Bonnell  
Director of ISEEES  
Professor, Department of Sociology



*Professor Zelnik at the Annual Stanford-Berkeley Conference, held in April 2004 at Stanford University. Many thanks to Jack Kollman for the use of his photo.*

# Tributes to Professor Reginald E. Zelnik

Reggie commanded respect and affection naturally, not only because of his academic achievements and status, but because he was a human being of the highest caliber. Six years ago, when I was a visiting lecturer, he made me welcome in the Department of History. In his subtle, unassuming way, he advised me whenever I needed his opinion, and I understand the Armenian Studies Program owes him much. His crystal-clear mind and his aloofness from academic fads and half-baked ideas shone in the seminars I attended with him. His steadfast commitment to justice made him an *intellectuel engagé* of the best kind. I am glad to have known Reggie. And I miss him.

—*Stephan H. Astourian, assistant adjunct professor of history and director of the Armenian Studies Program*

Reggie and I first met in 1971, when I joined the UC Berkeley faculty. Though in different departments, we interacted frequently at events sponsored by the Slavic Center. He became a role model for me: a dedicated teacher, a relaxed and generous interlocutor, a smart, highly informed scholar who knew how to leaven disagreement with humor. I knew I could never equal him in these qualities, but I also sensed I would become a better person if I tried to do so. I never imagined I would see a UC Berkeley without Reggie. Now I must, and it is not easy. The void is so great; the hurt is so deep.

—*George W. Breslauer, Chancellor's professor of political science and dean of social sciences*

Reggie made a decisive difference in the people he touched. In my case he influenced me to come to Berkeley in 1972 to develop Russian and American history in an international/diplomatic context. Over the years I watched the constant effect he had on those who knew him. He was a man of fine diversity devoted to helping others, to scholarship, baseball, colleagues and students, family and friends. He gave willingly of his talent, ability, and energy. I had the privilege of our working together and donating our time in managing research on Vietnam for the defense in the Ellsberg Pentagon Papers trial. This activist cause brought many UCB graduate students as volunteers in 1972–73. Reggie's fairmindedness, generosity, brilliance, humor, and innate goodness made him a magnet, one that set the standard for others to emulate.

—*Diane S. Clemens, professor of American diplomatic history*

Reggie's friends were members of a great extended family. I was painfully reminded of this fact yesterday, when something good happened to me and I realized that I could no longer share the news with Reggie. Like a father, he would have been happy at my success as if it had been his own. A rare situation in academia or anywhere else. Of course, part of the reason that he felt personal pride in

others' success is that it was also his success. Paterfamilias was selfless and read draft after draft of his huge family's writings, and relished discussing them, perhaps over a small glass of vodka. He was an absolute original who sustained more human achievement and warmth than anyone I have ever known or heard of.

—*John Connelly, associate professor of history*

I believe I knew Reggie longer than any other member of the campus Slavic community. I first met him in 1962 in Leningrad, when we both inhabited a primitive but gloriously situated *obshchezhitie* on the Mytinskaya Naberezhnaya across the Neva from the Winter Palace. He was there for his IREX year, and I was there on a month-long visit from my IREX year in Moscow. The exchange students were scattered in rooms inhabited by six to eight Soviet students, and every morning at an early hour the radio started blasting forth the Party line. Even so, it was a glorious time of "thaw," and Reggie managed to liven things up still further by running into Shirley MacLaine (sic!) at a downtown restaurant and bringing her back to admire the view from our sixth-floor balcony.

—*Martin Malia, professor emeritus of history*

One cannot evaluate Reggie Zelnik properly in 100 words. He was an excellent scholar specializing in the Russian labor movement, with many other sustained historical interests, a fine and extremely successful teacher and mentor, and a valuable member of our academic community and more broadly of Berkeley and California. I would single out as his most important trait a truly remarkable consideration and kindness for people. This trait was strikingly evident in his dealing with students, but it went beyond students to friends, faculty and acquaintances, in fact just about everyone he met, especially if they needed help. In turn, he acquired a great amount of credit. Obviously, he will not need it.

—*Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, professor emeritus of history*

Reggie was larger than life. We all live in his shadow. He combined enormous inner strength with effortless generosity and gentle wit. He had enough wisdom, tact, intelligence, and erudition for any number of institutes in any number of disciplines. He had more devoted students and admiring colleagues than any other Russian historian in this country. He could drink more red wine than anybody anywhere. He was a great scholar and a giant of a man. It is impossible to think of life in Berkeley without Reggie and maybe there is no point in trying, because Reggie was larger than life, anyway. Let's always think of Reggie.

—*Yuri Slezkine, professor of history*

# Noah London and Birobidzhan

*John Holmes*

*John Holmes is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History at UC Berkeley.*

This is an excerpt from a chapter of my dissertation on the life and times of Noah London. London, an activist in the Jewish socialist movement of Imperial Russia in his youth, emigrated to America and became a pioneer American Jewish Communist spokesman and a civil engineer. He re-emigrated to the Soviet Union in 1926, became an important industrial manager, and was arrested and shot in 1937. I have been researching his life for many years. In 1986 I received from a relative, Rose Risikoff, a 43-page unpublished manuscript by London, entitled “On Russia.” She was a sister of Noah London’s wife Miril, also a participant in early American Communism. The manuscript, a savagely critical socio-historical analysis of Stalinism, was dictated to Rose Risikoff at the Londons’ dacha in the summer of 1934.

The dissertation will view London’s career as a Jewish socialist political activist, journalist, and engineer on two continents through multiple prisms. London was involved with a remarkable number of key twentieth-century forces, trends, and events—especially the Russian Revolution and Stalinism. Other key themes of the dissertation will be Soviet industrialization, international socialism and labor, American Jewish radicalism, and the twentieth-century Jewish experience.

London’s fate as a victim of Stalinist repression was certainly in itself not unusual. He was however the most prominent American Communist to fall victim to the “Great Terror.” His career as an industrial manager in the Soviet Union offers many insights into the nature of Stalinism. In particular, it sheds much insight into the relationship between Stalinism and the original Russian Revolution. I intend to use London’s career—from the Jewish Russian socialist underground, to Jewish socialism in New York, through the birth and travails of early American communism, and back to the Soviet Union, through Jewish assimilation, Stalinist industrialization, and the great terror—as a lens through which to view broader historical narratives.

During the research phase of this dissertation, I conducted three research trips to the former Soviet Union, visiting Moscow in Russia, and Kiev, Kharkov, and Donetsk in Ukraine. These trips have given me ample material on his political and industrial Soviet career, as well as of his trial and execution in the fall of 1937. The serendipitous combination of being both a relative of the Londons and an exchange scholar affiliated with Russian universities opened many doors.

This excerpt is from the fifth chapter of the dissertation, which will be about Jews in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 30s. I use Noah London’s role in the Birobidzhan experience to analyze the sociological transformation of Soviet Jewry in the interwar period.

## **Noah London, OZET, and Birobidzhan**

While they were living in Kharkov, Noah and Miril London played leading roles in UkrOZET, the Ukrainian branch of the Society for Land Settlement for Jewish Toilers. OZET’s original purpose was to help impoverished NEP-era Soviet Jews become farmers, in Birobidzhan and elsewhere. OZET was conceived as a nonpartisan organization representing the general Soviet public—led by the *Evsseksiia*, the Jewish Section of the CPUSSR. In the summer of 1929, London represented OZET on an American experts’ expedition to Birobidzhan. This expedition was sponsored by IKOR, OZET’s American counterpart, on whose National Executive Committee London had served until his arrival in Ukraine. The expedition played a significant role in the history of this failed experiment in “Soviet Zionism.”

London became Ukraine’s head highway engineer in the spring of 1929. He had previous experience for this post, as a highway engineer in Buffalo, New York, during World War I. Nonetheless, this important-sounding job was actually the least vital industrial assignment he had while in the Soviet Union—or at any rate, the one to which he committed the least effort. During the year he occupied this post, his main interest was in road building in Birobidzhan, which is a long distance from Ukraine. However, the majority of Birobidzhan’s Jewish pioneers were indeed Ukrainians.

In May of 1928, the Soviet government decided to allocate this Belgium-sized chunk of the Soviet Far East, on the Manchurian border, for Jewish colonization. The area had been relatively inaccessible until the completion of a side spur of the trans-Siberian railroad in 1916. Revolution and civil war again cut it off from the outside world for many years. Jewish colonists immediately rushed to Birobidzhan, where little or no preparations had been made to receive them. Most departed quickly, complaining loudly. A cloud began to hover over the colonization project.

The IKOR expedition to Birobidzhan was seen as a body of impartial experts who would settle whether or not

the Birobidzhan project was a big mistake. OZET's first president, prominent Soviet economic planner Yuri Larin, opposed the Birobidzhan experiment, instead supporting Jewish agricultural colonization in the Crimea. Crimean colonization was also supported by Agro-Joint, a philanthropic organization funded by wealthy American Jewish bankers and businessmen. The Birobidzhan expedition was not just a tourist jaunt by starry-eyed fellow travelers. The leader, Franklin Harris, was the president of Brigham Young University. Also participating was Dr. J. B. Davidson. Both were among the world's leading agronomists.

Knowledgeable contemporary observers and subsequent historians have maintained that Larin's public opposition to the plan was supplemented by covert opposition from leaders of the *Evseksiia*. London made clear where his sympathies lay. London wrote a letter to *Tribuna*, the OZET journal, from Birobidzhan, in which he stated that "it is clear to us [the IKOR commission members] that with respect to colonization Crimea's possibilities are not equal to Birobidzhan's."<sup>1</sup> In an important subsequent article London expressed the fundamental reason why he found Birobidzhan preferable to Crimea. "We need to organize the colonization system in such a way that ... settlers do not expect and don't need philanthropy."<sup>2</sup> The idea of solving the Soviet Jewish question with money from rich American Jewish capitalists could not but be repugnant to a former American Jewish communist who had satirized Marshall in the pages of the *Frayhayt*, the American Yiddish Communist daily in which London had played a prominent role.<sup>3</sup>

#### **"Our Jewish Soviet public and we—its leaders—stand before a historic test"<sup>4</sup>**

London's *Tribuna* article, which proposed a thorough reorganization of the Birobidzhan project, was a toned-down version of the scorchingly critical written report he had delivered to the OZET leadership at a Moscow public meeting to celebrate the success of the expedition.<sup>5</sup> The report pulled no punches about the demoralizing impact of the blunders committed. London judged that the wrong spots to colonize had been chosen. The main locale, Birefeld, was far from the railroad, the river Amur, and even the great Siberian woods, where lumber for housing was easy to obtain. And moreover, it was unsuitable for rice culture, generally agreed to be the appropriate grain crop for the area.

London condemned the entire system of colonization, which he described as an attempt to transform *shtetl luftmentsshn* into dirt-poor peasants with wooden ploughs, scattered here and there across the taiga. With such methods, given the difficult climatic conditions,

only such elements as the forcibly-colonized Koreans ... hardy, stubborn and adapted to local conditions, could find their feet after many decades.

Those lands which can be taken "with bare hands" are already occupied .... The old settlers in certain regions eagerly sold their "farmsteads" to the Jewish settlers, which hardly speaks in favor of these "comfortable" land allotments. (2)

London advocated abandoning the scattered colonies taken over from previous settlers and starting all over again, for

if in Crimea or Ukraine individual Jewish agriculture can limp along with the help of demoralizing philanthropy, in Birobidzhan *only concentrated, carefully-thought-out, scientifically enacted, planned, large-scale management* [emphasis in original] can exist and thrive without any philanthropy, creating a completely new type of farmer with a high level of life and culture. (2)

According to London, not a single one of the settlements had a firm economic base. London sketched out an alternative colonization plan in the report, which he subsequently elaborated in his Yiddish-language pamphlet, *With the American Expedition to Birobidzhan*, published a year later in Ukraine.<sup>6</sup> Although the tone of the public pamphlet is much more upbeat than that of the private report, the content is fundamentally similar. He even concluded that "Birobidzhan can be mastered only ... with organization and system with capital investment and with seriousness, otherwise it should be left completely alone." (55)

According to London's plan, pioneers would be sent to prepare the territory for colonization a year in advance, as wage-workers, building houses, roads, drainage ditches, etc., and acclimatizing themselves. Then the pioneer could make a free choice: join his *kolkhoz* and invite his wife and children to travel from the Pale and join him there; or stay on as a construction worker or tractor driver or some other kind of proletarian; or take his wages and go home. (63) Instead of being tossed out onto the taiga with loan money in his pocket and little idea what to do with it, the colonist would get a finished house and land ready for planting at the end of his training year. And he would be getting something he had built with his own hands.

London stated bluntly that it would not be possible for OZET, which "did not possess the necessary power and discipline," to run such an ambitious project. OZET, a volunteer organization with mainly unpaid staff, was partially in charge of the Birobidzhan project, which surely was not the least reason for its problems.<sup>7</sup> According to London, what was needed was to create a single government trust to oversee the entire project. Thereby, colonization would not be a spontaneous, "line of least resistance" affair, but planned and organized. (60–62)

London's concluding words are about the "neutral and expectant" attitude of the local population to the project. According to London, "if Jewish colonization doesn't

succeed in the next few years, the old settler population will start to complain that we should stop wasting good land. On the other hand, success in colonization would mean abundance for the old colonists. It would also mean rebuilding their affairs on a new foundation.” (66) Here London is suggesting the collectivization of recalcitrant peasants, not through pressure and “dekulakization,” but by the power of Jewish example.

