

# ALEKSANTERI NEWS

December 5, 2008 ■ Issue 2

## DIRECTOR'S GREETING

### RUSSIAN WELFARE STATE – SOCIAL POLICY AT THE EMBRYO STAGE

Russia's economic growth and excellent fiscal resources are also expected to have an impact on social well-being. I am not inclined to argue that Russia's elite was so far alienated from ordinary life that its members would not understand this. Rather they define the creation of welfare as a "solemn political duty" for years to come. The problems of everyday Russian institutions are so obvious that awareness of this is not an issue. The real challenge is to establish a systematic model for welfare institutions.

The Soviet welfare policy was constructed on two pillars. On the one hand, the state provided non-monetary social benefits for particular social groups, while on the other, the firms in a planned economy were not enterprises as we understand them in the market economy. Their basic institutional form was a *kombinat* that provided all kinds of social services for the "labour collective", from child care to benefits for the elderly. Both of these old pillars are vanishing in the contemporary market system.

The so-called *l'goty* reform has been an effort to monetarise the traditional state-provided benefits. This reform – which was for years recommended by western experts – was heavily criticised by the media and the opposition. It also gave birth to street demonstrations that have continued to the present day. The old system had provided resources for several groups caught up in the turmoil of transformation. However, it had also been highly ineffective and corrupt. Corruption notwithstanding, the greatest problem has been the inflexibility of the system to face social policy problems of the contemporary market economy. Problems of poverty and unemployment cannot be targeted by the old social policy system.



Photo: Heini Lehväsliaho

The standard of living in Soviet society was modest but stable. To a large extent it was workplace based and services were provided by the *kombinat*. There was no unemployment because in the planned economy it was a prerequisite that vast labour reserves were maintained for the firm. The supply-based economy demanded maximisation of resources. Consequently, the logic of the market economy has changed the whole microstructure of economic institutions. Market economy enterprises cannot be the key institutions for social services.

The key challenge for Russian domestic politics for the coming years is to establish new structures for social policy. This means both the allocation of resources and defining the rules of the game. From the Western experience we know that the key players in this have been organisations of social classes and civil society NGOs. If these are all weak, as is the case in Russia, the key players will be specialised elites and professional organisations. What kind of social policy can be created in these top-down political conditions remains an open question.

From the perspective of Western experts in Russian studies, participation in these professional discussions and disputes is an inevitable challenge. Maybe it is the case that in this field also Russia could use the latecomer's advantage if a genuine dialogue could be established.

Markku Kivinen



## ALEKSANTERI CONFERENCE 2008

### WELFARE, GENDER, AND AGENCY IN RUSSIA AND EASTERN EUROPE

The 8<sup>th</sup> annual Aleksanteri Conference brings together researchers from fifteen countries across the dissolved East-West divide to examine the interrelationships of welfare, gender and agency in Russia and Eastern Europe during the transitional period.

For more detail, please see page 4



## ALEKSANTERI CONFERENCE 2009

### THE COLD WAR AND ITS CONSEQUENCES IN OCTOBER 2009

The 9<sup>th</sup> Aleksanteri Conference will address new and changing perspectives on the Cold War and its aftermath. A particular emphasis will be on interactions and transfers of knowledge, ideas and artefacts between East and West through the Iron Curtain.

For more detail, please see page 5

## FACE OF THE MONTH: JELENA OBRADOVIĆ

For many Westerners, Serbia remains an enigma. According to surveys, almost half of the Serbian population expresses doubt as to whether the Srebrenica massacre in July 1995 really took place. Various political parties in Serbia have attempted to dispute the event or the evidence itself. Extremist football fans support the Serbian football team by shouting slogans such as “knife, wire, Srebrenica”. And posters commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre, showing pictures of coffins, old women and abandoned children’s toys, were immediately vandalised. Key Serbian politicians condemned not the vandals’ actions but the campaign itself.

It is hardly surprising then that Serbia should be accused of failing to come to terms with the past. However, the reality is much more complex than that, argues Aleksanteri Visiting Fellow **Jelena Obradović** from the University of Birmingham.

