

The Past as Prologue

Building Yale University Library's Slavic and East European Collection from the Beginning of the Twentieth Century until Today

Paper presented by Tatjana Lorković

Yale University Library

In earlier publications I have written about Joel Sumner Smith, a pioneer of Slavic librarianship and the creator of the first Slavic collection in North America at Yale University, where he worked as a librarian from 1875 until his death in 1903. The purpose of this paper is to describe the development of the Slavic and East European Collection at the Yale University Library during the twentieth century and to offer some projections and thoughts about its future. In my research, I have attempted to answer several questions. First, how did the collection grow--by purchase, exchanges, donations, and/or gifts? Second, what were the motivations of the librarians interested in developing the collection? Finally, what was the connection between the historical events of the twentieth century and the importance of the Slavic studies collection at Yale?

TWO ANNUAL REPORTS

While checking the Librarian Records in the Manuscripts and Archives Department at Yale's Sterling Memorial Library, I came upon the annual report for 1896, in which the Slavic Collection was first mentioned as a discrete unit. It was created and donated to the university by Joel Sumner Smith, an assistant librarian. In describing this remarkable collection, which was unique in North America at the time, University Librarian Addison Van Name provided an excellent overview of materials pertaining to the field of Slavic philology:

A collection of Russian books of 6,000 volumes was given to Yale University Library . . . by Joel Sumner Smith. . . . The collection is even more valuable from the care with which the works composing it have been chosen than from its extent. In Russian and other Slavonic bibliography it contains approximately 250 volumes; in the languages of the Russian Empire, Slavonic, Lettic, and Altaic, 675 volumes; in Russian literature, apart from periodicals, 500 volumes; in history and geography, 475 volumes (on Alaska alone, 100 volumes) and 191 maps issued by the war department. But the most important feature of the collection is the large number of periodical publications, both those issued by learned societies and departments of the government and those of a more general character. There are 153 such serials, embracing not far from 4,000 volumes. No effort has been spared to make the sets complete and in most cases they are entirely so. Of the publications of the learned societies of Russia there are 570 volumes (which do not duplicate the 800 volumes already in the University Library) ; of the Ministry of Public Instruction, 360 volumes, of the Ministry of Marine, 308 volumes; of the Ministry of War, 140 v. Other important series are: Karamzin's "*Vestnik Evropy*" (M., 1802-30, 174 v.), and the later journal of the same name (St. P., 1866-95, v. 1-176) ; "*Russkii vestnik*" (M., 1808-20, 42 v.) ; Katkov's "*Russkii vestnik*" (M. & St. P., 1856-95, v. 1-241) ; "*Syn otechestva*" (St.

P., 1812-48, 229 v.) ; *"Otechestvennye zapiski"* (St. P., 1818-49, 113 v.) ; *"Severnaia pchela"* (St. P., 1825-55, from 1831 daily) ; *"Moskvitianin"* (M., 1841-49, 52 v.) ; *"Russkii arkhiv"* (M., 1863-95, v. 1-76) ; *"Russkaia starina"* (St. P., 1870-1895, v. 1-84) ; *"Istoricheskii vestnik"* (St. P., 1870-95, v. 1-26) ; *"Niva"* (St. P., 1870-97, v. 1-26) ; *"Sbornik"* of the Imperial Russian Historical Society (St. P., 1867-95, v. 1-95).

The books are in excellent condition and the greater part newly bound. Thirty of the periodicals in the collection were still published after the publication of the catalog in 1896.¹

In a later annual report, dated February 26, 1926, Senior Cataloger Rebecca Dutton Townsend also mentions the Slavic collection at Sterling Memorial Library:

Through the generosity of the late Joel Sumner Smith, the library received in 1896 a very valuable collection of Russian books numbering 6,000 volumes. This was augmented by a few accessions each year until 1924. Since then an agent in Moscow has sent nearly all the important contemporary works published in Russia.

The collection now numbers approximately 9,000 volumes. It is particularly strong in Russian literature and works dealing with the economic and social conditions and the history of Russia.

There are over 4,000 volumes of periodical publications, both those issued by learned societies and departments of the government and those of a more general character. The number of volumes in the field of bibliography and geography is comparatively small, but there are some very rare and valuable books in both. A collection of 100 volumes on Alaska alone is noteworthy. . . .

The post-revolutionary material includes nearly everything relating to the revolution, government publications, a mass of published secret documents, best works in literature, books on the theater and art, and periodicals.²

I also learned from this report about another librarian who was responsible for the growth of the collection and was also a Russian-language instructor at Yale.

Mr. M.S. Mandell has devoted much time to building up the Slavonic collections, the beginning of which we owe to the late Mr. Joel Sumner Smith. Mr. Mandell has also assisted the Librarian in the purchase of Yiddish books, and deserves the University's thanks for his unselfish devotion to both these fields.

¹ Librarian Records 120, Series I, Box 148, folder 1783.

² Ibid.

Max Solomon Mandell was an instructor of Russian at Yale from 1907 to 1924 and received his master of library science degree from Columbia University in 1924. Ms. Townsend's report ends with the reminder that "the J.S. Smith collection is described in the 'Catalogue of Books' (Slavica in the Library of Yale University, compiled by Joel Sumner Smith), privately printed, [Leipzig] 1896."

In the thirty years between the two reports, three thousand volumes had been added to the Slavic Collection--a rate of approximately one hundred volumes per year. Letters, memoranda, and lists of materials in the Yale archives provide a vivid picture of this growth. Due to space limitations, I will concentrate only on the most important documents.

EXCHANGES

The Librarian Records show that exchanges with the Russian Empire up to 1917 were dominated by the library's main partner, the Imperial Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg. For instance, on November 19, 1906, an anonymous Yale librarian wrote to the academy: "Gentlemen: I take the liberty of recalling that of Radloff "Versuch eines wörterbuchs der Turk-Dialect" we have received from you Lieferung 7-11 (Band 2, Lief. 1-5). If possible, we should greatly appreciate receiving Lieferung 1-6, 12-19, and subsequent numbers." The librarian went on to request that the academy send the materials "with the help of the Commission Russe des Échanges Internationaux, Bibliothèque Impériale Publique, St. Petersburg." Apparently, the Imperial Academy did not respond, and a little over a year later, on February 11, 1908, the same request was resubmitted, this time with a salutatory flourish: "Assuring you that we shall highly prize the completion of this monumental work, I remain, gentlemen, your obedient servant, The Librarian."³

On October 13, 1912, the University Librarian wrote to "M. le Secrétaire de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de Saint-Petersbourg, Russie":

Dear Sir,

I take the liberty of summarizing the exchange of publications between this University and your Imperial Academy which was established many years ago and has continued, I hope, to the mutual advantage of both institutions.

We are sending you regularly the publications of the Connecticut Academy of Sciences (Transactions and Memoirs), the printed Silliman Lectures, the Yale Studies in English, the Annual Report of the President and the Librarian, the Annual University Catalog and the American Journal of Science.

In return we have received from you the publications listed on the enclosed sheet. . . . Would you be so kind to supply us with any of the missing numbers.

Yours very respectfully,

³ Librarian Records 120, Series I, Box 25, folder 1182.

John Schwab, University Librarian ⁴

In a later dated November 29, 1912, Prof. S. Pilkin of the Imperial Academy pointed out several errors in the Yale list (“For instance No. 2, t. 39 is recorded as in the Library, but it was not yet published”) and asked that it be emended. (On the Russian side, the correspondence was usually conducted in French, but there are also letters in English and German—never in Russian.) A response was forthcoming on February 11, 1913:

Dear Sir:

I beg to thank you for your letter of November 29th returning the enclosed memorandum of the publications of your Royal Academy represented in this Library. I have made note of the memoranda you attach in red and blue pencil, but beg to note that of your Academy Memoires, 7th series, we have v. 39, whose title reads *Faune ornithologique de la Sibérie Orientale* par le Dr. L. Taczanowski, 1893, pt. 2 (= 2 leaves, pp. I-VIII, 685-1728, portrait) and title page and contents for the whole volume.

I am also enclosing a fairly complete list of the publications of your Academy to be found in the Library which may be of interest for you. This collection we largely owe to your kindness and I very much hope that in future you will still be inclined to continue to send us such publications as you can spare.

Assuring you that we appreciate your kindness in the matter, I beg to remain with great respect your obedient servant,

[No signature]

The Yale archives contain an interesting exchange of letters between the American consul general in Moscow, John H. Snodgrass, and University Librarian John Christopher Schwab. On February 11, 1914, Snodgrass informed Schwab that the Society for the Development of Experimental Sciences and Their Practical Applications, established in Russia in 1909, desired to exchange publications with Yale. Schwab replied on March 3 that he would “take pleasure in sending” the requested materials to the society, noting “for their interest that this Library probably contains the best collection of Slavonic books in this country. It is one of long standing and is constantly added to.”⁵

Snodgrass acknowledged the librarian’s letter on March 17, and on April 17 Schwab proposed to initiate direct contact between the library and the society. Because the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., and the Commission Russe des Échanges Internationaux, Bibliothèque Impériale Publique in St. Petersburg handled the vast majority of library and scientific materials shipped between the two countries, Schwab suggested that they use this established route.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

The exchange program continued operating smoothly despite the ravages of the war in Russia. In a letter of June 17, 1915, Carl Salemann, director of the Imperial Academy (Bibliothèque 2me Section, Livres en Langues Étrangères), stated that they continued to receive *Yale Studies in English*, but lacked certain issues. When Schwab discovered that two copies of the journal had been sent to St. Petersburg, one to the academy and the other to the university libraries, Salemann requested that it go only to the academy. In the event that the journal was discontinued, he hoped that other Yale publications could be sent in its place.⁶ Russia had been at war with Germany for almost a year, and on Salemann's letterhead somebody had crossed out St. Petersburg and added a handwritten notation "Petrograd," replacing the old Germanic form of the capital's name.

