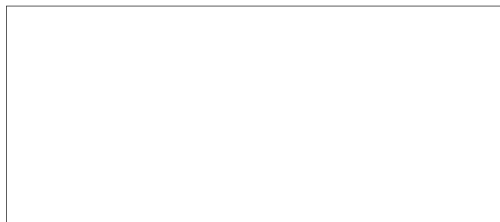


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## BOOK HUNGER IN THE USSR

Kennan Institute Fellow John Garrard, professor of Russian literature at the University of Arizona, spoke at the Wilson Center January 9 about the "Politics and Economics of Book Hunger in the USSR." All kinds of books are in short supply in the Soviet Union; Garrard's talk focused on fiction, not "subversive" material, such as samizdat.

According to recent émigrés and Soviet publishing officials, the growing demand for books in the USSR stems largely from a rise in Soviet educational levels over the last 15 years. Reading is fashionable and book collections are status symbols. The Soviet leadership should feel good, according to Garrard: book hunger proves a certain "intellectualization" of society, and it suggests the Russian people are materially better off.

Soviet publishing officials have tried to remedy the chronic book shortage. Throughout the USSR, for example, they have established 50-60 "pulping" centers where individuals can exchange unwanted books for tickets entitling them to top positions on waiting lists for books they do want. There have been complaints in the Soviet press, however, that many of the books taken to the pulping centers are stolen from public libraries. Book hunger thus continues to spawn responses like those provoked by other shortages in Soviet society—private initiative, end runs around the official distribution system, a black market.

While the Soviets publish huge numbers of books, too often they are not the ones people want to read. Many are "official" publications—political works

and memoirs, for example. There is even a shortage of contemporary Soviet fiction and Russian classics, which are published in large numbers. Soviet presses simply can't keep pace with the demand.

Also in short supply are Russian works of the '20s and '30s by authors still out of favor with the regime, and Russian works published abroad (tamizdat). Western literature (in Russian) isn't much easier to come by, and if nonfiction is included, religious materials are by far the hardest to find.

Andrei Sakharov (not the dissident physicist), head of the Belles Lettres Division of Goskomizdat (the state's publishing arm), estimated in December 1983 that only about one-third of all demand for books is being met. "You would need all the printing presses of the world," he said, "to meet the demand." Soviet officials claim paper is scarce, but the USSR has more timber than the United States and Canada combined.

The real reasons for book hunger are political. At some high level, Garrard noted, decisions are being made not to publish enough of the books people want to read, while loading bookstores with volumes destined for the remainder tables. The demand, after all, is well known: an organization called Soyuzkniga evaluates the nationwide demand for books.

At stake is a system of carefully graduated privileges that ensures loyalty to the regime. To satisfy the desire for books would rob the regime of a certain leverage it now enjoys. The challenge for the Soviet leadership is to promote a sliding scale of expectations, along which it can meet the broadest literary demands of the people and still use the controlled distribution of books as a reward for good behavior.

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THE TRANSFER OF POWER IN AFRICA:  
THE LAST 30 YEARS

The University of Zimbabwe, in Harare, was recently the site of a Wilson Center conference on the transfers of power in Africa over the past 30 years and their consequences. Wilson Center Deputy Director Prosser Gifford helped to design and run the four-day meeting, which brought together 30 historians, political scientists, and economists from Senegal, Guinea, the Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Nigeria, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Zaire, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, and South Africa, as well as from the United States, Great Britain, and France. Funding came from the Carnegie Corporation and the Ford Foundation.

The scholars examined both the events that marked the transfer of power in their own countries and the effects of the manner of that transfer upon subsequent events. Most agreed that the transfer of political power was indeed significant: it meant the transfer of the opportunity to do good or ill for the newly independent nation. The colonial state--its apparatus and its assumptions--constrained freedom of opportunity at the moment of transfer, sometimes severely. But there was, nonetheless, in almost all cases, some room for choice.

In one crucial aspect of independence, however, the choices were almost universally unfortunate. The reigning perspectives of "development theory" in the late 1950s are as much to blame for failed agricultural policy as the internal political exigencies of the various African countries. For a mix of theoretical and political reasons, agricultural prices paid to producers were kept artificially low. Surpluses, created through marketing boards or other mechanisms, were used to build import-substitution industries, many of which were inefficient. And the price of food in urban areas was subsidized.