Jelena Obradović conducted interviews among urban residents in Belgrade during 2005–2006 as a part of her PhD project on victimhood discourse and denial of war crimes in Serbia. “Many people were surprisingly willing to talk about war crimes, which is a non-topic in Serbia. They were seemingly content that somebody would just listen to them. Interestingly, the way they told these stories made no sense at all as people were continually contradicting themselves”, says Jelena.

Contradictions are important in showing that the question is not about the lack of knowledge. Thus, those people who argue that Serbs simply need more information about the past in order to “come to terms with it” miss the point. “Most responses I heard were based on various mediation strategies: evasion, using euphemisms or justification strategies. People partly resist the Western version of the war, which they think blamed the Serbs for everything, but they are not categorically denying the past. Denial of war crimes is not a failure to come to terms with the past but is part of the first steps in understanding the past. It is a sign that people perceive something as negative and feel the need to justify.”

Jelena is the first Aleksanteri Visiting Fellow to have joined the new programme that offers an opportunity for international scholars to spend a period of two to six months at the Institute. “I’ve really enjoyed my time here at the Institute. It’s such an active research community and everything’s been so well organised. I really like that I have the opportunity to teach and to present my research not only to the academic community but also to a wider audience.”

*Anna-Maria Salmi*

*Jelena Obradović will deliver a public lecture entitled Serbia and war crimes before and after the Karadzic arrest at the Aleksanteri Institute on December 15, 2008 at 10.15.*

More information from and registration at [www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/english/news/seminars.htm](http://www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/english/news/seminars.htm)



Photo: Wilma Hurskainen

### FACTS ABOUT JELENA OBRADOVIĆ

- Jelena Obradović is a Aleksanteri Visiting Fellow from 23.9.2008 to 19.12.2008, contact [obradovic.jelena@gmail.com](mailto:obradovic.jelena@gmail.com)
- PhD in Russian and East European Studies at the European Research Institute, University of Birmingham.
- PhD Thesis entitled Victimhood Discourse and Denial of War Crimes: Serbian National Mythology in Narratives of Ethnic Conflict, University of Birmingham.
- Previous work experience: EUISS Visiting Fellow at the European Union Institute for Security Studies, from 1.1.2008 to 30.6.2008

### ■ Her publications include

- Obradovic, J. (2009, forthcoming) Ethnic conflict and war crimes in the Balkans: the narratives of denial in post-conflict Serbia London: I.B. Tauris.
- Obradovic, J. (April 2008) Kosovo: the view from Serbia, Balkan Crisis Room, EU Institute for Security Studies, <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/kosovo.pdf>
- Obradovic, J. (2009, forthcoming) Knowledge, Acknowledgement and Denial in Serbia’s responses to Srebrenica Journal of Contemporary European Studies
- Obradovic, J. (2008, forthcoming) Tolerance and Prejudice in Belgrade: Young People and Their Constructs of Others (2008), Anthropology of East Europe Review
- Obradovic, J. (2007) ‘Ratko Mladic or Europe: War Crimes, Identity and the Serbian Politics of Myth’ in ed. Kangaspuro, M. Constructed Identities in Europe, Helsinki: Aleksanteri Series 7/2007, University of Helsinki.

## GRADUATE SCHOOL NEWS AWARDS AND MERITS

■ **Tomi Huttunen's** PhD dissertation *Imazhinist Mariengof: Dendi. Montazh. Ciniki* (NLO, Moscow 2007) was awarded a prize from the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters granted to young researchers for outstanding doctoral dissertations.

■ **Suvi Salmenniemi's** 2007 PhD dissertation in sociology has been published by Routledge as a book entitled *Democratization and Gender in Contemporary Russia*.

"Exploring the role of state institutions in the development of democratic civic life, the volume shows how, under the increasingly authoritarian Putin regime and its policy of 'managed democracy', independent civic activism is both thriving yet at the same constrained. Based on extensive fieldwork research, it provides much needed information on how Russians themselves view these developments, both from the perspective of civic activists and the local authorities."

■ **Elina Viljanen, Kaarina Aitamurto, Jussi Lassila** and **Anna-Maria Salmi**, editors of the forthcoming book *Oi Suuri ja Mahtava metodologia? Näkökulmia idäntutkimukseen*, received a grant of 8000 euros from Edita and an additional grant from the Kone foundation.

