# THE HARRIMAN INSTITUTE AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

#### FALL 2015

# COVERING THE UKRAINE CRISIS

ON THE GROUND WITH MARIA TURCHENKOVA, PAUL KLEBNIKOV FELLOW

#### COLUMBIA | HARRIMAN INSTITUTE Russian, Eurasian, and East European Studies

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Cover photo © Maria Turchenkova: Protestor in Kyiv's Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) during clashes with riot police in late January 2014

Photo on this page © Maria Turchenkova: Pro-Russian fighters searching for the pilots of a Ukrainian jet shot down by rebels near the city of Yenakievo

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am delighted to write my first note of introduction for *Harriman Magazine* and honored to be taking over the directorship from Tim Frye. I am deeply grateful for his many years of thoughtful and highly effective leadership. Under Tim the Institute went from strength to strength, affirming its global reputation as a leading center of scholarship and a vibrant hub for Eurasia-related issues. I am looking forward to continuing our long tradition of supporting academic excellence and encouraging research, investigation, and debate on a wide variety of regional issues and challenges.

Two pressing and interconnected regional challenges we face today are the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and the deteriorating relationship between Russia and the United States. Both have played important roles in shaping our programming and the contents of this issue. We are fortunate to publish a feature profile of Maria Turchenkova, our 2015 Paul Klebnikov Russian Civil Society Fellow, who started covering the events in Ukraine during the Maidan protests and spent nearly a year traveling across the country, including the separatist Donbass region. A few of the photographs printed here with her profile come from the exhibit of her work last spring mounted by the Harriman Institute.

Also in April we welcomed President Obama's former adviser on Russian and Eurasian affairs, and former U.S. ambassador to Russia, Michael McFaul, to deliver our annual Harriman Lecture. Dr. McFaul is a renowned Russia scholar and chief architect of the "reset" policy that defined U.S.-Russia relations during President Obama's first term. He became ambassador at the peak of the 2011–12 protests in Moscow and stepped down from the post just weeks before Russia's annexation of Crimea. In our interview with him, Dr. McFaul offers some invaluable insights into the Ukraine crisis, the president's Russia policy, and current developments.

We continue to mourn the untimely death of our dear friend, faculty member, alumna, and former Harriman Institute director, Catharine Nepomnyashchy. It has been difficult starting a new academic year without her inspirational presence. In her memory, we are reprinting her essay about Vladimir Nabokov and the detective novel.

We hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to hearing your feedback and ideas for future stories.

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Alexander Cooley Director, Harriman Institute





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Alexander Cooley in his office at the Harriman Institute in October. All photos by Jeffrey Schifman

### INTERVIEW WITH -

# ALEXANDER GOOLEY NEW DIRECTOR OF THE HARRIMAN INSTITUTE

lexander Cooley, professor of political science at Barnard College, Harriman deputy director for social sciences programming, and Columbia alumnus (Ph.D., 1999), took over the reins of the Harriman Institute from outgoing director Timothy Frye on July 1, 2015. A few weeks later Cooley was interviewed by the Center on Global Interests (CGI), Washington, D.C., about his goals as director of the Harriman, the impact of the Ukraine crisis on scholarship, and prospects for funding and research in the post-Soviet region. The interview was published on CGI's website, and is reprinted here with the kind permission of CGI.

#### July 24, 2015

### **Q:** You are the first Director of the Harriman Institute whose research background is not specifically Russia. Is this part of a trend where the Institute is looking to get away from its Russia-centric mission?

A: Well, it is certainly true that I am not a "Russianist" by training—I am also of what you might term the "post-Soviet generation," as I conducted my own graduate work here at Columbia in the mid-1990s when the post-Soviet Central Asian states were moving to consolidate their newly acquired independence. My dissertation work was actually on how Soviet-era administrative legacies and patronage networks shaped the independence of the Central Asian states, so Russia has never been far away conceptually or empirically!

Institutionally, the Institute has a long-standing commitment to engaging with the broader region. Our course offerings, guest speakers, visiting scholars and programming span a broad geographic area from the Balkans to Eastern Europe to Central Asia, covering a variety of issues and disciplines. Indeed, how exactly we conceptualize the "post-Soviet" space and how this affects our work have been recurring questions for the Institute's leadership. And we still grapple with these issues in our core course.

At the same time, maintaining an active focus on Russia is still critically important, arguably even more so in troubled times like these, so we will certainly not shy away from our Russian work. But I also think we need to understand that what it means to "do Russia" is dramatically different now than it was twenty-five years ago. Russian actors are far more immersed in broader regional, global and transnational networks and processes, which also has impacted how individual academic fields pursue Russia-centered research.



### **Q:** You have spearheaded successful expansion of Harriman's Central Asia and Caucasus programs. Will we see further focus on this region within the Institute?

A: Central Asia remains a compelling region to study because it really serves as a guide for studying the geopolitical trends, competing external influences and varying normative frameworks that increasingly characterize our multipolar world. Last year we were delighted to host the annual Central Eurasian Studies Society conference, in addition to the annual Association for the Study of Nationalities convention that we continue to host in April. We have conducted previous major research projects on U.S.-Georgia relations, the "frozen conflicts," and a variety of energy-related issues, so we remain actively engaged in both regions.

But given our location in New York and our proximity to large diasporas, networks and communities with ties to Central Asia and the Caucasus, I think we can do even more in areas such as the arts, media, urban studies, international law and finance. My own new book project on Central Asia's hidden links with the global economy and legal processes explores how Central Asian actors interface with global hubs such as New York and London. The Institute will also continue to welcome distinguished lawmakers, scholars, artists and commentators from the region.

### **Q:** What is your idea of quality as it relates to the Institute's output?

A: We anticipate that our faculty, visiting scholars and researchers will continue to publish in leading academic outlets, such as major university presses and important scholarly journals, but I am more interested in fostering an environment that supports thoughtful and reflective scholarship, whatever the field or discipline. So much of what we do is geared not to our final products or "outputs" (books, journal articles, book chapters), but to encouraging creative thinking and intellectual experimentation, rigorous research, the presentation of ideas, and academic networking. If we continue to support the Institute as an active hub and incubator of Eurasian-related scholarship and debate, I am confident that good quality products will emerge.



Vis-à-vis programming, we will continue to organize and promote large, high-profile public events, such as the revived Harriman Lecture series (given this year by Michael McFaul), but will remain true to our mission by offering platforms for scholars and specialists to present their more specialized research to smaller, but engaged audiences. We can and should do both.

### **Q:** How does your vision for the Institute differ from your predecessors? And where are points of continuity?

A: Every director retains a distinct outlook, undoubtedly influenced by our individual research interests and our respective academic communities. But every recent director has strongly supported the interdisciplinary nature of our mission, even if the balance between the humanities and social sciences in some of the Institute's programming has swung back and forth. I share this broad commitment (indeed, my undergraduate study was in Art History and Political Science), even as we critically continue to interrogate the value of "regional studies" and "interdisciplinarity" today. In terms of the Institute going forward, I would like to build upon the excellent foundations bequeathed to me by predecessors Timothy Frye and our late and beloved Catherine Nepomnyashchy. I plan on expanding the role of our National Advisory Council, offering more networking and programmatic opportunities to our world-class group of alumni and, with our 70th anniversary around the corner, I want to take stock of our own contributions, trials and tribulations by conducting an oral history of the Institute.

Given the dynamic nature of so many scholarly and professional fields, I also think it remains critically important to strengthen and promote our partnerships with other programs and schools at Columbia, because they are usually on the cutting edge of scholarly and professional trends.

One other priority is to involve more undergraduates in our activities and introduce them to regional studies at earlier points in their academic studies. To that end, we have just started a 5-year joint B.A./M.A. program and we will continue to support summer travel to the region and offer research fellowships for qualified undergraduates. We think it's a wonderful way of bringing them into our community, but their identifying fresh, new topics and trends also enriches us. **Q:** It is no secret that U.S.-Russia relations are the worst they have been since the beginning of the Cold War. Too often, hostility in bilateral relations spills over into policy and even academic discourse in both countries. How will you promote an objective approach at Harriman in the current political climate?

# *Our students now work for international organizations, nonprofits and NGOs, think tanks, the international media, the private sector, and leading foundations.*

**A:** I personally don't think that complete "objectivity" is practically attainable or even desirable from an institutional perspective. Rather, our guiding principle should be informed "exposure"—to solicit and showcase diverse research, intellectual engagement and viewpoints and to encourage dialogue and debate of these different perspectives. For some events, such as a panel discussion, opposing viewpoints might be encouraged and featured, but in other cases we will have single-person lectures and presentations.

Not every event, topic or presenter will be to everyone's liking, but they shouldn't be. My strong belief is that, over the course of an academic year, we offer a rich and informative set of events that will educate our community and allow them to draw their own informed opinions about current events with greater confidence. Above all, we must remain a "safe space" for the open exchange of ideas and opinions, especially as the rhetoric and political pressure increases across other institutional settings.

To that end, I am delighted that my colleague Kimberly Marten will be leading an exciting new program on U.S.-Russia relations, which will include a visiting speaker series, interviews and perspectives from leading policymakers, as well as hosting conferences on topics that are critical to the relationship. Most events will be video-recorded for our website.

### **Q:** What do you see as some of the more important areas of research in Russia/Eurasia fields in the next 5 years and how will Harriman ensure it stays at the forefront of such research?

**A:** The region itself has been changing so fast, and we need to be nimble and alert to these transformations. Also, I

want to continue our tradition of organizing events that bring academics into broader dialogue with practitioners and encouraging interactions between various professional communities that are actively engaged in the region. They are often dealing with new trends and challenges before scholars have fully recognized them.

In turn, we have a special obligation to offer deeper academic perspectives and context on issues that affect the region and that are sparked by regional developments. We want to facilitate the difficult discussions that might not otherwise receive attention from other venues or funders. So in recent years, issues like human rights, media freedom, and transparency have been programmatic priorities. Similarly, I think that the Ukraine crisis, beyond the immediate questions surrounding Ukraine's political future and territorial integrity, has sparked debates about the nature of media and propaganda and broader questions about the post–Cold War international order. These are topics we will be engaging more extensively in the years to come.

Next year marks both the 25th anniversary of the Soviet collapse and the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Institute. We are planning a series of events that will investigate how scholarship produced about the former Soviet Union has helped to enrich, or perhaps even challenge, assumptions across different academic fields. Some areas that we are looking into include human rights, energy politics, nationalism and democratization.

# **Q:** Harriman has for a long time been a leading institution for training the next generation of regional specialists on Russia and Eurasia. What are some new skills and demands that have arisen for aspiring experts in this field?

**A:** It has certainly been the case that Harriman has trained generations of specialists who went into government service and diplomacy. And while we continue to prepare such students, the types of careers and professional paths associated with the region have greatly expanded over the last two decades. Our students now work for international organizations, nonprofits and NGOs, think tanks, the international media, the private sector, and leading foundations. And many continue to use their Harriman training as springboards to pursue more specialized graduate studies at the Ph.D. level.

We wish to teach students about the region, but we also want to expose them to different types of fields, research and writing. And all our M.A. students will continue to be required to complete a rigorous and in-depth original thesis on a topic of their choosing for which we will offer a course structure and research, methods and ethics training. We want to equip our students to successfully make leaps between professional worlds and be good citizens in all.

**Q:** For the past decade, private foundations and the U.S. government have significantly reduced funding for Russian and Eurasian studies. How has this affected Harriman programming specifically, and what is your outlook for the future sustainability of current programs? Do you also expect diminished access to study abroad opportunities in Russia and academic exchanges in coming years? If so, how would you plan to overcome this challenge?

A: You are right—the general decline in area studies funding and the budget sequester has been devastating to regional studies programs across the country. I, like so many other scholars of my generation, conducted fieldwork for my dissertation with funds from the State Department's Title VIII Program via an SSRC fellowship. We hope that some of these cuts will be rolled back, but it is a shame that it takes an international security crisis to focus policymakers' attention on the importance of the region. It's a small investment to make that pays very big dividends in the future.

We also have been trying to find new ways to fund our M.A. students who have lost access to such funds such as the FLAS. But, overall, we are fortunate to enjoy a relatively generous endowment that supports our students, research projects and programming.

I think it would be a great shame if the reduced funding and tense political environment resulted in a drop in access to study opportunities and collaborations with scholars from the region. We will do everything we can to try and keep the channels of communication and contact with our Russian counterparts open. For example, we are currently involved in an effort to build a U.S.-Europe-Russia university consortium that can offer a platform for substantive dialogue and exposure about some of these critical issues.

The Center on Global Interests provides an open platform for discussion. The views expressed here are the authors' own.





(Top to bottom) Great Games, Local Rules: The New Great Power Contest in Central Asia by Alexander Cooley (Oxford University Press, 2012); Ranking the World: Grading States as a Tool of Global Governance coauthored with Jack Snyder (Cambridge University Press, 2015)

# COVERING THE UKRAINE CRISIS

## **A VIEW FROM BOTH SIDES**

BY MASHA UDENSIVA-BRENNER

### On the Ground with the Harriman Institute's 2015 Paul Klebnikov Russian Civil Society Fellow

ussian photojournalist Maria Turchenkova, a petite, soft-spoken twenty-seven-year-old with a mane of carelessly arranged red hair, sits at the front of the room in Columbia's Faculty House and looks quietly at the table. She is about to participate on a panel about ethics and approaches to conflict journalism, and when it is her turn to speak, she glances at the audience then loads something onto her laptop, projecting photographs on a screen behind her. Though she appears confident while describing her recent experiences covering the Ukraine conflict, she stops suddenly, covers her mouth, and pauses for breath. "Sorry," she says, smiling shyly at the audience. "I'm a little bit nervous because I'm not used to public events."

Though she may get anxious before a crowd, Turchenkova, the Harriman Institute's 2015 Paul Klebnikov Russian Civil Society Fellow, has no qualms about confronting physical danger. "The People's Republic of Chaos: Donbass, Eastern Ukraine," a series of photographs she exhibited during her six-week residency at Columbia, includes close-ups of masked separatists, corpses, coffins, and burning structures. One print, depicting a group of Ukrainian soldiers crouching in front of a flaming building in Strelkov, is particularly eerie. Right before Turchenkova snapped her camera, she had yelled for her colleague, *Le Monde* correspondent Benoît Vitkine, to get out of her shot. Seconds after he moved away, a landmine exploded in that very spot.

> Clashes with riot police in Kyiv's Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) in late January 2014. All photos © Maria Turchenkova





Danil (*center*) and his family find shelter after the Petrovsky district of Donetsk fell in the crossfire between pro-Russian and Ukrainian forces

But even in the most intense moments, Turchenkova never fears for her own safety. "I'm scared for other people, but I have developed some sort of immunity about myself," she says, after the panel, leaning back in her chair on the patio of an outdoor campus café and pulling intently on a cigarette.

Turchenkova did not always want to be a conflict journalist. She studied economics and translation at the Moscow State Linguistic University with hopes of opening a restaurant chain. By her second year of school, in 2005, she'd lost her passion for it and got a job as a radio journalist. Four years later, she enrolled in the Rochenko Multimedia and Art School and began her career as a freelance photographer, which she felt would bring her close to "the epicenter" of a story. Turchenkova photographed important events—Obama's meeting with opposition leaders during his first visit to Moscow, the protests on Bolotnaya Square, Pussy Riot's iconic Cathedral of Christ the Savior performance—but she wanted to use her camera to reveal something deeper.

