

Greetings!

The February edition of your monthly Source features the following:

1. Foreword: Dictators and Creativity
2. Outreach Program News: Screening, Workshops, Exhibits
3. Featured Resources of the Month: Moscow Stories, Shostakovich Against Stalin, Eisenstein and Stalin
4. Community Events: Films, Concerts, and a Special Celebration
5. Links: Ukrainian map collection, Polish Holocaust heroine, Central Asia photos, Trans-Siberian train tour
6. Aphorisms from anekdot.ru

FOREWORD:

Dear friends and colleagues:

We hope this newsletter finds you well. If you had a chance to take advantage of the many Gulag-related events around Boston during the past few months, as well as the new curriculum resource made available through our program, we hope you found them informative and useful in your work. Even though our visitors have long since departed and the exhibits have been packed up and sent on, it seems we cannot avoid the architect of the Gulag system this February. You will discover below that much of the news and events we have for you this month relates directly or indirectly to Joseph Stalin and the conditions he created in the Soviet Union.

A number of films will be screened around Harvard this month, from a classic commissioned by Soviet leaders to commemorate the road to the Revolution, to a series of American films produced at the apex of Cold War tension (some of them perhaps just as propagandistic in their own right), to a documentary examining the control Stalin wielded over composers and filmmakers. We are happy to be presenting the latter to you on February 22 at the Davis Center, as we feel it is an excellent resource not only about the featured historical figures, Dmitri Shostakovich and Joseph Stalin, but also WWII-era music and culture, but also for the history of the Siege of Leningrad, and the broader question of the relationship of art to politics.

We are also pleased to announce that a Summer Curriculum Development Workshop is in the works here at the Outreach Program. The topic will center around (who else?) Stalin and his legacy. The program, which will be one week in duration, is tentatively planned for late June or early July. More details will follow via the Source as well as our website.

We know that many of you will be tackling another difficult subject in your classrooms this month, that of the brutal, shameful history of slavery in America, as part of February's Black History Month commemoration. The resources featured this month are all intended to help you introduce, if you wish, a dialogue about gross human rights abuses in another part of the world in another era, and we trust that this will only enrich your students' understanding of the legacies of both of these sad histories.

After all, it was Joseph Vissarionovich himself who said, "Education is a weapon whose effects depend on who holds it in his hands and at whom it is aimed."

OUTREACH PROGRAM NEWS:

Please join us for a special screening of [Shostakovich Against Stalin: War Symphonies](#), Thursday, February 22, 6:30 pm, in Room S354 at the Davis Center, 1730 Cambridge St. If attending, your RSVP is greatly appreciated. See below for a description of the film.

Now that the Gulag exhibits have left Boston, we are planning our next teacher workshop, which will take place in mid-to-late spring on a topic TBD. If you wish to have a say in working out the details of the event, please complete our brief survey online at the following address: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=209022886531>. Those of you on our mailing list will shortly receive, if you have not already, our Spring 2007 newsletter, which includes a copy of the survey on page 7, which you can mail to us if you prefer not to take the survey online. If you would like to receive future issues of our print newsletter, please contact davisoutreach@fas.harvard.edu.

As noted above, we are also beginning to plan a week-long curriculum development workshop for this summer. The workshop, which will take place in late June or early July at Harvard, will focus on Stalin and his legacy. Meals and lodging will be provided to all participants, and professional development points will be awarded.

We are pleased to announce that two Davis Center associates will present special exhibits in the CGIS South building (1730 Cambridge St.). First, Professor Svetlana Boym will display “Nostalgic Technologies: Cities in Transit,” an exhibit about art, culture, technology and teaching through art. The opening reception is slated for February 15. The exhibition in CGIS South of Center Associate Gwendolyn Stewart’s extraordinary photographs of Russia and China will begin on April 23. Further details will follow on both our website and the Source.

FEATURED RESOURCES OF THE MONTH:

NEW: Moscow Stories by Loren Graham. Professor Graham has produced a lively and engaging collection of memories of his time spent traveling and conducting research in the USSR and post-Soviet Russia over the last 40 years. His often-humorous essays reveal a rare perspective on daily life in Russia as well as interesting portraits of famous figures from Lysenko to Gagarin.

NEW: Shostakovich Against Stalin: War Symphonies (DVD): Using archival footage, modern interviews with Purge survivors, musicians, composers and friends of Shostakovich, this 76-minute documentary paints a portrait of the repression, murder and totalitarianism of the Stalin regime during the years of the Purges and World War II, as well as the way the composer managed to remain physically and creatively alive in unthinkable trying circumstances, including the Siege of Leningrad. The Kirov orchestra performs Shostakovich’s wartime symphonies.

Eisenstein and Stalin (VHS): Drawing on sixty volumes of diaries and other recently revealed archival materials, this program presents the struggle between Joseph Stalin and Sergei Eisenstein, who fought for freedom of expression in a climate of exiles and executions. Rare clips of the preeminent Russian director’s controversial films—including the deleted Trotsky scene in *October*, the original ending of *The General Line*, and recovered footage from the banned *Bezhin Meadow*—and interviews with the director of the Eisenstein Museum, friends, associates, and former students underscore the coercive power of Stalin’s authoritarian regime.

COMMUNITY EVENTS:

February 6 :

-Strike (Stachka), Harvard Film Archive, 7 pm.

