



CEU DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF HISTORY

**The Public Defense of the
Doctoral Thesis in Comparative History**

by

Riikkamari Johanna Muhonen

on

**'Good friends' for the Soviet Union: The Peoples' Friendship
University in Soviet Educational Cooperation with the Developing
World, 1960-1980**

will be held on

Monday, June 13, at 1:30pm

in

**Hanák Room
Central European University (CEU)
Budapest—1051 Nádor u. 9.**

Examination Committee

Francisca de Haan – Chair (Department of History, CEU)

Charles Shaw – supervisor (Department of History, CEU)

Alfred Rieber – supervisor (Department of History, CEU)

Constantin Iordachi – CEU internal member (Department of History)

Pia Koivunen – external member (School of History, Culture and Arts Studies,
University of Turku)

Maxim Matusевич – external reader (Department of History, Seton Hall University)

*The doctoral dissertation is available for inspection. Should you wish to access it, please contact
Margaretha Boockmann (BoockmannM@ceu.edu)*

ABSTRACT

The dissertation looks at Moscow-based Peoples' Friendship University as a case of Soviet cooperation with the developing world during the Cold War. Founded in 1960 by the order of Nikita Khrushchev, the university was an important part of the new internationalist Soviet foreign policy of the Thaw era, portraying values such as friendship, cooperation and modernity to audiences in the newly-independent countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. The dissertation analyzes changes taking place in the university's activities in 1960-1980, demonstrating transformation occurring in Soviet educational cooperation and the changing position of the university during these years, as the enthusiasm and active networking with local political organizations of the target countries in the 1960s turned into a more stabilized form of state-level bilateral cooperation between the USSR and countries of the developing world in the 1970s.

The dissertation analyzes the ways in which the Soviet state administration aimed to fulfill both the educational and ideological goals set for the university activities: educating qualified professionals needed in countries of the developing world that would possess pro-Soviet political views and create Soviet-led global networks. The dissertation follows the study path of foreign students at Peoples' Friendship University from the process of selecting new students to graduation and returning home. It analyzes how the Soviet state aimed to influence "the hearts and minds" of foreign students through activities taking place in the classrooms and outside them. Activities organized in the leisure time of students both in Moscow and during holiday times in other parts of the Soviet Union had an important pedagogical meaning for the ideological goals of the education project.

The dissertation also contextualizes Soviet goals set for the education project by analyzing experiences of students, discussing the features of everyday life in the Soviet Union, and forms of student activism that contested the image of Soviet society and socialist modernity produced during classes and excursions. At the same time, it notices the different backgrounds and interests of students arriving to the Soviet Union that significantly affected outcomes of the project. In conclusion, the dissertation sees this specific case of Soviet educational cooperation as a playground of different interests of the Soviet state, state administrations of the target countries, and the students themselves. While analysis of different activities brings forward the Soviet interests concerning desired outcomes of the project, the realized outcomes are more diverse and demonstrate the influence different interests and political orientations of the target countries had throughout the education process, from student selections to alumni careers after graduation.

Key words: Soviet Union, Cold War, Third World, global south, internationalism, transnationalism, education, development aid, Soviet foreign policy, international relations, public diplomacy

CURRICULUM VITAE

Riikkamari Johanna Muhonen

EDUCATION

Department of History, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary/Vienna, Austria

PhD candidate in history 2016-2022

Dissertation project: “‘Good friends for the Soviet Union’: The Peoples’ Friendship University in Soviet educational cooperation with the developing world, 1960-1980.”

Institute of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies at UC Berkeley, United States

Fulbright visiting student researcher 2019-2020

Department of History, Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia

Visiting PhD student 2017-2018

Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

MSc majoring in political science (Development and International Cooperation) 2012-2016

Thesis: “When Identity becomes political. The Russophone Population of Moldova in Social Media”, grade 4 (very good) on a scale from 1 (weak) to 5 (excellent).

School of International Studies, Renmin University of China, Beijing, China

Graduate-level exchange student 2014-2015

Courses on various topics concerning Chinese politics, economics, society and history, and an intensive language course (HSK4 exam taken in June 2015 with a score of 262/300).

