



# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

**ASU** The Melikian Center:  
Russian, Eurasian and East European Studies  
Arizona State University

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**DONOR APPRECIATION**

**Board and community support for passionate students, dedicated teachers, critical languages, and thought-provoking programming helps to make ASU a premier national research and training center for East European and Eurasian Studies.**

Thank you to all the friends of the Melikian Center for your generous contributions of funds and time to support the Center and CLI in 2022.

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**To learn about giving opportunities, visit the Melikian Center support page at <https://melikian.asu.edu/about/support>. Your secure online gift represents an investment in the international leaders of tomorrow. Funds will be deposited with the ASU Foundation, a separate non-profit organization that exists to advance Arizona State University.**

## DIRECTOR'S LETTER

2022 has been an eventful year for Russia, Eurasia and East Europe, for the Center, and for me personally.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the ongoing and intense conflict it set in motion, has transformed world politics. In the wake of widespread civic protest in Belarus and Kazakhstan, increasing uncertainty in energy markets, and the resurgence of disputes over territory and history in Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Western Balkans, President Putin's decision-making has prompted governments across the globe to reassess their international policies.

Being in Finland when Russian forces invaded Ukraine, and paying attention to public debates over NATO membership, was illuminating. I enjoyed learning from colleagues about the long continuities in Russia's strategy in the Baltic region, key moments in Finland's relations with its powerful neighbors, and the country's robust traditions of participatory democracy and critical thinking.

Putin's gamble, and the brutal tactics employed by Russian forces, provoked substantial interest and concern among the Melikian Center' audiences in the United States. Interim Director Craig Calhoun, Associate Director Irina Levin and Center affiliates and staff were able to respond swiftly. In media interviews, op-eds, teach-ins and other events, the Melikian Center drew on in-house expertise as well as professional networks to provide accurate and timely information and analysis.

All this took place while the Covid-19 pandemic, prolonged through successive variants, continued to pose challenges for university life and public engagement. This especially impacted planning and recruitment for the Summer 2022 Critical Languages Institute, as the Melikian Center worked with ASU's Global Engagement office as well as long-standing



Project GO and Title VIII partners to resume in-person teaching. Overseas programs ran in Kyrgyzstan (with a record number of 36 students in Bishkek), Uzbekistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, Armenia and Indonesia. And for the first time since 2019, instructors were able to welcome introductory-level students back to Tempe's campus for language classes, cultural activities and the collaborative, immersive experience that so many alumni recall with warmth.

As CLI concluded in August, we received word from the U.S. Department of Education that for the first time the Melikian Center had been recognized as a Title VI National Resource Center. This represents the accomplishment of a long-term goal, and reflects the consistent support and effort of College and University leadership, and the Melikian Center's Advisory Board, affiliated faculty and staff. It has made return from Helsinki to Tempe both more demanding, as we scale up our capacity to undertake new initiatives, and also affirming, as we now have the opportunity to share ASU's distinctive and transformative approach to higher education with our peers at other universities and develop the next generation of experts on this critical world region.



## YEAR IN REVIEW - NOTABLE EVENT SERIES

**Creative Horizons: Art in the Post-Soviet Era**

Co-sponsored with the Havighurst Center at Miami University (OH), Institute for Russian, European & Eurasian Studies at the University of South Florida (IREES)



21 February

**“An Evening with Ilya Kaminsky & Katie Farris.”** A poetry reading and discussion.



14 March

**“A Ukrainian Writer Who Escaped the Bombs,”** Kateryna Babkina.

11 April

**“A Q&A featuring Ukrainian Artists,”** with artists Kinder Album (Lviv), Catherina Lisovenko (Kyiv), and Igor Gusev (Odessa). Moderated by Alisa Lozhkina, Ukrainian art historian & curator.

16 June

**“But the Sun Came Up and We Were Here,”** with Colleen Thomas, choreographer,



and dancers: Monika Witkowska, Mikolaj Karczewski, Krystian Lyson, Evegniia Romanovich, Samantha Allen, Oluwadamilare Ayonrinde, and Darrin Wright. Moderated by Michael Foley, University of South Florida. Co-sponsored with the Barnard College Dept. of Dance.

14 September

**“A Conversation with Yevgenia Belorusets – Ukrainian Photographer and Author.”**

Moderated by Stephen Norris, Havighurst Center.





## EVENT SERIES



## YEAR IN REVIEW

4 October

**“A Conversation with Ukrainian Filmmaker Sergei Loznitsa.”** Moderated by Stephen Norris, Havighurst Center.

4 November

**“A Conversation with Nadia Parfan,”** Moderated by Ana Hedberg Olenina, ASU. Co-sponsored with SPGS (School of Politics & Global Studies, SILC (School of International Letters & Cultures, and SHPRS (School of Historical, Philosophical & Religious Studies).

18 November

**“A Conversation with Oksana Karpovych,”** Ukrainian filmmaker. Moderated by Kateryna Ruban, Ukrainian historian. Co-sponsored with SPGS, SILC, SHPRS.

29 November

**“A Conversation with Oleksiy Radynski”** Ukrainian filmmaker. Moderated by Ana Hedberg Olenina. Co-sponsored with SPGS, SILC, SHPRS



18 January

**“The Two Vladimirs,”** a live guitar concert, featuring poetry by Vladimir Mayakovsky and songs by Vladimir Vysotsky. With Vadim Astrakhan, performer and translator.



27 January

**“Key Challenges in the Post-Soviet Era: 30 Years On.”** A discussion with George Krol, Ambassador, US State Department, and David Merkel, Chair, Melikian Center Advisory Board. Co-sponsored with the Phoenix Committee on Foreign Relations (PCFR) and the Santa Fe Council on International Relations.



8 February

**“Media Environments in Russia and East Europe: Challenges and Opportunities in the Digital Age.”** A discussion with journalists Elira Çanga (Albania), Bálint Fabok (Hungary), and Milana Mazaeva (Russia), Hubert H. Humphrey

Fellows at ASU. Co-sponsored with Cronkite Global Initiatives.



17 February

**Sonic Overload,** a book launch and lunch discussion with author Peter Schmelz, ASU



22 February

**“Working in Closed Archives: Challenges and Surprises.”** A discussion with Pulitzer Prize winner, David Kertzer, Brown University. Co-sponsored with Jewish Studies.



28 February

**“Ukraine and Russia: How Did We Get Here?”** a discussion with Hilde Hoogenboom, ASU, and Alexandra Manning,

## YEAR IN REVIEW

former Peace Corps volunteer in Ukraine. Co-sponsored with ASU SILC Advising.



3 March

**“Ukraine Invaded: A Barrett Community Dialogue.”** With Victor Peskin, ASU; Alona Dzon, ASU student and Ukrainian National; Kalani Pickhart, author; Kateryna Ruban, Ukrainian historian; Yan Mann, ASU. Moderated by Laurie Stoff, ASU. Co-sponsored with Barrett, The Honors College.



11 March

**“Waking Up in a New World Order?”** A discussion in the Reset Dialogues on Civilizations (DOC) Series. With Craig Calhoun, ASU;

Seán Golden, CIDOB; Andrea Graziosi, University of Naples; Shada Islam, EU Observer; Marlene Laruelle, George Washington University; Mikhail Minakov, Kennan Institute. Chaired by José Casanova, Georgetown University. Co-sponsored with the Berkeley Center for Religion, and Peace & World Affairs at Georgetown University.



15 March

**“From a PhD in Politics to a Career in Nuclear Policy,”** a discussion, and ***Atomic Steppe: How Kazakhstan Gave Up the Bomb***, a book talk. Featuring Togzhan Kassenova, Center for Policy Research at the University of Albany and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Co-sponsored with the School for the Future of Innovation in Society.



