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# 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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The latest issue, as well as archived  
issues, of the ISEEEES Newsletter is  
available in electronic format at <http://iseees.berkeley.edu/newsletters>

## Notes from the Director

Spring 2012 proved to be a very busy time at ISEEEES, and I would like to personally thank all of you who attended our events and participated in our various academic and outreach efforts.

I'm pleased to report that our faculty/graduate student lunchtime seminar series continued to be very successful this semester. Spring seminars were led by Professor Jane Zavisca, Department of Sociology, University of Arizona; Professor Sheila Fitzpatrick, Department of History, University of Chicago; Professor Olga Maiorova, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan; and Professor Grigore Pop-Eleches, Woodrow Wilson School and Department of Politics, Princeton University.

In addition, this spring our Carnegie-supported Field Development Project brought four young scholars from Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Ukraine to Berkeley for a two-week working visit. These scholars work with our faculty and graduate students in producing a field reading list, an undergraduate lecture course and/or graduate seminar syllabus, and a field survey. This semester's fellows were Dr. Azar Babayev of Azerbaijan, who is currently at the the Peace Research Institute, Frankfurt, Germany; Dr. Tetiana Maliarenko, Donetsk State Management University, Ukraine; Dr. Yuriy Matsiyevskyy, Ostroh Academy National University, Ukraine; and Dr. Maia Mestvirishvili, Tbilisi State University, Georgia.

This year's annual Berkeley-Stanford Conference on Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies was hosted by our friends and colleagues at Stanford. This year's topic—*From Prague Spring to Arab Spring: Global and Comparative Perspectives on Protest and Revolution, 1968-2012*—included presentations by Joel Beinin (History, Stanford), Jane Curry (Political Science, Santa Clara University), Sean Hanretta (History, Stanford), Natalia Koulinka (CREEES, Stanford), Djordje Padejski (John S. Knight Journalism Fellow, Stanford), Edith Sheffer (History, Stanford), Kathryn Stoner-Weiss (Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law, Stanford University), Cihan Tuğal (Sociology, UC Berkeley), Edward Walker (Berkeley Program in Eurasian and East European Studies, UC Berkeley), and Jason Wittenberg (Political Science, UC Berkeley). ISEEEES will host the 37<sup>th</sup> annual edition in spring 2013 on the UC Berkeley campus.

Our annual Outreach Conference for Educators was held on Saturday, April 28. Entitled *Putin III: The Aftermath of the Russian Presidential Elections*, this all-day conference examined various aspects of the Russian elections of March 2012. Guest speakers included M. Steven Fish, Professor of Political Science, UC Berkeley; Stephen Holmes, Walter E. Meyer Professor of Law, New York University School of Law; Barry Ickes, Professor of Economics, Penn State University; Maria Lipman, Editor of the *Pro et Contra* journal, published by Carnegie Moscow Center; and Alexei Yurchak, Associate Professor of Anthropology, UC Berkeley. For those of you who couldn't make it or who would like to listen again, the conference proceedings are available for download at the following website: <http://iseees.berkeley.edu/podcasts/#putin3>.

This year's annual Peter N. Kujachich Lecture in Serbian and Montenegrin Studies was held on

Tuesday, May 1. Professor Branislav Radeljić, senior lecturer in international politics at the University of East London, spoke on European involvement in Serbia—from intervention to European integration and Serbia's candidate status for the European Union.

For more information about these and other happenings, please visit our website and events calendar at <http://iseees.berkeley.edu/>; and please include Monday, September 24 on your calendar as the date of our annual ISEEEES fall reception. I look forward to seeing you at many of our events.

Sincerely yours,

Yuri Slezkine

ISEEEES Director

Jane K. Sather Professor of History

## Save the Date!

Come celebrate the beginning of the new academic year with ISEEEES!  
***ISEEEES Annual Reception***



Monday, September 24, 2012  
4 p.m. at the Toll Room  
Alumni House  
UC Berkeley Campus

# The Endurance of Putinism: Ideas, the Tandem, and Political Stability in Russia

## Boris Barkanov

*Boris Barkanov has recently received his Ph.D. from the Department of Political Science, UC Berkeley. He is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Harvard University.*

The mass protest movement that unexpectedly burst into the open in December 2011 and grew in size and intensity during the course of the presidential campaign of early 2012 represented a significant challenge to the political status quo in Russia and to Vladimir Putin, whom it targeted personally. For the regime to survive, it was critical to avoid a rupture within the elite at least until Putin's electoral victory in March.

That the elite held together was neither preordained nor inevitable. The then President of Russia, Dmitri Medvedev, was conveniently positioned to capitalize on the widespread societal discontent with the fraudulent Duma elections by dismissing Prime Minister Putin, calling for new parliamentary elections, and proposing his own candidacy for a second presidential term. From this perspective, the protests could have been an opportunity for Medvedev to distance himself from his suddenly vulnerable mentor and build his own independent power and authority under the mantle of advancing democracy in Russia. In the end, Medvedev stuck with Putin and the regime survived.

Overall, Medvedev's decision to help circle the wagons merits attention because it was a key event that kept Russia's political development moving along an evolutionary, rather than revolutionary, track. In what follows, I examine why Medvedev chose to support his ally during this important juncture. I argue that his decision was motivated by an ideological preference for gradual rather than radical change, which his defection would certainly have precipitated. The first part of this essay lays out the political landscape to show that Medvedev indeed had an opportunity to break with Putin and that doing so could have been part of a plausible strategy to develop his own power. The next section addresses the counter argument that Medvedev did not defect because of idiosyncratic features of his character. The final section elaborates my argument concerning Medvedev's ideological commitment to evolutionary, rather than revolutionary, change.

### **A view from Medvedev's Kremlin: the road not taken**

As Steven Fish has noted, under Yeltsin's 1993 constitution the presidency in Russia became endowed with extraordinary powers -- hence the term "super-presidentialism."<sup>1</sup> Literally with the stroke of a pen, President Medvedev could have fired his prime minister, Vladimir Putin, dissolved the State Duma, and called for new parliamentary elections. With a repeat of the parliamentary elections in the works, he could also have called for pushing back presidential elections while at the same time throwing his own hat in the ring.

Because this is a counterfactual, it is helpful to explore how such a scenario might have unfolded. As president, Medvedev had the legal authority to dismiss Putin and the illegitimate Duma. Moreover, in the context of mass public unrest aimed at Putin and given the general uncertainty at the time, he also could have made a case that "decisive action" was both in Russia's interest (to avoid a conflagration) and legitimate from a democratic perspective (fair elections). The protests, which were explicitly anti-Putin, were a golden opportunity for Medvedev to seize the moment and build his independence and authority.

Of course, firing the prime minister would have produced a major political crisis. However, Medvedev would arguably have had the strongest hand in that context. Although he was hardly the darling of the opposition movement, it is hard to imagine that the already mobilized protesters would not have rallied around Medvedev, both because he would have given them exactly what they wanted (Putin's departure and new elections) and by the logic of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend," especially given the specter of resistance from conservatives. We can also probably assume that the mass media, which historically has had a liberal (in the European sense) orientation in Russia, would have sided with the president as well. Finally, as with Yeltsin, the Western powers would likely have rallied around the president rather than the former prime minister.

By contrast, given the organizational, ideological, and material effort that was necessary to mobilize support for Putin in advance of the presidential poll, it is far from clear that the latter would have been able to rally his own troops in any significant number. Putin's authority was already diminished as a result of the protests. With no institutional base of power and no public resources at his disposal, he would have been badly weakened. It is true that Putin has a broad network of allies both in the state and in the private sector. The depth of their loyalty to him as an individual, as opposed to loyalty to him as leader, however, is questionable. Moreover, with the resources of the presidency at his disposal, Medvedev could have bought off many of Putin's associates while firing others and bringing in his own team. In other words, he could have adopted Boris Yeltsin's strategy under Mikhail Gorbachev during the fateful final days of the Soviet Union. Incidentally, when Yeltsin took over after the August coup, his team and network of allies was likely smaller and less powerful than that of the Russian president in 2011-2012.

