NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

DIVISION OF RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative of a previously funded grant application, which conforms to a past set of grant guidelines. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the application guidelines for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Research Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title:	The Post-Soviet Public Sphere: Multimedia Sourcebook of the 1990s
Institution:	New York University
Project Director:	Maya Vinokour
Grant Program:	Collaborative Research

Section I: Statement of significance and impact

Many features of the present geopolitical moment — from election hacking to "alternative facts" — trace their roots to the media landscape of the post-Soviet 1990s. Post-Soviet civil society emerged simultaneously with the explosion of new media, especially a newly liberated television and the Internet. Television stations, radio channels, print outlets, and Internet platforms such as LiveJournal enjoyed a brief and contested period of independence as explosive creativity collided with rank commercialism, journalistic integrity with burgeoning political ambitions, and fringe with mainstream. By the late 1990s, most of these media had succumbed to economic and political exploitation. The causes and nature of this co-optation, which set the stage for Vladimir Putin's crackdown on independent media in the 2000s and 2010s, are embedded in the era's media artifacts.

A group of seven researchers headed by the project director seeks funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities to complete an existing digital project titled "The Post-Soviet Public Sphere: Multimedia Sourcebook of the 1990s" (http://www.postsoviet90s.com). The proposed digital collected volume and associated sourcebook will interpret Russian-language print media, television, Web and radio artifacts dating to the "long 1990s," which began in 1986 with Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of "openness [*glasnost*]" and ended with the election of President Vladimir Putin in 2000. No current scholarship addresses the mutual influence among the disparate spheres of public life that enabled the media "Wild West" of the first post-Soviet decade — especially its popular culture, commercial advertising, political journalism, and nascent social media. Pertinent materials are currently scattered, often in low quality and without scholarly interpretation, across the Russian-language Web. Our volume and sourcebook, as a joint platform, redress these lacunae by presenting the media culture of the post-Soviet 1990s in a manner that reflects its historical interconnectedness and its relationship to the global present.

When completed in Fall 2022, the Multimedia Sourcebook of the 1990s will consist of three interlinked elements: (1) 500 print, television, Web, and radio artifacts, selected by the core research team and rendered in English by a professional translator; (2) annotations to these artifacts as well as thematic overviews for the four featured media types, written by the core research team for scholars and the broader Anglophone public, and (3) A digital collected volume featuring interpretive scholarly essays centered on subsets of the sourcebook's artifacts, to be written by the core research team, peer-reviewed by the project's advisory board, and published on the sourcebook in open access.

We anticipate a threefold impact for our project. Within Russian and East European Studies, our collected volume, in combination with an annotated network of media artifacts, will provide a valuable research tool. Using the dynamic, searchable, and interconnected sourcebook format, scholars and graduate students will gain insight into the cultural and political factors contributing to the rapid collapse of Russian journalistic independence after 1991 — especially the relationship between commercial advertising and politics and the competition between new capitalist elites and state actors. The project's impact will also extend to other fields within the humanities. The proposed account of the birth of a flourishing free media and its subsequent co-optation contributes vital material to studies of media and memory, the relationship between political policy and the media, post-Soviet perceptions of democracy and authoritarianism, and changes in public representations of gender and sexuality. Finally, our sourcebook will render the crucial years following Soviet collapse accessible and legible to a broad cross-section of the Anglophone and diasporic Russophone publics, particularly those with strong interests in current events, politics, the history of social media, as well as journalists, writers, and other non-academics focusing on post-Soviet politics and culture.

As the first platform of its kind, our sourcebook will be an invaluable resource on a crucial period in recent history. By investigating the rise and fall of Russia's only public sphere to date, our sourcebook will offer insight into the period's ongoing impact on global media history and political culture.

Section III: Narrative — The Post-Soviet Public Sphere: Multimedia Sourcebook of the 1990s

Substance and context

For most of its history, Russia has lacked such defining features of Western civil society as freedom of speech and association. Until Communist Party General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev introduced a policy called *glasnost* — meaning "publicity" or "openness" — in 1986, the chances that Russians would enjoy such liberties in the twentieth century seemed slim indeed. Our sourcebook investigates the historically anomalous period of media freedom that followed Gorbachev's momentous policy shift, focusing especially on the profound effects of that freedom's decline on global political culture today. In particular, our digital collected volume will address the relationship between Russian media subcultures and the rise of global alt-right movements; uncover the impact of pulling fraudulent, alternative, or underground material into mainstream public discourse through television and Internet advertising; and consider the significance of shifting cultural canons following the introduction of market capitalism. Our sourcebook represents the first attempt to unite peer-reviewed interpretive work on media in the post-Soviet 1990s with the media artifacts themselves, accelerating future research in the area by providing unprecedented access to a curated subset of crucial materials. In addition, ours will be among the first scholarly efforts to link media developments of the Russian 1990s to global phenomena like the decline of democratic regimes and the growth of right-wing nationalism, especially after 2016.[1]

Our timeline begins in the late 1980s, when Gorbachev's *perestroika* ("restructuring") reforms not only failed to stabilize the Soviet regime as he had hoped, but actively precipitated its collapse. *Glasnost,* one of *perestroika's* key components, allowed previously unmentionable historical episodes to become

[1] Much of the extant work on the post-Soviet media and related areas is either out of date (especially given the rapid evolution of Internet culture), or narrower in scope than our proposed sourcebook. The latter applies, for example, to Natalia Roudakova's *Losing Pravda* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), which addresses the decline of professional Russian journalism after 1991. It does not, however, deal with post-Soviet advertising, artistic culture, or media representations of gender and sexuality, all of which, we claim, bear substantively on post-Soviet politics and civil society. A full list of relevant volumes may be found in the Appendix.

headline news and long-forbidden films and books to be released or published. Most importantly, the current Soviet leadership became the target of intense public scrutiny, with muckraking television and radio programs politicizing huge swaths of disenchanted citizens.