16 March

**“Russia’s War on Ukraine: A Cross-Campus Q&A.”**

With Benjamin Jens, Pavlo Krokhmal, Doug Weiner and Jane Zavisca (University of Arizona); and Hilde Hoogenboom, Yan Mann, and Victor Peskin (ASU). Moderated by Irina Levin, ASU, and Olesya Zhupanska, UA. Co-sponsored by the UA Colleges of Engineering, Humanities, and Behavioral Sciences.

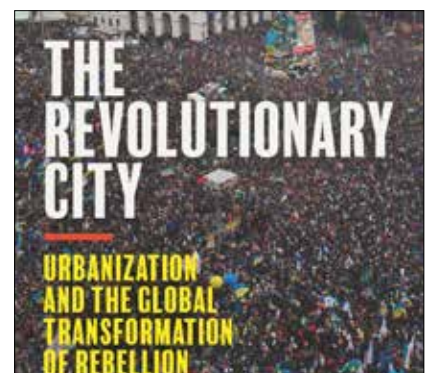
21 March

**“Roundtable: Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine.”** With ASU faculty Margaret Hanson, Timothy Peterson, Candace Rondeaux, and Thorin Wright. Co-sponsored with School of Politics & Global Studies (SPGS) and the Center on the Future of War (CFW).



22 March

***The Revolutionary City***. A book talk by Mark Beissinger, Princeton University. Co-sponsored with SPGS.





## YEAR IN REVIEW

31 March - 2 April

**“Gender, Power, Violence in the Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Regions.”**

Association for Women in Slavic Studies (AWSS) Biennial Conference. Co-sponsored with the University of New Mexico Department of History.



2 April

**“Spring 2022 Conference.”**

American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL), Arizona Chapter. Co-sponsored with the UA Department of Russian and Slavic Studies and ASU School of International Letters and Cultures (SILC)

4-9 April

**“Not on Our Watch.”**

Rosenbluth Family Foundation 10th Genocide Awareness Week.



8 April

**“Homeward,”** a film screening and discussion with Director, Nariman Aliev. Co-sponsored with SILC and the Sidney Poitier New American Film School.



12 April

**“Making Refugees, Remaking Italy: Decentering the Italian Postwar.”** Pamela Ballinger, University of Michigan. Co-sponsored with SILC and the School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies (SHPRS).



18 April

**“A Briefing on Women’s and Girls’ Education: Focus on Afghanistan.”**

With Rangina Hamidi, former Minister of Education of Afghanistan; Kamal Ahma, President, Asian University for Women; and Fahima Sultani and Mina Mushtaq, Afghan Student Association at ASU. Moderated by Craig Calhoun,

ASU. Co-sponsored with Education for Humanity and the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College.



22 April

**“Necati Çelik – Master of the Ud.”**

An intimate concert of classics of Turkey’s urban art music tradition, emceed by David Fossum, ASU. Co-sponsored with the School of Music, Dance and Theatre.



29 April

**“Research Pieces: Melikian Undergraduate Fellows Edition.”**

Featuring Spring 2022 Fellows (ASU faculty mentors): Cassidy Durland



## YEAR IN REVIEW

(Laurie Manchester), Alona Dzon and Isabelle Kinney (Margaret Hanson), Julia Grantham (Lenka Bustikova), Jordan Harb (Shyla González-Doğan), Kirsten Terrill (Michael Ostling).

8 June

**“What Is Happening in Eurasia? The Invasion of Ukraine and Beyond.”**

Craig Calhoun, ASU. Co-sponsored with the Global Futures Laboratory, CFW, and the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict.

20 June

**“Religious Dimensions of the War in Ukraine,”** Jacob Lassin, ASU.

27 June

**“Uyghur Muslims in China: Contemporary Ethnic**

ASU The Melikian Center:  
Russian, European and East European Studies  
Arizona State University

**Uyghur Muslims in China:**  
Contemporary Ethnic Conflict and Territory

With Sam Tynen,  
PhD in Human Geography and Social  
Studies Teacher

Date: June 27, Monday

**Conflict and Territory.”** Sam Tynen, Political Geographer and Social Science teacher.

6 July

**“Hearing the ‘Forest City’ Beyond the Trees: Multi-sited Ethnography, Collaborative Science, and Indigenous Soundscapes in East Kalimantan [Indonesia].”**

Walker DePuy, Cornell University.



2 September

**“Melikian Center Research Pieces: Faculty Edition,”**

Featuring faculty affiliates Eugene Clay, Michael Ostling, and Danko Šipka.

7 September

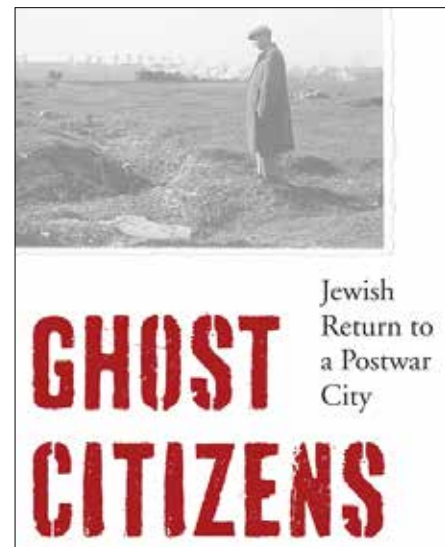
**“Why North Macedonia Should Join the European Union and Why it Matters.”**

A panel discussion with Kate Marie Byrnes, Ambassador, US State Department; Evelyn Farkas, McCain Institute; Bojan Maričikj, Deputy Prime Minister, Republic of North Macedonia. Moderated by

Paul Fagan, McCain Institute. Co-sponsored with PCFR.

8 September

**“Ghost Citizens: Jews Return to a Postwar City.”** Łukasz Krzyżanowski, University of Ottawa. Lowe Family Lecture Series, co-sponsored with Jewish Studies.



15 September

**“Warsaw Ghetto Police: The Jewish Order Service During the Nazi Occupation.”**

Katarzyna Person, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) Co-sponsored with Jewish Studies.



## YEAR IN REVIEW

22 September

**"Jewish Childhood in Kraków: A Microhistory of the Holocaust."**

Joanna Śliwa, Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany. Co-sponsored with Jewish Studies.



7 October

**"Social Justice Reflections with Ukrainian Artists."**

Global Forum Series, Co-sponsored with International Education at Maricopa Community Colleges.

12-13 October

**"Borderlands Biography: Z. Anthony Kruszewski in Wartime Europe & Postwar America,"** Events featuring Anthony Kruszewski, UTEP and Beata Halicka, University of Adam Mickiewicz, Poznan, Poland. Co-sponsored with the ASU School of Transborder Studies.



24 October

**More than Trending: A Conversation with a (Official) Digital Diplomat,** Matt Jacobs, Senior Digital Coordinator, Bureau of European & Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Dept. of State & ASU alum. PCFR International Careers Series. Co-sponsored with PCFR and SPGS.



4-7 November

**11th Macedonian-North American Conference for Macedonian Studies.** Hosted by the Melikian Center with support from the Mary Choncoff Fund.

15 November

**"Ukraine War Roundtable: Broader Implications."** With Anika Binnendijk, Keith Brown, and Candance Rondeaux. Co-sponsored with the Masters in Global Security Program and CFW.



19-20 November

**Homelands: Romanian Film Festival Arizona 2nd Edition.** Co-sponsored with the American Romanian Cultural Society and the Romanian Film Fest Seattle in partnership with Northwest Film Forum, with funds from the City of Tempe and the Departmentul Pentru Românii de Pretutundeni.



2-4 December

**"Armenia, the United States, and Regional Transformations in Eurasia: Advancing Transnational Understanding."** A symposium as part of the Yerevan State University-ASU collaboration to advance American Studies, supported by the U.S. Embassy in Armenia.