## GRADUATE SCHOOL NEWS RECENT DISSERTATION

■ **Mari Ristolainen** defended her PhD thesis *Preferred Realities: Soviet and Post-Soviet Amateur Art in Novorzhev* on November 15, 2008 at the University of Joensuu. The thesis is published by Kikimora Publications.



## SEMINAR NEWS

### FRESH PERSPECTIVES ON GEORGIA

*"The international community, for its part, should continue to actively engage in Georgia. Without such engagement Georgia will be unable to defend itself from existing and future threats. However, this support should be linked to certain benchmarks of democracy that the Georgian government should meet."*

**Thea Kentchadze**, research fellow at the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (GFSIS), was one of the keynote speakers at the *Crisis in the Caucasus; Russia, Georgia and the Wider World* seminar organised by the Aleksanteri Institute at the end of October.

In order to gain insight into the underlying causes of the August conflict and its far-reaching impacts, the seminar organisers wanted to invite people from different backgrounds so as to provide complementary approaches. Dr **Jeremy Smith** (University of Birmingham) spoke about the role of Georgian nationalism in the Russia-Georgia conflict. Visiting fellow **Jelena Obradovic** addressed the wider implications of the Kosovo case in this context. **Mikko Palonkorpi** discussed links between energy and the August conflict and **Hanna Smith** analysed how the Caucasus crisis affected the relations between Russia and the European Union.

The seminar attracted a wide audience of politicians, civil servants, diplomats, researchers and students, and the presentations were followed by a lively discussion.

Seminar presentations are available at [www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/english/news/events/20081029\\_seminar.htm](http://www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/english/news/events/20081029_seminar.htm)



## GRADUATE SCHOOL NEWS IINA AND THE COSMONAUTS

The early years of Nikita Khrushchev's reign were full of optimism. On June 12, 1961, Major Yuri Gagarin flew into space, the first man ever to do so, and was soon followed by other heroes, including the first-ever woman in space, Valentina Tereshkova. The Soviet Union had won the space race. Cosmonauts became important utopian heroes and pictures of them appeared everywhere – not only in journals or posters but also on any product imaginable from cigarette boxes to teacups. The CPSU propaganda machine drew as much as possible on this genuine

enthusiasm, said **Iina Kohonen**, a researcher at the University of Arts and Design in Helsinki and an associate member of the Finnish Graduate School for Russian and East European Studies, in a seminar last October.

Iina and four other postgraduate students presented their papers at the Graduate School's Autumn Seminar entitled "Narratives in Research, Narratives in the Field" on October 30-31, 2008. Lecturers and workshop facilitators included **Jukka Törrönen** (University of Stockholm), **Ilya Utekhin** (European University at Saint-Petersburg), **Sergei Prozorov** (Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies) and Aleksanteri Visiting Fellow **Jelena Obradovic** (University of Birmingham).

## ALEKSANTERI CONFERENCE 2008

## WELFARE, GENDER, AND AGENCY IN RUSSIA AND EASTERN EUROPE

As Russian society undergoes enormous changes, people have to adapt to the new reality characterised by a high degree of uncertainty and transformation. As one of the leading academics in the field, Professor **Linda J. Cook** (USA) puts it, the recent shift in Russia's welfare policy from liberalising and privatising reforms to more statist and interventionist policies, providing women with multiple incentives to increase the birth rate, are designed to solve demographic problems. Linda Cook is one of the keynote speakers at the 8<sup>th</sup> Aleksanteri Conference *Welfare, Gender and Agency in Russia and Eastern Europe* on December 10-12, 2008.