In short, a break within the tandem would have shattered the edifice of Putinism and led to a systemic crisis in which Medvedev would have most likely been the biggest fish in an admittedly very turbulent sea. As under Yeltsin, a war of all against all would have re-emerged within the elite, and it is not clear how anyone could have prevailed over the president. With one decision, Russia could have seen the beginnings of another revolution from above.

The scenario described above is not far fetched and was actually alluded to by the liberal Boris Nemtsov, who was a deputy prime minister under former President Yeltsin and has become a vocal anti-systemic critic and activist since the turn of the century: "There is a simple solution to [Medvedev's] problem, actually. All he has to do is fire Putin and that will be that. Regrettably, I do not think that Medvedev is up to it."<sup>2</sup> A similar course of events has also been described by the *Jamestown Foundation's* Pavel Felgenhauer: "Medvedev may turn the tables by acting decisively and ousting Putin from the government... to eradicate and marginalize his powerbase and use the highly effective state-controlled TV propaganda machine to discredit his former boss by promoting stories of corruption and nepotism. The ouster and subsequent successful public tarnishing of popular former Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov last fall demonstrates that such a campaign needs two months to be fully successful."<sup>3</sup>

## Medvedev's character

Nevertheless, in the article cited above, Nemtsov expressed skepticism that Medvedev would actually proceed down such a path. The idea that he is not "up to it" is consistent with the popular notion that Medvedev is somehow not strong-willed and is only an accidental member of Russia's ruling duumvirate. For the social scientist, such an idiosyncratic explanation is deeply unsatisfying. In and of itself, this does not mean it is not true. At the same time, there are reasons to doubt this assessment of the former president's character.

First of all, it is hard to imagine how a person who is not strong-willed would end up in Russian politics to begin with, let alone rise to be head of state, after surviving as presidential chief of staff, deputy head of the presidential administration, and deputy prime minister. While it is true that Putin was Medvedev's mentor, this does not mean that he lived a sheltered existence in Russian political life. Putin has many protégés and the battles among them are the stuff of legends.

One could argue that Putin picked Medvedev to succeed him as president in 2008, instead of former Minister of Defense Sergei Ivanov, precisely because he was not strong-willed and thus not threatening. This is certainly possible. However, recent episodes in Russian politics lead one to come to a different conclusion about Medvedev's personality. Before the protest movement emerged, the fall of 2011 was remarkable because it saw a major battle between Medvedev and former Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin, a close Putin ally and one of Russia's most prominent and respected governmental figures. After Kudrin announced a policy disagreement with the soon-to-be ex-president and stated that he would not serve in the expected Medvedev cabinet, the head of state publicly humiliated his minister on television<sup>4</sup> and forced him to resign.<sup>5</sup>

The battle with Kudrin was not an isolated incident. Medvedev also confronted another Putin ally, the *silovik* and deputy prime minister Igor Sechin, when he issued a decree requiring cabinet members to resign from the boards of state-owned enterprises. Sechin was the chairman of Rosneft, Russia's largest oil producer, and he immediately resigned.<sup>6</sup> In Moscow, this was understood to be a very significant political move. According to Felgenhauer, "Medvedev's attempt to partially dismantle a major institution of personalized state control over the economy, created by Putin, is seen in Moscow as a



major change that could seriously displease Putin and his cohorts... top government officials... dominated corporative decision-making, creating opportunities for nepotism and other corrupt practices.”<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the recently announced new Russian government is notable for Sechin’s absence. Reappointed as the head of Rosneft, he has regained control over Russia’s national oil company. Politically, however, he has nowhere near the same reach he had in his former position. It is also interesting to note that Sechin’s replacement, the new deputy prime minister, in charge of (among other things) the fuel and energy complex is Medvedev’s ally, the economist Arkady Dvorkovich.

Lack of a strong will also cannot explain why Medvedev is now the new prime minister. Given the enormous difficulties that this government will face, it seems that a weak willed politician would also have to be a masochist to assume what in 2012 is probably the most difficult political office in Russia in a decade.

Finally, one might argue that Medvedev maintained his end of the bargain out of loyalty to his mentor, Putin. This is probably true. However, loyalty is a shallow basis for alliances in politics, and it is hard to imagine how it alone can overcome competing interests or ideological commitments. At the same time, given their institutional positions and the broader political context in Russia after the protest movement emerged, Medvedev and Putin had potentially opposing political interests: the latter in protecting the status quo to maintain his power; the former in sidelining his mentor and precipitating a crisis in which he would be the most important figure as Russia’s incumbent president, with the ultimate aim of establishing himself as an independent politician and the top man on the totem pole more generally.

### **The role of ideas**

The preceding suggests that President Medvedev might very well have broken ranks with his patron and that it could have been in his immediate political interest to do so. However, breaking with Putin would have led to a political crisis, putting Russia on an uncertain and potentially revolutionary path. That he sided with Putin was not inevitable, but rather a product of his ideological commitment to evolutionary, rather than revolutionary, change.

There is direct evidence that the negative consequences of revolution were prominent in his thinking. In an early 2008 speech as a presidential candidate, Medvedev noted that: “... the quota for revolutions and civil strife in Russia was used up in

the last century... the most important thing for the development of our country is the continuation of peaceful and stable development. We need decades of stable development. Namely, what our country has been deprived of in the twentieth century. Decades of normal life and focused work. I am sure of this.”<sup>8</sup>

Medvedev also repeated a similar line after he became president. In his September 2009 programmatic statement “Go Russia,” he adumbrated his vision for reforming the country. The statement is hardly a panegyric to his predecessor (and successor) and the system he built:

“To sum up, an inefficient economy, semi-Soviet social sphere, fragile democracy, negative demographic trends, and unstable Caucasus represent very big problems, even for a country such as Russia. Of course we do not need to exaggerate. Much is being done, Russia is working. It is not a half-paralyzed, half-functioning country as it was ten years ago.... But this is still not enough.”<sup>9</sup>

Despite the problems, Medvedev cautioned against radical change:

“Not everyone is satisfied with the pace at which we are moving in this direction. They talk about the need to accelerate changes in the political system. And sometimes about going back to the ‘democratic’ nineties. But it is inexcusable to return to a paralyzed country. So I want to disappoint the supporters of permanent revolution. We will not rush. Hasty and ill-considered political reforms have led to tragic consequences more than once in our history. They have pushed Russia to the brink of collapse.”<sup>10</sup>

Dmitri Trenin, director of the Carnegie Moscow Center and a widely respected, sober analyst of Russian politics, has argued that a commitment to evolutionary change that does not undermine the state is an element of a broader ideological turn associated with certain segments of Russia’s elite class:

“Conservatism is in vogue in Russia.... Now, the conservatives’ principal task, as both Putin and Medvedev told convention delegates in St. Petersburg, is to bring about Russia’s modernization -- without losing traditional values, or, more importantly, tampering with the country’s political regime. The current buzz word is conservative modernization. The idea is that Russia’s backwardness would be overcome in an

evolutionary manner without destroying or dramatically weakening the state. It would also be based on Russia's core values: traditional family, a strong state, patriotism, 'faith in Russia,' and great-power independence."<sup>11</sup>

Trenin also suggested that this kind of reform was a "hallmark of the Medvedev presidency."<sup>12</sup> Thus, these are not just isolated statements, nor talking points for the consumption of domestic constituencies. Rather, these sentiments appear to inform his approach to politics more generally.<sup>13</sup>

Similar but even more conservative sentiments have been articulated by Vladislav Surkov, the Kremlin's chief ideologist and the author of "sovereign democracy":

"We have a school of thought that teaches that political modernization -- by which is meant political debauchery and 'anything goes' -- is the key to economic modernization. There is a different concept, to which I hold, which considers the consolidated state as a transitional instrument, a tool for modernization....