The long-term result: incentives for agricultural production were drastically reduced. This in turn discouraged farmers from replanting crops with long-term

yields (like cocoa); encouraged smuggling and second economies; increased the flow of rural unemployed to city shantytowns; and led ultimately to the use of scarce foreign exchange for food imports.

This spiral has been disastrous for some African countries; for others, it has made rural desperation more prevalent and has decreased productivity. Once begun, the spiral is very difficult to reverse. One corrective has been a stable currency, achieved in the franc zone through continued close ties to the metropolitan banking system. A better one is to pay rural producers a fair return. Kenya and Zimbabwe have thus far succeeded in maintaining a strong agricultural sector, and this bodes well for both balanced growth and the generation of internal savings for rural peasant populations in the two countries.

The colonial state was autocratic, bureaucratic, and, in the development decade of the 1950s, increasingly interventionist economically, despite a late patina of parliamentary institutions. But most participants felt the propensity of many post-colonial African regimes to put political partisanship and personal loyalty above any notion of service to the nation did not necessarily derive from their colonial inheritance.

When ethnic or ideological loyalty becomes the standard for military or judicial conduct, many conferees insisted, a regime compromises any claim to legitimacy among the many components of its national population. This reality highlighted the importance of the shape and scope of nationalist movements both as precursors to and inheritors of independence.

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THE ECONOMICS OF THE PACIFIC BASIN IDEA

How much of a challenge do the Pacific Basin economies pose to the world's current economic powers? At The Wilson Center December 14, former fellow Harold Jacobson, a University of Michigan political scientist, doubted the ability of

the post-World War II economic order to maintain its 40-year supremacy--given the emergence of new economic powers in the Pacific, the shift in the geographic balance of economic activity to Asia, Third World demand for more influence in international economic institutions, and the relative decline of U.S. global leadership.

The United States played a central role in creating the postwar "neoliberal" economic order (GATT, the IMF, the World Bank, OECD) that guided the vast expansion of trade and growth. Movement of goods and services across national borders was eased as a result, and the less-developed states benefited along with the industrial powers. But the system, according to Jacobson, "was designed with the institutions of Europe in mind--countries with democratic forms of government, without active oppositions, of roughly the same level of economic development, basically market economies."

The Pacific nations do not fit this description. Their economic behavior raises frequent questions: Must (or when will) the Pacific's newly developing economies lower their protectionist barriers? How, with heavy involvement by Asian governments in their national economies, can competition for markets be made fair? Jacobson suggested the United States would tire of keeping its market open if other nations did not reciprocate. How long, he asked, "can the United States tolerate a one-sided deal?"

The People's Republic of China is the wild card in the Pacific economic balance. Despite a new economic pragmatism and willingness to cooperate with the region's capitalist nations, its intentions remain unclear. According to Asia Program researcher Kelly Ho, China avoids discussing its potential role in the Pacific Community, continues to stress bilateralism in its economic relations, and is suspicious of the Japanese as the dominant economic force in Asia. Furthermore, China balks at the inclusion of Taiwan in a Pacific community, although Taiwan's exports far exceed those of the mainland.

The responsibility for shaping a viable Pacific Basin trade system will

probably fall on the shoulders of the United States and Japan, despite the assertion by one participant that the Pacific Basin Community "is an idea whose time may not have come." Without such a system, however, charges of protectionism and unfair competition are sure to persist. The United States may lack the economic strength to play a leading role, and Japan, despite its economic power, has yet to gather the courage to exert more individual leadership.

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Report of a dinner-discussion sponsored by The Wilson Center's Asia Program. Among the participants and discussants were Byong Hion Lew, ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the United States, and four members of the program's Advisory Council: Donald K. Emmerson, professor of political science, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Marius B. Jansen, professor of history, Princeton University; Chalmers A. Johnson, professor of political science, University of California, Berkeley; and Susanne H. Rudolph, director, South Asia Language and Area Center, University of Chicago.

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#### LATIN AMERICA 1984: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

At The Wilson Center December 13, William D. Rogers, former assistant secretary of state for Latin America, presented a roundup of the major events affecting U.S.-Latin American relations in 1984. Central America and efforts to ease the debt crisis and to further democratize the region were at the top of his list. He noted also that bilateral relations, especially between the United States and Mexico, had taken on new importance.

The year began with delivery of the report of the "Kissinger Commission" to the president January 4. After that, said Rogers, who served as counsellor to the commission, U.S. policy toward Central America fared poorly. He attributed this partly to the failure to heed two of the commission's basic suggestions: First, multilateralize all