For months she followed news about Dagestan, which had been engulfed in guerrilla warfare with Islamic insurgents since the Chechen War ended in 2009. She was baffled that the topic was seldom discussed in the mainstream media; Russian newspapers never published more than a few sentences about terrorist operations or the killing of suspected insurgents. Who were these people? And why were they killed? Were they proven terrorists? What happened to their relatives? In 2011, she set out for Dagestan. "There were no plans, editors, or budgets," she wrote in the online photo magazine *Bird in Flight.* "I just took my backpack and went as far as possible into rural areas." Her family was terrified—her mother frequently called crying and begging her to return—but Turchenkova continued traveling in and out of the republic for two years.

In 2013, her photographs from these trips were published in *Time* magazine, as a series titled "The Hidden War in the Caucasus." The experience was transformative. It taught her how to seek out and communicate stories with her camera, and it also sparked her interest in the Middle East, where many Dagestanis and Chechens had started fighting with the Islamic State. She planned to move to the region at the end of 2013, but Euromaidan erupted, and she decided to follow the developments in Ukraine instead (she moved to Beirut after her Harriman residency last spring).

After covering Maidan and photographing Crimean citizens for *Le Monde* in the weeks leading up to the February 2014 secession referendum, she went to Donbass, a coal-rich, predominantly Russian-speaking area in southeastern Ukraine, to follow the clashes between the pro-Russian separatists and Ukrainian self-defense militias.

Donbass, an unofficially demarcated province encompassing Donetsk and Luhansk, is comprised primarily of coal miners and factory workers. It was the second most populous area in Ukraine until people fled because of the war, and, though the majority of its residents are Russian-speaking, its ethnic makeup is predominantly Ukrainian. Former president Viktor Yanukovych grew up there, along with some of the country's most nefarious oligarchs, who ran the region as they pleased.

Though Donbass operated by its own rules, there had been little discussion of separatism until the revolution in Kyiv. But as the protests intensified, the people in Maidan, who were angry at the corruption perpetuated by Yanukovych and his cronies, lashed out at the southeasterners, calling them "trashy and uneducated," says Turchenkova. Meanwhile, propaganda intensified from both sides, with "news of tanks and swastikas from the pro-Russian side and of Chechen fighters from Kyiv."

She vowed to travel regularly between pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian areas, because the only way to understand what was happening was to "cover the conflict from both sides."

In April 2014, a group of armed, masked militias announced the creation of the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR). Turchenkova watched neighbors who had lived together for years turn against each other. Even families were disintegrating—fathers and sons taking up arms on opposing sides of the war.

As the troops marched into the city of Donetsk, people in the outskirts moved into hiding, confining themselves to damp basements and defunct World War II bomb shelters. But the city center maintained an eerie peacefulness. "Cafés stayed open, markets," says Turchenkova. "They were planting roses, mowing the lawns, and getting rid of dried leaves."

Moving from place to place in search of the complete story, Turchenkova, who blames media propaganda for perpetuating the conflict, felt like Alice chasing the White Rabbit around Wonderland. Her big breakthrough came in May 2014. For weeks international media had speculated about whether or not Russian soldiers were fighting with Ukrainian separatists, with DPR's de facto authorities vehemently denying the rumors. One evening, following a big shootout at the Donetsk airport, a senior official in the de facto government approached Turchenkova and her colleagues and told them that two truckloads of corpses would be repatriated to Russia the following day.

"We were absolutely shocked," says Turchenkova. The official not only confirmed the speculations, but also asked the journalists to accompany the trucks with the Russian cadavers to the border—they needed the journalists in order to ward off potential provocation from Ukrainian soldiers. The next day Turchenkova stood among a sea of reporters in front of a morgue in Donetsk, looking at a heap of coffins said to contain the bodies of Russian soldiers. There were nearly 100 correspondents in front of the morgue, but most of them snapped photos of the coffins being loaded into the trucks, and, as the trucks pulled away, returned to the center of Donetsk. Turchenkova and three colleagues decided to follow the trucks. "I had to know, was it really true that Russian citizens were in there? How would

> Residents of Uralo-Kavkaz (Eastern Ukraine) standing in a field near the city of Donetsk after fleeing their village, which had become a battleground between Ukrainian forces and pro-Russian rebels

they be repatriated?" says Turchenkova. Instead of going to the border, the trucks pulled up to an ice-cream factory. The journalists watched as pro-separatist volunteers emerged from the factory's refrigerators with corpses and body parts, which they deposited into black plastic bags and packed into what the journalists realized had been empty coffins—the morgue was full and they'd moved the bodies to the factory's refrigerators.

After the bodies were loaded, she and her colleagues followed them to the border. When they got there, they faced the rifles of confounded Ukrainian soldiers. But the soldiers, after seeing official notices from the hospital in Donetsk, allowed the bodies through. Turchenkova returned to Donetsk and wrote an article, which she published on Ekho Moskvy's blog. The story became one of the biggest on the war published in Russia, the first to definitively prove that Russian citizens were fighting with Ukrainian separatists.

Turchenkova stayed in Ukraine until February 2015. Each morning she checked the social networks for news from fellow journalists in the field, called her driver, and followed the action. On both sides of the conflict she was confronted with similar images: "destruction, funerals, more destruction."

She took the trip between Donbass and Ukraine often, but she usually traveled roads embedded in conflict zones. The first time she went on a road designated by media and authorities as a humanitarian corridor safe for civilians, she encountered separatists on one side and Ukrainian soldiers on the other, shooting each other while traveling civilians were caught in the crossfire. "When you travel through combat zones, you do so at your own risk. But when you choose officially sanctioned safe routes and end up in a combat zone, that's terrifying."

Turchenkova laments that Western media is too preoccupied with geopolitical questions to worry about the people caught in the middle. "There are so many other problems," she says during her exhibit opening at Columbia. "My story is dedicated to the people. How they live in basements, how no one can agree on humanitarian corridors."  $\Box$ 

*Top to bottom*: Ukrainian soldiers crouching in front of a flaming building in Strelkov (where a landmine exploded just moments after *Le Monde* journalist Benoît Vitkine stepped out of the shot); pro-Russian activist in Crimea; a mass grave on the outskirts of Luhansk, where both identified and unidentified civilians killed by mortar fire or shelling were buried







Sloviansk, May 11, 2014, the day before pro-Russian separatists in Donetsk declared independence

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### REBECCA KOBRIN IN PROFILE BRINGING BIALYS TO BIALYSTOK ~

#### BY RONALD MEYER

n December 2014, Rebecca Kobrin (Russell and Bettina Knapp Associate Professor of American Jewish History) traveled to Bialystok, Poland, for the launch of the Polish translation of her prize-winning book Jewish Bialystok and Its Diaspora, published in 2010 in Indiana University Press's prestigious monograph series, The Modern Jewish Experience. The evening began with a sampling of bialys, the cousin to the bagel that had once been a celebrated regional delicacy but had disappeared from Bialystok, its namesake city, along with the Jewish residents that once comprised over 70 percent of the population. Kobrin, thanks to Fresh Direct, the New York City grocery delivery company, had been able to fill in one more missing link for her audience about the city's Jewish history and culture by bringing the Jewish bread back to the city that gave it its name. The bialy became a metaphor for the reception of her book, and indeed herself, in Poland-the food is known all around the world, but the residents of its birthplace have no idea what it is, even after unsuccessful attempts to make some from a recipe found on the Internet.

Without the Internet the Polish translation most likely would not have happened. Out of the blue, Kobrin received an e-mail from the Mayor's Cultural Affairs Office in Bialystok, which had discovered her and her book the usual way—by means of a Google search. The Office was planning to put on a multicultural festival but had virtually no information on the Jewish component of the city's history, as the overwhelming majority of residents today are either Catholic or Russian Orthodox. The Cultural Affairs Office invited Kobrin to the festival and presented her with an award for her book, thus making it a truly multicultural festival, now that the Jewish history of the city was given a voice. The same Office also arranged to have



In her second book, *Chosen Capital: The Jewish Encounter with American Capitalism*, Kobrin shifts her focus from migration to problems of economics, finance, and capitalism, as practiced by these new Jewish immigrants

Jewish Bialystok translated into Polish, supported by grants from the U.S. Embassy and the Harriman Institute. The book was published by Borderlands, a prestigious Polish press that has an impressive list of East European historians from abroad, including Timothy Snyder and Jan T. Gross. The modest book launches with which authors content themselves in U.S. academia pale by comparison—more than 300 people turned out for Kobrin's launch. As Kobrin summed up the evening, "I was a celebrity." (The book launch can be viewed on YouTube: https://www.youtube. com/watch?v=U7yC\_ZoYPNA.)

Kobrin prefaced her remarks at the launch by quoting Polish President Komorowski, who had stated at the opening of POLIN, the new Museum of History of Polish Jews, a few months prior, "We cannot understand the history of Poland without the great contribution of its Jews to Polish culture." But as it turns out, the present residents of Bialystok do not know the city's history, in large part because, in addition to the loss of the Jewish population, the newspapers of the interwar period, like the majority of cultural institutions, conducted their business in Yiddish. Their records are now easier to find in New York and Tel Aviv than in Bialystok. Kobrin says that it had been her dream that people in Bialystok could read her book and learn the history of their city, which was destroyed and rebuilt in a modern style. Without knowing Jewish history, however, it is difficult to understand why Bialytsok is a large, urban industrial center, as it almost certainly would not have existed if Jews had not flocked to cities, gone into industry, and made it their home.

How did Kobrin get started on her amazing journey from girlhood on Manhattan's Upper West Side to Bialystok? First, a gap year between high school and Yale University during 1989-90, when she went to Israel at the same time thousands from the Soviet Union decided to go to Israel as well. Kobrin worked in an absorption center for Russian and Ethiopian Jews, tutoring young children in English, since in Israel instruction of English begins in the second grade and most of these children had never studied the language. She was struck by the many different stories and situations: some were preparing to move to the United States, others to Europe, while some simply would wait to see what would happen and weigh the different options. It made Kobrin realize that the story of immigration in the early twentieth century probably followed similarly diverse routes and not the direct, linear passage from Russia to New York City that scholars present as the paradigm; in fact, large numbers of the immigrants from Bialystok set off for Argentina, Australia, and Palestine.

An advanced course in history at Yale during Kobrin's freshman year introduced her to the excitement of sifting through archives, and the process of shedding light on the lives of people whom no one knew. Bringing these voices to the fore can alter our understanding of larger historical narratives, including the story of immigration in the early twentieth century. As she stated in our interview, "It's about stories. Stories about families and people you probably never heard of." It was also at Yale that Rebecca started studying the Russian language. Her year in Israel had given her a start of sorts, but most of the Russians she worked with in the absorption center were from Central Asia. When she showed up for her first day of Russian class at Yale her instructor remarked, "I see a beautiful young girl, I hear an old woman from Tashkent." For what would become her Bialystok project, in addition to Russian and Polish, she would need Yiddish and Hebrew.

Kobrin's early experience in Israel led her to choose comparative migration as the topic for her dissertation and first book. (As she told her audience in Bialystok, "Be sure that you love your subject-it may be with you for twenty years!") She had mentioned to a colleague that she wanted to write a transnational history of migration from Eastern Europe and was informed of the extraordinarily rich collection of documents assembled by Chen Merhavia of the National Library's Rare Book and Manuscript Division in Tel Aviv. Merhavia, a native of Bialystok, tirelessly devoted himself to amassing materials from all over the world related to his birth city for a work that he had planned to write but ultimately was unable to do so for health reasons. The Merhavia Collection was a goldmine. It gave Kobrin a running start on piecing together a global portrait of migration from Bialystok. She was able to use Bialystok as a test case of transnational migration and compare the new homes that Jews from Bialystok made in Argentina, Australia, Palestine, and the United States. The resettlement in these cities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries not only transformed the demographic and cultural centers of the world, but it also reshaped Jews' understanding and performance of their diasporic identities. To that end, Kobrin explores the organizations, institutions, newspapers, and philanthropies that the Bialystokers created around the world and that reshaped perceptions of exile and diaspora.

In her next two books, Kobrin shifts her focus from migration to problems of economics, finance, and capitalism, as practiced by these new Jewish immigrants: *Chosen Capital: The Jewish Encounter with American Capitalism* (Rutgers University Press, 2012), an edited volume based on a conference she organized, which was singled out as "recommended reading" by the Jewish Book Council; and the forthcoming *Purchasing Power: The Economics of Jewish History*, edited with Adam Teller (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015). Both volumes feed into her current work-in-progress, *A Credit to Their Nation: Jewish Immigrant Banks and the Shaping of American Finance, 1914–1930*, which will come out with Harvard University Press and delves into the economics underpinning mass migration. But the fact that these trips were facilitated by thousands of Jewish businessmen working in both Europe and the United States through institutions called immigrant banks that offered credit to immigrants to buy their tickets is largely ignored.



### SELECTED AWARDS

AAJR Special Initiatives Grant, 2015 Lenfest Distinguished Faculty Award, Columbia University, 2015 Southern Jewish Historical Society Kawaler Prize, for innovative research, 2013 Wasserman Prize, American Jewish Historical Society, best scholarly article, 2013 Genesis Philanthropy Group Grant, Innovative Research on Russian-Speaking Jews, 2012 Jordan Schnitzer Prize for best book in modern Jewish history, 2012 Shoah Foundation Teaching Fellowship, Shoah Foundation, 2012 University Service Learning Fellowship, Repair the World Foundation, 2012 International Multicultural Award, City of Bialystok Mayor's Office, 2011 Natalie Racolin Memorial Fellowship, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, 2011 National Jewish Book Award, Finalist, American Jewish Studies, 2011 Maurice Amado Award in Sephardic Studies, UCLA, 2009 Center for Advanced Jewish Studies, Fellow, "Jews, Commerce and Culture," 2008-9 Milstein Family Research Fellowship, Center for Jewish History, 2008–9 Cahnman Family Book Award, Association for Jewish Studies, 2008 Hettleman Summer Award, Columbia Faculty Development Committee, 2008 Koret Foundation, Jewish Studies Publication Award, 2005 Center for Jewish History, Sandra and Fred Rose Young Historian's Award, 2004 American Philosophical Society, Franklin Postdoctoral Research Fellowship, 2003

Few people think of economic models when they think of migration, but, as the tragic events involving current refugees in Eastern Europe illustrate, Kobrin notes, the business of mass migration can be treacherous for migrants. A Credit to Their Nation discusses how this business operated in the early twentieth century through the world of immigrant banks. It opens by pondering how different the dominant narrative of trans-Atlantic immigration history would sound if we invited its commercial practices to center stage. To be sure, many discuss the economic factors that drove 11 million European migrants to board ships in hopes of starting anew across the ocean in the years leading up to 1914. But the fact that these trips were facilitated by thousands of Jewish businessmen working in both Europe and the United States through institutions called immigrant banks that offered credit to immigrants to buy their tickets is largely ignored. The summer of 1914 is most often remembered for Europe's fall into an unprecedented war. Few recall that during the same summer in America, overshadowed by gruesome events in Europe, the era of immigrant banking came to an end. In response to immigrants' desire to send millions of dollars back to Europe, Eugene Lamb, New York State's banking superintendent, clamped down and closed numerous immigrant banks that had sprouted up in previous decades. These banks not only held the deposits of immigrants, but also sold ship tickets to millions of migrants wanting to better their lives. By selling the tickets on installment, they in essence offered impoverished migrants with the credit needed to make their dream of migration a reality. While these private unincorporated banks have faded into history, as Kobrin argues, the debates they launched over immigration, access to credit, and banking reform continue to this day and are important for twenty-first-century readers to understand.

