



inflections

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Anders Aslund gives two talks on economic transition in the former Soviet Union

Anders Aslund, a senior associate with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, gave two talks in mid-November at UNC-CH on the economic outlook for countries of the former Soviet Union. Aslund is a leading specialist on post-communist economic transformation, especially in Russia and Ukraine, having served as a senior economic advisor to the governments of those countries.

The first talk, presented on Wednesday, November 13 in Toy Lounge, was based on Aslund's recent book *Building Capitalism*, and was entitled "Lessons from Post-communist Economic Transformation."

Aslund began by saying he tries to combine theory and practice, both as an advisor and as an analyst.

"You have to look at the choices you have before you," Aslund said. "You are not usually choosing between being rich and healthy, or poor and unhealthy."

In elaborating on the economic and political choices various governments in the region have made, Aslund divided the 21 countries of the former Soviet Union and the Soviet Bloc into three categories: Radical Reformers, Gradual Reformers, and Non-Reformers. He used economic data to

demonstrate that the countries with the greatest amount of democracy and privatization – including Hungary, Poland, the Czech and Slovak Republics and the Balkans –

Belarus, which are characterized by authoritarian governments and state-controlled economies, were actually ahead of the Gradual

Reform countries (like Russia, Bulgaria and Romania) in terms of GDP growth. But he hastened to add that over the long run he believed democratization and privatization would prove to be the best economic strategies.

He said privatization was "better than its reputation," and described it as "one of the most maligned elements" of reform in the former Soviet Union. He also called the collapse in output in Russia a "statistical mirage," due to a few factors, including the rise in the unmeasured economy after the fall of communism in 1989. He said if there had been a huge decline in the economy, one would have expected huge social unrest, which hasn't occurred.

Aslund said within Russia, there were 20 large companies, all owned by Russians, which control huge segments of the economy, in particular heavy industry, gas, oil, and banking. He said these 20 "oligarchs" had to a large extent

eliminated the mafia from Russia, often using law suits as their weapon. Addressing



*Anders Aslund makes a point during his talk on November 14 at Gardner Hall. The talk was entitled "The Impact of EU Enlargement on the CIS Countries."/>*photo by Will Bettmann

tended to have the highest gross domestic product per capita.

Aslund did note that the Non-Reformers like Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and

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This month, Princeton University Press published in both cloth and paperback editions **Donald J. Raleigh's** *Experiencing Russia's Civil War: Politics, Society, and Revolutionary Culture in Saratov, 1917-1922*. Barnes and Noble is selling the book at a 20 percent discount, which brings the cost of the hefty tome to under \$20.

Edward Tiryakian of the Sociology department at Duke University lectured on "Multiculturalism in Europe and the United States," at the University of Latvia (Riga), on October 21, and on "Assessing Changes in the United States and the World since 9/11" at Stradins University (Riga) on October 22. He also participated at a panel session at Tartu University (Estonia), on October 23, and presented a paper at an international conference, "Multicultural Estonia," in Tallinn (Estonia), on October 24-25.

Sharon A. Kowalsky, PhD Candidate in History, had her article "Who's Responsible for Female Crime? Women, Deviance, and the Development of Soviet Social Norms in Revolutionary Russia" accepted for publication in *The Russian Review*, to appear in October 2003.

Vanek, Czech oral historian visits UNC, discusses current projects

By Elizabeth Michalka

In October, Miroslav Vanek director of the Center for Oral History in Prague, spent nearly two weeks at the University, a whirl-wind visit compared to his four-month stay in 2000. Vanek came to discuss his center's current research and to encourage further ties and collaboration with UNC.

"I prefer to speak with people, ordinary people to learn about history," said Vanek when asked why he decided to do research using oral history. "A lot of information comes through oral history that is not in archives or books."

The Center for Oral History was established in January 2000 as a part of the Institute of Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences. In the Czech Republic, the Center collaborates with history students at the Faculty of Arts, Palacky University in Olomouc, and with the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague. In 2000, collaboration was also established with the Center for Slavic, Eurasian & East European Studies and the Department of History at UNC. Vanek conducted two lectures while he was here, both sponsored by the Center for Slavic, Eurasian, and East European Studies. He gave his first lecture Oct. 14, about two of his Center's oral history projects.

The 1989 anti-

Communist demonstrations were covered in the first project and the book, *A Hundred Student Revolutions*, written by Vanek and one of his colleagues, Milan Otahal, based on the project's findings. The current status of the student revolutionaries is now being researched in a follow-up study on the new



Miroslav Vanek in front of St. Stephens Cathedral in Vienna this summer./ photo by Robert Jenkins

class of Czech elites.

"The students were the initiators and the motor of the first revolutionary days," said Vanek during his first lecture. "They had the greatest support and sympathies from the public, and they called this attention to themselves with great command."

In 1989 street demonstrations "exploded," said Vanek. On November 17, demonstrators were attacked

by police, which led the students to call for a strike of all Czechoslovak universities. Thousands of citizens then filled St. Wenceslas Square in Prague to protest the communist regime and support the students.

"In this way, the unknown, nameless university students became in one week the idols, representatives, spokesmen and exemplary models for the public," said Vanek. "They became members of the nation's elite, taking the position of a student to new and impressive heights."

The former student demonstrators are considered to be some of today's new elites in the Czech Republic, which is the subject of the Center's follow-up project. Vanek spoke more about the research on elites during his second lecture on Oct. 21. One of the objectives of the current project is to gain more knowledge about the "everyday lives" of the new elites, said

Vanek.