These seismic shifts simultaneously enabled and depended upon the emergence of a modern news and entertainment media. Radio, print media, and especially television — all media types our sourcebook will examine, along with early Internet artifacts — helped publicize, critique, and amplify many elements of *perestroika*. As *glasnost* accelerated, television and print media began exposing not only the ugliness of the Soviet past, but the flaws of the Soviet present — from the government's suppression of the nationalist rebellion in Nagorno-Karabakh in 1988 to the planned economy's "gifts" of endless queuing and consumer-goods shortages. When the economic promise of *perestroika* failed to materialize, the press turned on Gorbachev and anointed a new popular favorite: Boris Yeltsin, who would go on in June 1991 to receive 57% of the vote in the first and only democratic election for President of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic.[2]

The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution may not have been televised, but the collapse of the Soviet regime certainly was. When a group of hardline Gorbachev opponents tried to take control of the government on 19 August 1991, the media mobilized to defend hard-won democratic reforms. After the putschists shut down the press, editors banded together to form *Obshchaia gazeta* ["Common Newspaper"], which exhorted citizens to resist the coup. Meanwhile, a televised press conference with the coup's leaders revealed their lack of political vision to an international audience. By 21 August, the putsch had failed. The Soviet Union itself soon followed suit, with Gorbachev resigning in a televised address on 25 December of that same year.

After 1991, market forces drove Russian media, politics, and the public sphere ever closer together. Initially, newspapers, television stations, and radio broadcasters managed to elude both state and private influence. Soon, however, dramatic economic reforms (collectively known as "shock therapy") pushed

[2] For a commemorative description of this law, passed on 12 June 1990, see RIA Novosti (in Russian): https://ria.ru/media_Russia/20131022/971783682.html.

many media outlets to bankruptcy, toward alliances with the government, or into the arms of newly minted oligarchs enriched in privatization blitzes. By the mid-1990s, most major mass media companies were held by billionaires, the state, or some combination of the two, a consolidation that underpinned Yeltsin's victory in the 1996 presidential campaign. By 1995, Yeltsin had lost his *perestroika*-era verve and seemed genuinely vulnerable to challenger Gennady Zyuganov of the resurgent Communist Party. Fearing the prospect of a Communist government, several Russian oligarchs united with consultants from Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign team to launch a highly successful media offensive against Zyuganov (see Figure 1).

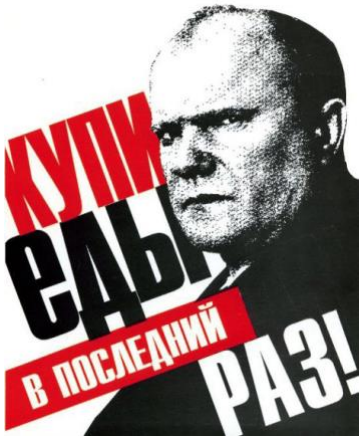

Figure 1.

A 1996 campaign poster bearing the image of Yeltsin opponent Gennady Zyuganov, alongside the terrifying slogan, "Go buy some food… for the last time!" The implication was that the re-introduction of Communism would immediately produce the empty shelves so loathed by late-Soviet consumers.

In addition to securing the presidency for Yeltsin, the tactics pioneered in 1996 had two far-reaching effects. First, the success of the oligarch-backed attacks against Zyuganov demonstrated the political indispensability of cornering the information market. Second, perfecting the technique of ambushing economic and political opponents with *kompromat*-laden media "hit jobs" laid the groundwork for the online culture wars of the Russian (and American!) 2000s.[3]

By the end of the 1990s, television had far outstripped radio and print in terms of its reach and impact. In theory, "politicized and commercial capital" were at cross-purposes, since the former sought to "capture the greatest audience" whereas the latter "aimed at making profits."[4] In practice, however, these

[3] "Kompromat" is the Russian abbreviation for "compromising material" that can be used to blackmail or tarnish the image of a public figure or politician.
[4] Zassoursky 31.

two projects often coincided. During the run-up to the 1996 elections, for example, Russian banks not only channeled hundreds of millions of dollars into the Yeltsin campaign, but also funded pro-Yeltsin advertising like the short-lived newspaper *God Forbid,* which detailed the horrors that would follow a Communist victory.[5] Some observers have even speculated that series of lavishly produced television spots for Bank Imperial (see Figure 2) — directed by future *Night Watch* franchise creator Timur Bekmambetov — conveyed a hidden pro-Yeltsin message in their portrayals of eccentric yet lovable rulers.[6]

Yeltsin's 1996 re-election campaign exemplifies the intertwining of apocryphal and confirmed conspiracy theories so common in the post-Soviet 1990s. As elucidated in our sourcebook, artifacts pertaining to the events of 1996 and thematically related moments open rich veins of inquiry to scholars interested in historical spectacle, propaganda, and popular dissent.

Figure 2.
Stills from the "World History — Bank Imperial" television ad campaign, 1992-1997.
From left: "Emperor Nero;" "Genghis Khan;" and "Catherine the Great."

In the post-Soviet 1990s, the infiltration of fringe phenomena into the mainstream was common in economic as well as in political life. One illustrative example is the saga of "entrepreneur" Sergei Mavrodi, whose pseudo-currency adorns our sourcebook's home page (Figure 3).

[5] Johnson, Juliet, *A Fistful of Rubles: The Rise and Fall of the Russian Banking System,* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000: 182.
[6] Avchenko, Vasily, *Teoriia i praktika politicheskikh manipuliatsyi v sovremennoi Rossii [The Theory and Practice of Political Manipulation in Contemporary Russia]*, http://psyfactor.org/polman3.htm

Figure 3.
10,000 units of Mavrodi's proprietary currency, featuring his portrait

This "ticket," representing 100 shares in Mavrodi's MMM pyramid scheme, perfectly encapsulates the intermixing of politics, media, and mythology typical of the post-Soviet 1990s. With the aid of state-owned television channels, which gave extensive airtime to MMM's entertaining ads, Mavrodi defrauded tens of millions of Russians before declaring bankruptcy in 1997. By then, he had already won a seat in the State Duma (1994) and even considered a presidential run (1996).

