A Letter from the Director

It has been my pleasure to continue serving as CEERES Acting Director throughout the first half of 2013 while Director Victor Friedman finishes his sabbatical year. CEERES is pleased to have participated in many exciting events during winter and spring quarters. Not only have we seen great turnout and added many new members to our community, we’ve been fortunate to participate in numerous events that have brought scholars from a wide range of disciplines together in new ways.

CEERES’ “Connecting with the Caucasus” speaker series continued this winter and spring, providing an opportunity for our community to hear talks by a range of experts on the region. In January, CEERES Associate Tamara Sivertseva delivered a lecture on the education of girls in Azerbaijan based on her extensive fieldwork in that country. Next, we hosted Georgi Derluguian (NYU Abu Dhabi), whose lecture connected the 18th century development of the Caucasus region to current affairs. In April, we hosted several Georgia-focused events. First, ethnomusicologist John A. Graham (Princeton University) came to campus to deliver both a lecture on one of the great masters of traditional Georgian chants as well as a Master-Class, at which attendees courageously tried their hand at singing selections from this unique musical tradition. Also in April, we collaborated with the Slavic Department to host a presentation by Ramaz Kurdadze (Tbilisi State University), a specialist on teaching Georgian as a second language. Finally, in May we hosted our last two Caucasus lectures. Tasha Vorderstrasse (Oriental Institute) gave us our first visual arts-focused talk in the series with her lecture on medieval Georgian wall paintings, while Stephen Jones (Mount Holyoke College) brought the focus back to contemporary events with his lecture, “Why the Saakashvili System Failed.” We have seen many familiar faces as well as a great number of new ones at our “Connecting with the Caucasus” events, and have been delighted overall by the high level of interest in this series. More information on the “Connecting with the Caucasus” speaker series along with recordings of many of the lectures can be found at ceeres.uchicago.edu/caucasus.

CEERES has also had the opportunity to co-sponsor a number of conferences and workshops this term. We kicked off the spring quarter with “Time, Space and Narrative: A Workshop on Digital Mapping and its Objectives.” This workshop, piloted by Bill Nickell and Lenore Grenoble (both of Slavic Languages and Literatures), provided scholars in the humanities and social sciences the opportunity to discuss the applicability of digital mapping technologies for their research and teaching. Next, CEERES worked with Eugene Raikhel (Comparative Human Development) to organize the two-day conference “From the New Socialist Person to Global Mental Health: the Psy-ences and Mental Health in East Central Europe and Eurasia.” The conference featured speakers from fields in the biological sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Then, in May, CEERES co-sponsored “The Russian Kurosawa,” led by Postdoctoral Fellow Olga Solovieva (Committee on Social Thought). Half film series and half symposium, four of Akira Kurosawa’s cinematic versions of classic Russian novels were screened at this three-day event, which concluded with a roundtable discussion, in which numerous scholars in the field of cinema studies took part.

This summer, CEERES will again be co-sponsoring a Summer Teacher Institute. This year’s STI is entitled “Natural Disasters and Social Responses: A Global Perspective” and will take place July 9–11. We are in the beginning planning stages for two major conferences in 2013–14: one on the languages and cultures of the North Caucasus in winter 2014 and also the 19th Biennial Conference on Balkan and South Slavic Linguistics, Literature and Folklore, to be held April 25–27, 2014. Also next year, our Center will have to apply for renewal of our federal grant funding. There is much to look forward to.

—Susan Gal, CEERES Interim Director and Mae & Sidney G. Metzl Distinguished Service Professor, Departments of Anthropology and Linguistics and the College
CEERES News is the biannual newsletter of The Center for East European and Russian/Eurasian Studies at The University of Chicago.

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CEERES Speakers Bureau
CEERES faculty and students not only study our world region, but also use their regional expertise to illuminate issues in art, history, culture, and politics. A CEERES guest speaker is thus a tremendous resource that can enhance learning in a variety of contexts, and CEERES is always happy to work to schedule guest speakers to visit Chicago area schools and cultural centers. To explore the possibility of arranging for a CEERES speaker, please contact ceeres@uchicago.edu or the CEERES outreach coordinator at 773-702-0875.

Subscription to the newsletter is free. Please send suggestions, corrections, address changes, or inquiries to the above contact information.
By Karl Rahder
krahder@uchicago.edu

(Note: this is an early version of a perhaps longer article. Comments welcome.)

