

HISTORY CURRENT



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Viola Wins Top Honour

Historian Lynne Viola has earned U of T's highest honour: the designation "University Professor." Awarded to only two faculty members across the University in 2011, the title recognizes exceptional achievement. Viola's field is the Soviet Union under Stalin, and she is renowned for her books on some of its most violent episodes. The first westerner to use archives opened after the collapse of Communism, she has also been instrumental in enabling others to study this past. Viola has published nine volumes of never-before-released documents – on peasant resistance in Ukraine, on the peasantry and the Politburo, and on the "tragedy of the Soviet countryside" in the 1930s.

Now Viola is working on a project titled "What Is the Soviet Perpetrator?" She spent most of last summer in Kiev, reading interrogation files from the KGB's forerunner, the NKVD. After the Great Terror of 1937-38 began to slow, she explains, the Communist Party tried to preserve its legitimacy by seeking scapegoats. It found many within its own ranks. Investigations followed, and it is the resulting records that Viola has begun to examine. "I've read transcripts of the trials and confessions of heads of prisons and shooting squads," Viola says. "These are enormous files, some of them thousands of pages long." She describes one case, a Ukrainian NKVD man charged with ordering strip searches of female prisoners. His file contains testimony against him from guards and women who had been violated. "These were perpetrators," Viola points out, "not innocent victims." Still they were viciously treated, and even reading about their fate is grueling.

When asked how she copes, Viola paraphrases the French historian Marc Bloch:



Soviet historian Viola celebrates University Professorship

the job of the historian is not that of a judge. The Soviet case is complicated, she notes, because in a planned economy everyone was involved. There were activists but also informers, desk murderers, local collaborators and victims, interacting and sometimes trading places in the village, the Gulag, and the interrogation room. Still, some kind of justice may emerge from historical study. In her work Viola tries to let people speak for themselves, "to give voice to the voiceless." Writing about mass terror "gives you a purpose," she adds. "It tells us something about violence today."

Not violence but literature and music first sparked Viola's interest in Russia. A high school teacher introduced her to Dostoevskii, and she has always loved Russian opera. After many trips to Russia and other former Soviet republics, Viola is also a connoisseur of the regional cuisines. "I like Georgian food most of all," she says, "and Ukrainian food can be wonderful, too." Thanks to the stipend attached to her new title, University Professor Lynne Viola will have more opportunities to enjoy those dishes – that is, when she's not hard at work in the archives.

by Doris L. Bergen

Greetings from the Chair

A warm welcome to History Current, our Department's annual newsletter. Within, you'll find features on special awards and people, news of the activities and accomplishments of faculty, students and alumni, and reflections on critical issues past and present. Look out for the section "What We're Reading." My thanks to Doris Bergen, Deb Barton, Janine Riviere and others for imagination, expertise and hard work. The Department of History greatly values your support. Keep in touch, and join us at an upcoming event! *Kenneth Mills.*

Historians in the World

Faculty

Looking Back to See Ahead: Spotlight on the Middle East and North Africa

To say there have been—and continue to be—dramatic changes sweeping the Middle East and North Africa is an understatement. Autocratic leaders have been ousted, civil wars have broken out, thousands have died for change, and widespread social protest continues. University of Toronto's historians share their expertise as we all try to make sense of what has been happening and what may happen yet.

Decolonizing Democracy

The revolutions that have swept the Arab world have taken everyone honest enough to admit it by surprise. This is not to say that we did not know about the growing inequalities in the region, especially in the last decade. The economic grievances in the Middle East are the same as in neighbouring Greece, in Spain or in

Madison, Wisconsin facing the consequences of debilitating and irresponsible neoliberal policies.

But the inspiring radicalism and particular stamina of the Arab uprisings is rooted—counter-intuitively—in the militarization of the authoritarian regimes during the ‘War on Terror.’ In a recent visit to the history department, Canadian ambassador to Tunisia, Ariel Delouya, confirmed that there was a causal link between the West’s strengthening of the security apparatuses in Tunisia and Egypt and the weakening of state legitimacy domestically. Long before Mohamad Bou `Azizi, the impoverished and humiliated university graduate, set himself on fire in rural Tunisia on December 17, 2010, North Africans had noticed the acute contrast between the state’s withdrawal of its responsibility for their livelihoods and the wealth displayed by business dynasties working Western investors and the

government. They had a word for these connections: al-fussad, “corruption”.

by Jens Hanssen, Associate Professor of Middle East History

Home Grown Democracy: Civil Movements in the Middle East

The desire for democracy has been an important part of the political culture in the Middle East since the early 20th century, but the state has managed to suppress it. Any voices that challenged authoritarian regimes were presented as enemies of the nation. Unfortunately, the term “democracy” has become loaded ideologically—similar to how Islam is perceived in the West. Nevertheless, democracy is significant in the protests. For many Egyptians, for example, the regime represented intense policing and the state’s control over everyday life—what you could say and how you could say it. When the protesters said Hosni Mubarak should go, they wanted all of this to go, too.