"Peoples in Motion," the 2011–12 Harriman Core Project, included the component "Voices of the New Russian-Jewish Diaspora," an autobiography contest, cosponsored by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and the Harriman Institute. Kobrin placed advertisements in the Russian newspapers, asking for readers to submit their autobiographies, with a cash prize awarded for the winning stories. The model for this project was the Harriman Institute's 1947 call for the papers of those who had lived through the seismic shifts of the early twentieth century, most notably the demise of imperial Russia, the Bolshevik revolution, and the birth of the Soviet Union. Crucial historical sources concerning these shifts were being lost, they astutely observed; it was the duty of a Western academic institution to provide a home where all scholars would have free access to these materials, which were critical





for a "full and free" picture of Russia and Eastern Europe in modern times. Kobrin's call took the form of a contest, borrowing from a model used by the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. Hundreds of stories were sent in, some of which were absolutely fascinating. Just as we expect a linear route of immigration from Russia to New York City, we expect to read only tales of prejudice, of people being forced out of their jobs because they were Jewish or had submitted documents for an exit visa; in other words, harassment on a large scale. But the stories, not surprisingly, turned out to be much more complex. My favorite—I was one of the dozen judges—was written by a person who was not given an exit visa because he was an instructor at a military academy and therefore had access to state secrets. Rather than submit to the decision, he took the academy to court-and won! That indeed was a story that needed to be told.

Kobrin has initiated a second autobiography contest—this time in Germany—that seeks to expand the collection of autobiographies, this time by calling on members of the new Russian immigrant diaspora scattered throughout Germany to narrate their lives. She is working with the Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe in Marburg along with the Center for Metropolitan Studies (CMS) in Berlin to collect the autobiographies, which will fill in the picture of the renaissance of Jewish life in Germany after reunification. With a Harriman Faculty Small Research Grant and a Diversity Initiative Grant from the University, Kobrin has been able to hire an assistant, place advertisements in Jewish media, and put together prize money. Like the initial autobiography project, the collection will be donated to Columbia's Bakhmeteff Archive of Russian and East European Culture. "Voices of the New Russian-Jewish Diaspora," like Kobrin's other projects, broadens the narrative by providing for the multiplicity of voices, ultimately enriching our understanding of how scholars and migrants themselves conceptualize, narrate, and theorize the long and silent revolution of Russian-Jewish migration, a movement that transformed life in the former Soviet Union, the United States, and Germany.

*Jewish Bialystok and Its Diaspora* Rebecca Kobrin Indiana University Press (2010) ISBN 978-0-253-22176-6

Available from Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, directly from the publisher, and select bookstores.

Chosen Capital: The Jewish Encounter with American Capitalism Rebecca Kobrin (Editor) Rutgers University Press (2012) ISBN 978-0-8135-5308-5

Available from Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, directly from the publisher, and select bookstores.

### FROM <sup>BY MASHA</sup> UDENSIVA-BRENNER STANFORD TO SPASO HOUSE

IN CONVERSATION WITH MICHAEL MCFAUL

n January 2009, Michael McFaul, a renowned Stanford political scientist and author of several influential books on Russian politics, joined President Obama's National Security Council. The war between Georgia and Russia had just sent U.S.-Russia relations to their lowest point since the Cold War, and McFaul's job was to advise the president on all Russia– and Central Asia–related matters. For three years he guided the president in designing a strategy known as the "reset" policy, and it appeared to narrow the rift between the two countries.

In 2011, tired of the chaotic lifestyle that comes with working in the White House, McFaul decided to return to Palo Alto. The president had other plans. That September, he

President Barack Obama is briefed by (*from left*) Mark Lippert, William J. Burns, Ben Rhodes, Michael McFaul, and Denis McDonough in the Conference Room aboard Air Force One, during a flight to Moscow, Russia, July 5, 2009. Official White House photo by Pete Souza



Just weeks after his departure in late February 2014, Russia annexed Crimea. Since then, the Ukraine crisis has persisted, the West has imposed economic sanctions on Russia, and Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov was murdered.

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nominated McFaul as the second noncareer U.S. ambassador to the Russian Federation in thirty years. McFaul was excited to return to Russia. He had fallen in love with the country as a Stanford undergraduate studying abroad in the 1980s and has been returning there ever since-writing his dissertation on a Rhodes scholarship in the 1990s, researching his numerous books on democratization and revolution, working at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and during his various roles as a political adviser. Throughout the years he had established relationships within the Russian government, and he was looking forward to building on the foundation of his "reset" policy. But when he got to Russia in January 2012, the atmosphere had shifted. A series of street protests against the fraudulent December 2011 parliamentary elections and the corrupt practices of the ruling United Russia Party resulted in a backlash from the authorities and a general distaste toward foreign influence.

McFaul's appointment to the ambassadorship quickly elicited suspicion from the Kremlin, as he was a known critic of the

Putin regime and proponent of human rights and democratization in Russia (he had published books with titles like *Russia's Unfinished Revolution: Political Change from Gorbachev to Putin*). To further complicate things, his second day on the job coincided with a visit from Deputy Secretary of State William Burns, whom, according to protocol, he had to accompany on a meeting with human rights activists and members of Russia's political opposition. The Russian media jumped on the story, and, within days of arriving, McFaul was portrayed as the agent of Western-imposed revolution.

McFaul stayed for two years, during which relations between Russia and the United States continued to sour. Just weeks after his departure in late February 2014, Russia annexed Crimea. Since then, the Ukraine crisis has persisted, the West has imposed economic sanctions on Russia, and Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov was murdered. I met with McFaul twice—once in early April 2015 in a conference room at the Harriman Institute the day after he addressed Columbia University at the annual Harriman Lecture, and again a month later over tea at the Omni Berkshire Place hotel in midtown—to discuss his career and this turbulent time in U.S.-Russia relations.

**Masha Udensiva-Brenner:** What was it like to make the transition from academia to the National Security Council?

Michael McFaul: I'll tell you honestly, I was very nervous. I had interacted with people in government for decades. Often times, at the end of those conversations, they would say, "Well, you don't really understand how government works." My first day was the day after the inauguration. I had worked with the president on his campaign, so it was an exciting time, but the challenges seemed big.

Ultimately, it wasn't as overwhelming as I anticipated. I think there's something of a mythology about the black box of government. There were adjustments to make. Three computer systems, depending on the security level and bouncing back and forth, and learning how to deal with classified information. I briefed the President and prepared him for everything he did related to Russia and Central Asia, but within the government I ran the IPC [Interagency Policy Committee for Russia], which means I chaired a meeting for all the people at the assistant secretary level involved in policy making and coordination for Russia. I held meetings often, I wanted the engagement, and I ran it sort of like an academic seminar—challenging assumptions and asking for data. I found it to be less difficult than I expected. The part I learned more bitterly was that everyone would formally agree on something at the meeting but then go back to their agencies and use different bureaucratic policies to unravel it.

**Udensiva-Brenner:** The Obama administration came into office on the heels of the Russia-Georgia war and started the "reset" policy. How did you negotiate getting out of that bitter situation and into a policy of cooperation and engagement?

**McFaul:** The war, which was in August 2008, gave us a jump start on formulating the reset policy. Much of the first presidential debate was about Russia, and it was a major campaign issue for a few weeks. When we got to day one of being in government, we weren't starting from scratch. The essence of the reset is that it wasn't a strategy about Russia, per se; it was integrated with other issues we were working on. In our assessment, our interests overlapped with the Russians on most big security and economic issues, and the argument for the reset was that if we had



*Left to right*: McFaul delivers 2015 Harriman Lecture; Kerry, accompanied by McFaul (*right*) and Russian chief of protocol Yuriy Filatov (*left*), tours Red Square during his visit to Moscow on May 7, 2013 (photo courtesy of the U.S. Department of State)



U.S. ambassador Michael McFaul and secretary of state John Kerry meet with Russian president Vladimir Putin and foreign minister Sergey Lavrov

Russia with us, it would make it easier to achieve our objectives. We sought to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, to develop our supply routes to Afghanistan, to increase trade and investment in the world, and to reduce the number of nuclear weapons in the world, which was the one issue directly related to Russia. For the rest we had our own strategy, our coda, and if Russia was with us, with respect to the strategy for achieving each objective, it would be easier.

#### Udensiva-Brenner: How did Medvedev react to the policy?

**McFaul:** The first meeting with Medvedev took place in London in April 2009, on the sidelines of the G20 meeting. It was the first "bi-lat"—as we call it in the government—that I had to prepare, and that's when the president really laid out his approach. Going into it, I had told him not to expect much. We were still just months away from the major confrontation over Georgia—Georgia, of course, remained a very difficult issue between us, not just in that first meeting, but for the entire time I was in the government—but Medvedev came ready to engage with us. And, if I'm not mistaken, he even used the word "reset." **Udensiva-Brenner:** How was the reset received by your Republican colleagues?

**McFaul:** When I arrived and met my new staff at the National Security Council, all of those people had worked for George W. Bush the day before. The same went for all the other entities, too, because the political appointees who needed Senate approval didn't come into their jobs until several months into the Obama administration. We had to tell them: "Okay, now we're going to have a different policy." And I remember one senior person in the Bush administration, who is a good friend of mine, saying, "We all start off with this big head of steam that we're going to change things with Russia, and it always ends in failure." I think about that often, given where we are today. And that was certainly the case in the Bush administration, too.

They started out pretty strong because September 11th really brought Russia and the United States together, and they ended with the war in Georgia. So, there was that kind of skepticism. Others wanted us to be more strident vis-à-vis the conflicts we had with Russia, Georgia being the most important but not the only one. Our attitude was that the reset policy was a deliberate attempt to stop linking unrelated issues. We can have progress on arms control here, and we can disagree on Georgia over here, but we're not going to link those two discussions. And that was controversial in our government and in the Russian government, because we were not going to allow *them* to link things they wanted to link. They would say, "If you want to get sanctions in Iran, stop talking about democracy and human rights." And we militantly said, "Let's talk about Iran here, let's talk about democracy here. We're not linking them, and we expect you not to link them either."

**Udensiva-Brenner:** And this is controversial with the human rights community as well—they would like to link these issues.

**McFaul:** That's right; some wanted to link the new START treaty with human rights issues. And it came into major focus for us during the WTO accession deliberations, when human rights activists wanted us to take the position that until Russia got better on democracy we shouldn't let them into the WTO. Those are not the rules of the WTO, obviously. China is in the WTO; lots of countries that don't meet the standards for democracy are in the WTO. Our argument was: We're not credible on adhering to the rules of the game, including the rules of the WTO, if we try to link membership to unrelated issues.

That was a big debate. You can imagine that for me, given my reputation as a human rights activist and advocate and democracy promoter, this was difficult. I know that community well, and they told me, "You're a sellout, McFaul; you've abandoned us." Now, I never thought that. We also practice what we call dual-track engagement, where we simultaneously engage with the government about democracy and human rights, and, in parallel, engage with society, the political opposition. That's what we always did. And I think we did that more aggressively than many previous administrations. But, you know, they pushed back on us. And that's their job, by the way. If you're working at Human Rights Watch or Freedom House, all those organizations, your job is to beat up on people like me. Sometimes I took it too personally, I think. In retrospect, I regret that, but their job is to keep us honest.

**Udensiva-Brenner:** How would you respond to the criticism that dual-track diplomacy marginalizes human rights issues; that the meetings take place in inferior rooms with lower-level officials?

**McFaul:** It is true that when I worked in the NSC and when I was ambassador, I did not have the luxury of just thinking about human rights. I had to think about Iran, I had to think about Syria, I had to think about supplying our troops in Afghanistan.



President Barack Obama and President Dmitry Medvedev of Russia ride together to lunch at Ray's Hell Burger in Arlington, Virginia, June 24, 2010. Official White House photo by Pete Souza

It is true that when I worked in the NSC and when I was ambassador, I did not have the luxury of just thinking about human rights. I had to think about Iran, I had to think about Syria, I had to think about supplying our troops in Afghanistan. And, oh, by the way, there's not a way to supply your troops in Afghanistan without working with some authoritarian regimes. So whether I wanted to or not, that was my job. The luxury you have if you're working at a democracy NGO is you get up every morning and the only thing you have to think about is democracy and human rights. You don't have to deal with the Pentagon asking you to supply your troops in Afghanistan. You don't have to deal with trying to get the Russians to support sanctions on Iran. So it is fair to say that democracy and human rights might not get the same amount of attention as other issues. I think that's a fair criticism. But it's structural and not something specific to the Obama administration.

When I was in government we met with the opposition when President Obama went to Russia. It was the president of the United States, not lower-level officials like me, who met with the opposition—and in the Ritz Carlton, by the way, not some dingy office. He was the only leader at the G20 who met with civil society. Nobody else did. And there's more to it than just meetings. We had the policy, we tried to execute it, and I most certainly tried to execute it when I was ambassador.

**Udensiva-Brenner:** Throughout his first term in office President Obama was cautious about pushing Russia too much on the democracy issue. For instance, he did not use the word "democratic" during his 2009 speech at the New Economic School. Yet, knowing your history as a human rights activist and democracy promoter, he decided to appoint you ambassador to Russia. Why?

**McFaul:** I'd say two things. One, with respect to his speech, he said "America wants a strong, peaceful, and prosperous Russia," and he didn't want to say, we didn't want to say, the word "democratic." However, if you look at the five themes of the speech, one of them was about what we call "universal values." So, it's there, but in a different way, in a less in-your-face way.

With respect to me, you know, I was Mr. Reset. I was the guy who steered this new policy in place; first within our government, and then with the Russians. So, when he asked me to become ambassador, months before the demonstrations, in spring 2011, his pitch to me was "we got too much going on, we got too much momentum, how can you leave me now?" And he knew my views on democracy. I had given him my latest book, *Advancing Democracy Abroad: Why We Should and How We Can*, as a Christmas gift—my first Christmas gift at the White House. It wasn't that he didn't know my views.

**Udensiva-Brenner:** Did President Obama know your history in Russia during the late '80s and early '90s? Did he know that some KGB officers thought you were a CIA agent, for instance?



**McFaul:** That's interesting. I don't ever recall talking about the CIA piece. He most certainly knew of my relationships with some of these opposition leaders, because he met them in July 2009.

**Udensiva-Brenner:** Would you have gone to meet with the political opposition on your second day as ambassador to Russia had Deputy Secretary of State William Burns not been visiting?

McFaul: Probably not, no.

**Udensiva-Brenner:** Do you think your time in Russia would have been different had that meeting not taken place?

**McFaul:** Well . . . I probably wouldn't have done that on my second day, but we always met with civil society, and I wouldn't have avoided them for the entire time I was ambassador. At the time I wasn't that enthusiastic about the meeting; my only contribution in terms of the invitation was, ironically, to invite a communist. Then, of course, the media portrayed it the way they did on national television because it happened at the same time there were massive demonstrations on the street. It was definitely not the start I wanted, but I knew that this was eventually going to be a complicated moment in our relationship. Even the previous ambassador, who did not have the same reputation I had, was already beginning to experience a bit of a tension because of things happening inside Russia, not because of us. It's important to understand: we didn't change our policy. What changed was politics inside Russia, and the rise of the opposition and the regime's fear of them.

**Udensiva-Brenner:** How did you feel about coming to a diplomatic role with no experience as a diplomat?

**McFaul:** I was nervous, of course. Moscow is a big embassy not traditionally run by political appointees. The last political appointee actually hired a Russia specialist to be his special assistant so that he could help him navigate the embassy, and obviously I didn't have that. So, I had to learn the ways of an embassy, but I think it's exaggerated how hard that is. I mean, it's listening, it's leadership, it's management. I've been a manager of other things. But you'd have to ask my staff how they felt about it.