... Spontaneous modernization is a cultural phenomenon (it is cultural, not political), and it was achieved only in the Anglo-Saxon countries. Not in France, not in Japan, not in [South] Korea. There modernization was accomplished with statist methods. The 1990s in Russia showed that. It gave rise to the splitting of society, not to positive energy. Yes, some energy is released, but it is spent and where did it lead? We saw that nothing happened. And society was forced to recall the state."<sup>14</sup>

From this perspective, it appears that the Russian elite did not split at the highest levels of the state because a conservative ideology that embraced evolutionary change while rejecting revolution motivated Medvedev to stick with Putin, even though his immediate political interests may have dictated otherwise.

### Moving forward

With Putin's election, the political crisis in Russia appears to have abated for the time being. Nevertheless, the situation remains delicate and Putinism appears as fragile as ever. In the near future, we can expect to see continued low scale protests. These could take on mass proportions again as a result of economic difficulties, prominent acts of misgovernance, and/or highly publicized acts of corruption. If the events of the last six months are at all

instructive, one of the keys to regime survival will be whether or not the elite can stick together to confront challenges from below.

The analysis here has focused on the ideology of Dmitri Medvedev, the second most powerful person in Russia after Putin. However, as the quote by Surkov and analysis by Trenin suggest, a commitment to gradual, rather than radical, change may be fairly widespread among the elite in general. To the extent that this is true, an ideological aversion to revolution is not just a property of Medvedev's thinking. Rather, it has become an institutionalized norm that underpins Putinism and helps us understand the source of regime stability in Russia more generally.

At the same time, this aversion to radical change is not nearly as powerful in generating elite cohesion as Soviet ideology was during its prime. Nor is it as compelling as the commitment to procedural democracy that buttresses our own system in the United States. Moving forward, understanding how this ideology evolves and the role it plays during the numerous challenges and opportunities that Russia will encounter will be key to understanding the trajectory of Russia's political development.

### (Endnotes)

1 M. Steven Fish, "The executive deception: Superpresidentialism and the degradation of Russian politics," in *Building the Russian State*, ed. Valerie Sperling, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000, pp. 177-92.

2 Nikolaus von Twickel, "New Signs of Rift in Ruling Tandem," *The Moscow Times*, April 14, 2011.

3 Pavel Felgenhauer, "The Putin-Medvedev Ruling Tandem Disintegrates," *Jamestown Foundation Eurasia Daily Monitor*, April 14, 2011.

4 "Medvedev and Kudrin: Culmination of the Conflict," (in Russian) Accessed April 18, 2012 at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rg9G89Ydpg0&feature=related>; "Medvedev lectures Kudrin, suggests Finance Minister resigns," (in Russian with simultaneous interpretation in English). Accessed April 18, 2012 at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gpCVLv-1mpA&feature=topics>.

5 Ibid. "The Putin-Medvedev Ruling Tandem."

6 Tom Bergin, "BP's Rosneft deal more uncertain after Sechin quits," *Reuters*, April 12, 2011.

7 Ibid. "The Putin-Medvedev Ruling Tandem."

8 Dmitri Medvedev, "Speech at the 2<sup>nd</sup> All-Russia Civic Forum," Moscow, January 22, 2008, in "Dmitri Medvedev, in his own words," *New York Times*, December 8, 2008.

9 Dmitry Medvedev, "Dmitry Medvedev's Article, Go Russia!" September 10, 2009. Accessed April 18, 2012 at: [http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches/2009/09/10/1534\\_type104017\\_221527.shtml/](http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches/2009/09/10/1534_type104017_221527.shtml/).

10 Ibid.

11 Dmitri Trenin, "Russia's Conservative Modernization: A Mission Impossible?" *The SALS Review of International Affairs*, Winter-Spring 2010, Volume 30, Number 1. Accessed April 18, 2012 at: <http://carnegie.ru/publications/?fa=41108/>.

12 Ibid.

13 Aleksey Makarkin, the first deputy president of the Center for Political Technologies, comes to the same

conclusion: "... Of course, Medvedev is an evolutionist: he is cautious and not inclined towards sharp movements. But the system is in need of changes and the president has emphasized this on more than one occasion." Andrey Polunin, "Expert Rules Out Putin, Medvedev Running Against Each Other," *Svobodnaya Pressa*, April 13, 2011.

14 Brian Whitmore, "In Russia's Modernization Debate, It's Deja Vu All Over Again," *RFERL*, February 16, 2010.

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## Faculty and Student News

**Boris Barkanov**, Ph.D., Department of Political Science, filed his dissertation, *Mercantilist Development in Russia: The Legitimacy of State Power, State Identity, and the Energy Charter Regime (1990 – 2010)*. In addition, he started a postdoctoral fellowship at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian studies at Harvard University.

**Mieka Erley**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, presented her paper titled "The Metaphorics of Soil in Eurasia and the Legacy of Justus von Liebig" at the Eurasian Environments: Nature and Ecology in Eurasian History Conference, at Ohio State University this September. She also presented her paper titled "The Dialectics of Nature in Karakum: Desert Metabolism in Andrei Platonov's Dzhán" at the The First Princeton Young Scholars' Interdisciplinary Conference on Soviet Science and Technology: The Great Experiment Revisited: Soviet Science and Techno-utopianism, at Princeton University, during February 2012.

**Yuriy Gorodnichenko**, Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics, was a recipient of the National Science Foundation's Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) award.

**Theocharis Grigoriadis**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science, received a book contract from Springer: *Aid in Transition: EU Development Assistance to the former Soviet Union*, Springer, Berlin and New York: 2013.

**Will Jenkins**, Graduate Student in the Department of History, received a FLAS award for Summer 2012 to study in Prague, Czech Republic.

**Anastasia Kayiatos**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, has accepted the two-year Provost's Postdoctoral Fellowship in Slavic at the University of Southern California starting this August. Before then, she will

head down to the University of California Humanities Research Institute at UC Irvine to participate in the two-week "Arts Inclusion: Disability, Design, Curation" program.

**Jody LaPorte**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science, has filed her dissertation, accepted a postdoctoral position at the Kennan Institute for the Spring and Summer of 2012, and has accepted a tenure-track position in the Department of Political Science at Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio.

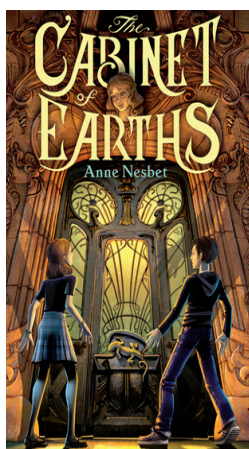
**Tony Lin**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, published two articles: "Negotiating Wyspiański's Wesele: Three Case Studies" in *Slavic and East European Performance* (Fall 2011) and "Gubaidulina's Musical Setting of Poems by Tsvetaeva: Hommage à Marina Tsvetaeva (1984)" in *Muzyka: Russian Music Past and Present* (Vols. 3-7). Tony has also been awarded the DAAD Intensive Language Course Grant as well as the Berkeley-Viadina Dissertation Research Fellowship. Lastly, he organized an "Evening of Russian Music" on March 20, featuring works by Russian composers and writers such as Leo Tolstoy, Boris Pasternak, Vladimir Odoevsky, and Alexander Griboedov.