The exchanges took place not only with the Library of Academy of Sciences but also with many other scientific organizations and institutions of higher education. For instance, a letter dated October 14, 1909, points to an exchange between the Yale University Library and the Observatoire Magnétique Central "Nicolas," Saint Petersburg. Writing in French, the Russian scientists expressed their desire for an exchange of scientific papers. The Central Observatory also represented the interests of the Observatoire Magnétique et Météorologique in Irkutsk, Siberia, whose professional staff had requested the scientific publications of the Connecticut Academy of Sciences. Yale, happy to oblige the scientists in far-off Siberia, promptly dispatched to Irkutsk the *Transactions* of the Connecticut Academy containing materials on the natural sciences. In this case, too, the shipping services of the Smithsonian Institution were used.⁷

An interesting correspondence in the summer of 1916 indicates a broadening of the exchange program:

Sir,

The Cabinet of Criminal Law of the University of St. Petersburg has the honor to send you a copy of the Catalogue II part 1913 for information. It shall be very precious for the Cabinet

⁶ Salemann to Schwab, June 7, 1915: "I beg to inform you that of all libraries in our capital the Library of the Imperial Academy of Sciences owns the fullest collection of periodicals and series. . . . We therefore hope you will produce no alteration in the mutual exchange between both our libraries." Schwab to Salemann, July 7, 1915: "Dear Sir, Replying to your kind letter of June 17, 1915 (46) regarding the numbers of the "Yale Studies in English" I beg to assure you that we will continue to send them to you as they appear. Believe me dear Sir your very obedient servant, Librarian." Librarian Records 120, Series I, Box 33, folder 434, Russia 1905-1915.

⁷ On May 20, 1911, Schwab wrote to the *Observatoire Magnétique*, Irkutsk, Russia: "Recurring to my letter of 26 1909 I beg to enquire whether you have received the parts of our Academy's *Transactions* which relate to natural sciences. . . . In exchange we would be much pleased to receive the scientific works of your Observatory, as well as your 'Annales' of which we have only 1903, 1904, 1905." Librarian Records 120, Series I, Box 33, folder 434, Russia 1909-1915.

to have your editions which relate to the criminal law and penitentiary questions since the year 1908.

I remain, Sir, yours truly,

P. Lublinsky,

Conservator of the Cabinet

Andrew C. Keogh, who had just become acting University Librarian in August 1916, added in pen on the verso of the original letter: "August 16, *American Law 1901* was sent to Russia."⁸

Still, the library's main interest seems to have been scientific publications. On March 16, 1911, Schwab sent a letter to the Société Impériale des Naturalistes in Moscow. The subject of the correspondence was the society's *Bulletin*, published since 1887, of which Yale had not one but two complete sets. (One set had been received through the *American Journal of Science*.) "Could we replace second set for your "*Nouveaux Memoires*" of which we have only t.10, 13 and 14?" asked the librarian.

Examples of such searches for scientific publications abound on both sides. In a letter dated October 13, 1912, the Yale librarian sent a list of exchange titles to the St. Petersburg Botanical Garden (Botanicheskii sad) and requested that they be continued. On the same day similar letters were sent to Peterburgskoe mineralogicheskoe obshchestvo and several other institutions.⁹ On June 2, 1915, Schwab wrote to Alexander Petrunkevich, professor of zoology at Yale, whose family evidently still lived in St. Petersburg. The librarian wondered if Petrunkevich's father could kindly replace eight issues of the Russian journal *Riech*, which Yale lacked. On April 13, 1915, Schwab had asked Petrunkevich to help with materials pertaining to the war. "We have had a first batch of war publications from Russia. May you care to look them over? If you thought your family is in a position to induce anyone to send us ephemeral Russian publications of the war, we shall be very grateful, as our collection already includes a large mass of important material."¹⁰

The exchange program extended beyond St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Irkutsk. On April 6, 1906, Schwab wrote to Mr. Chesterikoff, secretary of the Novorossisk Society for the Research of Nature in Odessa (Novorossiiskoe Obshchestvo Estestvoisitatelei v Odesse): "I am sending you herewith the

⁸ Librarian Records 120, Series I, Box 7, folder 1182.

⁹ Librarian Records 120, Series I, Box 33, folder 434, Russia 1905-1915.

¹⁰ Ibid. Alexander Petrunkevich was born in Russia in 1875 and died in New Haven on March 9, 1964, at age 88. A professor at Yale from 1910 to 1944, he was the 20th century's greatest authority on spiders. His father, Ivan Il'ich Petrunkevich, was one of the leaders of the liberal movement in Russia from its earliest stages; he has often been called the "veteran of Russian liberalism." The Alexander Petrunkevich archive at Sterling Memorial Library contains 210 letters that I.I. Petrunkevich wrote to his son between 1886 and his death in Prague in 1928.

desired volumes of Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Sciences. If you would send us in exchange any or all of the following the Academy would be greatly pleased. . . . We lack your Memoires 1-4, 7 and also Memoires of your Mathematical Section.”¹¹ Another request for cooperation came from the Russian Publishing House in Dorpat (now Tartu, Estonia). A letter to the Yale librarian dated April 24, 1905, and signed “Bibliothekar”, itemizes “what to read in Russian literature” (Chto chitat o russkoi literature).

PURCHASES

The archives provide plenty of evidence illustrating the library’s efforts to build its Slavic collection by purchasing a plethora of materials, soliciting gifts, and organizing acquisitions trips, both by librarians and by other members of the Yale community. For example, on March 20, 1906, Schwab wrote to Mr. B.R. Ward:

My dear Dr. Ward,

At your suggestion I enclose a list of Russian authors lacking in our collection. I also enclose a list of gaps in our Russian learned societies’ publications. If in your trip to Russia you could spy out the land and find any means of filling those gaps by purchase or gift, I should be glad to have the result at your return.

Yours very truly,

J.C. Schwab

This list was prepared by M.S. Mandell, the above-mentioned instructor of Russian at Yale. It contained forty-three names of Russian authors, among them Tiuchev, Mamin-Sibiriak, Veresaev, and Shenshin. Mandell also provided three pages itemizing missing issues from the library’s holdings of publications of Russian learned societies. (Interestingly, Schwab mentions that some variations of spellings were done “according to J.S. Smith transliteration.”)¹²

I found several letters and invoices from the years 1908-13. One, dated November 26, 1913, is addressed to Schwab, presumably by a professor of literature at Yale:

Dear John,

Order from MacMillan all of Constance Garnett’s translations of Dostoevsky, she has thus far published only two: “The Brothers Karamazov” and the “Idiot,” which has just appeared. Make sure that the others are sent you as they appear. Be sure to get also her translations

¹¹ Librarian Records 120, Series I, Box 72, folder 989.

¹² Librarian Records 120, Series I, Box 67, folder 970.

unless you have them already of Tolstoy's "War and Peace," "Anna Karenina" and the "Death of Ivan Ilyitch." Her translations are very superior to others ever made in English from the Russian.

As to translations of Gorki, they have been by a number of hands, and it is hard to say which are best. I would simply get every one of his works that have been translated into English. There is another book that you ought to buy immediately and that is Persky's "Contemporary Russian Novelists" just published by John W. Luce and Company, Boston.

A penciled annotation in an unknown hand reads: "Have by C.G. 'The Brothers Karamazoff', No Tolstoi." There is also a list of Gorky's works in translation, such as *Lower Depths*, *Foma Gordeev*, and *Outcast and Other Stories*.¹³

It is interesting to note that the Yale Library continued to buy books from N. Kymmel, a well-known dealer in Riga, Latvia. The Kymmel Bookstore had been one of the main suppliers of Slavic books for Joel Sumner Smith's collection. One invoice from Kymmel, dated April 15, 1908, lists two books by Pleshcheev: *Povesti i rasskazy*, for which Yale paid seven rubles, and *Stikhotvoreniia, 1905*, which cost four rubles. The total bill, in U.S. currency, came to \$6.18.¹⁴ I assume that this was not the only transaction between Kymmel and the Yale University Library; very likely the invoices were not saved as part of the Librarian Records.

It seems that Yale's Slavic Collection was becoming famous. In early 1916 Leo Pasvolsky, the editor of *Russian Review*, published at 27 East Seventh Street in New York City, asked the acting University Librarian, Andrew Keogh, to lend him two volumes of Russian poetry. On February 25, Keogh answered with a dose of pride:

I enclose herewith a statement about our Russian literary collection copied from the Yale Librarian's Report for 1896. Since that account was written we have added many works in Russian and on Russian topics so that the collection is now probably half as large again. . . . The books of our Russian collection up to 1896 were catalogued in a volume entitled "Catalog of Books," privately printed in 1896, of which a copy will probably be found in the New York Public Library. The book was compiled by our Joel Sumner Smith and it was a list of books collected by him and afterwards given to the Library.¹⁵

On November 4, 1916, the editor wrote to Keogh that he "should be very glad to have the Pollen, Browning and Wilson volumes of Russian poetry that you have been good enough to suggest sending to me for three weeks, and, of course, I shall be only too glad to pay the postage both ways. Hoping that this will not inconvenience you in any way, I remain very sincerely yours, Leo Pasvolsky."

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Librarian Records 120, Series I, Box 72, folder 1094.

When Pasvolsky returned the books to Yale a month later, enclosing stamps to cover the shipping cost, Keogh scrupulously sent him a fifteen-cent refund.¹⁶

Another interesting correspondence took place early in 1914. H.P. Kreiner, a surveyor and municipal engineer living at 790 Broad Street in Newark, N.J., inquired:

Dear Sir,

Will you advise me if you have a published list of works in Slavonic folklore, folk songs, epic and fairy tales (byliny and skazki) and if you do not a rough notation of the number of works in your files on these subjects. I mean by Slavonic a general term covering the several races such as Slovenian, Dalmatian, Croatian, Bosnian, Slovak, Serbian, Wendish, Great and Little Russian.

Somebody from the Yale Library staff scribbled on the original letter in pencil: "c. 150 items in reply to Mr. Kreiner's request."¹⁷

On March 14, 1917, Kreiner wrote again to the library. "Gentlemen, Can you advise me whether any of enclosed lists of Slavonic Books are in the Yale Library." To which Schwab replied on March 17: "Dear Sir, I return the list of Slavonic books which you sent to me on the 14th. I have had a Y placed against the titles that are in this Library."¹⁸

There is also correspondence between the University Librarian and the Slavonic Publishing Company (456 Fourth Avenue, New York City), whose Slavonic Classics series highlighted the masterpieces of Slavic literature. The series consisted of twenty large octavo volumes of approximately 600 pages each, illustrated by masters of Slavic art. It was endorsed by such luminaries in the field of Slavic studies as Matija Murko, Ivan Lappo, Aleksandr Lappo-Danilevski, and Paul Vinogradoff, several of whom served on the series advisory board. According to a promotional letter,

The Executive Committee has succeeded in interesting in the plan a small group of men of means who have disinterestedly placed at our disposal the necessary preliminary funds and their credit, and all of us hope that "in the end we will come out even," satisfied as we are on

¹⁶ Ibid. Pasvolsky to Keogh, Dec. 1, 1916: "Under separate cover I am returning to you the collections of Russian poetry that you were kind enough to send me. I found them extremely interesting and wish to express to you my deep gratitude for this opportunity to see the volumes. Yours sincerely, Leo Pasvolsky. P. S. Enclosed please find stamps to cover the expense of sending the books to me." Keogh to Pasvolsky, Dec. 4, 1916: "The volumes of Russian poetry have come to hand safely. You send us too much for postage and I am returning 15 cents herewith."