Faculty of Humanities, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

MA majoring in general world history 2011-2013

Thesis “Dear Yunost... The worldview and everyday life in the public letters of Soviet youth, 1964-1982”, grade 5, on a scale from 1 (weak) to 5 (excellent). Minors in Russian language and culture, ethnology and Slovak language and culture. Also studies in German and Hungarian languages.

Aleksanteri Institute, University of Helsinki, Finland

Master's school in Russian and Eastern European studies 2010-2013

Various courses concerning politics, history, culture and social change in Russia and Eastern Europe. A fieldtrip to Georgia.

Faculty of Humanities, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

BA majoring in history 2007-2011

Minors in Russian language and culture, ethnology, journalism, Latin American studies, Asian studies and museology. Also studies in Spanish, French and Chinese languages.

Faculty of History and Political Science, Yaroslavl State University, Russia

Exchange student 2009-2010

Various courses on Russian history, culture, language and politics taught in Russian.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Väli-Suomen Media/Sunnuntaisuomalainen, Jyväskylä, Finland <i>Journalist</i>	July-August 2020 April-September 2021 February 2022- present
Open Society University Network, Vienna, Austria <i>Teaching fellow for the Global History Lab project</i>	August 2020- present
Several Finnish newspapers and news agencies <i>Freelance journalist</i>	January 2007-present
Central European University, Budapest, Hungary <i>Teaching assistant for three courses of Russian history</i>	January-June 2019
Finnish Institute at Athens, Athens, Greece <i>Intern (communications, research)</i>	January-July 2016
China Foreign Studies University, Beijing, China <i>Teacher of Communication and Learning Skills in English</i>	March 2015
Embassy of Finland in Moscow, Russia <i>Intern (political and economic analysis, communications)</i>	September 2013-February 2014
Department of History, University of Jyväskylä, Finland <i>Intern (conference secretary)</i>	April-August 2012

RESEARCH PROJECTS

PhD project on Soviet public diplomacy <i>PhD candidate at the Central European University working on connections between the Soviet Union and the newly-independent countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America.</i>	2016-2022
Research assistant at the University of Jyväskylä <i>Research assistant for several projects concerning the Soviet Union, especially Finnish-Soviet cultural relations and Russian emigrant communities.</i>	2013-2021

Publications of projects in which I have worked as a research assistant:

- Simo Mikkonen. *Te olette valloittaneet meidät! - Taide Suomen ja Neuvostoliiton suhteissa 1944-1960.* [You have concurred us! – Art in Finnish-Soviet relations 1944-1960, in Finnish.] Helsinki: SKS, 2019.
- Simo Mikkonen, John Winzenburg & Hon-Lun Helan Yang. *Networking the Russian Diaspora: Russian Musicians and Musical Activities in Interwar Shanghai.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2020.

PUBLIC LECTURES

Invited talk at the University of British Columbia, Canada 24.3.2021

Invited talk co-sponsored by Institute of European Studies, Department of Anthropology and Eurasia Research Cluster: "Internationalism, Curiosity and Violence: Questions of Race in the 1960s and 1970s Moscow"

CONFERENCES

ASEEES Convention, New Orleans, USA (online)

December 2021

Paper: "Foreign Friends of the Soviet Union?: Soviet Internationalism in Higher Education".

20th Annual Aleksanteri Conference "Eurasia and Global Migrations, Helsinki, Finland (online)

October 2021

Paper: "Producing 'Good Friends' of the Soviet Union: Soviet Soft Power in the Field of Higher Education during Cold War"

ICCEES 10th World Congress, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada (online)

August 2021

Paper: "Producing 'Good Friends' of the Soviet Union? Soviet Educational Cooperation with the Global South in the 1960s-1970s"

Constructing the "Soviet"?, European University at Saint Petersburg, Saint Petersburg, Russia (online)

May 2021

Paper: "Presenting the Soviet Union to its Future 'Good Friends': Holiday Programs of Peoples' Friendship University Students in the 1960s and 1970s"

BASEES Regional Conference/Eastern Europe – Global Area (EEGA) Annual Conference, University of Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany (online)

April 2021

Paper: "Dealing with Other Forms of Socialism in the Soviet Space: Political activism of foreign students in the 1960s and 1970s Soviet Union and responses of the Soviet administration"

ASEEES Convention, San Francisco, USA

November 2019

Paper: "Attempting to Turn Them into 'Good Friends of the Soviet Union': Responses of Students from the Developing World to the Soviet Education Project (1960s-1970s)"

ASEEES Summer Convention 2019, Zagreb, Croatia

June 2019

Paper: "Dealing with Racism in a Non-Racist Society: Students from the Developing World in 1960s Moscow"

The 2nd International Conference by the West Network: End of Western Hegemonies?, University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland

June 2019

Paper: “Soviet Educational Cooperation with the Developing World in the 1960s: Contesting Western Hegemonies in the Sphere of Higher Education?”