With the importance of national sovereignty in Middle Eastern political culture it’s best for external powers not to get directly involved in support of civil movements. When democracy is depicted as a gift of foreigners, it cannot become a highly cherished cultural value. It only becomes a cherished cultural value if people fight for it, protect it and institutionalize it of their own volition.

by Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, Professor, Modern Middle Eastern History



Syrian protest, Dundas Square, Toronto, 2011.

Crossing Borders and Back Again: Protest in Israel

Over the summer, Israel witnessed massive social protests that were undoubtedly related to the general unrest throughout the Middle East. Last spring, Israeli observers of the political revolutions shaking the Arab world wondered why Israel was so quiet, given its problems with growing income inequity, budget cuts to social assistance and education, and skyrocketing housing prices. Israel's citizens do not live in a repressive, authoritarian police state, and Israel has a strong, vibrant civil society, so once the protests did break out, their nature and purpose were different than in other Middle Eastern lands.

The protests were overwhelmingly peaceful, and their goals have been limited to correcting social inequities as opposed to overhauling the political system. But they share with the Arab Spring movement a commitment to reform at home rather than conflict abroad.

Until recently, the Arab protests were rarely directed against external foes (e.g., Israel). Similarly, the Israeli protests attempted to avoid any association with a specific approach to the issues of Palestinian statehood and Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories.

Unfortunately, of late the protests in Egypt have turned against Israel, in part because of Israel's own actions (e.g., the killing in August of Egyptian soldiers in the course of pursuing perpetrators of terrorist attacks emanating from Sinai) but also because the slow pace of reform within Egypt has created frustration that is all too easily projected outwards, onto the Arab world's traditional arch nemesis. In

Israel, despite claims of neutrality the social protests emanate primarily from the left of the political spectrum, as one of the protest movement's accusations is the government's expenditure of vast sums on settlements in the Occupied Territories rather than in the development of affordable housing within the Green Line, the armistice lines that up to June 1967 constituted Israel's de facto borders. Thus the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has not been able to remain off the radar screen of the protest movements either in Arab countries or in Israel.

by Derek Penslar, Samuel Zacks Professor of Jewish History



Syrian protests, Dundas Square, Toronto, 2011

Do They Know It's Spring? Africa and the "Arab Spring"

"Do They Know It's Christmas?" was the awkward title and surreal refrain of the 1984 pop song released by the celebrity group formed as part of Ethiopian famine relief. The question was recently reposed in terms of the so-called Arab Spring and sub-Saharan Africa. Pundits asked if Africans in Zimbabwe or several other repressive states elsewhere on the continent would similarly take to the

streets with demands of reform and regime change. Thus far they have not. In some formulations of this question it was as if Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya were not actually in Africa and peopled by Africans. The use of the word "Arab" seemed to deny the African dimensions to these waves of political change.

Even though the movement has not travelled south of the Sahara, that does not mean it is not being watched, followed, and discussed by alienated publics and anxious leaders. However, for something similar to take hold in these countries it will require local idioms and regional sparks to capture and ignite similar political discontent and action. In many countries I

can only assume people are watching and waiting for their moment to come; seasons of change come more than once, just as others came to Africa before the Arab Spring. However, in these countries they cannot rely on ongoing media attention or international military support, which makes the calculus of popular revolutions elsewhere on the continent a little different. On July 9 of

this year, when Southern Sudan won its independence from Sudan, it was only after two civil wars (the first lasting 17 years and costing over half a million lives, and the second 22 years and claiming two million casualties and displacing many more people) that such a victory was secured. Across Africa people know it's spring, but they also know the costs of acting on that knowledge while the rest of the world remains largely indifferent.

by Sean Hawkins, Associate Professor, Modern Social and Cultural History of sub-Saharan Africa

Wanted – History, Dead or Alive

It may have escaped the notice of most professional historians in Canada, but history has taken centre stage in the presentations of the Conservative government of Stephen Harper. The government has suddenly revived and burnished the image of John G. Diefenbaker – “Dief the Chief”, the old Tory warrior who led Canada from 1957 to 1963 and the Progressive Conservative party from 1956 to 1967. There were three other late-twentieth-century Progressive Conservative prime ministers, Joe Clark (1979-80), Brian Mulroney (1984-93), and Kim Campbell (132 days in 1993). None was judged suitable. Perhaps that was partly because they are too recent – all three are still alive, and two are very much part of the public scene. More important, the Harper government has tried to distance itself from Brian Mulroney, who remains a figure of controversy in some circles, and Joe Clark’s party was the “Progressive Conservatives” – not the un-Progressive Conservatives of Stephen Harper. “I have no party,” Clark told me a few years back. So Clark will not do. As for Campbell, she led the party to its most catastrophic defeat and holds the Canadian record for most seats lost in a single election. Her memory is to say the least divisive among Conservatives, and she survives in the public memory mainly as Canada’s only female prime minister.