The apparent impunity with which Mavrodi conducted his deceptions inspired thousands of imitators, who also snapped up airtime on the major television channels to peddle their dubious financial products to a gullible public. After his original schemes had failed, Mavrodi founded an international "social financial network" called the "MMM Global Republic of Bitcoin" in 2014. In the latest iteration of a familiar pattern, the "Global Republic" attempted to capitalize on popular media trends (social networks) and financial fads (alternative currencies) in order to, as the site's copy claimed, "destroy the world's unjust financial system." Though the "Global Republic" officially closed in 2016, individual branches remain active in countries around the world.

MMM's metastases in the Internet age point to the continuity between the post-Soviet 1990s and the global 2000s. Indeed, the flourishing of the Russian-language Internet toward the end of the decade opened new avenues for self-expression and social connection, even as it provided new opportunities to manipulate public opinion for political and financial ends. With the advent of platforms like LiveJournal — which quickly transcended its original brief as an online diary to become a powerful launching pad for budding public figures — the Internet seemed poised to become the newest bastion of

free speech in Russia. Ultimately, however, many of these platforms succumbed to pro-Kremlin elements, proving the Internet no less susceptible to economic and political co-optation than older types of media.

By 2014, international media outlets were reporting the proliferation of pro-Kremlin trolls (posters of deliberately offensive or off-topic material) on LiveJournal, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites.[7] Just as they did during the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the U.S. presidential election in 2016, these fake users created dummy accounts and flooded their chosen platform with Kremlin-approved content. Recently, Russian-owned social media sites like LiveJournal have begun to re-locate their servers to Russian territory, delivering platforms to the draconian Internet laws instated in 2013-16 following the social-media fueled anti-Putin demonstrations of 2011-12.[8] Our sourcebook will argue that the preceding decade of media-company consolidation, political manipulation, and proliferation of fringe or fraudulent content set the stage for this crackdown.

It is the legacy of this turbulent decade, with its blurring of boundaries among media, politics, and public discourse, that we aim to interpret and preserve. Following the explosion of trolling, *kompromat,* and astroturfing onto the American political scene in 2016 — all tactics perfected in the post-Soviet mediasphere — we believe it is vital to analyze an era whose very traces the Putin regime has been actively erasing since 2000.[9]

---

[7] See, for example, Sindelar, Daisy, "The Kremlin's Troll Army," *The Atlantic*, 12 August 2014, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/08/the-kremlins-troll-army/375932/.

[8] For a detailed articulation of the connection between the Putin administration's Internet censorship laws and the protest movement of 2011-13, see Nossik, Anton, "Russia's First Blogger Reacts to Putin's Internet Crackdown," *The New Republic*, 15 May 2014, https://newrepublic.com/article/117771/putins-internet-crackdown-russias-first-blogger-reacts.

[9] See Chebankova, Elena, "The State and the Public Sphere in Russia," *Demokratizatsiya* 19.4 (2011): 317-41; Denisova, Anastasia, "Democracy, protest and public sphere in Russia after the 2011–2012 anti-government protests: digital media at stake," *Media, Culture, and Society* 1.19 (2016): 1-19; Etkind, Alexander, "The Decay of the Russian Public Sphere," *Current History* 114.774 (2015): 278-81; Gorham, Michael S., "'Cyber Curtain' or Glasnost 2.0?" in *After Newspeak: Language Culture and Politics in Russia from Gorbachev to Putin* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014): 166-191; Pomerantsev, Peter, "Beyond Propaganda: How Authoritarian Regimes Are Learning to Engineer Human Souls in the Age of Facebok," *Foreign Policy*, 23 June 2015, http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/06/23/beyond-propaganda-legatum-transitions-forum-russia-china-venezuela-syria/; Rosenberg, Alyssa, "How Censorship Works in Vladimir Putin's Russia," *The Washington Post*, 9 Feb. 2016, www.washingtonpost.com/news/act-four/wp/2016/02/09/how-censorship-works-in-vladimir-putins-russia/?utm_term=.da6c1f7ec6a1; Snegovaya, Maria, "Stifling the Public Sphere" National Endowment for Democracy, 14 October 2015,

History of the project and its productivity

Maya Vinokour built the current version of the site during Summer 2017 in order to illuminate the complex network of intra- and inter-medial relationships in the post-Soviet 1990s, ultimately seeking to improve scholarly understanding of an era whose geopolitical ramifications continue to be felt around the world today. Today, the sourcebook features about two dozen artifacts — video links, screenshots of webpages, and images — and accompanying annotations written collaboratively by members of the core research team.

Some entries contain hyperlinks to related objects (see, for example, the entry for *Obshchaia gazeta* [scroll down to view]: https://www.postsoviet90s.com/print/#/printjournalism/). Though many artifacts are tagged with key words, the present version of the platform lacks thematic overviews of the four featured types of media artifact (television, print, Web, and radio) as they existed during the post-Soviet 1990s. These overviews are necessary to give scholars at-a-glance introductions to these media types' development and significance, pending deeper engagement with the artifacts themselves and with the digital collected volume. The site also lacks an internal search engine; the ability to assign unique URLs to specific artifacts; a way to integrate thematically related artifacts into networked displays; a means of creating lists of "favorite" artifacts for research or pedagogical goals; and many other features that would permit sophisticated cross-referencing and interpretively motivated cataloguing. A bilingual, digital platform linked to a peer-reviewed collected volume, also hosted on the site in open access, will enable scholars and the broad public to engage with the decade's media history.

Currently, no platform of this type exists. Although many of the artifacts we plan to include are scattered throughout the Russian-language Internet, they can often be difficult to find and are seldom contextualized for an international audience.[10] Below is a brief survey of comparable sites and their shortcomings, which our sourcebook seeks to remediate.