Developments within the welfare sector itself are also of interest. Drawing upon principles of gender criticism, Professor **Elena Iarskaia-Smirnova** (Russia) argues that discourses on social work and social work practices seem to reinforce social inequalities and assumptions concerning cheap female labour. But absolute poverty and polarisation are also issues in the new EU Member States. Are they by-products of rapid change that will be overcome by economic growth and new kinds of national policies? Does this apply also to vulnerable ethnic minorities? This is an issue to be brought up by Professor **Vesselin Popov** (Bulgaria), a distinguished scholar and activist in Gypsy/Roma studies.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Aleksanteri Conference takes a multidimensional approach to welfare. In addition to economic and

social problems the agenda also includes bodily and sexual issues. The conference comprises seven keynote addresses, seventy workshop presentations and a satellite seminar at STAKES (National Development and Research Centre for Welfare and Health).

The programme (including the STAKES seminar) is available at: [www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/conference2008/](http://www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/conference2008/)

The conference is connected to the 'Welfare, Gender and Agency in Russia in the 2000s (WGA)' project.

The WGA project emphasises knowledge and insights from "in-between" and "inside" Russia, in co-operation with Russian researchers, and lays stress on case studies and women's agency from below. The project is led by senior researcher Dr **Aino Saarinen** and is funded by the University of Helsinki during 2008-2010. Sub-projects of this larger umbrella project include ongoing research on crisis centres in Russia (**Aino Saarinen**, **Janet Elise Johnson**, **Olga Lyapunova**, **Irina Dracheva**, **Maija Jäppinen**), local governments and civic organisations in solving problems of local welfare (**Meri Kulmala**) and self-help and conceptions of a 'good life' in Finland and Russia (**Suvi Salminen**).

[www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/wga/](http://www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/wga/)



## RESEARCH NEWS

## A NEW FULBRIGHTER: MERI KULMALA

**Meri Kulmala**, a PhD student in the Finnish Graduate School for Russian and East European Studies and a researcher at the Aleksanteri Institute, is one of the fifteen new Finnish Fulbrighters who will spend the next academic year in the United States. Meri's destination is Brown University, where she will complete her PhD study under the guidance of Professor **Linda Cook**, a leading expert on welfare issues. The scholarship is a cost-share scholarship partly funded by the University of Helsinki.

Meri's ongoing dissertation focuses on the new emerging state-society and welfare regimes in contemporary Russia and is part of the WGA project. At Brown, Meri will have an opportunity to work with Professor Cook and other scholars, and to take classes and participate in the lively research community at Brown. "I'm so much looking forward to working with Linda Cook and to get her comments on my work, as well as from other US scholars. They're so good at giving feedback. But I think I have a lot to give too. Few US scholars are aware of the Nordic welfare model and I want to share my



knowledge of it, as I have found knowing a more complex set of models makes Russian welfare more intelligible."

Former Fulbrighter **Ulla Hakanen**, an associate member of the graduate school, spent the academic year 2006-2007 at the Slavic Department of the University of California at Berkeley. Ulla recalls her visit with much pleasure: "It is a top-class institution with renowned professors and a lively community of graduate students. It is hard to exaggerate the meaning of the year. It deepened my understanding of literary criticism and cultural studies as disciplines, and helped me to define what kind of research I want to pursue."

Scholars specialising in Russia have succeeded well in Fulbright calls. "There are no specific quotas", says Program Manager **Karoliina Kokko** from the Finnish Fulbright Center. "On the contrary, we wish to receive applications from as many disciplines as possible. The quality of the application and the applicant's merits are all that counts. Thus those who have been selected can be very satisfied with their achievements."

*Anna-Maria Salmi*

The next Fulbright call starts in February 2009. More information from the Finnish Fulbright Center at [www.fulbright.fi](http://www.fulbright.fi).

## ALEKSANTERI CONFERENCE 2009 "THE COLD WAR AND ITS CONSEQUENCES" IN OCTOBER 2009

Next year will mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the final episode of the destruction of the socialist system in Eastern Europe. The anniversary provides us with a remarkable reason to look back at the Cold War era and to reassess it from today's perspectives. The 9<sup>th</sup> Aleksanteri Conference on 29-31 October, 2009 will focus on the Cold War and its consequences. Nearly two decades after the Cold War was claimed to have ended, the concept of the Cold War has once again reappeared in the rhetoric of world politics.