The government, having removed the artwork from the lobby of the Pearson Building and subbed the Queen, and having exiled the unmemorable image of governor general David Johnston from the lobbies of Canadian embassies and subbed the same majesty, has now renamed the auxiliary building of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) the Diefenbaker Building. It’s funny, really. There is a long line of precedents for putting the past to work to forward the agenda of the present. Thutmose III of Egypt demolished or altered the statues and images of his hated predecessor, Queen Hatshepsut. The early Roman

emperors were careful to shape the image of the past in a way that would justify them and their regime. French governments from Louis XVIII to Vichy recast and reconstituted what was taught as “history” in French schools.

These are noteworthy precedents, though one cannot be sure that the several history PhDs (there really are, though not from the U of T History Department) in ministerial offices are aware of the models for their work. Scraping around they found a number of admirable things that Dief had done -- his Bill of Rights, appointing Ellen Fairclough to the cabinet (first woman) and a few other things -- the first Aboriginal Canadian appointed to the Senate (James Gladstone), or giving the vote to status Indians on reserves. And yes, he did these things. He was also a political disaster of the first magnitude, first directing his fire at the Liberals, with stunning effect, but then inwards, at his own party. A professed Anglophile and fervent monarchist, he brought relations between Britain and Canada to their lowest ebb since the rebellions of 1837. The Conservative British prime minister, Harold Macmillan, confided to his diary (just published) that he found Diefenbaker a fraud and a charlatan. Diefenbaker’s low standing in Washington is generally well known, but John F. Kennedy’s dislike of “Dief the Chief” pales beside Macmillan’s.

Diefenbaker’s greatest disasters came in defence and foreign policy. He enraged Macmillan by proposing, and then withdrawing, a trade-deal with Great Britain in 1957. In fact, Diefenbaker pretended the subject had never arisen. Under his direction Canada wandered uncertainly



through the underbrush of the Cold War, notably losing its way during the Cuban Missile Crisis, while generally pretending to an importance or significance it did not have. As for defence, even when Diefenbaker got it right (canceling the Arrow interceptor in 1959) he managed to put himself in the wrong. Perhaps the Harper government wishes to be prophetic in naming important aspects of Canada’s foreign policy machinery after him.

So we can take comfort that the past, if not history, is alive and well and doing Harper’s bidding in Ottawa. Our prime minister likes to deliver his pronouncements surrounded by decorative people symbolizing whatever fantasy he is peddling at the moment. But for Harper the living are not sufficient: he has enlisted the dead as well.

by Robert Bothwell, May Gluskin Professor of Canadian History, winner of the J.B. Tyrrell Historical Medal in 2011

Parents to Blame for New Professor's Bilingualism

Sean Mills (no relation to our department chair Kenneth Mills) joined the History Department in January 2011 with an appointment in French Canada. Born in Sault Ste. Marie, Mills credits his parents for his bilingualism. Neither one of them spoke French, but in what Mills calls a "Trudeau moment" they enrolled him in the local French-language elementary school. This worked in his favour, he figures, because they were unable to read his report cards or the notes his teachers sent home. By his teen years and the family's move to St. Catharines, Mills was functionally bilingual.

Mills came of age during the second Quebec referendum of 1995. He was fascinated by the debates taking place, watching closely as Canada itself appeared on the brink of break-up. But he had a sense that the English-language media was not accurately conveying what was going on in Quebec and he wanted to find out for himself. While an undergraduate at Queen's, he did an exchange year at McGill, choosing to live in east-end Montreal and cultivate friendships with francophones. In the years that followed, he oscillated between Kingston and Montreal, doing his BA at Queens, MA at McGill (while taking courses at the Université de Montréal and Université du Québec à Montréal), and PhD back at Queens. The more time Mills spent in Quebec the more he noticed the politicization of everyday life there, the high level of citizen engagement compared to elsewhere in Canada, and the political influence of labour unions.

Also striking to Mills was the deep divide between anglophone and francophone scholarship. He now makes a point of giving conference papers and publishing in both official languages. This practice is more than an effort to break



Professors Sean Mills and Steve Penfold.

down the "two solitudes"; for Mills, Canadian history needs to be seen in its transnational and global contexts. It is not possible to understand Montreal in the 1960s, he argues, without considering the links between Montreal and Paris, New York and Buenos Aires. Those connections are the subject of Mills' 2010 book, *The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal*. Recently translated as *Contester l'empire. Pensée postcoloniale et militantisme politique à Montréal, 1963-1972*, *The Empire Within* received Honourable Mention for the 2011 Sir John A. Macdonald Prize for the best book in Canadian history.