---

http://www.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Stifling-the-Public-Sphere-Media-Civil-Society-Russia-Forum-NED.pdf.

[10] See, for example, sites like http://love90.org/videozal/reklama-90/reklama-90-x-godov/, https://vk.com/archiveof90s, http://staroetv.su/, and http://aquatek-filips.livejournal.com/167364.html.

- *Seventeen Moments in Soviet History: An on-line archive of primary sources* (http://soviethistory.msu.edu/). This English-language multimedia archive of primary materials is "designed to introduce students and the general public to the richness and contradictions of Soviet history" through thematically and chronologically organized multimedia modules covering the years 1917 to 1991. The timeline of this resource does not, however, extend to the post-Soviet years. Furthermore, the featured artifacts, while accompanied by brief annotations targeted at undergraduates, remain unconnected to any larger interpretive apparatus.
- *Colta Magazine's "Museum of the 1990s"* (https://www.colta.ru/90s). *Colta* is an online Russian-language magazine centering on contemporary culture. Its "Museum of the 1990s" displayed cultural artifacts in four virtual "rooms" called "Freedom of Speech," "Freedom of Choice," "Freedom of Deed," and "Freedom in Daily Life." In addition to being exclusively in Russian, this resource lacks the thematic focus on the public sphere. Furthermore, it targets primarily members of the Russophone public rather than scholars or students worldwide.
- *The online archive of Moscow's Yeltsin Center* (http://www.yeltsin.ru) Like the previous platform, this site is entirely in Russian. Its focuses exclusively on materials pertaining to Boris Yeltsin, whereas our sourcebook seeks to explore the entire landscape of the 1990s-era public sphere.
- *Gorbymedia.com*. This Russian-language site features artifacts from 1986-1991, focusing on the "birth of the Russian mass media." Like the Yeltsin Center portal, this site centers on a single figure: Mikhail Gorbachev. As a result, its timeline ends in 1991, whereas ours will extend until 2000.

By the time our site is completed in 2022, it will feature: (1) a searchable network of approximately 500 print, radio, Internet, or television artifacts, presented as image, video, or sound files; (2) brief (300-500 word) annotations to these artifacts, written by the project director and her collaborators; and (3) a digital collected volume containing eight articles by the project director and the core research team.

Collaborators (Core research team)

As specialists in media-related subfields of Russian and post-Soviet Studies, core research team members are optimally positioned to address the project's central research questions through the articles they will write for the sourcebook's digital collected volume and the related artifacts they collect and annotate. Due to the vicissitudes of today's academic job market, some team members are in contingent positions and will likely switch institutions during the grant period. Accordingly, the project budget is structured to compensate all researchers (with the exception of the project director) not through percentages of full-time employment but through portable honoraria in the amount of $5000. This amount reflects the estimated time each team member will dedicate to the project, including the approximately 90 hours necessary to collect and annotate 30 artifacts apiece (at an estimated rate of 3 hours per artifact).

In addition, though many of the collaborators and advisory board members — including the project director — were born and/or educated in Russia, all have since emigrated to the West and now work at US or British universities. From the perspective of the Russian government, this project's topic is sensitive and controversial. One of our core premises is that the Putin regime, which we explicitly characterize as undemocratic and repressive, is removing or distorting traces of 1990s-era history. In light of recent legal developments in Russia, particularly the law on so-called "foreign agents," it would be risky for scholars at Russian institutions to engage formally with our project, especially if it is funded by a US government agency. We view the absence of Russia-based colleagues from our ranks as further evidence of our project's urgent relevance to global humanities scholarship.

Maya Vinokour (project director) is Assistant Professor in the Department of Russian & Slavic Studies at New York University, specializing in Soviet and post-Soviet media and culture. In addition to coordinating the project as a whole, she will: (1) write a scholarly article on "Post-Soviet Trauma, Historical Revisionism, and the Early Russian Internet;" (2) gather and annotate approximately 290 related artifacts; (3) write an introduction to the digital collected volume; and (4) write thematic overviews for each of the four types of media featured in the sourcebook. Vinokour has written on contemporary Russian politics and culture for the blog All the Russias, which she edits and for *Studies in*

Russian, Eurasian and Central European New Media, a peer-reviewed digital journal where she has been an editor since 2013. She is co-editor and -translator of *Found Life* (Columbia University Press, 2017), a collected volume by the contemporary fiction author and Russian Internet pioneer Linor Goralik. If this proposal is awarded funding, Maya Vinokour will take unpaid leave from her teaching and administrative duties at NYU in academic year 2019-20. She will devote 20 hours/ week to the project from October to May 2019 and 40 hours/ week during June-August 2019. In 2020-22, she will dedicate 10 hours per week to the project during September-May, and 40 hours/ week in June-August 2020 and 2021.

Courtney Doucette is Visiting Assistant Professor of History, Franklin & Marshall College. Her work on the project will include (1) writing an article entitled "Dear ~~Comrade~~ Mr. Editor: The Soviet Origins of Post-Soviet Communications with the Press;" and (2) gathering and annotating 30 artifacts pertaining to the evolution of print and television media outlets after 1986. Doucette's book project, *Perestroika: The Last Attempt to Create the New Soviet Person* investigates how Soviet leaders attempted to turn the USSR into an exemplary socialist democracy in the years leading up to the Soviet collapse. Her research appears in *Reconsidering Stagnation in the Brezhnev Era* (Lexington Books, 2016) and in *Kritika, Raritan: A Quarterly Review*, and *Reading Russian Sources* (Routledge, 2018).