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

the point of profit, with the consciousness to quote Cardinal Gibbons' words of "liberating a wealth of thought, instruction and inspiration which has been locked up for so long a time from the English speaking people."

On May 8, 1915, the Slavonic Publishing Company's managing editor, Isidor Singer, thanked Schwab for the library's subscription to a cloth set of the series. The subscription was to be paid in four installments.¹⁹ In a subsequent letter, Kreiner asked the librarian to annotate the titles in the series that Yale already held, with the obvious intent of donating the rest.

GEORGE VERNADSKY

In September 1927, Yale University hired George Vernadsky to teach Russian history and to oversee the development of the Russian collection in the library. Vernadsky graduated from Moscow University in 1910 and received the M.A. degree in history from St. Petersburg University in 1917. The October Revolution and the ensuing civil war profoundly changed his life. After leaving Russia and wandering through Istanbul and Athens, George and Nina Vernadsky found refuge in Prague, where, thanks to Czech president T.G. Masaryk's benevolent attitude toward Russian immigrants, it became possible for him to continue working on Russian history.

Michael Ivanovich Rostovtzeff, Vernadsky's colleague from St. Petersburg University, and the Sterling Professor of Classics and Archaeology at Yale, suggested to the Yale Corporation that they invite Vernadsky to Yale. George and Nina sailed to America in late August 1927. Vernadsky brought with him the manuscript of his first book, *A History of Russia*, and a rather poor knowledge of the English language, which he had to improve in order to teach at Yale.

Vernadsky taught Russian history until his retirement in 1956. He published an impressive number of books, journal articles, studies, and reviews, and became the preeminent Russian historian in the West. He also, as we will see, made invaluable contributions to the development of the Slavic Collection at the Yale University Library. Vernadsky died in 1973 and is buried in New Haven.

BUILDING THE RUSSIAN COLLECTION

The first document relating to Vernadsky's interaction with the library staff is dated November 2, 1927. In a memo to Mr. Humphreys, a staff member, University Librarian Andrew Keogh wrote:

When I got back in October Dean [Wilbur] Cross told me that Professor Vernadsky had been conferring with him on various occasions with regard to the Russian collections here and that Vernadsky had expressed great surprise at the richness of our collections and also at the absence of certain sets and monographs. Dean Cross had asked him to make a list of the things that he thought important in his work for this year and this was brought to me yesterday by the Dean. Of course, it will need careful checking. . . . Dean Cross understands that the whole list of

¹⁹ Ibid.

books recommended can be had for \$1,000 with the exception of the Fundamental Sources of the list. Vernadsky has also offered his services to procure these books and Cross advises that we make as full use of him as possible. He is, unfortunately, unable to do any teaching this term and Cross is anxious to have him serve the University as fully as possible in other ways.²⁰

A year later, on October 2, 1928, Vernadsky presented a large list of desiderata to the library. I am quoting it in full because the list shows the seriousness with which he understood his role as an advocate for the growth of the Russian collection.²¹

Mr. Vernadsky's Request for Purchase of Books and Sets in the Russian Language

A. Fourteen large sets	estimated cost	\$2,900
The most important are:		
a. The great collection of Russian Laws, 1649-1916 (in 200 volumes, published 1830-1916)		\$1,000
b. Stenographic Records of the Duma, 1906-1916		\$ 800
B. Post war sets and books (all ordered)		\$ 150
C. Periodicals and newspapers (annual charge about)		\$ 100
D. List of about 200 titles, old and new	estimated cost	\$ 1,000
	Total	\$ 4,150

The list created quite a stir among librarians. They noted that about \$600 worth of these books had already been ordered and that the funds "must be made of unrestricted money: Library funds or University grants in budget." The Vernadsky request was also discussed at the Library Committee. I quote from the minutes of the meeting of October 3, 1928:

The Librarian (Andrew Keogh) reported that Professor Vernadsky had made a careful examination of the Library's books in Russian, and particularly of those in the field of Russian history; that he had found the collection extraordinarily rich, with the important lacks of which he has given the titles. The Librarian asked a vote of thanks to Professor Vernadsky for his work, and this vote has unanimously passed. . . . The Librarian then reported that Professor Vernadsky

²⁰ Librarian Records 120, Series I, Box 102, folder 1072.

²¹ Ibid.

has requested the early purchase of Russian books that he had listed so that they might be available for him and his students. . . .

The Librarian said he had ordered the post war books and had placed subscriptions to the serials, at a cost of about \$500, but asked advice of the Committee, as to the purchases of the remainder. The Committee agreed that lists of this sort should be welcomed; that sets like the laws and the reports of the Duma should be at Yale; that the Librarian should purchase as many of the books requested as his discretion should allow; that an effort be made to obtain additional appropriations or gifts so that the unrestricted book fund might not be greatly reduced by Russian purchases.

However, in a "Note on Possible Russian Purchases," the librarian stated:

After deducting amounts already spent and making allowances for continuations to restricted funds . . . the available free money in all subjects for the rest of the year is about \$9,000. Mr. Vernadsky's demands might take \$4,000 of this if we could find all he asks for.²²

The discussion continued, and on November 6, 1928, Keogh wrote to Humphrey:

I have carefully considered the request from Professor Vernadsky to purchase a set of the Russian laws. In view of the fact that both Frederick Charles Hicks, the law librarian, and the Dean, Robert Maynard Hutchins, agree that the set should be in the Law School and of my own agreement with that view, I feel that we ought not to spend out of the funds of the general Library the large sum needed to purchase it. I am writing a note to this effect to Mr. Hicks.²³

Keogh also wrote to George Vernadsky on the same day:

I told the Library Committee at its last meeting of the requests for the purchase of books that you had handed in and of the impossibility of purchasing them all at this time out of the book appropriation for the current academic year.

I have also talked with Mr. Hicks and Mr. Hutchins, the librarian and Dean of the Law School, and we have agreed that in principle the sets of law should be found in the Law School and not in the general Library. Unfortunately, the Law School has no money either for the purchase of so expensive a set, although everyone agrees that it is a highly desirable purchase.

The Stenographic Reports of the Duma and some of the other titles that you recommended have been ordered and should come soon. We have also placed

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

subscriptions for the newspapers you have recommended and will see that these come regularly hereafter.

Please continue to send us titles of desirable additions to our collection. We may not be able to purchase them this year, but we shall be glad to have them on file in view of next year's appropriations or in the hope that some benefactor of the Library may be willing to give them.²⁴

In a second letter to Vernadsky, also dated November 6, Keogh wrote:

I told the Library Committee at its last meeting of the service you have rendered to the Library by examining our collection on Russian history and kindred topics and making recommendations for the purchase of additional material to bring our collection more up to date.

The Committee was well aware of the importance of the service that you have rendered and of the large amount of time and interest that you must have given to this survey, and they unanimously requested me to convey to you an expression of their cordial thanks.

Vernadsky replied on November 9:

I have your two letters of November 6 and I thank you for communicating to me the Library Committee's good words.

I am glad that Committee decided to grant some of the requests for books designed for Russian section. As regard to large set known as "Complete Collection of Russian Laws (Polnoe sobranie zakonov)" I fear your decision to postpone the purchase may prove to be a great handicap to future research in Russian history at Yale. There are only a few copies of this collection left and as far as I know Soviet Government some years ago destroyed all the copies of the collection within Russia except 100 copies which are kept in the principal Russian libraries. Copies of this collection could be now purchased by chance in some border states as Bessarabia, Poland, the Baltic States or Finland. Even in these countries the complete sets may be difficult to obtain. Already European libraries are buying up these remaining sets. If the Yale Library does not acquire a copy this year the possibility becomes much more remote and the price would certainly mount much higher. Meanwhile this set is the most important not only for the legal history of modern Russia but also for Russian social and economic history and if the

²⁴ Ibid.

Yale Library should continue without this set it would be a serious setback for every student of Russian affairs.²⁵

After all was said and done, Vernadsky's request was honored by the Law Library. An invoice from Simeon J. Bolan (17 East 45th Street, New York City), dated April 1, 1930, listed the following items:

Full collection of the texts of laws of the Russian Empire, enacted between 1649-1913 (Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii); about 230 volumes of which 90% are in full morocco bindings and balance in good half leather binding;

The body of laws of the Russian Empire in force November 1, 1916 (Svod zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii); 28 bound books and unofficial index therefore;

Decisions of the Russian governing senate for three departments—civil, general, and criminal—from 1806 to 1916, inclusive (Riesheniia Pravitel'stviushchago Senata); about 90 books.²⁶

The price was \$3,000.00. The Yale Law Library asked that payment be delayed until after July 1, 1930.

From then on, the influx of Slavic and East European publications to the Law Library increased significantly. The Yale Law Library Order Sheets for 1929-1931 and the Yale Law Library Accession Lists for October 1, 1928 to July 1, 1932 show acquisitions of law titles from Russia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Latvia, Albania, Rumania, Poland, Bulgaria, Finland, Lithuania, Estonia, and Danzig (an open city). There is even an entry from Harbin, China, where in 1925 V.I. Ryazanovsky published in Russian the title *Modern Civil Law of China*, which the Law School acquired in 1930. It is likely that Vernadsky stimulated Hicks--his colleague and friend, a professor of legal bibliography, and also the law librarian at Yale--to become interested in Slavic and East European materials. The approval of Hutchins, dean of the Law School in 1928-1929, may also have been helpful. The major suppliers of these materials were Simon Bolan of New York City and Sweet & Maxwell, Ltd. of 3 Chancery Lane, London, England.

Library books were always an important part of Vernadsky's life. One can imagine his joy at being able to use the rich collection of Sterling Memorial Library after so many years of wandering. He enjoyed surrounding himself with books so much that Anne Stokley Pratt, a Yale reference librarian from 1925 to 1948, was compelled to send him the following note on November 23, 1928:

Dear Professor Vernadsky,

You now have 275 books borrowed from the Library. This is so extraordinary a number that I cannot refrain from asking you whether there are not some of them you are finished with.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

Our Library is, of course, primarily a reference library and books should be returned as soon as they are no longer in constant use.

