

define the new interdisciplinary organization of knowledge known as area studies. He later served as director of research for the War Documentation Project (Captured German Records), out of which emerged his award-winning (Wolfson Prize in History) classic study, *German Rule in Russia, 1941–1945* (1957, republished in 1981).

Alex sought to bring his careful scholarly training to contemporary problems of American foreign policy; among his most frequent topics were Soviet international behavior, international communism, and U.S.–Soviet relations: *The Soviet Union at the United Nations* (1962), *Diversity in International Communism* (1963), *The Soviet Union and Disarmament* (1964), and *Black Box: KAL 007 and the Superpowers* (1985). In these books and in many important edited works and conference papers, Alex was constantly engaged in the foreign policy debates of his day, as he was through his membership in the Council on Foreign Relations and Amnesty International.

Most of the volumes he edited were the results of conferences he had helped organize. His extensive international contacts and insistence on hearing all sides of the question meant that these conferences more often than not brought American scholars into contact with their European and Soviet/Russian counterparts. And he eagerly sought out collaborative authorship and editorship because he welcomed the challenge of learning something new. Together with Gail Lapidus and Dorothy Atkinson, he co-edited one of the first important collections on *Women in Russia* (1977); with Condoleezza Rice, he co-edited *The Gorbachev Era* (1986). Last year, the Yale University Press Annals of Communism series published *Dimitrov and Stalin, 1934–43: Letters from the Soviet Archives*, which he co-edited with the Russian scholar F. I. Firsov; just months before his death, series editor Jonathan Brent persuaded Alex to edit a companion volume to the Annals series, “A Guide to Soviet History.” Characteristically, Alex’s partner in this venture was Aleksandr Chubarian, director of the Institute of World History (Russian Academy of Science).

Alex’s contribution to scholarship can be seen in many of his other activities as well. He served on several editorial boards, helped select participants for student and faculty exchange programs, waged battles to assure adequate support for area studies in major university libraries, and oversaw the *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, an invaluable resource for scholars of contemporary Soviet affairs.

Finally, Alex’s scholarly legacy lives on in the generations of students he taught at Columbia and Stanford (and elsewhere) in the history and political science departments. His commitment to public service in the field engaged him in numerous departmental and university committees, and he did so with a sense of obligation that has earned him the title of a true citizen of the international scholarly community.

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August 2000

Stephen Lessing Baehr, 1946–2000

Stephen Lessing Baehr’s many friends and colleagues were shocked to learn of his death from a heart attack, 28 June 2000, at the age of only fifty-four years. Steve had experienced problems with arrhythmia during the past year, but had received treatment for it, and in recent letters suggested that it was under control. Tragically this was not the case, and Steve was characteristically making the best of a difficult situation.

The Slavic field knew Steve Baehr as one of its leading specialists in early modern Russian culture and as the editor of the *Slavic and East European Journal*. These highly visible positions only begin to suggest the extent of his learning and service to the field. Steve began his lifelong commitment to Russian studies at Clark University, where he studied economics and Russian (B.A., 1967), and at Princeton University, where he spent a year in the Critical Languages program (1966–67). He earned his Ph.D. at Columbia University (1973) with unusual rapidity but nevertheless managed to strengthen his historical understanding of Russia while completing a minor in comparative literature and taking full

advantage of New York's museums and theaters. At Columbia, where we met in 1968, his enthusiasm, warmth, and consideration made him a leader among an active group of graduate students as well as a memorable participant in the courses of Robert Bellman, Richard Gustafson, Robert Maguire, Harold Segel, and Edward Said, with whom he had lively debates on literary and political theory. Steve spent part of this time on a fellowship from the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) in St. Petersburg, where his love of Russian culture and his intellectual honesty won him a warm and enduring welcome in intellectual circles.

Well versed in mathematics and economics, Steve was drawn to the more formalized approaches to literary theory: formalism, structuralism, semiotics, and myth criticism. But his logical and critical abilities were well balanced by interpretive imagination, a feeling for the nuances of language, and an indefatigable sense of humor. These abilities, joined to learning and abundant good nature, made us eagerly seek him out as a reader for our papers and sounding board for our fledgling insights.

Steve began his teaching career at the University of Virginia (1972–78), then took up a Mellon Fellowship at Harvard University (1978–79). In 1979 he moved to Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, eventually becoming professor of Russian and Humanities and chair of the Russian Studies Program. An active mentor of students and colleagues, he was frequently nominated for university teaching prizes, winning a University Certificate of Teaching Excellence in 1993. Two years later he won the Albert E. Sturm Award for Excellence in Faculty Research, granted by Phi Beta Kappa, Mu Chapter of Virginia. Over the years, awards from IREX, Fulbright-Hays, the Ford Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities supported his active research program.

Steve's extensive scholarship earned him many positive reviews and an international reputation. It is characterized by range, thoroughness, theoretical sophistication, and subtlety of analysis. It is no exaggeration to state that his writings, published and unpublished, demonstrated scholarly competence in nearly all the subfields of Russian literature from the Middle Ages to the present. Steve wrote on a variety of genres (prose fiction, verse, drama) and on cultural forms often ignored by literary scholars, such as alchemy, fireworks displays, court masquerades, and Masonic rituals. Appropriate comparative references drew on his solid acquaintance with classical antiquity, the Renaissance, and even eastern civilization. Such range, of course, would count for little were it not backed up by meticulous, thorough research, and this quality marked Steve's work no less than its scope. His articles, particularly those on the eighteenth century, use hard-to-get primary materials (many of which are available only in Russia), pioneering nineteenth-century scholarship, and appropriate modern studies of other literatures. He was adept at using materials that many literary scholars ignore, such as ecclesiastical documents and court records. At the same time he had a sharp eye for textual detail and pattern; his recent article, on Aleksandr Griboedov's *Woe from Wit* (1998), is a fine example of this talent for rigorous close reading.

Steve's publications add up to one of the most comprehensive and significant projects ever attempted by an American Slavist. The eighteenth-century papers outline the major possibilities of the "panegyric culture" of the period, as he aptly characterized it. Other papers fit the project by showing alternatives to this culture that help delimit it. Steve's magisterial book, *The Paradise Myth in Eighteenth-Century Russia: Utopian Patterns in Early Secular Russian Literature and Culture* (1991), and his second major project, *The Machine and Its Enemies in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Russian Literature and Culture* (under contract to Stanford University Press, much of it completed and delivered as conference papers), together span the history of Russian culture in terms of themes (especially utopia and anti-utopia) that he studied for over three decades.

Steve's own university did not offer him a major research library or a broad circle of colleagues in Russian studies. But he took advantage of his heavy course load to teach a wide variety of subjects in the humanities, and he seized every opportunity to take an active part in conferences, both domestic and international. Married to an accomplished Russian scholar, Irina Mess-Baehr, his commitment to Russian studies became, if anything, more intense as his career unfolded. In recent years e-mail allowed him to be in active contact with friends and colleagues, and he embraced his editorial responsibilities with his usual combination of firm judgment, diplomacy, and enthusiasm. One of our colleagues

recently wrote to me that Steve had sent him “the nicest, most thoughtful rejection letter [he] had ever received.” Steve was particularly energetic in his support of young scholars of early modern culture, helping them with their manuscripts and interceding in their tenure decisions. Unfailing generosity and capacity for friendship are no less Steve’s legacy than his exemplary teaching and scholarship.

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