Fabrizio Fenghi is Assistant Professor of Slavic Studies at Brown University, where he studies post-Soviet public culture. His work on the project will include (1) writing an article entitled "Counterculture, Political Technology, and the Emergence of the Russian Alt-Right Media;" and (2) gathering and annotating 30 artifacts pertaining to post-Soviet nationalism, xenophobia, and related issues. Fenghi's current book project, *Another Russia: Post-Soviet Nationalism and Protest Culture*, examines the influence of Eduard Limonov's radical National-Bolshevik Party on Russian protest culture and Putin-era state ideology. His article "Making Post-Soviet Counterpublics: The Aesthetics of *Limonka* and the National-Bolshevik Party," appears in *Nationalities Papers. The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*.

Bradley Gorski is Assistant Professor of Russian and East European Studies and affiliated with the Program in Comparative Media Analysis and Practice (CMAP) at Vanderbilt University. His work on the project will include (1) writing an article entitled "From Analog to Digital: The Statistical Turn in 1990s

Russian Culture's Self-Representation;" and (2) gathering and annotating 30 artifacts relating to 1990s-era literary culture. Gorski's book project, *Cultural Capitalism: Literature and Success in Post-Soviet Russia*, examines technologies of literary prominence in the wake of communism—from mass literature to social media—and their effects on the development of contemporary literature. In 2016-18, he served as Digital Humanities Project Manager for the Black Sea Networks Initiative, an interdisciplinary research and teaching project on the Black Sea region based out of Columbia University.

Thomas Keenan is the Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies Librarian at Princeton University. His work on the project will include (1) writing an article entitled "Media Refractions of Russia's 'Gay Nineties;'" (2) gathering and annotating 30 artifacts pertaining to 1990s-era media representations of gender and sexuality; and (3) providing expertise on the project's data-preservation and -presentation aspects. Keenan holds a Ph.D. from Yale's Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures and a Masters in Library and Information Science from Pratt Institute's School of Information. He has published and presented on the Russian mediasphere, especially the Russian-language Internet.

Pavel Khazanov is Assistant Professor of Russian at Rutgers University. His work on the project will include (1) writing an article entitled "Free Style: Soviet-Era 'Liberation' and the Demise of Russian Liberal Political Media (1987-1991);'" and (2) gathering and annotating 30 artifacts relating to political and commercial advertising. Khazanov's research spans contemporary Russian cultural discourses, with special emphasis on the 1990s. His current book project, *Recalling Russia: History and Memory of the Pre-Soviet Era, After Stalin and Until Today*, examines how inventive recollections of the pre-Revolutionary past informed post-Soviet Russia's mainstream political rhetoric.

Daniil M. Leiderman currently teaches Art History at the Department of Visualization at Texas A&M University and holds a Ph.D. in Art & Archaeology from Princeton University. His work on the project will include (1) writing an article entitled "Old Man B.U.Kashkin and Other 'Clowns': Trash Art and Street Performance in the Post-Soviet era;" and (2) gathering and annotating 30 artifacts pertaining to post-Soviet informal, underground, and political art. Leiderman's current book project, *Moscow Conceptualism and "Shimmering": Authority, Anarchism, and Space*, investigates the influence of late-

Soviet non-conformist art on post-Soviet and post-Crimean artistic resistance. His current research addresses representations of Eastern Europe and Russia in contemporary video games and related media.

Rita Safariants is Assistant Professor of Russian Language and Area Studies at St. Olaf College. Her work on the project will include (1) writing an article entitled "The State, Dissent, and Late-Soviet Rock Music *Samizdat*;" and (2) gathering and annotating 30 artifacts pertaining to *perestroika*-era Soviet music and its post-Soviet legacy. Safariants' scholarly interests center on Russian film, late-Soviet popular culture and twentieth-century literature. Her book project, *Rock-n-Roll and Soviet Cinema: A Soundtrack to the Collapse of the Eternal State*, deals with the symbiotic interplay between popular music and the late-Soviet film industry. She has also authored articles on Russian cinema and popular culture.

Ainsley Morse (Translator) holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University. Her work on the project will consist in transcribing, subtitling, and/or translating media artifacts, as well as adding elements to promote accessibility for disabled site visitors. Morse's recent translations include *Kholin 66: Diaries and Poems by Igor Kholin* (Ugly Duckling Presse [UDP], 2017) and Vsevolod Nekrasov's *I Live I See* (UDP, 2013) (both with Bela Shayevich). She also contributed translations to the Linor Goralik collection *Found Life* (Columbia University Press, 2017) and *Written in the Dark: Five Siege Poets* (UDP, 2016). She will spend a total of 1241 hours on the sourcebook project at her standard rate of [redacted]/ hour: 124 hours in 2019-20; 190 hours in 2020-21; and 927 hours in 2021-22.

Methods and execution

The key feature of the post-Soviet public sphere was the erasure of boundaries not only between different types of media, but also among different genres (e.g. advertisement, reportage, and interview). To fully comprehend any given artifact's significance, it is imperative to consider its larger historical and thematic context, preferably in a manner that permits dynamic toggling among its thematic "cousins." For example, the grandiose ads for Bank Imperial (see Figure 2 in Substance and Context) are integral to understanding the strategy of Yeltsin's campaign team, which framed the possible end of the Yeltsin era as the death knell for Russia as a great power. In the sourcebook, these ads would therefore ideally be networked with exemplary materials from the 1996 campaign like the Zyuganov poster from Figure 1.

Funding from the NEH will permit us to improve five key aspects of our platform, boosting its potential as a scholarly resource. Over three years, we will expand the sourcebook's interpretive apparatus; the range and quality of its artifacts; its searchability and overall technical functionality; its archival longevity; and its accessibility to a diverse international public of non-Russian speakers.

Interpretive apparatus. NEH funding will defray the cost of gathering and annotating a much fuller range of artifacts than is currently featured on the site. It will also enable Maya Vinokour to take academic leave in 2019-20 in order to dedicate herself fully to the project. Finally, NEH funding will provide honoraria to (1) the core research team, which will write articles and select and annotate artifacts; and (2) an advisory board of seven senior or advanced junior scholars in Soviet and post-Soviet culture and media studies from leading U.S. and British universities. The board will both peer-review articles for the digital collected volume and assess the representativeness and interpretive value of the artifacts themselves throughout the three-year grant period. Our decision to offer honoraria to advisory board members reflects our expectation that their advice, peer-review expertise, evaluation of the website during the Alpha and Beta testing phases detailed below, and presence at key group meetings will be constant throughout the three-year grant period, thus extending beyond the standard practice of writing a single (or even two) peer-review reports. Bios of the advisory board members may be found in the Appendix.