**Kate Marple-Cantrell**, Master's candidate in City Planning, will be presenting her paper titled "Effects of the Siege on Residents' Relationship with Sarajevo" at the *Violence and Resilience in South-Eastern Europe Workshop*, EASA (European Association of Social Anthropologists) Biannual Conference: Uncertainty and Disquiet, in Paris, France, on July 13, 2012.

**Jessica Merrill**, Ph.D. from the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, has filed a dissertation titled "The Role of Folklore Study in the Rise of Russian Formalist and Czech Structuralist Literary Theory," and has accepted a Post-Doctoral Fellowship for 2012-2013 in the Center for Cultural Analysis at Rutgers University.



**Anne Nesbet**, Associate Professor in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, has published her first work of children's fiction, *The Cabinet of Earths*. It has received excellent reviews and is available as a hardcover and as an e-book. Congratulations Anne!



**Brandon Schechter**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History, will be conducting research on the material culture of the Red Army in Moscow during all of 2012 on the Dean's Dissertation Research Fellowship. He will be affiliated with the Center for History and Sociology of the Second World War and its aftermath at the Higher School of Economics, where he will work with Oleg Budnitskii.

**Erik Scott**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History, has accepted an assistant professorship in modern Russian history at the University of Kansas starting this fall.

**Regine Spector**, Ph.D. from the Department of Political Science, UC Berkeley, will be joining the Department of Political Science of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst this September as an Assistant Professor (tenure-track).

**Malgorzata Szajbel-Keck**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, presented her paper titled "Highly Non-canonical Adjectives in Slavic Languages" at the AATSEEL Annual Meeting in Seattle, Washington, during January 5-8, 2012. She received a BPS Travel Grant as funding for this. In addition, in the summer of 2011, she received a Summer FLAS award to study Advanced Czech in the Czech Republic. She also initiated a development of the Polish section in the BLC Library of Foreign Language Film Clips, here at UC Berkeley, under supervision of Mark Kaiser (Associate Director of the Berkeley Language Center and manager of this Library).

**Elena Tomlinson**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Architecture, is a recipient of the 2012-2013 IREX-Individual Advanced Research Opportunities (IARO) Fellowship. She also received the 2012-2013 Fulbright Research Grant 2012-2013, the 2012-2013 ACLS Dissertation Fellowship in East European Studies, and the 2011-2012 Institute of European Studies Daimler Dissertation Fellowship. In addition, she published an encyclopedia piece, co-authored with Professor Nezar AlSayyad, "Traditional Environments in a Post-Traditional World: Interdisciplinary Perspectives," in *Sustainable Built Environments*, eds., in *Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems* (EOLSS), Oxford, UK: UNESCO, Eolss Publishers, 2011. Finally, she presented her paper "The Future Reimagined: Heritage, Governance, and Shortage in Bucharest" at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Architectural Historians, in Detroit, Michigan in April, 2012, and her paper titled "Soft Budget Entrepreneurs: European Funding and the Business of Public Works in Contemporary Bucharest," at the Association of American Geographers' Annual Meeting in New York in February, 2012.

**Barbara Voytek**, former Executive Director of ISEES and current Research Associate of the Archaeological Research Facility, has a new publication in press: "Post" Transformation: Ongoing Developments in the Organization of Technology during the Neolithic." The work discusses the ongoing study of stone tools from the Neolithic site of Hodmezovarsahely-Gorzsa, Hungary. Together with colleague, Elisabetta Starnini, Ph.D., Genoa, Barbara submitted the article to *Interdisciplinaria Archaeologica – Natural Sciences in Archaeology*, a Czech journal, for an upcoming issue in memory of Dr. Marek Zvelebil, Sheffield University, who sadly passed away last July. Marek was a Visiting Scholar at ISEES and IES in the spring of 1997 at which time he taught two courses in the Department of Anthropology. His presence on campus was a great stimulus to everyone with an interest in European archaeology. It was a particularly exciting time and he is truly missed.



### ASEEES Convention 2011

The ASEEES (formerly known as AAASS) annual convention was held in November 2011 in Washington, DC. The following ISEEES affiliates made presentations:

**David Beecher**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History, presented a paper titled “Escapism and Linguistic Self-Preservation at Tartu University in Soviet Estonia” at the panel *Peripheral Plotlines: New Stories about Being Soviet Inside the Union and Out*. In addition, he chaired the panel on *Personalized Institutions and Soviet Agendas during Late Socialism (the case of the Baltic States)*.

**John Connelly**, Professor in the Department of History, served as a discussant on the panel on *Fear and Fascination: War, Enemies, and the Other in the Soviet Bloc through the 1960s*.

**Jean Dickinson**, Slavic Cataloger at the UC Berkeley Library Cataloging Department, chaired the roundtable on *Challenges, Successes, and Rules in Slavic and East European Cataloging*.

**Eleonory Gilburd**, Assistant Professor of History, Russian, and Slavic Studies at New York University (Ph.D. in History from UC Berkeley), was the co-recipient of the Robert C. Tucker/Stephen F. Cohen Prize for her dissertation “To See Paris and Die: Western Culture in the Soviet Union, 1950’s and 1960’s.” This prize is awarded annually by the JKW Foundation for an outstanding English language doctoral dissertation in the tradition of historical political science and political history of Russia or the Soviet Union.

**Cameron Girvin**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, presented a paper titled “Shared Balkan Proverbs: A Sprachbund Phenomenon?” at the panel on *Language Contact at the Margins: New Approaches to Southeast Europe*.

**Luba Golburt**, Assistant Professor in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, presented a paper titled “Turgenev’s Eighteenth-Century Uncles” at the panel on *The ‘Afterlife’ of the Eighteenth Century: Revivals, Revisions, Reductions*. In addition, she served as a discussant on the panel on *Libertinism in Imperial Russia*.

**Theocharis Grigoriadis**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science, presented a paper titled “Orthodox Hierarchies and Surveillance Incentives: Collectivist Bureaucrats and Threshold

Public Goods in Siberia” at the panel on *Unpacking Institutions under Authoritarianism in Eurasia*.

**Anastasia Kayiatos**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, served as a discussant on the panel *The Other “Other Europe”: Queer Studies in Poland and Russia*. In addition, she participated in the roundtable on *Disabling Slavic Studies*.

**Anzhelika Khyzhnya**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, presented a paper titled “Mikhail Zoshchenko: Poetry as Smuggling” at the panel *Soviet Writers Confront the Literary Heritage: 1920s-1970s*.

**Chloe Kitzing**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, participated in the roundtable on *Mikhail Kuzmin’s “Trout Breaking Though the Ice”: The Poem’s Reputation and the Aesthetic Experience of Reading*.

**Steven Lee**, Assistant Professor at the Department of English, presented a paper titled “The Ethnic Avant-Garde: New Routes for the Soviet ‘Magic Pilgrimage’” at the panel on *Authority and Liberation: American Encounters with Russian Revolutionaries*.

**Tony Lin**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, chaired the panel on *Transpositions of the Mozart and Salieri Myth in Literature and Music*.

**Olga Matich**, Professor in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, chaired the roundtable on *Mikhail Kuzmin’s “Trout Breaking Though the Ice”: The Poem’s Reputation and the Aesthetic Experience of Reading*.

**Marcy McCullaugh**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science, presented a paper titled “From Well to Welfare: Social Spending in Mineral-rich Russia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan” at the panel on *Welfare Provision in Electoral-Authoritarian Regimes*. In addition, she participated in the roundtable on *Russian Health and Demography*.

**Jessica Merrill**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, presented a paper titled “Roman Jakobson and Viktor Shklovsky’s uses of Folklore and Folklore Theory” at the panel on *Russian Formalist Literary Theory: Interdisciplinary Intersections and Negotiations*.