London modestly claimed that this scheme was not his own, but merely what “some of the expedition and the local activists” were calling for. (62) The plan, though not fully incorporated in the report of the IKOR commission, clearly influenced it.<sup>8</sup> Its conclusions strongly emphasized the need to form “a single managing and planning body,” warned against “too hasty settlement,” and urged that “as far as practicable the prospective settlers who are in a stage of probation and training be used as workers.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Birobidzhan Through American Eyes**

When writing their report on the Trans-Siberian train back to Moscow, the expedition participants, all Americans, discovered that finding a common language was not difficult. Most western Jewish spokesmen (and Larin) condemned the Birobidzhan project. But, in his Moscow speech, Iowa professor Davidson, whom London described as “the father of modern agronomy” in his pamphlet (5), characterized Birobidzhan as the most suitable unoccupied spot currently available on earth for agrarian colonization. The ditch digging for land drainage purposes that the commission considered necessary, though not a trivial endeavor, would certainly be less difficult than the irrigation needed for Harris’s Utah, Larin’s Crimea, or the Donbass, the focus of London’s career as industrial manager. Davidson asserted that, after drainage, the land would “drip with milk and honey.” (14)

According to both London and IKOR chairman Leon Talmy, who was both a participant and the author of *Oyf royer erd*, a 300-plus-page Birobidzhan travelogue,<sup>10</sup> the Jewish communist participants got along surprisingly well with the expedition’s conservative Mormon leader Harris and his secretary Kiefer Sauls. Birobidzhan’s climatic difficulties no doubt intimidated the Mormons, proud heirs of pioneer forefathers, less than they did Larin’s urban Jewish businessmen. Donbass water expert London was highly impressed by the region’s “wonderfully healthy climate”: not a single participant became sick from drinking or bathing in the local water, indeed nobody even caught a cold. (25, 67)

London himself viewed Birobidzhan very much through American eyes—but eyes wearing spectacles of unusual prescription. London liked to compare the conditions Birobidzhan pioneers faced with his own American immigrant experience and America’s pioneer days—not always in America’s favor. Stories of huge Siberian mosquito swarms disturbed would-be Jewish pioneers.

London narrates a personal mosquito horror story suitable for deterring the faint-hearted (46–47), but he hastens to add that “I must say, that being one summer at a certain lake-branch near New York, on vacation, or in a little New Jersey town near New York, I had worse mosquito problems than in Birobidzhan.” (48) London spent the summer of 1920 hiding from the Palmer raids in New Jersey, at a cousin’s home, and the New York vacation presumably took place at Camp *Nitgedeiget*, the left wing Jewish summer camp he directed in 1924.

London’s attitude to settlers’ complaints about Birobidzhan was complex. On the one hand, he clearly did not like how they were being handled, warning that leading personnel “should be able to treat the colonists tactfully. In the difficult conditions of colonization, understanding and a good word plays a great role ...” (38) But he sympathized to some degree with the counter-complaints of his fellow officials that all problems were due to the colonists being poor human material. After recounting colonist complaints about the dreadful housing situation, he counterposed the example of one colonist with the American “can-do” spirit, who, instead of whining, simply set about building his own house. (36–38) Perhaps remembering his own immigrant experience, London recalls how

also in America people would arrive and every day want to go back, but they couldn’t go back, because there weren’t any boat tickets. And as they saved up for a boat ticket, they slowly got used to things, began to earn a little money, so they could bring a little something home with them ... today, there’s Birobidzhan, which is as far away as America, and where there’s nothing but heaven, earth and mosquitoes. In America, you had no other choice, like that damn Columbus, but here you’ve got some kind of “Soviet power,” which gives you a ticket there and a ticket back, which gives you money for a house and so forth, you’ve got OZET ... to whom you can make certain complaints ... (41)

London’s own American immigrant experience had not been a bed of roses. Working in a garment sweatshop by day and studying engineering at Cooper Union by night, this strappingly healthy blacksmith’s son had been struck down by tuberculosis. Had it not been for the free care he received at the Jewish socialist Workmen’s Circle sanitarium, he might not have survived.<sup>11</sup>

### **A Ukrainian Highway Engineer in Birobidzhan**

London’s plan bore certain similarities to the recommendations of the KOMZET expedition of 1927, the first systematic Soviet effort to investigate the region, on the basis of which the Soviet government decided to allocate it for Jewish settlement. KOMZET was the government department actually in charge of Jewish agricultural colonization. Its report had called for colonization “in accordance with a strict plan.” It had warned against

“partial, spotty colonization ... making use of the best tracts of land.” It had described systematic preparation in advance as absolutely essential. It had advocated using cheap Chinese labor, but also suggested that labor brigades of unemployed Jewish youth, who could become settlers, would be desirable.<sup>12</sup>

However, London’s disagreements with the recommendations of KOMZET were not limited to disinterest in using Chinese coolies for the dirty work. The KOMZET expedition had recommended beginning colonization on the already partially-settled Soviet bank of the Amur river and prioritizing highway construction for access. Attempts to steer colonists there largely failed, due to the absence of decent roads connecting the Amur valley with the railroad, Birobidzhan’s connection with the rest of the Soviet Union.

Highway engineer London’s actual assignment was to investigate Birobidzhan road construction, which had been assigned to OZET. London’s recommendation was that spending millions on highway construction was premature. Settlement should have begun near the railroad, even if the valley land was more fertile. After the first settlements were successfully consolidated, settlers otherwise idle in the winter could be employed in road building. This conservative approach foreshadows the industrial policy that London would advocate in his 1934 manuscript.

London states in his reports that he spent the bulk of his time on road building questions, which is certainly how he is depicted in *Oyfroyer erd*. His first action was to protest the assignment of the planning of road construction to OZET, in a memo sent to Moscow. The tractors IKOR had given OZET were being used for road building in the off seasons. In the memo, he insists that Birobidzhan road building has to be integrated into general planning and budgeting for the region as a whole, and that the local OZET has no particular expertise in, no apparatus for, nor even enough staff assigned to road planning to make such an assignment practical.<sup>13</sup>

His second action was to move to get the head of the local OZET road department fired. According to London,

the road department was given assignments of tremendous length, beyond its strength, insufficient money ... but the main fault was the criminal irresponsibility, incompetence and deception of the department manager Benkogenov. This worked together with squabbles, general lack of discipline in the office and the absence of generally agreed political leadership, as a result of which the whole season was a failure ...<sup>14</sup>

In *Oyfroyer erd*, Talmy was more interested in beautiful scenery and adventures with Siberian tigers and bears than in the settlers’ complaints. Whereas London judiciously categorized them into “justified and unjustified,”<sup>15</sup> almost invariably, when a Soviet official or institution was criticized, Talmy took care to explain why the criticism was

unfair, but he made an exception for Benkogenov. When the tractor assigned to the expedition got stuck in the mud, Talmy described a self-satisfied “Be-nov” sitting in his wagon, ignoring the tumult, and finally telling the crew to “leave it there.” However, when a film crew showed up, “Be-nov” reacted immediately—by pulling out his pipe and lighting it for the camera, in best Stalin fashion.<sup>16</sup>

### A “Historic Test” Graded

The panegyrics delivered to the Birobidzhan project by Talmy and other Jewish communist spokesmen did not necessarily represent the opinions of those who were grading London’s “historic test”—the top Soviet leadership, whose initial attitude to the experiment, like that of the local Cossacks, was probably “neutral and expectant.” Perhaps the best insight into what Soviet leaders really thought of the Birobidzhan experiment is provided by an article by Soviet journalist Victor Fink in *Sovetskoe Stroitel'stvo*, a journal intended mainly for the Soviet elite, not the general public.

Fink blasts the pernicious role of the Soviet press in painting the situation in rosy colors. He describes the barracks the settlers initially lived in as worse than prisons and recounts instances of desperate Jewish women settlers forced to turn to prostitution to survive. According to Fink, “the problem is not with the administrators, nor with the settlers, nor with the climate, nor with the mosquitoes, nor with the taiga, but solely with the absence of advance preparation, planning and research.”<sup>17</sup>

Fink joined the expedition on the road. Talmy describes a chubby journalist with disheveled curly hair, carrying a hunting gun and hoping to bag some Siberian trophies. He was promptly introduced to London at the *Amurzet* rice plantation.<sup>18</sup> This is the same plantation at which loud protests by the settlers against the corruption and incompetence of the administration had resounded the previous year. According to material found in KOMZET archives by Robert Weinberg,

[they] accused the plantations’ manager, L. G. Baskin, of mistreating and exploiting them. Baskin reportedly withheld the bread ration of a group of workers who had asked for a rest. When the workers complained about their low pay, he dismissed them as Zionists more interested in ‘earning money’ than in building socialism.<sup>19</sup>

According to Fink, in 1929 “the colonists reacted by going home ... those who remained reacted by organizing public opinion: a conference of the settler youth, which took place in Khabarovsk this winter, issued a sharp censure of the unprofessional, disorganized bungling that reigned in OZET’s Birobidzhan work ...”<sup>20</sup>

When the IKOR commission asked Alexei Rykov, the about-to-be fired head of the Soviet government, whether

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# Identity Politics in the Schools of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia

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They are trying in peace to do that which they didn't achieve during the war.

—*Bosniak School Administrator, Mostar 2001*

When the wars that raged through the former Yugoslavia ended, the fight over ethnically cleansed territory moved from the battlefield into the classrooms. Throughout the region, many schools have continued the segregation that resulted from the wars in an attempt to foster group identities and cultures. As a result, the wars of the late twentieth century are now being waged over the children's identities in the twenty-first century. Due to their prominent role in the construction of national identity, schools are frequently arenas in which identity politics arise, often in the form of curriculum debates. I understand identity politics as a struggle between the need for social cohesion at the level of the state and the imperative of cultural integrity for the various groups that make up the state's population.<sup>1</sup> Even in the most peaceful multinational states, navigating this tension is challenging for educators. States, subgroups within a state, and individuals within those subgroups all express identities. Further, individuals often hold multiple, conflicting identities. It is precisely the interplay between these different levels of identification that makes identity politics so complex. Thus, in the aftermath of the Balkan wars of the mid-1990s, one of the greatest peace-building challenges faced by both Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) and Croatia is to navigate this tension. In this paper, I examine the identity politics of education in these two states, which have very different formal relationships among the national groups living within them.

This paper is based upon qualitative data collected as part of a collaborative research project conducted by a team of scholars from BiH, Croatia, and the United States.<sup>2</sup> The research was carried out between 2000 and 2003 in two of the most conflict-ridden towns in the region, Mostar, BiH, and Vukovar, Croatia. Our work sought to provide international organizations and local policy-makers working to reform the education systems in these two countries "a better understanding of the aspirations and experiences of those most immediately affected by the education system." From our findings, we argued that the history curricula needs to address "the facts surrounding the recent wars and with the history of ethnic relations in each country" using a

multiple-perspectives approach. Furthermore, we noted that the issue of school organization is intimately linked to questions of identity. We argued that any effort to integrate the schools needs to address issues of identity and to protect group rights.<sup>3</sup> This paper investigates what the project data reveal about how students, parents, and teachers experience the tension between their civic and ethnic identities.<sup>4</sup>

## Education and Identity in Yugoslavia

History curricula are often used to inculcate a particular national identity in students. While national identity is largely viewed as constructed,<sup>5</sup> history education can be employed to "invent tradition" in an "attempt to establish a largely fictitious continuity with a suitable historical past."<sup>6</sup> While much of this kind of national history education is based in fact, the narrative that is told in schools often contains as much myth as reality. This sort of nation building in schools often enables social cohesion by fostering political loyalty to the state. The former Yugoslavia was no exception.

During the Tito years, schools in Yugoslavia were charged with the task of inculcating an identification with the state, rather than with the national group through the ideology of "brotherhood and unity." In his "War, Memory, and Education in a Fragmented Society: The Case of Yugoslavia," Wolfgang Hoepken analyzes the official remembrance of World War II in Yugoslavia's socialist years.<sup>7</sup> Hoepken chronicles the suppression of the ethnic character of the war in textbooks during the Tito years and argues that Tito used selective memories of World War II as a tool to legitimize his rule.

Another prong of Tito's unifying efforts came in the form of language policies. During the Yugoslav years, all people except Slovenians were said to speak a variant of Serbo-Croatian or Croato-Serbian. The primary difference between the two had to do with which alphabet was used, Cyrillic or Latin. Students learned both alphabets, which have a one-to-one correspondence, but the Cyrillic alphabet was most often used in the Eastern part of the country, mostly by Serbs, and the Latin alphabet was used in the West, predominantly by Croats and Bosnian Muslims. There were also regional dialectical differences that did not



correspond perfectly with the boundaries between national groups. With the break up of Yugoslavia and the corresponding rise of national movements, there have been increasing efforts to differentiate the languages spoken by the various national groups in the region.

Today, language is a hot button issue and a marker of people's attitudes towards nationalism. Many claim that Croats, Serbs, and Bosniaks<sup>8</sup> all speak different languages. One of many criteria that linguists use in determining if two people speak the same language is mutual intelligibility. Using that standard alone, one could claim that Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian are the same language, since Bosnian-speakers, Croatian-speakers, and Serbian-speakers frequently converse without any difficulty.<sup>9</sup> However, linguists also note that mutual intelligibility depends in part on the effort made by two speakers to understand each other. Today, students no longer learn both alphabets, the grammatical differences in the language variants are being codified in schools, and many traditional words that are used in only one of the language(s) are being revived. With such language policies in school, there is no question that the mutual intelligibility of the language(s) will diminish with future generations.

### **Post-conflict Resolutions' Effects on Education in Croatia and BiH**

While Croatia and BiH share a history as successor states to the former Yugoslavia, they differ not only in terms of their pre-Yugoslav histories, but also in terms of their current formal group relations. Whereas Croatia is the Croats' *nation-state* in which minority populations of other national groups including Italians and Hungarians, as well as Serbs, also live, BiH is a fledgling *multinational state* with three constituent peoples. This designation in BiH that Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs are all "constituent people," means that the constitution specifies that all three of these nations have equal status within the state of BiH. Thus, the "group rights" that Croatia's minorities are able to claim are significantly more limited than the rights reserved for the three constituent peoples of BiH. This affects not only the educational situation for the various national groups in each country, but also the educational rights these different national groups feel entitled to claim. To help understand how these differences in formal group relations affect schooling practices, I now turn to a discussion of the ways in which the schooling of national subgroups in each country has been affected by the resolutions that ended the armed conflicts in the region.

#### **Croatia**

Croatia's education system is highly centralized, with all primary and secondary education regulated by the Ministry of Education and Sport (MoES). Unlike the United States' Department of Education, which devolves much educational authority to the state and municipal level, the MoES has tremendous oversight powers. In addition to drafting

education-related legislation, designing curriculum, and approving textbooks, the MoES appoints head teachers, approves student enrollment numbers and school budgets, and settles all expenditures except those discharged at the local level.