The big advantage I had that many career ambassadors did not have when they went to Moscow is that I knew a lot about Russia. I'd written tons about Russia, I spoke Russian, I'd lived there several times, so I was not needing the political officer to tell me who Surkov is, who Dvorkovich is, who Nemtsov was. We had very talented people, but, in terms of analysis of Russia, I was more up to speed than your average person who comes in. And I didn't want to be the traditional American ambassador in Russia; I had a different agenda. I wanted to be more engaged with society, I wanted to be more public. I was on Twitter; I was in the Russian media way more than my predecessor, even in a more constrained environment.

### The luxury you have if you're working at a democracy NGO is you get up every morning and the only thing you have to think about is democracy and human rights.

Udensiva-Brenner: So you wanted to be in the Russian media?

**McFaul:** I did. I spoke Russian, sometimes very badly, but I wanted to engage with society and working with the media was one way to do it. We wanted to explain our policy, which was distorted by others in the media. And we wanted to show *chto takoe* America, what is America? And I wanted to use my own biography to say that. That was part of our public diplomacy strategy. Somebody told me something very wise before I went: "The best way to be an authentic ambassador is to be yourself." And if you try to be what you think is the right way to be an ambassador, that won't be authentic. And I took that to heart.

We had more guests at Spaso House, where I lived, than in any other period in history—20,000 guests in two years. We did things like throw concerts. One of the first was a country western band. I'm from Montana, my father is a country western musician, and in Montana you don't just sit on your hands and listen to music, you dance. So we did that, and that was radical. It hadn't happened in thirty or forty years, and it was against protocol and all that. And the Russians loved it.

**Udensiva-Brenner:** Some might say your strategy backfired. Would you go back and do it the same way?

**McFaul:** I don't think it backfired. I think conditions changed. As I was on my way out, there was an outpouring of goodwill toward me, even by people who had been critical of me before. Thousands, no tens of thousands, Twitter messages, Facebook



Cartoon of Michael McFaul published in *The Moscow Times* in June 2014. By Sergey Elkin

So, despite the kind of cartoonization of me in the Russian media, people would still meet with me and talk with me. And people have changed their views. messages, saying, "Oh, we're losing this guy, he understands us, he likes Russia."

One colleague of mine said, "You know, what really drove the Kremlin nuts about you was that you criticized the regime, but you demonstrated through public diplomacy that you loved Russia." It would have been much better if I had just been a cold warrior. I do love a lot of things about Russian culture, I know Russian history, and I'm very respectful and admiring of what happened. Some of my best friends in life are Russian. It's not because they're Russian; they're my friends. I know thousands of Russians, *thousands*. Not just a handful of people I got to know in a few years.

Then, with the annexation of Crimea, the intervention in Eastern Ukraine, everything became extremely polarized again, and all that goodwill that I felt dissipated quickly. Especially on social media now, it's very nasty and a lot of it is organized to be that way, but it's depressing.

**Udensiva-Brenner:** Can you tell me about your time in Russia during the '80s and '90s?

**McFaul:** I went there as a Fulbright scholar to finish my dissertation about the international effects on national liberation movements in southern Africa. I went several times, but the pivotal time was in 1990, 1991. And, obviously, that was a time of great social upheaval in the Soviet Union, and my thesis was looking at different theories of revolution. So, I was interested in what was going on in Russia. I came into contact with a group called the National Democratic Institute (NDI). I met them because one of my former students worked for them and she just delivered a letter—this is pre-email; she delivered a letter through one of the members of an NDI delegation that came to Moscow. It was by chance, right? And when they found out I was living there, they needed help, so they hired me as a consultant. It was an extraordinary, exciting time.

There's this common misperception we were coming to impose something, to pressure the government. But, in those days, it was exactly the opposite. We were special guests trying to help them build a new society, and it was incredibly exciting and heady. I was a young guy and I had a pass to the parliament—I met Boris Yeltsin—and it felt like we were helping to end the Cold War and make democracy in Russia. People who come into this story later forget that the Russian government greeted us as friends and colleagues and partners. All these newly elected officials in the Russian parliament and the Mossoviet, the Leningrad City Council—Popov, Sobchak, and all these new democrats—they wanted us there, they invited us.

### I didn't want to be the traditional American ambassador in Russia; I had a different agenda. I wanted to be more engaged with society, I wanted to be more public.

**Udensiva-Brenner:** How did your past in Russia influence your present there?

McFaul: I think what is probably frequently misunderstood about my time as ambassador is that I've been interacting with the Russian political and economic elite for thirty years. So, despite the kind of cartoonization of me in the Russian media, people would still meet with me and talk with me. And people have changed their views. Some people have become more powerful, some people are more marginal, but I know a lot of these people, and, even when we disagree, we're still interacting. I have very good contacts with many senior Russian government officials. For instance, Minister Ulakayev, the minister of the economy, used to work for Gaidar. We had him come to Stanford for a conference on defense conversion in 1992 or 1993. These contacts remain. Partly because of my job, and partly because they knew I was close to the White House and to Obama, and partly because I've known some of these people for a very long time.

**Udensiva-Brenner:** How did it feel to be vilified by the Russian media?

**McFaul:** At times I was frustrated by it, of course. I was the guy pushing for closer relations and *perezagruzka* [reset], so early on in my ambassadorial times, I wanted to say, "Don't you understand that, guys? That's who I am." But then I understood that it was much bigger than me, that it wasn't about me personally. But sometimes it felt very personal. And I'll tell you honestly, in the early days of my tenure as ambassador I was reporting about how the Russian regime was changing, how Putin was different than Medvedev and how we had to adjust our expectations. That we weren't going to be able to continue with the reset. The reset was over, as far as I'm concerned, in 2012. But not everybody back in Washington agreed with me and my team at the embassy. And, tragically, I think history has proven that we were right, even more so than we thought at the time. The trend started in 2012; it started way before the current crisis.

**Udensiva-Brenner:** You mentioned during your Harriman Lecture that you don't think we should push Russia too much

or test Russia too much because Putin is testing us. But you also said that you're in favor of arming Ukraine. How do you reconcile those two attitudes?

**McFaul:** First of all, Ukraine is a sovereign country. The whole world recognizes it as a sovereign country, including Russia. Countries have the right to defend themselves and to have a monopoly on the use of force within their territories. This is IR 101. United Nations 101. Those are the norms, and therefore Ukraine has the right to defend itself and should be able to purchase weapons from other countries. Russia purchases weapons from other countries. Why is it not provocative when they do it, but provocative if Ukraine does? That's how I feel on the level of principle.

On the level of policy, the debate is that if we arm Ukraine, Putin will respond. And I agree—I think there will be a response. But who is eliciting that response? It's the same people who are asking for arms. They are the ones who will bear the burden. They are the ones who have decided, in the cost-benefit analysis, that it's better to obtain these arms than not, and I think it's a bit presumptuous of us to think that we know better than Ukrainians what is in their own security interests.

The third piece, I would say, is that there is a way to provide weapons that are designed for deterrence and defense, not offense. If you install a new alarm in your house, and the neighbor says, "Well, that's provocative, why are you doing that?" You would respond, "It's only provocative to those who want to break into my house; if you have no ambition to break into my house, this is not a provocation." I think of defensive weapons in the same way. I'm not a military expert, but I think there are certain ways to prevent more conflict by making escalation costly. That said, I do believe it's a very difficult issue. I'm not dismissive of the opposing arguments. My prediction, knowing where the Obama administration stands on this, is they're not going to provide arms—lethal arms—unless it is in response to a Russian escalation.

**Udensiva-Brenner:** The U.S. is currently conducting joint military exercises with Georgia. Do you think that's in the same vein?

**McFaul:** Yes, I do. Georgia's not going to invade Russia. Ukraine is not going to invade Russia. These countries are not a threat to Russia's national security. They're not fools. Do you know how many countries joined NATO while I was in government during the Obama administration? One. We were not expanding NATO. We were not pushing missile defense against Russia. We were taking actions very deliberatively to try to build security relationships with Russia, not against Russia. It's Putin who changed that, we didn't change that.

**Udensiva-Brenner:** Some people see Kerry's recent visit to Sochi as a new mini-thaw. How do you see it?

**McFaul:** I think it's interesting that Putin, who is extremely protocol-conscious, agreed to meet with somebody who is not his equal for four hours. Barack Obama didn't come to see him. The vice president didn't come to see him. The fact that this meeting took place kind of signals how eager he is to be reengaged with the Americans. From what I've heard about the meeting, there was a desire to be better understood, so that's a good sign. I don't think it will lead to any breakthroughs. And even signaling that it will is, in my view, extremely dangerous. This is not a moment for reset 2.0, because there's no way that's going to happen.

**Udensiva-Brenner:** One might argue that the sanctions against Putin have actually given him a convenient excuse for the already declining economy in Russia—now he can blame Russia's economic turmoil on the West. This has strengthened his position at home and made his propaganda campaign much stronger. What's your response?

**McFaul:** Yes, it's a big source of his popularity. *My ne vinovaty, oni vinovaty* [we're not to blame, they're to blame]. Certainly, that's there for those who watch and believe the propaganda on television. To those who are involved in the international economy and are losing money because of the sanctions, some of them billions of dollars, it is perfectly clear what's going on, and they're not convinced by this kind of argumentation. I mean, they don't like the sanctions, they think we went too far, they're doing whatever they can to revoke them, but they know precisely why they were put in place.

**Udensiva-Brenner:** One year after you left Russia, Boris Nemtsov was murdered. Could you have foreseen something like this?



President Obama meets with (seated, from left to right) Leonid Gozman, Boris Nemtsov, Gennady Zyuganov, Yelena Mizulina, and Sergey Mitrokhin

McFaul: When I was ambassador I had death threats against me. There are a lot of kooky people out there who get wrapped up in weird ideas, nationalism. I don't know what happened with Nemtsov, and I don't want to speculate, but I do know that he feared for his safety and he was nervous about these things. Although now that I think about it, I was totally shocked that he was killed the way he was. It's important to understand that Nemtsov was not just an opposition figure-the Western press says he was killed because he was an opposition politician and the regime didn't like him. Well, some people in the regime didn't like him, that's true, but a lot of people in the regime were close to him. A lot of people in elite circles were close colleagues of his. He had been deputy prime minister. He was a two-time governor. He was friends with Prokhorov, he was in that *tussovka*, he was in that milieu. He was, as my colleague phrased it, part of the nomenklatura of post-Soviet Russia. And so, his assassination was not just a shot across the bow to the opposition, it was a shot across the bow to all of these people. And that's important to remember, so that's what's shocking to me. He actually used to say to me, "I'm too important, they would never go after me."

**Udensiva-Brenner:** When you were leaving Russia you told the journalist Julia Ioffe that you were more optimistic about Russia after spending two years there than you had been when you came in. Does this still hold true given recent events?

McFaul: I'm still optimistic about Russia in the long run. Though I'm much more pessimistic about it today as a result of what happened in Ukraine; this pivot has gone farther than I expected. Having always been a great believer that Russia could become a normal, democratic, market-oriented, boring country—this debate has been going on for more than thirty years—I find this current phase to be without question the most depressing. I even felt better about the Soviet Union when I was there in 1985 as a student than I do today. But I believe in modernization theory: property, education, urbanization, and globalization. The Putin regime can retard that, they can slow it down, but they can't stop it. □

Flowers left at the site of Boris Nemtsov's murder. Photo by Alexander Krassotkin



# THE LONG ROAD TO THE FOREIGN SERVICE

BY MASHA UDENSIVA-BRENNER

EMILY NELSON TEICKENSON ('10) *IN PROFILE* 

mily Teickenson (SIPA '10) first started contemplating a career in the Foreign Service while serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in Snihurivka, Ukraine, a small town three hours east of Odessa. She arrived in October 2005, not long after the Orange Revolution, and was surprised to see how greatly the events, which had taken place in Kyiv, more than thirteen hours away by train, had resonated with the town's 5,000 residents. Her host father, who once worked on freight ships, had joined the protests and liked to spend evenings over drinks and photos from Maidan, discussing his hopes for the country's future. "Even in this little village, people wanted to see politics in Ukraine develop," says Teickenson.

It was an exciting time, and Teickenson, who had been interested in Eastern European culture and politics since she started studying Russian as a freshman at Smith College in 1999, saw many opportunities for Snihurivka's development. After visiting various organizations in the village, as instructed during her Peace Corps orientation, she decided her skills would be most valuable to Snihurivka's City Council. The local river, where people continued to fish and swim, was polluted with toxic chemicals, and Teickenson would help organize the cleanup effort. A major part of her work was to research potential grants and write grant applications to fund the project. Eventually, the town was able to afford a small cleanup. It did not produce striking results, but the experience led her to solve another problem: the town's lack of a functioning trash collection system, which left residents dumping household trash in a ravine. Teickenson realized that some of the grants she had come across while trying to clean up the river could help pay for trash bins and garbage trucks. Snihurivka received funding to cover the trash bins-the local government pitched in to pay for the trucks—and spent the next year setting up the system. The remaining

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Teickenson on her birthday at T.G.I. Friday's in Kyiv (November 26, 2006)

grant money went toward a marketing and education campaign informing the residents how to use it. The program was a hit—it continued to function for years after Teickenson's departure. "That's pretty remarkable for a grant-based Peace Corps project," she says.

In addition to environmental work, Teickenson took advantage of the pro-European atmosphere inspired by the Orange Revolution, and focused on social outreach. She went to various schools, universities, and summer camps to teach seminars on LGBT rights and "other really Western ideas." Throughout these endeavors, she met diplomats working on political development projects, such as HIV prevention. These encounters sparked her interest in the Foreign Service.

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"Wow," she thought, "someone will pay you a decent salary to live in Ukraine and work on really cool projects?"

In late 2007, after she returned to the United States, Teickenson applied to graduate programs in international affairs. She had already put down a deposit for Yale, when Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) informed her that the Harriman Institute had offered her two fellowships. Enticed by the money and the Harriman Institute's certificate program, she accepted. "My experience at SIPA was really a Harriman experience," she says. Her first year, she spent the summer interning at the U.S. embassy in Kyiv, which made her realize how much she enjoyed consular work. Not only was she hearing interesting stories from people applying for visas, green cards, and adoptions, but also her daily efforts produced tangible results. "Even if you can't issue someone a visa, you can still explain the law to them and how they might qualify in the future," she says.

Teickenson began the rigorous threepart application process for the Foreign Service in October 2009, during her final year at SIPA. In 2013, after her second attempt at the oral portion, she passed. It was a great feat, but it still did not guarantee her a job. Teickenson, like all candidates, was put on a ranked waiting list to join an orientation class. The list is malleable—new people pass every day, and they can move past you on the list with a higher score. As a result, some people may never be called. But, the good news is you can start the application process over again and raise your scores at any point. "It's a long and arduous process," says Teickenson, "but anyone who has the patience and commitment can do it."

Fortunately, Teickenson was called quickly. Her first assignment was in São Paulo, known for having the highest-volume non-immigrant visa section in the world. Initially, she was apprehensive about the workload; she and her wife were due to have their first baby just two months after arrival. But when she started, in March 2014, after a seven-month intensive course in Portuguese, she found a well-managed operation and friendly, interesting colleagues. Aside from conducting visa interviews with Brazilians, who are generally very qualified visa applicants, she also spent eight months working at the visa fraud prevention unit.

In March, after Carnival 2016, she starts her second tour, in Kyiv. She is excited to return. "It's kind of like going home," she says. "I've lived in Ukraine longer than I've lived anywhere else in my adult life."