Continued on page 19

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# Why Is History Teaching So Often Debated In The Republic Of Moldova? <sup>1</sup>

Sergiu Musteață

*Sergiu Musteață is an Associate Professor in the History Department at Ion Creangă State University, Chișinău, Moldova. He was a visiting scholar with ISEES during the Spring 2012 semester.*

The problems of language and history in Moldova have been part of the public discourse since the time of *perestroika* and the national movement in Moldova. This happened because the Soviet authorities invented a Moldovan language and nation in order to distinguish them from the Romanian language and nation.<sup>2</sup> The population of the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic (MSSR) was subject to communist indoctrination, aimed at replacing Romanian identity with another, newly-created one. “Moldovenism” became a policy strand that was promoted for decades by the central authorities. Since the late 1980’s, the national movement in Moldova has been based on ideas of returning to Romanian national cultural values, but most initiatives were treated by leftist political parties and ethnic minorities as Romanian nationalist, arguing that these ideas oppose Moldovan statehood and patriotism. On the other hand, the left-wing parties have been supporting another type of nationalism – *neomoldovenism*, which advocates the building of a Moldovan nation. During the two decades of its independence, Moldova has had to confront and examine its identity, history, and statehood. These discussions are still taking place – not only in history books but also in the government and among ordinary people.

We can observe several stages while tracing the way the approach to national identity and history education has developed since the declaration of independence to the present day:

**I. 1988/89-1991.** The national movement culminated in the declaration of independence of the Republic of Moldova, the transition to the Latin alphabet, and the replacement of *History of the USSR* and *History of the MSSR* courses with *World History* and *History of the Romanians* courses.

**II. 1992-1995.** The war in Transnistria was a military conflict that had implications for Moldova’s national identity and interethnic relations. The accession to power of the Agrarian Party in 1994 resuscitated the discussion around language and history. The Agrarians’ promotion of the “Moldovenism” policy led to increased tensions inside

the country and a change in the Constitution, declaring that the Moldovan (as opposed to Romanian) language is the official language of Moldova.

**III. 1995-2001.** History education entered a phase of curriculum reform. During this period, the political debate around the school subjects of Romanian language and history became extremely intense. In March 1995, the government of the Republic of Moldova made the decision to exclude the *History of the Romanians* course from schools. This provoked huge street demonstrations that lasted for two months. After a long negotiation, the president issued a decree that established a moratorium on this issue. The *World History* and *History of the Romanians* courses were reinstated into the national curriculum. Later, the government of the Republic of Moldova approved national curricula for the two subjects of history and the corresponding school textbooks.

**IV. 2001-2009.** Following the February 2001 general elections, the Communist Party came to power, reigniting the debate about history education between historians and the government and bringing this issue again into public view.

The communist government has been trying hard to change the name and content of the *History of the Romanians* course into *History of Moldova*; after new street demonstrations (January-February 2002) and seminars (in September 2002 and February and October 2003), organized by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Council of Europe, the idea of an *Integrated History* course, which would include a balanced representation of national and world history in a single course, reappeared. The idea of a course in integrated history is not new in Moldova: in 1994, a textbook of (integrated) ancient history was published for the 5th grade, although it was replete with conceptual, scientific, and methodological errors and triggered severe criticism in academic circles, schools, and mass media. Even though the Ministry of Education distributed this textbook, it remained practically idle, as it was largely plagiarized from other history textbooks and as ancient national history, in the context of ancient world history, was given only a few pages.

Many historians in Moldova, thus, were sceptical about the resurrection of an integrated history textbook and viewed this as an attempt by the Communist Party to continue the tradition of Soviet historiography concerning the Moldovan nation and language – an effort to further develop the manufactured identity of the Moldovan state and nation as separate from the Romanian one. The new administration's policy included both internal and external measures to promote a Moldovan identity. Thus, relations between Moldova and Romania cooled down between 2001 and 2004, and the Chişinău government refused to sign agreements of cultural cooperation and ignored scholarships offered by Romania to Moldovan children and students. Internally, the focus of this campaign was opposition to the *History of the Romanians* course, citing arguments such as “this is the history of another country,” that teaching it “undermines Moldova’s statehood,” that “our children don’t study enough of the history of their native communities,” etc.<sup>3</sup> With these arguments, the communist authorities tried to gain support from various international governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to justify changes to the history curricula and textbooks.

Civil society, in general, and the academic community, in particular, have opposed political involvement in history education. Thus, at the Congress of the Historians of Moldova, held on July 1, 2001 in Chişinău, university professors, schoolteachers of history, scientists, intellectuals, and students from various universities protested against the communist government’s attempt to replace the *History of the Romanians* course. The Congress adopted the declaration *For the defense of national dignity, cessation of Romanophobia and vilification of the history of the Romanians*. The participants of the Congress also asked the leadership of Moldova to stop their campaign against the *History of the Romanians* course and stop exercising political pressure on historians. The intellectual community of Moldova, thus, tried to defend the legitimacy of its Romanian history and identity. In November 2001, the leadership of the Historians’ Association of Moldova also published a declaration condemning the pressure from central authorities to introduce a *History of Moldova* course. They drew the public’s attention to the fact that such actions were pursued in order to use history to promote the ideological interests of the Communist Party of Moldova.

In another controversial decision in late 2001, the communist government reintroduced Russian language

as a compulsory school subject, to be taught starting from the second grade. This triggered major protests by parents, teachers, pupils, and the public. During this period of rallies in downtown Chişinău, a small group of people demanded that the president of Moldova introduce without delay the *History of Moldova* course as, according to them, the *History of the Romanians* contributed to the “destruction of the Republic of Moldova.”<sup>4</sup> Under these circumstances, on February 1, 2002, the Historians’ Association of Moldova addressed a memorandum to the authorities in which historians and scholars expressed their concern about what they referred to as attempts to institute a dictatorial regime and resume “the old practices of indoctrinating the population with false and distorted ideas regarding the past of the Romanian people, and especially regarding Romanians living in Bessarabia as a component part of the Romanian nation.” The authors of the memorandum asked that Moldovan authorities respect and promote scientific truth when dealing with issues of national language, literature, and history, and stop the Romanophobia campaign and the vilification of Romanian language and history, echoing the opinion of participants at the July 1, 2001, Congress of the Historians of Moldova.<sup>5</sup>

In spite of mass protests in Chişinău’s main square, on February 12, 2002, the Minister of Education fully endorsed a resolution on the introduction of the *History of Moldova* as a subject in schools, high schools, universities, and post-graduate institutions as of September 1, 2002: On February 15, this resolution was approved at a governmental meeting. This decision provoked even larger protests by teachers, students, and other social and professional groups. Prime Minister Vasile Tarlev considered the adoption of those decisions to be his personal responsibility. For a “smooth” implementation of this course, a decision was taken to develop a textbook on the *History of Moldova*. This was an initiative of President Voronin, who in 2001 appointed Vladimir Ţaranov, one of the champions of “Moldovenism,” as editor of the textbook.

As a result of street protests and criticism from the academic community, on February 22, 2002, the government of the Republic of Moldova approved a resolution *On steps to improve the study of history*, which revoked the decision from February 15, 2002 concerning the implementation of the *History of Moldova* as a discipline to be taught in educational institutions of Moldova. This resolution, however, also authorized Vice Prime Minister Valerian Cristea to

create a state commission for the development of the concept for a *History of Moldova* course. Thus, this was a clear sign of the decisiveness of the communists, who wanted to force the *History of the Romanians* out of schools, indicating that while they grudgingly delayed the immediate realization of the project because of the protests, they had not renounced it.

