

Pushkarev, as chief compiler, and Vernadsky as senior editor, he assembled a comprehensive collection of sources on Russian history intended especially for teachers of survey courses. The project grew well beyond its original limits and was published in three volumes in 1972 by Yale University Press as *A Source Book for Russian History from Early Times to 1917*. The glossary was also expanded, and Yale published it in 1970 as a separate volume, *Dictionary of Russian Historical Terms from the Eleventh Century to 1917*.

Ralph accepted a tenured position at the University of Illinois in 1958 to teach Russian history. By his own admission, he looked forward to a normal career of teaching and research, and he inaugurated an ambitious schedule of classes on the political, economic, and social history of Russia and the Soviet Union. But soon after his arrival in Urbana-Champaign, he became deeply involved in organizing and promoting Slavic and east European studies at Illinois and further afield. He was the founder of the Russian and East European Center, as it was initially called, which began to function in 1959 with the full support of the university administration and grants from the U.S. Office of Education. Under Ralph's directorship (until 1987) and that of his successors, it became one of the leading centers in the country. Ralph gave particular attention to building the library's holdings in the field as essential for attracting outstanding faculty and graduate students, and thanks to his enthusiasm and perseverance and to the support of the library directors and staff, Illinois's collection became one of the strongest in the United States. The same combination of expertise and devotion led to the establishment of the Slavic and East European Library, in 1970, which served as a hub for research on campus and beyond. Ralph was always concerned about sharing scholarly resources, and at his initiative the Summer Research Laboratory on Russia and Eastern Europe took form in 1973. Its main purpose, as Ralph envisioned it, was to make Illinois's holdings easily available to researchers from this country and abroad. The success of the enterprise may be measured by the large numbers, in one year two hundred, who were thus drawn to the campus. The Slavic Reference Service, established in 1976, grew out of the laboratory as a means of providing continuous support for research activities. While several of these projects were getting underway, Ralph was asked by the Joint Committee on Slavic Studies of the ACLS and SSRC to establish a membership organization to support the *American Slavic and East European Review* and the field in general. He set to work with characteristic vigor and efficiency, and as secretary of AAASS between 1960 and 1969, he oversaw a going concern whose members rose from 900 to 3,700.

In all these varied undertakings, Ralph's role was crucial. He of course had the necessary administrative experience and knowledge of the field, but his success owed, in the first place, to his humanity and integrity. He was always sensitive to the needs and wishes of others, and thus he always thought of the center, the library, and the laboratory as cooperative ventures. Yet, everyone knew who the chief architect was. Such accomplishments and such modesty are rare things. Ralph will be greatly missed.

KEITH HITCHINS

*University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*  
May 2015

## Jane T. Hedges, 1951–2015

A good editorial hand is invisible, clearing away typos and inelegant or imprecise phrasings, of course, but also helping authors sharpen their thinking and refine their arguments. All that is left on the page is the best work the writer was capable of all

along. In this regard, Jane Hedges was an unseen but invaluable presence on every page of *Slavic Review*. Her objection to the wording “always-already,” for example, was often accompanied by the wry query “What does that mean, anyway?”—a question many writers often fail to ask themselves before deploying an easy rhetorical shorthand. She honored and bolstered the journal’s legacy and reputation with her meticulous attention to detail and well-tuned ear for language, knowing that the ultimate editorial obligation is to you, the readers, whose understanding, engagement, and respect were and are always kept foremost in mind.

Jane passed away on June 17, 2015, after a five-year-long battle with cancer. For seventeen years, from 1996 to 2013, Jane served as the sole full-time employee at *Slavic Review*. Not only did she provide impeccable editing, interacting tactfully and respectfully with the journal’s contributors, but she managed relationships with the providers of typesetting and printing services, with advertisers and book publishers, and with the AAASS/ASEEES office on all matters great and small. She also held down the fort at the small two-story frame house off campus that served as the journal’s editorial office for much of her tenure. When the furnace broke down one bitterly cold winter day and the water inside the building froze solid, Jane kept working, in her fur hat, coat, and gloves, encouraging the university’s maintenance staff by her example to complete their repairs. From her office, lined with bound *Slavic Review* volumes and a library of reference works, Jane carried out her responsibilities with empathy and integrity. She always had a sympathetic ear and kind word for any contributor or provider in difficulty. She insisted on imposing the highest standards for quality in all aspects of the journal. Her marvelous sense of humor provided a sense of balance and levity that helped break the tension in those occasional moments of conflict. Yet she also possessed an amazing toughness that revealed itself in countless but subtle ways and with which she approached her illness as well as her work responsibilities and her life.