Yours very sincerely,

Miss Pratt²⁷

In 1929, Vernadsky's *History of Russia* was published by Yale University Press, with a preface by Rostovtzeff. The publisher's brochure stated:

He traces the development of the Russian people in terms of the effect of geography and climate on their life; of the social, cultural, and religious influences; of their unique relations with nations of the East and West, particularly the Mongol invasion which overran Russia; of the expansion of the Russian Empire, the World War, and the Russian revolution. The account is brought up to January 1, 1929.²⁸

Two years later, on February 17, 1931, the University Librarian sent the following memorandum to Mr. Troxell of the library staff:

Professor Vernadsky came in yesterday to give me the accompanying four sheets of recommended books. He had apparently been referred to me by you.

I told him that we had very little money and that we could probably purchase only the most important material at this time. He then said that the title on sheet A is the most important and that he thinks 25 volumes have now been published and that this could be had for about \$50. He wants the continuation, however, as they come out.

On sheet B, dealing with the history of the Russian church, he thinks that the first title is the most important. I do not know how good a guesser he is as to the price of the books; I fear he is underestimating the cost. If, however, we can buy them in paper, we can bind them here, charging that cost to our binding account.

On sheets C and D he recommends a Czechoslovakian and Polish historical review. He does not know the amount of the annual subscription, but thinks it very slight. He would like to have complete sets bound and available, but I told him all we could do at present was to subscribe for the current year.²⁹

THE DENIKIN PAPERS

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

Early in 1931, Mr. H.H. Fischer of Stanford University informed Vernadsky about the availability of the Denikin documents, which could be obtained in France for \$3,000. The documents “consist of the reports of the Sitting of the Denikin Government or the ‘special assembly.’ The documents are now in typewritten form with the exception of one which is printed. They are in six bound volumes containing a total of 2,956 pages typed on both sides. The pages contain the autograph signatures of General Denikin and in one or two cases of General Lukomsky and presumably of one or two other members of the government.”³⁰

Vernadsky did not want to miss out on these materials, a primary source for an important historical event. The White Army general Anton Ivanovich Denikin (1872-1947) had led the fight against the Bolshevik forces in the south of Russia and the Crimea, where he established a provisional government. The defeat of his army forced him to immigrate to France, and after World War II he moved to the United States. He died in 1947 in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Vernadsky emphatically argued for the necessity of this acquisition. When Keogh informed the provost, Charles Seymour, who was also a historian, about the Denikin papers, Seymour said he would be very glad to have the set, but “he could see no way of purchasing it at present unless a special gift was secured for the purpose.” Keogh told Vernadsky that Seymour “did not know anyone who would be likely to make such a gift, nor do I. . . I cannot at this time give you any great hope of acquiring the collection for Yale.”³¹

Vernadsky was greatly disappointed to miss the opportunity to write about this important chapter in Russia’s recent history. I find it interesting to note that the Denikin papers were published for the first time in Russia by ROSSPEN in 2008.³²

LIMITED RESOURCES

Vernadsky continued to place requests for Russian materials, but the library staff was not always so cooperative. There is evidence in the Librarian Records that Charles Everett Rush, associate librarian from 1931 to 1938, and Carl Leslie Cannon, head of the Accession Division from 1932 to 1939, tried to ignore Vernadsky’s requests. In one such exchange, dated December 8, 1933, Cannon complains to Rush: “I ordered some Russian books for Mr. Vernadsky this fall amounting to about \$30 or \$40. I have just received the attached checked list from him. I remember there was a question raised about the desirability of purchasing many books in the field of Russian language. This would amount to

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., letter of April 23, 1931.

³² *Zhurnaly zasedanii Osobogo soveshchaniia pri Glavnokomanduiushchem Vooruzhennymi Silami na IUge Rossii A.I. Denikine : sentiabr’ 1918-go—dekabr’ 1919 goda.* Ed. B.F. Dodonov et al. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2008, 1002 pp.

considerable expenditure if we bought all that were recommended. I should be glad to know what you suggest.” Rush answered: “Most are likely not important, on which he probably could wait. Might ask him what one (or two) item(s) is (are) urgent.”³³

In April 1934, Vernadsky was asked to give advice on cutting certain periodical titles currently received by the library, “with a view to reducing this list to meet the present financial crisis”:³⁴

Krasnaia letopis’	\$ 3
Planovoe khoziaistvo (RM 38)	\$15
Narodnyi komissariat finansov, Vestnik finansov	\$9.48
Sovetskaia torgovlia (RM 12)	\$4.60
Za industrializatsiiu sovetskogo Vostoka, sbornik	\$3.00

The records in the current on-line catalog, ORBIS, show that only *Krasnaia letopis’* was canceled.

In 1934 Vernadsky donated eight Slavic newspapers to the library, including *Karpatorusskii Golos*, published in Uzhorod, Czechoslovakia (this comprised more than one hundred issues, from 1932 to 1934). He also gave thirty-seven Russian newspapers and pamphlets published in the United States (1932-1933) and many monographs from his private collection. This donation brought him an invitation to join the Library Associates. In a letter of October 13, 1934, James Tinkham Babb, at that time an employee of the library and secretary of the Library Associates, wrote:

My dear Professor Vernadsky,

The trustees of the Yale Library Associates have noted with pleasure your recent gift to the Yale University Library. They hope that your interest in the Library is such that you may desire to become a member of this organization.

Membership is open to those who give money, books, manuscripts, or other materials, such as coins or maps, to the Yale Library. An expression from you of your willingness to accept such membership is all that is necessary.

For your information one of the leaflets is enclosed. This is not a request for money at this time. If you should care to continue your membership another year any contribution of books or money you may wish to make will be gratefully received.

Sincerely yours,

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

James T. Babb

Vernadsky answered with a handwritten note on October 18:

My dear Mr. Babb,

Thank you so much for your letter of October 13. Being greatly interested in the Library I am certainly pleased to accept membership.

Very sincerely yours,

George Vernadsky³⁵

The orders from Vernadsky continued without respite and the library tried to cooperate, but only up to a point. In a memorandum dated February 18, 1935, Keogh wrote to Cannon: "Mr. Birge was in this afternoon. I asked how much this *Ottoman Historical Review* cost and he said that he had a set which cost him about \$32 bound. He said he would be willing to write to his secretary in Constantinople asking her to ask the bookseller to collect another set and to bind it and send here. I told him we would ask him to do this." The decision was made to buy the title: "From what he [Vernadsky] told me I think we ought to take this periodical even if we do not continue it. Please order."³⁶

Another request soon followed, and Andrew Keogh related to one staff member:

Professor Vernadsky was in this morning and recommended the purchase of the five serials on the accompanying cards. They all have to do with Ukraine and they are the most important periodicals on that part of Russia which is, he thinks, to be of increasing historical importance. He thinks periodicals have ceased publication, but he is not certain. There is, therefore, probably no question of adding to our subscription list, but only of buying the back sets.

I pointed out that the sets were long and would probably be costly, and that it might not be possible to buy them all or to buy any of them at this time. I asked him to arrange the cards in order of importance to him and I put down his numbers, 1-5, at the top right corner of each card. He said that if we could buy one it would be of great use, but if we could not find any, would we please keep the cards until the money was available. He thinks there is no library except the Library of Congress that has these periodicals or a good Ukraine collection and that the possession of them at Yale should add distinction.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

The librarian recommended that the staff member check the periodicals in the Union List because, after all, the sets might be in other libraries. "Perhaps he would like to know that they are in the New York Public Library, for example."³⁷

On November 25, 1938, Bernhard Knollenberg, the newly appointed University Librarian, informed Vernadsky that "Mr. Alfred Hamill of Chicago offered to spend up to \$300.00 on books in the 'Bolan List' which would be of outstanding value for the Library." The list included:

Appolon. Published and edited by Serge Makovsky, Saint Petersburg, 1909-1917. 68 unbound issues. Besides its profusely illustrated text it contains 1 sheet of music, 73 colored and 160 black single plates; 1 colored and 780 black plates printed on both sides. Each illustration is described in two languages, Russian and French. All wrappers are preserved. Size 4to. Regular price \$125.00.

Ezhegodnik Petrogradskikh (up to 1915 imperatorskikh) teatrov. Complete set for 1890-1915, all that was published. Illustrated, unbound 4to and 8vo. Yale has the years of 1918-1919, published by Soviets and which is nothing like previous set's issues. Regular price \$125.00

Zolote runo, or La Toison d'or. Moscow. Complete file for 1906-1909. Everything that was published, French and Russian texts, illustrated, unbound 4to. Regular price \$100.00³⁸

In a letter of December 1, 1938, Simeon J. Bolan of 17 East 45th Street in New York City wrote to Knollenberg: "I received your letter of November 30 and in reply wish to inform you that if the periodicals wanted by you were still available, I would be only glad to let the Library have them for \$300 which amount would barely cover their actual cost to me." On December 2, Knollenberg wrote to Vernadsky: "I enclose a letter from Mr. Bolan and wonder if you are interested in his suggestion. I assume that he would sell us the three items for \$300. We do not have any of the items mentioned." Vernadsky's answer, of course, was an enthusiastic "yes."³⁹

SPECIAL ACQUISITIONS

Vernadsky was occasionally asked for advice about special acquisitions and gifts to the library. For example, he evaluated a gift of a manuscript volume on Russian history that had apparently been written during the reign of Peter the Great and contained more than 300 pages of beautifully

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Librarian Records 120, Series II, Box 109, folder 1512 (1938-1947).

³⁹ Ibid.

handwritten text. Knollenberg thanked Vernadsky for his interesting account of the life of Peter the Great, which he had added to the manuscript itself in the Archives.⁴⁰

In 1942, Vernadsky was again approached for his expert opinion concerning a manuscript, alleged to have been written by Ivan the Terrible himself, which had been donated to the library. Five years later he was asked to evaluate a series of letters between Louis Fischer, an American writer, and Georgii Chicherin, the foreign commissar in Russia during the 1920s. He graciously accepted this task and appraised the letters with care.⁴¹

While World War II was raging, the Soviet Union and the Russian language gained in popularity and respect in the United States. Concurrently, there was growing interest within the Yale community for the acquisition of materials from the USSR. The acting librarian, James Tinkham Babb, asked for Vernadsky's opinion on how best to organize acquisitions from Russia. The historian replied on September 19, 1944:

Referring to our conversation this morning, I think that the first thing to do in regard to acquiring Russian publications in a systematic way would be to prepare a list of Soviet Academies and Universities and of their respective publications. As to the academies besides the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. (Moscow), there is the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (Kiev), the White Russian Academy of Sciences (Minsk), the Georgian Academy of Sciences (Tbilisi). The Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. has several local branches, including, if I am not mistaken, a Far East branch in Vladivostok. There is an Academy of Fine Arts, of Architecture, etc. and also several schools of music (conservatoires).