The digital collected volume will consist of eight approximately 30-page articles by the core research team, written on the basis of subsets of artifacts related to each team member's respective article topic. The volume will also include a scholarly introduction by the project director. Maya Vinokour, Pavel Khazanov, Courtney Doucette, and Bradley Gorski's proposed articles each interrogate whether Russia's public culture, either shortly before or after 1991, can properly be called a "public sphere" — that is, a discursive space where citizens discuss politics and culture freely without fear of reprisal or marginalization. Their studies also consider how the rapid influx of market ideologies in the very late 1980s and early 1990s, along with disastrous economic policies like "shock therapy," affected public perception of newly cash-strapped and advertisement-dependent television and print media. Fabrizio Fenghi's article will chronicle the rise of the globally influential Russian alt-right/ neo-reactionary

political movements, especially as these intersect with the development of online trolling culture. Daniil Leiderman and Rita Safariants' articles will uncover the relationships between alternative, popular, and state-supported art and music during *perestroika* and the early 1990s, illuminating the origins of such media-savvy, art-inflected Putin-era dissenters as Pussy Riot. Finally, Thomas Keenan's study explores the intersection of politics and media on the example of alternative sexual expression in 1990s-era Russia, offering insight into an area of public discourse that occupies a central position in the neo-traditionalist cultural policies of Putin's Russia. Full article abstracts may be found in the Appendix.

Range and quality of artifacts: We aim to include 500 artifacts on our sourcebook — 225 still images (200 excerpts from journalistic or other print sources + 25 screenshots of select Web 1.0 pages), 200 video, and 75 audio artifacts. This distribution of media types reflects the relatively greater importance of print and television compared with radio and the Internet in post-Soviet public life up to the year 2000. The total number of artifacts is large enough to provide a robust database for scholars wishing to engage with any of the four featured media types, but small enough to make the task of interpretation, annotation, and translation feasible over the three-year grant period.

Many of the artifacts we will include in our sourcebook are already available for download on the Internet. A large majority are orphan works, in the public domain, or covered by fair use. The quality of these artifacts is, however, often lacking. NEH funding will permit us to partner with Russian Archives Online, a service that has been sourcing stills and archival footage for researchers and museums since 1998 and was instrumental in creating the NEH-supported *Seventeen Moments* sourcebook. Russian Archives Online will take charge of tracking down high-quality versions on a rolling basis between December 2019 and May 2022. Further artifacts will be drawn from the Soviet and post-Soviet independent publications collection at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University (where Maya Vinokour will travel in Summer 2019) and the East View print database. NYU Libraries has purchased a license to subsets of the database, which features extensive holdings of Soviet-era and post-Soviet print media for download. Certain newspapers and journals published prior to 1994 may need to be digitized by East View prior to inclusion in our sourcebook; we have included an estimate for these minor digitization costs

in our budget. Radio artifacts will be drawn from the Internet and from the All-Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company, with which Russian Archives Online has an existing working relationship. Our use of all these artifacts is covered by Fair Use laws.

Searchability and technical functionality: NEH funding will permit us to partner with Parallactic Consulting, a Chicago-based web development firm specializing in academic database projects, including the NEH-supported Dioptrice Telescope Database. In consultation with the core research team, Parallactic will build a dynamic, multi-functional platform with robust searchability and sophisticated cross-referencing (technical details of the buildout are included in the Appendix). By 2022, users will be able to search for artifacts by year of artifact publication, release or creation; by historical, political, or cultural figure; by theme; and by medium (print, television, Web, or radio). Any given artifact will be displayed in a "cloud" with thematically related objects and any articles from the digital collected volume in which that artifact appears. This last functionality will help researchers gain insight into individual artifacts while maintaining a sense of their significance within the larger post-Soviet media landscape.

A tool permitting the creation and personalized annotation of "favorite" artifacts will be especially useful to researchers and teachers. Users will be able to create individualized accounts to store and personalize their "favorites." For example, a researcher wishing to track sexual themes in political advertising since 1991 could fill their "basket" with pertinent objects. Alternatively, an instructor wishing to provide students with an assignment on Russian Internet culture could drop relevant artifacts into a "basket" accessible to students via hyperlink. Mockups of some features may be found in the Appendix.

Archival longevity: The current version of the sourcebook merely links to artifacts hosted elsewhere (largely on YouTube), which leaves our materials vulnerable to deletion by third parties and consequent disappearance from our site. After creating the more technically sophisticated version of the sourcebook described in this proposal, Parallactic Consulting will host our materials to perform iterative improvements to the design and functionality until the project goes live in June 2022. At this point, hosting and storage will transfer to NYU Libraries, ensuring that our sourcebook remains accessible and well-maintained in the long term.

Accessibility: The artifacts featured on the current version of the sourcebook are briefly annotated to give researchers an at-a-glance overview of their significance. They are not, however, subtitled, translated, or available for inclusion in a "favorites"-type repository, all of which limits their usefulness to scholars. NEH funding will enable us to partner with professional literary translator Ainsley Morse, who will translate print and online texts, subtitle video clips, and transcribe and translate excerpts for radio programs. To render sourcebook materials maximally accessible to persons with disabilities, and in compliance with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the translator, in consultation with the project director and Parallactic Consulting, will add English-language captions and descriptions to video and audio, accompany complex graphics with detailed text descriptions, and create any other modifications necessary to accommodate the needs of disabled visitors to our site. Parallactic Consulting will design and build the site architecture and page coding to be compliant with W3C standards for HTML5 and W3C standards for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.