The education of national minorities is legislated by a set of laws that provides three options for the education of minority children, each of which attempts to strike a balance between the need for a unified state identity and the desire to sustain minority languages and cultures. At one end of the spectrum is the possibility to have separate schools, with classes conducted in the minority mother tongue. It is most common for minorities who form a numerical majority in the local context to exercise this "separate schools" option, as is the case with Italians in Istria.<sup>10</sup> In the second alternative, which I call the "separate national curriculum" option, minority students attend regular Croatian language schools, but take separate courses in the "national" group of subjects in their mother tongue. These courses include language, history, geography, religion, and art. Finally, minority groups have the "extra-curricular" option of taking additional ethnic-oriented schooling outside of regular class time. Minority cultural organizations usually hold these cultural heritage courses outside of school grounds, but MoES provides funding for them.

These options theoretically apply equally to all of Croatia's minority national groups, including Italians, Hungarians, Slovaks, Czechs, and Serbs, among others. Although Croatia's Serbs are, by far, the largest minority national group in Croatia, the MoES does not actually extend any of these minority-schooling options to the Serbs who live in the Podunavlje region of Croatia, the region most densely populated by Serbs.<sup>11</sup> Outside of the Podunavlje, there are a small number of towns with minority schooling options for primary school, but these students must attend the regular Croatian programs for secondary school.<sup>12</sup>

Schooling in the Podunavlje is regulated by the Erdut agreement, named after the village in which the agreement was signed.<sup>13</sup> Although the war in Croatia officially ended in 1992, the Podunavlje was under Serbian rule until the signing of the Erdut agreement in November 1995. This agreement dictated the terms of the peaceful reintegration of the region to the Republic of Croatia, covering many areas of dispute, including the right of displaced persons to remain in the region and the return of refugees. In 1997, a letter of agreement was signed as an addendum to the Erdut agreement that ensured the right for Serbs to be educated in their mother tongue using curricular materials approved by the MoES.

The agreement was implemented through the creation of separate language programs within schools with joint administrations. Headmaster positions were distributed equitably between the two groups, and wherever a school

had a headmaster of one national group the vice headmaster would be of the other. Another provision of the agreement placed a five-year moratorium in the Serbian language programs on the teaching of history for the war period. The schools in this region, then, are divided into separate Croatian and Serbian language programs, with students rarely occupying the same building at the same time. Although this situation seems much like the first option, wherein minority students are schooled separately, there are very real differences.

Since the schools are administratively united, neither language program is autonomous. Further, the needs of the local authorities and the MoES tend to subordinate the needs of the Serbian programs to those of the Croatian language programs. Indeed, at least two Serbian-language secondary school programs are held in buildings that are vastly inferior to the new building that is occupied by their Croatian-language counterparts. These buildings suffer so badly from war damage that they cannot be heated in the winter, and birds nest in the bullet holes that riddle the sides of the buildings. At least part of the resistance to providing the Serb students with reconstructed buildings has to do with the feeling on the part of Croats that the Croatian government should not pay to fix damages that the Serbs caused. One teacher explained:

They already have all that they have asked for, but now they go even further and ask for separate school buildings. If we want to be honest and think about what happened eight, nine years ago, and what happened was that they destroyed those very same buildings, I believe there is no moral justification to allow these buildings, which have been rebuilt using the money of Croatian citizens, to serve as means of division. It is they who want to create their ghetto.

Although this rationale has some logic to it, the Serbian students who attend school in inadequate conditions were at most 5 or 6 years old when the war started. Clearly, the Serbian students are those most hurt by this particular situation.

The mandated period has expired, and MoES has lifted the moratorium on teaching about the war, but there has been no movement on the issue of school organization. Despite formal requests from Serb leaders for officially recognized separate schools, the MoES has refused to make a decision and has opted to maintain the status quo. While the MoES is reluctant to make the separation permanent, there is enormous resistance to any form of reintegration of the schools from both sides. Probably the most challenging issue is the very real fear of violence between the students. One Serb student explained:

Theoretically, it would be great if all children could go to school together. However, if that was put to practice, there would be a lot of problems because the war might be almost forgotten in other parts of

the country but not here. I think that there would be a lot of conflicts. I mean, there are conflicts even now when schools are divided.

Among the other stumbling blocks is an unwillingness among many Croats to associate and live normally with their former enemies. Another is the problem of ensuring the job security of Serb teachers. Indeed, Milan Milic, the Serb deputy minister of education, went so far as to claim that lawmakers designed the “separate national curriculum” option specifically to meet the needs of those minorities that have a shortage of teachers. From his perspective, as long as there is no shortage of qualified teachers who speak Serbian, there is no need to prioritize the teaching of national subjects in Serbian, and all schooling of Serbian children should be conducted in the Serbian language. This somewhat disingenuous argument ignores any possible benefits that might come from the reintegration of the language programs.

### **Bosnia-Herzegovina**

The administrative structure set up by the Dayton Accords and the Washington Agreement has allowed segregated education to predominate in BiH. The Dayton Accords, which brought an end to the war in BiH, created a supposedly “unified” BiH made up of two entities: the Republika Srpska and the Muslim-Croat Federation (FBiH), both of which are overseen by the United Nation’s Office of the High Representative (OHR).<sup>14</sup> FBiH, as formulated in the Washington Agreement, consists of ten cantons: five Bosniak majority, three Croat majority, and two mixed cantons. Dayton grants educational authority to each of the two entities. While the education system in Republika Srpska is centralized, the constitution of FBiH further devolves control over education to the cantonal level. This highly decentralized arrangement in FBiH has resulted in a situation in which there are no less than twelve Ministries of Education in BiH—a state with a population of less than 4 million people.<sup>15</sup> These parallel education administrations significantly increase the costs of education as well as intensify the danger of allowing those who would perpetuate group conflict to use the education system to achieve their goals.

Ironically, the Washington Agreement’s stipulation that minister and deputy minister positions at the Federation level and in mixed cantons be filled in an “ethnically-balanced” manner only aggravated the situation. Instead of mitigating national division of government offices, nationalists manipulated it to facilitate the partition of these ministries into parallel institutions for the two constituent groups. For example, in the mixed Herzegovina Neretva Canton, the minister of education was a Croat and the deputy minister was Bosniak. Their offices and parallel administrations, staffed only by members of the respective national origin, were based in separate locations and only presided over the educational institutions of their constituent peoples. In October 2002, OHR annulled these parallel

systems of administration in the mixed cantons. This, along with a transfer of education-related oversight to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which has an enormous field presence, has brought about significant improvements in the joint administration of the schools in the mixed cantons. However, there has been little movement on bridging the curricular divide that exists between the different national groups' schools.

Not surprisingly, the curriculum problem stems from the decentralized system established by the Dayton Accords and the Washington Agreement. Currently, in most of the Bosniak-majority cantons, "Pedagogical Institutes" are "responsible for curriculum, data collection from schools, school evaluation, teacher recruitment and evaluation, in-service teacher training, and school development."<sup>16</sup> A single "Institute of Education," which is located in Mostar, provides a similar service to the ministries in the Croat-majority cantons and to the Croat educational institutions in the mixed cantons. Each institute develops the actual curricula that schools use, utilizing "curriculum frameworks" created by different authorities. The Federal Ministry of Education develops the Bosniak curricular framework, while the Croats' Institute of Education imports and modifies the curricular framework that is used in Croatia for Croatian schools in BiH.

In September 2000, OHR succeeded in brokering an agreement between the three entity-level ministers of education in BiH—the Republika Srpska minister, the (Bosniak) Federation minister, and the (Croatian) Federation deputy minister. They decided to create a common core curriculum model, where 70% of the curriculum would be standard across all regions and schools of BiH and the other 30% would be particular to the region and national group. The Federal Ministry of Education assembled a mixed-nationality team of teachers and professors that worked on developing a new curricular framework in accordance with this agreement, which was supposed to be ready in the fall of 2003. However, although this team agreed upon the curriculum framework in principle before the school year began, new textbooks were not ready for use in the 2003–04 academic year. It is unclear at this point if new textbooks will be implemented in the 2004–05 school year. In October 2002, the director of the company that publishes textbooks for use in the Croat schools claimed that his company had no intention to produce textbooks in accordance with the common core curriculum because the Federal Ministry had no authority to force the Croatian schools to implement it.<sup>17</sup>

Should a common core curriculum eventually be realized, the effect on students living in ethnically homogeneous areas would be minimal. However, the future possibilities for education in areas where there are significant populations of more than one constituent people would change significantly. Currently, some areas have completely segregated schools, whereas others have

students of different national groups sharing a single building, but attending their separate schools in shifts or in different parts of the building, a system described by OSCE as "two schools under one roof." Aside from the fear that the continued division of students will undermine the goal of a unified BiH, the completely segregated schools are not an economically feasible option in the long run. Further, in many areas one group does not have the proper facilities to have a separate school. In Mostar, for example, each of the Bosniak secondary schools is a subtenant in a primary school's building. For years now, fully-grown students have had to sit in chairs designed for small children.

Originally, OHR had thought that bringing students of a divided community together under one roof could be the first step in integrating the schools, especially where lack of space presented pressing problems. The hope was that if students of different nationalities would be able peaceably to share facilities such as the library, the gym, and computer labs, eventually resistance to more thorough integration would yield. In November 2001, the senior education advisor to OHR described what happened when they "succeeded" in integrating a primary school in Stolac this way:

We finally managed to accommodate [the Bosniak students]. But, they have to enter the building through a back door. They file out through the back door. They are not allowed to use the gym; they are not allowed to use the library ... I mean, everything is totally separate. Even the wing that they occupy ... is separated from the rest of the school by a pile of furniture, old furniture that the Croat principal piled up ... in one of the corridors to prevent any contact between the two groups. So this is total nonsense, total apartheid, and it cannot be tolerated.<sup>18</sup>

After their experience in Stolac, OHR abandoned this model. Now, OSCE has been working hard to implement a model of integration that is much like Croatia's "separate national curricula" option for minorities, wherein students have most subjects in integrated classes and attend separate classes for national subjects, including language, history, religion, geography, and art.

### **Mostar and Vukovar**

The cities in which we collected data are two of the most divided cities in the region. Although they are not representative of less conflict-ridden areas of these countries, they allow for an examination of how students, parents, and teachers in divided communities experience the tension between their ethnic and civic national identities. Before turning to the data, I will take a moment to describe these two cities.

Mostar is located in the southwest corner of BiH. During the early 1990s, Mostarians lived through what they describe as two separate wars. First, in 1992, the Serb-

dominated Yugoslav National Army (JNA) occupied East Mostar.<sup>19</sup> During this siege, Croats and Muslims fought alongside each other and eventually ended the occupation as they drove the JNA out of Mostar. The second and much more brutal war began in April of 1993 when the Croatian army rounded up and took to camps the Muslims who had been fighting in the Croat forces throughout BiH. Simultaneously, Croats expelled almost all of Mostar's Muslims from the west side of the city. Today, a few newly reconstructed buildings punctuate the otherwise decimated boulevard that once formed the front line of the war. Croats from the west side still rarely cross over to the east side, but Bosniaks increasingly cross the other way to shop and work. A Bosniak teacher described the division:

There is line of separation. [A student] cannot go to the other side, let's say to go to school over there, to go freely to the other side. Or if he can freely go, he can not speak ... This is the case for one side as well as for the other.

Economic conditions in Mostar are dire, with many government functions not working. For example, while I was there in October 2003, garbage lined the streets on the west side, since the company that collected the garbage had gone bankrupt, and the schools on the east side had yet to begin their school year, because the teachers were on strike protesting the fact that they had not yet received their pay for part of the previous school year.

Vukovar is located in Eastern Croatia, on the Dunav River, which forms the border with Serbia. Like Mostar, it was the site of a brutal battle, where neighbor fought against neighbor and the siege destroyed much of the city. In the year prior to the outbreak of war, Vukovar Serbs were frequently the victims of Croat abuse orchestrated by the ultranationalist HDZ party. When the city fell to the JNA in November 1991, the JNA and paramilitary groups, but also some local Vukovar Serbs, committed many war crimes against Vukovar Croats. In one of the worst instances, the Serb army emptied the hospital of all Croats, including doctors, nurses, and patients, and massacred them. The Croatian population that now lives in Vukovar is a mixture of people who are new to Vukovar and those that were originally from Vukovar but had to live in exile from the time they fled until they were able to return after the signing of the Erdut Agreement. Unlike Mostar, Vukovar is not physically divided. Instead, there are essentially two cities superimposed on top of each other. Serbs and Croats move through life largely ignoring each other. Everybody knows which bakeries are theirs and which coffee shops belong to the others. People who might otherwise be friendly with each other in private do not acknowledge each other when they pass in the street. For example, one Croatian teacher who was not originally from Vukovar explained in a focus group discussion that, although she does not hate Serbs, she worries that if she were friendly to a Serb, there is the possibility that he or she perpetrated

war crimes against her Croatian friends and their families. She simply avoids all Serbs so as not to take the chance of offending other Croats.

### **The Experiences of Students, Parents, and Teachers<sup>20</sup>**

#### *Conflation of Croatian Civic and Ethnic Identities—Where Does That Leave Serbs?*

Since Croatia is the Croat's nation-state, Croatia's civic and ethnic identities are conflated, leaving little room for Serbs and other minorities to identify with the state. The Croats we spoke with identify strongly with both Croatia as a state and the Croat nation. They want the Serbs either to assimilate themselves completely to the Croat culture or to move "back" to Serbia. Neither of these options allows Serbs to maintain their ethnic identity and also identify with the state of Croatia. However, we found that the Serbs of Vukovar tend to be accepting of the state of Croatia as their home but say that they would like to be able to preserve their identity and culture, just as other minorities in Croatia do. But their situation is particularly difficult, given the history of conflict, and Croats often argue that Serbs will become isolated and ghettoized if they put too much focus on preserving their national culture.

A sentiment that we heard from many Croats was that they think Serbs in Vukovar want the Podunavlje region to be part of Serbia. One teacher said, "There are great numbers of them who don't know that this is Croatia or don't want to accept it." The Croats tend to say that the best way to get Vukovar's Serbs to accept the fact that they live in Croatia is to make them attend the regular Croatian language program. One teacher said,

Since this is the Croatian state, please listen to the lectures in the Croatian language ... So please if you want to go, then go. No one stops you! ... If you don't want to [study in the Croatian language], please, across [the river] is not far away.

Although this teacher implies that she would support integrated schools, in reading the rest of the interview, one cannot help but wonder if she would simply prefer to have the Serbs leave Vukovar than have to teach Serbian students. A Croat student echoed this sentiment, saying, "As far as I'm concerned ... let them go elsewhere. I don't care."