Besides, there are research bureaus and laboratories at the Commissariat of Heavy Industry, as well as some others. The publications of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and of Agriculture are also very important.⁴²

In reply, Babb committed the library to a system of thoroughly checking and listing any lacunae within its holdings of the publications of the Soviet academies and universities.

VERNADSKY'S LEGACY

George Vernadsky's career at Yale was not very happy. In spite of his excellent academic achievements and extraordinary care for the library, he was kept in the position of research associate in history from the beginning of his employment in 1927 until 1946, when he was finally appointed

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

professor of Russian history. Vernadsky retired in 1956. Columbia University gave him an honorary doctorate (LHD) in 1959. After his death in 1973, Vernadsky's archive was given to Columbia, where his papers now reside in the Bakhmetev Archive. This, I believe, was a huge loss for Yale.

Vernadsky's personal library was sold to the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. It is interesting to note that my esteemed colleague Harold M. Leich, the Russian area specialist at the Library of Congress, European Division, in Washington, D.C., since 1987, catalogued this collection as a librarian at the University of Illinois Slavic Library in the 1970s.

The Vernadsky legend still lives on at Yale. Many Russians come to New Haven just to tour the addresses where the famous historian lived and to seek out his grave in the Beaver Dam Cemetery. However, Vernadsky's greatest posthumous claim to fame, in my opinion, is that his works have been translated in Russia and are now used for the study of Russian history at various universities in his homeland.

THE *SPUTNIK* ERA

In 1957, a year after Professor Vernadsky's retirement, the satellite *Sputnik* was launched by the Soviet Union. The reaction to this event was many-faceted, but in essence it gave rise to an uneasy feeling that the Soviets were overtaking America in technology and the sciences. This in turn resulted in a renewed interest in the Soviet Union throughout American universities and scientific institutions.

Administrators and faculty at Yale were afraid that Russian studies were not adequately preparing students to face the new global threat. It was also determined that the library's Slavic Collection had fallen behind its counterparts at other Ivy League universities, especially Harvard and Columbia. Soon thereafter, the Council on Russian and East European Studies was formed within Concilium,⁴³ a body that evolved into today's MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies at Yale. The Concilium was originally funded by the federal government, under a program later known as Title VI, and by private sources, notably the Ford Foundation.

In this part of my essay, I will try to describe these events in more detail as they relate to the Slavic and East European Collection during that time.

FACULTY PRESSURE

⁴³ The term "Concilium" was introduced by Leon Lipson, Professor of Law, to placate Whitney Griswold's dislike for "Centers". The Yale Corporation also did not like independently funded "centers" fearing that they might pursue their own policies, different from the University's stated mission. This cost Yale much in funding because the donors often had no idea what the term "Concilium" meant. The support of the Ford Foundation was more important than Federal support in developing area studies at Yale.

The Slavic faculty was clearly dissatisfied with the treatment of Slavic materials in the library. Their complaints were compiled and enumerated by Alan D. Ferguson, and relayed to Associate University Librarian John Henry Ottemiller on October 6, 1958.⁴⁴ Ferguson, who received his Ph.D. degree in Russian history at Yale in 1954, was a student of Professor Vernadsky, and it seems that he took on the fight for the Slavic Collection after Vernadsky retired. An instructor (1953-1955), lecturer (1959-1960), and research associate in history (1961-1963), Ferguson also served as assistant dean of the Graduate School, a position that enabled him to apply pressure on the library during the politically charged 1960s.

The faculty worried that the budget of \$2,500 allocated for acquisitions and personnel in the field of Slavic studies was “woefully weak”, and that the single cataloguer, Mrs. Evreinov, who worked two days a week on Russian books, was unable to cope with the work load. They were angry because their requests were rarely honored. Bibliographic information was poor and, according to René Wellek, professor of comparative literature, even donated books had to wait more than a year before appearing on the shelves. The most vocal attacks came from the faculty in language, literature, history, political science, and economics, Ferguson warned. He advised Ottemiller that William S. Cornyn, the head of the Russian Department, René Wellek, and Frederick Barghoorn, professor of political science, wanted to express their concerns directly to the library administration.

The library fought back. In a six-page statement, the administration blamed a general lack of interest in Slavic and Russian studies, particularly in the years 1917-1930, for the lamentable situation in the library. They admitted that they had not reacted fast enough when, for the first time in its history, Yale began awarding the Ph.D. degree in Russian. They claimed that the amount spent on different book dealers, such as I. Perlstein, Four Continents, and Nihoff, far exceeded the official budget of \$2,500. The library administration defended its work on selection, cataloguing, and treatment of gifts. They accused the Slavic faculty of never placing a book request to the Acquisition Department, noting that “Mr. Jegers, who catalogued all books in Cyrillic scripts, claimed that he never had a book come through which was recommended by a faculty member. On the other hand, Mrs. Evreinov said we had more requests for Slavic material than we used to, but apparently most requests originated with Ralph Fischer and Mr. Vernadsky who were no longer on the faculty.”⁴⁵

Something had to be done, and Ferguson took it upon himself to ameliorate the situation. On December 12, 1958, he informed Ottemiller of the formation of an Advisory Committee for Slavic and East European Matters. He nominated four faculty members who had indicated their willingness to serve: Professor Frederick Barghoorn (Political Science), Professor Arthur Galston (Botany), Assistant Professor Ivo J. Lederer (History), and Assistant Professor Alexander M. Schenker (Slavic Languages and

⁴⁴ Librarian Records 120, Series III, Box 125, folder 1597.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Literatures). Since Ferguson wanted to mediate and influence this body, he asked for ex officio status in the group.⁴⁶

The committee members, on advice from Alfred J. Berlstein, a librarian at the New York Public Library, commenced their work by studying the *Annual Report of Slavic Acquisitions at Columbia University* for fiscal years 1956-1957 and 1957-1958. Both reports, written by Karol Maichel, the Slavic librarian at Columbia, served as templates for the committee. It was well known that Columbia had developed a strong Russian program and an excellent Slavic collection. The reports covered broad issues of library concerns: acquisition, budget, exchanges, backlog of uncataloged materials, room facilities, newspapers, reader services, staff, collections purchased in 1956-1957 and 1957-1958, and other miscellaneous topics.

The committee members read that in 1957-1958 Columbia had acquired a total of 6,823 volumes. The report listed the book dealers and the amounts paid to them; for instance, the Four Continents Book Store had been paid \$2,401. Mezhdunarodnaia kniga (International Book) had started to deliver Russian books directly from Moscow, billing Columbia for \$401.51. The university's orders were based on *Novye knigi*, a catalogue created and regularly sent abroad by Mezhdunarodnaia kniga. Les Livres Etrangers in Paris was used, particularly for Russian provincial materials. The Columbia Library also had dealings with Kultura (Paris) and Ars Polona (Warsaw) for the acquisition of Polish materials.

As for exchanges, Columbia claimed to have relationships with twenty-nine Soviet libraries, among them the Lenin Library, the Rudomino Library of Foreign Literature, the INION Library (social sciences materials) in Moscow, and the public library by the name of Saltykov Schedrin and the Library of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Leningrad. The reports enumerated what had been received and which materials had been sent out. The library mentioned, with obvious pride, that it had received many more titles on exchange in 1957-1958 than in previous years. Karol Maichel wrote to Ottemiller in a letter accompanying the reports: "I would especially call your attention to the final pages of the report for '57/'58 where the Slavic acquisitions policy of Columbia University is outlined. I believe that it is the first statement of its kind." Aware of the uniqueness of these materials, Ottemiller replied, "You have made a very valuable contribution in this rather difficult area of acquisitions."⁴⁷

YALE TAKES STOCK OF ITS SLAVIC COLLECTION

Early in 1959, Sterling Memorial Library, along with the Council on Russian and East European Studies, engaged Alfred J. Berlstein to evaluate the Slavic Collection at Yale. The resulting document, *Slavic and East European Material in the Yale University Library: A Survey*, forty-five pages long, gave an overview of the entire East European collection, both Slavic and non-Slavic, with detailed information

⁴⁶ Librarian Records 120, Series III, Box 125, folder 1596.

⁴⁷ Librarian Records 120, Series III, Box 1597. Karol Maichel wrote to Ottemiller on Jan. 27, 1959, and Ottemiller answered on Feb. 6.

about materials from Russia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and other countries.⁴⁸ Berlstein worked closely with the acquisitions and cataloguing staff, particularly Mr. Jegers, Slavic cataloguer, and Mr. Leon Nemoj, curator of Hebrew and Arabic literatures, who was also well informed about the Slavic field.

Berlstein acknowledged the strength of the collection created by Joel Sumner Smith. He praised the work done by George Vernadsky for the Russian history section, as well as the collection of Russian literature that René Wellek and William Cornyn had overseen. He took special note of the Law Library's Slavic collection, which consisted of forty-nine full shelves of Russian materials, seventeen of Czech and Slovak materials, and ten each for Yugoslavia, Poland, and Hungary.

Overall, however, Berlstein was critical of the Slavic and East European Collection. He pointed to large gaps in many subjects, to some geographic areas that had been totally neglected, and to extensive lacunae in the periodical literature, all of which bespoke a general stagnation and lack of interest in the collection. The library's searching and ordering methods were unsatisfactory, and there was a lack of bibliographic information about publishing in relevant countries. Moreover, communication was poor, both within the processing departments in the library and between interested faculty and library staff.

In Berlstein's opinion, the estimated 33,800 volumes of Slavic and East European material at Yale constituted a middle-sized, relatively good collection. To improve the situation, he made three recommendations: that one person be appointed to take full responsibility for the collection; that one staff member be put in charge of procedures in the Order Department; and, above all, that funds for the purchase of materials be significantly increased. Quick action was needed on all these issues, he warned.