Recent incidents

Of the three South Caucasus states, Azerbaijan has long been considered to be the most stable, at least since the war with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh ended in 1994. President Heydar Aliyev—father of the current president—sought to bring order and economic development to the country, in part due to the “contract of the century” which awarded exploitation of much of the country’s oil reserves to British Petroleum. While Azerbaijan was hardly “democratic” in the late 1990’s, governance under Heydar Aliyev included a veneer of pluralism as the country emerged from years of internal chaos and war.

But since Heydar’s death in late 2003, the domestic political landscape has been bleak under the rule of his son Ilham, who has presided over a crackdown on dissent that has progressively worsened in the past nine years. The situation has been particularly worrisome since 2012, when a riot broke out in the city of Quba, about 90 miles northwest of the national capital of Baku.

Other incidents have multiplied this year, including:

- The arbitrary arrests and imprisonment of journalists, opposition figures and youth group activists.
- Police responding to demonstrations in Baku with excessive force.
- The attack on opposition presidential candidate Isa Gambar’s entourage in January while en route to a campaign appearance.
- The closure by authorities of an independent university in April.
- An effort by the government to discredit pro-democracy NGOs.
The pattern outlined above is depressingly familiar to anyone who has spent time studying Azerbaijan. And while the human rights situation has deteriorated steadily, the arrest of an activist or roughing up a few protesters or the closing of a university are, in the larger context, cases of “dog bites man.”

What is truly remarkable in Azerbaijan’s recent past, and what may signal a fundamental shift in the country’s political dynamic, is a new pattern consisting of a series of unexpected, spontaneous outbreaks of violence since last year. The three major “explosions,” accompanied by a number of lesser but still significant political events, are indications that Azerbaijan may be entering a new, unstable period in its modern history.

We will review these events briefly and then explore the government’s reaction as well as aspects of the opposition strategy in the run-up to the presidential election in October. Is a revolution brewing? Does the president possess the vision to address the underlying forces that are destabilizing the country? Will the Azerbaijani people turn toward a “new wave” of youth and other activists who will topple the Aliyev government?

Three explosions: a taste of what may lie ahead

Explosion 1: Quba
In early March of last year, thousands of protesters took to the streets in a series of demonstrations in the northern Azerbaijani city of Quba after a video surfaced of remarks by Rauf Habilbov, the local governor, who told associates that Quba residents were “traitors” for selling their land for as little as “thirty or forty manat.” (An Azeri manat is worth approximately US $1.28 at the current exchange rate.)

The resulting explosion of outrage caught everyone off guard, and despite attempts by the governor to apologize for his unguarded remarks, what began as merely a demonstration quickly spiraled into a riot, with protesters smashing windows of government buildings and, according to reports, setting fire to a house owned by Habilbov.

After responding with force against the rioters, the Baku government dismissed the governor soon afterwards. But many protestors were arrested, with several convictions in the months that followed.

Explosion 2: Bina Market
About a thousand shopkeepers clashed with police in January of this year at the Bina Market, situated on the outskirts of Baku, after their rent was raised by more than $300 a month. The market, a popular shopping area, “reportedly has indirect ties to state officials,” according to Radio Free Europe. Thousands more shopkeepers went on strike in a show of support for those who blocked off access to a road and were subsequently tear gassed by police in the skirmishes that followed.

Explosion 3: Ismayilli
In late January, a random car wreck in the resort town of Ismayilli, about a hundred miles northwest of Baku, erupted into a scene of violence and general mayhem lasting two days. It all began when Vugar Alkeperov, the son of the Minister of Labor and Social Protection and nephew of the minister’s brother—who happened to be the Ismayilli governor—was allegedly involved in a collision with a taxi. According to press reports, Alkeperov got into a quarrel with the taxi driver after the crash and then made insulting comments regarding Ismayilli women, all of which was followed by a blowup with local men and the torching of a hotel that may have been connected to the governor and, according to rumors, housed a brothel.

Ismayilli resembled a combat zone for the next few days, with thousands of locals battling police and setting fire to more buildings (and luxury cars thought to belong to officials) before order was restored.

Sensing a public relations debacle, President Aliyev fired the governor three weeks later and went on national television to scold the sons of government officials for their “obnoxious behavior.”
But the prosecutor’s office acted much more quickly in arresting two well-known opposition figures—Ilgar Mammadov and Tofig Yaqublu—for inciting violence and resistance to police, although the two men arrived separately in Ismayilli after the riots began and stayed briefly before returning to Baku.\textsuperscript{11}

There are several extraordinary elements to the outbreaks of violence since last year:

\textbf{First}, and most importantly, they were “organic.” Neither the formal opposition parties nor the youth opposition groups announced that demonstrations would be held in Ismayilli, the Bina Market, or Quba. These events—sudden, unexpected, and violent—erupted from the ground up.

