

Researcher Hanna Smith, Minister for International Development Pekka Haavisto and Professor Pekka Sutela were well primed to answer even the trickiest questions about the present Russia-Ukraine conflict at the University of Helsinki Think Corner on 31 March. Read more on page 4.

VISITING SCHOLARS PROGRAMME MORE POPULAR THAN EVER

The call for Aleksanteri Visiting Fellowships for the academic year 2014–2015 was open until 24 February 2014. Altogether, a record number of 176 applications were received from 40 countries; the top three applicant countries were Russia, the USA and the UK.

The selection of the fellows for the academic year 2014–2015 will be concluded in April 2014. Stays of 1–3 months at the Aleksanteri Institute will be granted.

[Learn about the current Visiting Fellows on page 7](#)

ALEKSANTERI CONFERENCE 2014, CALL FOR PAPERS OPEN UNTIL MAY 15TH

The 14th Annual Aleksanteri Conference: *Restructuring State and Society in Russia* will examine the intersections of and interrelationships between state and society in Russia and other post-Communist countries.

The multidisciplinary conference will take place at the University of Helsinki on October 22–24, 2014. Proposals for panels and individual papers are invited by May 15, 2014.

[Read more on page 3](#)

14th Annual
**Aleksanteri
Conference**

FACE OF THE MONTH: ALEXEI YURCHAK

Saara Ratilainen

A close scrutiny of the decades-long scientific work devoted to **Lenin's** embalmed body opens up a unique perspective on the meta-history of the Soviet project and the impetus behind it, which were not articulated but still taken as truth in the Soviet Union, argues **Alexei Yurchak**, Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley. Currently in Helsinki for three months as a Visiting Scholar at the Aleksanteri Institute, he is fully focused on completing his monograph on the experimental science that developed around the project of preserving Lenin's body in Moscow and on the link of this science to political imagination.

Lenin's tomb on Moscow's Red Square attracts visitors from all over the world, and the periodically posed question of whether the former leader should be buried reminds us of Lenin's significance as the master symbol of the Soviet Union. Lying in a glass coffin, dressed in a black suit, and surrounded by security guards, this body, as Dr. Yurchak points out, represents the "hyper-normalized" Soviet discourse, which positioned Lenin as the ultimate source of truth. Hence the poet **Vladimir Mayakovsky's** famous slogan, "Lenin lived, lives, and will live!" To preserve that truth, Lenin's body has also been subject to a different discursive treatment outside the official canon – that of meticulous scientific elaboration of his physical remains, which symbolically materialise that truth.

Through repeated chemical procedures scientists have managed to preserve Lenin's external appearance, the texture of his muscles, the functionality of his joints, and even his body weight exactly as they were at the moment of his death. In this process, the original matter of this body has been gradu-

ally replaced with synthetic substances and liquids, though the physical appearance of the leader has "formally" remained unchanged. Based on this scientific preservation of "the master sign," the Soviet discourse of truth remains anchored in the physical body of its source. As Dr. Yurchak argues, Lenin's "second body" of scientific elaboration shows that "the production of Lenin as symbol was carried out not by ideologists but by scientists," and therefore the specific anatomy of Lenin's cells and joints has a direct link to the role that the reconstructed "Lenin" plays as the leader and the master symbol of the Soviet polity.

The work on Lenin's body is conducted at the "Lenin Lab," a branch of the All-Russian Research Institute for Medicinal and Aromatic Plants in Moscow. In its heyday the Institute functioned as an internationally renowned scientific centre, housing some information that was deemed a state secret. Its scientists' expertise was also utilised to preserve several leaders in other communist and quasi-communist countries, and experiments on different techniques for processing Lenin's body even resulted in several breakthroughs in modern medicine. During the post-Soviet period, however, the Institute has faced serious economic difficulties and problems with raising a new generation of scientists.

