

Newsnotes: 2CUL Russian, Eurasian & East European Studies Resources. **No. 30, Winter/Spring 2025**

Dear Colleagues:

I hope that you have enjoyed a restful break, and recharged for the challenges of a new semester.

I have a bit of news: at the end of July, I will be retiring from my duties at Columbia and Cornell. I began working in the field of Slavic and East European librarianship in January of 1987, fresh out of the history program at Columbia. Thirty-eight years in a profession is a long time, but I have enjoyed (almost) every minute of it! During my tenure here on Morningside Heights, just from current approval materials alone, dated 2008-2025, the collections have grown by more than 135,000 items. Moreover, they are remarkably diverse in terms of languages and cultures represented, which is a source of great pride. At Columbia, while you have the expected large numbers for certain languages--51,484 titles in Russian, 19,631 Polish, and 12,303 items in Ukrainian, you also have significant growth in some thirty other languages−including 148 in Yakut! At Cornell, which traditionally has collected in a more narrow range of languages, we have added more than 54,561 titles with imprint dates 2010-2025 in 55 languages, with Russian (32,569 records), Serbian (6,241), and Romanian (3,799) as the three largest intake languages. In addition, these numbers exclude the literally thousands of titles received as gifts, or via antiquarian purchase during my tenure at both institutions. Nor does it include e-books and other electronic resources acquired.

Another great source of pride are the strides we have made to better coordinate and make more efficient our inter-institutional collecting. With our partners Cornell, NYPL, Harvard and Princeton, we have been able to obtain more materials, in more languages, by avoiding duplication. Given rising costs and an ever-increasing volume of published material, in both traditional and electronic formats, working together across libraries is the only way to meet these challenges.

Since I am neither a golfer nor a pickleball player, I intend to stay busy by continuing to contribute publications, and conference presentations on library-related topics. I hope to see you from time-to-time around campus, which has been a vital part of my life since 1978.

It has been a great honor to work with all of you, and these remarkable collections. I have tried to enhance them, keep them linguistically diverse, and address your research needs in the process. Thank you for your input and steadfast support!

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CURRENT APPROVAL ACQUISITIONS

At the halfway point of our Fiscal Year, our mostly-in-country vendors continue to send along carefully selected materials according to our subject profile. As of this writing, Columbia has received from Botimpex (Tirana): 336 titles; Bouchal (Budapest) 144; Derex (Bucharest) 403; EastView (Minneapolis, but with offices throughout the former Soviet Union) 363; Isajevych (Kyiv/Lviv) 288; Kozmenko (Moscow/Erevan): 709; Lexicon (Warsaw) 101; MIPP (Vilnius) 67 (most in Russian); Regula Pragensis (Prague) 112; Serbica (Toronto) 67; Sofia Books (Sofiia) 503; and University Press (Sarajevo) 438. To date, these represent an expense of $138,473 at a per-unit average of $39.62. Cornell has thus far received 795 titles from Kozmenko, 116 from MIPP (mostly Russian), 135 from Serbica, and 649 from EastView (in various languages).

ANTIQUARIAN ACQUISITIONS

Cornell's outstanding Human Sexuality Collection added:

- Petrov, D. *Eroticheskiy goroskop*. [Erotic Horoscope]. (Moscow: gay newspaper 1/10, 1994). Complete with 12 postcards, a collection of homoerotic drawings, accompanied by verses, which relate to each zodiac sign.



- Glazkova, N.A. *Vostochnaia kul'tura seksa*. *Tantra-yoga* [The Eastern culture of sex. Tantric yoga] (Leningrad: Chelovek, 1991). Illustrated by A. Nechaev. One of the first Soviet guidebooks on tantric yoga, as well as a broad variety of subjects on sexuality, including chapters on 'Erotic wear', 'The moral of sex' and hygiene.

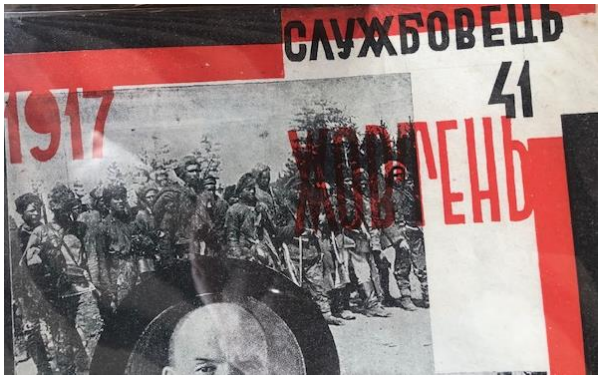
- Zbignev, Lev. *Seks v kul'turakh mira* [Sex in world cultures]. (Moscow: Mysl', 1991). An illustrated encyclopaedia on sex, one of the earliest editions of the kind in USSR. Some of the art used in the edition are of Russian origin, including a few works by Konstantin Somov.