The conference will cover the whole of the Cold War period and the post-Cold War period up to the present, with a particular emphasis on the former Soviet bloc. The goal of our conference is twofold. First, we will address new and changing perspectives on the Cold War and its aftermath. The conference invites new ways to view international history and international relations. A particular emphasis will be on interactions and transfers of knowledge, ideas and artefacts between East and West through the Iron Curtain.



## THE EURASIAN ENERGY GROUP "TOMSK, OMSK, MINSK, PINSK, WHATEVER..."

The comment above was made by one eminent scholar when **David Duseault**, researcher at the Aleksanteri Institute, headed once again towards Tomsk in Western Siberia. The latest trip in October 2008 took David to Tomsk for three weeks during which he, among other things, conducted interviews on regional socio-economic development for the Institute's Energy Project.

David's frequent journeys to Tomsk and other Siberian cities are based on his conviction that there is more to today's Russian Federation than just Moscow and St Petersburg. Producing hydrocarbons and being a link in the military industrial complex, the industrial town of Tomsk was hit very hard by the decline of the centralised economy following the collapse of the USSR. Through a concerted effort of the regional Duma and the regional administration it was possible to lay the strategic foundation for Tomsk's economic recovery. Contradictions remain, however: "Expectations on the part of the regional population for further socio-economic improvement are fuelled by the success

The second point our conference wishes to promote is a critical self-evaluation and also theoretical discussion on disciplines not so obviously connected to traditional Cold War studies. We encourage researchers to evaluate the current studies on the state of the area and to discuss how the Cold War mentality still possibly influences our research and thinking.

The themes of the conference include, among others, transfers of knowledge, ideas, technologies; culture and communication; change and continuity; ideologies and identification; consumption and citizenship.

The Call for Papers for the conference will be published at the beginning of 2009.



Confirmed keynote speakers:

- ★ **Natalia Arbatova**
- ★ **Jessica Gienow-Hecht**
- ★ **Serguei Oushakine**
- ★ **Yale Richmond**
- ★ **Jeremi Suri**

See also the website of the project "Knowledge through the Iron Curtain – Transferring Knowledge and Technology in Cold War Europe": [www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/kic](http://www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/kic)



of the region's oil and gas industry. Many expect more in terms of a better living standard now that the economy is robust. However, many wonder where the money for all the anticipated investments will come from."

David's research into regional socio-economic development is part of the Aleksanteri Institute's research project co-ordinated by him, entitled *The Structuration of the Russian Energy Sector*. The four-year programme is directed by **Markku Kivinen** and funded by the Academy of Finland and the Aleksanteri Institute. The project investigates the current challenges and the future implications of the energy issue for Russia, the EU and Northeast Asia.

[www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/energy](http://www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/energy)

## FIFTY YEARS OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION THE RENAISSANCE OF SOCIOLOGY IN RUSSIA

In October 2008 Russian sociologists organised a major conference to celebrate half a century of the Russian Sociological Association. At the same time, the conference was dedicated to forty years of the Institute of Sociology in the Russian Academy of Sciences. This development is a real sign of the revival of concrete social research.

During the Stalin period, sociology was regarded as a politically suspicious bourgeois science unable to coexist with Soviet ideology. Historical materialism was seen as a general sociological theory that could not be challenged by other conceptual approaches, let alone by concrete sociological analysis. Sociology had to wait until perestroika to emerge as an academic discipline.

In the end of the 1950s the situation started to change. The first generation of Russian sociologists came from many disciplines, e.g. philosophy, history or economics. In spite of their background many of them were able to establish an independent and profound relationship to sociological theorising and were well aware of the international socio-

logical scene. Several leading minds of that generation were present at the conference: **Vladimir Yadov**, **Andrei Zdravomyslov**, **Gennadi Osipov**. Also the great sociologist of perestroika, **Tatyana Zaslavskaya**, contributed an interesting keynote paper.

Whereas in the 1950s all Russian sociologists could fit in one Moskvich, now the hall was full of merited sociologists from many departments and institutes. The European University in St Petersburg and the Higher School of Economics in Moscow are no longer the only places for rising stars of Russian sociology.