Division of labor

Between October 2019 and October 2022, the core research team will collectively identify and annotate 500 Russian-language media artifacts dating to 1986-2000 (for a detailed breakdown of artifacts, see "range and quality of artifacts" above). These will be transcribed and translated by the translator, who will also render them accessible to disabled site visitors.

By December 2019, the core research team will begin preliminary research on scholarly articles, aiming to identify and annotate (or "process") approximately 30 artifacts, per person, thematically related to their respective article topics. Like the annotations already on the Squarespace version of the site, new annotations will give brief historical and cultural context for the object, explain its significance to the post-Soviet public sphere, and include hyperlinks to any related artifacts within the sourcebook. The resulting 30*8 = 240 artifacts, which we estimate will require each researcher about 3 hours/ artifact to process, will be fully identified and annotated by September 2020. The project director will process the remaining 500-240 = 260 artifacts (or 260+30 = 290 artifacts in total) according to the schedule detailed in the Work Plan below.

As the core research team identifies artifacts for inclusion in the sourcebook, we will send references to them, on a rolling basis, to Russian Archives Online, which has calculated that they will need 40 researcher-days to complete sourcing at a rate of $265/ researcher-day. Any remaining artifacts will be sourced through the Hoover Institution and the holdings of East View database. On a rolling basis, the core research team will also send artifacts to the translator.

As high-quality versions of artifacts are sourced by Russian Archives Online and the artifacts themselves rendered into English by the translator, our web developer, Parallactic Consulting, will build them into the Alpha and Beta versions of the platform. By April 2020, a draft website (Alpha version) will be mounted on Parallactic Consulting's servers and made available to advisory board members, students, and the wider NYU community. We will solicit comments from all these constituencies by email, incorporating these into a new draft of the website (Beta version). This draft will go live in April 2021, to be evaluated by all project participants and the wider NYU community over a period of 12 months. Following Beta usage, testing, and incorporation of user feedback by Parallactic, the final version of the sourcebook will go live by June 2022. For further technical details, please see the Development Proposal in the Appendix and "Hosting and maintenance" in Final Product and Dissemination below.

The production of the digital collected volume will proceed in parallel with the gathering, annotation, sourcing, and translation of artifacts. In 2019 and 2020, we will meet informally at the Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES), which all project participants regularly attend, to discuss project progress and challenges. We will also use these meetings to map out the thematic overviews of the four media types featured on the sourcebook and discuss the content and structure of the volume's scholarly introduction. Maya Vinokour will finish writing both of these crucial sourcebook elements by September 2021.

By that time, preliminary versions of our articles will be ready for discussion at a dedicated ASEEES roundtable. This session will build upon a roundtable called "(Digital) Manuscripts Don't Burn: Archiving the Post-Socialist 1990s," organized by Maya Vinokour for ASEEES 2017. Feedback from the 2021 roundtable and meetings with research team and advisory board members, to be held during the

same conference, will be incorporated into article and introduction drafts, all of which the advisory board will peer review by February 2022.

Using broad-based feedback from the 12-month testing phase mentioned above, the Parallactic Consulting team will implement new features, fix bugs, and revise existing frameworks. The final version of the website, including completed articles for the digital collected volume, will go live by June 2022.

Work plan

YEAR 1 (2019-20)

- *December*: Having met informally at ASEEES in November to discuss the project's trajectory, the core research team begins preliminary research on scholarly articles, identifying and annotating approximately 30 artifacts (per person) thematically related to their respective articles.
- *April*: Parallactic deploys Alpha version of sourcebook using existing artifacts and annotations drawn from Squarespace page. Core research team begins testing Alpha page and relaying feedback to Parallactic.
- *May*: User testing and feedback period ends. Parallactic begins developing changes in preparation for Beta version launch.
- *September*: MV has traveled to Hoover Institution over the summer. 240 artifacts have been identified and annotated by the core research team, and 145 additional artifacts processed by the project director.167 artifacts have been sourced by Russian Archives Online. 40-60 artifacts have been translated and rendered accessible for disabled site visitors.

YEAR 2 (2020-21)

- *November*: Participants meet informally at ASEEES to discuss project progress and challenges.
- *April*: All data is loaded. Begin 12 months of beta usage and testing by the core research team and larger user community (see Testing and Evaluation below for details)
- *September*: MV completes thematic overviews and volume introduction. Core research team completes preliminary outlines of articles. 115 more artifacts identified and annotated by project director, bringing the total number of identified and annotated sourcebook artifacts to 500. 167 more artifacts have been sourced by Russian Archives Online. 60-90 more artifacts translated.

YEAR 3 (2021-22)

- *November*: Discussion of draft articles by core research team and advisory board at dedicated ASEEES roundtable.
- *December*: Core research team submits articles to advisory board for peer review by end of month.
- *February*: Peer review is complete by mid-month. Core research team begins editing articles to incorporate feedback.

- *May*: Edits for digital collected volume are complete. Parallactic begins developing changes; testing and evaluation of Beta version of sourcebook complete. Remaining 166 artifacts sourced by Russian Archives Online. All remaining artifacts translated.
- *June*: Parallactic deploys final version of sourcebook, including the peer-reviewed digital collected volume. 90-day support and bug-fixing window begins (see Development Proposal in the Appendix).
- *September*: By end of month: Bug fixes complete. Long-term hosting, maintenance, and storage plan begins (as detailed in "Anticipated Issue II: Hosting and Maintenance" under Final product and dissemination below).

Final product and dissemination

Audiences

Making the sourcebook and digital collected volume accessible online will target it to several interconnected audiences. The primary consumers will be scholars, who will benefit from the thematic clustering of artifacts around non-paywalled, peer-reviewed articles. Another set of audiences will be American graduate and undergraduate students; indeed, the sourcebook has been or is being piloted in several courses taught by the core research team and members of the advisory board. The expanded collection will be ideally suited for undergraduate and graduate courses on post-Soviet media, history, and culture. It will also be useful for educators working in courses with significant Russia-related content in disciplines like Political Science, History, Media Studies, Comparative Literature and Literary Theory, Gender and Sexuality Studies, and Memory and Trauma Studies.