While the lab has provided essential material for Dr. Yurchak's research, acquiring access to the Institute's archives and gaining the employees' trust have been the most challenging part of his project. In his analysis he combines disciplines ranging from Science Studies to Political Philosophy, History, and Comparative Anthropology of Kingships. "A spectacular case study like this consists of many paradoxes, as it presents an

exception to the norm of the society in question. This encourages the researcher to wear different 'goggles' as he tries to make sense of those paradoxes and eventually to reveal something formerly unseen," Dr. Yurchak concludes. ■

FACTS ABOUT ALEXEI YURCHAK

Visiting Fellow at the Aleksanteri Institute from March to May 2014

Associate Professor in Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley

Fellow at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies 2012-2013

Winner of the 2007 Wayne S. Vucinich Book Prize (ASEEES) for *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More*

Fellow at the International Center for Advanced Studies, New York University, 2005-2006

Fellow at the Centre for Research in Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, Cambridge University, 2003

Selected Publications:

Yurchak, A. (2006) *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Yurchak, A. (2014) *Eto bylo navsegda, poka etogo ne stalo: poslednee sovetskoe pokolenie*. Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie.

Yurchak, A. (forthcoming). *Form Versus Matter: Religious Saints and Lenin's Body*, Collegium, Studies Across Disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences, Special Issue on: Death, Dying and Mortality (University of Helsinki).

Yurchak, A. (forthcoming) *If Lenin Were Alive He Would Know What to Do: Naked Life of the Leader*, Qui Parle.

Yurchak, A. (2011) "A Parasite from Outer Space: How Sergei Kurekhin Proved that Lenin Was a Mushroom", *Slavic Review*, 70, 1.

Yurchak, A. (2008) "Necro-Utopia: The Politics of Indistinction and the Art of the Non-Soviet", *Current Anthropology*, 49, 2.



Alexei Yurchak will present his current research "Lenin's body: the politics of science and history" at the Visiting Fellows Research Seminar on May 8 at 14.15 at the Aleksanteri Institute. Welcome!

14th Annual Aleksanteri Conference

CALL FOR PAPERS OPEN UNTIL MAY 15TH

The 14th Annual International Aleksanteri Conference, *Restructuring State and Society in Russia*, will be held on October 22–24, 2014 at the University of Helsinki.

The aim of the conference is to bring together scholars, experts and advanced graduate students from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds to examine the intersections of and interrelationships between state and society in Russia and other post-Soviet and post-Communist countries.

PROPOSALS FOR PANELS AND INDIVIDUAL PAPERS ARE INVITED UNTIL MAY 15, 2014.

See the conference website for detailed information www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/conference2014

CONFIRMED KEYNOTE SPEAKERS AND TITLES:

- Professor **Alexander Etkind**, European University Institute, Florence (Italy): “Towards a Critical Theory of Hyper-Extractive State: An Exemplary Case of Russia”
- Professor **Steven Hanson**, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg (USA): “Russia, Ukraine, and the Borders of Europe”
- Professor **Oleg Kharkhordin**, European University at St. Petersburg (Russia): “Is Russia Doomed to Creativity? Technology, Entrepreneurship and Society in Russia in Comparative Perspective”
- Professor **Alena Ledeneva**, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College, London (UK): “Russia’s Practical Norms and Informal Governance: Modernisation v. Corruption”
- **Maria Lipman**, editor-in-chief, Pro et Contra, Moscow Carnegie Center (Russia): “The Kremlin’s Ideological Turn: Causes, Content, and Consequences”

The keynote abstracts are now available at www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/conference2014/speakers.htm

Members of the Advisory board Charlotta Tallqvist-Cederberg, Henrik Lax, Ilkka Herlin, Paula Lehtomäki, Jaakko Iloniemi, Martti Häikiö, and Heleena Savela.

ADVISORY BOARD DISCUSSED UKRAINE

The critical situation in Ukraine was at the forefront of discussions during the annual meeting of the Aleksanteri Institute’s Advisory Board on 31 March, 2014. Minister **Jaakko Iloniemi**, chairman of the board, had just returned from Moscow, where there were many uncertainties in the air. One thing seems certain, however: if one wants to understand Russian politics, it is advisable to study carefully the speeches of President **Vladimir Putin**.

Mr. Putin’s speech was exactly the starting point of **Hanna Smith’s** analysis of Russia foreign policy. The speech in question, however, was one from 1999. Smith pointed out that all key elements were already visible then, including the idea of Russia as a Great Power with legitimate interests outside its own borders, which must be globally recognised. Smith outlined three foreign policy projects with which Russia has been preoccupied with during recent years. The first concerns Eurasian integration, the second is about using soft power in promoting the “Russian idea”, and the third concerns strengthening the status of the military. But the shared factor in all three is to increase Russia’s influence in the world.