Despite Croats' certainty that Vukovar Serbs are not willing to identify with the Croatian state, we found evidence to the contrary. One student said, "We are after all citizens of this state, and I can, as much as I want, wish the best for Serbia, but I still live here." In terms of learning the Croatian language, one Serbian teacher said in an unrecorded interview that since they live in Croatia, they must respect the state. She added that it is necessary for children to know the official language of the country in which they live. Participants in the Serb fathers' group also

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## Noah London, continued from page 7

“a single managing and planning body” would be formed for Birobidzhan, he cautiously replied that “I think that there will be no objections . . .”<sup>21</sup> According to Fink, such a trust—*Birobidzhanstroi*—was in the process of formation.<sup>22</sup> In fact, this did not take place. One plausible candidate to head such a trust—Noah London—was appointed, the very same month Fink’s article was published, to head *Donbassvodtrest*, a “single managing and planning body” in charge of something more important than Birobidzhan—water for the Donbass, where the coal that fueled the Soviet economy was mined.

The commission’s and London’s proposals could hardly have come at a worse time. In the fall of 1929, Stalin’s industrialization and collectivization programs were reaching their frenzied peaks. The economy was suffering from extreme overstretch. Leaving the Birobidzhan experiment in OZET’s and KOMZET’s hands had obvious advantages. The last thing the Soviet government wanted or needed was another expensive project to suck up money and, equally importantly, cadres, time, and energy. Rykov’s cautious semi-endorsement surely did not help matters.

### UkrOZET and the Londons

In the initial period of enthusiasm over Birobidzhan, OZET grew rapidly and effectively replaced the *Evseksiia*, whose Yiddish-language focus had made it unnecessary to both the Soviet leadership and an increasingly Russian-speaking Jewish Soviet public. Like their American cousins, Soviet Jews were assimilating. OZET’s industrial training programs played a significant role in the sociological transformation of the Soviet Jewish community. Dimanshtein’s *Tribuna* became its officially-anointed spokesman. OZET’s ostensible purpose, the transformation of Jews into peasants, came to take on the role of a Sorelian myth. As the myth frayed over the course of the 30s, and both the Jewish poverty and the popular anti-Semitism of the NEP era ebbed, OZET declined as well.

But in 1930, the year the *Evseksiia* was dissolved and London’s pamphlet appeared, OZET, whose paper membership reached 400,000, was at its peak. In December, OZET called a Kharkov city conference attended by over 600 delegates, of whom less than a hundred were party members, more than half were factory workers, and 45 percent were not Jewish. As was the ritual in this period of “criticism and self-criticism,” the delegates lambasted the Kharkov OZET leadership for its multiple failings, and the apologetic leadership team was renovated.<sup>23</sup> The report by Kharkov OZET leader Viktorov mandated a transformation in OZET’s principal tasks, which now were:

a) creation out of the Jewish poor, especially the youth, of a qualified labor force for industry and agriculture;

b) bringing the Jewish poor into the fundamental branches of industry and industrial cooperatives;

c) settling the poorest sections of the Jewish population in Crimea and Birobidzhan.<sup>24</sup>

The priority order clearly indicates what OZET’s real role was becoming. Viktorov stated that OZET’s main job, as far as agricultural settlement was concerned, was arranging settler contingents for Birobidzhan.

The conference sent 16 delegates to the all-Ukrainian OZET conference, 15 of whom were named, but one of whom mysteriously is listed as “from *Donugol*” (the Donbass Soviet coal trust, of which London had been a prominent functionary).<sup>25</sup> This was “Maria” London. She was working in the chemistry lab of the Coal Institute and representing it on the executive committee of the Kharkov engineer’s section of the miners’ union.<sup>26</sup> At the all-Ukrainian conference, she was elected an alternate member of UkrOZET’s Presidium.<sup>27</sup> As she was living in Kharkov, where the organization was headquartered, and, unlike most of the Presidium, was a regular and active participant, she began to play a certain role.

The protocols of the UkrOZET Presidium make clear that the leadership of UkrOZET, or at any rate those who bothered to attend meetings, were a disputatious lot. Maria London participated quite actively in the “lively discussions” of this body. But when it was proposed to send her out on an organizational tour, a resolution had to be passed first to “talk with the party secretary of the Coal Institute.” Authorization apparently was not received, and her role in OZET diminished.<sup>28</sup> Her work at the Coal Institute was not unimportant. In this period, she wrote two scientific papers on coal chemistry, both of which were published in technical journals and presented at the sixth Mendeleev Conference in Kharkov in 1932.<sup>29</sup>

The real reason for her stepping back may have been different. Her period of maximum activity in UkrOZET corresponded closely with the period when her American sister Rose was her house guest. When Rose decided not to accept a job offer at *Narkomzdrav* and to return home to New York, she wrote her future husband that “Mira is taking my change of heart very painfully. She cries when I mention going, and cannot bear once more to be isolated from everyone.” A few years later, after the Ukrainian famine, “Mira” underwent a nervous breakdown.<sup>30</sup> Many years later, Rose told her niece Beatrice Holmes (the author’s mother) that “Miril told Aunt Rose that there had been a famine in Ukraine and it had been hushed up whereas the famine after the Civil War was published and help was sought from the United States . . . people were dying there, she told this story weeping to Rose.”<sup>31</sup> Miril’s loneliness was definitely not due to marital difficulties. According to her sister’s description, “evenings I lie on the couch and watch Mira and Noah. They are an unusually affectionate couple and bandy pet names and embraces as though they had been married yesterday.”<sup>32</sup>

Maria London stepped away from her involvement in UkrOZET as serious problems developed. The *Tribuna* ran a number of articles in 1932 and 1933 about the deficiencies of UkrOZET's work, especially in Kharkov. In Kharkov, OZET's true task of aiding Jewish proletarianization was already near completion, while its alleged task of Jewish peasantization was rapidly losing appeal. The Kharkov *oblast* was one of those worst hit by the famine. Formerly Kharkov had been held up as a model. Now it was being described as UkrOZET's worst branch.

A Ukrainian Central Committee document from January 1933 described the organizational condition of UkrOZET as extremely unsatisfactory. Many branches existed only on paper. Non-Jews were drifting away. Local party organizations were simply ignoring OZET, giving it no leadership, direction, or even interest. Dues receipts were failing to cover organizational costs, and the organization was becoming ever more dependent on sales of lottery tickets and governmental subsidy. OZET's Ukrainian language journal, *Sotsialistychna Borozna*, had just been suspended. Plans for Jewish land settlement in Ukraine had been cut back, while OZET focused too much on Birobidzhan.<sup>33</sup>

A very busy Noah London had just been saddled with the post of president of Kharkov *oblast* OZET.<sup>34</sup> According to a report to Dimanshtein by an inspector sent from Moscow headquarters,

The obLOZET apparatus was picked in such a way that it cannot do any work. Responsible secretary Furman is barely literate, doesn't have any organizational ability and even with all his best intentions cannot handle the work. Responsible instructor Shpil', in addition to not knowing how to work, doesn't want to. With the exception of the president of the *orgkom*, comrade London, none of the members of the *orgkom* is interested in the work. Presently, Kharkov obLOZET basically does not exist.<sup>35</sup>

UkrOZET graded the work of the Kharkov obLOZET in June 1933 as "clearly unsatisfactory."<sup>36</sup> The prime task KharobLOZET was assigned during London's presidency seems to have been selling lottery tickets to raise money. At one UkrOZET Presidium meeting, London remarked that due to the lottery campaign, little else was being done.<sup>37</sup> Surely selling lottery tickets to factory workers in the Kharkov region to support Jewish agriculture in Birobidzhan—right in the middle of the great famine that killed millions of Ukrainian peasants, many near Kharkov—must have been a difficult task.

### **UkrOZET and Birobidzhan**

Despite the brave front presented in the *Tribuna*, things were not going well in Birobidzhan either. Soon after Larin's death in January 1932 Birobidzhan officially became OZET's prime emphasis. UkrOZET had sent

Professor Liberberg, head of the Jewish Section of Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, off to Birobidzhan to investigate how UkrOZET could best assist. On his return to Ukraine, he demanded and obtained, with some difficulty, the calling of a special Ukrainian CP commission on Birobidzhan. The transcript of this mini-conference sheds light on the state of affairs in 1932, the year the largest number of settlers arrived.<sup>38</sup>

Liberberg minced no words in his report. Out of 8,000 settlers who had arrived, only 2,000 stayed, primarily because, despite all warnings, no housing had been prepared for them. Liberberg put the main blame on the worthlessness of the local party leadership. When conference participants protested, he replied "how is it anti-party to say that such a local leadership *ni k cherty ne goditsia* (is completely worthless)."<sup>39</sup> Liberberg's solution was that UkrOZET needed to come to Birobidzhan's rescue by sending reinforcements. Activist Grinbein praised the Yiddish Ukrainian *Komsomol* journal for calling for the mobilization of 400 *Komsomol* construction workers for Birobidzhan. This practical proposal, which if implemented would have been far more useful than sending a few dozen OZET activists, was not taken up.<sup>40</sup> In 1934, Liberberg was appointed chairman of the Provincial Executive Committee of the newly-formed "Birobidzhan Jewish Autonomous Region," but he was purged in 1936, charged with "Jewish nationalism" and "Trotskyism."

### **Birobidzhan and London**

London's recommendations for Birobidzhan had been ignored. In 1934, *Sovetskoe Stroitel'stvo* complained that local construction trusts were ignoring government decrees and refusing to hire Jewish settlers, that colonists were being given land without housing and unready for cultivation, and that government organs were criminally mishandling the settlers.<sup>41</sup> In reaction to agricultural failures, planners shifted emphasis in Birobidzhan from agriculture to industrial development. The Birobidzhan experiment's original justification, solving the problem of Soviet Jewish poverty, was tacitly abandoned.<sup>42</sup> The Stalinist industrial revolution had rendered it irrelevant.

It seems that for London, after he was transferred to Moscow in the summer of 1933, the experiment in "Soviet Zionism" became a bad memory best forgotten. The "historic test" London posed had been flunked. Shortly before her death in the 1980s, London's American sister-in-law, Rose Unterman-Discher-Rizikoff, did tell the author's father of London's participation in the IKOR expedition and his later judgment that Birobidzhan was a failure. His 1934 dissident manuscript, dictated to her at his Moscow dacha, evades any mention of OZET or Birobidzhan, or indeed any mention of Soviet Jews. According to family tradition, when once during her 1934 visit she addressed him in Yiddish, he told her never to speak to him in public in that language.

Whether London's scheme to make a success of the Birobidzhan project was really practicable is unclear. What London recommended would almost certainly have worked better than what was actually done. The real question, however, is whether the Soviet Union could have genuinely afforded to commit the human and monetary resources to the Birobidzhan experiment that would have been required by London's plan. The judgments by a Soviet exile who began concerning himself with Birobidzhan at about the same time as London stopped, can serve as a useful referent. I have in mind Leon Trotsky.

### Trotsky and Birobidzhan

Trotsky initially paid no attention whatsoever to the Birobidzhan experiment. He was compelled to take a position in 1934, when followers wrote to him about it from deep in the Soviet underground. These may have been among the last such letters received before all communications were cut off. He replied that "the statement that Birobidzhan is 'Left Zionism' seems to me completely incorrect ... a workers' government is duty bound to create for the Jews, as for any nation, the very best circumstances for cultural development."<sup>43</sup> To a subsequent question, whether or not the Trotskyist underground should attempt to work in OZET, his son was compelled to reply that "we are not in a position to give our opinion, due to scanty information."<sup>44</sup> Perhaps this was taken as a go-ahead. According to the 1937 OZET transcript brought to the attention of historians by Arkadii Zeltser, Dimanshtein and the OZET leadership believed that the Tatar branch of OZET had been seized by a Trotskyist conspiracy.<sup>45</sup>

His most considered judgment of the experiment came in a Mexican press interview in 1937, by which time what advice Trotsky might have had for Russian followers had become a moot point. When asked about Birobidzhan, he replied that

it can be no more than a very limited experience. The USSR alone would still be too poor to resolve its own Jewish question, even under a regime much more socialistic than the present one. The Jewish question, I repeat, is indissolubly bound up with the complete emancipation of humanity. Everything else that is done in this domain can only be a palliative and often even a two-edged blade, as the example of Palestine shows.<sup>46</sup>

In practical terms, Trotsky was essentially agreeing with Larin that foreign assistance would be needed for serious Jewish land settlement. But unlike Larin, he believed that the only practical basis for such assistance was world proletarian revolution, not "socialism in one country." This was also the basic difference between Trotsky's views and London's. Trotsky's final judgment on the Birobidzhan experiment, with which the ghost of London would probably have agreed, was that Birobidzhan was "a bureaucratic farce."<sup>47</sup>

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Noah London, "Birobidzhan nuzhdaetsia v khoroshikh rabotnikakh!" *Tribuna* (Sept. 20, 1929): 13.

<sup>2</sup> Noah London, "Zadachi stroitel'stva Birobidzhana (Rezul'taty raboty ekspeditsii 'IKOR')," *Tribuna* (Oct. 20, 1929): 3.

<sup>3</sup> Noah London, "Marshall, Pine and the poor unfortunate brothers (trans. from Yiddish)," *Freiheit* (May 14, 1924).

<sup>4</sup> London, "tasks," 4.

<sup>5</sup> Noah London, "Zamechaniia po voprosu o kolonizatsii Birobidzhana, v sviazi obschim otchetom ekspeditsii 'IKORA,'" GARF, fond 9498, op. 1, d. 47, pp. 20–25.

<sup>6</sup> Much of this pamphlet was assembled out of his fall 1929 articles in the *Shtern* and *Tribuna* on the expedition. Noah London, *Mit der amerikaner ekspeditsie keyn birobidzhan* (Kharkov: Central Publishing House, Ukrainian Department, 1930).

<sup>7</sup> Jonathan Dekel-Chen describes the unfortunate results in the Crimea of putting OZET in direct charge of colonization there. Jonathan Dekel-Chen, "Farmers, philanthropists and Soviet authority: Rural Crimea and southern Ukraine, 1923–41," *Kritika* 4 (Fall 2003): 872.

<sup>8</sup> American Icor Commission for the Study of Biro-Bidjan and its Colonization, *Report* (New York: ICOR, 1930).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 90, 86.

<sup>10</sup> Leon Talmy, *Oyfroyer erd* (New York: "Freyhey" farlag, 1931).