## YEAR IN REVIEW - EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

## 11th Macedonian-North American Conference for Macedonian Studies



Victor Friedman (Emeritus Professor, University of Chicago) presents his paper at the conference

In Fall 2022, the Melikian Center hosted the **11th Macedonian-North American Conference for Macedonian Studies**. The conference, first held in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1991, brings together scholars from different disciplines working on Macedonian language, culture and society. The participants in 2022 included linguists, anthropologists, policy analysts and scholars of literature, theater and film, from universities in North Macedonia, Japan and Poland, as well as from the United States and Canada. Over the weekend, participants met with members of the local diaspora community from the region for dinner and a screening of the 2012 feature film *Punk is not Dead*, and also visited Sedona and Arcosanti. The papers from the conference will be published in a special issue of *Balkanistica* in 2024.

Three years after his first visit to Tempe, when he donated his extensive collection of Polish-themed books to Arizona State University, **Tony Kruszewski** came to campus with his biographer and colleague, **Beata Halicka**. Kruszewski is an emeritus professor from the University of Texas El Paso, where he taught for over 50 years, and Halicka is a Professor of Contemporary History at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan. They met with ASU faculty and students, as well as community members, to discuss *Borderlands Biography*, which recounts Tony Kruszewski's journey from wartime Warsaw, where he served as a scout and courier in the Polish Home Army, through German captivity, service in the British military, and graduate school in Chicago to his distinguished career at the Texas-Mexico border. Kruszewski's and Halicka's visit brought together a range of Melikian faculty affiliates with interests in biography, oral history and



Tony Kruszewski and Beata Halicka

émigré/refugee experiences, and provided students in Michael Ostling's Honors class, *Do the Right Thing*, with the opportunity to hear from a World War II veteran on the principles and values that drove his unique odyssey.

## YEAR IN REVIEW - EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

## Nobel Peace Prize Recipient discusses war crimes with ASU faculty on national panel

In October, Ukrainian civil rights leader Oleksandra Matviychuk spoke at a roundtable session titled “War Crimes and International Justice” at the annual convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES). The panel was planned and proposed by the Melikian Center founding Director Stephen Batalden soon after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, and was held virtually. The October discussion focused on the effectiveness and limitations of criminal courts in adjudicating crimes of aggression, crimes against humanity, and other war crimes, in the context of violence in Southeast Europe and Ukraine. Chaired by Batalden, the roundtable also included Melikian affiliate Victor Peskin, and three other scholars and practitioners of international law and international relations.



A lawyer and internationally known advocate for women’s rights, Matviychuk is the Director of the Center for Civil Liberties, which was awarded the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize just a few days before the panel. In her opening presentation, she noted that the sheer scale of Russian war crimes against Ukrainian civilians is likely to swamp any future criminal tribunal. Already, there is forensic evidence linking victims and perpetrators for more than 21,000 civilian war crimes in Ukraine, and no criminal tribunal under terms of the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court has ever had to address such a large number of cases. She affirmed nonetheless her Center’s determination to secure international justice for all such victims.

The roundtable provided its international audience a glimpse of Ukraine’s experience when, 40 minutes into the proceedings, Oleksandra Matviychuk calmly apologized on the Zoom chat room that she would need to step away. She had heard air raid sirens, indicating that she needed to seek refuge underground. Although she was unable to return to the roundtable, she informed the other panelists later that evening that she was safe and unharmed.

## 2023 EVENTS PREVIEW

In Spring 2023, the Melikian Center will host visits from two accomplished creative artists from North Macedonia.

Film director **Milcho Manchevski** will visit Tempe in February 2023. Manchevski, the director of seven independent films since 1994, first came to Tempe as a high school student through the Sister City exchange program between Tempe and Skopje. As well as renewing contact with Tempe Sister Cities, he will teach a master class for students at the Sidney Poitier New American Film School.

Award-winning short story writer and translator **Rumena Buzarovska** will visit Tempe in March 2023, as part of a book tour to promote the English translation of her latest collection.



## NEW FACES



In March 2022, the Melikian Center welcomed **Sofia Walsh** as a new student worker. A CLI alumna (Russian 200, 2020), Sofia was thrilled to support CLI and the Melikian Center. She is also an alumna of the center's Undergraduate Research Fellowship (2021), through which she assisted with visiting Fulbright scholar Dr. Beibit Shangirbayeva's research of Russia's impact on the domestic human rights policies of Kazakhstan. In addition to majoring in Global Studies, Sofia is also pursuing minors in Russian, Spanish, and Political Science, as well as a certificate in Russian and Eastern European Studies. She is currently working on her honors thesis focused on Russian disinformation in Estonia and will be graduating from ASU in May 2023.

**James Edmonds**, aka Dr. J, joined the Melikian Center in April 2022 as a CLI Program Coordinator and currently serves as interim CLI Director. He received his Ph.D. from Arizona State University in 2021 in anthropology of religion. Dr. J's academic work addresses the changing texture of contemporary Indonesian Islamic piety and its relation to global forms of Islam in Asia, the Middle East, and the United States.



In November 2022, the Melikian Center welcomed **Theresa Zimm** as its new CLI Program Coordinator. A Dartmouth graduate (B.A. Russian Area Studies), former Great Hearts Academy educator, and two-time alumna of CLI (Russian 300, 2009, Russian 600, 2021), she brings her experience and enthusiasm for languages, cross-cultural connections, and recruitment to the Melikian team. Travel is one of her passions, having most recently visited Russia to study at St. Petersburg's Derzhavin Institute (Oct. 2021 & August 2022) and Romania to assist with Ukrainian refugee efforts in Cluj-Napoca (April 2022). Theresa and her husband of 25 years are members of the Phoenix Committee on Foreign Relations, have three grown children, and reside in Gilbert.

**Garine Palandjian** joined the Melikian Center in November 2022 as Postdoctoral Research Scholar. Garine earned her PhD in Educational Policy and Evaluation at the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College of Arizona State University in May 2022. As a Postdoctoral Research Scholar, Garine's main priority is to develop modules for Arizona educators with the Russian Studies at the Margins: Migration in the Post-Soviet Borderlands project. Additionally, Garine is assisting with other projects and initiatives at the Center.



On May 23rd 2022, a sense of nervous excitement filled the newly renovated Durham Hall on ASU's Tempe campus. Forty students arrived on ASU's Tempe campus to study Russian and Indonesian, as the Critical Languages Institute returned to in-person programming. They were joined a week later by students in other less commonly taught languages (LCTLs), bringing the community up to 73.



## CLI 2022

Over 60 percent of the CLI's students in 2022 received scholarships to support their intensive linguistic and cultural study. Sixteen of these students were recipients of the Project Global Officer (Project GO) scholarship that fully covers the cost of the program for ROTC students. Other students had received Melikian Center Fellowships or other scholarships provided by the U.S. Department of Education.

That initial nervous excitement quickly converted into lively conversation and laughter among participants, who came together to undertake intensive linguistic and cultural training. This common purpose created strong bonds across different life experiences, as high school students, university students,

life-long learners, and every student in between embraced the opportunity that CLI represents. Regardless of academic, socio-economic, and cultural background, students in Tempe, AZ, or our study abroad locations in Albania, Armenia, Bosnia, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan,

and Uzbekistan form a community invested in shared success.

One example of the range of experience among CLI participants Haylie Burlin-Isen a high school student from Paradise Valley High School. Haylie took 2nd-year Russian in

“

Haylie thrived in the community created by instructors and students, and went on to give one of the keynote speeches at CLI graduation.