Markku Kivinen presented a new invention created at the Aleksanteri Institute called RussiaHUB Helsinki, which gained much support from the board members. The hub strives to build new knowledge and increase societal outreach by bringing together key experts and institutions in the Helsinki region. ■

NEW EXECUTIVE BOARD APPOINTED

The Rector of the University of Helsinki has appointed a new executive board for the Aleksanteri Institute for the period of 1.4.2014 – 31.3.2018. Chairman of the board is Dean **Kimmo Nuotio** (Faculty of Law, University of Helsinki). Read more at www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/english/institute/executive_board.html

UPCOMING EVENTS

15.-16.4.

International symposium
“Evald Ilyenkov – Prospects and Retrospects in Philosophy and Psychology”
Arranged by the Aleksanteri Institute and CRADLE at the Aleksanteri Institute, Unioninkatu 33, Helsinki.

24.4., 8.5. and 22.5. at 14:15

Visiting Fellows Research Seminars at the Aleksanteri Institute. See p. 7 for a detailed schedule!

16.5.

Seminar: “Central Asia today: Geopolitics, economic relations and political culture”, at 9.15-11.30 at the Banquet hall, University of Helsinki Language Center, Fabianinkatu 26, 3rd floor.

26.5.

Seminar in cooperation with the association European Movement in Finland and the Alumni Society of the University of Helsinki: “EU-vaalien jälkeen: Itäryhmän kehitysnäkymät”, at 15.00-17.00 at Eurooppasali (Malminkatu 16, Helsinki)

26.-27.5.

International conference by the Aleksanteri Institute and the CoE in Russian Studies Choices of Russian Modernisation: “The Shrew Untamed: Cultural Mechanisms of Political Protest in Russia and the World”, at the Aleksanteri Institute.

More event information at:

www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/english/news





THE ROOTS OF THE CRISIS DISCUSSED AT THINK CORNER

Niina Into

In wars and conflicts, truth is always the first casualty. This old adage was the reason for **Pekka Haavisto**, Minister for International Development, to steer a panel discussion about the situation in Ukraine with the leading experts of the field: researcher **Hanna Smith** from the Aleksanteri Institute and Professor **Pekka Sutela** from the Lappeenranta University of Technology. Why have things in Crimea proceeded the way they have, and what might lie in the future for Ukraine, Russia and Europe generally?

The problem with Ukraine, according to Pekka Sutela, is that it has never been a truly sovereign state and never developed an economy or political structure of its own. It's wholly dependent on Russia. Thus every attempt to tighten its relations with the West in the foreseeable future are doomed to fail.

Hanna Smith also stated that Ukraine needs time and genuine will to build a working democracy and governmental structures. These cannot be superimposed by the EU. The EU-Ukraine association agreement and trade cooperation could only act as an unnecessary catalyst of juxtaposition, forcing Russia to prove its status as a superpower.

And that's exactly what's happening in Crimea. Both speakers agreed that the importance of Ukraine to Russia is not about raw materials or their trade routes; rather it is more symbolic. Russia has shown that its military forces are modern and ready. **Putin** is accruing support by acting as a strong leader, and as long as the sanctions threatened by the EU have little concrete effect on the Russian economy, his strategy will pay off.

It's impossible to say where the events will lead. It seems that the crisis has de-escalated for now, but Russia has shown that its actions can be sudden. The reactions from the West have so far been quite weak. Much depends on the upcoming presidential elections in Russia. As Pekka Haavisto said: "Russia becomes restless whenever there's uncertainty about how the future leader will be chosen."

The event brought over 80 people to the University of Helsinki Think Corner in the evening of 31 March. Various, often intricate questions came from the audience, and it was easy to see that this kind of forum is a very welcome form of interaction between the university, politics and larger society. ■

EXPERT VIEWS ON UKRAINE – ON THE VERGE OF CRIMEAN CRISIS

Niina Into

The Aleksanteri Institute invited journalists to hear the views of two experts on Ukraine and discuss the scenario on 6 March, at a time when the protests in Ukraine had just led to the exile of President **Viktor Yanukovich**.

