

Greetings!

The January edition of your monthly Source features the following:

1. Foreword: New years and old resolves
2. Outreach Program News: GULAG exhibit closing, workshop survey invitation
3. Featured Resources of the Month: Icons, Poland, Russian history
4. Community Events: Icon museum, Polish jazz, ballet, Russian pop
5. Links: Polish Coke, Russian airports, Bosnian pyramids, Russian cooking
6. Aphorisms from anekdot.ru

FOREWORD:

"No one," Charles Lamb once observed, "ever regarded the First of January with indifference." I need hardly rewrite the New Year's editorial which gets rewritten ad nauseum this time every year, the one with all the musings on looking back sagely and looking ahead optimistically, the one which loves to reference Janus, the two-faced namesake of this month, the one which wishes you success on keeping those pesky resolutions. Instead, I would like to write a few words about how almost everyone, it seems, regarded last week's anniversary of the fall of the USSR with indifference.

Fifteen years ago last week, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev stepped down, and within four days the Soviet empire was pronounced dead. With the exception of several radio stations, the media failed to cover the anniversary. Gorbachev, usually press-friendly, made no public statements. Less surprisingly, current President Vladimir Putin also kept quiet on the subject; in 2005, he famously called the collapse "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century."

An anniversary, of course, functions much the same as New Year's Day—it is a time to reflect on the past and plan for the future. There is no question that the effects of the dissolution continue to be felt deeply by the region and its inhabitants. Recent polls show that a 60-percent majority of Russians regrets the fall of the Soviet Union, and a similar margin feels that the country could have been salvaged. Stability continues to be elusive in all major spheres, from economics to politics to culture. A generation has been growing up under these conditions, and one can only wonder what the future will hold for them.

We across the pond have our own set of challenges. Here too a generation has been growing up, a generation on whose consciousness the Soviet Union never registered firsthand. The students in our classrooms have never listened to talk of iron curtains and mutually assured destruction on the nightly news. Political figures who, not so very long ago, profoundly impacted the lives of millions of people are only names in textbooks to them. How can we as educators best bring understanding of history, so recent and yet so remote, without also bringing old (and new) prejudices and misconceptions? How can we engender respect and interest in current events when xenophobia and apathy are alive and well in our culture? Quite simply, we must work together and try our hardest.

And that, perhaps, is the resolution which will remain with us long after New Year's Day.

OUTREACH PROGRAM NEWS:

We hope you have had an opportunity to take advantage of this fall's series of events and resources related to GULAG remembrance and instruction. The two exhibits hosted at BU, *GULAG: Soviet Forced Labor Camps and the Struggle for Freedom* and *Territories of Terror: Mythologies and Memories of the Gulag in Contemporary Russian-American Art*, will remain open until January 14, so there is still time to visit them at 808 and 855 Commonwealth Ave, Boston, if you have not had the chance!

Also, print copies of the curriculum unit, *GULAG: Soviet Prison Camps and Their Legacy*, are still available by request; the PDF version is available online here: <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~nrc/Gulag.pdf>

As always, we are here to help you in any way we can, and this month we invite your feedback and participation to help us plan our activities in 2007. We ask you to complete a brief survey regarding our activities and how they can better suit your needs as an educator. You can complete the survey in 1 of 2 ways:

Website:

We welcome your input on how we can best help you and your students. Therefore, we invite you to fill out our online survey at the following address: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=209022886531>. Your responses will help us plan future teacher workshops and other resources. Thank you in advance for your participation!

Newsletter:

The survey will be printed in our biannual newsletter, which will be mailed in mid-January. If you do not currently receive this resource, please contact us via telephone or email to add your mailing address to our list.

FEATURED RESOURCES OF THE MONTH:

* The Face of Russia. VHS (3 cassettes), 1998.

Part One: The Face on the Firewood; Part Two: The Facade of Power; Part Three: Facing the Future. Hosted by James N. Billington, the Librarian of Congress and one of America's foremost historians of Russia, this magnificent three-part series illuminates the hearts, minds, and many faces of Russia by exploring her architecture, paintings, music, literature and cinema.

* Poland. VHS and CD-ROM, 1999.

This video will give you an insight into Poland's most fascinating features, including magnificent monuments, intricately detailed architecture, priceless collections of art and picturesque landscapes. Stroll the streets of Warsaw and Krakow or taste the exhilaration of the Tatra Mountains and the Baltic Coast.