"Dnieper River in Kyiv" by Dmitry Mottl, licensed under CC-BY-SA 3.0

Marina Boiko and Anastasia Patlai in Polina Borodina's *The Bolotnaya Square Case* (dir. Varvara Faer) at Teatr.doc, 2015. All photographs courtesy of Teatr.doc

## Maksim Hanukai THEATER GAMAES ON SITE AT TEATR.DOC



n a damp, cloudy morning in mid-June 2015, I found myself inside a dark basement a short walk from Moscow's Kursk Station. No, I was not hungover from a late-night bender, like the hero of Venedikt Erofeev's cult classic Moscow to the End of the Line. Rather, I was one of a dozen or so volunteers helping in the construction effort at Teatr.doc, one of Russia's only remaining independent theaters. Founded in 2002 in an abandoned basement in Patriarch Ponds, Teatr.doc helped revitalize Russian theater with its provocative documentary plays and rebelliously ascetic stagings. However, in the fall of 2014, the theater was forced to leave its home of twelve years and move into a ramshackle osobniak (a detached house) on the outskirts of Moscow. Six months and nine premieres later, it was evicted yet again after staging a play about the May 6, 2012, antigovernment protest on Bolotnaya Square. Creeping defiantly back toward the center, but still poised on the edge of the cultural abyss that extends beyond Moscow's Garden Ring, Teatr.doc was now moving into a space whose very location testified to its uncertain predicament.

I came to Russia this summer on a grant from the American Philosophical Society,

an organization whose membership once included Catherine the Great's close friend (and theater patron) Princess Dashkova. I had long been interested in Russian theater but did not feel the urge to write about it until I watched a recording, on YouTube, of a performance that took place at the original Teatr.doc. Entitled Khamsud: The Sequel, it was conceived in response to the sentencing, only days earlier, of three members of the punk rock band Pussy Riot. Just as with the original protest action at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, I was struck by the aesthetics no less than the politics of the performance. There was no script, no actors in the traditional sense, no fourth wall separating the audience from the stage. There was no *mimesis*; rather the one-off performance took the form of a dialogue between the audience and a panel of witnesses. As Mikhail Ugarov, the artistic director and cofounder of Teatr.doc, explained, the Pussy Riot trial was too unwieldy to dramatize. As a result, he and director Varvara Faer came up with an unusual format: something between a press conference and a public tribunal. The audience would vote on the dramatis personae, whose motives and character traits the witnesses (defense lawyers,

family members, journalists present in court during the trial) would then break down with the aim of eventually handing this material to some future playwright. The list of characters turned out to include the judge, the defendants' parents, and a police Rottweiler that famously threw up in court. This playful conceit lent the performance the air of a mischievous game, creating a temporary safe space where the public could build group solidarity and vent their anger. When a group of Orthodox activists suddenly arrived at the theater midway through the show, their attempts to break up the performance were quickly drowned out by laughter.

I arrived in Moscow in mid-May and therefore did not witness the large police presence at the theater during the premiere of *The Bolotnaya Square Case.* When I attended the show a couple of weeks later, after Teatr.doc's landlord had torn up their rental agreement under pressure from the authorities, there were two officers milling around the entrance to the theater. Despite all the buildup, I was struck by the relatively low-key nature of the performance. Written by Polina Borodina, the play is based on interviews conducted with family members of those convicted in the Bolotnaya Square case. Four actors take turns speaking lines from the interview transcripts, sometimes reclining in a mesh hammock, sometimes unwrapping candies while seated behind a small kitchen table (objects passed to prisoners during visits must first be unwrapped). We hear the words of a mother whose son was arrested at the protest and of a young woman who navigated the bureaucracy in order to marry her sweetheart in prison. All of this is done with the utmost restraint, lending the stories a sense of melancholy intimacy that would have been hard to achieve had they been spoken dramatically. And yet, despite the poignancy of the monologues and the naturalness of the acting, I felt that the play never managed to forge the kind of communal bond with the audience that was so powerfully on display in Khamsud. When, at the end of the performance, the actress Anastasia Patlai tried to lead the audience in a rendition of "A Wagon Rushes on a Dusty Road" (a revolutionary song from the 1860s), her increasingly desperate gesticulations were met largely with silence.

Faer, who in addition to writing and directing also acts in many of Teatr.doc's productions, including The Bolotnaya Square Case, suggested one possible reason for this. I met with her at the theater on June 22, while a somber celebration was taking place next door to commemorate the closing of the old Teatr.doc. Among those gathered around a small buffet table were Ugarov; the poet Andrei Rodionov, who days earlier gave an uncanny performance as Socrates in a verbatim staging of *Plato's* Symposium; and the playwright Maxim Kurochkin, who plays the real-life Belarus poet and activist Vladimir Neklyaev in Elena Gremina's Two in Your House. "There is still an interest in politics among theater audiences," Faer told me when I asked her to gauge the mood of the public in the wake of Putin's return to power, "but the nature of this interest has changed." According to Faer, audiences no longer want to hear shrill cries directed at them from the stage; they interpret them as a sign of hysteria. Instead, they want "warm" plays that center on the experiences of ordinary individuals suddenly confronted with injustice, which is what the theater tried to deliver with *The Bolotnaya Square Case*.

Of the ten plays that I attended at Teatr. doc this summer, only two, The Bolotnaya Square Case and Two in Your House, directly addressed instances of recent political injustice. The other plays were either about universal human themes-love, infidelity, faith-or about historical subjects, such as the Fall of Constantinople. According to Faer, such plays acquire a special significance within the current political context. "Putin's politics is aimed at driving a wedge between people," she told me, "at trashing, slinging mud, spreading meanness, muddying the waters." Faer recently experienced the consequences of such tactics firsthand, when a small group of actors in Pskov wrote an open letter to the minister of culture denouncing her play The Bathhouse Attendant. (She is currently raising funds in order to stage the play with a new cast at Teatr.doc.) Teatr. doc wants to counteract such developments, she says, by fostering humanistic

> Anastasia Patlai in Polina Borodina's *The Bolotnaya Square Case* (dir. Varvara Faer) at Teatr.doc, 2015

At first hesitantly, then with growing eagerness, audience members share their intimate experiences with the actors. The fourth wall breaks down, creating a space of discovery and communication.

values such as solidarity, friendship, and nobility. The trick is to do so without becoming didactic.

This approach can be seen in two shows that premiered this spring. The first, Lear-*Klesch*, is a witness theater show starring Marina Klescheva, a former convict who rediscovered her childhood talent for performance when Teatr.doc visited her prison colony in 2002. Raised by an abusive father and a mother who doted more on her older sister, Marina started skipping school early and fell in with the wrong crowd. She was given a four-year prison term for assault and robbery in her twenties, and was sentenced again, this time for twelve years, after failing to find her way in society upon her release. A larger-thanlife, self-deprecating charmer of a woman, Marina interlaces her reminiscences about life in the prison colony with songs and dramatic scenes that she performed for the colony's "psychotherapeutic theater." She was already near the end of her second sentence when a young psychologist brought in Varvara Faer and Shakespeare. In the show, Marina tells of her terror upon learning that she would play the lead role in *King Lear*; of how she would prepare by suddenly breaking into character with other inmates; of how she fell in love with Shakespeare's Sonnet 147, its piercing concluding couplet ("For I have sworn thee fair and thought thee bright, / Who art as black as hell, as dark as night") reminding her of a girlfriend that had betrayed her trust. More than a case study in drama therapy, Marina's story is about the ability of any person to overcome circumstances

and to discover her better self. Her lesson is no less applicable to the streets of Moscow than to the colony.

The second show is Forgiving Betrayal, a participatory play written and directed by Elena Gremina (Ugarov's wife and managing director of Teatr.doc). It features two young couples that reminisce about their experiences of sexual and emotional betrayal with an explicitness rarely encountered on the Russian stage. As the play unfolds, the actors repeatedly interrupt their stories with uncomfortable questions to the audience: Have you ever cheated on anyone? Have you ever peeked at your partner's e-mails without their consent? Have you ever known that your friend was being betrayed but did not tell them? At first hesitantly, then with growing eagerness, audience members share their intimate experiences with the actors. The fourth wall breaks down, creating a space of discovery and communication. "The true underlying topic here is decency," observed the American theater critic John Freedman in his review for the Moscow Times. "What does it take for a person to be decent, and what has to happen for someone to cross the line and lose it? And when decency is gone, what comes next?" The success of each performance rests on the audience's willingness to overcome personal fears in

order to join in the collective exploration of these fundamental questions.

Shows like Lear-Klesch and Forgiving Betrayal bring real people (and their stories) out onto the stage, breaking down the partition between professional actor and passive public. As such, they also challenge us to rethink theatrical convention. "We are oppositional only from the point of view of the regime," Ugarov told me when I met with him at the new theater late in June. "But otherwise we have no yearning to be in the opposition. Except in the sphere of aesthetics." What drives Ugarov and his collaborators is the search for the boundary separating "theater" from "already-not-theater" and "not-yet-theater." This could mean constructing plays around documentary material, such as court transcripts and interviews; cultivating a deliberately nontheatrical acting style; or doing away with professional actors altogether, as in Lear-Klesch and AkynOpera, a witness theater show featuring real migrant workers from Central Asia. More recent work increasingly exhibits the influence not only of such internationally acclaimed participatory theater companies as Rimini Protokoll (their street-theater show Remote Moscow was a huge hit this summer) but also of key figures in the history of performance art. A good example of this is Silence on an Assigned Theme, a show devised by Vsevolod Lisovsky, in which audience members are given an hour to ruminate in silence on a theme assigned to them beforehand. Channeling both John Cage's 4'33" and recent work by Marina

"What does it take for a person to be decent, and what has to happen for someone to cross the line and lose it? And when decency is gone, what comes next?"



Varvara Faer in Polina Borodina's *The Bolotnaya Square Case* (dir. Varvara Faer) at Teatr.doc, 2015

Rather, the harassment of Teatr.doc is obviously linked to more openly political productions, such as The Bolotnaya Square Case, which are perceived as a threat because they address issues that are distorted or covered up by official propaganda. Abramovic, the show asks anew what we mean when we speak of theater.

Provocative as such projects may be aesthetically, it is unlikely that they are responsible for Teatr.doc's problems with the authorities. Rather, the harassment of Teatr.doc is obviously linked to more openly political productions, such as The Bolotnaya Square Case, which are perceived as a threat because they address issues that are distorted or covered up by official propaganda. According to Ugarov, there is currently a war being waged within Russia over the representation of reality. The mere appearance of the words "Maidan" or "Bolotnaya" in a title is enough to provoke a reaction. As he explained in a recent interview: "If someone has committed a crime, it's not very pleasant for the criminal to be reminded of it, to be asked, 'Why did you choke that young woman?" Believing that public interest in politics is bound to become sharper the worse things get, Ugarov told me that the time for true protest theater in Russia has yet to come. And in the meantime? Ugarov likes to cite a quote by the German filmmaker Rainer Werner Fassbinder that has done much to shape the theater's philosophy: "If you don't have the power to change the situation, you have the duty, at the very least, to bear witness to it."

Teatr.doc's continued ability to bear witness to Russian social and political hardships will depend, in part, on the lengths the regime is prepared to go to enforce its increasingly repressive cultural politics. In an article on June 17, 2015, published in the newspaper Izvestiya, ominously entitled "Whoever Doesn't Feed His Own Culture Will Feed a Foreign Army," the Russian minister of culture, Vladimir Medinsky, laid out the most detailed vision yet of how the State wants to redefine the relationship between art and power. Observing that culture has "a strategic importance for the development of the country," Medinsky uses the exam-

ple of theater to argue that the State must not distribute public funds for projects it deems to be in conflict with "traditional" values such as family and service to the fatherland. "The State does not forbid anything in the realm of art," he writes, "but neither does it finance everything" (a claim obviously belied by the continued persecution of Teatr.doc, an independent theater). The effect of this policy, were it to be enforced, would be to drive out experiment and freethinking from what has arguably been the most innovative realm of post-Soviet Russian culture. Medinsky illustrates his reasoning by means of an analogy with medicine (ironically, another area that has recently seen large budgetary cuts): "If you were to fall ill and come to a regional clinic, would you want to be treated with 'non-traditional' medicine? Would you want to be a test case for a new, 'experimental' miracle device? I doubt it.... For lovers of the alternative there is non-traditional medicine, which is not paid for by the State. And it's the same in art. Only with one difference: a non-traditional artist experiments not on the body of one patient, but on the souls of thousands and thousands."

The almost casual nod to Stalin here (cf. his famous line that writers are "engineers of human souls") is probably not accidental, for the most alarming part of Medinsky's article is that it openly encourages the kind of "citizen activism" (as he calls it) that Russia hasn't seen since the 1930s. As a positive model he mentions a recent exhibit organized by the group Art Without Borders (an Orwellian name, given the fact that its activities are aimed at curtailing expression), in which large photographs of controversial theater productions were displayed together with the amounts they received in public funding. The exhibit was quickly taken down after drawing loud protests from the



artistic community, but the same group later filed a separate complaint with the office of the public prosecutor, which led to the mailing of official summonses to the directors of six Moscow theaters. The latter were instructed to provide information on twelve recent productions, most of which had been featured in the exhibit, including Konstantin Bogomolov's An Ideal Husband, Konstantin Raikin's Every Shade of Blue, six shows by Kirill Serebrennikov, and Timofei Kuliabin's "blasphemous" staging of Tannhäuser. The fact that most or all of the twelve productions were not in the repertoires of the theaters in question (Tannhäuser was staged in Novosibirsk!) did not seem to give pause to the authors of the summons.

In light of these developments, it may be that the regime's treatment of Teatr.doc—a small theater without the powerful backers of a Moscow Art Theatre or a Gogol-Center—was a trial run for a broadening set of repressive actions. If there is a strategy in play (and not everyone agrees there is), it seems to be not so much to ban undesirable cultural activity outright—officially, the State played no part in Teatr.doc's latest eviction—but to sow division, create uncertainty, and wear down opponents by forcing them to deal with distracting and costly tasks such as relocating and answering summonses. It is in effect the same strategy that has been used against the political opposition, whose most visible leader, Alexei Navalny, has spent much of the last few years battling fabricated charges in court. "I'm an actor with a university degree, and I'm here painting walls," one young man told me while taking a break from construction work. It was six o'clock. He had been volunteering at the site all day and still had to meet Ugarov an hour later for evening rehearsal.

So how does "a theater where no one acts/plays [teatr, gde ne igraiut]" come out on top in this game of attrition with the regime? I posed this question to Ugarov as we sat in the smaller of the two theater spaces at the new Teatr.doc, our conversation occasionally interrupted by a ringing phone or the entrance of an actor. The authorities were shocked by how quickly the theater was able to mobilize, he said, noting that, with the help of their community of colleagues and volunteers, they were able to hold a premiere at the new theater on the very next day after playing their last show at the old one. In Ugarov's view, the two evictions did not have the ef-

fect intended by the authorities. Instead of dividing people, it brought them together, consolidated them. "They don't believe in the consolidation of people," he said, "but we do. This is the only thing that we can count on." Recently Teatr.doc has even turned to crowd-funding, promising new artistic and social projects-"regardless of the conditions and confluence of circumstances on Russian territory"-as part of its "social contract" with the public. If this sounds like defiant rhetoric, it is. But this does not mean that Teatr.doc has lost its penchant for playfulness. As Ugarov observed while pulling out yet another cigarette from his pack of Vogue Slims: "The main thing is to not give in to the pathos and seriousness of revolutionary struggle."