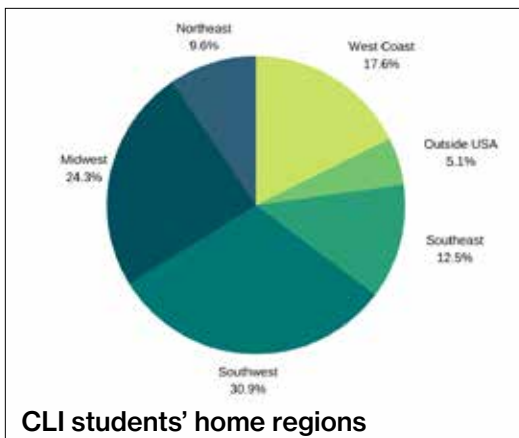
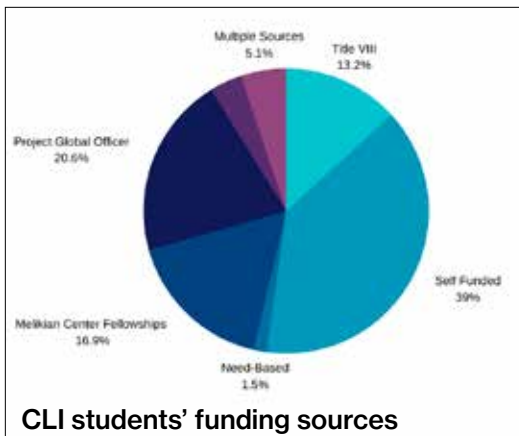
“

Tempe, beginning the program immediately after completing her Mandarin final in a community college course. CLI staff were initially concerned that Haylie might be overwhelmed or intimidated by the pace of the program. It turned out she thrived in the community created by instructors and students, and went on to give one of the keynote speeches at CLI graduation.

Outside of the classroom, CLI hosted events aimed at building community. CLI's Ice Cream Social and Culture Nights brought food,







fun, and learning together with students, instructors, and community members. Members of ASU's retirement community, Mirabella, were regular attendees at our culture nights as well as student's families creating multi-generational exchange. A digital performance by Olga Burlakova, a soloist with the Kharkiv National Academic Theater of Opera, living in refugee housing in Warsaw, Poland brought beauty and provided context to students. Walker DuPuis, an environment anthropologist, spoke to students about Indonesia's future capital city in East Kalimantan and how the government is developing the city as a "Forest City." ASU Professor Craig Calhoun brought the global impacts of the war in Ukraine to light and highlighted the interconnectedness and impacts of refugee flows as well as energy and food insecurity. Visits from intelligence agencies, scholarship representatives, and other invited talks provided robust opportunities for students to learn about the history, culture, and geo-politics of the languages and countries of their studies.


2022 foregrounded the need for flexibility and support structures, as students dealt with financial, academic and social challenges, not the least of which was the continuing incidence of Covid-19. Drawing from the program's reach during 2021-22, under Irina Levin's leadership, CLI will offer many introductory languages in 2023 in an online

synchronous format. Students attending class online will receive the same instruction as students in Tempe through Zoom. In revitalizing the online learning space at CLI, we continue to measure our success by whom we include in our community of belonging.

## Long-time CLI faculty member honored



In recognition for her dedicated work for over 30 years in the pedagogical field, **Saodat Adilova** was awarded a medal of "Excellence in Public Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan" to mark the "National Day of Teachers and Mentors". She was also awarded a diploma from the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan recognizing her many years of efficient and honest work as an education professional. Saodat has been a tireless advocate and mentor for students at the Critical Languages Institute, where she has introduced over 50 students to Uzbek since 2011.



## 2022 CLI Coordinator Jamie Edmonds shares students' excitement in post-Covid travel

CLI students on a field trip in Kyrgyzstan

I boarded the plane in Chicago headed to Istanbul with twelve students who just finished the domestic portion of the Critical Languages Institute's 1st year Russian Program. The stuffy air and seemingly endless line of people in the jetway moved at a painfully slow pace. Many of the students lined up in the jetway had never been out of the country, and they were entering a world reshaped by the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war against Ukraine.

When I finally found my seat in the back of the plane, I was happy to see two open seats next to me and hoped they would remain empty. However, one of the CLI students towards the very end of the boarding process made his way into my row, leaving just the seat between us. The student got settled and called his parents. I wanted to respect his privacy, but he was speaking with such excitement and giddiness, it was impossible. "Mom, I am doing it. I am on the plane, and it has a TV. I am so excited, mom." Joy radiated from this student. During every meal, he took pictures and videos for his

newly-launched food blog. This CLI student reminded me of the transformative power of new experiences. Those sometimes-forgotten first moments on an international flight or the first taste of something completely new are the anchors upon which linguistic and cultural advancement are achieved.

Soon after arriving at our Russian program in Bishkek, I met with another student who had fallen very ill from a food-related illness. She recounted the story of her trip to the local medical provider, and I initially worried that this negative experience would blunt her enjoyment. However, she laughed about it, and explained that it left her even more motivated to study Russian, and experience everything that the Kyrgyz Republic had to offer. I was again reminded that the study abroad experience is grounded in new challenges outside of the classroom. CLI's study abroad programs provide classes in resiliency, with knowledge as the prize.





Following whirlwind classroom observations, meetings with Bishkek staff and leadership at the London School, and consultation with our fearless resident directors (Saule Moldabekova Robb and Matt Tallarovic), I left for Denpasar, Indonesia. Denpasar was a very different place than three years ago, when I served as Resident Director for the Critical Languages Institute. Indonesia opened for tourists only a few months before our 2022 students arrived in Bali. Although some restaurants and shops had reopened, many shops sat vacant with chairs and furniture stacked in their entryway. Some owners had abandoned their

shops altogether, including some places that previous Project GO students had recommended.

The 2022 cohort, though, was unfazed by the challenge of striking out on their own. One 1st Year Indonesian student in particular was quick to let me know that she was a bargaining master. The other students confirmed this, recounting that during the first week of their arrival, this student had not only used her Indonesian skills to bargain at the shops for herself, she had also managed to bargain for other students. This was especially welcome news, because this student had been somewhat reserved and

withdrawn while in Tempe. The novelty and intensity of study abroad inspired her to apply her skills fully, and see the tangible fruits of her studies. When entering a completely different environment, this seemingly quiet student adapted quickly and thrived.

In 2022, CLI launched a program in Tashkent, Uzbekistan and students returned to Albania, Armenia, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina. From each of these locations, we heard stories of joy, resilience and self-discovery that affirmed the transformative impact of living another language.

**Matt Tallarovic joined Saule Moldabekova Robb as resident co-director in Bishkek. He offered some reflections on what it meant to visit the region again in familiar company, and work with a new generation of colleagues and students.**



CLI students on a field trip to a museum in Bishkek with Matt Tallarovic (first row right) and Saule Moldabekova (second row right).

### **How did you get interested in Russia, Eurasia, East Europe? How did this lead to a career?**

My heritage on my father's side was Czech and Slovak, and I thought it would be fulfilling to study one of those languages. But when I began college at NAU in the late 1980s, only Russian was offered. As politics began to change, we started to get visitors from the Soviet Union, including river runners from the Altai Region and university and high school students from Kazakhstan. I realized there was more to Russia and Russians than Moscow or Leningrad, or contemporary politics. By the time I graduated (1992) there was no Soviet Union, and there was a whole new part of the world to explore, and friends to go visit. I started out volunteering to teach, and that took me to Poland and Kazakhstan. The next

step was working on educational exchanges, which is how I first met Saule, where we worked together promoting Kazakhstan's Presidential "Bolashak" scholarship program. I was eventually recruited by Deloitte due to my language skills.

### **What was a highlight of CLI 2022 for you?**

Saule and I were invited to a conference dedicated to the Pamir Kyrgyz living in Tajikistan but also other countries of Central Asia. At the conference, we met with representatives of the Ministry of Culture, Information, Sports and Youth Policy, members of the Kyrgyz Parliament, prominent scholars, and representatives of NGOs. In our presentation, we talked about the language policies of Central Asian countries. Language issues became crucial after the breakup of the Soviet system. The

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**Any language you study is an asset  
that no one can take away from you.  
It allows you to communicate with  
that many more people.**

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linguistic environment completely changed, but Russian language is still a main common language of trade and diplomacy across the Central Asia region. Almost 1 million Kyrgyz nationals are migrant workers living abroad, and we underlined the importance of the national identity of the Kyrgyz living abroad.