On March 20, 2002, the Scientific Council of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova adopted a decision *On the teaching and study of the History of the Romanians in the educational and academic systems of Moldova*. On March 26, 2002, the Academy of Sciences of Moldova voted to preserve the *History of the Romanians* course in schools.

In tune with other academic institutions, the Historians' Association of Moldova continued expressing support for the preservation of the *History of the Romanians* and *World History* courses in schools and other educational institutions of the country. The historians of this organization repeatedly pointed out the fact that Moldova's national history was undergoing essential changes, which were fully justified in a period in which the historical discourse was evolving, and that it was totally against the professional ethics of historians to harness those changes for purposes dictated by politics.

In the wake of visits paid by European experts, and as a reaction to the rallies in Chişinău, on April 24, 2002, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted Resolution 1280 (2002) *On the functioning of democratic institutions in the Republic of Moldova*, which provided an extension of the existing moratorium on the reforms concerning the study and status of the Russian language, as well as the changes in the history curricula.

On September 26, 2002, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted Resolution 1303 (2002), whereby the Assembly expressed its satisfaction with the fact that Moldovan authorities had maintained the moratorium on the reforms concerning the study of Russian, its status, and changes to the history curricula. The moratorium, according to the resolution, permitted the preservation of stability in the country. Russian language remained, however, a mandatory discipline in Moldovan schools starting with the 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

In 2002, the government of the Republic of Moldova launched a competition for the best concept of history teaching for Moldova and, through Moldovan embassies, asked European countries to

provide suggestions for reforming the teaching of history in Moldova. In February 2003, the Moldovan government collected 42 concepts and transmitted them to the Secretariat of the Council of Europe. Out of the 42, the Committee of Experts selected just five; these were approved by the Council of Europe's delegation, which also suggested that these five concepts should be further developed into possibly one or two concepts which would be acceptable to all the parties involved. In February 2003, the Ministry of Education of Moldova sent a set of Moldovan history textbooks to the Secretariat of the Council of Europe, via the Permanent Representation of Moldova. The Secretariat was asked to see whether the German Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Analysis could evaluate them. The Council of Europe decided to provide the necessary support to the Georg Eckert Institute to carry out an evaluation of existing history school textbooks and also to invite the authors of Moldovan textbook and curriculum outlines to the Institute in order to discuss the analysis and make recommendations. During 2003, the Council of Europe supported the foundation of the Teacher's Training Centre and became a member of its board. The Council of Europe agreed with the Moldovan government that the Centre will be a non-governmental entity but that members of the Board can be members of the government (e.g. Mrs. V. Haheu and V. Cristea, who in fact opposed the Moldovan law on NGOs and the principles of activity of NGOs).

In April 2003, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress of Historians of the Republic of Moldova condemned the interference by the communist government in the field of history education and endorsed the existing concept of teaching the *History of the Romanians* and *World History* courses as a scientific foundation for the education of young generations. The participants also called on all history teachers from the Republic of Moldova to support them in their attempts to educate cultivated citizens, making them aware of their historical identity and place in contemporary world society and their profound rootedness in Europeanism.<sup>6</sup>

During 2002-2003, the Council of Europe and the European Association of History Educators (EUROCLIO) were actively involved in the development of a new history education concept for Moldova. Representatives of these international organizations have often visited Moldova to support and participate in training seminars. Through their presence at such meetings, they managed to introduce



a multilateral and objective approach regarding history education in Moldova. During the meeting of the Council of Europe's experts with president of the Republic, V. Voronin, which was held in Chişinău on February 18, 2003, the president said that "the government had decided to renounce its initial plan to change the name of the course on national history to the *History of Moldova* and proceed instead with an integrated course for history."<sup>7</sup> According to Voronin's statement "only a depoliticised history can reveal the historical truth." The new history curriculum should be based on the principles laid down in the Council of Europe's *Recommendation, on history teaching in the twenty-first-century (Rec (2001) 15)* and should reflect the multicultural composition of Moldovan society. He emphasized that such an approach to the teaching of history would also be helpful in the integration process of Moldova into Europe. During the meeting, Ms. Cardwel Alison, representative of the Council of Europe, said that "both the experts and President Vladimir Voronin have agreed on the necessity to have a single course of history that would include all of the materials and would reflect the multiple cultures in Moldova. We must do what has been done in other European countries."<sup>8</sup> The support shown by these organizations for the *Integrated History* course provoked disagreement among Moldovan historians, who stated that this change contrasts with the current educational realities of the country. Some foreign experts responded by insisting on a single course of history, branding local historians who were pleading for the preservation of the two courses of history, the *History of the Romanians* and *World History*, as Romanian nationalists.

The discussions that took place in Germany at the Georg-Eckert Institute during 2003-2006 between historians from Moldova and other countries led to the identification of some elements of the national history curriculum and textbooks that needed to be improved. However, there were no suggestions to replace the textbooks. Participants of a seminar held in Braunschweig on June 25-29, 2003, mentioned that the intention to replace history curricula and textbooks in Moldova would constitute a revitalization of "the Stalinist concept of the creation of the nation, language, and history of Moldovans as different from Romanians,"<sup>9</sup> which contradicts the Council of Europe's *Recommendation 15 (2001)*.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education started an experiment whereby a new course, titled *Integrated History*, was introduced on September 1, 2003, in

50 schools across the country. Neither the method by which schools had been selected nor the list of schools chosen was made public. According to the Ministry of Education, the number of schools involved in the experiment increased to 150 in the 2004-2005 school year; in the 2005-2006 school year, the number increased to 400. Thus, this "secret" experiment with a course of integrated history revealed the political opposition of the communist government to the *History of the Romanians* course. The lack of a concept, strategy, and transparency in the realization of the experiment, as well as the selection of the textbook for this course by the Ministry of Education, reveals the political nature of the decision to implement the *Integrated History* course. The communist authorities have distorted the concept of an integrated history by adjusting it to their political ideology. During 2002 and 2003, some Moldovan officials declared that the teaching of the *History of the Romanians* creates barriers for the integration of Moldova into the EU and the resolution of the conflict with Transnistria. This experiment and these declarations provoked new tensions in Moldovan society.<sup>10</sup>



*A protest in Chişinău against the Integrated History Course*

In July 2004, the Minister of Education, Mr. V. Beniuc, declared that new textbook authors were nominated in April 2004 by the Ministry and that the textbooks would be ready for the beginning of the upcoming school year (September 1, 2004).<sup>11</sup> In 2004, the Ministry of Education indeed announced a competition for writing new history textbooks, but most historians and publishing houses refused to participate in this process as they considered it to be both undemocratic and unscientific. Thus, Minister V. Beniuc simply selected the people he wanted to lead the textbook writing project. It is difficult to assert that this was a real democratic and transparent process.



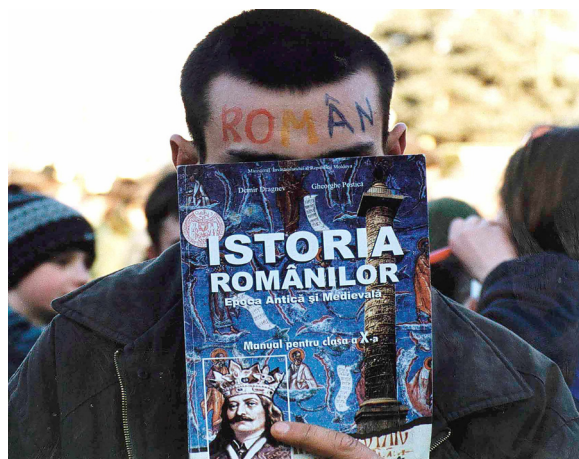
*Students protesting in Chişinău against communism.*

In 2005, the Ministry of Education excluded final exams in the subjects of *History of the Romanians* and *World History* from the list of exams for Moldovan high schools. The Ministry proposed that high schools conduct an exam in geography instead and that other schools offer an exam in history as an optional exam. These changes once again provoked a public outcry. Leaders of professional associations (A. Petrencu and L. Stavinschi) asserted that history teachers' associations did not support this decision and viewed it as a political interference by the communist government in history education. This position was supported by the participants at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress of Historians of Moldova, which was held on November 5, 2005 in Chişinău.