Mark Teramae from the Aleksanteri Institute, a scholar focusing on Ukraine, has lived in that country in recent years. He outlined and analysed the meaning of EuroMaidan, the event that became the major symbol of the pro-EU protests in Ukraine. The initial demonstration was a moderate, unplanned gathering of 500-1000 people in November 2013, protesting against the last minute withdrawal from the EU-treaty. Some students got beaten up, which awoke wider protests against police brutality. Over the following months, over 1,000 000 people became involved in the demonstrations. "In contrast to the popular myth, the protesters came from every age group and linguistic background and from all over the country, not just the western regions," stated Teramae.

The role of the extreme right was quite small. The force labelled as the fascist nationalist movement consists of a mere 4000 - 5000 loosely organised radicals, and constituted a marginal fraction of the protesters.

According to Teramae, it's hardly probable that Pravyi Sektor would attract significant support in the long run. "But it's hard to say whom the Ukrainians will trust now."

Arseniy Svyrenenko presented recent surveys, showing that although there is a political divide between Ukrainian and Russian speakers, west and east, the situation is far from clear. The Ukrainian speaking people from the western regions have a strong Ukrainian identity while people in the predominantly Russian speaking regions identify themselves more with their local region, for example, as "Donetski". According to latest surveys, 65 % of citizens identify themselves as ethnic Ukrainians while 34 % share Russian ethnicity.

The question about language is even cloudier. People might declare that Ukrainian is their native language, but conduct their everyday life in Russian. Less than 40 % of all Ukrainians use the Ukrainian language at home. But this does not mean they see themselves as Russians. "A remarkable fact is that only a tiny fraction of youngest generation (under 30-year-old) interviewed both in Ukraine and Russia share the integrationist ideas concerning a possible union between these East Slavic states", said Svyrenenko.

What became clear was that there is no easy route to a working democracy in Ukraine. The subsequent events have, of course, complicated matters further, but the questions of identity still play a significant role in the conflict.

ACTIVE COOPERATION WITH THE MEDIA

The Ukrainian crisis has once more shown that expertise in the field of Russian and Eastern European studies has great value for the Finnish society. Researchers from the Aleksanteri Institute, particularly **Markku Kivinen**, **Markku Kangaspuro** and **Hanna Smith** have frequented in the media in January-March 2014. More than 120 interviews with our staff have been published since mid-January by the television, radio and press. For example, on March 3rd, our researchers appeared in the media eight times in one day.

More about our media activity at www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/ajankohtaista/mediassa.html

Left: Altogether 200 people found their way to Think Corner during the Sochi week.

Right: Markku Kangaspuro inspecting the Olympic torch on Friday.



PUTIN'S NARRATIVE OF STABILITY: RUSSIAN POLITICS IN A NUTSHELL?

Julia Gerlach

How can we make sense of Russia's recent political developments? Analysing political narratives, the 'stories' that political actors create, can contribute to a more holistic understanding of politics. This is particularly true for **Vladimir Putin's** narrative of stability (стабильность) that became prominent during the presidential election campaign of 2012. Stability refers to a not clearly tangible, yet positively-connoted equilibrium that is crisis-averse.

For Putin, stability has been both a political objective and a precondition for development. Depending on the spatial dimension, the connotation varies. Domestically, stability refers to the consolidation of the 'anti-1990s' or 'anti-crises' path that Putin initiated from 2000, based on the centralisation of power, and various 'unity' and 'security' measures. For the 'near abroad', stability means the compensation of loss – geopolitical, territorial, security, and civilizational – following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, for example, by the creation of the Eurasian Union. Globally, stability refers to a balance 'po russki' with Russia as a global player at eye level as opposed to unilateralism. Evidence can be found in Russia's engagement in the Syrian civil war.

The narrative of stability reflects four key elements and thus presents recent Russian politics in a nutshell: an analysis or construction of 'political reality' (diagnosis), focusing on the threat of instability; a mission (polity/ policy) for the improvement of 'political reality' (therapy) that allows the Putin administration to take any political action as long as it serves stability; a set of causes (explanation) and values or ideals (legitimation) to make sense of both diagnosis and therapy. ■

HEAD START TO THE SOCHI OLYMPICS. THEME WEEK AT THE THINK CORNER 2.-7.2.2014

Niina Into

When Russia and Sochi were chosen as the host for the 2014 Winter Olympics many had doubts about how it would all work out. Could Russia develop the critical infrastructure in time? How would spokespersons handle questions about inequality and human rights?