Mills' next book will examine French-Canadian/Haitian relations since the 1940s. He is already discussing related issues with students in his seminars on Canada and Empire in the 20th Century, and Canada and Decolonization. For Sean Mills, conversation – the exchange of ideas – is essential to building intellectual and political communities. But who can converse without a common language? So Professor Mills, call your parents and say merci.

*by Heidi Bobaker, Assistant Professor,
Aboriginal history, Pre-Confederation
Canada*

FACULTY NEWS

Recently tenured Nhung Tran was appointed Lead Expert on Women's Land Rights in Vietnam, United Nations Development Program

Eric Jennings received the *Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes académiques*. His new book *Imperial Heights: Dalat, the Making and Undoing of France in Indochina* was published

Carol Chin's book, *Modernity and National Identity in the United States and East Asia, 1895-1919*, was published

Melanie Newton was interviewed in Barbados about historical genealogy for an episode of TV's "Who Do You Think You Are," featuring Gwyneth Paltrow

James Retallack and Derek Penlar were named Fellows of the Royal Society of Canada

Natalie Rothman received a Chancellor Jackman Humanities Institute Fellowship

Jennifer Jenkins's Canada Research Chair in Modern German History was renewed

David A. Wilson's book *Thomas D'Arcy McGee Volume 2: The Extreme Moderate* was published

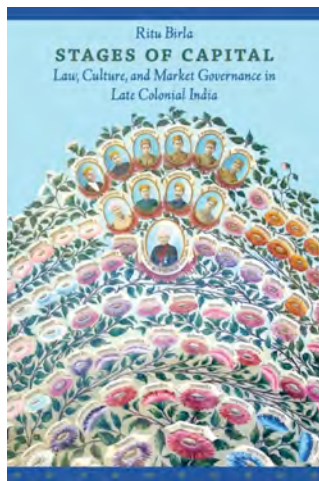
Tong Lam has a photography exhibit entitled "The Storm of Progress" in our newly renamed Natalie Zemon Davis History Conference Room. Check it out!

Giulio Silano was promoted to full Professor

Jennifer Mori's book *The Culture of Diplomacy: Britain in Europe, 1750-1830* was published

Ritu Birla was named Director of the Centre for South Asian Studies.

Books, Books, Books!



Ritu Birla, *Stages of Capital: Law, Culture, and Market Governance in Late Colonial India*, Duke University Press, 2008.

Ritu Birla's award-winning book presents late colonial India as a case study of the economic sensibilities and behaviours of colonizers and colonized. On one level,

“Stages of Capital” is about the colonizers' perceptions: British reformers decried Indian kinship-based trade networks as a form of hoarding that did not contribute to the national economy and

dismissed Indian speculation in commodities as mere gambling. But the book is also about the actions of the colonized: Birla presents Indian merchants around 1900 as at the forefront of movements for social and religious reform. India nationalist ideologies appealed to members of the commercial bourgeoisie, who, in doing their business, circulated across their land's administrative boundaries, thereby conceptualizing and consolidating the nation as a coherent geographical body. In the years following the British introduction into India of the law of trusts, under which customary gifts must be surrendered in perpetuity, Mohandas Gandhi and other Indian nationalists presented the Indian merchant as not oriented towards profit and self, but as a trustee for the nation.

In subaltern studies, the themes of hegemony, agency, representation and difference all have economic inflections. With its blending of economics and law, Birla's book both contributes to this field and transforms it.

by Derek Penslar

WHAT WE'RE READING

FACULTY AND GRADUATE STUDENTS SHARE THEIR FAVOURITE 2011 READS

Prof. Daniel Bender, Charles Mayer's *Trapping Wild Animals in Malay Jungles* (1920) is a vivid memoir of an American animal trader who trapped Malayan animals for sale to zoos and helped pave the way for British colonial expansion throughout the peninsula. The Singapore papers, written 13 years later, revealed that Mayer plagiarized most of his stories of tiger attacks and elephant charges from an 1878 book. History is never simple!

Prof. Michael Marrus, *Hugh Trevor-Roper: The Biography*, is a marvelous portrait by Adam Sisman. Readers may be tempted to go first to the chapter on the Hitler Diaries, but they shouldn't omit the others, full of the Oxford (and later Cambridge) don's pride, snobbery, gossip, lust for polemics, brilliance, and old-fashioned eloquence.

Grad Student, Candace Sobers, *The Elegant Universe: Superstrings, Hidden Dimensions, and the Quest for the Ultimate Theory* by Brian Greene is a non-technical, narrative history of the attempts to unite quantum mechanics and general relativity. It highlights the differing projects of physics and history.