This is hugely significant, since it means the opposition party apparatus, beleaguered by years of government pressure against it, is no longer necessary to motivate ordinary people.

\textbf{Second}, the explosions in the regions and at the Bina Market were viral and attracted thousands of participants almost immediately. Thus, these demonstrations were much larger than anything the opposition have tried to arrange since the Arab Spring or at any time since 2005, when an attempted Azeri Color Revolution was snuffed out by the police and internal security forces.

\textbf{Third}, the outbreaks have not been anti-Aliyev, and their goals were not ambitiously over-arching. Last year’s rioters in Quba didn’t torch the governor’s house because they wanted to topple the president. They, and the protesters this year, were reacting to local, accidental tripwires—the intertemperate comments of an arrogant apparatchik in Quba and a random car wreck in Ismayilli. The real issues are economic burdens that lead people to sell their land out of desperation and a deep, simmering resentment over systemic corruption that pervades every aspect of life in Azerbaijan.\textsuperscript{12}

\textbf{Fourth}, the two largest riots happened not in Baku, but in the “regions,” which is Azeri-speak for any province (“region”) outside of the Absheron peninsula, where Baku is located. The Bina Market incident took place on Baku’s outskirts, far from the city center, where the opposition prefers to stage its poorly attended demonstrations.

\textbf{Finally}, despite number three above, a critical mass may be developing that threatens to destabilize the national government on a fundamental level, rendering the president’s rule illegitimate in the eyes of many ordinary Azers. This is because the recent incidents were breathtakingly swift, and the violence that followed was both surprising and carefully targeted. This implies a deep reservoir of pent-up anger, and where it has expressed itself in one region, it may emerge in others.

\textbf{The government’s sense of fear}

The continuing arrests of journalists and opposition figures on dubious charges speak to a very real sense of fear at the highest levels of government. And it’s the fear, along with a mentality that the power structure must be maintained at any cost, that has been responsible for retarding democratic and economic development in Azerbaijan.

Why the president, an intelligent man, would react as he has—hurling at his opponents a set of rather blunt weapons such as imprisonment on hooliganism charges and stiff penalties for attending unsanctioned rallies—has perplexed many foreign analysts. But Ilham Aliyev, for all his skills, is apparently unable to react in any other way—largely because his conception of government and his role in it is so foreign to both his friends and critics in the West.

One of the most salient aspects of rule by the Aliyev family (which includes the influence and wealth of his wife Mehriban’s family) is how similar it is to a sultanistic regime. Such regimes tend to be non-ideological and rely on a support system of kinship ties, semi-independent oligarchs and other allies to stay in power and enrich themselves. As Jack A. Goldstone wrote during the Arab Spring, these regimes “may preserve some of the formal aspects of democracy—elections, political parties, a national assembly, or a constitution—but they rule above them by installing compliant supporters in key positions and sometimes by declaring states of emergency, which they justify by appealing to fears of external (or internal) enemies.”\textsuperscript{13}

While the Arab Spring sultanates were overthrown, there is no national effort to bring down the government of Ilham Aliyev.

The reason may have something to do with the implied contract that has existed between the Azerbaijani people and the President Aliyev since he came to power after a flawed election in late 2003. All societies have such contracts between the governed and the ruling elite. Elections, in democracies or quasi-democratic states, tend to confirm or slightly alter those contracts. And for nearly a decade, the contract between the people and the Aliyev government has been something like, “Mr President, we understand that
our ‘elections’ are not exactly fair, and we know that democratic norms in Azerbaijan are very superficial. But as long as you better our lives materially and provide a level playing field so that we can realize our ambitions, we will continue to support you.”

The importance of the explosions in places like Ismayilli is that many people in the regions are beginning to view the “contract” as null and void.

And when that sort of thing happens, ruling regimes everywhere get nervous.

Another symptom of fear is the familiar accusation that “foreign forces” are to blame for the unrest, with the angry assertion by an advisor to the president that the Ismayilli riot was triggered by forces working “against Azerbaijan’s statehood,” and an influential member of Azerbaijan’s parliament charging that the March 10 protest “was supported and instigated by anti-Azerbaijan forces abroad and the radical opposition.”

Normally, “forces abroad” is a transparent code for Armenia, but hints in the press reveal that the Aliyev government might have Russia in mind this time, with a number of sources speculating that the “Moscow Billionaires’ Club”—a group of wealthy Russians of Azeri ethnicity—is involved in destabilizing Azerbaijan.