All these questions were discussed during a Sochi theme week organised by the Aleksanteri Institute at the University of Helsinki Think Corner. Each day had a different focus from Sochi's historical and geopolitical importance to corruption, minorities and human rights. The panel discussions and to-the-point presentations by scholars and leading experts both from the Aleksanteri Institute and other organisations such as the Paralympic Committee and SETA, a human rights association promoting LGBTI rights in Finland inspired a lively dialogue with the audience and in the media.

"We are all better off if the rival nations and ideologies meet on the sport ground instead of battle ground" was how **Markku**



Tiina Kivisaari from the Finnish Paralympic Committee and Aija Salo from SETA had somewhat differing views about the role of politics in sports.

Kivinen summed up the meaning of the games.

The week was brought to an almost surreal end by the arrival of the actual Olympic torch on Friday, brought by Professor **Lassi Heininen**, who was Finland's torch bearer on the epic voyage to the Arctic. ■

THREE DEFENCES IN MAY 2014

17.5. MA **Dima Yagodin** "The Blogization of Journalism. How Blogs Politicize Media and Social Space in Russia" at University of Tampere.

23.5. MA **Laura Lyytikäinen** "Performing Political Opposition in Russia. The Case of the Youth Movement Oborona" at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki.

31.5. MA **Miia Ijäs** "Res publica redefined? The Polish-Lithuanian transition period of the 1560s and 1570s in the context of European state formation processes" at University of Tampere.

NORDIC FUNDING FOR PHD SUMMER SCHOOL AND MA WEB-COURSE

Katja Lehtisaari

Nordic Russian Cooperation Programme in Education and Research, coordinated by Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU), has granted support of 48.827 euro for the project called Interaction and Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region – Coping with a Variety of Institutions, Practices and Values.

The project is coordinated by the Aleksanteri Institute. Other partners include European University at St. Petersburg, Russia and The Centre for Baltic and East European Studies, Södertörn University, Sweden. This network will organise a Summer School for PhD students in 2014 and based on this, a web-course for MA students in area studies. ■

MASTER'S SCHOOL EXCURSION TO KAZAKHSTAN

Kia-Riikka Repo, Laura Lakso

In March 2014 the master's school students arranged a field trip to exotic Kazakhstan and its most famous cities; the country's biggest city Almaty and the current capital Astana. From a Finnish point of view, famous probably is not the right word to describe this rather mysterious Central Asian country mostly known for its oil and gas resources, Soviet history, and *kokpar* – a sport which resembles equestrian polo except with a headless goat as a ball!

We were surprised to notice how modern these two cities in Kazakhstan were. There was no sign of yurts or horses, instead there were recycling points and cycling lanes. The skyscrapers of Astana and the giant Khan Shatyr mall – containing an indoor beach – showed the might of oil money.

Kazakhstan has recently emerged out of the status of developing country and is now commonly known as the 'big brother' of the Stans in a sense of modernisation and growing working opportunities. Although there are still problems related to freedom of the press and NGO activities in Kazakhstan, the country seems eager to take influence from the West. The future will show if these oil-rich Western-orientated Post-Soviet countries have developed faster than Russia itself!

The excursion included meetings with UN, OSCE and EU delegations, which deepened our understanding of the political and social aspects of the country. Other interesting and eventful visits took the group to a Gulag museum, a Carlsberg factory, President Nazarbayev University, the Chevron oil company, the Finpro trade organisation and finally the Embassy of Finland. We learned that around forty Finnish companies are already doing business in Kazakhstan, and the country would be happy to welcome more. Prior to us, the delegation of Finland's parliament with **Eero Heinäluoma** visited Astana to promote trade between the two countries.

A special mention for Kazakh cuisine: after a long day of sightseeing nothing is better for dinner than a typical Kazakh dish: traditional boiled lamb's head. ■



The Master's School group at Shymbulak ski centre near Almaty.

EAST EUROPEAN RESEARCH GROUP – NEW IDEAS AND FRESH DYNAMICS

Katalin Miklóssy

In recent discussions over Eastern Europe, it has been claimed that the area has become an imaginary construction, since the post-communist era it referred to is now over, and many of the Eastern countries have now joined Western institutional structures. In response to this international debate, and in order to bring more attention to the research being conducted, the Aleksanteri Institute's East European Research Group has been formed. They argue that the 'East within' is actually a characteristic that looks back to a much longer history than merely the communist period. An area where Eastern and Western features have coexisted for centuries does not evaporate easily. The Group maintains that without the Eastern component, the development pattern cannot be grasped in all its complexity.