#### Moscow, July 2015

Maksim Hanukai, a 2015–16 postdoctoral fellow at the Harriman Institute, is completing his book manuscript "Pushkin's Tragic Visions," based on his doctoral dissertation (Columbia, 2014).

In March 2013 the Harriman Institute hosted Teatr.doc, which performed The Sequel, a witness theater piece about Pussy Riot.

Portrait of Joseph Stalin by F. Reshetnikov, 1948 ٩

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### THE DEFECTION BY DAVID SHUB TRANSLATED BY GLORIA DONEN SOSIN OF A TOP SOVIET SPY WALTER KRIVITSKY AND THE STALIN-HITLER PACT\*

n August 23, 1939, just a week before Germany invaded Poland and ignited World War II, the world was shocked by the announcement that two sworn enemies—Hitler and Stalin—had signed a nonaggression treaty. But the news should not have been surprising. Many months prior, Walter Krivitsky, the top Soviet spy in charge of military intelligence in Europe, had defected from the Soviet Union and exposed the plot with a series of articles in the *Saturday Evening Post*.

When Krivitsky first arrived in the United States in late 1938, with Stalin's secret agents on his trail, he received help and guidance from the well-known journalist and Lenin biographer David Shub (1887–1975), a Russian Social Democrat and friend of the Mensheviks who worked for the Yiddish-language newspaper, the *Jewish Daily Forward (Forverts*). What follows is an edited excerpt from Shub's memoirs *From Bygone Days* (the thousand-page Yiddish original was published in two volumes in 1970), detailing Shub's early encounters with Krivitsky and Krivitsky's efforts to publish the above-mentioned articles. It is available in English for the first time thanks to the translation of Gloria Donen Sosin.

-Gene Sosin ('49)

On New Year's Eve, 1938, I worked late into the evening at the Forward's editorial office. I was all alone, engrossed in finishing an article that I had to leave at the printer's before going home, when someone knocked on my door. A tall man who looked like a detective in Western films stood before me. He gave me two opened letters from Paris-one addressed to me from Feodor Dan, one of the leaders of the Russian Mensheviks, and the second from Boris Nikolaevsky, the famous historian of the revolutionary movement. Both informed me that the person delivering the letters would be Walter Krivitsky, former leader of Soviet military intelligence in Europe. He had escaped from the Bolsheviks a few months prior, and had openly, in the Menshevik journal Sotsialistichesky Vestnik (Socialist Herald), written articles about why he had decided to break with Stalin and emigrate. The Forward, through Nikolaevsky, received proofs of these articles even before they were published in Vestnik. I had translated them immediately.

"Are you Krivitsky?" I asked the man.

"No." he answered. "I'm a foreign agent."

"Then how did you come by these letters?"

"Krivitsky is a close friend of mine," the man responded. "The GPU informed American immigration officers that he is a Soviet secret agent, so when he got to Ellis Island they would not admit him. The American immigration officers are preparing to send him back to France. I was at Ellis Island today. He gave me these two letters and asked me to deliver them to you, and to tell you that tomorrow you must come without fail to see him on Ellis Island."

The following morning I went to Ellis Island. Krivitsky, his wife, and their little boy came out. Krivitsky was very thin and not very tall, and looked Jewish, although he spoke Russian without

<sup>\*</sup>Excerpt from David Shub's From Bygone Days—Memoirs: On the Revolving Stage of History—Recollections of People and Events in Russia and the West (original in Yiddish, CYCO Press, 1970), © 1970 by David Shub. Published here with permission of Adam and Rachel Shub, all rights reserved.



Portrait of Joseph Stalin

Once I took him home with me to Seagate, and we chatted until three in the morning. He told me many very interesting things about Russia and Europe, things I had no inkling about. a Jewish accent. He later told me that he was from a shtetl in Galicia. He studied in Vienna, served in the in the Austrian army during World War I, and was taken prisoner by the Russians. After the Bolshevik revolution in Russia he became a member of the Bolshevik Party and fought in the ranks of the Red Army against the Whites. Later he became the commander of the entire brigade. When the civil war ended, his aptitude for languages landed him abroad as a Soviet military intelligence agent. He had lived in various countries under several names and in time became the chief leader of Soviet military intelligence abroad. In Russia he was known by the name Walter Krivitsky, but his real name was Ginsburg.

Krivitsky's wife, Antonina, or Tania, as she was called, was a typical Great Russian—tall, blonde with blue eyes. She came from St. Petersburg and was the daughter of a Russian worker, an old Social Democrat. Both made a very good impression on me. They told me that they had been informed on, accused of being Soviet secret agents, and that the GPU had already tried to attack him twice.

Krivitsky asked me to make contact at once with William Bullitt, the American ambassador to France (and the first ambassador to the USSR after the United States recognized it in 1933, the first year of FDR's [Franklin D. Roosevelt] presidency). Bullitt was in New York at the moment; he had met Krivitsky in Paris and obtained his American visa for him.

"Bullitt will not allow them to send me back to France," Krivitsky said.

I went directly to my friend Joseph Shaplen at the *New York Times*. He had heard of Krivitsky and knew Bullitt well. He called Bullitt's secretary, who contacted Bullitt. In two days an order from the White House allowed Krivitsky and his family to leave Ellis Island.

The Krivitskys spoke German to each other and they went to live with a German-Jewish family in Washington Heights, where they were known as German-Jewish refugees. That very evening I visited them in their new home. We had a long talk about the situation in Russia and also about Soviet espionage and Soviet agents in America. Krivitsky spoke freely about this from the very beginning.

I visited him several times a week. And he would come to see me at the *Forward* office. A number of times we would sit in a nearby cafeteria and schmooze. I kept his identity a secret. Once I took him home with me to Seagate, and we chatted until three in the morning. He told me many very interesting things about Russia and Europe, things I had no inkling about. He asked me to propose to Abe Cahan [founding editor of the *Forward*] my writing a series of articles about the backstage happenings in contemporary Soviet Russia and about the secret activities of Stalin's agents abroad. But I didn't want to do that. I knew that Cahan would gladly print them, but that he would pay Krivitsky four to five hundred dollars at most.

"I'm positive that an English-language paper or journal would give you three or four, possibly five thousand dollars," I told Krivitsky.

Joseph Shaplen tried to promote Krivitsky's articles to the managing editor of the *New York Times*, but the editor-in-chief wanted to see the articles first and in general was not taken with the proposal. Shaplen and I introduced Krivitsky to the famous American journalist, Isaac Don Levine [also a Russian émigré]. Levine spent an evening with Krivitsky, and he was convinced that Krivitsky's story would make a great, international sensation.

The next morning Levine drove to Philadelphia to see his good friend, editor of the popular national weekly magazine, the *Saturday Evening Post*, and told him all about Krivitsky. The editor of the *Post* already knew of him. He agreed to print a series of 10 articles translated by Levine, and to pay Krivitsky five thousand dollars per piece.

One day Krivitsky called me at the office and asked to meet me at once about a terribly important matter. I told him to meet me at four o'clock in front of a drugstore on the corner of Seventh Avenue and Forty-Second Street. When I got there, Krivitsky was waiting, and I realized that, perhaps, it was not an appropriate place to have an important conversation. I suggested we go to a nearby cafeteria. We went in and sat down near a table of four American girls. We talked freely without fear of being overheard. Krivitsky told me that Levine, who had promised to bring him a corrected rewrite of his article the day before, had suddenly disappeared.

"I think he wants to get out of having anything to do with me, he's fooling me, he wants to drag me down into the mud so I won't be able to crawl out," Krivitsky complained.

"He will surely get in touch with you. If not today, then tomorrow; take it easy," I tried to reassure him.

Suddenly, Krivitsky, who was sitting opposite me, said: "We've got to get out of here this minute; right there are some GPU agents."

I saw that three men now occupied the table where the young girls had been, but I could only see one of their faces. We got up at once and stood in the checkout line, when the man whose face I had seen came up to us and greeted Krivitsky.

Krivitsky turned pale and said to him, "Did you come here to shoot me?"

The agent responded, "Are you out of your mind? Do you want to have a little chat?" [Both men used the familiar "you," ty.]

Krivitsky thought for a moment, then said, "Fine, let's go outside."

Krivitsky and I went onto the street. The man had gone back to get his coat and hat from the cafeteria. We waited five or ten minutes. "You see," said Krivitsky, "He's not coming out. He must be telephoning Moscow about what to do with me."

Krivitsky told me that the man, who had been his closest aide, was one of the most eminent Soviet secret agents. Now he was responsible directly to the chief of the GPU-NKVD.

"He's been sent to New York to find me and see what I'm doing." The man suggested taking a taxi and going to a hotel where they could talk, but I told Krivitsky we should not go to a hotel, but instead head to the third floor of the *New York Times* building, without telling the Soviet agent that we were going to see Shaplen.

Krivitsky, the Soviet agent, and I went up to the newsroom. There I found Shaplen and told him what was happening. Shaplen found a separate room for Krivitsky and the Soviet agent. They must have talked for more than an hour. Krivitsky told me that the agent's name was Byeloff. [In Krivitsky's own memoir he writes that the man was Sergei Basoff, an agent of Soviet military intelligence living in the United States as an American citizen.] He told Krivitsky that after Krivitsky's escape, Stalin ordered the murders of his two brothers-in-law, and a couple of his wife's other relatives, who had all been Communists.

"You better not go to that cafeteria anymore; 'our' people are always there," Byeloff told Krivitsky before we left.

Krivitsky got the impression that Byeloff had been sent not to kill him, but to find out about his plans and report back to Moscow. "And I think he's calling there right now and telling him the content of our conversation," he said.

Meanwhile, Shaplen came over and said that we should not leave the office until he finished work, and that Isaac Don Levine and two more of his friends—left-wing journalists Benjamin Stolberg and Susan La Follette, who had already met with Krivitsky several times—would join us. Shaplen suspected that the other GPU agents were waiting at the entrance to the *Times* building and that they would try to kidnap Krivitsky. About an hour later the others arrived at the office and the six of us descended to the street. Three of them encircled Krivitsky while Isaac Don Levine and I brought up the rear. A tall man who looked Latvian stood outside at the

"I think he wants to get out of having anything to do with me, he's fooling me, he wants to drag me down into the mud so I won't be able to crawl out," Krivitsky complained.



*Left to right:* "The Prussian Tribute in Moscow," a cartoon about the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, printed in *Mucha Warszawska* on September 8, 1939; Joseph Stalin and German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop in Moscow after signing a nonaggression pact between Germany and the USSR, August 23, 1939; portrait of Joseph Stalin

entrance to the *Times* building. Levine went up to him and asked what he was doing.

The man, flustered, responded in a strong Russian accent, "What business is it of yours? I'm waiting for a friend of mine."

Meanwhile, Shaplen, Stolberg, and La Follette led Krivitsky away. They all got into a car and went off to Shaplen's house. Levine and I also went there as arranged.

Levine had brought with him the two rewrites of Krivitsky's articles about Stalin's role in the Spanish Civil War. He had deleted several parts, and rewritten others, and wanted to show them to Krivitsky, but Krivitsky wanted Levine to read the entire article to him. It was already late and Levine was anxious to get home. He told Krivitsky that no new changes could be made—only a word here and there—since he had to have the corrections delivered to the editor of the *Saturday Evening Post* by eleven the following morning. Krivitsky insisted that he had to reread the entire article carefully. Levine went home, and Shaplen read the article while I translated it into Russian for Krivitsky sentence by sentence.

Krivitsky was not pleased with Levine's changes. He wanted to make edits and strike out some phrases entirely. We explained to him that this was technically impossible, but he didn't want to hear it.

"If these changes aren't made," he said, "I'll call the editor of the *Saturday Evening Post* tomorrow morning, forbid him to print the article, and refuse to write the rest."

For hours we argued with Krivitsky and told him that he could not break his contract with the *Post* and lose the opportunity to tell the world the truth about Stalin's regime just for the sake of some minor changes. We only gave in to changing several words and deleting a section that Krivitsky was particularly insistent about. He finally acquiesced, on the condition that Levine show him all future articles before setting them in type. In the morning Shaplen called Levine and told him about the changes that we had been forced to make. Levine was not at all pleased.

In a few weeks the article appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* and attracted a great deal of attention. Soon afterward, Krivitsky published an article detailing the longtime secret negotiations between Stalin's representatives and official representatives of Nazi Germany. This caused an even greater sensation than the articles about Stalin's role in the Spanish Civil War. However, both American liberals and the conservative American press were skeptical about Krivitsky's revelations and did not want to believe him. Several months later, it turned out that Krivitsky was telling the truth. At six in the morning on August 24, 1939, the nonaggression treaty between the USSR and the Third Reich was announced on Moscow radio.

The Stalin-Hitler pact hit the world, and Jews in particular, like an earthquake. Many Communists and Communist sympathizers immediately left the Party and condemned Stalin and the Soviet regime. In late summer 1939, when France and England declared war against Nazi Germany, I, like many others in America and Europe, was convinced that Hitler would soon lose the battle. Only Walter Krivitsky, the former chief of Soviet military intelligence abroad, was pessimistically inclined. He did not think much of the French Maginot Line and the old French military leaders. He kept on telling me that Nazi Germany possessed a larger and better battle-ready army than the French, and that the young German generals were much more capable than the old French and English ones.

"I assure you," Krivitsky said, "that as soon as the Germans begin their military offensive on the Western front, they will be in Paris within thirty days." He also predicted that Stalin would overtake the Baltic States (Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia) within a few days' time and would also try to occupy Finland. I did not want to believe Krivitsky's prophecies, but when the Nazis swiftly occupied Belgium and Holland, and began their march on Paris, I began to think that perhaps Krivitsky's estimate of the military situation was correct. If the Nazis occupied Paris, the first to be arrested would be leaders of the anti-Nazi Russian and German parties, Socialists, as well as enemies of Communism, Fascism, and Nazism. I felt we must help them get out of France as quickly as possible.

Translator's epilogue: In his memoirs, David Shub does not mention anything more about Krivitsky or his fate. But their contact continued in late 1939 and 1940, and Shub's older son, Boris Shub, collaborated with Krivitsky on the spy-*cum*-defector's book, *In Stalin's Secret Service*, published in late 1939.

David Shub wrote in English, Russian, and Yiddish. He joined the *Jewish Daily Forward* as a member of the staff in 1924, a post he held for over 48 years. He wrote extensively about the Russian Revolution, including his acclaimed biography of Lenin. In addition to *Lenin: A Biography* (published in Yiddish in 1928; translated into English in 1948) and his memoirs *From Bygone Days*, his books include *Heroes and Martyrs* (1939), *Social Thinkers and Fighters* (1968), and *Political Figures: Russia*, 1850–1928 (1969).

About the translator: Gloria Donen Sosin, M.A. '49, and Certificate, Russian Institute, is a writer, translator, teacher of Russian, and specialist in Russian affairs.

Gene Sosin, B.A. '41CC, M.A. '49, Certificate, Russian Institute, and Ph.D. '58, was a retired director of Russian broadcast planning at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. He passed away at age 93 on May 6, 2015, shortly after this piece was completed.