Full of dazzling cinematic conventions, Sergei Eisenstein’s first full-length film depicts the story of a 1912 strike by factory workers in Tsarist Russia and its brutal suppression by the authorities. Eisenstein’s dialectic montage is on full display, incorporating caricature, visual metaphor, and shock cutting. Made with members of the Proletkult

Theatre, *Strike* is an essential work of the Soviet Constructivist art movement of the 1920s. For more information, see <http://hcl.harvard.edu/hfa/>.

February 6 – 28:

-Poetic Horror, Pop Existentialism and Cheap Sci-Fi: Cold War Cinema 1948–1964, Harvard Film Archive.

In the aftermath of World War II, filmmakers in the US, Europe, and Japan developed what Susan Sontag termed a “popular mythology” with which to imaginatively address post Auschwitz/post Hiroshima guilt and anxiety. A visiting lecturer at Harvard University this spring, renowned film critic J. Hoberman (*Village Voice*) has curated a series of works which reflect on the tensions of the postwar period. Hoberman’s selections will continue on the spring program calendar (March-May) and include commercial movies, documentaries, and avant-garde films which accompany a course that will analyze the films in relationship to literary analogues (Kafka, Camus), the political rhetoric of the period, and the popular mythology of today. For more information, see <http://hcl.harvard.edu/hfa/>.

February 13:

-The Outcasts of Europe: Life among the Gypsies of Slovakia, A Special Event with Julie Denesha, Photojournalist and Milena Jesenská Fellow, Institute for Human Sciences. Colloquium Room, Boston University Photonics Center, 8 St. Mary’s Street, 6:00 pm.

Julie Denesha’s work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The Economist* and *The Christian Science Monitor*. From 1996 to 2004, Denesha was based in Prague, Czech Republic, where she covered Central and Eastern Europe for a number of newspapers and magazines. Her project on the Roma was a featured photo essay on AOL “Visions in Focus” and was shown at The Half King Gallery in New York. Images from her work are in the permanent collection of The World Bank.

February 13:

-Earth (*Zemlya*), Harvard Film Archive, 7 pm

This film uses simple but powerful means to tell a story of collectivization on a Ukrainian farm that expresses profound and universal themes: the fruitfulness of the earth, its annual rebirth, life, love, and death. When a local kulak refuses to divide his land for a collective, a young villager (Svashenko) takes it for the people by force and turns it into a success. Despite the tragedy that ensues, the people sing songs of renewal as rain promises another cycle of life for the earth. Filled with sensuality, joy, and pain, Aleksandr Dovzhenko’s classic remains a stunning example of cinematic expression.

For more information, see <http://hcl.harvard.edu/hfa/>

February 13:

-Stravinsky: Rarely Heard Masterworks, New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall, 8pm.

This all-Stravinsky program includes rarely heard masterworks from all three of the composer's creative periods. This is a rare opportunity to hear the complete range of Stravinsky's musical language, all in a single concert program.

The early, "Russian" period is represented by the Three Pieces for String Quartet, performed by the Parker String Quartet, who are currently enrolled in NEC's Professional String Quartet Training Program. (A later orchestration of this work is performed the previous evening.)

Stravinsky's middle, "neoclassical" period is represented by the Mass, performed by the NEC Chamber Singers and players from the NEC Wind Ensemble, conducted by Amy Lieberman, and the Concerto in D for String Orchestra performed by the NEC Chamber Orchestra, coached by Donald Palma.

John Heiss leads the NEC Contemporary Ensemble in vocal works from Stravinsky's late period, when he was influenced by 12-tone techniques: Three Songs from William Shakespeare with mezzo-soprano Christina English and In memoriam Dylan Thomas with tenor Joel Cummings.

Admission is free. For more information, see <http://www.newenglandconservatory.edu/index.html>.

Save the Date: March 21
- Nauruz Celebration

The Program on Central Asia and the Caucasus at the Davis Center is planning a very exciting event – the first-ever Nauruz Party. Nauruz is typically viewed as the Iranian New Year celebration, celebrated on the spring equinox. However, the holiday is now viewed as an indigenous celebration, and it is now celebrated throughout Central Asia and the Caucasus, as well as in Afghanistan, India, Turkey, Zanzibar, and Albania. Therefore, it is the perfect occasion for scholars and students of Eurasian studies to meet each other and learn about the various departments and centers at Harvard which focus on this region.

The celebration, open to friends and family, will be held on March 21 from 5-7 p.m. on the concourse level of CGIS-South, 1730 Cambridge St. Food will be served, and there will be a cultural program. Please feel free to contact the Program on Central Asia and the Caucasus for further information about the region and the Program's activities at (617)496-2643 or email centasia@fas.harvard.edu.

=====

LINKS:

<http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2006/12.14/07-maps.html> Ukrainian map collection arrives at Harvard.

http://fzp.jewish.org.pl/nobel_eng.html Online petition to present Polish Holocaust heroine Irena Sendler with the Nobel Peace Prize. Hers is a very moving story; in fact, a teacher in Kansas had his students investigate her life, which resulted in an amazing project: <http://www.irenasendler.org/>.

<http://www.herwigphoto.com/index.htm> A beautiful collection of photographer Christopher Herwig's work in Central Asia. Includes a link to his cleverly titled book Stanorama.

<http://www.rzd.ru/images/flash/> Take a virtual trip on the Trans-Siberian rail line! This high-tech site lets you explore the train and view your surroundings day-by-day on the way from Moscow to Vladivostok.

=====

APHORISMS:

1. The limits of human nonsense will always wish to spread farther apart.
2. Absolute truth does not exist; there is only relative truth with various concentrations of lies.
3. One may praise the fool who tries to think, but only when he does so quietly.

All the best,
Nicole