Studying this region even offers a possibility to understand Russia from a different angle. Besides offering a comparative context to study Russian development – pinpointing what is and what is not particular to it – examining Eastern Europe also helps to detect the dimension of interaction and Russian influence in a wider perspective.

These questions boosted a new drive of the Institute's researchers on East Europe to open up exciting new research paths, intensify collaboration and think about novel ways to spread information. A position at the forefront of developing innovative approaches to international education, according to the top priorities of the University of Helsinki, was defined as an important aim, and a new course 'Challenges of Post-Communist Transition in Eastern Europe' is under construction, targeted specifically at international students.

There are several events planned for the wider public, serving society's need for

knowledge. A breakfast meeting entitled 'Change of Power in Ukraine' was held on March 6, 2014 and on May 26, 2014 there will be a public event analysing the results of the EU Parliamentary elections in the Eastern countries. ■

For more information about the activities of the East European researchers, please visit our website at www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/eerg



JOINT PROJECT WITH THE JAPANESE

The Academy of Finland has granted two-year funding for a multidisciplinary research project called Russia's Final Energy Frontier – Sustainability Challenges of the Russian Far North led by Professor **Veli-Pekka Tynkkynen** from the Aleksanteri Institute. This is a joint international project with a Japanese research team from Hokkaido University. The Finnish part is to be conducted in cooperation with the Pan-European Institute (University of Turku). ■

ALEKSANTERI INSTITUTE VISITING SCHOLARS PROGRAMME, SPRING 2014



Irina Busygina

“Globalization, Political Regime and the Russian Virtual Conflict with the West”

Fellowship period: April – May 2014

Irina Busygina is Professor of Comparative Politics, and European Studies Institute at MGIMO. She also heads the Center for Regional Political Studies. Her main spheres of research include EU-Russia relations, regional development, regional policy and federalism in Russia and the EU.

During her stay at the Aleksanteri Institute Busygina will work to explain the link between the political regime in Russia and the nature of the country's foreign policy. Busygina seeks to offer a theory-based explanation of why cooperation between Russia and the EU has remained so severely limited in many areas of mutual interest. The deterioration of the EU–Russian relations is analysed as a result of strategic choice. The key premise is that the Russian leadership has domestic political incentives for sustaining a certain level of political conflict with the West, the EU and many post-Soviet countries. Political tensions with the EU stimulate Moscow to develop a more extensive framework of bilateral relations, and to welcome certain regional programs promoted by blocs of EU member states. ■



Martin Dimitrov

“Dictatorship and Information: Autocratic Regime Resilience in Communist Europe and China”

Fellowship period: May – June 2014

Martin Dimitrov spent the first half of his fellowship period at the Aleksanteri Institute

in August 2013. Read his presentation in Aleksanteri News 3/2013. ■

Alexei Yurchak

“Lenin's body: the politics of science and history”

Fellowship period: March – May 2014

Alexei Yurchak is presented in the Face of the Month story on page 2 of this issue. ■



Slavomír Horák

“Ideology and Regime-Building in Turkmenistan. The Writers, Players and Customers”

Central Asia Fellow, May 2014

Dr. **Slavomír Horák** works as the Research Fellow at the Department of Russian and East European Studies of the Institute of International Studies, Charles University in Prague. Horák's research covers political, social, and economic issues in Central Asia, particularly in Turkmenistan.

During his stay in the Aleksanteri Institute, Horák will work on a project that aims at analysing the correlation between elite formation and their image-making in post-Soviet Turkmenistan. The research starts with an analysis of how the local elites have been transformed into *de facto* super-personal regimes. The study focuses on the rise of President Niyazov and the crystallisation of his innermost circle as (presumably) crucial for creation of his image. Additionally, the ‘achievements’ of the ideology creation and the customers of the ideology are analysed.

Considering the complex character of the project and its focus on Turkmenistan as the least-researched country in the region, the project is unique in the worldwide context. ■

Time: Thursdays, starting at 14:15

Venue: Aleksanteri Institute, Unioninkatu 33,

Meeting room 2nd floor

Please note that this programme may be subject to change.