The project is researching common ties between the former students and the broader anti-communist opposition, including how they became involved in the anti-Communist movement and what actions they took in 1989. The project is also delving into the private lives, past and present, of the former Communist Party elites.

Upcoming events on campus

Jan. 20

Padraic Kenney, author of *A Carnival of Revolution*, will be on campus on Tuesday, Jan. 21. He will give a talk entitled "Oppositional Networks and Transnational Diffusion in the Revolutions of 1989." Location and time have yet to be announced.

February

The Yale Women's Slavic Choir will give a full length performance at UNC in February. Time and date have not been announced. For more information, contact Jeremy Pinkham at 962-0901.

Featured Event - Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* at UNC - Feb. 26 - March 23

The Playmakers Repertory Company will stage a production of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, directed by internationally recognized Hungarian director, Laszlo Marton. The Center for Slavic, Eurasian and East European Studies is a co-sponsor of the production, which is not Marton's first in Chapel Hill. Two years ago, he directed a production of Moliere's *The School for Wives*. Marton

is a native of Budapest, and has been the artistic director for a major Hungarian theater company, Vigszin haz, since 1985.

Also this spring, Chris Putney, of the Slavic Languages and Literatures department at UNC, will be teaching a class on Chekhov, RUSS 165, which will include a study of his major works and a survey of contemporary authors and literary trends relevant to his career.

See the next issue of *Inflections* for further information regarding events centered on this production of *Uncle Vanya*.

Aslund FROM PAGE 1

concerns about the undue influence of the oligarchs over the Russian government and economy, he again stressed the importance of privatization, saying, "To my mind, it doesn't matter how you privatize, so long as you do it."

He did note the "worrisome tendency" of the 20 largest companies to "buy" members of parliament, but he said the oligarchs, rather than crush smaller competitors, frequently encouraged their growth so that they could be assured of more reliable source of supplies. Not everyone in the audience was swayed by Aslund's arguments. A few students interrupted Aslund's talk with questions about the authenticity of his conclusions.

Aslund's second talk, delivered on Thursday, November 14 at Gardner Hall was entitled

"The Impact of EU Enlargement on the CIS Countries." The talk centered on problems stemming from the decline of trade between the countries of the former Soviet Union and the EU and its accession countries. The EU's protectionist policies and anti-dumping regulations are having a serious effect on CIS exports, which Aslund described as a trade war that was leading to a "rising wall between the EU and the CIS."

Professor Milada Vachudova asked why the EU should respond to the problem of CIS trade and Aslund responded that there were three incentives for the EU to act to open trade with the CIS: 1) that liberalization will lead to greater wealth for all involved; 2) that criminal problems develop where there are trade barriers; 3) that "If you don't want the goods, you get the people."

Aslund also discussed the destabilizing problem of depopulation and declining birth rates throughout the region, noting that Armenia, Georgia and Moldova had suffered 20-33% loss of population due to emigration and that Estonia, Latvia, Hungary and Bulgaria could lose as much as 40-50% after accession.

Aslund added that high poverty has a direct correlation to high migration and that the majority of immigration today is illegal. Russia, however, is actually growing from CIS immigration, as it is the only country to have real economic growth, although the growth is limited to the major cities and a few industries.

The Aslund visit was sponsored by CSEEEES, the Curriculum for International and Area Studies, the Economics Department, and the EU Center.

meetings | P3

JAN 1: Paper proposals are due for the next conference of the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages. The annual conference will be held on Saturday, March 1, 2003 in Toy Lounge of Dey Hall at UNC-CH. Submissions can be mailed to: AATSEEL of the Carolinas c/o Biljana Belamaric Wilsey, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, 425 Dey Hall, C.B. # 3165 Chapel Hill, NC 27599. bbiljana@email.unc.edu

JAN 15, FEB 20: The International Social Studies Project (ISSP), in collaboration with the Center for Slavic, Eurasian and East European Studies and the Center for European Studies, will present the final two workshops of its "World in Transition" series. The first will focus on Russia and the Former Soviet Republics, and the February workshop will focus on Europe. The series is a Distance Learning program of the ISSP. Workshops are broadcast from UNC-CH to four remote North Carolina high schools, where participants have internet access and are able to interact with each other and with workshop leaders, Dr. Ginger Wilson and Jim Litle.

Planning underway for April conference on contemporary security challenges in Eurasia

For the past two months, a group of faculty and students from both UNC-CH and Duke has met bi-weekly to plan the CSEEEES conference on contemporary security challenges in Eurasia, which will take place from April 10 - 12, 2003.

The focus of the conference will be on the 14 new nations created upon the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. These nations stretch from the Baltic Sea through the Caucasus and Central Asia to

the Pacific Ocean, and are facing security issues such as the war in Chechnya, Caspian Sea oil development, and the effect in the region of the war on terrorism.

Questions addressed by the conference will include: how these new states have adapted to sovereignty, and what modes of government have developed ; how human rights are being addressed; what the impact of the new political environment has been on the

natural environment; and, what is the role of Islam in these states.

One of the main goals of the planning committee is to encourage as much community participation as possible. Speakers have not been finalized yet, but will include policy makers, military experts and decision makers as well as academics.

For information or suggestions, please contact CSEEEES Director Robert Jenkins at rjenkins@email.unc.edu.

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