From that point on events followed one another with astonishing speed. First, a visitor from the Midwest stopped by to visit George W. Pierson, head of Yale's History Department. Oswald P. Backus III, associate professor of history at the University of Kansas, piqued Pierson's interest with stories of his recent experiences while traveling in the Soviet Union. When Pierson shared this news with University Librarian James T. Babb and Dean Ferguson, they expressed the hope that Yale could find ways and means to take advantage of what appeared to be real opportunities to expand the collection.⁴⁹

The University of Kansas had already made great strides in this area. Describing his visits to thirty-two Soviet libraries, Professor Backus suggested that his Yale colleagues should also travel to the Soviet Union and expand their trade with Soviet libraries. As he wrote to Professor Pierson, "Prerevolutionary books are abundant in the USSR. The libraries which should be definitely contacted were the Library of the Academy of Sciences and the Public Library by the name of Saltykov Shchedrin in Leningrad; in Moscow it should be the Lenin Library and the Library of Moscow University. They had enormous duplicate collections (which are catalogued). They were willing to exchange duplicates. Moreover they were eager to acquire American and British books, but they lacked hard currency and

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

experience in communicating with the West. Yale should send a librarian to the USSR and establish personal contacts with the Soviet librarians.”⁵⁰

Soon after, on February 24, 1959, Ottemiller invited the Slavic Advisory Committee to a meeting in his office. Present were Charles Hickey (head of the library’s Order Department), Alan D. Ferguson (assistant dean of the Graduate School), Frederick C. Barghoorn (professor of political science), Ivo J. Lederer (assistant professor of history), Arthur W. Galston (professor of botany), Alexander Schenker (assistant professor of Slavic languages and literatures), and Donald Wing (associate librarian for collections). Alfred Berlstein, the consultant mentioned above, also offered to come to Yale to discuss his survey with the librarian and the committee.

RUSSIAN STUDIES AT YALE

On March 5, 1959, George W. Pierson, chairman of the Department of History, sent a proposal titled “Russian Studies Program” to President A. Whitney Griswold. Its purpose was to seek approval for the expansion of Russian studies at Yale. Arguing that “a university with Yale’s traditions and responsibilities should have a strong Russian Studies Program,”⁵¹ Pierson called attention to Russia’s achievements on the intellectual, scientific, and political fronts. “The aim of such a program should be, first of all, to find the desperately needed scholars--the potential Vernadskys and Karpoviches⁵² of tomorrow--and train them in the fundamental linguistic and historical disciplines of Russian learning. A secondary aim should be to offer to our own graduates, rising specialists and future leaders, whether in the foreign service, in business or in public affairs, a varied and thorough instruction in the languages, inherited traditions, organization and circumstances of the Soviet world.”⁵³

Pierson suggested that the following elements of the program should be addressed right away: faculty concerned with Russian studies, the undergraduate major in Russian studies, the graduate program in Russian studies, and an estimate of financial requirements, consultation, and support. He stated that the proposal had been prepared with the close cooperation of William S. Cornyn, chairman of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, and other interested faculty. He also advised President Griswold that he had sought expert advice from outside Yale and had invited George Kennan to discuss the structure and character of the proposed program. Kennan’s acceptance proved to be a happy decision. A former ambassador to the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Estonia, he pointed to Yale’s traditions in diplomatic history and suggested that Yale should emphasize foreign relations under czarist and Soviet rule and the study of Soviet-American relations in the last forty years. He even proposed to

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Michael Karpovich (1888-1959), professor of Russian history at Harvard.

⁵³ Ibid

influence donors and secure for Yale some unique collections of ambassadorial papers to supplement the papers of William C. Bullitt that the library already held.⁵⁴

President Griswold approved Pierson's request, and from that point on events followed one another with considerable speed. The end result of these efforts was "Yale Russian Studies: A Statement of the Reorganization and Expansion of the Undergraduate and Graduate Program in Russian Studies," dated October 30, 1959, and cosigned by Pierson and Cornyn. The nineteen-page document addressed administration, faculty, the undergraduate and graduate programs in Russian studies, and estimated financial requirements. Most important for this paper, it included an appendix describing the Slavic Collection in the library.⁵⁵

YALE'S SLAVIC COLLECTION IN 1959

Several contributors addressed the library's needs. In "Yale's Library Collection of Slavic and East European Materials," Alan D. Ferguson stated that the "collection of Slavic and East European materials in the Yale Library system has been assessed reliably as constituting the sixth largest collection of such items in the United States " adding that "the assessment reflects national inadequacy rather than Yale's strength in this matter." As the most serious drawback, he pointed to a "dearth of coverage in all major fields of study for the period 1917 to the present, and the absence of an adequate ordering and processing staff. Without the latter, no improvement is possible and deterioration is certain."

Howard B. Gotlieb, librarian of Historical Manuscripts and the Edward M. House Collection, wrote the section "Historical Manuscript Holdings in Slavic History and Foreign Affairs." He noted that a nucleus of Russian, East European, and Slavic materials , all in English language, already existed in the archival collection and listed the following collections: Sir William Wiseman's papers concerning the Siberian intervention; William Bullitt's mission to Russia; the State Department files and the correspondence of Col. Edward M House relating to Russian and various East European countries at the Paris Peace Conference; the Henry L. Stimson Collection for the problems of recognition in the 1930s; Ambassador Arthur Bliss Lane's files for his tours of duty in the Baltics, Yugoslavia, and Poland; the papers of James F. Montgomery, ambassador to Hungary; and the Louis Fischer –Georgii Vasilevich Chicherin correspondence concerning the Soviet Union in world affairs.

For the czarist period, the papers of interest, in Gotlieb's view, were those documenting the Gustavus V. Fox mission to Russia in 1866-1867; the journals and correspondence of Nikolai Alekseevich Miliutin , minister of home affairs to Aleksandr II; and the Josiah Pierce IV papers relating to the Russian economy and social scene in the mid-nineteenth century. Gotlieb ended his presentation on a positive note: "The Historical Manuscripts collection anticipates adding materials to this nucleus and will

⁵⁴ George Kennan taught a course at Yale in 1960.

⁵⁵ Librarian Records 120, Series III, Box 125, folder 1597.

continue to vigorously seek out groups of papers and to supplement its resources in this area in order to facilitate original research in Slavic history and foreign affairs.”⁵⁶

John H. Ottemiller presented the budget report. Of the \$141,000 allocated for the Russian Studies Program, the library was to receive \$26,000, with the proviso that the funds had to be distributed between:

- a) acquisitions of manuscripts, microfilms, books, and periodicals, with the object of filling existing gaps and maintaining a vigorous accession program;
- b) and an emergency appropriation to enable the library to add staff for curating, accessioning, and cataloguing.

Furthermore, Ottemiller offered figures for the last three fiscal years demonstrating that the budget for Slavic and East European accessions had tripled, from \$8,000 in 1958-1959 to a projected \$26,000 in 1960-1961. He also emphasized the need for a full-time Slavic acquisitions librarian: “It is strongly recommended that a person be hired full time for the selection and acquisition of materials in Slavic and East European languages, to consult with the faculty in these matters and to advise the cataloging department when necessary. A salary budget allocation of 5,000.00 dollars would be the minimum for this position. . . . Plans should be made to secure additional monies for the purchase of materials in this area and to lessen the strain on our already burdened book budget. Additional monies should be obtained to implement the purchase of retrospective materials. . . . With additional money and personnel, a successful interpretation of our Slavic and East European Accession Policy could be achieved.”⁵⁷

The last section of the document, “Slavic and East-European Acquisition Policy for the Yale University Library,” was written by Research Associate University Librarian Charles Hickey. He defined the purpose of the collection as support for advanced research, support for teaching, and the maintenance of the comprehensive collection of reference works connected with the geographic area and its languages. The area covered should include all of the USSR and Eastern Europe, apart from Greece and Finland. Albania was deemed to be of secondary importance and represented very selectively. The subjects of acquisitions were history, economics, government, communism and the Marxist movement, literature, linguistics and folklore, social sciences, and reference works. The material should be in all formats, such as pamphlets, periodicals, published lecture series, publications of the academies of sciences, codes of law and international law, and scientific journals in the fields of medicine, biochemistry, zoology, geology, mathematics, and botany.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid. “Slavic and East European Accession,” Oct. 25, 1959.

A new urgency for the acquisition of Russian materials can be seen in a letter of June 5, 1959, in which the University Librarian, Mr. Babb, asked five prominent Yale professors who had had their books published in the Soviet Union to use the proceeds for the purchase of books:

At a meeting of the people interested in Slavic collections and ways and means of strengthening them the point was mentioned that a number of faculty, including you, have books published in Russia and royalties accumulated there which you cannot take out.

I think it might be possible for you to buy books in Russia using that money, having the books shipped to you in this country and then the Library would take them over from you and reimburse you. In this way we could get material that we very much need and want and at the same time you might retrieve some of your funds.

If you would be interested in this get in touch with me. . . . It would certainly be a help to the Library.⁵⁸

ALEKSIS RANNIT (1914-1985)

The early 1960 were years of close and fruitful cooperation between the Council on Russian and East European Studies and the Yale Library. In November of 1960 the library hired Aleksis Rannit, a former librarian at the New York Public Library, as its first Slavic and East European Curator. At the same time, the library created a junior curatorial position for Mrs. Tatiana Fedorova, also formerly of the New York Public Library.

Rannit was Russian by birth. His real name was Aleksis Dolgoshev. He was born on October 14, 1914, in Kallaste, Tartu County, Estonia, which is located on the western shore of Lake Peipus (Peipsi/Chudskoe). Most of the Kallaste population at that time was Russian, with only 15 percent being Estonians. Rannit attended Tartu high school. In the early 1930s he started publishing reviews, articles, and essays in Estonian newspapers. He was attracted to graphics too—his idols were Eduard Wiiralt and the Lithuanian artist Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875-1911).

Early in his life Rannit started writing poetry, influenced not only by traditional Russian and Estonian poetry but also by the Russian symbolists. His first book of poetry in the Estonian language appeared in 1937. In 1938, the Russian poet Igor Severyanin (Lotarev)⁵⁹ translated it into Russian and another book of Rannit's poems, *V okonnom perepletie*, appeared in Tallinn. It was followed in 1940 by a third collection, *Via dolorosa*, which was published in Stockholm by the Russian publishing house "Severnye ogni." Again, the translator was Severyanin.

In 1940, Rannit went to Lithuania to study. He first enrolled at Kaunas University and later transferred to Vilnius University. He also got married at that time to a well-known Lithuanian opera

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Igor Vasil'evich Lotarev (1887-1941) wrote under the pseudonym of Igor Severyanin.

singer. In 1944 he fled to Sweden before the advancing Red Army. In 1947, Rannit moved to Germany, where he attended Freiburg University. At that time his book of poetry *Rukopozhatie* was published in Lübeck, Germany. He continued to publish his poetry through an Estonian publishing house in Lund, Sweden.