Natalie Koch

“Synecdoche and the subject: Spectacular power and state-making in Central Asia”

Central Asia Fellow, May 2014

Dr. **Natalie Koch** is an assistant professor in the Department of Geography, at Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. She received her PhD in Geography in 2012 from the University of Colorado, Boulder. Although Koch primarily positions herself as a political geographer, as well as a ‘Central Asianist,’ her work has always been highly interdisciplinary, with a focus on state-making, nationalism, geopolitics, spectacle and authoritarianism.

In her current book project, ‘Synecdoche and the subject: Spectacular power and state-making in Central Asia’, Koch proposes that to understand the spectacular in highly centralised political systems, it is necessary to conceptualise it as a generalised trope – one that operates on the basis of synecdoche – the part standing for the whole and vice versa. To date, there has been no systematic analysis of how synecdoche works in the geographic imagination, nor the political effects of its use. Koch's book project takes up this task through a targeted case study of three authoritarian Central Asian states – Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. ■

VISITING FELLOWS RESEARCH SEMINARS

24 April

Irina Busygina

Moscow State University, Russia

Multilevel Policy of the EU Towards Russia and Russia's Possible Responses

8 May

Alexei Yurchak

University of California-Berkeley, USA

Lenin's Body and Russia's Foreign Policy

22 May

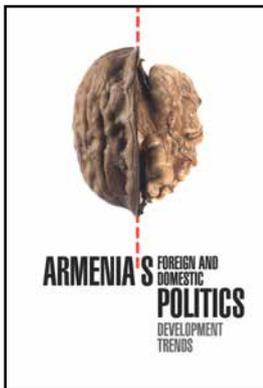
Martin Dimitrov

Tulane University, New Orleans, USA

Dictatorship and Information: Autocratic Regime Resilience in Communist Europe and China

ARMENIA'S FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLITICS DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

The new book edited by **Mikko Palonkorpi** (Aleksanteri Institute, University of Helsinki) and **Alexander Iskandaryan** (Caucasus Institute, Yerevan) consists of articles written within the framework of a Wider Europe Initiative project entitled "The South Caucasus Beyond Borders, Boundaries and Division Lines: Conflicts, Cooperation, and Development" (2010-2012). The articles by **Richard Giragosian**, **Sergey Markedonov**, **Hrant Mikaelyan**, **Sergey Minasyan** and the editors shed light on the different aspects of Armenian politics. In the concluding article of the volume, Mikko Palonkorpi discusses the duplicability of the "Finnish model" in the Armenian context: could the policies chosen by Finland after WWII provide ideas and inspiration for the countries of South Caucasus?



Published jointly by the Caucasus Institute (Yerevan), Aleksanteri Institute and MFA of Finland in 2013. 88 p., ISBN 978-99941-2-915-7

ALEKSANTERI INSIGHT - SNAPSHOTS OF EURASIA

Aleksanteri Insight is a series of expert opinions, published by the Aleksanteri Institute, University of Helsinki since 2013. It presents in a short format analysis of specific issues, their underlying causes and implications in the Eurasian context. The expert views address different trends, grasp hidden agendas and provide context to popular media headlines.

The series is published online at www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/english/insight



ALEKSANTERI INSTITUTE

Finnish Centre for Russian and Eastern European Studies

The Aleksanteri Institute is affiliated with the University of Helsinki and operates as a national centre of research, study and expertise pertaining to Russia and Eastern Europe, particularly in the social sciences and humanities. The institute co-ordinates and promotes co-operation and interaction between the academic world, public administration, business life and civil society in Finland and abroad.

The institute was founded in 1996. It has grown rapidly into a working community of around 50 people, including doctoral students in the Institute's Graduate Programme. The institute hosts the Centre of Excellence in Russian Studies - Choices of Russian Modernisation and a Finland Distinguished Professor project. The Institute has an executive board that represents the University of Helsinki and other interest groups. The Institute also has an Advisory Board.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED

ARTICLES

Heusala, A.-L.: "Changes of Administrative Accountability in Russian Transitions". In: *Review of Central and East European Law*, 2013, Vol. 38, Issue 3-4, pp. 267-293.

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