- *Skazka o Mikolke durake i o nemke bludnitse i o Grichke rasputnoi shishke* [Tale of Nikolka the Fool and the German Whore, and Grichka, the Lewd Knob]. [N.p.]: Elektropechatnia Uspekh, ([Petrograd?, 1917]. A rare example of the pirate edition circulated at the frontlines in the final stages of World War I. The book alludes to Tsar Nicholas, Empress Aleksandra, and Rasputin.

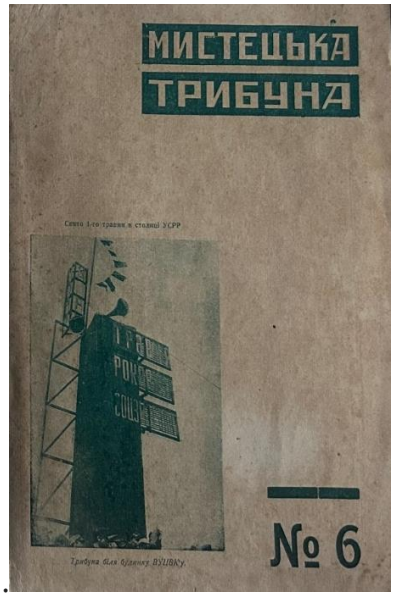


Columbia acquired two interwar Ukrainian titles reflecting the design aesthetics of the day:

- *Sluzhbovets: Orhan VUK ta Kharkivs'koi okruzhnoi filii profspil'ky radotorshluzhbotstiv* [Civil Servant: Organ of the All-Ukrainian & Kharkiv Regional Trade Union] (Kharkiv, 1925-1931). Twenty-six issues, specifically for: 1926: 15, 21, 26, 31. 1927: 7, 42. 1928: 3, 4, 25, 33, 41, 47. 1929: 25, 41, 42, 43, 46. 1930: 2, 8, 12, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 28. Only partial holdings at the Ukrainian National Library, Kyiv and the Russian State Library, Moscow.



- *Mystets'ka trybuna* [Art Tribune]/ (Kharkiv: All-Ukrainian Union of Art Workers, 1930-1931). Four issues, specifically for: *1930: 2, 6, 10, 11*. No holding institutions in WorldCat.



GIFTS

Adam Drozdek donated twelve Polish books lacking in our ReCAP collections, dating from 1955-2017.

Stephen Kit of Ontario donated his mother's reminiscences of the village of Korchmyn. (published in 2002 as Volume 3 of the Library of Zakerzonnia by the Association of Ukrainians "Zakerzonnia". The volume comprises both the memoirs of Anna Leskiw-Kit and the transcribed memoirs of her brother, Mykhailo Leskiw, who was a soldier in the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA).

Professor **Liza Knapp** added a number of Russian and English titles lacking in ReCAP holdings.

Cornell added several volumes of Soviet-era works on genetics and Darwin, given by Professor James Catalfamo.

Paul Michael Taylor of the Smithsonian donated additional volumes from his personal library lacking from our holdings. The items cover many languages and subject areas.

My University of Washington colleague **Michael Biggins** donated a book in English about Bucharest as a topic in Romanian literature (Brussels, 2002).

Former Columbia Libraries staff member **Enerel Dambiinyam** donated a publication on the subject of her father, the renowned Buryat/Mongolian architect Dambiinyam Bandi Enerel translated, edited, and compiled this book to accompany an exhibition in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, to commemorate his 100th birthday.

Cornell's President White Professor of History and Political Science (*Emeritus*) **Matthew Evangelista** donated rare titles picked up in Tomsk some two decades ago.

ARCHIVAL MATERIALS

Columbia's Bakhmeteff Archives:

Supplemented its holdings of the papers of the artist **Serge Hollerbach** (1914-2019. Five additional boxes of material donated after his death.
https://findingaids.library.columbia.edu/ead/nnc-rb/ldpd_7227044/dsc/7

Aleksandr Shteinberg papers, 1956-2005 Includes "Correspondence, books with inscriptions, and research notes of a Russian immigrant from Leningrad/St. Petersburg who befriended many Russian dissident poets such as Joseph Brodsky, Lev Losev, Aleksandr Kushner, among others. The majority of this collection consists of books with inscription of significant scholarly value. Some of those inscriptions may light shed on the creative methods of Russian dissident poets."
https://findingaids.library.columbia.edu/ead/nnc-rb/ldpd_18609298

ELECTRONIC ACQUISITIONS

Columbia added a newly-published ProQuest module (Collection 63) of the Digital National Security Archive (DNSA-63): *U.S.-Russia Relations: From the Fall of the Soviet Union to the Rise of Putin, 1991-2000*. https://resolver.library.columbia.edu/clio4750105