### How do you see the program growing in the future?

Following the conference we attended, the Kyrgyz National Library and Association of Kyrgyz Women expressed their interest in collaboration with the Critical Languages Institute Program in Bishkek. They suggested we could organize round-table discussions on the issues of Kyrgyz and American cultures, including days of Kyrgyz culture at the National Library and joint trips to Issyk-Kul, the pearl of Central Asia. They were pleased to hear of interest in Central Asian languages among U.S. students, and especially at Arizona State University

### What advice do you have for students?

Any language you study is an asset that no one can take away from you. It allows you to



communicate with that many more people. I started with German in school and moved on to Russian at university, but I have not stopped there. I am not fluent in other languages, but an American even knowing a few words in someone else's language can prompt smiles, and open doors.

## CLI ALUMNI UPDATE

*Hazen Williams participated in Project GO in summer 2019, when he studied first-year Indonesian in Tempe and Denpasar, Bali. Since then, he completed his undergraduate degree in Regional and Comparative Studies with a concentration in Southeast Asia at Georgetown University. As part of our ongoing outreach to alumni, CLI Interim Director Jamie Edmonds checked in with Hazen during Fall 2022.*

### Q: Where are you now, and what are you doing?

A: I am currently in Washington, DC, completing a Masters' degree in Security Studies and working as the Special Assistant to the President & CEO of the US-ASEAN Business Council. In this position, I help bolster trade relations with South East Asia,

by supporting U.S. companies trying to navigate investing and operating in regional markets. Providing staff support for the President offers regular opportunities to use Bahasa Indonesian in a professional setting. For instance, Ambassador Serbini from Brunei was very surprised when I was able to answer him in bahasa. In this way, knowledge I started building at the Critical Languages





Institute has been an asset as I've entered this work environment.

**Q: How did you get there from CLI?**

A: After I returned from Indonesia, I continued to study Indonesian with Bu Nona at JHU SAIS until I finished the highest level she offered. In parallel with undergraduate coursework at SAIS and Georgetown, I had a series of internships after CLI including at IDS International's COVID Response team; the State Department's office coordinating ASEAN, the Mekong-US Partnership, and the South China Sea; the LGBTQ Victory Institute; the U.S. House of Representatives; and the CSIS Southeast Asia team. During this time, I built a professional repertoire to augment my education and language skills. I was fortunate to find a job in the Southeast Asia sphere quite soon after graduation. I would add that the cohort I went to Indonesia with has had reunions and is still in contact regularly.

**Q: Which experience do you remember the most strongly from CLI?**

A: Between a cohort of classmates who are still among my closest friends and a staff that cared deeply about both us and our learning, there are many experiences to choose from. I have vivid memories of pencak silat classes, visits to various temples, and attending ceremonies with my host family. It was this last aspect that really created the sense of immersion. The class visits and planned extracurriculars are excellent, but the experience of living with a host family and seeing their day-to-day deepens the experience dramatically. If I had to choose one experience, I would probably

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CLI allowed me to develop connections with my cohort, but also with my host family, my professors, and all the other people who supported the program.

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choose the first day I went home with my host family. I was nervous, and in an attempt to connect with my host sister, I asked if the family's chicken had a name. It did not, so we decided to name it after me: Ayam Hazen. To this day, when my host family and I talk, we still joke about Ayam Hazen and they still proudly show him to me on video calls. The fact that this was one of the first conversations I had where English was simply not an option has seared this into my brain as a core memory for sure.

**Q: What's something you learned or took away from CLI that surprised you or changed your perspective?**

A: CLI allowed me to develop connections both with my cohort, but also with my host family, my professors, and all the other people who supported the program. In maintaining my relationships with them, I have been able to change my perspective significantly. In Summer 2020, I was supposed to go to Jakarta to work with the U.S. Mission to ASEAN. The COVID-19 pandemic prevented that. I was still in touch with my host family, and teachers and staff in the program in Den Pasar. Through my ongoing and close relationships in Indonesia, I was able to hear directly about the impacts that COVID had beyond the borders of the United States. My host family, who were heavily involved in the tourism and hospitality industries, faced significant hardships and losses, as did the tutors and other Indonesian students that I had interacted with. The adjustment of perspective allowed me to think more globally, and grasp that difficulties and impacts are asymmetrical, and felt differently across the globe.



**STUDENT ALUMNI SHARE STORIES OF SUCCESS**

Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the significant impact of the war beyond those two countries' borders, have reinforced the value of regional expertise and language skills in standing up to aggression, countering disinformation, and maintaining international alliances. In 2022, today's students had the opportunity to hear from alumni who are using skills and knowledge they acquired at ASU, in careers in government service.



**Matthew Jacobs at ASU**

**Matthew Jacobs** studied BCS in summer 2007, and then studied abroad in Sarajevo, during his degree in Global Studies at ASU. Now a public affairs specialist at the U.S. Department of State, he returned to campus to discuss the vital role of digital diplomacy in the Western Balkans, where malign actors seek to weaponize social media and escalate political tensions. Matthew has drawn on his practical experience in the region, as well as interdisciplinary perspectives he gained through the global studies program, to build effective partnerships with local NGOs and government agencies seeking to grow the space for civic debate.



**Steven Gillen with SPGS professor Okey Iheduru**

**Steve Gillen** was a visitor for Homecoming, when he was honored as a College Leader for 2022. He studied Russian, BCS and Macedonian during his ASU undergraduate years, going on to spend a year in North Macedonia as a Fulbright fellow and Gilman scholar. Since joining the Foreign Service he has served tours in Macedonia, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iraq. He spoke with students about his commitment to government service, including his current work as Deputy Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs, pursuing the safe return of US citizens held by foreign actors.



**Tatum James at 2022 Skopje Pride parade with US Ambassador Kate Byrnes**

One of ASU's most recent recruits to the State Department, **Tatum James**, spent the first half of 2022 as a Fulbright Teaching Fellow in North Macedonia. She taught in Tetovo, making use of the Albanian language skills she built through two summers in the Critical Languages Institute (2016 and 2017), as well as participating in a range of cultural activities. In Fall 2022, Tatum began graduate school at the Fletcher School as a Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Fellow, in preparation for her career as a Foreign Service Officer.

## Q & A with Isabelle Kinney,

## REES certificate student and

## Spring 2022 Melikian Center Undergraduate Fellow



***You are majoring in French, Political Science and Religious Studies. How did you get interested in Russia and its neighboring countries?***

I first became interested in studying Russia and its neighboring countries during my senior year of high school when I read *Secondhand Time* by Svetlana Alexievich. When I started college, I went to a Melikian Center event (I think it was a discussion with the Czech ambassador to the US), and I learned about the Center and CLI. From there, I applied for undergraduate research fellowships and started working with Dr. Margaret Hanson during the fall of 2020. I really enjoyed the work I did and continue to do with her. To build up the skills I needed to keep doing that work, I participated in CLI, learning Russian and Uzbek. I also added the certificate in my junior year and did my capstone project on Central Asian constitutions which I presented on at a small conference. I have just kept building on the research I've done, and the more I have learned about the region, the more I want to learn.

***What is the focus of your Barrett Honors thesis?***

My Honors Thesis is focused on Central Asia more broadly. I am looking at Uyghur communities outside of China, particularly in Kazakhstan and looking at how they understand their political identity. Some of the more interesting sources I have looked at involve how Uyghur youth have used

Facebook to connect with their traditional culture and keep in touch with relatives.