One of those stars is **Vadim Radaev**, the Vice-Rector of the Higher School of Economics. His plenary speech painted a promising perspective for further development. Radaev warns Russian sociologists that they should not invent their own rules for the game of "patriotic sociology". "Look at soccer", Radaev advises. "We play according to common rules and even use a foreign coach. And on this basis we are able to create a team that is competitive on the international arena." No bad advice for Finnish sociology, for that matter.

Markku Kivinen

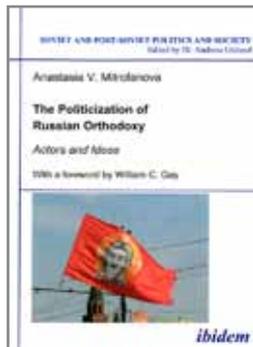


Photos from Moscow by Elina Kahla

## ALEKSANTERI VISITING FELLOWS VISITORS FROM RUSSIA

**Dr Anastasia Mitrofanova** visited the Aleksanteri Institute in November 2008 under the framework of the Aleksanteri Institute Visiting Scholar Programme. Dr Mitrofanova is a senior research fellow at the Center for World Economy and Global Studies, Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Moscow) and an expert on religious politicisation with a special accent on Orthodox Christianity.

Her current research project concerns the influence of Orthodox Christianity on world politics. Other topics include nationalism in today's Russia as well as the government-initiated nation-building projects in Belorussia and Moldova. Her recent publications include *Politicization of Russian Orthodoxy: Actors and Ideas* (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2005). There she argues that the



influence of Orthodoxy on socio-political life in contemporary Russia tends to be exaggerated. Instead, the Russian leadership has been attempting to form some kind of civil religion.

Dr Mitrofanova can be contacted at [anastasia-mit\(at\)mail.ru](mailto:anastasia-mit(at)mail.ru).

**Dr Olga Lyapunova** is an adjunct professor at the Department of Psychology, Pomor State University in Arkhangelsk, Russia. She is also a researcher for the Crisis Centres in Russia Today: a National Survey Study, a sub-project of the Welfare, Gender and Agency in Russia in the 2000s. The WGA is funded by the University of Helsinki and is based at the Aleksanteri Institute. Dr Lyapunova will attend the Aleksanteri Institute during November 17 – December 16, 2008.



## RUSSIA'S NORTHERN REGIONS ON THE EDGE

Communities, Industries and Populations from Murmansk to Magadan  
 Edited by Vesa Rautio and Markku Tykkyläinen

■ Highly readable, coherently structured, and full of interesting insights, Russia's Northern Regions on the Edge will help geographers and other social scientists better sort out, as noted in the book's concluding reflections, to what extent that "edge" represents remoteness with all its contingencies and to what extent precipice.

—Andrew R. Bond

Managing Editor, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*

*Kikumora Publications B 37, ISBN 978-952-10-4097-9*  
 233 p., maps, illustrations, 28 EUR + VAT

## RECALLING THE PAST – (RE)CONSTRUCTING THE PAST

Collective and Individual Memory of World War II in Russia and Germany  
 Edited by Withold Bonner and Arja Rosenholm

■ Memories and scholarly exploration on memory have become a significant part of contemporary cultural studies. Breaks in the cultural and political orders in Russian and German societies had a strong impact on the re-negotiation of cultural memory in both countries. Since World War II has been one of the most traumatic events and highly emotive topics in German as well as in Russian and Soviet history, more than 60 years after its termination, the recall of wartime experiences is gaining significantly in importance. A re-evaluation of wartime history, therefore, has emerged in both countries.

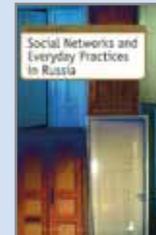
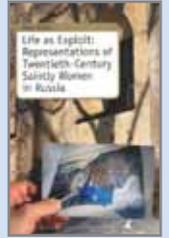
As a consequence it has been possible to discuss forbidden and "forgotten" subjects: for instance, the siege of Leningrad, the Holocaust, the fate of POWs, life and death at the front and the "home" front, female soldiers in the Red Army, and the rape of women as a mass phenomenon in the occupied parts of Germany.

The aim of this multi- and interdisciplinary volume is to examine the fractures, interactions and intersections of private and collective memories in Germany and Russia and to facilitate understanding of how both recalling and forgetting play a significant role in constituting identities by individuals, communities and nations.