The best-known proponent of this theory isn’t from Azerbaijan or even Russia, however. After a visit to Baku in late February, Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili warned reporters that the Russian government, acting in collaboration with certain members of the Billionaires’ Club, is planning to “arrange a change of power in Azerbaijan using a large amount of money.” The Ismayilli incident was so sudden and violent that, according to some, Russia and the billionaires must have played a role.

One of the problems with blaming the billionaires for Ismayilli or the spate of demonstrations in Baku is that Azerbaijan’s entrenched graft, along with the persecution of activists, was in place long before the creation of the club. The group may represent a new and worrisome factor for the Aliyev government, but its existence is not necessary to account for the explosions of anger we have seen recently in Azerbaijan.

If the unrest continues, the president will find that he has few options, since there is no mechanism in place such that the government can respond in a calm, mature fashion and engage in a rational discussion of issues such as corruption and democratic development. Because he does not see these topics as legitimate issues for examination in the first place, President Aliyev does no appear to have the conceptual tools to respond by engaging the very people he is imprisoning.

The opposition “new wave”

Pitting itself against the Aliyev government is a new, loose-knit group of liberal, educated youth activists and others, some of whom have ties to the two main opposition parties—the Popular Front Party of Azerbaijan (PFPA) and the Musavat Party. But many in the Azeri new wave see no reason to support a party apparatus that, to them, is exhausted after a successful multi-year effort by the Aliyev government to render it impotent.

Two of the more significant new wave organizations are REAL (Republican Alternative) and NIDA (the Azerbaijani word for an exclamation point), both of which have attracted the attention of the prosecutor’s office. Ilgar Mammadov, who was arrested for his alleged involvement in the Ismayilli unrest, is REAL’s presidential candidate for the upcoming election. At press time, he was languishing in jail awaiting trial.

NIDA is more youth-oriented than REAL and has been singled out in the last year as the government’s chief target for prosecution. By early March, seven NIDA activists had been arrested, with two of them confessing on national television to planning the use of Molotov cocktails against police during the March 10 protest discussed below. Many observers have commented that the “confessions” appeared to be staged, raising concerns about improper police coercion and lack of due process.

O! (“To Be!”) is another group being harassed by the government, although it does not have the same sort of political agenda as NIDA or REAL. Creative and multi-faceted, O! was instrumental in the creation of Azad Fikir (“Free Thought”) University, funded by foreign partners such as USAID and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). Another of the university’s partners is the National Democratic Institute (NDI), which is under intense scrutiny by the prosecutor’s office for alleged financial irregularities. Azad Fikir University was recently shut down by the Azerbaijani authorities.

By far the most visible and talked-about figure in the Azeri new wave is Emin Milli, who as of April was living in Berlin, where he had founded a new TV station dedicated to bringing down the Aliyev government. Milli spends an enormous amount of time in the
Milli has paid a price for his pro-democracy efforts, spending 16 months in a squalid prison after his involvement in promoting the now-famous “donkey blog” video, which ridiculed the Aliyev government.21

Since his release from prison and subsequent sojourn to the UK, where he earned a master’s degree, Milli has become the rock star of the opposition new wave, in no small measure due to his talents at engaging with audiences and an articulate, telegenic persona. But he engages best with adoring foreign audiences who tend to be captivated by the dramaturgical element in his personal story. For Milli’s more skeptical Azeri audience, he continues to promote a two-pronged approach that is clearly not working: an overemphasis on Baku, where the opposition has focused its efforts, and an infatuation with social media as a key ingredient of regime change. A glance at how this model has performed should indicate just how feeble it is.

During 2011’s Arab Spring, both the new wave and the formal opposition parties promoted the expectation that President Aliyev would, like Zine El Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia and Egypt’s Hosni Mubarak, be overthrown. A series of demonstrations was planned, the most significant of which was the “Great People’s Day,” when protests would take place across the country. Milli and a few other ex-pat Azeri youth living in France, the Netherlands and elsewhere were among the major proponents who spread the word via Facebook.22

But the Great People’s Day was a bust, largely ignored in the countryside, and attracting no more than a few hundred participants in the capital. The police responded with their usual modus operandi of swooping down on small groups of demonstrators as soon as they gathered, arresting a handful, and scattering the remainder while roughing up a few people in the process.23

Likewise, the day after the Quba riots in 2012, Milli called for mass protests across Azerbaijan in an interview from the UK with Voice of America.24 The country shrugged, and life went on as usual.

Once again, after this year’s Ismayilli incident, the opposition called on Facebook for a solidarity demonstration in Baku that would take place on January 26. And once again, several hundred people showed up, with the police easily dispersing the protesters.