The years 1944-1953 were years of wandering for Rannit. He crisscrossed Europe, living in France and traveling in Italy, Austria, Germany, and many other countries. His interest in the arts, especially graphic arts and literature, put him in touch with contemporary European artists and writers, and with the members of the Russian and Baltic émigré communities, with whom he maintained contacts throughout his life. These connections resulted in a voluminous correspondence, which now, as part of his archive, is deposited in Yale's Beinecke Library.⁶⁰

In 1953 Rannit arrived in New York. After graduating from Columbia University with a master's in library science, he went to work as a cataloguer at the New York Public Library. Throughout that time he continued to write poetry in Estonian, while also translating Russian poets into English and writing studies of his favorite graphic artists, Wiiralt and Čiurlionis. In 1960, on a recommendation by Nina Berberova, an old friend from his Paris days who taught Russian at Yale, he accepted the position of curator of the Slavic and East European Collection at the Yale University Library. He remained at the helm of the collection until his death in January 1985.

These were auspicious times, when interest and funding for the collection were at their peak. Rannit, with the help of Tatiana Fedorova (who soon became Mrs. Tatiana Rannit), set out to organize the reference collection in the newly acquired Slavic Seminar Room; to expand the acquisition of library materials with the aim of catching up with the Slavic collections of Columbia and Harvard Universities; and to offer the best possible reference service to the graduate and undergraduate students enrolling in ever greater numbers at Yale. The Rannits achieved all these goals splendidly. Above all, however, they are to be commended for acquiring Russian émigré literature and making Yale the owner of one of the best collections of such materials in the world.

Aleksis Rannit's most important achievement was his talent for bringing archival collections to the Beinecke Library. These documents regarding the public and private lives of many important artists and authors brought distinction to the Yale Slavic Collection. Great results flowed from Rannit's warm friendships with artists and authors everywhere, his own eminence as poet and critic, and his concern for the documentation of the cataclysmic era through which he and his friends had lived. The flow of archival collections to Yale started with Nina Berberova's donation of her personal archive, which also encompassed the personal papers of her husband, Vladislav Khodasevich, the distinguished poet, essayist, and translator. The many archives that followed varied in size, but all contained letters, rough drafts of manuscripts, unpublished stories and articles, notebooks, drawings, photographs, biographies, and clippings of a myriad of important Russian literary figures. There are numerous letters in various collections between Rannit and Boris Fillipov, the editor and literary historian, and Fedor Stepun, the

⁶⁰ Aleksis Rannit Papers. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

novelist. There are also many letters from Boris Pasternak, Ivan Bunin, and other prominent writers such as Konstantin Bal'mont, Roman Gul', Aleksei Remizov, Yurii Terapiano, Lev Lunts, George Adamovich, Georgii Ivanov, and Yurii Ivask. Another distinguished collection was given to Rannit by the Lada-Mocarski family of New Haven. This collection consisted of 197 rare or scarce books dealing with Russia from the sixteenth century to 1917.

The late Marjorie G. Wynne, the noted rare book librarian, described Rannit's contribution to Yale in the following words: "There will be many monuments to the memory of Aleksis Rannit . . . but none [is] more important to scholars than the Beinecke Library's vast array of archival boxes filled with the living words of a generation of Russian authors."⁶¹

YEARS OF GROWTH

On October 19, 1961, Frederick C. Barghoorn, chairman of the Council on Russian and East European Studies, wrote to John Ottemiller, Associate University Librarian, that he was very happy "that you have hired Madame Fedorova. I feel certain that Mr. Rannit and Madame Fedorova together will give us an exceptionally strong acquisitions team."⁶² He continued with the allocation of funds and offered the library \$16,000 for the academic year 1961-1962. He suggested that the funds be allocated as follows: "\$6,000 for Mr. Rannit's salary for the period beginning on November 1 and ending June 30; \$3,500 for Madame Fedorov's salary for the period beginning January 1 and ending June 30. The rest of the money went toward acquisitions, except for \$500 designated for Rannit's moving and travel expenses."⁶³

For fiscal year 1962-1963, the council committed itself to paying Rannit's salary and making a partial contribution toward Mrs. Fedorova's. It also agreed to continue the supplementary acquisitions allotment of \$6,000 a year, fully expecting that the "total expenditure by the Library for salaries and acquisitions should be increased by the full amount, which the Council turns over to the Library."

From then on the council sought to avoid allocating its funds for fixed expenses, such as librarian salaries and collection development. The plan was to use its appropriation--so-called "soft" funds--to strengthen the faculty, increase student aid, and fund publications and visiting lecturers. For its part, the library was expected to transfer all of its expenditures to the "hard" or fixed budget, funded by general appropriation. These money issues would become the principal subject of the correspondence between the council and the library.

On October 2, 1962, Barghoorn wrote to Ottemiller:

⁶¹ Marjorie G. Wynne, "Aleksis Rannit and the Russian Archives," *Yale University Library Gazette* 60 (April 1986): 103-104.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

Russian Studies Council has voted (9/28/62) to recommend a supplemental budget of \$15,000 for the next fiscal year. But the Council felt strongly that the Library should spend at least \$25,000 a year for acquisition of Slavic materials. Even that amount would scarcely make us competitive with Columbia, the University of Indiana . . . not to mention Harvard, which not only has an enormous head start on Yale, but spends \$45,000 a year out of library funds on Slavic materials. In addition the Council felt unanimously that the necessary supporting personnel for the Slavic curator should be supplied by the Library . . . although the Council was willing to continue, of course, its support of the Curator's salary and part of Mrs. Fedorova's salary as at present. In the long run, however, the University should take over this entire operation, thus leaving the Council in a position to promote the expansion of our total effort. . . . One of the functions of the Council is to render enthusiastic support to the Library in playing its part in this total build up. I believe the Consilium has the same point of view. . . . We feel that the budget should be expanded at once and that it should reach the \$25,000.00 figure in the fiscal year after the one coming up.⁶⁴

The issue of money came up again in a letter of April 18, 1963, from Barghoorn to Ottemiller:

It has come to the attention of the Russian Council that only \$10,000 will be allocated of the Library budget for 1963-64 for Slavic Acquisitions. The Council expected at least \$30,000. [They have hoped that] there is still a possibility that special funds may be made available by the Office of the President of the University. . . . In any case 10,000 leave us far behind almost all other universities in the country in terms of acquisition of Slavic materials.⁶⁵

On April 18, Ottemiller explained to Barghoorn that the sum was actually \$16,500 for the 1963-1964 budget. "I assure you that the Library had requested \$35,000 for our Russian acquisitions but the request was cut back by \$10,000." In a letter of April 29, Barghoorn asked for \$500 for an increase in salary for Rannit and \$250 for Mrs. Fedorova.⁶⁶

Ottemiller was somewhat perplexed by Rannit's frequent journeys to New York City. In a letter to Barghoorn of May 20, 1963, he wrote:

Dear Fred,

One question I would like to discuss with you . . . is the frequency of Rannitt's trips to New York City for the purchase of books. I think we have to consider ground rules, not only for frequency, but also as to expenses allowable.

Sincerely,

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

J.H. Ottemiller⁶⁷

Barghoorn replied on May 27:

Mr. Rannit should be assisted in assembling materials for the Slavic Seminar Library—the name that we have decided to give to the Slavic Room by Alex Schenker and Ivo Lederer. We are all, of course, delighted that you are making this room available to us. I personally join in the feeling that this will gradually strengthen our activity in the field of Slavic studies. . . . Now that the University has apparently decided to step up its support for acquisition of non-Western materials, the Council in the future might want to get out of acquisitions entirely and have all acquisition money supplied by the University. . . . With regard to the matter of Mr. Rannit's trips to New York, I will be glad to come in and chat with you about it. I do not have any particular position on it at present. I would suggest that we would want to arrive at an optimum position reconciling the needs of procurement with those of economy. . . . My term as chairman of the Council expires June 30th, 1963. Professor Leon Lipson of the Law School will be chairman of the Council.⁶⁸

Professors Ivo Lederer and Alexander Schenker, in their capacity as library consultants for the Slavic Collection, had asked Rannit to provide them with a complete list of purchases for 1962-1963, which would give them an insight into his work and could eventually serve as a guideline for further acquisitions policy. On September, 24, 1963, Lederer wrote to Ottemiller:

Just a brief note, to comment on the survey of 1962/1963 acquisitions which were prepared by Mr. Rannit for Alex and myself. I have looked at the statistics with care and feel that 1962/1963 acquisitions were sound both in terms of the ratio between current and noncurrent materials and in terms of distribution between countries and disciplines. Rannit has done a first rate job. Money was spent intelligently based on sound acquisitions principles. As for Mr. Rannit's "style," whatever problems it created we have persuasive evidence that he is doing a satisfactory job.⁶⁹

Lederer had written to Barghoorn on June 27, 1963, to offer his thoughts about the distribution of funds for Slavica. He opined that only 65-70 percent of the total budget should be devoted to Russian materials. The minor languages, such as Albanian, Bulgarian, Romanian, and Hungarian, should be given very limited coverage, but materials in Czech, Polish, and south Slavic languages should be collected in depth.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

From the point of view of chronology, while not ignoring the medieval and late medieval areas, we should emphasize the period since the beginning of the 18th century. Our primary emphasis should be on fundamental works of reference and historical, literary, and contemporary periodicals. As for the distribution of disciplines it would seem reasonable to strike a rough balance between literature, political science and economics, and history. We should not, I think, spend substantial sums in such fields as archaeology, etc. Furthermore other departments of the Yale University, such as the Law School, Art and Architecture Department, Divinity School and Medical School should be engaged in this effort, materially and intellectually.⁷⁰

Finally, Lederer suggested that Rannit write a report about his work up to that time and elucidate his concepts of collection development in this area.