A secondary audience will be the general public, from members of the large and bilingual Russian diasporas residing in the United States, Israel, Germany, and elsewhere; English-speaking residents of Russia itself; to journalists and non-academic writers with interests in the history and aftermath of the Soviet Union, contemporary Russian media, or international politics. Members of the public will be aided by the brief annotations, tags, and hyperlinks connecting thematically related artifacts to one another, as well as by the overviews of media types. The chronological and thematic organization of artifacts, as well as the accompanying narratives, should enable even readers with minimal knowledge of post-Soviet culture to benefit from the sourcebook. All audiences will be aided in their engagement with the period by

the "favorites" feature discussed in "Searchability and technical functionality" above. Disabled site visitors will be served through suitable modifications to artifacts and web design.

Anticipated Issue I: Copyright

In an age of rapidly proliferating digital archives and Internet preservation projects, fair use is a powerful tool that allows scholars to curate and share knowledge without the paralyzing restriction of seeking permissions for each individual artifact. While it is difficult to know in advance whether our use of any given artifact will be challenged by rightsholders, our conversations with experts have led us to the conclusion that our proposed activities are well-matched with the strictures of fair use. Questions of fair use can be fluid and are often determined by the long-term accumulation of legal precedent. Therefore, the language used to indicate that copyright will not be an issue for a given (set of) artifact(s) is necessarily somewhat vague. We can rarely say definitively that a given use *is* fair, instead stating that factors *weigh heavily in favor of fair use*.

After consultation with April Hathcock, a lawyer and Scholarly Communications Librarian at NYU Libraries, we have determined that the manner in which we plan to include materials in the sourcebook — where they are not orphan works, in the public domain, or out of copyright — is most likely covered by fair use. This stipulation covers all materials, including those obtained from East View and the Hoover Institution or sourced through Russian Archives Online.

According to the NYU Libraries' "Copyright: Getting Permission," a primer on copyright in the academic setting, "Fair use allows limited use of copyrighted material without permission for purposes such as criticism, parody, news reporting, research and scholarship, and teaching." Whether a given use would be classified as "fair" hinges on four factors: the purpose and character of the use; the nature of a copyrighted work; the amount of use and its sustainability with respect to the original artifact; and effect of the use upon the potential market for the intellectual property in question. We will now discuss each of these factors and their respective applicability to our sourcebook.

1. **Purpose and character of use.** Our sourcebook is educational and nonprofit, uses that are generally favored as fair. Because we are translating, subtitling, excerpting, and annotating materials, our use would also be classified as transformative, another element weighing in favor of fair use.
2. **The nature of the copyrighted work.** Many of the artifacts we seek to include are previously published, and thus more likely to qualify as fair use than unpublished objects. The few creative, fictional, or artistic artifacts in our proposed collection — such as television advertisements for defunct companies originally aired on channels that have since been sold or shuttered — are highly likely to be orphan works or works originally created for the public domain.
3. **Amount and sustainability.** Excerpting and annotating materials weighs heavily in favor of fair use.
4. **Effect upon the potential market.** Objects that are available for licensing cannot generally be used without the creators' permission. However, many of the materials we plan to include in our sourcebook are orphan works or licensed to New York University.

In addition to observing the above guidelines to ensure that we uphold existing fair use standards, we will bring any ambiguous cases to Ms. Hathcock, who will be available to help us navigate our fair use determinations for the duration of the project. Furthermore, we will include a disclaimer on our front page encouraging any rightsholders to contact us if they believe infringement has occurred. We will immediately remove any material rightsholders flag as potential infringement.

Anticipated Issue II: Hosting and Maintenance

In addition to a professional web developer capable of designing, constructing, administering, and maintaining the site, creating the sourcebook's digital home requires (1) 200 Megabytes of server space, meeting specific technical requirements (detailed in the Development Proposal found in the Appendix), to host the site's codebase and metadata; (2) 1 Terabyte of server space to store website assets (audio, video, and image files); and (3) Ongoing maintenance and administration for the codebase + metadata, assets, and hosting environment.

With respect to requirements (1) and (2), the application will require server space for the Ruby on Rails program that runs the site (fulfilling requirement 1) and storage of up to 1 Terabyte of assets

(fulfilling requirement 2). During the initial development and testing phase, Parallactic Consulting will host the project on their own cloud hosting service as part of the fixed cost set forth for the development (line 16 in the Budget). This will enable easy access for the developer to perform iterative improvement of the design and ensure functionality.

At the conclusion of the grant period, Parallactic will transfer and configure the sourcebook's finished (i.e. production) system on an Amazon Web Services (AWS) instance provided by NYU. At this stage, October 2022, the site will be live for a web audience, and NYU's Research Technology Services will cover all AWS costs for a period of 18 months. After this period, NYU's Department of Russian and Slavic Studies and the Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia have agreed to jointly provide up to $1500 in annual upkeep costs (which would cover Parallactic's $100/month hosting and maintenance costs as well as $300/ year in AWS storage costs), fulfilling requirement 3.

During 2022-2023, the project director and NYU Libraries will also secure the long-term preservation of sourcebook materials. All media, associated text files, and metadata files will be placed on deposit with NYU's Faculty Digital Archive. Audio and video files will be placed on NYU's Stream, which offers unlimited storage without forcing separation from the access point familiar to our site's user base, since assets stored in Stream can be embedded on the sourcebook. Five to ten years from the end of the grant period, the sourcebook — like any website created in the present day — will require re-design and re-deployment to avoid technical obsolescence. At this point, the aforementioned departmental funds will be used to contract Parallactic to perform the maintenance and updating required to keep the site's front end functioning in years to come.