<sup>11</sup> Letter from Kharkov, Rose Unterman, Sept. 8, 1931, to Louis Discher, New York. Unterman-Discher collection, in possession of Lucy Lewis, daughter of Louis Discher/Richard Lewis, Berkeley. Hereinafter "Lewis Collection."

<sup>12</sup> Solomon Schwartz, "Birobidzhan: an experiment in Jewish colonization," in *Russian Jewry 1917–1967*, ed. Gregor Aronson (New York: Union of Russian Jews, 1969), 349–55.

<sup>13</sup> Noah London, "Birobidzhanskomu predstavitel'stvu Ts. P. 'OZET,'" GARF, fond 9498, op. 1, d. 47, l. 26–27.

<sup>14</sup> London, "Remarks," GARF, fond 9498, op. 1, d. 47, l. 22 ob.

<sup>15</sup> London, *American Expedition*, 27.

<sup>16</sup> Talmy, *erd*, 54–55.

<sup>17</sup> Victor Fink, "Birobidzhan," *Sovetskoe stroitel'stvo* 5:46 (May 1930): 121.

<sup>18</sup> Talmy, *erd*, 214–23.

<sup>19</sup> Robert Weinberg, "Jews into peasants? Solving the Jewish Question in Birobidzhan," in *Jews and Jewish Life in Russia and the Soviet Union*, ed. Yaacov Ro'i (Portland: Frank Cass, 1995), 92.

- <sup>20</sup> Fink, "Birobidzhan," 122.
- <sup>21</sup> American Icor Commission for the Study of Biro-Bidjan and its Colonization, *Report*, 92.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>23</sup> "Protokol, 1-i Gorodskii konferentsii Khar'kovskogo otd. OZET," GAKHO, f. 1623, op. 2, d.1, l. 45–57.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.
- <sup>26</sup> Maria London, party registration blank, RGASPI; Moscow FSB archive, *sledstvennoe delo* for Maria London, letter M. London to L. Beria, *Alzhir* lager, 1938, p. 3.
- <sup>27</sup> UkrOZET Presidium Protocols, Dec. 8, 1930; GARF, f. 9498, op. 1, d. 218, p. 4.
- <sup>28</sup> Protocols, 10/12/1931; GARF, f. 9498, op. 1, d. 229, l. 21.
- <sup>29</sup> Letter to Beria, p. 3.
- <sup>30</sup> Letters Rose to Louis Discher, 9/4/1931, 8/2/1934; Rose to Sara, 8/2/1934; Miril London to Louis 7/21/1934; Lewis collection.
- <sup>31</sup> Interview, John Holmes with Beatrice Holmes, 11/30/1998.
- <sup>32</sup> Letter, 9/13/1931, Lewis collection.
- <sup>33</sup> CC KPBU, agitmassovy otdel, "Spravka o sostoianii I rabote Obschestvo Zemleustroistva Trudiashchikhsia Evreev /"OZET"/ na Ukraine," TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 6213, l. 18–21.
- <sup>34</sup> GAKHO, f. 17-2, op. 1, d. 20, l. 119.
- <sup>35</sup> "Khar'kovskomu oblkomitetu I gorkomitetu KP(b)U, Ot Instruktoroga Tsentral'nogo Soveta OZET chl. VKP(b) ROT," GARF, f. 9498, op. 1, d. 242, l. 107.
- <sup>36</sup> "Rezolutsiia po dokladu Khar'kovskogo oblogkomiteta OZET ot 10/6-33g.," GARF, f. 9498, op. 1, d. 260, l. 25.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*; Ukrozet Protokol #58; 12/18/1932, GARF, f. 9498, op. 1, d. 241, l. 7 ob.
- <sup>38</sup> "Soveshchanie pri kul'trope TsK po voprose o Birobidzhane," 10/1/1932, TsDAHO, f.1, op. 20, d. 5288, l. 1–50.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 17–18.
- <sup>41</sup> D. Barshchevsky, "Zemel'noe ustroistvo trudiashchikh evreev," *Sovetskoe stroitel'stvo* 1 (Jan. 1934): 86–90.
- <sup>42</sup> Weinberg, "peasants."
- <sup>43</sup> Joseph Nedava, *Trotsky and the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972), 216.
- <sup>44</sup> Nedava, *Trotsky*, 217.
- <sup>45</sup> Arkadi Zeltser, "OZET and the Soviet self-criticism campaign of 1937," *Jews in Eastern Europe* 3:40 (Winter 1999): 57–67.
- <sup>46</sup> Nedava, *Trotsky*, 218.
- <sup>47</sup> Nedava, *Trotsky*, 220.

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## Identity politics, continued from page 12

expressed this sentiment. One father said, "There is an official language and one should learn it." One participant in the girls' focus group went even further, saying, "To me the official language of the state seems more important than the mother tongue, because of communication between people." Another girl agreed, saying:

For us, both [languages] are equally important. We are in Croatia and that is the state that we live in, and we learn the Croatian language ... Because we are Serbs, we should know Cyrillic letters for ourselves, not for others, not because we will say the word "thousand" in Serbian or Croatian, but because of our culture.

As the conversation continued, one student almost echoed the words of the Croatian teacher quoted above, saying, "If [we] don't want to learn it that way, according to their program, we can simply go. Why should we live here if it doesn't suit us? We can always go to Serbia."

Nevertheless, most Serbs in Vukovar are not willing to forgo their national identity completely. Serbs often claim that as a minority they have a right to educate their children in Serbian. A Serb student said, "How it is with other minorities, the same should be with us." Another student, in discussing the possibility of integrated schools worried that this would threaten the Serbian language and identity:

Integrated schools would represent a step towards peaceful coexistence. On the other hand, I don't think that parents would approve of integrated schools. They are afraid that in case Serbian children went to school together with Croatian children, in time there wouldn't be Serbian language in schools any more. Even now we don't have a library where we could find books in Serbian language and at school we have only four periods of Serbian language a week. Nevertheless, I think it would be a good idea to do something in the way of bringing children together. Only in that case strict rules should be laid down about the rights of both Serbian and Croatian children.

This student points out that striking a balance between peaceful coexistence and maintaining Serbs' cultural rights will be very difficult.

Many Croats also recognize that there are no easy answers to the integration question and that the future identification of Serbian children is at stake. One teacher explained how he himself vacillates on the issue:

I don't think that it is good for children to be divided like this, but as I have already said every national community has the right to claim education in its own language. And if it asks for it, then the conclusion is that there will be separated schools. And if

there should be special schools for Serbian students ... sometimes it seems to me that is all right and then sometimes it seems to me that it is ... like a ghetto.

This teacher worries about the Serbian students' futures. He cannot envision a way for them to integrate themselves into Croatian society if they attend segregated schools. Another teacher also stated that the Serbs should have a right to education in the Serbian language, and then came to the same conclusion as her colleague did about what the long-term drawbacks might be:

I think that children must have the right to educate themselves in their mother tongue according to their wishes. Well, on the other hand ... it might look like simple segregation, and from this all [of our] problems arise. How, if they go to some special schools, will they include themselves in normal society? ... How will they include themselves and how will all of us be together in a multicultural and bilingual society? Ah, again because of this terrible inheritance from the recent past, to mix them and connect them just like that, I'm afraid that it wouldn't work. God forbid some excessive reactions on both sides.

This teacher eventually concludes that despite the good intentions that might be behind the change, it just does not seem feasible to integrate the schools due to the possibility of violence.

### *Individuals' Identities Are Linked to Their Visions of BiH*

The citizens of BiH are in the midst of conflict over their state's identity. For the most part, the Bosniaks we spoke with hold an ethnic Bosniak identity and a civic Bosnian identity, which they do not see as being incongruous in the least. They wanted BiH to be a multinational state with a unified civic identity. The Bosnian Croats, on the other hand, tended to hold only a Croatian national identity. They were concerned about maintaining this identity, and were distrustful that it would be possible to do so within a multinational BiH. They reject the notion that fostering a unified civic Bosnian identity would result in anything other than an imposition of the Bosniak identity upon them. Most Croats prefer the highly decentralized federated system that affords them the protection of majority status in the areas that they control.

Bosniaks tend to see segregated schools and separate curricula as detrimental to their vision of a multinational BiH because they fear that the other constituent peoples will not identify with the state. One Bosniak teacher described the Croatian and Serbian areas of BiH as "extreme areas, where [the average pupil] sees Bosnia and Herzegovina where he lives, not as his homeland, but Croatia, or Serbia." Many Bosniaks expressed distrust of the Croatian curriculum. For example, one teacher said:

In the part of the Federation of BiH that is still controlled by the HDZ,<sup>21</sup> educational systems are places where they reproduce young generations to hate, to resist, to maintain the processes of segregation, degradation and disintegration of BiH.

In general, Bosniaks want schools to foster an identification with the state of BiH, without emphasizing the particular national identities of the students. One teacher explained how the multinational character of BiH should form the basis of a civic Bosnian identity:

We are living in the multinational Bosnia and Herzegovina ... To make mono-national schools, that is insane! And to us Bosniaks, it was never on the top of our minds, nor will it be. Our value, our wealth, our power is exactly hidden in that multinational [character of the state].

Most Bosniaks did not see this desire for a multinational BiH identity as in any way threatening to the national identities any of the constituent groups.

Croats, however, see the Bosniaks' vision of a multinational BiH as a direct threat. One participant in a focus group of Croatian students' fathers eloquently explained his feelings about the necessity of Croatian nationalism:

As long as we ... are at risk as Croats ... And we are! We are under threat from the majority nation. We are under threat because we don't have our own state and we are surrounded here by extermination and defeat. We are simply ethnically cleansed here. We have been the most ethnically cleansed. There aren't any of us in Muslim areas at all ... I'm fighting for school to be national and nationalist ... because it's the only means of surviving here. I mean, it's a tragedy that ... I have to worry and burden [my child] nationally, that I have to stick some weight on his shoulders that he has to drag around. But I have to; I have deliberately to make him different from others. Because [my nation] will melt away to nothing. I mean, until these state and social problems are resolved, school must be a national tool ... Whoever is under threat develops that nationalism and he must implement it through school. I mean, I'd like that until I get national equality within the state.

This fear does not come out of nowhere, for Croats are, by far, the smallest constituent national group in BiH. BiH has a population of approximately 3.8 million people, which is made up of about 1.6 million Serbs, 1.7 million Bosniaks, and half a million Croats. Although all three nations have the status of constituent peoples, the Croats are in a clear numerical minority. Further, the international community has worked hard to reign in the nationalist impulses of the HDZ, which has been the Croats' leading political party.

In addition, we found evidence that some Bosniaks are not sensitive to the Croats' need to maintain their national

identity. Bosniaks who hold this view do not think it is important for the Bosnian identity to leave room for difference. One teacher went so far as to say, "We must build a single state, a single monolithic society, a uniform society." While most Bosniaks are not this extreme in their desire to do away with difference, many are still quick to avoid topics of disagreement in the interest of unity. One father said:

It would be more logical when they go to the same class and the same school, in the same state, that they also to learn the same things. If they cannot agree about something, like they cannot agree about a lot of things, they should skip that; they should skip that part of the subject.

This impulse to suppress difference is precisely how supposedly neutral civic identities become imbued with the culture and norms of the dominant ethnic identity.

### *Language and Identity in BiH*

Such inclinations to suppress differences in the interest of unity are especially evident in Bosniaks' attitudes towards the language(s) spoken in BiH. Indeed, identity politics are most evident in respondents' discussions about what language(s) should be used in the classroom. It is precisely the similarity of the language(s) that makes it difficult to realize a vision of a multinational BiH without simultaneously assimilating the constituent peoples. If, as in Quebec, the differences between the two languages in question were more pronounced, then promoting a bilingual populace would be a viable option. However, the temptation to meld such similar languages is very strong.

When Bosniaks talk about the language that they speak, they tend to dismiss differences and express the desire for all people in BiH to speak a single Bosnian language, which would combine elements of the various national languages. One mother, when asked if more than one language should be used in the school, said, "No ... Because this is the state of all three peoples, which should be equal. Basically, we all speak the same language. Well that is all one language—that is all the Bosnian language." This mother clearly sees language as an excuse for divisiveness and later called upon future generations "to tear down this barrier" that resulted from the war. A teacher with linguistic training was just as dismissive:

The Bosnian language is a Slavic language, actually a South-Slavic language. Precisely, it belongs to the Western group of [South-Slavic] languages. This group includes the Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian and Bosnian languages. I have to say that the only difference between these languages is about 200 different words. Therefore, I see no problem having a Bosniak teacher giving lessons to children of Croat nationality and vice versa. We should not fear that Croat children who are taught chemistry or biology

by a Bosniak professor might lose their national or cultural identity. That's nonsense ...

Similarly, another teacher said, "[Croats] make language one of the biggest obstacles. It is not nearly as big an obstacle as they make of it." And a student focus group participant said that she doesn't know how someone could "live in Bosnia and Herzegovina but learn the Croatian language, after all, Croatia is a completely separate state."

There were, however, a number of Bosniaks who were more sensitive to the Croats' need to preserve their language. One father noted that since BiH is multinational, each group has linguistic rights that the state should respect:

In my opinion everyone should speak their own language ... because, they have the right to do so. Why should you force someone to speak a different language, at least in this milieu? It would be different if I were to go now to Slovenia. It would be appropriate if I speak Slovenian, wouldn't it? But here, in this multilingual environment, in a multinational environment... why shouldn't the professor make it possible if someone wants to speak in his or her own language?

Although this father wanted to extend linguistic rights to all constituent groups, it is important to point out that he did not see this as a stumbling block to integrated classrooms. Clearly, he is counting on the mutual intelligibility of the languages. Other Bosniaks, although clearly in favor of integrating the schools, did recognize that language would be a serious obstacle. One teacher noted the difficulty of resolving his desire for integrated classes with the linguistic differences:

Now you are in paradox. I, as a Bosniak-Muslim, what position would I be in if I spoke, let's say, the language of the Croats or Serbs? ... It is very difficult to reconcile the languages.

Similarly, in reference to OSCE's proposed "separate national curricula" model of integration, a participant in the Bosniak mothers' focus group said:

Do you know what I am afraid of there? I have been thinking about it for a long time. These are young people that are still developing their language skills, they are building their language, building and developing their characters and identities. I ask you, if my child were to listen to Croatian day in day out, he would adopt the language, which is a fact, a child cannot isolate himself, he will respond in Bosnian—but more and more he will adopt and use Croat expressions.