According to its published description:

"This curated collection of documents covers the formative period of U.S.-Russian relations from the birth of the new Russia in December 1991 through January 2001. It captures the highest peaks of cooperative relations under presidents Boris Yeltsin and Bill Clinton as well as the first notes of discord under Vladimir Putin. The product of years of archival research and hundreds of targeted Freedom of Information Act requests, this unparalleled collection features a full set of memoranda of conversations between Yeltsin, Putin, and Clinton; correspondence between the top leaders; hundreds of high-level memos from members of the Clinton administration; and analyses and assessments of the defense capabilities of the new Russia. Among other core topics, the set closely tracks negotiations on nuclear arms reductions, nonproliferation, and the

withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan and their dismantlement in Russia. The collection also covers the Russian wars in Chechnya and Russian participation in peacekeeping in the former Yugoslavia. Many documents deal with one of the most controversial issues in U.S.-Russian relations – the expansion of NATO to Eastern and Central Europe."

We are also at this very moment in the process of acquiring access to two interesting electronic resources for Columbia. The first is a searchable AI-generated English translation of the long-running journal *Iskusstvo kino* (Moscow, 1931-2023), which will open the content of the journal to readers without a knowledge of Russian. Described

The second is a collection of forty-seven Russian-language newspapers, 2014-2023, published in the occupied territories of Eastern Ukraine. A description is found at https://www.eastview.com/resources/newspapers/eastern-ukraine-newspaper-collection/

Both resources will be available to current affiliates via the EastView platform: https://resolver.library.columbia.edu/clio4320231

PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

One of the most useful tools for getting one's research accessible is Columbia's Academic Commons. This site makes one's publications freely accessible for download. In my own case, it really extends the "reach" of one's *oeuvre*. For example, as of December 2024, *Checklist of Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian Avant-Garde and Modernist Books, Serials and Works on Paper at The New York Public Library and Columbia University Libraries* has been downloaded 5,430 times since 2015; *Eastern European Modernism: Works on Paper at the Columbia University Libraries and the Cornell University Library*, 3,356, and *The Russian and Early Soviet Sheet Music Collection, The Columbia University Libraries: An Introduction*, 3,022 downloads,

By contrast, print copies of my *Slavic and Baltic Library Resources at The New York Public Library: A First History and Practical Guide* (New York/Los Angeles, 1994), with an introduction by George F. Kennan, are listed in only 73 libraries in WorldCat.



In Boston, yours truly presented on the 125th anniversary of the establishment of The New York Public Library's Slavic collections. I was joined on a panel by my colleagues Dr. Lukáš Babka

(Slovanská knihovna, Prague), Dr. Irma Rejonin (Slaavilainen kirjasto, Helsinki), and Dr. Bogdan Horbal (NYPL).

EXHIBITIONS

The Harriman Atrium is currently hosting the panel exhibit *Lens on a Century: Documentary Photographic Albums From the Slavic, East European and Eurasian Collections of The Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford University*. Curated by **Edward Kasinec**, Hoover Institute, Stanford University/Research Associate, Harriman Institute, with Design by **Remy Chwae**. https://harriman.columbia.edu/event/exhibit-lens-on-a-century-documentary-photographic-albums-from-the-slavic-east-european-and-eurasian-collections-of-the-hoover-institution-library-archives-stanford-university/

The Slavic, East European and Eurasian archival collections of the Hoover Institution Library & Archives have long been regarded as one of the premier resources of their kind outside the homelands. Perhaps less well appreciated are Hoover's extraordinary holdings of tens of thousands of photographs, both "loose" prints and in hundreds of collector-assembled albums found in collections relating to the vast expanse of the Caucasus, the Balkans, Eastern and Central Europe, the Baltics, and of course, Russia and the former Soviet Union.

This exhibit in twenty-five panels seeks to provide a "lens" on a period from circa 1899 to the post-World War II era as prismed through a necessarily very small selection of documentary photographic albums, selected from the hundreds found within the Hoover's archival collections.

IN CLOSING

I have had the privilege of serving as a staff member at three great Slavic and East European collections during my career: The New York Public Library, under the mentorship of the incomparable Edward Kasinec, for twenty-two years, Columbia since 2008, and Cornell since 2010. Collections that began actively collecting in these many languages in 1899, 1903, and 1884, respectively. Playing a small part in building upon the broad and deep legacy collections of these three institutions has been the honor of a lifetime. Helping to continue to bring to these shores the intellectual and cultural output of the diverse lands of Eastern and Central Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia is a most satisfying way to have lived one's professional life.

My strong suggestion to students and faculty is to never, ever, ever take these great resources for granted. Impactful changes can occur at even the greatest of institutions.

Please stay engaged with library administrations, academic colleagues, and my eventual successor to keep our collections and robust collecting moving forward.

Thank you.