Rannit accepted the suggestion and on October 7, 1963, sent his report to Mr. Babb, the University Librarian. In it he stated that the Slavic and East European Collection at Yale contained 30,000 titles. (This number did not include materials in the art, music, drama, law, medicine, mathematics, and science collections.) He noted that Yale probably had the fifteenth-largest Slavic collection in the United States and was ranked eighth among American university libraries. Harvard at that time had 260,000 titles and Columbia University, 200,000. The Universities of California, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin each held about 50,000 titles. Rannit hoped that Yale would have 100,000 titles in its collection by 1970.⁷¹

Rannit emphasized that current acquisitions focused on history, literature and linguistics, political science, and economics. Russian acquisitions were running at approximately 55 percent of the total, with the remainder devoted to other materials in Slavic and East European languages. The goal for Russian materials was 65 percent of the total budget. Rannit thought that Yale should devote its energies to the acquisition of out-of-print materials, mainly basic reference works, missing volumes of sets, and serial titles that could be obtained on microfilm. With additional staff, he noted, this should be possible. In light of the recent transfer of funds, Rannit believed that he could sustain an acquisitions rate of 5,500-6,000 titles per year, at a cost of \$35,000; later, with more funds, as many as 10,000 titles per year might be possible. Rannit's report also stated: "The Library has allocated \$16,500 for the FY 1963/64. We need \$35,000 for the regular acquisitions and \$15,000 for the materials for the Slavic Reading Room reference collection (to be spent in two installments of \$7,500 per year)—which for the current year amounted to \$42,500."⁷² The library's appropriation, as noted earlier, was \$16,500.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

Therefore, Rannit requested that the council allocate \$26,000 in additional funds for fiscal year 1963-1964.⁷³

Funding had started to improve noticeably. On October 18, 1963, the Yale Corporation granted \$400,000 to the Concilium, of which \$26,000 was allotted to the Slavic and East European Collection, and the library was instructed to carry over any unspent funds into fiscal year 1964-1965.⁷⁴

In January 1964, Rannit was honored with an invitation to address a committee of the United States Congress. The official announcement read: "The Current State of Baltic Literatures under Soviet Occupation. Testimony given by Aleksis Rannit of the Council of Russian and East European Studies at Yale University before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Europe in the United States Congress in Washington, D.C. on January 27, 1964." Rannit sent his thorough and beautifully written testimony about Baltic intellectuals and artists to Babb. This speech was, I believe, the high point of Mr. Rannit's life.

The nagging question of how best to obtain materials from Eastern Bloc countries was often discussed in the council and in the library. Acquisitions trips became possible with additional funding, and in 1964 Rannit traveled to Europe, aided by a grant of \$450 from the council. The same year Ottemiller undertook a similar trip, the council allotting \$420 for his stops in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Helsinki.

It is interesting to note that help was sometimes sought even from outside Yale. On June 9, 1964, the library gave \$500 to Professor Stephen Fischer-Galati of Indiana University to acquire Romanian books for Yale while he was visiting that country. He described his trip in a letter to Ottemiller dated September 24, 1964. Among his successes Fischer-Galati counted newly forged connections with the Romanian Academy of Sciences and Bucharest University, which resulted in the acquisition of many new publications from both institutions.⁷⁵

The problem of how to ship the materials from Romania was solved by sending them to the United States via diplomatic pouch. Another problem that Professor Fischer-Galati faced was obtaining the documentation required by the library, such as invoices and accounting for expenses. In the end, he was only able to collect some bulk sales invoices. In a long letter to Ottemiller, he pointed out that it was impossible to apply American business criteria to the countries of the Soviet Bloc.⁷⁶

TATIANA RANNIT

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid,

⁷⁵ Letter to J. Ottemiller, Sept. 24, 1964, from Stephen Fischer-Galati.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

Following Aleksis Rannit's death, Tatiana Rannit was appointed curator of the Slavic and East European Collection. To help her in the acquisitions work, three clerical and technical positions were established in the Slavic Reading Room, all filled by native speakers of Russian and/or another Slavic language. The original idea of having two professional librarians in charge of collection development was abolished, a pattern that has continued up to the present.

Cataloguing operations were separated from the acquisitions and reference work. At that time the Cataloguing Department was reorganized into teams. The Slavic Cataloguing Team consisted of three professional librarians and three technical and clerical employees. Again, all were native speakers working under a team leader, who was one of the professional librarians.

Mrs. Rannit also employed student workers for the equivalent of one full-time position. Usually graduate students, they provided excellent help by bringing to the acquisitions and reference work their knowledge of languages and subject matter. All told, four librarians, six clerical employees, and several students took care of the Slavic Collection at Yale. Mrs. Rannit continued her work in the same spirit as when she had worked alongside her husband. She carried on her duties remarkably well until 1989, when she decided to retire.

THE FALL OF COMMUNISM

I arrived at Yale in June 1989, four months before the Communist world started to unravel. In 1991 the Soviet Union was dissolved, as was Czechoslovakia. Following a cruel, four-year-long war, Yugoslavia fell apart as well, with seven new independent countries eventually taking its place. These epochal changes completely transformed my work as a curator of Yale's Slavic and East European Collection.

Since the book trade was one of the casualties of this transformation, it became necessary for me to think about new and inventive ways of purchasing books. The Russian and East European Council urged the library administration to enlarge the acquisition funds for Slavic materials, and the Council itself contributed significant amounts for this purpose. The library administration realized that the curator should travel to these countries to examine the new situation and buy whatever was available. Since the early 1990s, I have made many trips to eastern and central Europe and experienced what has probably been the most exciting period of my life.

Much has been written about the travails of librarians in the present epoch, and it is not necessary to repeat that story in this paper. I will limit myself to those points which I consider the most important during my curatorship at Yale.

During my tenure I have substantially increased the funding for the collection. Year after year I have stressed the need for a thorough documentation of the post-Communist era. I have succeeded in securing annual increases of the general funds from both the library and the Russian Council, which has appropriated generous allotments from its Title VI grant money. There have also been many other donations and grants, of which I would like to mention just a few. In the early 1990s I obtained \$250,000 from Mr. George Chopivsky for the acquisition of Ukrainica. The United States Institute of Peace gave

me \$25,000 in 1990 to help with acquisitions in our area. In 1992, I traveled for eight weeks in eastern and central Europe on a grant from the Pew Charitable Funds, and also received IREX funding for several acquisitions-assessment projects in Russia.⁷⁷

Since 2000, Dr. Kristaps Keggi has generously supported the Baltic Library Internship program. He has also engaged other Yale Baltic American graduates to create a fund for the Baltic Initiative at Yale, which now pays for our Baltic acquisitions. I supplemented our yearly budget by systematically overspending and was able to obtain additional funds to cover these expenditures. Finally, I would like to thank Ann Okerson, our collection development officer, who has always understood the extraordinary situation in Eastern Europe and has generously allotted additional funds for these important acquisitions.

THE SLAVIC AND EAST EUROPEAN COLLECTION AT PRESENT

With more than 175,000 volumes concerning central and southeastern Europe, as well as some 600,000 volumes covering Russia and the states of the former Soviet Union, Yale has become one of the five largest collections in the United States. Each year the Slavic and East European Collection acquires about 13,000-14,000 volumes in the vernacular languages. English-language titles are usually acquired separately by the library for the general collection. Yale owns about 775,000 monographs in the vernacular languages. In addition, the library has approximately 6,000 current and recent journal subscriptions, as well as subscribing to 200 newspapers in print or digital form. It also has access to several databases, notably the Universal Database (East View) and the Central and East European Online Library.

An important part of Yale's research collection is the Slavic, East European and Central Asian Archival Collection in microfilm and microfiche formats. The policy of the curator was to obtain such collections as they were published in the period from 1991 until very recently. A unique opportunity arose when the Russian archives began cooperating with various microfilming companies (e.g. IDC, Chadwyck-Healey, Gale, and ProQuest) and renowned archivists and historians acting as selectors and editors to create a massive documentation on major historical figures and events.⁷⁸ The jewel in the crown is the *Archive of the Soviet Communist Party and Soviet State*, published in Cambridge, England, by the State Archival Service of Russia and the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, in association with Chadwyck-Healey Ltd. (1993-2004). Only a few libraries in the United States own the complete set of more than 11,000 microfilm reels of this title.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ More information is available on the Web at http://www.library.yale.edu/slavic/library_assessment_project/.

⁷⁸ More information is available on the Web at <http://www.library.yale.edu/slavic/microform/index.html>

⁷⁹ More information is available on the Web at <http://www.library.yale.edu/slavic/microform/sovietarchives.html>

This collection is just one part of the voluminous resources of Slavic and East European archival holdings available at the Sterling Memorial Library and the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.⁸⁰

EAST COAST CONSORTIUM FOR SLAVIC ACQUISITIONS

Slavic librarians in the United States have traditionally been organized in two different professional organizations: the Slavic and East European Section (SEES) of ACRL, ALA, and later as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS). Slavic librarians, for political and practical reasons, found it necessary to cooperate in their endeavors. In the post-Communist era, however, there was an even stronger need for closer cooperation in order to overcome the many obstacles facing our work.

In 1993, at Yale's initiative, the East Coast Consortium for Slavic Acquisitions was formed in a meeting at Columbia University. The original members of the Consortium were Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, the Library of Congress (with a limited involvement—duplicate distribution), the New York Public Library, Princeton, and Yale. Later on New York University, Dartmouth College, the University of North Carolina, and Duke were added. The consortium, now in its seventeenth year of existence, meets twice a year under a rotating chairmanship. Its members are, however, in constant consultation with each other. We negotiate prices with suppliers and divide acquisitions among us to make sure that a cross-section of materials is deposited in each of our collections. We deliberate on technical matters and support each other in requesting grants for different projects, thus making our diminishing budgets stretch further than they would if we were acting alone. The current chair of the consortium is Ernest Zitser, curator of the Duke University Slavic Collection.

JOEL SUMNER SMITH RETURNS

I would like to end the story of the Slavic and East European Collection at Yale with Joel Sumner Smith, the founder of the collection. To take advantage of the digital era, I proposed to the Digital Enterprise Steering Committee that they scan his *Catalog of Books: Slavica in the Library of Yale University*, privately printed in 1896, and also to digitize all individual titles within the catalog. The proposal was accepted and the catalog is already available in digital format on our Slavic Web Page.⁸¹ The digitization of individual titles is proceeding as planned: the pick lists have been created and the Kirtas Company of Victor, N.Y., has been chosen for processing and has already finished the test run. The project, funded by the Arcadia Fund of the United Kingdom, will start by scanning monographs, to be followed by serial publications.

⁸⁰ More information is available on the Web at <http://www.library.yale.edu/slavic/archives.html>

⁸¹ More information is available on the Web at http://www.library.yale.edu/slavic/docs/rus_cat-high.pdf

The digitization effort began with pulling monographic volumes listed in Smith's catalog. If the volumes are in good condition, they are sent to a vendor for scanning. More fragile materials are being scanned in-house. The next steps will include the conversion of the digitized page images to full text using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software. Because of the old Cyrillic fonts, the OCR poses certain technical challenges; the software had to be "trained," an effort undertaken by the curator and her staff. In the meantime, technology specialists are working on depositing the digitized materials in a permanent repository and on developing a special portal so that library patrons can search and read this valuable collection. Electronic access to the Slavic and East European Collection will make its content usable by faculty, students, researchers, and the interested public worldwide.