On November 30, 2005, President Voronin convoked a meeting with members of the government and parliament and discussed the problem of implementing an *Integrated History* course based on the Council of Europe's recommendations. Voronin mentioned that the introduction of this course is part of Moldova's efforts to raise national educational standards to European standards. He also said that new textbooks should have better quality and price, and that the commercial factor should be excluded from the process of evaluation, editing, and distribution of books to schools.

On July 27, 2006, the Ministry of Education approved the decision to introduce the *Integrated History* course and textbooks into pre-university education starting that September. Hence, following September 1, 2006, the Ministry of Education introduced new curricula for history education in all secondary schools with one course titled *History*, excluding the two previously taught courses on *History of the Romanians* and *World History* from the curricula. Also, the Ministry of Education distributed new history textbooks in all schools and demanded that schools stop using other textbooks. This situation

again generated opposition from teachers, professional organizations, and NGOs. Opponents pointed out multiple mistakes in the content of the new books. Many national newspapers published articles complaining about the quality of the new textbooks. The most criticized textbooks were for the 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade, which contained numerous pictures of and comments from communist government leaders.



*An anti-government protester holding a history book for the "History of Romanians" course.*

In this very difficult situation, President Voronin convened another meeting on September 29, 2006, with some of the best known historians from the Republic of Moldova. He said that for the first time, he was getting involved in the discussions of teaching integrated history in Moldovan schools.

During this meeting, Voronin said: "educating through history is our first step in the process to attend the general-human values, accepted by the European Union. The introduction of the integrated course of history in our educational institutions is just a small step in the process of integrating our country into Europe - a very important step." Voronin also mentioned, that "a school is not an obstacle course for battles and exercises of scholars. The teacher's chair cannot be a political tribune. During the last 15 years, the Republic of Moldova has been a subject of international law, and our country is not a Gubernia or province of some others states; it has its own contemporary state symbols with multi-century old traditions, culture, and history."<sup>12</sup>

The President's declaration about political involvement in history research and teaching is contradictory, because the communist government promoted exactly the opposite thing. Most historians who participated at this meeting criticized the new history textbooks, and at the end of the discussion, President Voronin asked them to correct all the



mistakes from these textbooks as urgently as possible. He also suggested that a group of experts under the Institute of History and Law of the Academy of Sciences should develop the second edition of integrated history textbooks, and he invited all interested institutions and organizations to participate in the editing process. Hence, after this meeting, in November 2006, a 35-member commission for scientific expertise of history textbooks was created at the Academy of Sciences of Moldova.

Since the decision by the Ministry of Education to introduce a new curriculum and new textbooks on integrated history in Moldova, we have seen a new wave of activism in Moldovan society against this decision. There were hundreds of declarations in local mass media from diverse institutions and groups of people (political parties, professional organizations, mass media organizations, group of teachers and parents, parliamentary debates, etc.) criticizing the new curriculum.

On December 22, 2006, after two months of evaluating the content of these new history textbooks, a state commission approved the evaluation report. But at the final meeting, only 19 of the 35 members participated, and just 8 of them voted for the final decision. Most historians left the meeting because they thought that while many of the reviews (cca. 40) criticized the new textbooks, the leaders of the commission tried to push for a positive decision, which finally prevailed. Chiril Stratievschi, chair of the commission, declared that the final decision had been approved by a vote of the majority of the members of the commission. The commission admitted that the textbooks contained various mistakes (conceptual, linguistic, factual, technical) which should be removed during the course of the following two years. The commission held the Ministry of Education responsible for these mistakes but recommended that teachers use the textbooks while being critical of the controversial issues. The Ministry of Education was to elaborate and distribute appendices to these books (as *errata*) in all of the schools.

V. Țvircun, Moldova's Minister of Education, declared that the introduction of a new curriculum and the publication of new textbooks were accomplished based on the recommendations of the Georg Eckert Institute for Textbook Analysis in Braunschweig, Germany. This, however, was untrue. As mentioned earlier, the government asked the Council of Europe and the Georg Eckert Institute to offer these authors their expertise in textbook research. The Georg Eckert

Institute stressed that its role in the process of textbook development was to help improve the didactic quality of the work and support the textbook authors in their efforts towards an integrated approach to the teaching and learning of history.

The Georg Eckert Institute's press release from December 15, 2006, mentions that "the Georg Eckert Institute has no mandate to approve textbooks neither in the German nor in the international context. The Georg Eckert Institute's role is that of a consultant body. Thus, its expertise does not substitute the comprehensive internal process of review and approval of textbooks. The Georg Eckert Institute has supported the Moldovan government in its undertaking to improve history teaching and textbook writing, yet the Georg Eckert Institute has *not approved* the textbooks and their content." The German Institute's experts reviewed the manuscripts of the new textbooks and stated that "none of the manuscripts fully reached the goals set by the Moldovan curriculum. Some were still far from meeting the new methodological standards at all." The experts recommended "a serious reworking of all of these books" and did not suggest that they should be published in the form they were submitted for review. Additionally, the Georg Eckert Institute was "not of the opinion that the new textbooks should exclusively replace the previous ones. On the contrary, given the shortcomings of the new textbooks, use of the previous textbooks in addition to the new ones seems to be a beneficial approach."<sup>13</sup>

**V. 2010-2012.** As a result of the double general elections in 2009, the new democratic parties (Alliance for European Integration) came to power and established the integration of the Republic of Moldova into the European Union as their government's main goal. This, however, did not end the public debate on history education in Moldova. In 2010, the Ministry of Education approved a new, modernised curriculum for a single subject called *History*. This decision did not satisfy some historians, who asked the Ministry to reinstate the two history courses taught in Moldovan schools until 2006 – *History of the Romanians* and *World History*. After long debates and a new commission, established in March 2012, the Ministry of Education decided to maintain one course, but with a new title, changed from *History* to *History of the Romanians and World History*. This decision provoked new debates and a new controversy, prompting some politicians and NGOs leaders to quit the Ministry of Education due to what they perceived to be an antipatriotic decision.



## A few conclusions

In the majority of West European countries, history education goes beyond the national framework, and the trend is now moving towards teaching a common European history. Moldova has not embraced this approach yet. Now, the Republic of Moldova has an opportunity to start teaching its own history again, to get rid of the remnants of the false version of history that was promoted during Soviet times, and to develop a comprehensive, accurate history curriculum that incorporates both regional and European elements. More importantly, as the community of historians of Moldova stated, the process of creating a single history course for Moldovan schools should evolve naturally and be based on democratic principles and supported by public debate.

Moldovan language and history have remained issues of political importance, aggravating tensions in Moldovan society. In the context of the socio-political, economic, and cultural changes at the end of the 20th century, the Republic of Moldova is laying the foundation of a state based on democratic principles. The main problem experienced by this political entity in its attempt to assert itself since the declaration of independence and up to the present day has been the problem of national identity — a subject closely linked to the history and the language of the majority population as well as to the attitude of the country's ethnic minorities towards the state. The problem of identity still remains central in this context: some people see themselves as Romanians and thus support the teaching of Romanian history and Romanian language, while others consider themselves Moldovans, embracing the idea of a Moldovan language and Moldovan history. For more than two decades, the Republic of Moldova has been looking for its national identity. Indeed this problem is difficult to tackle, as Moldovan society remains divided over this issue.