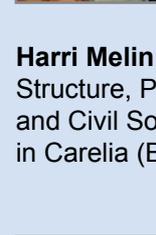
*Aleksanteri Series 2:2008, ISBN 978-952-10-4098-6*  
 342 p., 28 EUR + VAT

## ALSO OF INTEREST:

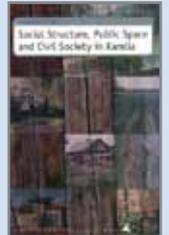
**Elina Kahla:** Life as Exploit: Representations of Twentieth-Century Sainly Women in Russia (A16)



**Anna-Maria Salmi:** Social Networks and Everyday Practices in Russia (A13)



**Harri Melin (ed.):** Social Structure, Public Space and Civil Society in Carelia (B34)



**Marianne Liljeström:** Useful Selves: Russian Women's Autobiographical Texts from the Post-War Period (B32)

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K I K I M O R A P U B L I C A T I O N S



The new editorial board of Kikumora Publications convened on November 7, 2008.

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**Matti Kotiranta**, Professor, University of Joensuu

**Markku Kangaspuro**, Head of Research, Aleksanteri Institute

**Markku Kivinen**, Director, Aleksanteri Institute

**Helge Blakkisrud**, Head of department, Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt (NUPI)

Front row from left to right:

**Elina Kahla**, Managing Editor, Aleksanteri Institute

**Rosalinde Sartorti**, Professor, Osteuropa-Institut, Freie Universität Berlin

Not pictured are:

**Jeremy Smith**, Senior Lecturer, University of Birmingham

**Irina Sandomirskaja**, Professor, Södertörns högskola

**Richard Stites**, Professor, Georgetown University

**Vladimir Gelman**, Professor, European University at Saint-Petersburg

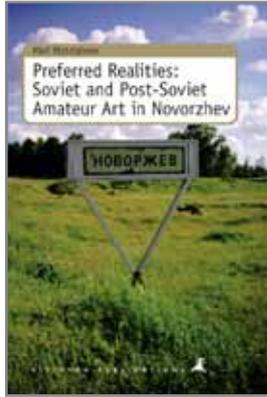
Mari Ristolainen:

## PREFERRED REALITIES:

Soviet and Post-Soviet Amateur Art in Novorzhev

■ Highlighting the astonishing boom in amateur art activities on a local level in post-Soviet society, this research traces how different actors impact the reality construction process – in the case of the town of Novorzhev, Pskov Province – before and after 1991.

This book examines the relationship between Soviet and post-Soviet practices of amateur activity in a peripheral town of some 5000 inhabitants on Russia's western borderlands. The author shows how persistent Soviet models still are used today by powerful social forces. The study illuminates amateurs' creative potential and how it is used to convey some carefully selected themes. These themes are chosen to depict a preferred reality that show how the new Russian reality must look like.



“Ristolainen finds a somewhat surprising continuity between the amateur productions of the two eras in form and method and in doing so raises important questions about the response to change and about the forces that held the Soviet state together on the local level. The scholarship in this dissertation is among the best I have seen in 25 years in academia.”

– Adele Barker, Professor of Russian Studies,  
University of Arizona, USA

Kikimora Publications A 19, ISBN 978-952-10-4096-2  
366 p, illustrations in colour, 28 EUR + VAT



When the first issue of this newsletter was published we asked for feedback. The feedback we received was in general very positive, and we would like to thank all of our readers for sending their comments and suggestions for improvement. Among those who replied, the winner of two Kikimora books is Veikko Huuska who has been contacted and has received two books of his choice.

Would you like to receive the newsletter directly to your e-mail? Please send an e-mail to [aleksanteri@helsinki.fi](mailto:aleksanteri@helsinki.fi)

## 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 Aleksanteri 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 School who work at their respective universities. The Institute has a board of trustees that represents the University of Helsinki and other interest groups. The Institute also has an international Advisory Board and is also guided in its various activities by the executive boards of the Master's programme and of the Graduate School and by an editorial board.

Aleksanteri Institute  
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