Not long afterwards, a major demonstration was announced by Milli and his supporters which would take place on March 10, ostensibly in response to widespread abuse of conscripts in Azerbaijan’s military. This would be the most significant event in years and would, Milli insisted on Facebook, involve “all the cities of Azerbaijan,” attracting more than 16,000 people in Baku alone who would flood the streets in a mass action.

On the 10th of March, some five hundred protesters marched in downtown Baku, with several dozen arrests.

One would think that after such paltry results, the new wave might engage in a period of reflection, asking if perhaps they have failed to connect with ordinary Azeris. And while a survey I conducted in February25 reveals that a number of new wave activists acknowledge that they have not done enough to reach out to those in the regions, Milli recently doubled down by telling a foreign newspaper that Azerbaijan is now teetering on the brink of “civil war,”26 an astonishing declaration given the lack of interest displayed by the very people he claims to represent.

No revolution ahead, but a fragile status quo

Continuing comparisons to the Arab Spring and predictions of imminent regime change are heady stuff. But as is often the case, reality is less dramatic and requires both hard work and analysis of unpalatable facts. One of these facts is that President Aliyev has been, for most of his tenure, relatively popular—Azerbaijan’s deplorable human rights situation notwithstanding.27 The failure to recognize this, together with the “two-pronged” approach discussed above, leads to blind alleys and false conclusions.

Evidence of the public’s attitude can be found in polling data released in early 2010 from the Friedrich Ebert Foundation28 revealing, among other things, that if protests occurred, a little over 10% of respondents would join the protesters. Sixty one per cent would remain neutral, and roughly 22% would “help the authorities to establish order.”

In a more recent poll (released in May of 2013), the Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC) found that 29% of Azeris believe that “people should participate in protest actions”—the lowest percentage by far of the three South Caucasus states.29 By contrast, some 43% of respondents said that people should not participate.
Recent Events

(The wording here is significant. The Friedrich Ebert Foundation asked if respondents “would join” the protests, while CRRC asked three years later if respondents thought people “should” protest—which may account for the 19% difference. Merely believing that other people should participate in demonstrations and asserting that one would actually join in are two different things—as are clicking the “I’m going” button on a Facebook protest page and actually showing up to get tear gassed.)

The 61% neutrality figure from the 2010 survey is consistent with what I’ve observed in Azerbaijan, and while that can’t be terribly reassuring for President Aliyev, it’s not exactly a ringing endorsement of the opposition new wave, and flies in the face of their extravagant claims to represent the aspirations of “the people.”

Despite the hyperbole of those who warn that Azerbaijan is heading toward a revolution, this outcome is unlikely. Ideological rhetoric about freedom of speech mouthed by university-educated activists from TV studios in Berlin or on Facebook is lost on people in rural Azerbaijan who have no jobs, no computers, and no toilets in their homes. The internet “penetration rate” is thus meaningless to most people in the regions, where the actual resistance to government corruption and abuse is taking place.

Though many of the new wave dismiss the opposition old guard as irrelevant, the latter have done a much better job of connecting with the regions, mainly due to the simple fact that they have been around longer and can still utilize the remnants of their party infrastructure. Both Musavat and the Popular Front Party have a recognized history and presence in the regions that the new wave lacks.

Azerbaijan’s voiceless and powerless may yet produce something that resembles an uprising, although more frequent, uncoordinated eruptions are probably where the country is headed. They will occur in isolated geographic pockets and won’t be “virtually inspired.” The interactive twitter maps with dazzling nodes of color stretching over national boundaries and continents will be about the observers, not the participants.

A civil war is not in the offing, but the near-term future looks to be increasingly unstable as an election approaches.

Karl Rahder (U Chicago, MA 1989) was for many years the South Caucasus correspondent for ISN Security Watch, and has taught international relations at universities in the US and the former Soviet Union.

Endnotes for this article are available online at ceeres.uchicago.edu/azerbaijan-spring2013

Image from page 3: Photo by Aziz Karimov.
Image from page 4: World Economic Forumswiss-image.ch/. Photo by Christof Sonderegger.