Prof. Michael Wayne, *My friend Gil Levin was named conductor of the Krakow Philharmonic in 1988*, the first American signed to a music directorship behind the iron curtain. Pope John Paul II invited him to conduct a concert celebrating the 10th anniversary of his pontificate. Gil later received the Silver Star of the Order of St. Gregory the Great, the highest papal distinction ever given to a Jew. Over the years he led so many performances for the Vatican that he became known as the “Pope's Maestro.” This eponymous book recounts the remarkable story of his relationship with John Paul.

Grad Student, Rebecca Carter-Chand, Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* (2008). Set in 1838, the novel traces the journey of the Ibis, a ship carrying indentured labourers from Calcutta to Mauritius. It's an adventure story that shows us nineteenth-century globalization up-close.

Prof. Alison Smith, *The Hare with Amber Eyes: A Family's Century of Art and Loss* (2010) Already a respected ceramic artist, Edmund DeWaal here shows himself to be a vivid storyteller, as well, as he reconstructs the history of the family collection of netsuke—small Japanese carvings—he inherits, and in so doing, the history of his family itself.



Around the World

Graduate Students

Negotiating a Livable Past

“You’re going to write something bad about us.” Over my year researching in Russia and Ukraine I heard this time and again. Was it me? Was the decade I had spent trying to understand the former Soviet Union somehow proof of hostile intent? I soon realized that positive/negative is the main binary in post-Soviet history in Russia today. Writing about political terror is negative, but writing about the Soviet victory in World War II is positive. I gradually learned to navigate this dichotomy—not only to gain access to

sources but because studying a region includes paying attention to what historical research might mean to the people who live there.

It helps that my dissertation focuses on youth in the 1930s. In a region where the most prestigious work concentrates on politics, industry or the military, my interest in Soviet youth usually inspires smirks or puzzlement. Many of my files were censored, but others from the Soviet youth organization (Komsomol) had not been touched for decades, if ever. These neglected sources yield major insights. Political repression of youth leaders in the Komsomol showed the outer limits of

terror under Stalin—policies aimed not at murder but at modifying the behavior of young people. And military training for youth revealed an expectation of war in the late 1930s.

Staff at the archive of the Komsomol understand that they are sitting on a treasure for social historians. The chief archivist, Galina Mikhailovna, holds the keys. Captured by the German army during the war, Mikhailovna spent her childhood years in a German concentration camp, then in a Soviet orphanage. She trained as a teacher and became the head of the Komsomol in

her district and eventually a member of the organization’s Moscow-based central committee. In the early 1990s, long after moving away from the Komsomol (indeed after its dissolution) she became its chief archivist.

Working with Galina Mikhailovna was a rewarding challenge. Her rise from orphan to influential youth organizer left her indebted to the Soviet system. She complained that after 1991, Western historians came to Russia looking for “negative” information. Although we butted heads over my interest in political repression in the past, we agreed on problems in Russia today. Over (mandatory) tea breaks, we discussed how meritocratic social promotion for youth, flawed as it was in the Soviet Union, had been replaced by widespread corruption. To Mikhailovna the end of a national youth organization meant an end to “patriotic education” and loss of a crucial source of stability in Russia. I tried to emphasize the “positive” aspects of my research and we gained respect for one another. I received most of the files I asked for and many I did not.

My point is not that manipulating elderly archivists will help you (though it might). But when I invoke “patriotic education” as a topic, Eastern Europeans react with hope, cynicism, nostalgia and interest. It pays to engage with those who care about your research. Their concerns can lead not only to better sources but to new perspectives.

*by Seth Bernstein, PhD candidate, 2010
Vanier Canada winner*



A visit to the "Monument to the Pickle" (Lukhovitsy, Moscow Oblast, Russia) provides a break from researching repression

Cross-Cultural Journeys in History

Alexandra Guerson discovered her passion for teaching history while giving a ten-minute talk to an ESL class in Montreal. A young student from Brazil at the time, she chose to practice her spoken English with a presentation on Tudor and Stuart England. Ten minutes turned into an hour, drawn out by Guerson's enthusiasm and the rapt attention of her audience.

Ten years later Guerson is a successful PhD candidate in History at the University of Toronto. She recently submitted her dissertation on Christian-Jewish relations in medieval Spain and is now teaching in the International Fellows Program at New College. This innovative program provides international students who speak English as a second language with the academic skills necessary for undergraduate study. Guerson's course, "Ten Days that Shook the World," uses history to teach the critical skills students need to succeed.

Guerson's own cross-cultural academic experience gives her insight into the challenges faced by international students. Like many other Brazilians, she did a first degree in law. But she remembers being keen on history ever since, as a child, she heard about Josef Mengele, the Nazi doctor whose body was found in Brazil in 1985. After meeting her husband Alan, a Canadian, Guerson moved to Montreal, where she took English and French classes and enrolled at Concordia University. There she studied all kinds of history from

Tudor England to genocide studies. She credits Professor Shannon McSheffrey, a U of T alumna, for steering her toward medieval Spain.