Another oft-unseen part of the journal’s operations, but one central to its production and to Jane’s impact, is its employment of three graduate students as editorial assistants every year. During her time as managing editor, Jane mentored dozens of assistants, each undertaking the unique challenges of editorial work in addition to their courses, prelim exams, dissertations, job applications, and new families. Many of them have shared their recollections for this tribute, and among the overlapping impressions the word that recurs most frequently is *warmth*. Offering hot tea from the extensive collection she maintained in the office—a practice we have preserved—and an open smile, as if she had all the time in the world to chat, Jane shared her wisdom about everything from parenting to recalcitrant reviewers, grammar rules and good walking shoes. One alumna recalled sharing her anxiety about giving her very first ASEEES paper: Jane replied, “‘I’ll come to your panel. You will see at least one smiling face looking at you.’ I suddenly felt that I could do it, that I could talk in public about my work, and one smiling, nonjudgmental face would be there. After that conference, I always think about Jane before giving a paper.”

She was “infectiously kind,” an alumnus observed, deeply patient, and generous in the best of ways, sharing her time and her knowledge. Jane demonstrated the kind of equanimity and conscientiousness that raises everyone’s standards of their own work. She “ran a tight ship,” said one former assistant, yet “was the calm in the storm,” noted another. But more than one person has also recalled Jane’s laugh, which was “easy and infectious,” “melodious,” and yet, as one longtime friend and colleague aptly remarked, “for a petite person, she had such a hearty (and infectious) laugh!” It complemented “eyes shining with mirth,” making us feel like we were welcome to join in on a wonderfully silly joke. Making Jane laugh was a pleasure in its own right.

*Slavic Review* was, of course, only one part of her life, which was filled with quilting and community, languages and music, travel and family, and we are grateful to have shared in it in this small way. As an assistant-turned-friend stated, Jane had an inquisitive mind and spirit “turned outward, toward the world and toward us. She listened to our stories and she told us her own. She humbled us and she encouraged us. We are better because of her.”

Jane is survived by her husband, Mark D. Steinberg, and her son, Sasha Steinberg. It was an honor to work alongside her.

DIANE P. KOENKER

*University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*

FAITH WILSON STEIN

*University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*

August 2015

## Catharine Theimer Nepomnyashchy, 1951–2015

When Catharine Nepomnyashchy passed away following a relatively brief illness in March of this year, the loss was so devastating that it was hard to know what to say. Our field suddenly found itself without one of its best-known and most beloved figures, a scholar in the prime of her life and at the height of her professional abilities, who still had so much she wanted to do and write and who, as many knew, had been raising a sixteen-year-old daughter as a single parent. Cathy’s friends and colleagues were heartbroken and, in many cases, ill-prepared for the news: Cathy had chosen to keep the seriousness of her illness private until the very end of her life. Tributes and condolences poured in to Cathy’s Facebook page, but other, more public forums, including, most notably, the Slavic and East European Languages and Literatures list (SEELANGS), remained strangely silent, as those in Slavic studies struggled to process the news.

Cathy was a remarkable scholar, distinguished by her broad education, intellectual adventurousness, and her facility with interdisciplinary approaches. After finishing a BA in Russian and a combined BA and MA in French literature at Brown University in 1973, she went on to complete a PhD program at Columbia University in the Department of Slavic Languages. Hired as an assistant professor at Barnard College in 1987 amid the excitement of glasnost and perestroika, Cathy quickly acquired a reputation as one of the world’s leading specialists on contemporary Russian literature and popular culture. Her first two books and many of her early articles focused on the work of the renowned dissident writer Andrei Siniavskii (Abram Tertz). Along with Slava Yastremski, Cathy completed a translation of Tertz’s scandalous *Strolls with Pushkin* (Yale University Press), which won the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL) Translation Prize in 1994. A year later, she published the first monograph on the writer’s work, *Abram Tertz and the Poetics of Crime* (Yale University Press), setting a high standard for all later work on the author. Other projects included *Under the Sky of My Africa: Alexander Pushkin and Blackness* (Northwestern University Press, 2006), an edited volume completed with Ludmilla Trigos and Nicole Svobodny; *Mapping the Feminine: Russian Women and Cultural Difference* (Slavica, 2008), which Cathy coedited with Hilde Hoogenboom and Irina Reyfman; and a first-person account of the 1991 coup titled *Tri dnia v avguste* (MediaMir), which was written together with Nadezda Azhgikhina and appeared in 2014. Cathy wrote articles on an even more diverse array of topics: the reception of