***You've worked with practitioners, like former Ambassador Roderick Moore, as well as scholars like Professor Margaret Hanson. Do you have a sense whether your career will be more policy-oriented, or research-based?***

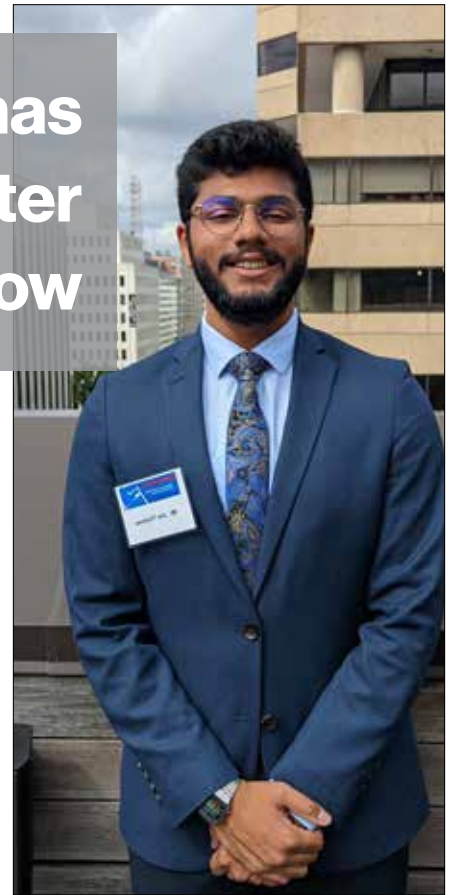
I have enjoyed working with both practitioners and scholars but I think my career will be more research-oriented. I have really enjoyed the research work I have done with the Melikian Center and the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict so I would like to keep doing that type of work. That being said, the world is unpredictable so I want to be flexible enough to make a transition to one or the other should the need arise.

***You're participating in the Thinktank initiative based out of Howard University this year. What drew you to apply, and what has been the highlight so far?***

The main thing that drew me to apply to the Think Tank was the experience of going to and presenting at the Association for Slavic, Eurasian and East European Studies (ASEEES) conference in Chicago. I have presented my work before at ATSEEL but this is a much bigger conference and it was a very different experience. I was also drawn in by the possibility of meeting other students in my field across the country. I worked with a student, Aylar, who is studying at the University of Kansas and she has been a wonderful person to connect with personally and academically.



## Joe Thomas Melikian Center Undergraduate Fellow



### My work with Ambassador Polt: A reflection on the Melikian Fellowship

I spent the Spring of 2021 as a Melikian Center Fellow. The Center's focus on Eastern European and Eurasian affairs intersected with my passion for international relations and Middle Eastern Studies. I was paired up with Amb. Michael Polt, ASU Ambassador-in-Residence and the cofounder of the Leadership, Diplomacy, and National Security Lab at ASU.

Our work centered on the Ambassador's Masterclass project: 90-to-120-minute presentations, accompanied by well-designed slide decks, that would break down and explain the fundamentals of the global order and U.S. foreign policy. The project was motivated by the increasing disconnect between the American middle class and foreign policy, and the Ambassador's wish to do something to combat it.

I worked on designing the slide deck for Masterclass 4 titled, "America and the World." The slide deck focused on the origins of the U.S.-led global order, and why continued American leadership was essential for global prosperity. I brought together well-researched historical narratives, data, and graphic design to create eye-catching and informative slides. I would meet with the Ambassador every two weeks, where he would evaluate my work and provide his vision for further slides. The work was so enriching that I decided to stay on with Amb. Polt and produce another Masterclass titled,

“My work with Ambassador Polt has been deeply rewarding on both a professional and personal level, and I am forever grateful to the Melikian Center for connecting us.”

“Understanding America to Represent America.”

In the Spring of 2022, Amb. Polt tapped me to join him in the American Diplomacy project, a multi-university effort led by former Ambassadors, that aimed to produce a comprehensive guide on how to reform the Foreign Service. I drafted a new Ambassadorial letter, wrote relevant narrative, and researched legislation and regulation relating to the Foreign Service. I traveled to Washington, DC from September 7th to 9th, alongside my fellow ASU research aides, to attend the unveiling of the report. We were recognized for our contributions and got to meet a whole host of State Department officials.



*Masters' student in Political Science and Melikian Center student worker **Collin Frank** is the recipient of a 2023 Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Graduate Fellowship. This prestigious fellowship from the Department of State was awarded to just 45 individuals in 2022. It provides financial support for graduate study as well as federal internships, mentoring, and professional development activities. Fellows who successfully complete their program receive appointments as Foreign Service officers, and serve at least five years.*

### **What inspired you to pursue the Thomas R Pickering Foreign Affairs Graduate Fellowship and the Foreign Service?**

I've always been drawn to Foreign Service as a career, but I never imagined that I'd be a qualified applicant for the Pickering Fellowship, let alone a recipient. After a close friend received the fellowship in 2020, I decided to give it a try.

The Foreign Service has always been my ambition. I have enjoyed learning about other cultures and their languages, and it's always a fun experience to be the first American that someone has ever met! Although I knew that being inducted into the Foreign Service was a long shot, I centered my academics and work experience toward becoming the best possible applicant. I knew that language proficiency is critical for a Foreign Service career, so I was determined to study several during college. I started learning Russian as a freshman at Boston University, and I continued after transferring to ASU. Studying at the Critical Languages Institute in 2019 and 2022 accelerated my language proficiency, allowing me to turn my Russian minor into an additional major while still graduating on time. As a graduate student, I decided to pick up Serbo-Croatian after taking several courses centered on the region. I plan on enrolling at CLI for the third time in 2023 to pursue 2nd-year Serbo-Croatian in Sarajevo.

### **What was your biggest challenge in applying and how did you overcome this challenge?**

As a self-funded graduate student, I always have to balance working and completing classwork.

Throwing scholarship applications on top of that was difficult to manage, especially toward the end of the semester. Thankfully, I have some incredibly supportive professors in my corner. Feedback from Dr. Hanson, Dr. Hoogenboom, and the Melikian Center team helped me polish my essays and build a great application.

### **If you had your pick of opportunities in the Foreign Service, what position, region, and job would you choose?**

As someone who had the opportunity to engage with several Department of State Cultural Exchange Programs, I would love to support international exchanges as a Foreign Service Officer in the Public Diplomacy career track. Flexibility is one of the key requirements for the job. I'd be happy ending up in any of the five career tracks. I'd love to use my Russian and BCS at my first post, but I know that this isn't a given. The State Department wants FSOs to become generalists, so I could end up being sent anywhere! My ideal post would probably be somewhere in Eastern Europe or the Caucasus.

### **If there was one thing that you learned from this experience that you can pass on to other students, what would it be?**

Start early, and don't give up! I applied to intern with the Department of State six times. I was interviewed on the fifth time, but I ended up being passed over. That was discouraging, but I knew that I couldn't give up. After applying the sixth time, I ended up being interviewed and receiving a slot at the Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. This experience was critical for my application.



## U.S. DEPT. OF EDUCATION NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

In August 2022, the Melikian Center was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a National Resource Center (NRC) for the study of Russia, Eurasia and East Europe. This makes ASU one of just 12 research universities in the United States with this mark of distinction. The four-year award provides funding which will allow the Center to expand its on-campus profile, in addition to serving publics in Arizona and beyond.

Among the initiatives included in the proposal is a major oral history project to promote intergenerational conversation between ASU students and the various global networks of greater Phoenix – including heritage communities, and professionals from the fields of diplomacy, international development and business,

with experience in the Center's region of focus. Besides equipping students with skills in interviewing, research and multi-media storytelling, the project will offer them fresh perspectives on international career opportunities.

NRC funding will combine with support from ASU's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to provide salaries for two new core staff positions at the Melikian Center. The first is a dedicated outreach and communications professional, who will take responsibility for maintaining and integrating digital and print messaging, to broaden the impact of the Center's research and teaching. The second is an academic coordinator who will support students by identifying internship and mentoring opportunities, as well as providing guidance on scholarships and career pathways tied to the study of the languages, culture and

politics of Russia, Eurasia and East Europe.

From 2023-26, these scholarship opportunities include Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships, a second new award from the Department of Education. Supporting graduate and undergraduate students, this award will provide almost \$1 million in scholarship support over the four years 2023-2026, including academic year fellowships as well as scholarships for students to attend the Melikian Center's Critical Languages Institute. Five ASU students have received FLAS fellowships for Spring 2023, and 20 summer FLAS awards are available for attendees at CLI in 2023, for intensive language study in Tempe, online and in countries of the region including Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan.