### (Endnotes)

1 This paper is based on my book S. MUSTEAȚĂ, *Educația istorică între discursul politic și identitar în Republica Moldova* [History education between political and identity discourse in the Republic of Moldova], Seria IDN, M3, Chișinău, Editura Pontos, 2010, 364 p.

2 The Moldovan language and nation were initially an invention introduced by Stalinist propaganda in order to justify the military intervention and annexation of Bessarabia to the USSR in 1940. The intention to name the language spoken by the majority of the population as “Moldovan” had a political aim. Today, however, the subject

taught in schools in Moldova is called Romanian language (not Moldovan), despite the fact that the Constitution refers to the state language of Moldova as the “Moldovan language.”

3 *La baza statalității trebuie să se afle adevărata istorie a Republicii Moldova*. In: *Moldova Suverană*, nr. 26-26, 19 februarie 2003, p. 1.

4 Hotărârea Guvernului Republicii Moldova (nr. 180) cu privire la implementarea „Istoriei Moldovei” ca disciplină de predare în instituțiile de învățământ. In: *Monitorul Oficial al Republicii Moldova*, nr. 27-28, 18 februarie 2002, art. 252.

5 *Apelul Congresului Istoricilor din Republica Moldova „Pentru apărarea demnității naționale, pentru stoparea campaniei de românofobie și denigrare a Istoriei Românilor (1 iulie 2003).”* In: *În apărarea istoriei și demnității naționale*, Chișinău, 2003, pp. 33-35.

6 Resolution of the II Congress of Historians from the Republic of Moldova, Chisinau, April 12, 2003.

7 <http://www.prezident.md/search.php?id=902&lang=rom> (accessed 21.06.2008). Tatiana Roșca, Viorica Bivol, *Integrarea Republicii Moldova în Europa – prin educația istorică*. In: *Moldova Suverană*, nr. 206 (20154), 13 noiembrie 2002, pp. 1, 3.

8 Tuesday, February 18, 2003, *Bassa-News, Council of Europe experts plead for teaching of integrated course of history in Moldovan schools*. [www.basa.md](http://www.basa.md)

9 Wim van Meurs, *History Textbooks in Moldova*, Expert Pefort, Braunschweig 26-27 iunie 2003, p. 5.

10 In Transnistria, schools continued using the standards of the Russian Federation for history education (using the same teaching program, with the same number of hours and history textbooks). The school program included two courses, World history and History of the Fatherland, which referred to the history of Russia, the USSR, and Transnistria.

11 In 2006, the Minister of Education, Mr. V. Țvircun said that these authors had participated in a competition and had been selected through a legitimate selection process; this, however, was a false statement.

12 *Voronin cere returnarea manualelor de istorie integrate*. In: *Gazeta liberă*, Nr. 34 (75), 5 octombrie 2006, <http://gazeta.md/75-3.php> (ultima accesare 24.06.2008).

13 Georg-Eckert-Institut für Internationale Schulbuchforschung, Press Release “The Moldova Project and the Controversies about the New History Textbooks in the Republic of Moldova”, December 15, 2006.

**Eric Naiman**, Professor in the Departments of Slavic Languages and Literatures and Comparative Literature, chaired the panel on *Vladimir Nabokov: Interdisciplinary Approaches*.

**Shota Papava**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, participated in the roundtable on *Mikhail Kuzmin's "Trout Breaking Though the Ice": The Poem's Reputation and the Aesthetic Experience of Reading*.

**Irina Paperno**, Professor in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, participated in the panel on *Authoritarian Turns*.

**Jeffrey Pennington**, Executive Director of the Institute of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, chaired the panel on *Teaching and Researching Central Eastern and South Eastern Europe at Regional and Non-Title VI Universities*.

**Jillian Porter**, Assistant Professor of Russian at the Department of Modern Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics at the University of Oklahoma (Ph.D. from the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, UC Berkeley), presented a paper titled "Hospitality and Domestic Space in Olesha's 'Envy'" at the panel on *Soviet Values and their Spaces in Olesha's "Envy."*

**Eric Prendergast**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Linguistics, presented a paper titled "Contested Grammars – Contested Identities: Object Reduplication" at the panel on *Language Contact at the Margins: New Approaches to Southeast Europe*.

**Harsha Ram**, Associate Professor in the Departments of Slavic Languages and Literatures and Comparative Literature, presented a paper titled "Imagined

Community: The Georgian Intelligentsia between Nation and Empire" at the panel on *Literature and Empire in Russia and the Soviet Union I: Peripheral Identities*. In addition, he served as a discussant on the panel on *Literature and Empire in Russia and the Soviet Union III: Imperial Modernities*.

**Brandon Schechter**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History, participated in the roundtable on *Health and Hunger in Russia and the Soviet Union During Two World Wars*. In addition, he presented a paper titled "They Cut Everyone after One Fashion: Indigenizing the Great Patriotic War among Non-Russians" at the panel on *Authority and War: World War II and Challenges to Political and Social Authority*.

**Allan Urbanic**, Librarian for Slavic and East European Collections, received the Distinguished Librarian Award from the Committee on Library and Information Resources of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies. This prize was established in 2010 to recognize outstanding leadership in the field of Slavic, East European and Eurasian librarianship and to show formal appreciation for a recipient's sustained impact in promoting and strengthening the profession.

**Zhivka Valiavicharska**, Collegiate Assistant Professor, Social Sciences, University of Chicago (Ph.D. Rhetoric, UC Berkeley), presented a paper titled "Spectral Socialisms: Neoliberalism, Critical Discourses, and the Future of Progressive Politics in Post-Socialist Bulgaria" at the panel on *Allegories of Transition: Re-Figuring Authority in post-1989 Bulgaria*.

## **CASE-UC Berkeley Field Project: Spring 2012**

The Institute of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, in collaboration with the Centre for Advanced Studies and Education (CASE) at the European Humanities University and the Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC), organizes a bi-annual two-week-long workshop for promising scholars from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. The workshop is funded by a generous grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Each semester, a total of four scholars ("Carnegie Fellows") are brought to UC Berkeley for an intensive review of key literature, theoretical approaches, and methods employed in a particular field of scholarship. During the Spring 2012 semester, ISEES hosted the following scholars:

Dr. Azar Babayev came from the Peace Research Institute, Frankfurt, Germany. During his stay at Berkeley, he did research on the foreign policy of Russia and its near abroad. He worked with Sarah Garding, Ph.D. candidate, Political Science, and Steve Fish, professor, Political Science.

Dr. Tetiana Maliarenko came to Berkeley from Donetsk State Management University in Ukraine. During her visit as a Carnegie Scholar, she studied research prevention, mechanisms of governance, and the security of the state. She worked with Charles Shaw, Ph.D. candidate, History, Marcy McCullaugh, Ph.D. candidate, Political Science, and Jason Wittenberg, professor, Political Science.

Dr. Yuriy Matsiyevskyy is a 2011-2012 Fulbright-Kennan Institute Research Scholar, Kennan Institute, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and Associate Professor, Ostroh Academy National University, Ukraine. During the workshop, he researched hybrid political regimes and informal institutions. He worked with Alina Polyakova, Ph.D. candidate, Sociology, and Dylan Riley, professor, Sociology.

Dr. Maia Mestvirishvili is from Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia. Her research at Berkeley focused on topics in social identity. As a Carnegie Scholar, she worked with Elise Herrala, Ph.D. candidate, Sociology, Anaita Khudanazar, Ph.D. candidate, Near Eastern Studies, and Victoria Bonnell, professor, Sociology.