This mother's concern for her child's language development is precisely the same issue raised by the Croats.

The Croats with whom we spoke are protective of their language, which they see as intimately linked to their

identity. They resent any measures that they see as impinging on their linguistic rights. For example, shortly before the interviews took place, OHR had removed television programming produced in Croatia from the BiH airwaves. Although OHR did not outlaw television programming in the Croatian language, all of the programming produced in BiH was in Bosnian. Thus, Croats claimed that this measure was in violation of their linguistic rights. In general, Croats are quick to make recourse to the language of human rights. One Croatian school administrator said,

No one has the right to forbid anyone from going to school, or from using his own language. That's a basic human right, and I think there's no dilemma there whether to conduct classes in a certain language. That, I'm sure, that's a right that no one can remove.

A teacher echoed these sentiments and also verbalized what he sees as an integral link between language, identity, and nation:

No one has the right to demand, say, of the Croats, that they speak the Bosniak language, and we are a people who have been speaking our mother tongue here for fourteen centuries and it is called Croatian, I don't know why that should bother anyone. Language is part of the being, part of the identity of a people ... In Bosnia and Herzegovina, if we know that the constituent peoples are Serbs, Muslims and Croats, and vice versa, then that should mean accepting as the truth, as a fact, as something absolutely normal, that there are three languages. They do exist.

This teacher cannot envision a nation without its own language. Similarly, a student said, "there was a famous Croat poet who said ... if you kill a language, you have killed the nation. For as long as there is your language, there will be you."

The Croats' concerns that integrated schools would deny them their language rights do not only have to do with the views of Bosniaks and the international community. In part, they are reacting to the denial of language rights they experienced under Tito's rule. A school administrator explained:

The Croatian people were under socialism for 40 years, and the Croatian language was neglected. Although it was Serbo-Croatian that was spoken, [Croatian] was pushed into the background. Because, you can see it in the textbooks, there were not many Croatian words used.

However, as quick as Croats are to point out the long history of their language and how it was suppressed in the past, they are just as quick to dismiss Bosnian as a language in its own right. For example, one teacher explained how Bosnian is just a mixture of Croatian and Serbian:

What is the Bosniac language, really? It is a mixture of Croatian and Serbian ... One distinguished person called it a jumble. It is, in my mind, very well said, no matter how much one can interpret this expression as intolerant ... Because you have half Croat words, half Serbian, half some Turkish, half, I mean, it's a mixture of languages ... Muslims have that problem, because they need to create a nation, their own nation, their republic. Because Croats have their republic, Serbs have their republic, and they are the only ones left, either here or nowhere. And of course, they would all fight ... to create their own language and their own state ... although it is all under the mask of tolerance.

It is interesting to note that this teacher takes the Bosniaks' need to have their own language as a given. This view helps shed light on why Croats are resistant to the idea that they can share a language with the Bosniaks. From the Croatian perspective, the Bosnian language is necessarily tied to a Bosniak national identity and cannot be associated with a civic Bosnian identity that is separate from that Bosniak national identity.

At the same time, however, the Bosniaks' fears that Croats will identify solely with Croatia and will not see themselves as citizens of BiH are not unfounded. When asked what language should be used in school, a school administrator said that they should be taught in Croatian. As justification she said, "We go to France, we listen [to lectures] in French. Just now we are here." This implied that just as French was the language of France, Croatian should be the language of Mostar. Even more telling was a student's response to the same question:

[Lectures should be] in Croatian ... because Mostar has a majority Croat population. In places where another religion is in the majority, for example in Bosnia, then use Bosnian. And in Serbia, Serbian.

In his answer, this student showed that he thinks of Mostar not only as if it was not divided between Croats and Bosniaks, but also as if it were not located in BiH.

#### *Children Pay the Price—What Should Be Done about Segregation?*

In both Mostar and Vukovar, it is evident that those most hurt by the struggles over identity are the children. In Mostar, one participant in the Croat girls' focus group said, "I think that we're the main losers, we young people. We quarrel over it so much, we don't need that, we're not statesmen. We're the losers." A participant in the Serbian girls' focus group in Vukovar argued that children shouldn't have to bear the brunt of the adults' conflicts, saying, "the smallest problem is here, among us children. The situation is much worse among the grown-ups." A Bosniak mother expressed similar sentiments:

I am so embarrassed to see what schools our children attend. What is it that we want now?! What kind of political exercise this is? Look, we are throwing our children to some sort of abyss. Let's have equal conditions, an equal education system for all children.

Here, the mother was also referring to the inadequate conditions in which her child attends school. Indeed, in both Mostar and Vukovar, one group of children have to deal with inadequate schooling facilities just because the adults cannot find a way to resolve the issue of segregation. Both the Serbs in Vukovar and the Bosniaks in Mostar are being educated in sub-par conditions. There are a number of possible solutions to their situations, but each is symbolically marked and, therefore, problematic.

The Croatian ministry of education has two clear options. They could grant Serbs the "separate schools" form of minority schooling, but this would hamper the integration of Serbs into Croatian society and require funding for the construction of new school buildings. Similarly, they could integrate the schools and classrooms, adopting the "separate national curricula" form of minority schooling. There are two obstacles to this solution. First, some parents on both sides do not, in fact, want their children to attend integrated schools, partly because they fear conflict between students. Second, if Vukovar adopted this form of minority schooling, many Serb teachers would be out of work. The Croats have been clear that they do not intend to let their children be taught by Serbs, so the only Serbian teachers who would be able to keep their jobs under this scenario would be those who teach the national group of subjects.

In Mostar, it is also theoretically possible either to provide separate, adequate buildings for the Bosniak children or to integrate the schools. Most recognize that the prior option is simply not an economically viable alternative, especially now that donations for reconstruction have largely dried up. At the same time, however, the international community has been slow to bring about the integration of the schools in Mostar, partly because they have met significant resistance and partly owing to more pressing issues requiring their attention and political capital. With the transfer of education issues from OHR to OSCE, it seems plans to reunify the highly symbolic old gymnasium are finally moving forward. OSCE has already carried out the administrative unification of this school, and plans are underway to move the Bosniak students into it. However, many remain skeptical about whether this plan will succeed.

#### **Conclusion**

In order to understand the complex processes of identity politics in each of these towns, I argue that it is necessary to separate the issue of the development of the states' identities from how individuals experience their civic and

ethnic identities. Both BiH and Croatia are in the midst of forging their identities as newly formed states, and the citizens living in these two countries are left to cope with the contentiousness of how they choose to identify.<sup>22</sup>

In BiH, the international community and Bosniak leaders have been trying to forge a multinational state with a corresponding civic Bosnian identity that allows room for the expression and maintenance of ethnic differences. In the early stages of this process, the international community was resistant to Croats' demands for linguistic rights, thinking that it was just an excuse to demand segregated schools and to foster nationalist separatism which was antithetical to their vision of a multinational, federated BiH. Although Croats still maintain that language issues are an obstacle to integrating schools, the international community has come to recognize that there will be no forward progress in state-building without ensuring Croats' linguistic rights. The only way to realize their vision of BiH as a multinational state that Bosnian Croats could identify with is if the state truly respects the Croats' national rights. As such, the resulting civic Bosnian identity would not be mutually exclusive with the ethnic identities of any of BiH's constituent nations.

In Croatia, nobody is even suggesting that a neutral civic identity is feasible or desirable. Instead, the issue of Croatia's national identity has more to do with its political identity and its relationship to Europe. Many people in Croatia who want their state to be a liberal democracy are disgusted by the fact that Croatia is so far from membership in the European Union, while states that they consider to be far more backward than their own are being granted membership. There are many issues to be resolved if Croatia is going to be considered for EU membership, not the least of which is Croatia's reluctance to cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Another pressing issue is whether Croatia is willing to demonstrate its respect for its Serbian citizens' minority rights. If Croatia manages to become a liberal democracy that extends minority rights to Serbs, in time Croatian Serbs might be able to identify strongly with the state in which they live without feeling like their identification with their national group is in jeopardy.

In the meantime, as politicians in Croatia and BiH struggle to forge their states' identities, the quality of innocent children's schooling is being sacrificed for the continuation of these stalemates. As one Croatian teacher in Mostar put it, "as long as people put primary importance on emphasizing the national, as long it is the most important fact, there will be no happiness, there will be no respect."

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Some explanation is necessary to understand my usage of the terms "nation" and "state." In keeping with the usage common to the former Yugoslavia, I only use the term

"nation" to refer to ethnic groups. Further, because of my specific use of the term "nation," I refrain from using a term like "national state" to refer to what lay people would call a "country"; I use the term "state" instead. It is important to note that I do not use "state" in the strict Weberian sense. Rather, I use it in a broader sense, including both the bureaucratic structure of the state and the people controlled by it. Finally, I use the term "nation-state" to refer to those states where the nation and the state are coterminous, and the term "multinational state" to refer to states with multiple national groups.

<sup>2</sup> These data are from the education subproject of the Human Rights Center at UC Berkeley's "Communities in Crisis" project, funded by the MacArthur and Hewlett Foundations. The principal investigators of the education subproject were Sarah W. Freedman and Harvey Weinstein. The principal investigators of the Communities in Crisis project were Eric Stover and Harvey Weinstein. Local collaborators included Centar Za Mir in Osijek, Croatia, the University of Sarajevo's Human Rights Center, the Mostar Human Rights Center, and Prism Research.

<sup>3</sup> See Sarah Freedman, Dinka Corkalo, Naomi Levy, Dino Abazovic, Bronwyn Leebaw, Dean Adjukovic, Dino Djipa, and Harvey Weinstein, "Public Education and Social Reconstruction: Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia," *My Neighbor, My Enemy: Justice and Community in the Aftermath of Mass Atrocity*, eds. Eric Stover and Harvey Weinstein (London: Cambridge University Press, 2004), in press.

<sup>4</sup> My own work makes use of the project data but is specifically focused on identity issues. I study how national identity is learned by students in various educational settings. My dissertation begins with a description of the various ways that people in BiH and Croatia experience their identities and then uses quantitative data from a number of cities in each country to explain the variation in the ways that students experience their state and national identities.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Benedict R. O. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. and extended ed. (New York: Verso, 1991), Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

<sup>6</sup> E. J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

<sup>7</sup> W. Hoepken, "War, Memory, and Education in a Fragmented Society: The Case of Yugoslavia," *East European Politics and Societies* 13:1 (1999): 219.

<sup>8</sup> Since the war, the majority of Bosnian Muslims have adopted the term *Bosniak* to describe their national identity. For a description of the difference between the Bosnian Muslims who claim a Bosniak national identity those who

call themselves Bosnians, see Chapter 10 of Yahya Sadowski, *The Myth of Global Chaos* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1998).

<sup>9</sup> The name of the language spoken by Bosniaks is, itself, a contentious issue. Bosniaks tend to call it Bosnian, reflecting their desire for all of Bosnia's citizens to speak the same language. Croats and Serbs, on the other hand, refer to this language as Bosniac, which equates it with the only people they think should speak it. I use the term "Bosnian" because this is the term used by American linguists.

<sup>10</sup> Indeed, Croats form the numerical minority in some towns in Istria. Many Croatian parents throughout Istria send their children to Italian language schools so that they can become bilingual. These parents feel that near-native Italian language skills will provide their children with greater opportunities later in life.

<sup>11</sup> The Podunavlje region includes Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Srijem.

<sup>12</sup> There are also no Czech or Slovakian secondary schools.

<sup>13</sup> For more information, see <http://www.db.idproject.org/Sites/IdpProjectDb/idpSurvey.nsf/1c963eb504904cde41256782007493b8/6083d813ce17671ec1256993003597f1?OpenDocument>

<sup>14</sup> For the sake of simplicity, I only deal with education in the Federation in this paper.

<sup>15</sup> These are the Ministry in the Republika Srpska, the Federal Ministry, and 10 cantonal Ministries.

<sup>16</sup> Johanna Crighton, Steven Bakker, Linda Beijlsmit, Alexandru Crisan, Slavko Gaber, Peter Greenwood, Elsie Hunt, Gregor Ramsey, Pasi Sahlberg, Eluned Roberts-Schweitzer, Christine Stromberger, and Ian Whitman, *Thematic Review of National Policies for Education—Bosnia and Herzegovina* (OECD, Center for Cooperation with Nonmembers, Directorate for Education, Employment, Labour, and Social Affairs, Education Committee, 2001), 12.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Naomi Levy, October 17, 2002, Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Naomi Levy, November 6, 2001, Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

<sup>19</sup> Although originally the JNA claimed to be fighting to keep Yugoslavia together, by this point the army was clearly a Serb force.

<sup>20</sup> Throughout this section, in addition to new insights I have drawn from the data since finishing my work on the project, I make use of findings from the analysis conducted by the Berkeley team, some of which were reported in

Freedman et al, "Public Education and Social Reconstruction in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia."

<sup>21</sup> The HDZ is the Croatian Democratic Union, a right-wing nationalist-oriented political party with a presence in BiH as well as in Croatia. Franjo Tudman, Croatia's founding president, was the HDZ leader of his time. Some argue that the party is in the process of transforming itself under the leadership of Ivo Sanader. See, for example, M. Steven Fish and Andrej Krickovic, "Out of the Brown and Into the Blue: The Tentative 'Christian-Democratization' of the Croatian Democratic Union," *East European Constitutional Review* 12:2 (2003).

<sup>22</sup> The question of how to reconcile a civic or supranational identity with multiple ethnic identities is raised in Eric Stover and Harvey Weinstein, "Conclusion," *My Neighbor, My Enemy: Justice and Community in the Aftermath of Mass Atrocity*, eds. Eric Stover and Harvey Weinstein (London: Cambridge University Press, 2004), in press. My analysis reframes the question by noting that there is an interplay between state-level identity struggles and the struggles over individuals' identities.

## St. Hyacinth Collection Acquisition

The UC Berkeley Library received a significant collection of Polish books from St. Hyacinth College and Seminary Library in Granby, Massachusetts. The collection of more than 10,000 volumes, mainly Polish-language, dates from the mid-nineteenth century through the 1930s. The unusually comprehensive collection features academic publications by most of the publishing houses in Poland. A large part of the collection deals directly with Catholicism, including a significant number of sermons, giving a comprehensive overview of Polish Catholicism during that period. These materials, many of which are quite rare, will be invaluable to research on Poland prior to World War II.