**Spring 2023 FLAS Fellows (from left): Jadie Minhas, Djurdja Jovanovic Padejski, Cassidy Durland, Rebecca Stuch, and Chandler Chase Camarena (not pictured).**



## Expanding the Melikian Center's research and training portfolio

The NRC and FLAS awards, made through the Department of Education's Title VI program, capped a successful year of external funding at the Melikian Center. For calendar year 2022, the Center received over \$1,600,000 in funding from external sources. Besides continuing support for the Critical Languages Institute from Project GO and Title VIII, the Melikian Center continues to work with the Institute for International Education to deliver predeparture orientation to outgoing Fulbright grantees, and with Yerevan State University to strengthen American Studies in Armenia.

The Center also received increased support from the US Russia Foundation for a second year of programming to strengthen Russia studies in the U.S. Southwest. Planned activities include curriculum development for high school and community college students, focusing on the lived experiences of post-Soviet migrant and borderland communities, support for early career scholars in writing and multimedia storytelling for audiences beyond the academy, and public programming to introduce US publics to the work of artists based in Russia and the former Soviet Union.

The new award will build on a successful first year of activities which generated curricular materials for high schools on the theme of Indigenous Russia. Lesson plans focused on state and community definitions of membership, practices of environmental stewardship, and relations with central and provincial authorities. In light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Melikian

Center has provided a venue for a variety of Ukrainian artists addressing the war in their work. In Fall 2022, in collaboration with the Havighurst Center at Miami University in Ohio and the Institute for Russian, European and Eurasian Studies at the University of South Florida, the "Creative Horizons" series featured Ukrainian documentary film-makers Sergei Loznitsa, Nadia Parfan and Oleksiy Radynski.

The Melikian Center hosted the first Professional Development Workshop in Public Scholarship in September 2022. Ten graduate students and scholars who share interest in taking knowledge public came together from across the U.S. to develop concepts and pitches for magazine articles, podcasts, K-12 lesson plans, short videos or websites which draw from their particular regional expertise. Based on their positive feedback on the practical writing exercises led by Steven Beschloss, the next workshop in 2023 will include similar hands-on opportunities in digital and multi-media storytelling, as well as a focus on adapting scholarly research to inform policy professionals.



Professional Development Workshop in Public Scholarship participants and staff

## Melikian affiliate partners with US State Department to drive tech entrepreneurship in the Balkans

In Fall 2022, ASU was awarded a cooperative agreement from the State Department's Global Innovation Through Science and Technology (GIST) office to establish a Science and Technology Innovation (STI) entrepreneurship training program in the Balkans, called

leadership team also includes ASU colleagues with start-up experience, and Kosovo-based colleagues with Innovation Centre Kosovo (ICK), a startup incubator and GIST Innovation Hub.

The broader aim of GIST Innovates Balkans is to



**Visar Berisha, ASU, Tina Waddington, PCFR and Uranik Begu, Executive Director Innovation Center Kosovo**

GIST Innovates the Balkans. The award will support activities through 2023 and 2024 designed to address skill and resource gaps and provide opportunities for interaction between entrepreneurs in the Balkans and US-based investors and companies. In designing and implementing the program, Associate Professor Visar Berisha, a Melikian Center faculty affiliate, draws from his own venture-backed STI entrepreneurship success. The

reinforce productive values in the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the Balkans, including merit-based competition, diversity of experience, scientific rigor, societal impact of technology, ethics, transparency, and inclusion of traditionally underrepresented groups. The program will recruit teams from Kosovo, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Bosnia and will culminate with selected participants attending and pitching at ASU's Venture Devils Demo Day in Fall 2024.

Despite Covid-related travel restrictions and related setbacks, the Melikian Center partnership with Yerevan State University for developing at YSU an American Studies Center with its own degree program in American Studies has not only survived, but is thriving. In the fall of 2022, YSU admitted the second cohort of ten MA students into their new American Studies degree program. The first cohort will be graduating from YSU with MA degrees in the spring of 2023. In early December, the YSU American Studies Center sponsored its first international symposium in Yerevan, a two-day conference featuring twenty presenters, including four from the Melikian Center. ASU's Craig Calhoun keynoted the event. Publication of the proceedings of the symposium are expected in 2023. Shortly before the opening of the symposium the agency sponsor of the partnership – the U.S. Embassy-Yerevan – announced renewal funding for the project, extending the ASU-YSU American Studies partnership through December 2024.

## FRESH PERSPECTIVES - NOTES FROM A RESEARCH LEAVE



From August 2021 through August 2022, I was a core fellow at the University of Helsinki's Collegium for Advanced Studies. Each year, the Collegium hosts approximately 30 scholars from a range of disciplines to pursue their own research, and meet weekly for a research seminar. Fellows are also encouraged to engage with faculty and students at the University of Helsinki – ranked in the top 30 universities in the world for arts and humanities – as well as the broader scholarly community in Finland and beyond.

The Aleksanteri Institute is a prominent research and teaching center on Russia, Eurasia and East Europe. From conversations with a number of faculty members including visiting fellow Dr. Melanie Mierzejewski-Voznyak, an ASU alumna who studied Polish at



**Barnabas Szabo**

the Critical Languages Institute in 2004, an agreement was reached to pilot online collaboration in between ASU and University of Helsinki students in Spring 2023. Several joint discussion sections will be incorporated into the Spring 2023 class on Democratic Erosion, which will be taught by Global Teaching Fellow Barnabas Szabo.

Helsinki boasts a dynamic cultural scene, with a community of film-makers, novelists and other artists whose work often intersects with activism. Among the best-known young novelists writing in Finnish is Pajtim Statovci, whose family left Kosovo as refugees in 1992.

Reading his work, and having the opportunity to interview him, prompted me to relaunch the Melikian Center's book group in Spring 2023, in collaboration with Tempe Public Library.

The group's first reading will be *Crossing*, Pajtim Statovci's 2016 novel, which was translated by David Hackston in 2020, and was a finalist for the National Book Award.



Under the terms of my research leave, I continued to play an active role in grant-writing and outreach for the Melikian Center. I spent January and February of 2022 working on the Center's Title VI proposal, collaborating closely with colleagues at the Center for Asian Research and the proposed new international center. I also co-led the cultural training initiative within the Project GO community, and taught the Summer 2022 Post-Soviet Geopolitics class for Title VIII fellows at the Critical Languages Institute. As I expand this class into a regional track course for ASU's masters' program in Global Security, I will incorporate insights gleaned from conversations with scholars and policy practitioners in Helsinki, who encounter geopolitics from the vantage point of a small nation rather than a great power.

– Keith Brown



## FACULTY DISTINCTION

During 2022, 20 new affiliates were elected by the Melikian Center faculty affiliate community. As a result of this influx of talent, at year end the Center had 86 ASU staff and faculty affiliates. The Melikian Center now has affiliates across all four physical campuses in greater Phoenix. These new affiliates include faculty at the Cronkite School downtown, the Polytechnic School

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**The Melikian Center now has affiliates across all four physical campuses in greater Phoenix.**

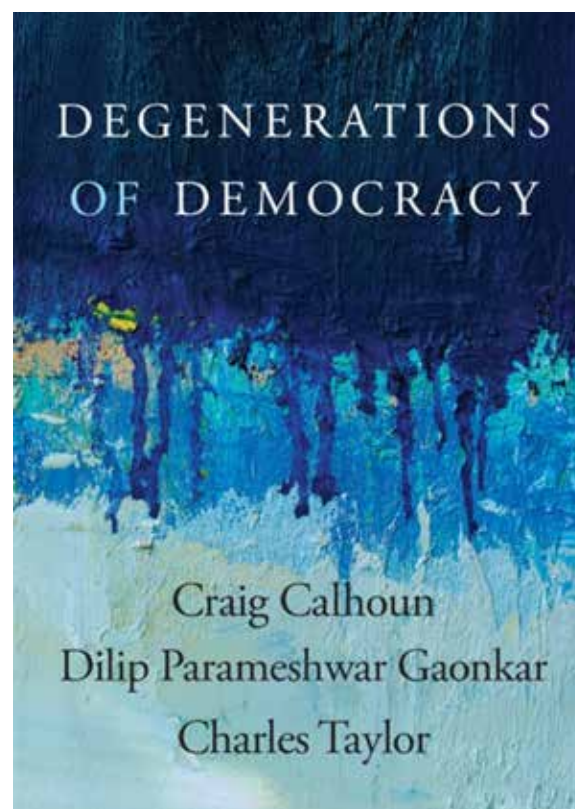
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of Engineering, and the Sidney Poitier New American Film School. They brought expertise, among other topics, on Indigenous adaptation to climate change in Russia's far north; Tajikistan's leading role in water governance; and human rights activism in the Caucasus.

