Padma Desai is the Gladys and Roland Harriman Professor of Comparative Economic Systems, Director of the Center for Transition Economies at Columbia University and an elected member of the Council on Foreign Relations. President of the Association for Comparative Economic Studies (2001) and US Treasury's Advisor to the Russian Finance Ministry (1995), she is regarded as a leading scholar today on the Soviet Union and Russia, while her writings extend also to the problems of other transition and emerging market economies.


Organized by Daniel Berkowitz, Pittsburgh, Chair of International Organizing Committee (with Dale Jorgenson, Harvard, and André Sapir, Brussels)

April 26th and April 27th at Columbia University, New York; Location: 15th Floor, SIPA Building

Day 1

APRIL 26th 2007, THURSDAY, 10:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Welcome Remarks: Janet Currie, Professor and Chairperson, Economics Department, Columbia University

Panel 1. The Decline and Disintegration of the Soviet Economy.
10:45 am – 1:00 pm

Chair: Guillermo Calvo, Professor of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University; President of the International Economic Association

Presentations:

Paul Gregory Cullen Professor of Economics, University of Houston; “What do the Soviet Archives Teach Us about Disintegration?”

André Sapir Chair in International Economics, Université Libre de Bruxelles; “Social Models and Disintegration”

Eric Maskin A.O. Hirschman Professor of Social Science, Institute for Advanced Studies, Princeton University; “Organizations, Hierarchies and the Soviet Economy”

Richard E. Ericson Professor of Economics, East Carolina University; “The Structure and Dysfunction of the Soviet Economic System”

Lunch: 1:00-2:30 pm

Reminiscences Students and Friends

Panel 2: Privatization: What Have We Learned?
April 26th, 2:30 pm – 4:45 pm

Chair: Robert Solow, MIT, and Nobel Laureate in Economics

Presentations:

Patrick Bolton Zalaznick Professor of Business and Professor of Economics, Columbia University

Andrei Shleifer Professor of Economics, Harvard University and 1999 John Bates Clark Medalist

Jan Svejnar Berg Professor of Business and Professor of Economics, University of Michigan

Saul Estrin Professor of Management, London School of Economics; “Privatization and Growth in Transition Economies”

Katharina Pistor Professor of Law, Columbia University; “Privatization and Market Creation as Lawmaking: Lessons from Post Socialism”
CELEBRATORY EVENT AT COLUMBIA ROTUNDA, LOW LIBRARY
(15 minutes from SIPA Building)
By Invitation Only

Cocktails: 5:30 pm • Dinner: 6:15 pm • Speeches and Messages: 7:00 pm to 9:15 pm, April 26

Day 2

APRIL 27th, 2007 FRIDAY, 9:00 AM – 11:15 AM

Panel 3: Russian Growth: Oil, Dutch Disease, and Reforms
April 27th: 9:00 am – 11:30 am

Chair: Robert Mundell, University Professor, Columbia University, and Nobel Laureate in Economics

Presentations:

Yegor Gaidar
Director of the Institute for Economies in Transition and Former Prime Minister of Russia; “Growth, Oil Prices and Structural Reform.”

Erik Berglöf
Chief Economist, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; “Is Russia Growing because of Oil Prices and/or because of Reform?”

D. Mario Nuti
Professor of Economics, University of Rome La Sapienza; “Growth and Exchange Rates”

Daniel Berkowitz
Professor of Economics, University of Pittsburgh; “A Political Economy of Pipelines: The Case of Russian Oil.”

Tim Frye
Professor of Political Science, Columbia University; “Original Sin, Property Rights and Russian Growth”

Brigitte Granville

*Co-Sponsored by: Program for Economic Research, Economic Department
CONCLUDING EVENT AT COLUMBIA ROTUNDA, LOW LIBRARY
(under the auspices of President Bollinger’s World Leaders Forum)

Where is Russia Headed?
The participants, many authors of celebrated books on Russia, are: Chrystia Freeland (US Editor of The Financial Times; Moderator); Yegor Gaidar (Former Prime Minister of Russia); Sergey Dubinin (former Finance Minister and Chairman of Russia’s Central Bank), Sergey Rogov (Director of Institute for US and Canada, Russian Academy of Sciences); Padma Desai; and Jack Matlock (former US Ambassador to Russia).