As a PhD student, Guerson flew through the Centre for Medieval Studies' Latin program and learned to read Catalan and Spanish. She served as President of the Graduate History Society for one term and Vice-President and Secretary for another two years. Her dissertation, supervised by Mark Meyerson, explores Jewish-Christian relations in the Crown of Aragon during the period just before the pogroms of 1391. In Barcelona, Guerson examined hundreds of cases, drawing on her training in law and history to analyze the royal court records of the Crown of Aragon. To her surprise, she found more conflict among Jews and among Christians than between Jews and Christians. She discovered that Jews could sometimes use the legal system to their advantage, seeking particular outcomes by appealing to the many different courts. Her findings highlight the agency of Spanish Jews on the brink of a period of intense persecution and demonstrate the complex legal, economic and social connections



Alexandra Guerson, centre, with IFP students at New College's 50th anniversary celebration, fall 2011

among religious communities in medieval Spain.

Alexandra Guerson's career seems set on a cross-cultural trajectory. At New College she encourages students from all over the world to appreciate history and models engagement in the social and intellectual life of the University. A decade after her first "lecture" to that ESL group she still finds history exciting. We can learn a lot, she is convinced, not only from conflict but from coexistence in the past.

by Janine Rivière

GRADUATE HIGHLIGHTS

Katie Edwards (supervisor Jennings) won the Finlayson Prize for her dissertation on "Le Mal Jaune: The Memory of the Indochina War in France, 1954-2006"

Jared Toney (Kazal) received the first New College Senior Doctoral Fellowship in Caribbean Studies

Stacy Hushion (Bergen) received a German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Research Grant

Anthony Cantor (Retallack) received the History TA award

Bakary (Paul) Gibba (Klein), the first recipient of the Carmen Brock Fellowship created with a gift from the late Peter Brock, defended his dissertation "The West Indian Mission to West Africa: The Rio Pongas Mission, 1850-1963"

Svetlana Frunchak (Viola) won the Centre for Jewish Studies's Kornberg-Jeziarski prize

Karen Cousins (Mills) won the Connaught International Scholarship for her doctoral work on colonial Latin America

Stephanie Corazza (Bergen) received a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, International Tracing Service fellowship

Tomasz Frydel (Wróbel) won the Trillium Award for his work on modern Poland

Shaking up the World

Undergraduate Students

Historical Wrongs and Human Rights

U of T student Nader Panahi's role model is humanitarian activist and one-time president of Doctors Without Borders, Dr. James Orbinski. Panahi admires the doctor's principled yet realistic approach to human rights. Born and raised in Tehran during the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-1988, Panahi describes how the war and the UN shaped his future: "Since one of my earliest memories is fleeing the missile attacks in Tehran, the war had a formative impact on my understanding of the world and triggered my interest in what is right and wrong in society. The stabilizing influence of UN peacekeepers in 1988 had a significant effect on me – I knew that one day I wanted to work alongside the UN to help others in dire situations."

And he's done just that. Panahi has completed six UN internships in post-conflict countries, including Bosnia, Kosovo and Iran. For the past fifteen months he worked for the UN in Sierra Leone. Now he plans to devote his career to peace building, humanitarian interventions and aid, conflict mitigation and, most important, human rights.

Although he acknowledges past failings, Panahi stresses that the UN is working

hard to change its image of a "hapless big brother" by adopting new tools in its human rights arsenal. Many of these approaches are designed to harness the power of peers. "Peer recognition or admonishment," Panahi believes, "is the sine qua non for positive international relations." One mechanism, the Universal Periodic Review, is a process in which all 193 UN member states review one another's human rights records in a four-year, recurring cycle. This program requires input from three key stakeholders: the government; non-state actors such as civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations; and nations' external partners, among them the UN.

Panahi is hopeful that the Universal Periodic Review will help improve UN efficacy. He cites Sierra Leone as an example. "Having once been the epitome of a 'failed state', rife with the most flagrant and heinous human rights abuses and crimes," he maintains, "Sierra Leone can now boast a state that has supported a transparent yet scrutinizing process with regard to its human rights track record."

Looking ahead, Panahi stresses the importance of balancing education and professional experience. "My global experiences have been hugely enriching personally and professionally," he notes, "but I can better achieve my goals by complementing these experiences with more structured and focused studies." Panahi has just entered U of T's M.A.