With the addition or resumption of classes in four less commonly taught languages since 2018 (Ukrainian, Macedonian, Kazakh and Tatar), the Melikian Center's Critical Languages Institute employed over 20 instructors in 2022. This outstanding faculty has collectively over 100 summers' experience teaching in the program, and a strong collegial ethos in which new instructors as well as students to the program feel welcome and supported.

Faculty affiliates from a range of disciplines won national recognition during 2022. Craig Calhoun, who served as interim director until July 2022, made a number of public presentations, including the Clough Lecture at Boston College, drawing and extending on his co-authored book published by Harvard University Press, *Degenerations of Democracy*. He was also appointed as the Fall 2022 Stanley Kelley, Jr. Distinguished Visiting Lecturer at Princeton University, where he focused on rethinking 'classical sociological theory'.

Peter Schmelz's 2021 book *Sonic Overload*, Alfred Schnittke, Valentin Silvestrov, and Polystylism in the



*Late USSR* won two awards from the American Musicological Society. As well as a 2022 Deems Taylor/Virgil Thomson Book Award in the concert music field, *Sonic Overload* also won the Otto Kinkeldey Award, which is given to the most distinguished book in musicology published during the previous year.

Over the past two decades, Professor Ileana Orlich has advanced the study of the languages, culture and history of East/Central Europe, with a particular emphasis on Romania. The strength of the program that she has built at ASU has received recognition from the Arizona Legislature, which in its 2022 session committed \$250,000 to support the Eastern Europe Cultural Collaborative to facilitate academic and cultural exchanges between ASU and academic institutions in Eastern Europe.

## Melikian affiliated faculty, staff and graduate students shared knowledge and expertise with new audiences in 2022

*As well as generating peer-reviewed print research, they published commentary and insight on a range of digital platforms, and engaged with publics outside the United States.*

**Hannah Barker** co-authored “Pandemic Outbreaks and the Language of Violence: Discussing the Origins of the Black Death and COVID-19,” featured in *CHEST* 162, no. 1 (July 2022): 196-201.

**Anna Cichopek-Gajraj** authored several scholarly publications in 2021-22, including “Polish and German Jewish Survivors in the ‘Recovered Territories’ in Postwar Poland.” *In Terrortimes, Terrorscape? Temporal, Spatial, and Memory Continuities of War and Genocide in 20th Century Europe*, edited by Michael Mayer and Volker Benkert. Purdue University Press, 2022. She presented research at several international venues, including the Stiftung Universität Hildesheim in **Germany** and Warsaw’s Jewish Historical Institute in **Poland**.

**Taylor Genovese** created, “The Land of Sunflowers and Steel,” a visual exploration of a country on the eve of war, shot in Ukraine in the fall of

2021. With the support of a Melikian Center Research Award, Genovese is also working on a short film shot in Ukraine last year.

**Alexandra Humphreys** organized ‘Tempe Sister Cities’ exhibit that celebrates citizen diplomacy at ASU’s Noble Library, and a similar exhibit in the Downtown campus ASU Library in May-August 2022. In March 2022, she created a library guide about the war in Ukraine: <https://libguides.asu.edu/ukrainewar>

**Agnes Kefeli** published several articles and blog posts in 2022, including a description of the Critical Languages Institute’s relaunch of Tatar teaching for the American Association of Teachers of Turkic Languages at (<https://www.aatturkic.org/tatar>). Kefeli was also awarded an IHR Publication Development Grant for her current project, entitled “In the Land of Giants: Eco-Mythology and Islam in Tatar Imagination.”

**Jacob Lassin** wrote or co-wrote several widely-read commentaries in Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, including “Putin’s antagonism toward Ukraine was never just about NATO – it’s about creating a new Russian empire” in *The Conversation*, with Emily Channell-Justice. In August, he started a position at Miami University, Ohio, as Teaching Fellow at the Havighurst Center and a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Media, Journalism, and Film.

**Irina Levin** took a new position as Assistant Teaching Professor and Honors Faculty Fellow at Barrett, The Honors College.

**Victor Peskin** published “Putin’s Crime of Aggression in Ukraine and the International Criminal Court” as an op-ed in the *Los Angeles Times*, and “International courts prosecuting leaders like Putin for war crimes have a mixed record – but offer clues on

how to get a conviction,” in *The Conversation*.

**Danko Sipka** published three papers, as well as several public-facing articles. In May-June 2022, he gave a series of lectures of lexicography and collaborated with colleagues in Belgrade, as a Fulbright Scholar. He completed work on the book *Whiskey, Water, and Vodka: A History of Slavic Languages*, which will be published by Georgetown University Press in fall 2023.

**Laurie Stoff** edited and annotated *Surgeon Grow: An American in the Russian Fighting* (Bloomington: Slavica Publishers of Indiana University, 2022). Her 2006 book, *They Fought for the Motherland: Russia's Women Soldiers in World War I and the Revolution* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006) was published in Russian as *Они сражались за Родину. Русские женщины-солдаты в Первую мировую войну и революцию* (Boston and St. Petersburg: Academic Studies Press, 2022). Dr. Stoff also took on a new position as Assistant Director of the ASU's Office of National Scholarship Advisement.

In my letter to this board last year when I stepped into the very stylish shoes of Ramona Melikian, I highlighted the value of the Melikian Center for the diplomatic and negotiating tools that it provides. Possessing knowledge of the culture, language and history of the vital region covered by the Center is critical. With the events of this past year, the Melikian Center will need to demonstrate that we also excel in the analysis of geopolitics. The unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by Russian President Putin, the largest armed conflict in Europe since World War II; unsettling and potentially violent tensions in the Balkans; domestic repression and interstate conflict impacting the Central Asian Republics of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan; and finally the violent conflict when negotiations failed between Azerbaijan and Armenia; all point to the importance and timeliness of the work of the Melikian Center.

During the Cold War, the last twilight struggle between great powers, the great Universities of America came to the foreground to equip and prepare those who would shape foreign policy and educate the broader community about the challenges, costs and opportunities that lay ahead. Working with partners in the US and abroad, we at the Melikian Center now have a similar challenge and opportunity. By building on the recognition that the Center's faculty affiliates have earned, extending our partnerships with Phoenix-based foreign policy organizations as well as institutions in the region, and expanding our own outreach to local communities and schools, we can contribute to a richer understanding of these geopolitical events. We can generate the ideas and serve as resource for the individuals who will shape the world ahead.

One great asset of the Melikian Center that some may not be aware of is our Indonesian language training. Indonesia is the largest Muslim majority country by population, a giant in Southeast Asia and a country that will in future play a larger economic and political role. It has an underdeveloped democracy and while its direction cannot be assured, its value is clear. It is to the credit of those at the Melikian Center that while the language is outside of our region this opportunity was seized, making the Melikian Center ever stronger.

I look forward to working together with each of you to take the Center forward in 2023.



**David Merkel, Melikian Center  
Advisory Board President**



**ASU** **The Melikian Center:**  
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