BASEES Annual Conference 2019, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK

April 2019

Paper: “Returning Home as ‘Good Friends’ of the Soviet Union: Soviet Ideological Work with Student of Peoples’ Friendship University in the 1960s.”

The Urban History Group Annual Conference 2019, Queen’s University Belfast, Belfast, UK

April 2019

Paper: “1960s Moscow as an International City: The View of Students from the Developing World”.

6th National Conference of the Finnish International Studies Association, Helsinki, Finland

January 2019

Paper: “Korkeakoulutusyhteistyön rooli Neuvostoliiton ja kehitysmaiden välisissä kontakteissa kylmän sodan aikana” [Role of educational cooperation in the contacts between the USSR and the developing world during the Cold War].

2nd Session of the International Forum for Young Scholars of Soviet and Post-Soviet History and Culture, Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia

November 2018

Paper: “How to Portray the Soviet Union? Students of Peoples’ Friendship University experiencing ‘Soviet reality’.”

Socialist Educational Cooperation with the Global South, Justus-Liebig-Universität, Giessen, Germany

May 2018

Paper: “Moscow-based Peoples’ Friendship University as a Continuation of Earlier Soviet Educational Cooperation.”

8th Annual International Student Conference of the Cold War History, Cold War History Research Center at the Corvinus University of Budapest, organized in cooperation with the Central European University, Budapest, Hungary

June 2017

Paper: “Soviet Transnational Relations with the Developing World: Previous Research and Theoretical Points of View.”

Constructing the “Soviet”? European University of Saint-Petersburg, Saint Petersburg, Russia

April 2013

Paper based on MA thesis “Dear Yunost... The world view and everyday life in the public letters of Soviet youth, 1964-1982.”

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Cultura Foundation Travel Grant for research in Russia	2022
Central European University PhD Write Up Grant	2021
Finnish Cultural Foundation Grant for PhD Research	2020-2021
Fulbright Finland ASLA Graduate Grant	2019-2020
Central European University Doctoral Research Support Grant	2019-2020
Central European University PhD Stipend	2016-2019

LANGUAGES

Finnish

native speaker

English, Russian

fluent spoken and written

Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Chinese (Mandarin), French, German, Slovak, Spanish, Swedish

intermediate spoken and written

Hungarian

beginnings

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Articles

“Neuvostoliiton ‘hyviä ystäviä’ tuottamassa”. [“Producing ‘Good Friends’ of the Soviet Union”, in Finnish.] *Idäntutkimus* vol. 27 no.1 (2020): 3-21.

Book Chapters

“Soviet Education Contesting Western Hegemonies”. In *The End of Western Hegemonies? Political and Cultural Contestations*, edited by Marie-Josée Lavallée. Wilmington: Vernon Press. Forthcoming.

“Moscow-based Peoples’ Friendship University as a case of Soviet cooperation with the Developing World: Changes and Continuities”. In: *Socialist Educational Cooperation and the Global South. Studia Educationis Historica/Studies in the History of Education 7*, edited by Jane Weiss & Ingrid Miethe, 205-228. Berlin: Peter Lang Verlag, 2020.

“The Language of Pushkin and Lenin: The role of Russian language in educating students from the developing world in the 1960s Soviet Union”. In *Russian Language in the Multilingual World. Slavica Helsingiensia 52*, edited by Ahti Nikunlassi & Ekaterina Protassova, 369-379. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 2019.

Reviews

Review of *Vallankumouksen Venäjä 1891-1991* [Revolutionary Russia 1891-1991] by Orlando Figes. *Idäntutkimus* vol. 29 no. 1 (2022).

Review of *Rauhanuskovaiset* by Pia Koivunen. *Idäntutkimus* vol. 28 no.2 (2021).