U of T student Nader Panahi en route to Kabala, Sierra Leone

program in Political Science. He looks forward to interacting with faculty members who have both "on-the-ground" and policy-making experience. Meanwhile, history remains important to him. He credits his undergraduate studies in history with helping him understand the importance of a nation's past in determining conflict mitigation and peace initiatives in the present. And he is happy to be back at U of T: "The University of Toronto has been instrumental in helping me overcome many challenges, and I am forever indebted to its holistic approach to education. I hope one day to give back to the university all that it has given to me."

by Deborah Barton

The Future of History - Each year the St. George campus History Students Association publishes *The Future of History*, a journal featuring outstanding undergraduate work. This past year the first annual journal conference was held, providing undergraduates with a professional, conference-like environment in which to present their work.

Congratulations! Kate Bruce-Lockhart was awarded one of only six Jackman Humanities Undergraduate Fellowships for 2011-12 for her work on slave communities in colonial Brazil.

Changing the World

History Alumni

History, Power, and Gratitude

As a History major at U of T in the 1960s, Michael Ignatieff remembers being challenged. “One of my first papers was for Jim Estes,” he recalls. “I thought it was pretty good. He did not.” That experience slapped Ignatieff awake. “I had to get serious,” he realized: “I could do better.”

Ignatieff chose History for personal reasons: “My dad was a Russian refugee, and I wanted to figure out who I was.” A course with Harvey Dyck satisfied some of that desire, and in Carl Berger’s seminar on Canadian Intellectual History he explored the Grant side of his family. But History, Ignatieff learned, is about more than identity. Estes, Dyck, Berger, and their colleagues John Beattie, Donald Creighton, and Jill Ker Conway “knocked this foolishness out of me,” he smiles. “These were very good teachers,” Ignatieff recalls. “They were serious, demanding, and proud of their discipline. They had a huge impact.”

Ignatieff went on to do a PhD at Harvard, supervised by the economic historian David Landes. Like most of his generation, however, Ignatieff was inspired by social history. Reading E.P. Thompson, Eric Hobsbawm, and Natalie Zemon Davis taught him to look at the past from the bottom up. Social history, Ignatieff insists, like all history, is about power: “It’s

about how power is exercised, how it justifies itself, how it is fought for and resisted.” His PhD dissertation, published as *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850*, headed straight for the belly of the beast, to examine the history of incarceration, as viewed from inside.

In 1976 Ignatieff took a job as assistant professor of Canadian History at UBC. There he had another shock. “Canada is a very regional country,” he discovered. “The Canadian history I knew was the history of the St. Lawrence River system. My students had no idea what I was talking about.” Just as all politics is local, Ignatieff says, “All history is local.” And it is contested, the site of “fierce argument and debate.” The past is “never over, never securely in the past.” You see that in politics, Ignatieff notes, in the ways the past will “surge up,” and in the “many unresolved issues” connected with Aboriginal peoples in Canada. “We can’t take the national story for granted,” he insists. “We’re still in the process of writing it.”



Michael Ignatieff at Massey College

History has always been his “guiding light,” Ignatieff maintains. One of his favourite essays is Isaiah Berlin’s “On Political Judgment.” What made Bismarck great? Ignatieff asks, channeling Berlin: “It’s a sense of what’s possible in any given set of circumstances – and that’s defined by the history of those circumstances.” No theory can give you that specificity, Ignatieff asserts: “History made me an empiricist.” Forty years later, Michael Ignatieff has a message for his U of T history professors: “I am profoundly grateful.”

by Doris Bergen

PHD PLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Congratulations!

Tomaz Jardim (supervisor Marrus) Assistant Professor, Tenure-track, Ryerson University, Toronto

Max Bergholz (Viola) Assistant Professor, Tenure-track, James M. Stanford Professorship in Genocide and Human Rights Studies, Concordia University, Montreal

Jon Soske (Hawkins) Assistant Professor, Tenure-track, McGill University, Montreal

Sophie Roberts (Jennings and Penslar) Assistant Professor, Tenure-track, Zantker Professor of Jewish History, University of Kentucky, Lexington

Dot Tuer (Mills) Assistant Professor, Tenure-track, Ontario College of Art and Design

Natalie Oeltjens (Meyerson) Postdoc, Hebrew University

Gregor Kranjc (Rossos) Assistant Professor, Tenure-track, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth

Julie Gilmour (Bothwell) Postdoc, York University

Katie Edwards (Jennings) Visiting Assistant Professor, Bucknell University, Lewisburg, PA

Heather Dichter (Eksteins) Adjunct Professor, York College of Pennsylvania

Chris Pennington (Bothwell) Manuscript Editor at Dictionary of Canadian Biography

Alexandra Guerson (Meyerson) Lecturer, New College, University of Toronto

Eventful Times

Celebrating 30 Years of Ukrainian Studies!

Paul Robert Magocsi, Chair of Ukrainian Studies, professor of history and political science, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada celebrates 30 years as the Chair in Ukrainian Studies and the generous \$2-million bequest from the late John Yaremko. The Chair is now called “The John Yaremko Chair in Ukrainian Studies.”