Recent Events

Traveling feminisms? Women of the Extreme Right in Europe
February 27, 2013

This year, the Iris Marion Young Distinguished Faculty Lecture, sponsored each year by the Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality, focused on women in Eastern Europe. The lecture, entitled “Traveling feminisms? Women of the Extreme Right in Europe,” was delivered by Susan Gal (Anthropology, CEERES Acting Director). In her lecture, Gal noted that, despite the trust of international agencies in women’s supposed pacifism, all over the continent women are increasingly active as leaders and participants in far right parties that claim to support gender equality while also promoting xenophobic policies.
This workshop gave participants an opportunity to familiarize themselves with existing tools and methodologies for digital mapping, to identify new and continuing work in this area, and to determine the key objectives of these types of projects. The workshop brings together specialists in the use of digital mapping technologies and scholars working on the linguistic, cultural and literary aspects of mapping time and space. Special emphasis was placed on the mapping of Slavic and Eurasian materials.

This annual graduate student conference gave doctoral students in Slavic Studies from around the country an opportunity to present and discuss their research. The two-day event included four panels—Central European Performativity, Linguistics, History and Narrative, and, finally, a panel devoted to recent research on Pushkin. The keynote address, “Movement Through Time and Space: Dersu Uzala from Arseniev’s Diaries to Kurosawa’s Film,” was provided by Postdoctoral Fellow Olga Solovieva (Committee on Social Thought).

In recent decades, the professions and disciplines concerned with the human mind, brain and behavior (“the psy-ences”) have undergone significant changes in the countries of East Central Europe and Eurasia. These transformations have articulated with global trends in mental health, but are also specific to the political economic collapse of the U.S.S.R. and other socialist states. This conference, organized by Eugene Raikhel (Comparative Human Development), explored these aspects of the psy-ences together. The event was attended by an interdisciplinary group of scholars from the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Biological Sciences.

This event, organized by Olga Solovieva (Committee on Social Thought) introduced Akira Kurosawa’s cinematic adaptations of Russian literature through a series of screenings—The Idiot (1951), Ikiru (1952), The Lower Depths (1957), and Dersu Uzala (1975). These four cinematic masterpieces are based respectively on works by Dostoevsky, Tolstoi, Gorky, and Arseniev. Each screening began with a 10-minute introduction and was followed by a Q&A period. A roundtable, which included scholars in the East Asian Studies as well as Cinema Studies, concluded the three-day event.
Recent and Upcoming Events

2012–2013 Speaker Series

Throughout the 2012–2013 academic year, CEERES held a lecture series on topics surrounding the Caucasus region. We were proud to welcome the following eight scholars to campus this to give talks in the “Connecting with the Caucasus” series, which will be followed by next year’s conference on languages and cultures of the North Caucasus.

October 23: Sergey Markedonov (Center for Strategic and International Studies)
The Caucasus Region at the Geopolitical and Security Crossroads

November 27: Michael Khodarkovsky (Loyola-Chicago)
Empire and Identity in the Russian Conquest of the North Caucasus

January 15: Tamara Sivertseva (Independent Scholar)
Education of Women in Azerbaijan: The Case Study of School Education in Southern Azerbaijan

February 12: Georgi Derluguian (NYU Abu Dhabi)
Guns, Maize, and Foreign Trade: The Origins of Democratic Polis in the Eighteenth-century Caucasus

April 9 & 10: John Graham (Princeton)
The Last Master: Georgian Orthodoxy and the Oral Chant Tradition
Workshop-Masterclass on Georgian Traditional Music

April 15: Ramaz Kurdadze (Tbilisi State)
Georgian Script and Literary Language through Centuries

May 14: Tasha Vorderstrasse (Oriental Institute, UChicago)
Medieval Wall Paintings of Georgia: Iconography of Patronage

May 21: Stephen Jones (Mount Holyoke)
Why the Saakashvili System Failed

For more information on these talks as well as recordings of many of the lectures in this series, visit ceeres.uchicago.edu/caucasus.

Upcoming Events

Summer Teacher Institute
Natural Disasters and Social Responses: A Global Perspective
July 9–11, 2013

This interdisciplinary 3-day institute will explore the challenges involved in understanding and responding to natural disasters around the globe. Faculty, staff, and graduate students from the University of Chicago and other educational institutions from around the country will speak each day. Intended primarily for elementary through community college educators, but open to all interested parties, the Institute will address each theme through a series of presentations and discussions of curriculum development.

For more information and to register visit http://cis.uchicago.edu/outreach/summerinstitute/2013/.