The couple met at Columbia in 1947, thanks to the GI Bill (Gloria had served in the WAC, and Gene in the Navy). In 1950 they were chosen to join the Harvard Refugee Interview Project in Munich, Germany, as team members of Columbia's Bureau of Applied Social Research. (See Gloria's book, *Red Letter Year— Munich 1950–51* and Gene's *Sparks of Liberty—An Insider's Memoir of Radio Liberty.*)





Top: David Shub; bottom: Gloria and Gene Sosin

# CATHARINE THEIMER NEPOMNYASHCHY NABOKOV AND THE DETECTIVE NOVEL

atharine Theimer Nepomnyashchy, Ann Whitney Olin Professor of Russian Literature and Culture, Barnard College, and former director of the Harriman Institute, died on March 21 of this year. (An obituary is printed at the end of the magazine.) Cathy first taught the Nabokov survey at Columbia in the fall of 2007 (I remember because I taught the second class), and the following year she published her first article on Nabokov, "King, Queen, Sui-mate: Nabokov's Defense Against Freud's Uncanny" (Intertexts, Spring 2008), the first brick of what was planned to be "Nabokov and His Enemies," which unfortunately

was left unfinished at her death. Cathy proposed to investigate more thoroughly and inventively Nabokov's enemies (Freud, Pasternak, the detective novel) to see whether his blistering invective obfuscated a deeper engagement with said enemies. Although we can only guess at the work's final shape, conference papers from 2010 onwards offer glimpses of a potential table of contents: Nabokov and Pasternak; *Pale Fire* and *Doctor Zhivago*: A Case of Intertextual Envy; A*da* and *Bleak House*; Nabokov and Austen; Nabokov and the Art of Attack.

The essay that follows is what we have of the second brick of Cathy's

#### INTRODUCTION BY RONALD MEYER

work-in-progress, "Revising Nabokov Revising the Detective Novel: Vladimir, Agatha, and the Terms of Engagement," which Cathy presented at the 2010 International Nabokov Conference, sponsored by the Nabokov Society of Japan and the Japan Foundation, Kyoto. The detective novel was a natural point of departure and comparison for Cathy (as was Pasternak, one of the authors she wrote about in her dissertation and a figure to whom she would return regularly throughout her career). An avid reader of detective novels both classic and contemporary, Cathy had once taught a first-year seminar on detective fiction at Barnard. The reader

needs to keep in mind that what follows is a conference presentation and that Cathy was writing within the constraints of time and length, but one cannot but regret its preliminary state and wonder what was to come in a fully expanded version.

The essay appears in the volume Revising Nabokov Revising. The Proceedings of the International Nabokov Conference, March 24–27, 2010, Kyoto, Japan, edited by Mitsuyoshi Numano and Tadashi Wakashima, and published by the Nabokov Society of Japan. We gratefully thank the editors and James Theimer, Cathy's brother, for permission to reprint this essay.

Véra and Vladimir Nabokov play chess on the balcony of the Montreux Palace Hotel (1966)

### Revising Nabokov Revising the Detective Novel: Vladimir, Agatha, and the Terms of Engagement

By Catharine Theimer Nepomnyashchy



Catharine Theimer Nepomnyashchy

There are some varieties of fiction that I never touch—mystery stories, for instance, which I abhor...<sup>1</sup>

The present paper forms part of a larger project, now in its early stages, which I have tentatively titled "Nabokov and His Enemies." As we all know, Nabokov was far from reticent about expressing his evaluations of other writers, many of them distinctly and repeatedly negative. In this context we may concede that even professional critics and literary theorists when they broach the issue of influence or intertextuality tend to presuppose that texts "interact" with works their authors like-or at least profess to like. Harold Bloom's "anxiety of influence" most readily comes to mind. In contrast, I contend that we can learn a great deal about Nabokov specifically and about the complicated interactions among texts in general by studying the terms in which Nabokov engages in his fictions the writings of authors he claims vehemently to detest. (In this context, you will hardly find it surprising that my first chapter is devoted to the "Viennese witchdoctor" Freud.) The book will ultimately be made up of a series of case studies, based on which I argue that Nabokov, acutely aware that the sophisticated pleasures he ascribed to literature were threatened by the fabric of twentieth-century culture, confronted in his writings precisely those cultural products for which he expressed the most profound contempt in order to

reclaim literature from them. The "terms of engagement" were far from superficial or frivolous, but complex "combinations" through which Nabokov worked out in his own terms the question of what literature is. In this installment I will test this hypothesis against a writer, as the foremost representative of a genre, whom, as my epigraph reads, Nabokov professed to "abhor"—Agatha Christie.

While Nabokov may have claimed that he "never touch[ed]" mystery stories, attentive readers of Lolita (or of Alfred Apfel's Annotated Lolita) will have remarked that one of the few books listed among the holdings of the library of the prison in which Humbert Humbert is incarcerated is Agatha Christie's A Murder Is Announced. This detail has been noted among the many "clues" Nabokov plants in the early pages of the novel to what is to come, bait for readers and delectation for rereaders who delight in catching the hints missed on a first read. Yet upon due consideration there is every reason to believe that, despite his denial, Nabokov did in fact read Christie's Miss Marple novel, which came out in 1950 as Nabokov was working on Lolita. In the simplest terms, A Murder Is Announced rests on a clever deception, a confusion of identities that, when unraveled at the end, reveals that the victim is in fact the murderer. What then if we go past the sly joke of planting "a murder is announced" toward the beginning of Lolita, announcing that a murder will take

place, and assume that Nabokov's own plot, in which the identities of murderer and victim are confounded, resonates significantly with Christie's?

Before attempting to answer this question, let us look at yet another instance in which Nabokov clearly incorporates a Christie plot into his own text—belying his claim never to touch the stuff. In Nabokov's first novel composed directly in English, *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*, Nabokov not only toys with the basic mechanisms of the detective novel, but again appears to invoke a specific Christie text (or even texts). Here let me repeat with judicious cuts the narrator's paraphrase of Sebastian Knight's first novel, *The Prismatic Bezel*.

Twelve persons are staying at a boarding house; the house is very carefully depicted but in order to stress the "island" note, ... One of the lodgers, a certain G. Abeson, artdealer, is found murdered in his room. The local police officer ... rings up a London detective, asking him to come at once ... In the meantime the inhabitants of the boarding house plus a chance passer-by, old Nosebag, who happened to be in the lobby when the crime was committed, are thoroughly examined. All of them except the last-named, a mild old gentleman with a white beard yellowish about the mouth, and a harmless passion for collecting snuffboxes, are more or less open to suspicion; [...] Then, with a quick sliding motion, something in the story begins to shift (the detective, it must be remembered, is still on the way and G. Abeson's stiff corpse lying on the carpet). It gradually transpires that all the lodgers are in various ways connected with one another. [...] then the numbers on the doors are

gradually wiped out and the boarding house motif is painlessly and smoothly replaced by that of a country-house, with all its natural implications. And here the tale takes on a strange beauty. [...] Here the lives of the characters shine forth with a real and human significance and G. Abeson's sealed door is but that of a forgotten lumber-room. A new plot, a new drama utterly unconnected with the opening of the story, which is thus thrust back into the region of dreams, seems to struggle for existence and break into light. But at the very moment when the reader feels quite safe in an atmosphere of pleasurable reality and the grace and glory of the author's prose seems to indicate some lofty and rich intention, there is a grotesque knocking on the door and the detective enters.[...] The lodgers are examined afresh. [...] Old Nosebag





Left to right: Louis Hayward, C. Aubrey Smith, Barry Fitzgerald, Richard Haydn, Mischa Auer and Walter Huston in the film And Then There Were None (1945), based on the novel by Agatha Christie

potters about [...]. The old gag of making the most innocent looking person turn out to be the master-villain seems to be on the point of being exploited. The sleuth suddenly gets interested in snuffboxes. [...] There was a moment of ridiculous suspense. "I think," said Old Nosebag quietly, "that I can explain." Slowly and very carefully he removes his beard, his gray wig, his dark spectacles, and the face of G. Abeson is disclosed. "You see," says Mr. Abeson, with a self-deprecating smile, "one dislikes being murdered."<sup>2</sup>

While, as I will presently discuss, Sebastian Knight's novel takes a hackneyed (hence generally used) device of the detective novel as its frame, it nonetheless seems to invoke two of the most famous examples of the genre: Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express* and *And Then There Were None.*<sup>3</sup> In his preface to his summary of the

novel, the narrator of The Real Life of Sebastian Knight, V., observes that The Prismatic Bezel conflates "a rollicking parody of the setting of a detective tale" with the modern novel's "fashionable trick of grouping a medley of people in a limited space (a hotel, an island, a street)."<sup>4</sup> In his remarks following his summary, the narrator concludes that his half-brother's novel is a "new" book rather than a "nice book," that "the heroes of the book are what can be loosely called 'methods of composition.' [...] By putting to the ad absurdum test this or that literary manner and then dismissing them one after the other, he deduced his own manner [...]."<sup>5</sup> Whether or not we imagine that this is, in some sense, a gloss on Nabokov's own process of creation in The Real Life of Sebastian Knight, the following comments by the narrator, again from the text preceding his retelling of The Prismatic Bezel, are salient to my larger argument (and certainly reflect "strong opinions" worthy of the author himself):

With something akin to fanatical hate Sebastian Knight was ever hunting out the things which had once been fresh and bright but which were now worn to a thread, dead things among living ones; dead things shamming life, painted and repainted, continuing to be accepted by lazy minds serenely unaware of the fraud. The decayed idea might in itself be quite innocent and it may be argued that there is not much sin in continually exploiting this or that thoroughly worn subject or style if it still pleases and amuses. But for Sebastian Knight, the merest trifle, as, say, the adopted method of a detective story, became a bloated and malodorous corpse. He did not mind in the least "penny dreadfuls" because he wasn't concerned with ordinary morals; what annoyed him invariably was the



Nabokov in 1939, the year he finished The Real Life of Sebastian Knight

In Nabokov's first novel composed directly in English, The Real Life of Sebastian Knight, Nabokov not only toys with the basic mechanisms of the detective novel, but again appears to invoke a specific Christie text (or even texts). second rate, not the third or N-th rate, because here, at the readable stage, the shamming began, and this was, in an artistic sense, immoral.<sup>6</sup>

The "bloated and malodorous corpse," which Sebastian Knight resurrects in The Prismatic Bezel (dare I say in Old Nosebag's transformation into G. Abeson), becomes essential to the author's self-discovery, so, just as Nabokov deploys conventions of the detective novel in his masterwork Lolita in order to transfigure them, so also does Nabokov incorporate motifs of that genre into the very structure of The Real Life of Sebastian Knight, which is likewise a pursuit of the true perpetrator which begins (and ends) with a corpse. Like Lolita and The Prismatic Bezel, moreover, The Real Life of Sebastian Knight employs the "methods of composition" of a Christie novel in a sort of parodic inversion, glossed by the anagram of Nosebag as G. Abeson written backwards, in a "through the looking glass" fashion. Just as Humbert the Hunter becomes Humbert the Hunted, the murderer who murders the detective who pursues him (and who is, in a sense, his double), so the narrator seeks his half-brother's identity and finds only himself.

This leads me inevitably to the third work I wish to adduce here, the Nabokov novel that most obviously and centrally plays on the convention of the detective novel in general and, I believe, on a well-known Agatha Christie novel in particular-Despair. (Here I would note in passing that the three novels I find most relevant to my topic are all pivotal to Nabokov's transformation into an English-language writer—The Real Life of Sebastian Knight as the first novel Nabokov wrote in English, Despair as the first of his novels he himself translated into English, and Lolita, of course, as his breakthrough American

novel. I will return to this point apace.) Despair's opening scene, in tried and true detective novel fashion, invokes precisely the finding of the corpse that sets the conventional plot in motion, for, when Hermann first spies Felix lying on the hill outside of Prague, he takes him for a corpse and it is precisely because of his death-like immobility that Hermann professes to recognize in Felix his double: "That man, especially when he slept, when his features were motionless, showed me my own face, my mask, the flawlessly pure image of my corpse—I use the latter term merely because I wish to express with the utmost clarity-express what? Namely this: that we had identical features, and that, in a state of perfect repose, this resemblance was strikingly evident, and what is death, if not a face at peace-its artistic perfection?"7 As we learn in due course, Hermann equates the perfect crime with the exemplary work of fiction he is creating, and he situates this equation in the tradition of the mystery:

Let us discuss crime, crime as an art; and card tricks. I am greatly worked up just at present. Oh, Conan Doyle! How marvelously you could have crowned your creation when your two heroes began boring you! What an opportunity, what a subject you missed! For you could have written one last tale concluding the whole Sherlock Holmes epic; one last episode beautifully setting off the rest; the murderer in that tale should have turned out to be not the one-legged bookkeeper, not the Chinaman Ching and not the woman in crimson, but the very chronicler of the crime stories, Dr. Watson himself-Watson, who, so to speak, knew what was Whatson. A staggering surprise for the reader.8

While Hermann gives his fiction a more respectable genealogy,<sup>9</sup> invoking the Sherlock Holmes stories which so appealed to Nabokov himself in childhood, there would seem to be a more obvious contemporary source here: Agatha Christie's The Murder of Roger Ackroyd.<sup>10</sup> Of course, as a number of critics have pointed out, Hermann has a complex literary genealogy in Russian literature as well, ranging from Pushkin's protagonist of the same name in "The Queen of Spades" to Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov.11 Yet we should bear in mind that Christie's 1926 novel enjoyed enormous popular success and was, in its own right, something of a literary event. Moreover, Nabokov's tour de force in Despair lies in no small measure in the fact that he takes as his narrator a bad writer whose own plot cannot escape the conventions of the trashy fiction which his wife Lydia reads and for which Hermann expresses the utmost contempt. And yet Lydia clearly recognizes tired conventions of the fiction she reads in Hermann's murder plot: "Oh, stop saying such horrors,' cried Lydia, scrambling up from the carpet. 'I've just been reading a story like that. Oh, do please stop-."12

In 1944 Edmund Wilson published the article, "Why Do People Read Detective Stories?" in the New Yorker. He opens the article with the lament, "For years I have been hearing about detective stories. Almost everybody I know seems to read them, and they have long conversations about them in which I am unable to take part."<sup>13</sup> After expressing his own lack of attraction to the genre, Wilson gives his motivation for writing the article: "In my present line of duty, however, I have decided that I ought to take a look at some specimens of this school of writing, which has grown so prodigiously popular and of which the output is now so immense that this

Surveying what he deems to be among the better recent works of detective fiction, Wilson is "surprised and disappointed" to find "simply the old Sherlock Holmes formula reproduced."

department has to have a special editor to deal with its weekly production."<sup>14</sup> Surveying what he deems to be among the better recent works of detective fiction, Wilson is "surprised and disappointed" to find "simply the old Sherlock Holmes formula reproduced." He concludes the article with an explanation of the genre's growing popularity:

Yet the detective story has kept its hold; had even, in the two decades between the great wars, become more popular than ever before; and there is, I believe, reason for this. The world during those years was ridden by an all-pervasive feeling of guilt and by a fear of impending disaster which it seemed hopeless to try to avert because it never seemed conclusively possible to pin down the responsibility. Who had committed the original crime and who was going to commit the next one?---that murder which always, in the novels, occurs at an unexpected moment, when the investigation is well under way, which may happen, as in one of the Nero Wolfe stories, right in the great detective's office. Everybody is

suspected in turn, and the streets are full of lurking agents whose allegiances we cannot know. Nobody seems guiltless, nobody seems safe; and then, suddenly, the murderer is spotted, and—relief!—he is not, after all, a person like you or me. He is a villain—known to the trade as George Gruesome—and he has been caught by an infallible Power, the supercilious and omniscient detective, who knows exactly how to fix the guilt.<sup>15</sup>

In an October 11, 1944, letter to Wilson, Nabokov gave his own, positive response to the article:

I liked very much your article on detective stories. Of course, Agatha is unreadable—but Sayers, whom you do not mention, writes well. Try *Crime Advertises.* Your attitude towards detective writing is curiously like my attitude towards Soviet literature, so that you are on the whole absolutely right. I hope that one day you will tackle the quarter of a century–old literature *sovetskovo molodnyaka*—and then I shall have the exquisite pleasure of seeing you reel and vomit—instead



Agatha Christie, best known for her 66 detective novels

of the slight nausea you experienced with [here follows a list of hackneyed phrases drawn from detective fiction].<sup>16</sup>

As Wilson's article and Nabokov's response to it indicate, the detective story was such a popular genre that it was impossible to ignore. In fact, I would argue, it is precisely its popularity that made the genre a fair and necessary target for both Wilson and Nabokov. Here we should note the analogy Nabokov tacitly posits between Soviet literature and the detective novel—how are we to understand that? I would suggest here a variation on the old adage "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery." In this case, we might modify it to read, "imitation is the sincerest form of rivalry." While Nabokov might not have shared Wilson's explanation of the reasons for the genre's popularity, he certainly recognized that the immense success of the detective novel made it a force to reckon with-especially as he was making his transition to writing in English, a language in which the detective novel particularly flourished. Judging by the examples I have adduced briefly in this paper, it would seem that Nabokov did not merely view the detective novel as a hackneyed genre for lazy readers, but perhaps as a source of potentially powerful devices which had become automatized, but-renovated along the lines outlined in the description of Sebastian Knight's Prismatic Bezel-might yet serve as a rich impetus to the Nabokovian text.