Ibor Bardyn, President of the U of T Chair in Ukrainian Studies; Michael Marrus, and Paul Robert Magocsi

Coming Up in 2011-12

For more information on upcoming events visit <http://www.history.utoronto.ca/events>

• **Rethinking Human Rights: Two Workshops**, Nov. 11, 2011, organized by Paul Cohen (CEFMEF):

1. Human Rights in Historical Perspective: A Dialogue, featuring Lynn Hunt, University of California and Samuel Moyn, Columbia University

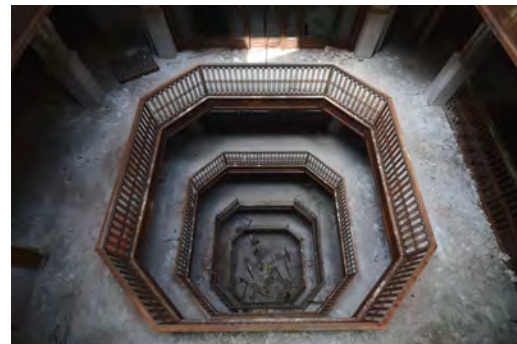
2. Imagining a Human Rights Museum: A Roundtable about the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Winnipeg

• **Nazism and Terrorism: Violent Responses to a Dark Past**, organized by Rebecca Wittmann, Dec. 5, 2011

- **The Donald Creighton Lecture: Mobile Subjects: Nations, Empires, and Biographies in the Nineteenth-Century Imperial World**, Adele Perry, University of Manitoba, March 8, 2012
- **Jewish Life and Death in the Soviet Union during World War II**, March 25-26, 2012, featuring the annual Wolfe Lecture in Holocaust Studies, Ilya Altman “Holocaust in the Soviet Union: Unknown Pages”
- **Early Modern Migrations: Exiles, Expulsion, and Religious Refugees, 1400-1700**, April 19-21, 2012, organized by Nicholas Terpstra and others
- **The Eichmann Trial: Retrospect and Prospect**, Sept. 9 -11, 2012 organized by Michael Marrus

• **The Big Berks Comes to U of T, June 2014!**

For the first time, the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians will take place in Canada. The official host is Berks President Franca Iacovetta.



COMINGS AND GOINGS

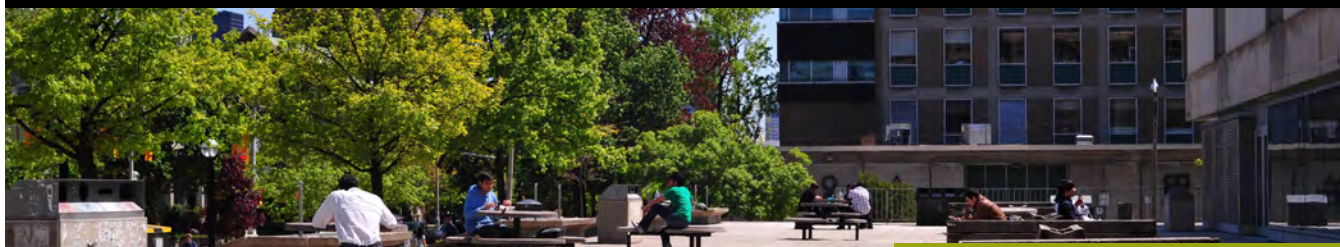
Welcome to new hires **William Nelson**, historian of Europe, and **Takashi Fujitani**, Professor & Director of the David Chu Program in Asia-Pacific Studies.

Malcolm Thompson from the University of British Columbia joins us in 2011-2012 to teach Chinese history.

A number of colleagues are retiring during or at the close of this academic year: Warm thanks to **Jane Abray**, **Peter Blanchard**, **Robert Johnson**, **Andrew Rossos**, and **Barbara Todd**. We look forward to their ongoing participation in the department's intellectual life.

Heartfelt thanks to **Lori Loeb** for her dedication as Associate Chair, Graduate. And congratulations to **Russell Kazal**, who now holds this position.

Camille Alexander is here to stay! She holds the position of Executive Assistant to the Chair.



Drop by!



From top left: 1. Trinity College 2. Audience at 2011 Wolfe Symposium 3. Lori Loeb 4. Cherry blossoms outside Robart's Library 5. Queen's Park 6. Grad students Stephanie Corazza, Deborah Barton, and Lilia Topouzova

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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We welcome your feedback! For more information, to comment, or to get involved please contact the Assistant to the Chair at history.chair@utoronto.ca.

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Janine Rivière, PhD Candidate, Europe, 1500-1800

Deborah Barton, PhD Candidate, 20th-century Europe

Alexandra Guerson, PhD Candidate, Medieval

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