19th Biennial Conference on Balkan and South Slavic Linguistics, Literature and Folklore
April 25–27, 2014

The series of conferences on Balkan and South Slavic Linguistics, Literature, and Folklore was initiated in 1978 by a small group of Balkan linguists at the University of Chicago. A conference has been held every two years since then, with this year’s conference returning to the UC.
New Reference Materials: A Selection


Thaw Cinema. Pittsburgh: University Center for Russian and East European Studies, 200-?. [CDRom PN1993.5.R8T439 2000z Mansueto] [An annotated catalog of over 300 feature films, with biographical entries, filmographies, bibliographies]

Novyi i polnyi geograficheskii slov' Rossiiskago Gosudarstva: ili, Leksikon, opisuiushchii... namiestnichesa, oblasti i uiiezdy... Moskva: Sekachev, 1788-1789. 6v. facsimile reprint [DK14.N68 2010 Slavic Reference, 4th Floor Reading Room]

Ekologicheskaia entsiklopediia v 6 tomakh. Moskva: 2008- v. 1- [QH540.4.E44 2008 Slavic Reference, 4th Floor Reading Room]

New Films


Comrades. Steel Mill Soccer. Richard Denton and Janet McFadden, directors. [VideCass GV944.S645C65 1986] [Shows the Soviet Union’s Lenin Tube-Rolling Mill soccer team preparing for the big match against their arch-rivals the Synthetic Rubber Factory]

Comrades. The Trial of Tamara Russo. Richard Denton and Janet McFadden, directors. [HV6295.M629C65 1986] [Shows Lyubov Bubulich, a people’s judge in a small town in Soviet Moldavia, as he judges trials involving theft, divorce, brawling, and alcohol-related offenses. Also shows him judging the trial of Tamara Russo through the opening formalities to the evidence, verdict, and sentencing.]

Comrades. Hunter and Son. Richard Denton and Richard Ellison, directors. [VidCass SK283.6.R8C65 1986] [Shows Soviet Mikhail Kuzakov, a professional fur trapper, hunting from horseback with a pack of well-trained dogs in the forests of the Siberian taiga]


Despair. Rainer Werner Fassbinder. [DVD PN1997.2.D476 2011] [based on the Nabokov novel]

Richter: l’insoumis. Burno Monsaingeon, director. [DVD ML417.R38R53 2012] [Documentary on the life and art of Soviet pianist Sviatoslav Richter, as related through interviews with the pianist, family members and artists, including Glenn Gould, Artur Rubinstein, and the pianist’s wife, Nina Doliac.]


Svetut e goliam i spasenie debne otvsiakude = The world is big and salvation lurks around the corner. Stephan Komandarev, director. [DVD PN1997.2.S9405 2011] [based on Iliia Troianov’s autobiography]


New Exhibits


by June Pachuta Farris
Bibliographer for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies

Each civilization, each government and society has had to come to terms with the tension between the individual and the state, of what can be done, said, written, researched, read, performed, painted, photographed or texted, and what is deemed harmful to the state and its citizens and by whom this is to be decided. In this exhibit we catch a glimpse into the past and present of nearly 300 years of censorship in Russia.
As the nations of the west slowly and haltingly began to limit the restrictions of censorship, Tsarist Russia was just beginning to impose and broaden its reach. And in the 20th century, the Soviet Union expanded censorship to new and horrific depths. Marianna Tax Choldin (Ph.D, University of Chicago, 1979), a noted authority on the censorship of both periods, has coined a phrase, now taken up by many in Russia who write about censorship—OMNİCENSORSHIP (ВСЕЦЕНЗУРА)—the Soviet version of censorship, unacknowledged officially, but all-pervasive, and woven through the entire fabric of Soviet society. All citizens—scholars, scientists, artists, composers, librarians, teachers, journalists—knew not only what they MUST NOT do, but also what they MUST do in order to get ahead or in the worst of times, just to survive. If unexpressed thoughts could have been censored, they would have been, and indeed, in the darkest days of the Stalinist purges, it seems as if they sometimes were. Self-censorship was, by necessity, an integral part of the system.

First in the era of the “The Thaw” (early 1960s) and then again in the era of Glasnost’ (late 1980s), there were signs, at least in some areas, of more permissiveness, a greater freedom of artistic expression. In the introduction to The Red Pencil: Artists, Scholars, and Censors in the USSR, Maurice Friedberg and Marianna Tax Choldin wrote: “What is at issue in this age of glasnost is whether the oppressive status quo will remain in place, whether all cultural and intellectual life in the USSR will be continued to be controlled by a faceless censor endowed with unlimited powers or whether some degree, however modest, of procedural legality is to be introduced.” [pp. xvi-xvii]

The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 brought new hope that a civil society, based upon just such a system of procedural legality, would develop. Twenty-two years later the issue is unresolved and the battle rages on: unlimited censorship vs. freedom of the press.

In the first half of 2013, CEERES collaborated with the Central Eurasian Studies Committee to hold a lecture series on topics in Central Eurasian history and culture.