* Russia: A History. Gregory Freeze, ed. 1997.

A detailed, yet highly readable account of the history of Russia from its beginnings as Kievan Rus' to the post-Soviet political struggles. Each chapter is written by an expert on that period, and draws upon newly-available archival materials to give a clear and well-rounded understanding of Russian history.

COMMUNITY (and beyond) EVENTS:

Ongoing:

* The Museum Of Russian Icons, Clinton, MA.

An American businessman has opened a museum in Central Massachusetts featuring the large collection of icons he amassed while living in Russia. Read more about his story [here](#).

Hours: 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays. Admission: \$5 adults; voluntary donations by children. Call (978) 598-5005 for more information.

January 19:

* Bogdan Holownia in Concert. Polish-American Citizens Club, South Boston. 7:30 pm.

Jazz pianist from Poland, with his trio. Tickets \$10, kids 12-under free. The address is 82-84 Boston St, So. Boston, MA 02025. For more information, see www.promusicaonline.org or call 508-384-0454.

January 20-21:

* Prokofiev's "Cinderella," State Ballet Theatre of Russia, Cutler Majestic Theatre, Boston. Saturday at 7:30pm, Sunday at 3pm.

The State Ballet Theatre of Russia is the touring name of the Voronezh State Theatre of Opera and Ballet, established in 1961. This is the Company's debut North American tour. Tickets \$35, \$50, \$60, \$80. For more information, see http://www.maj.org/P2007/hegi_cind.html or Telecharge: 1-800/233-3123.

January 26:

* Dima Bilan in Concert, John Hancock Hall, Boston. 8:00 pm.

Russian pop star in concert to promote his third album, Vremya-Reka. His official website (with English and Russian) is at <http://www.bilandima.ru/>. For more information on tickets, contact Solomon: snovikov@verizon.net or 781-593-1405.

If you are able to venture a bit farther out, this looks to be a very interesting pair of exhibits:

Oct 14, 2006 - Mar 25, 2007:

* Word and Image: Visual Experiments of Russian Artists, 1910s-30s, Russian Special Exhibition Gallery

* Word and Image: Visual Experiments of Soviet Nonconformist Artists, 1960s-80s, DuBrow Gallery

Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 71 Hamilton St., New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1248. For more information call 732.932.7237 or <http://www.zimmerlimuseum.rutgers.edu/>

LINKS:

* Coca-Cola Poland's version of 43Things.com

Launched recently, <http://cocacola.pl/UdaSie/> is a 43things.com clone prepared for Coca-Cola. It's a fully-featured social network integrated into Coca-Cola's Polish website. This one caught my eye, because to my knowledge no major commercial website in the US has integrated anything like [43things](#) into its site. When you go to the frontpage on the left (green) you have "what do you want to achieve" (actually "what you desire" or in Polish "czego pragniesz"); and on the right (yellow) is "what you've achieved" ("co ci sie juz udalo"). You can share your goals and achievements with the community... and then perhaps the world will buy you a Coke?

* A look at Russia through her airports, from *The Economist*

An unnamed (as far as I can tell) *Economist* correspondent takes a light-hearted look at the major airports across the land, from Kaliningrad to Sakhalin, in an effort to understand the bigger picture in contemporary Russia: http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=8401107

* The latest on the Bosnian Pyramids controversy on *The Register*

An interview with a Cambridge professor on how much credence to put into the claims of Semir Osmanagić (the self-proclaimed "Indiana Jones of Bosnia") and company: http://www.theregister.co.uk/2006/12/26/bosnian_pyramids/

* A nice Russian language recipe site

[Kuking.net](#) has lots of recipes, organized by helpful themes (holidays, caviar, etc.,) as well as by "Most Delicious." There doesn't seem to be an embedded English translation, but an online translator should be able to get the job done.

APHORISMS:

* Do not forget to wipe dust and dirt from your glasses—otherwise, the world around you will seem hopelessly gray and gloomy.

* A new year is always better than the old, but not always for you.

* Toast: Sometimes we choose roads, but more often roads choose us. Let us drink to these roads being the same in the New Year!

* Toast: The more mistakes there are, the clearer life is. Let us drink to the mistakes of the past year, so that in the New Year they are not repeated!

* Volcano, fire, repair, and scandal
Are all good from a distance.

* Clever is not the man who has read many books, but the man who has understood one woman.

All the best,
Nicole