Lunch at Low Library (by Invitation Only): 11.45 to 1.00 pm *Panel: 1.15 to 3.00 pm, April 27
Selected Book Review Excerpts

The Soviet Economy: Problems and Prospects

“Amongst students of the Soviet economy, Padma Desai is noted not only for her Russian expertise but for her concern for technical rigor. This is a masterly volume.” -Abram Bergson

“Professor Desai’s book makes clear that Sovietology is ripe for advanced techniques and reasoning. The book is a brilliant example of this approach.” -H. J. Wagener, Economica

“A substantial body of work, which advances our knowledge of the growth process in a centralized economy in several directions.” -J. Michael Montias, Journal of Comparative Economics

“Combines theoretical elegance, econometric sophistication, and precise handling of empirical evidence. Many general economists will enjoy Desai’s sophisticated and rigorous appraisal of the Soviet system. Policymakers will quote from her conclusions.” -Holland Hunter, The Annals of the American Academy of Polifical and Social Science

“Padma Desai is a pioneer in the application of quantitative methods to the study of the Soviet economy. Her facility with econometric techniques is supported by refreshing eagerness to draw on the work of descriptive economists and political scientists.” -R. W. Davies, The Times Higher Educational Supplement

“Particularly ingenious and innovative. The book is to be highly recommended to all students of comparative economics.” -S. Gomulka, The Manchester School

Perestroika in Perspective: The Design and Dilemmas of Soviet Reform

“… a model of lucidity … This book is a healthy antidote to the tendency to discuss economic reform in the USSR out of its social and political context.” -John Barber, London Review of Books

“Perestroïka in Perspective is … accessible to the general reader, and ranges … widely to examine political, social, and cultural forces linked to economic change. It offers a sound … review of Mr. Gorbachev’s reform program.” -Philip Taubman, The New York Times Book Review

“… Perestroïka in the Soviet Union is potentially the most significant of all contemporary ventures. It is one of the merits of this book that it makes clear not only how difficult is the starting point, but how uncertain is the goal.” -Martin Wolf, Financial Times
Selected Book Review Excerpts

Financial Crisis, Contagion, and Containment: From Asia to Argentina

“The best book yet about the financial crises that have swept the world in recent years. Desai offers a comprehensive, critical survey that will unsettle ideologues right and left. This book is essential reading for anyone interested in the global economy.” -Paul Krugman

“Padma Desai attacks head-on fundamental questions about the compatibility of small emerging country economies with inherently volatile global financial markets—questions that have too often been ignored or glossed over in the policy debate.” -Paul Volcker

Conversations on Russia: Reform from Yeltsin to Putin
Oxford University Press, April 2006.

“Economists usually try to understand the evolution of policy and its impact by specifying policy actions and attempting to model their consequences. That is indeed a valuable approach. But there are other and complementary ways of trying to understand what happened in the past and what might happen next. This book represents an imaginative and creative alternative approach; namely to ask key policy makers what they had in mind and their own understanding of events. And the issues at hand are the extraordinary events in Russia over the last 15 years. The discussions with the most influential policy makers and reformers of the period are riveting and the approach gives crucial insights, especially as Padma Desai relates their own interpretations to events, history and ideas in a very thoughtful way. This is an important and fascinating book.” -Sir Nicholas Stern, Head of UK Government Economic Service, and former Chief Economist and Senior Vice President, The World Bank

“Russia specialist Desai talked to just about every major figure in the country’s transition from communism to managed capitalism. What she heard is revealing, disturbing and ultimately encouraging.” -Financial Times, announcing it as one of its “Top Picks of 2006”

For other books and reviews, see Padma’s website: www.columbia.edu/~pd5