<sup>1</sup> Vladimir Nabokov, Strong Opinions (New York: Vintage, 1973), 43.
<sup>2</sup> Vladimir Nabokov, The Real Life of Sebastian Knight (New York: New Directions, 2008), 92–95.

<sup>3</sup> There is a difficulty here in that Christie's novel, originally published under the title *Ten Little Niggers*, first appeared in November 1939, while Nabokov claimed to have completed *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* by the end of January of the same year in time to submit the manuscript for a literary prize. Still, since *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* was not published until 1941, the possibility that Nabokov was responding to that Christie novel in particular is not precluded. <sup>4</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>7</sup> Vladimir Nabokov, *Despair* (New York: Vintage, 1989), 15.

<sup>9</sup> The passage following this begins: "But what are they—Doyle, Dostoevsky,

Leblanc, Wallace—what are all the great novelists who wrote of nimble criminals, [...]" (122).

<sup>10</sup> Helen Oakley compares *Despair* with Christie's novel at some length in her "Disturbing Designs: Nabokov's Manipulation of the Detective Fiction Genre in *Pale Fire* and *Despair*," *Journal of Popular Culture* (Winter 2003), 480–96. While I would view *Pale Fire* as invoking the thriller rather than the classical British detective novel, I certainly agree with her assertion that, "The difference between the classic detective story *and Nabokov's inversion of it can be linked to* Barthes' contrast between the 'text of pleasure,' which is identified with 'a *comfortable* practice of reading,' and the text of 'bliss' which 'unsettles the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions [...] brings to a crisis his relation with language" (493).

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Julian W. Connolly, "The Function of Literary Allusion in Nabokov's *Despair," Slavic and East European Journal* (Madison, MD), 26, 1982, 302–13; and Alexander Dolinin, "Nabokov, Dostoevsky, and 'Dostoevskyness'," *Russian Studies in Literature: A Journal of Translations* (Fall 1999), vol. 35, no. 4: 42–60.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>13</sup> Edmund Wilson, "Why Do People Read Detective Stories?" *New Yorker* (October 14, 1944).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Ibid., 91–92.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Ibid.,121–22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Simon Karlinsky, ed., *The Nabokov-Wilson Letters 1940–1971* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 144. The title of Sayers's novel is *Murder Must Advertise* [RM].

Photograph by David A. Goldfarb (London, 2001)

### Catharine Theimer Nepomnyashchy

(1951–2015)

atharine Nepomnyashchy, Ann Whitney Olin Professor of Russian Literature and Culture, Barnard College, died on March 21, 2015. She is survived by her daughter, Olga Nepomnyashchy; her mother, Jo-Anne Theimer; and her brother, James Theimer, and sister-in-law, Sunnie Noellert. Cathy Nepomnyashchy was a brilliant scholar, thinker, teacher, mentor, and administrator. Her intellectual energy was a force of nature. She was an agent of change in the institutions and programs she served, the scholarly fields she pursued, and no less in the hearts and minds of the many people she knew.

A native of New Jersey, Cathy Nepomnyashchy earned her B.A. in Russian literature and B.A. and M.A. degrees in French literature at Brown. She went on for her doctorate in Russian literature in the Department of Slavic Languages at Columbia. She joined the faculty at Barnard College in 1987.

Cathy Nepomnyashchy was a masterful teacher and a curricular visionary. Her regular repertory included all periods of Russian literature and all forms of Russian culture, including popular culture. She collaborated in the classroom with colleagues in history, political science, and human rights. She masterminded interdisciplinary and cross-cultural courses. She taught online courses. In summer 2014 she cotaught a Columbia Global Programs course on Post-Socialist Cities in which students visited Berlin, Moscow, Ulan-Bator, and Beijing, traveling part of the way via the Trans-Siberian Railway. Her seminars in Soviet and post-Soviet literature and culture were essential to the Columbia graduate program. And she especially loved introducing undergraduates to the work of Vladimir Nabokov. In addition to being a superb writer herself, Cathy Nepomnyashchy had a special gift for teaching others to write lucid prose. And she was known not just on campus but in the Slavic field at large as a loyal mentor who forged lasting bonds and who never let students give up on what they aspired to.

In addition to chairing the Barnard Slavic Department, Cathy Nepomnyashchy served as director of the Harriman Institute from 2001 to 2009. She drew academics, writers, chiefs of state, ambassadors, public intellectuals, conceptual artists, dancers, and others into action at the Harriman. She broadened the geopolitical range of the institute to include Central Asia and Georgia, and she made it a center of interdisciplinary inquiry. She was a wonderfully creative administrator.

The recipient of the AATSEEL Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Profession (2011) and the Harriman Institute Alumna of the Year award (2013), Cathy Nepomnyashchy had been honored for her achievements in the field.

As a scholar, Cathy Nepomnyashchy's range was broad. She published on Pushkin, on great writers of the Soviet period, on émigré Russian writers, on women writers, on Jane Austen in Russia, on ballet, and on popular culture and new media. She is known especially for her work on Abram Tertz (Andrei Sinyavsky): *Abram Tertz and the Poetics of Crime*, which appeared in English in 1995 and in Russian translation in 2003; and a translation with Slava Yastremski of Tertz's *Strolls with Pushkin*. She coedited *Under the Skies of My Africa: Alexander Pushkin and Blackness*, a volume that inspired an editorial by Henry Louis Gates Jr. in which he asked, "Was the father of Russian lit a brother?" *Mapping the Feminine: Russian Women and Cultural Difference*, another coedited volume, was a landmark in the study of writings by and about women. In each of her books she put a feature of Russian literary life into play in a way that expanded the horizons of our field.

For the past few years Cathy Nepomnyashchy had been at work on a book manuscript, "Nabokov and His Enemies: Terms of Engagement." In it she explores how Nabokov capitalized on writers and thinkers whom he took pleasure in trashing—among them Sigmund Freud, Jane Austen, Agatha Christie, Boris Pasternak, and Edmund Wilson. This leads her to "suggest a way of rethinking authorial agency in the construction of literary texts." In Cathy Nepomnyashchy, Vladimir Nabokov met his match. This project played to her many strengths: her literary sensibility, her erudition, her critical sophistication, her penetrating intellect, and her delight in the mysteries of the human psyche.

The literature, culture, and society of Russia and its neighboring lands were not just a field of study for Cathy Nepomnyashchy. She lived and breathed this world. Together with Nadezhda Azhghikina, a Russian journalist and dear friend, she published an eyewitness account of the 1991 coup in Moscow, *Three Days in August.* (It appeared in Russian in 2014.) Cathy Nepomnyashchy traveled extensively. She was an astute observer of the societies and cultures she visited. Cathy Nepomnyashchy took joy in sharing these experiences with her traveling companions—her husband, Vyacheslav Nepomnyashchy, who died in 2011; and their beloved daughter, Olga, now sixteen, who accompanied her mother on her recent trip across Siberia.

Cathy Nepomnyashchy's colleagues, students, and friends in the Columbia and Barnard Slavic departments and Harriman Institute cherish her memory. We are extraordinarily proud of the legacy she leaves behind.

We remembered Cathy Nepomnyashchy at a memorial on October 2, 2015.

A website that houses Cathy Nepomnyashchy's writings and celebrates her life and work has been set up by her former students Ani Kokobobo and Emma Lieber. Please see http://www. cathynepomnyashchy.com. If you would like to post a tribute on that site, please send it to cathynepomnyashchytribute@gmail.com.

A fund at Barnard College has been established that will support student and faculty initiatives in the area of Cathy Nepomnyashchy's work. To make a gift to the Cathy Nepomnyashchy Fund, please either mail a check made payable to Barnard College to the Barnard College Development Office, 3009 Broadway, New York, NY 10027 (be sure to include a note that references the Fund by name), or visit barnard.edu/gift and enter the Fund name as the designation.

### In Memoriam



Gene Sosin (1921–2015)

Gene Sosin, a member of the Russian Institute's second graduating class in 1949, died peacefully on May 6, 2015, of pneumonia. He was 93. For over thirty years Sosin was a key executive of Radio Liberty, the U.S. governmentsupported shortwave radio station that broadcast to the Soviet Union in Russian and the major languages of the national minorities. His book Sparks of Liberty: An Insider's Memoir of Radio Liberty (Penn State University Press, 1999), in the words of historian Richard Pipes, was "the first authoritative account of an institution that played a major role in undermining Soviet authority and paving the road to its collapse."

Sosin prefaces his story of Radio Liberty by describing how he met his wife, Gloria, a WAC veteran, at Columbia in Ernest J. Simmons's Dostoevsky seminar and how the young married couple subsequently moved to Munich as members of the Harvard University Refugee Interview Project. The Russian Institute's Philip E. Mosely had strongly recommended them for the team responsible for interviewing displaced persons from the Soviet Union who remained in the West after the war. The project became famous as a pioneering research model that assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet system. Gloria published an account of the project and their experiences in that group of twenty-five Harvard and Columbia graduate students as Red Letter Year-Munich 1950-1951 (Kalita Press, 2004).

In 1952 Sosin joined the staff of Radio Liberty, which was preparing to inaugurate broadcasts the following year. He was instrumental in making Radio Liberty the most powerful and popular Western station, reaching millions of Soviet listeners. Before retiring in 1985, Sosin helped direct programming and policy in several positions: head of the New York division, senior adviser to the director of Radio Liberty at the headquarters in Munich, and, after the merger with Radio Free Europe in the mid-1970s, director of broadcast publishing.

Sosin received his Ph.D. from Columbia in 1958, with a dissertation on the role of professional theaters and drama for children in Soviet education. He lectured frequently on university campuses throughout the United States about the activity of Radio Liberty; underground Russian *anekdoty* (political jokes); and *magnitizdat*—the clandestine tape recording of songs by Soviet dissident bards, including Okudzhava, Galich, and Vysotsky. *Dissent in the USSR*, published by Johns Hopkins University Press in 1975, includes a chapter by Sosin on *magnitizdat*.

In the post-Soviet era, Gene and Gloria were invited by Radio Liberty to take part in the fortieth anniversary of its birth, which was celebrated in Moscow in the Central House of Writers, with Gorbachev and other prominent figures present. His speech at the event was broadcast by Radio Liberty and excerpted in the daily *Segondya*.

In his essay "Moscow and the Hudson," Sosin reminisces on his long Columbia career, beginning as a Columbia College student (Class of '41) who was a member of the Varsity Show, winner of limerick contests for Chock full o'Nuts, and student of Japanese prior to enlisting in the Navy in 1942 (published in *Columbia Magazine* (Winter 2008–09). He returned to Columbia for graduate studies on the GI Bill and enrolled in the new Russian Institute.

Gene Sosin valued his Russian/Harriman Institute ties and was a frequent visitor to Harriman events. He will be missed.

### Alumni & Postdoc Notes

#### Samuel H. Baron (Russian Institute Certificate, 1948; Ph.D., History,

**1952)** studied with Geroid T. Robinson. He is distinguished professor emeritus at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He authored and/or edited ten books, three with Stanford University Press. *Plekhanov: The Father of Russian Marxism* was translated into Spanish, Japanese, and Russian. He has been coordinating a series of lectures and discussions, entitled "Thoughtful People," at his retirement community in North Carolina for the past five years.

#### Megan Duncan Smith (Harriman Certificate, 2011; MARS-REERS,

**2011)** is a doctoral candidate in the History Department at Harvard University, specializing in the history of modern Ukraine and Russia (Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union). She is interested in the cultural construction of geography and conflicts over water in Eastern Europe. Her dissertation is a cultural and environmental history of the Dnieper River, titled: "Taming the Rapids: Transforming the Dnieper River and the Nature of Empire in Eastern Europe, 1837–1975."

#### Edin Forto (Harriman Institute East Central Europe Certificate, 2001;

**M.I.A., SIPA, 2001**) was elected to the cantonal council in the October 2014 general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). He has been CEO of the Nexe Group in BiH, a business that produces and sells concrete and aggregate stone, since 2003.



Samuel H. Baron



Megan Duncan Smith



Edin Forto



Diana Gosselin Nakeeb



Anatoly Pinsky

#### Diana Gosselin Nakeeb (Russian Institute, 1966; Ph.D., Slavic Languages, 1972)

writes that the first thing she wanted to do upon retirement was to write a work of fiction that would be "pleasantly refreshing, charmingly entertaining, and more than a little educational." The result is the sci-fi comedic satire, *Venus Turning*, published by Smashwords.com, available for most e-book readers. Nakeeb taught at William Patterson University, Pace University, and Yeshiva University. In all these positions she sought to introduce area studies and the broader Slavic picture, a practice instilled by the "giants of the Russian Institute: Raeff, Ehrlich, Brzezinski, Dallin, Hazard, Maguire . . ."

**Anatoly Pinsky (Ph.D., History, 2011)** has been assistant professor of late Soviet and contemporary Russian history at the European University at Saint Petersburg (EUSPb) since the fall of 2012. He has authored articles that have appeared or are forthcoming in *Slavic Review, Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History,* and other publications. He is currently working on an edited volume, *Posle Stalina: Pozdnesovetskaia sub"ektivnost' (After Stalin: Subjectivity in the Late Soviet Union)*, to be published by the EUSPb press in 2016, and a book project, "The Individual after Stalin: Writers, Diaries, and the Reform of Soviet Socialism."

Susanne Wengle (M.I.A., SIPA 2002; Harriman Certificate, 2003) is assistant professor of political science at Notre Dame University. She holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of California, Berkeley. Before coming to Notre Dame, she was a research fellow and lecturer at the University of Chicago. Her research examines the politics that govern markets and market regulations, and she has published on various aspects of Russia's post-Soviet market transition. Her articles have appeared in *Governance and Regulation, Studies in Comparative International Development, Economy* and Society, Europe-Asia Studies, the Russian Analytical Digest, and in the Chicago Policy Review. She is currently working on a project on the political economy of agriculture and food systems in Russia and the United States. Her book, Post-Soviet Power: State-led Development and Russia's Marketization, which tells the story of the Russian electricity system and examines the politics of its transformation from a ministry to a market, was published by Cambridge University Press earlier this year.

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