The materials need to be processed before they can be made available to library patrons, a huge undertaking, especially in this time of dwindling budgets. Anyone interested in making a financial contribution to the St. Hyacinth effort should contact ISEEEES executive director, Barbara Voytek, at (510) 643-6737 or [bvoytek@socrates.berkeley.edu](mailto:bvoytek@socrates.berkeley.edu).



# Outreach Programs

## *Historical Juxtapositions: America and Russia in the 19th and 20th Centuries*

Our annual Teacher Outreach Conference, “**Historical Juxtapositions: America and Russia in the 19th and 20th Centuries,**” was held Saturday, May 1, 2004, at the Alumni House on campus. This year’s conference experimented with a new format that emphasized a comparative approach to the study of Russia. As ISEEEES director **Victoria Bonnell** remarked in her introduction, a comparative format is both intellectually stimulating and pedagogically useful. We can best understand a particular phenomenon by comparing and contrasting it with another case (or cases) that shares common features and also differences. Our first juxtaposition was an obvious one: Russian serfdom and American slavery were contemporaneous, were abolished about the same time, and shared many features. But our second juxtaposition—nineteenth-century American capitalists with twentieth-century Russian entrepreneurs—dealt with private wealth and public power in two different places in two distinct eras. So, what is the value of such comparisons? Bonnell made two arguments. First, there is a tendency to emphasize both American and Russian exceptionalism: the idea that each of these countries has a unique and special historical pattern that somehow deviates from the norm. Comparison can place claims of exceptionalism in proper perspective. The second reason is more practical. Since the California high school curriculum for social studies devotes an entire year on American history and largely neglects European history, students draw mainly on references to American history when they try to understand Russia.

**Peter Kolchin**, professor in the Department of History at the University of Delaware and author of the comparative work *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom* (Harvard University Press, 1987), made a presentation on the major historical juxtapositions between the slavery and serfdom. He suggested three similarities between slavery and serfdom: timeframe; both systems of forced agricultural labor operated in areas of low or inadequate population; and in both systems, people owned other people. While the institution in Russia is called *serfdom*, it resembled American slavery much more than it did serfdom in medieval Europe. The differences between the two systems included race (though Kolchin stated that Russian serfs were categorized in racial terms by their owners), continuity (American slaves were outsiders in a new and strange place), and demographics. About 25% of southern white families owned slaves and in small numbers, and slave owners were directly involved in daily life. Meanwhile, Russian serf owners comprised less than 1% of the population, controlled huge numbers of serfs, and were

usually absentee landlords. Since US masters lived in a slaveholders’ world, they persistently sought to maintain the institution, even through the development of a proslavery movement. Russian serf holders, by contrast, understood that they were surrounded by the peasant world, and they offered relatively little resistance to the abolition of serfdom.

Next, Kolchin discussed emancipation in both countries, how it came about under opposite circumstances. In the United States, an armed rebellion occurred, and a democratic government brought about the emancipation. American slaves were given more or less the same freedoms as other Americans and then left to fend for themselves. In Russia, where the process was gradual and convoluted, the serfs were immediately freed but remained temporarily obligated to the serf holders. The former serfs became peasant proprietors through redemption, on terms that were unfavorable to them. While the American legislation was simple and direct, Russian legislation was deliberately complicated, lengthy, and difficult for even educated people to understand. In both countries, post-emancipation brought legal reforms and significant changes to society. In the 1870s, both countries underwent reconstructions, followed by backlashes during the 1880s and 1890s. Disillusionment set in. Freed people felt betrayed by the scope of their new freedoms (former serfs suspected that the true emancipation proclamation had been suppressed), and reformers were disappointed by the slow progress made by the people who were emancipated. But despite these perceptions of failure, real changes occurred in both countries. Kolchin concluded with remarks about the usefulness of the comparative method. It facilitates generalization, enables a hypothesis to be disproved, and provides a context in which to understand specific details.

This presentation was followed by two commentaries. **Waldo E. Martin, Jr.**, professor of history at UC Berkeley and a specialist on African American history and culture, pointed out that Kolchin’s comparative research on slavery and serfdom goes against some of the received wisdom in US history in a compelling way. Martin raised a number of issues for further research. He asked what role slaves had in the resistance that led to the Civil War, in the war itself, in the emancipation, and in black reconstruction, the period of African American participation in the political process. Further, he suggested that we should consider the role of the state, its coercive or repressive nature, and how marginalized peoples act within that system, for much existing scholarship on slavery focuses on the distinctiveness of African American slave culture. He added that the

perception of failure in emancipation and reconstruction should be considered, in the words of W. E. Dubois, a “splendid failure.” It is not a case of freed slaves failing to rise to the occasion. Rather, marginalized people must struggle against the constraints of the existing power structure, which often conspires against their efforts.

Next, **Reginald E. Zelnik**, professor of Russian history at UC Berkeley, commented on the Russian case. Although slavery in Russia was replaced by serfdom at an earlier time, Zelnik noted that this serfdom was essentially the same as American slavery. He observed that while the ownership of one person by another was abolished in Russia in 1861, the peasant population lacked freedom of movement and was tied to the land until the 1905 revolution. Zelnik emphasized that, in contrast to American slaves, Russian serfs were ethnically and numerically the Russian people. Former serfs could blend into Russian society—as opposed to the United States where issues of race were not erased by emancipation. Furthermore, Russian nobles understood that emancipation would erupt violently from below if it was not imposed by the government (Zelnik commented that the threat of violence did not go away, as evidenced by anarchists such as Bakunin and by subsequent revolutions). The nobility went along with emancipation out of necessity and because many of the terms were favorable to them, but Zelnik asked us to consider how they might have behaved if the emancipation had been structured differently. He suggested that there were two possible outcomes of emancipation. Treating peasants as ordinary Russian citizens, as was theoretically the case in the United States, would have abolished the commune and the recognition of peasant law. But the commune was useful for the government to keep control over the peasantry, and the peasants and their supporters wanted to maintain traditional peasant culture—minus serfdom and redemption payments. So the other option was for the peasants to grab more land, totally ignoring the landowners’ claim to such land. This is what they tried to do in 1905, but such a solution was not possible in the American context.

The second panel, which juxtaposed robber barons and oligarchs in conditions of emergent capitalism, began with a presentation by **Robin Einhorn**, associate professor in the Department of History at UC Berkeley and a specialist in US political and urban history. She spoke about the capitalists of late nineteenth-century America, who came to prominence in a period of significant industrial growth. Between the Civil War and the 1880s, industries experienced dramatic increases, most notably the railroads. The corporate titans who emerged during this economic boom were called robber barons and were characterized by contemporaries as ruthless, greedy pirates who took bribes, had contempt for laws, and flaunted conspicuous consumption. But these men were also system builders, technological innovators who created systems of management, marketing, and finance. Einhorn described how the

transcontinental railroad involved huge government subsidies and land grants that included the rights to lumber and minerals. She gave the example of the 1873 Credit Mobilier scandal that was connected to the Union Pacific Railroad and involved members of the US Congress. Then she described how the railroads issued stocks and created investment banking, instituted important business practices such as modern accounting, and established the standard time system. Other industries, such as meat or oil, also illustrate the story of robber barons and their system building. We are able to separate out the two sides of the story, though contemporaries could not see both aspects and criticized the capitalists for their disproportionate wealth.

**M. Steven Fish**, professor of political science at UC Berkeley and a specialist in post-Soviet politics, then applied the concept of the robber baron to twentieth-century Russian entrepreneurs and noted that the system builder comparison does not hold. Oligarchs, as these entrepreneurs are called in Russia, emerged in the mid-1990s during privatization. Yeltsin’s hands-off approach allowed the oligarchs to make economic policy, essentially capturing the state. Industrialization was already in place, so the oligarchs did not build anything in the economy. In fact, the oligarchs did not even keep their money in the country, but used it for such things as buying property in New York. Beginning in 2000, President Putin worked to eliminate the oligarchs, something Western social scientists did not believe he could pull off. Putin has aimed to increase the power of a centralized state, foster a form of patriotism—with his own cult of personality emerging at the center, and restructure competition to make it predictable. There is no room in this plan for oligarchs, for (1) non-state entities could not be allowed to remain as loci of power, (2) citizens cannot take seriously a state captured by oligarchs, especially—in Russia—where they are Jews, and (3) the oligarchs’ fortunes and power rendered their influence too unpredictable. With the oligarchs in check, private party corruption has been reduced, but overall, corruption has stayed about the same. Putin has managed to create a sort of monocacy, a pyramidal, centralized hierarchy around himself. He now has the power to create economic liberalization, but liberal economic control would interfere with political control. Putin has so far failed to produce the economic and social reforms that he promised in a post-oligarchical system. For Russia to sustain lasting economic growth, it needs the creation of a modern banking system, transparency in corporate governance, and an improved electrical system. Furthermore, eliminating the oligarchy has had little effect on the mafias, which are numerous and decentralized and, therefore, could not easily be eliminated. So, the story of Russian oligarchs is about entrepreneurialism without system building, and it seems more like a short-lived side note in the story of Putin’s effort to gain control with himself at the center.

**Yuri Slezkine**, professor of Soviet history at UC Berkeley, noted that both cases involved the concentration of tremendous wealth by a few individuals during times of massive economic change. Like Leland Stanford, most Russian oligarchs were their own bankers. In both cases, the entrepreneurs' activities were morally questionable. Both robber barons and oligarchs were directly involved in politics, financing public officials, being financed by them, intermarrying with them, and simply becoming them. A number of oligarchs owned media empires, which allowed them to influence politics. In both cases, governments attempted to keep the tycoons under control: in the US by introducing anti-trust legislation, separating investment banking from commercial banking, and so on, and in Russia by attacking them through the criminal justice system. One obvious difference is that the Russian oligarchs were, as it were, "more oligarchical" (fewer in number and more powerful than the American robber barons). Another difference is that the state the oligarchs were confronting was much larger, much more aggressive and intrusive than what the robber barons faced. A central question is whether Putin's struggle against the oligarchs is the rise of authoritarianism or a legitimate attempt by the state to free itself from private interests. Another point of comparison is whether such tycoons are good for the

economy. As Einhorn stated, robber barons are considered bad as monopolists but good as system builders. In Russia, the anti-oligarch position is that they hijacked the economy, exploited it, and escaped the consequences of the financial crisis they helped to create. The pro-oligarch position is that they were the only alternative to the big, inefficient, and corrupt state and its officials. Further, are robber barons and oligarchs good for politics? In the United States, the robber barons were seen as bad for democracy. In Russia, the pro-oligarch position is that the country needs democracy, democracy requires a civil society, and civil society requires the market. The only people in Russia able to provide the financial infrastructure for democracy are the oligarchs. So some believe that it is better to have competition among oligarchs, which could benefit society, than to be bullied by the central state attempting to protect everybody. An important lesson that we can take from the US case is that anti-trust legislation does not last for a long time. In the United States, some sectors of the media are controlled by a few wealthy individuals, and wealthy businessmen are directly involved in politics. While Putin may have eliminated the oligarchs as a class, the remaining wealthy entrepreneurs will have a role in the development of the Russian economy.

## Upcoming Events

**Through September 2004.** *Exhibition:* Images from the Georgia-Chechnya Border, 1970-1980: Visual Anthropology of the Peripheries. At Hearst Museum of Anthropology, 102 Kroeber Hall; Wednesday through Saturday 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Sunday 12 noon–4 p.m. Fees: \$4 general, \$3 seniors, \$1 students, UCB students/faculty/staff free, children 12 and under free, free Thursdays. Contact: Hearst Museum, (510) 642-3682 or <http://hearst.museum.berkeley.edu/index.html>.

**July 26–30, 2004.** *ORIAS Summer Institute for Teachers:* "Human Rights in World History." In IEAS Conference Room, 2223 Fulton St, 6th Floor, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. Sponsored by ORIAS, the Institute of East Asian Studies, the Center for Latin American Studies, the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, ISEEEES, the Center for South Asia Studies, the Center for Southeast Asia Studies, and the Institute of European Studies. For information, please contact: ORIAS, <http://www.ias.berkeley.edu/orias/> or (510) 643-0868.

**Saturday, July 31, 2004.** *Festival:* Cultural Heritage Day, celebrating Russian America at Fort Ross. The festival includes Orthodox Christian liturgy in the cathedral, musical and dance performances, and historical demonstrations. At

Fort Ross State Historic Park, 19005 Coast Highway One, Jenner, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free, parking for a fee. Contact: Fort Ross State Historic Park, (707) 847-3286 or <http://www.mcn.org/1/rparks/fortross/lhd.htm>.

**Sunday, August 29, 2004.** *Memorial:* In honor of Professor Reginald E. Zelnik. In the Faculty Glade, UC Berkeley campus, 11 a.m. Sponsored by ISEEEES and the Department of History.

**Wednesday, September 29, 2004.** *Annual Fall Reception.* Please join us in celebrating the new academic year. In the Toll Room, Alumni House, 4–6 p.m. Sponsored by ISEEEES.

### Cal Performances 2004–2005

Single tickets go on sale Sunday, August 22. Get your tickets now for the Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company (9/19/04); the Bolshoi Ballet and Orchestra (11/3-7/04); Ekaterina Semenchuk, mezzo-soprano, and Larissa Gergieva, piano (12/5/04); Takacs Quartet (2/6/05, 4/3/05); The Kirov Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre (4/9/05); Gypsy Crossings (5/8/05); Eifman Ballet (6/8-12/05). Contact: Cal Performances, <http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu/> or (510) 642-9988.

# Associates of the Slavic Center

ISEEES acknowledges with sincere appreciation the following individuals who have contributed to the annual giving program, the Associates of the Slavic Center (or have been enrolled due to their particular generosity toward Cal to support some aspect of Slavic & East European Studies), between January 15 and June 4, 2004. Financial support from the Associates is vital to our program of research, training, and extra-curricular activities. We would like to thank all members of ASC for their generous assistance.

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**ISEEES NEEDS YOUR HELP.** Gifts from the Associates are essential, providing current use, unrestricted funds that we use to offset the recent cuts in our budget, which are seriously impacting student fellowships and grants. For example, ISEEES travel grants (annually totaling less than \$10,000) allow Cal students to compete for academic and professional positions by presenting papers at nationally and internationally recognized conferences and symposia. ASC donations enabled 13 graduate students to travel in the past academic year; please help us keep this program alive.