**February 15: Ryan Perkins (UChicago)**
Honor Killings, Cultural Tropes and the Question of Afghan Historical Agency

**February 18: Douglas Northrop (Michigan)**
Earthquakes and Empire in Eurasia

**February 22: John Woods (UChicago)**
Framing the Timurid Aristocratic Order

**March 8: Heather Sonntag (Wisconsin-Madison)**
The Visual Contest for Colonizing Central Asia: Russian Photography, Album Mania and Territorializing Turkestan

**May 17: Uli Schamiloglu (Wisconsin-Madison)**
The Black Death and Religiosity in the Muslim Turkic World (14th-15th Centuries)

**May 24: Marianne Kamp (Wyoming)**
Sharia, Socialism, and Rights: The 1917 Debate in the Muslim Women’s Association, Kazan

For more information on the Central Eurasian Studies Committee visit centralasia.uchicago.edu.
Faculty News

Philip Bohlman (Music)
Went on European tour with the New Budapest Orpheum Society, the Ensemble-in-Residence in the Humanities Division, for which he serves as Artistic Director, performing a series of commemoration concerts responding to the eighty years since the fascist seizure of power in January 1933, among others, at the Jewish Museum of Berlin and the European Center for Jewish Music in Hanover.

Received Guggenheim Fellowship to work on his book project, “Music after Nationalism.”

Victor A. Friedman (Slavic, Linguistics, CEERES Director)

Publications

Articles


Newspaper Article


Edited Collection


Lectures


Saddlebags and Free Lunches: Translating a Nineteenth-Century Bulgarian Classic. Department of Translation and Interpreting Studies, School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics, Monash University, Melbourne. March 21, 2013

Linguistic Morbidity and Vitality: The Sprachbund vs. the Nation-State in the Balkans. University of Adelaide, School of Humanities, Department of Linguistics. March 27, 2013.

Evidentiality, Narrativity, and the Balkan Sprachbund. Department of Linguistics, School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. April 10, 2013.
Typology and Areality in the Balkans: A View from the Field. Center for research on Language Diversity, La Trobue University, Melbourne, Australia. April 11, 2013.

**Interviews**

March 7, 2013 - Macedonian Radio, 103.3 Mac FM (Melbourne, Australia)
March 7, 2013 - Macedonian Television, Channel 31 (Melbourne, Australia)

**Susan Gal (Anthropology, CEERES Acting Director)**

**Lectures**

Traveling feminisms? Women of the extreme right in Europe. Iris Marion Young Distinguished Faculty Lecture, University of Chicago Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality. February 27, 2013

**Bozena Shallcross (Slavic)**

**Articles**


**Conferences**


**Olga Solovieva (Committee on Social Thought)**

**Conferences**


**Lectures**

Movement Through Time and Space: From Arseniev’s Diaries to Kurosawa’s Film. Keynote address at the University of Chicago Slavic Forum. April 12, 2013.

Kurosawa’s Russia. University of Chicago, Committee on Social Thought. May 28, 2013

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**Student and Alumni News**

**Madeleine Elfenbein (NELC)**

Won the Social Sciences Research Council International Dissertation Research Fellowship.

**Kristy Ironside (History)**

Won and accepted the American Councils for Learned Societies Mellon Dissertation Completion Fellowship for 2013-2014.

**John McCannon (PhD 1994, History)**

Accepted a position at Southern New Hampshire University in 2011.

**Books**


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**Congratulations to our 2013-2014 FLAS recipients!**

**Summer**

Alison Davis (Divinity) Czech
Eric Phillips (History) Czech
Giovanni Ricci (Anthro) Czech
Cheryl Stephenson (Slavic) Czech
Claire Roosien (NELC) Turkish
Monica Feliz (Comp Lit) Russian

**Academic Year**

Ilana Miller (History) Polish
Jonah Simpson (Anthro) Russian
Eric Phillips (History) Czech
Ksenia Ershova (Linguistics) Georgian
Diana Ohanian (History) Armenian
John Doyle Wagner (Slavic) Russian
Patrick Lewis (Anthro) Turkish
Siddkesh Mukerji (SSA) Russian
Kara Anne Peruccio (CMES) Turkish
Daniel Phillips (Art History) Polish

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NATURAL DISASTERS & SOCIAL RESPONSES
A Global Perspective

Summer Teacher Institute
July 9-11, 2013
University of Chicago

DAY 1
Defining and Anticipating Disaster

DAY 2
Engaging Crisis

DAY 3
Hidden Costs and Long Term Effects

18 CPDUs for 3-day attendance

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