**Members (\$10 to \$100).** Members of ASC receive monthly "Updates" and special mailings to notify them of events and special activities, such as cultural performances and major conferences. In this way, notification of even last-minute items is direct.

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**Benefactors (\$500-up).** ASC Benefactors receive invitations to the dinner and evening programs associated with our annual conferences, such as the annual Berkeley-Stanford Conference in the spring.

**Center Circle (\$1,000-up).** In addition to enjoying the above-mentioned benefits, donors within the Center Circle will also become Chancellor's Associates of the University, joining a select group of alumni and friends who support Cal through unrestricted giving. Membership in this group offers a number of University benefits.

*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.*

Send a check, payable to the Regents of the University of California, to:  
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# Fellowship and Other Opportunities

**ISEEES Travel Grants** provide limited travel support for academics and ISEEES-affiliated graduate students. Awards up to \$400 are made to those presenting a paper at a meeting of a recognized scholarly organization. Awards are made on a first-come, first-served basis, and priority is given to those who did not receive ISEEES funding in AY 01–02 or 02–03. Deadline: none. To apply send request with budget to: Barbara Voytek, ISEEES, UC Berkeley, 260 Stephens Hall # 2304, Berkeley CA 94720-2304.

## American Council of Learned Societies

The **ACLS/New York Public Library Fellowship** provides a stipend up to \$50,000 for projects that will be enhanced by access to the collections of the NYPL Humanities and Social Sciences Library. Applicants will be asked to identify the specific resources to be used and benefits to be gained. Deadline: 10/1/2004; applicants must apply to both ACLS and Center for Scholars and Writers. Contact: Center for Scholars and Writers, The New York Public Library, Humanities and Social Sciences Library, 5th Ave and 42nd St, New York NY 10018-2788; csw@nypl.org; <http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/scholars/fellowship.html>.

## ACTR/ACCELS

The **Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe Language Program** provides up to \$2,500 for the summer study of Albanian, Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, Bulgarian, Czech, Hungarian, Macedonian, Polish, Romanian, Slovak, or Slovene. Applicants should present proposals for attendance at intensive courses offered by institutions of higher education in the US or, in exceptional cases, for study at the advanced level in courses in Eastern Europe. Deadline: 10/1/04 for spring.

The **Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe Research Scholar Program** provides full support for 3-9 months of research and/or language training in Albania, the Baltics, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and former Yugoslavia. Applicants must be US citizens or permanent residents. Fellowship includes round-trip international travel, housing, living stipends, visas, insurance, affiliation fees, archive access, research advising, and logistical support. Deadline: 10/1/04 for spring.

Contact: Outbound Program, American Councils for International Education, 1776 Massachusetts Ave NW Ste 700, Washington DC 20036; Tel: 202-833-7522; Fax: 202-833-7523; [outbound@actr.org](mailto:outbound@actr.org); <http://www.actr.org/>.

## Central European University

**Center for Policy Studies International Policy Fellowships** provide a stipend plus travel for one year of full-time analyti-

cal policy research for open society leaders and professional policy training. Applicants must be permanent residents of a country where the Soros Foundations work. Fellows participate in four training seminars in Budapest over the course of the year. Applications must be made on line. Deadline: 8/1/2004. Contact: International Policy Fellowships, Open Society Institute, Oktober 6 utca 12, H-1051 Budapest, Hungary; Tel: 36-1-327-3863; Fax: 36-1-327-3809; [fellows@osi.hu](mailto:fellows@osi.hu); <http://www.osi.hu/ipf/apply.html>.

## Coordinating Council for Women in History

The **CCWH/Ida B. Wells Award** is made to an A.B.D. woman grad student working on a dissertation at a US institution. The dissertation topic must be historical but not necessarily in a history department. Deadline: 10/1/2004. Contact: Professor Montserrat Miller, Award Committee, Department of History, Marshall University, Huntington WV 25755; [millerm@marshall.edu](mailto:millerm@marshall.edu); <http://theccwh.org/wellsapp.htm>

The **CCWH/Berkshire Conference of Women Historians Graduate Student Fellowship** is open to women graduate students in history at a US institution, having completed all work up to dissertation stage. Deadline: 10/1/2004. Contact: Professor Gina Hames, Awards Committee, Department of History, Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma WA 98447; [hamesgl@plu.edu](mailto:hamesgl@plu.edu); <http://theccwh.org/>.

## Fulbright/HIE

**Full Grants for Study and Research Abroad** provide travel, tuition, books, and a stipend for one academic year. Applicants must be US citizens holding a B.A. or equivalent. Grants provide opportunity for personal development and international experience and can be used for course work or for master's or dissertation research. Deadline: September 2004 (date to be announced). Contact: Fulbright Program Advisor, Graduate Fellowships Office, 318 Sproul Hall # 5900; Tel: 510-642-0672; [http://www.grad.berkeley.edu/fellowships/fellowships\\_deadlines.shtml](http://www.grad.berkeley.edu/fellowships/fellowships_deadlines.shtml).

## Kosciuszko Foundation

The **Metchie J. E. Budka Award** provides \$1,500 to an outstanding scholarly work in Polish literature (14th Century to 1939) or Polish history (962 to 1939). This is open to grad students at US universities and to postdocs in their first three years. Deadline: 7/15/2004. Contact: Metchie J. E. Budka Award, The Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E 65th St, New York NY 10021-6595; Tel: 212-734-2130; Fax: 212-628-4552; [thekf@aol.com](mailto:thekf@aol.com); <http://www.kosciuszkofoundation.org/>.

## Library of Congress

**Rockefeller Islamic Studies Fellowships** provide \$3,500 per month for 5-10 months of research in residence on the

# Faculty and Student News

**Laura Adams** (Ph.D. sociology, 1999) published “The Future of Performing Arts in Uzbekistan” in *Analysis of Current Events* (September 2003). Laura was a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for Eurasian, Russian, and East European Studies at Georgetown University in 2004.

**Jose Alaniz** (Ph.D. in comparative literature, 2004) presented “Particularities of National Death: Russian Hospice” at the 2004 Annual SOYUZ Symposium. He is an assistant professor in the Slavic department at the University of Washington.

**Diana Blank**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Anthropology, received an Alan Sharlin Memorial Award from the Institute of International Studies for 2003–2004. Her research project was entitled “Voices from Elsewhere: An Ethnography of Place in Mogilev-Podolsky, Ukraine.”

**M. Steven Fish**, associate professor of political science, and **Andrej Krickovic**, Ph.D. candidate in political science, authored “Out of the Brown and Into the Blue: The Tentative ‘Christian-Democratization’ of the Croatian Democratic Union,” which was published in *East European Constitutional Review* (Spring/Summer 2003).

**Kristen Ghodsee** (Ph.D. in education, 2002) presented a paper entitled “Red Nostalgia: Reconstructing Memories of Communism in Bulgaria” at the 2004 Annual SOYUZ

Symposium. She is an assistant professor of women’s studies and Eurasian and East European studies at Bowdoin College.

**Laura Henry** (Ph.D. in political science, 2004) has accepted a position of assistant professor with the Department of Government and Legal Studies at Bowdoin College.

**Hubert Ho**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Music, presented “Structuring Timbre in a Octatonic Context: The Fourth Symphony of Bohuslav Martinu” at the West Coast Conference of Music Theory and Analysis, which was held at UC Santa Barbara in April 2004.

**Anaita Khudonazarova**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Near Eastern Studies, presented a paper on “The Image of the Other in Tajik Poetry of the 70s and 80s” at the convention of the Association for the Study of Nationalities in New York during April 2004.

**Ingrid Kleespies** (Ph.D. in Slavic languages and literatures, 2004) has accepted a tenure-track position with the University of Florida’s Department of German and Slavic Studies.

**Konstantine Klioutchkine** (Ph.D. in Slavic languages and literatures, 2002) presented a paper entitled “The Medium

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humanities on globalization and Muslim societies. Fellows will conduct their own research, lead seminars, and participate in the Center’s intellectual life. Deadline: 9/30/2004. Contact: Rockefeller Islamic Fellowships, Office of Scholarly Programs, Library of Congress LJ 120, 101 Independence Ave SE, Washington DC 20540-4860; Tel: 202-707-3302; Fax: 202-707-3595; [scholarly@loc.gov](mailto:scholarly@loc.gov); <http://www.loc.gov/loc/kluge/rockefeller.html>.

**Kluge Center Fellowships** provide \$3,500 per month for 6-12 months of research in residence at the Library of Congress. Scholars who have received a terminal advanced degree within the past seven years in the humanities, the social sciences, or in a professional field such as architecture or law are eligible. Applicants may be US citizens or foreign nationals. Deadline: 8/15/2004. Contact: John W. Kluge Center Office of Scholarly Programs, Library of Congress LJ 120, 101 Independence Ave SE, Washington DC 20540-4860; Tel: 202-707-3302; Fax: 202-707-3595; [scholarly@loc.gov](mailto:scholarly@loc.gov); <http://www.loc.gov/loc/kluge/>.

## Society for Slovene Studies

The **Graduate Student Prize** awards \$1,000 for the best paper in any discipline written by a grad student on a topic involving Slovene studies. Slovene citizens and students studying in Slovenia are not eligible to apply. Deadline: 9/15/2004. Contact: Professor Timothy Pogacar, Editor, Slovene Studies, Bowling Green State University, Dept of GREAL, Bowling Green OH 43403; <http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/~ljubljan/gradprize.html>.

## Woodrow Wilson Center

**East European Studies Short Term Grants** provide a stipend of \$100 a day, up to one month, for specialized research in East European and Baltic studies that requires access to Washington, DC and its research institutions. Grants do not include residence at the Wilson Center. Deadline: 9/1/04. Contact: East European Studies, Woodrow Wilson Center, One Woodrow Wilson Plaza, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Washington DC 20523; Tel: 202-691-4000; Fax: 202-691-4001; [kneppm@wwic.si.edu](mailto:kneppm@wwic.si.edu); <http://wwics.si.edu/ees/>.

and National Identity: *The Idiot* Mini-Series and Dostoevsky's Original in Their Respective Media Environments" at the 2004 Annual SOYUZ Symposium. He is currently an assistant professor of Russian at Pomona College.

**Naomi Levy**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science, presented a paper on "Identity Politics in the Schools of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia" at a graduate student conference at the University of Pittsburgh in March 2004. A version of that paper is published in this issue.

**Tatyana Mamut**, Ph.D. candidate in anthropology, presented "From Comrade to Consumer: Advertising Practice and the Making of Post-Soviet Man" at the Annual SOYUZ Symposium, which was held at Reed College in February 2004.

**Elizabeth McGuire**, Ph.D. candidate in political science, was a John L. Simpson Memorial Research Fellow during 2003–2004. Her research project was entitled "Children of the Revolution: Chinese Students in Soviet Russia, 1920–1970."

**Susan Morrissey**, tenured lecturer at London's School of Slavonic and East European Studies and a Ph.D. from our history department in 1993, has been awarded a fellowship from the School of Historical Studies at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study for AY 2004–2005.

**Conor O'Dwyer** (Ph.D. in political science, 2003) has accepted a tenure-track position with the University of Florida's Department of Political Science and Center for European Studies, which he will begin in fall 2004. During AY 2003–2004, Conor was an Academy Scholar at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University.

**Paolo Pellegati**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Anthropology, presented a paper entitled "Adaptations in the Balance? Scales of Action across the Pleistocene-Holocene Boundary in Istria, Croatia" at the annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology. This year's meeting was held in Montreal during the spring.

**Nicholas Riasanovsky**, professor emeritus of history, served as an associate editor of the recent four-volume *Encyclopedia of Russian History* (Macmillan Reference USA, 2003).

**Maria Stoilkova** (Ph.D. in anthropology, 2004) will be teaching two courses at Columbia University next year. She will also work on a project for the World Bank on international migration within Europe and Central Asia. Maria spent the past academic year at the Harriman Institute as a postdoctoral fellow. She also presented a paper on "The

Life of the Body National under Question: Declining Birthrates and Hushed Discontent in Bulgaria" at the 2004 Annual SOYUZ Symposium.

**Ilya Vinkovetsky** (Ph.D. in history, 2002) has accepted a position as assistant professor with the Department of History at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British Columbia. He was formerly an assistant professor in the Department of History at the American University in Bulgaria.

**Deborah Yalen**, Ph.D. candidate in history, was awarded a dissertation write-up grant from the Mabelle McLeod Lewis Memorial Fund for the 2004–05 academic year.

**Jane Zavisca**, Ph.D. candidate in sociology, has accepted a postdoctoral fellowship at the Statistics and Applied Mathematical Sciences Institute in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

A group of US Embassy Kabul officials recently traveled to Konduz, in Northern Afghanistan, to observe elections registration efforts there. On the eight hour drive from Kabul, which took them up over the historic Salang Pass, they realized that four were Cal alumni. Here they are at the entrance to the Salang Tunnel:



2nd from left: **Jeff Hawkins** (B.A., 1988), political/economic counselor, US Embassy Kabul

3rd from left: **David I. Hoffman** (Ph.D., 2000), senior democracy and governance advisor, USAID Kabul

4th from left: **Kari Johnstone** (Ph.D., 2003), US Department of State

5th from left: **Jason Aplon** (B.A., 1988), consultant, USAID

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## Hertelendy Fellowships Awarded

A Hertelendy Graduate Fellowship in Hungarian Studies has been awarded to two graduate students for 2004–2005.

**Jeremy Darrington**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science, will work on developing a dissertation prospectus dealing with the accession of Hungary and other East Central European states to the European Union.

**Andras Erdei**, J.D. candidate in the Boalt Hall School of Law, plans to conduct research into the legal implications of Hungary joining the European Union, particularly the burden on the government to find ways to comply with the Union's standards.

## Kujachich Endowment Funding

Grants from the Peter N. Kujachich Endowment in Serbian and Montenegrin Studies were awarded to the following graduate students for 2004–2005:

**Mieczyslaw Boduszynski**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science, received a travel grant to Belgrade to research the final stages of his dissertation on political change in the Yugoslav successor states.

**Andrej Milivojevic**, M.A. candidate in the Goldman School of Public Policy, is also traveling to Belgrade his master's thesis on civil society organizations and social policy reform in Serbia.

**Victor Peskin**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science, is also the recipient of a travel grant to Belgrade. He is examining the ways in which the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia has affected political and legal developments in Serbia and Montenegro.